

TRUTH WILL TRIUMPH  
CITY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

August 18, 2012

Ron Fleck, MD

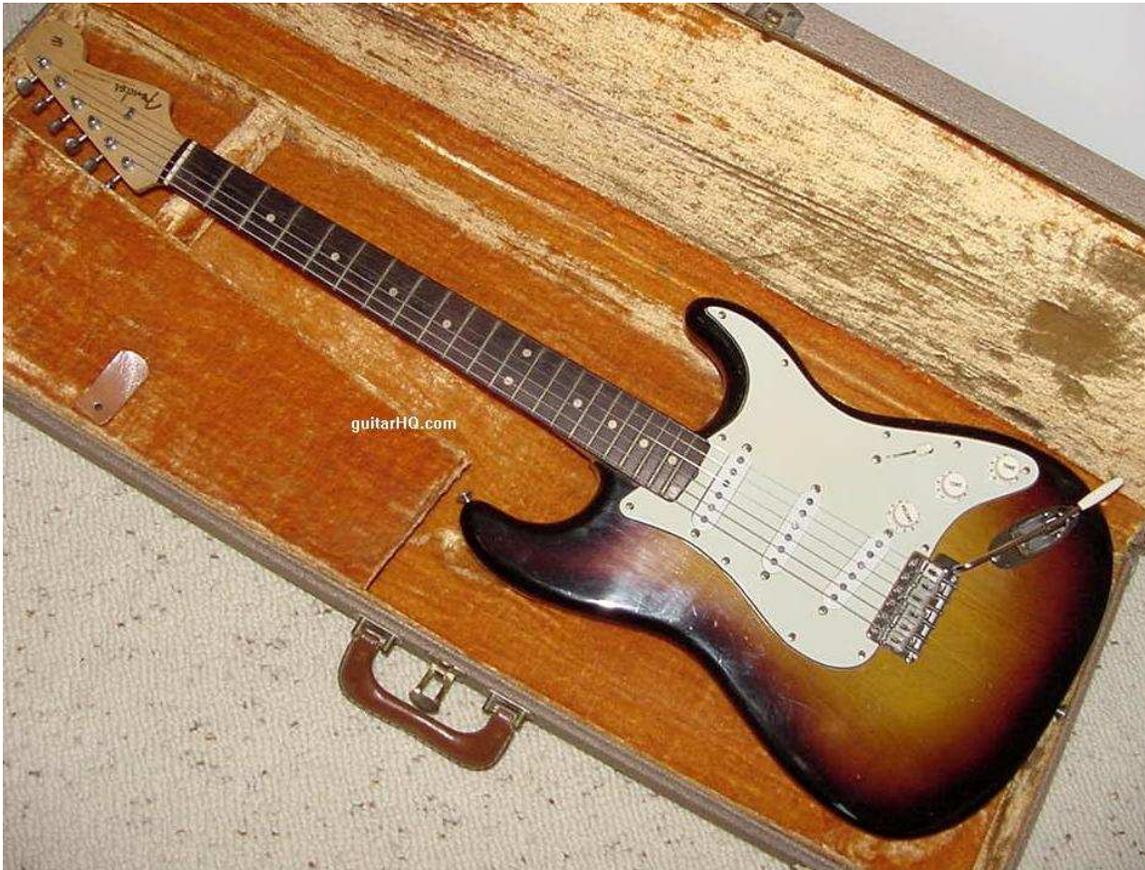
SEVERE WEATHER WARNING!!

- Whenever a major storm (tsunami, hurricane, cyclone, flood, etc.) is approaching, the National Weather Service issues warnings so people can be prepared and lives and property can be saved.
- It is interesting that the headquarters of the National Weather Service, a branch of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)—an operating unit of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is located in Silver Spring, Maryland—the same place where the world headquarters of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and North American Division of SDA, is located! Hopefully, our Adventist leaders will continue to warn our people whenever a spiritual storm threatens us.
- There is currently a huge storm threatening the SDA Church. You may or may not be aware of it. It involves doctrines and philosophies that are a threat to the very foundation and pillars of our faith.
- Because many of our members here have asked him about it, Pastor Mark has asked me to help us understand what we are facing. That is what I'll try to do today. Let's Pray...

A GOOD COUNTERFEIT OF TRUTH

- Dedicated Adventists all over the USA are mobilizing to warn our Church members of erroneous teachings about God and Jesus.
- Like any other counterfeit, it is mixed with some truth and is very subtle, and only those who are seriously studying their Bibles and have a personal relationship with Jesus will be able to recognize it. The people who are deceived by it are good people, they live good lives, and many of them are very persuasive and talented.
- On the surface, this new emphasis on Jesus and spirituality sounds very good. People who long for a personal relationship with Jesus and closer walk with God are attracted to the ideas and philosophies of the EC/SF.
- But, on closer review, something is obviously “way off kilter,” things just do not match up with what the Bible clearly says. In fact we have warnings in the Bible of this exact thing happening in the last days.

## COUNTERFEIT VS GENUINE



- This is a genuine 1959 Fender Stratocaster guitar worth about \$35,000.
- But there are special shops in China and Indonesia that make exact replicas of this guitar, and others like it, to pass off as genuine.
- Only a specialist can tell if it is a genuine or a fake. Sometimes, an MRI imaging study can be done to tell if it is damaged or genuine.
- Often, it is very difficult to tell a fake from the genuine in spirituality as well.
- “Those who are unwilling to accept the plain, cutting truths of the bible, are continually seeking for pleasing fables that will quiet the conscience. The less spiritual, self-denying, and humiliating the doctrines presented, the greater the favor with which they are received... Too wise in their own conceit to search the Scriptures, they have no shield from delusion. Satan is ready to supply the heart’s desire, and he palms off his deceptions in the place of truth... All who neglect the Word of God... will be left to receive damnable heresy for religious truth. Every conceivable form of error will be accepted by those who willfully reject the truth. He who looks with horror upon one deception will readily receive another... With such a warning before us, it behooves us to be on our guard as to what doctrines we receive.” (EGW, GC 523-524; Radiant Religion, p. 167)

## BIBLE WARNINGS

- “Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*” (2 Timothy 4:2-4 KJV)
- “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20 KJV)

## CURRENT ACTIONS BEING TAKEN TO COMBAT THIS THREAT

- Several excellent books have been recently published:
  - “*The Dangers of Contemplative Prayer,*” by Howard Peth, Pacific Press, 2012
  - “*The Omega Rebellion,*” by Rick Howard, Remnant Publications, 2010
- Several articles and documents have been written clarifying the dangers of the EC/SF, and very widely distributed on the Internet.
- An informative DVD presentation, “*The Shaking,*” is being distributed widely, including on You Tube; the final version will be ready in about 2-3 months. It includes video interviews with key leaders of the EC/SF movement and key Adventist leaders.
- The latest issue of *Ministry, International Journal for Pastors*, produced by the Ministerial Association, GC of SDA, and printed by the Pacific Press Publishing Association, is almost entirely dedicated to warning the SDA Church pastors and leaders about this brewing storm.
  - Editorial by Derek J. Morris, Editor of *Ministry*
  - Lead article by Mark Finley, Assistant to GC President
  - A Statement on Biblical Spirituality, by Andrews University
  - Article by Stanley E. Patterson, Professor at AU
  - Article by Abraham Guerrero, AU

## KEY PRESENTATION AT ASI

- One of the most popular breakout sessions (the conference room was full) was taught by Howard Peth, “*The Dangers of Contemplative Prayer.*”
  - This was a very informative seminar, attended by many key Adventist leaders and influential business people. He summarized the information in his book. He also distributed a couple very good handouts.
  - This book was distributed free to all ASI members in attendance at the National Conference, and to all ASI members in the USA. It is a must-read for all Adventists who want to know the truth about the false spirituality infiltrating our Church today.
  - He agreed to give me all his PowerPoint slides from this presentation.

## TRUTH:

- WE CAN KNOW WHAT IS TRUTH Ex 34:6-7 (KJV) “And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and *truth.*”
- Josh 24:14 (KJV) “Now therefore fear the Lord, and *serve Him in sincerity and truth...*and serve ye the Lord.”

- 1 Sam 12:24 (KJV) “Only fear the Lord, and *serve Him in truth with all your heart*; for consider how great things He hath done for you.”
- Ps 40:11 (KJV) “Let Thy lovingkindness and *Thy truth continually preserve me.*”
- Ps 86:11 (KJV) “Teach me Thy way, O Lord: *I will walk in Thy truth.*”

#### WE CAN KNOW WHAT IS TRUTH

- Ps 119:142 (KJV) “Thy law is the truth.”
- Ps 119:151 (KJV) “all Thy commandments are truth.”
- Dan 8:12 (KJV) The little horn “cast down the truth to the ground.”
- Jn 1:17 (KJV) “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
- Jn 4:23-24 (KJV) “True worshippers shall *worship the Father in spirit and in truth*: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and *they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*”
- Jn 8:32 (KJV) “And *ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*”

#### DEFINITION OF TRUTH

- Jn 14:6 (KJV) Jesus saith unto him (Thomas), “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”
- Jn 14:17 (KJV) The Holy Spirit is called “*the Spirit of Truth.*”
- Jn 15:26; 16:13 (KJV) “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the *Spirit of truth*, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me... *He will guide you into all truth.*”
- Jn 17:17 (KJV) Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them through Thy truth: *Thy Word is truth.*”

#### PILATE AND THE TRUTH

- Jn 18:37 (KJV) “Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and *for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth*. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?
- The “new” spirituality claims that there is no ultimate truth. It is taught that what is truth for one person, may not be for someone else. They say that all religions are equally valid, and all lead to the same place. (we would agree on that)
- Textbooks on Christian doctrine advise students that we must learn about God from other religions, such as Buddhism (which teaches that THERE IS NO GOD). How can we learn from a Buddhist monk anything about God?

#### HOW SHOULD WE PRESENT TRUTH?

- Eph 4:15 (KJV) “*speaking the truth in love*”
- Eph 4:21 (KJV) “as *the truth is in Jesus*”
- 2 Tim 2:15 (KJV) “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the Word of truth.*”

## BIG DANGER FACING ALL CHRISTIANS TODAY

- EMERGING CHURCH MOVEMENT (EC): this refers to a loose-knit organization of Protestant leaders, pastors, and authors who are trying to re-invent Christianity and make it more attractive to people today.
- This EC movement is penetrating in our own beloved SDA Church at many different levels.
- The leaders of the EC in the Adventist Church are aggressively working to change Adventism, and re-structure the SDA Church to become the organization they want it to be.
- Most Protestant church members are not even aware of what's happening. Even many Adventists have never even hear of the EC yet. But many leaders, including professors in our colleges and universities are very excited about this movement.

## THE EMERGING CHURCH AGENDA

- The youth are being targeted.
- The Bible is misinterpreted and de-emphasized.
- Strong pantheistic foundation. It is very ecumenical and non-sectarian (no ultimate truth). Everyone's opinion about spirituality is equally valid
- Many EC leaders see the Protestant Reformation of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in a negative light, and are calling for a return to the spirituality and ritualism of the Medieval Romish Church. The Protestant Reformers are looked down upon and discredited, since they worked hard to bring the Dark Ages to a screeching halt.

## TRENDS OF THE EC/SP

- There is a big shift back to tradition and ritualism in the RC Church and Protestant Churches in America.
- Renewed emphasis on confession, reciting the rosary, the Tridentine Latin Mass (from "Tridentine"—modern day Trent, Italy), the Eucharist—transubstantiation, and a renewed interest in monastic and religious orders.
- Large numbers of Protestants (Evangelical, and even SDA's) are reading the early desert fathers of the RC Church, attending religious retreats at RC monasteries, reading Catholic Bibles (most of the modern Bible versions), using candles in religious services, and doing other things that are downright anti-Protestant. (*A Return To Tradition*, U.S. News and World Report, 12/13/2007)
- Most EC/SF leaders erroneously think that the Catholic desert church fathers in northern Africa (Alexandria and Carthage) were the precursors of God's true church today.
- However, a serious study of these desert fathers will reveal they were pagans who tried to mix pagan philosophy with Bible truth.

## POPULAR CHRISTIAN AUTHOR

- *"Yes, what I'm saying is that, when we had the Protestant Reformation, we left so much good behind us in Catholicism! We need to have a rapprochement. We need to get back in touch with our Catholic brothers and sisters. We need to say, 'We can teach you some things, but you can teach us even more.' Catholics have*

*spent centuries developing relationships with God in many forms of prayer and, as Protestants, we're largely unaware of those wonderful forms of prayer. There's a spirituality in Catholicism that we need to reclaim. We can hold only our Reformation Theology, but we had better get back into pre-Reformation spirituality." (TONY CAMPOLO)*

#### "JESUS, NOT DOCTRINE"

- A common error promoted by the EC/SF leaders is that Bible doctrine is not important, only Jesus is important.
- Obviously, there is something wrong with this idea: Bible doctrines are all about the true teachings of God and Jesus. You can't separate Jesus from what He believed and taught, and told us to teach (Mt 28:18-20)

#### ILLOGICAL REASONING ABOUT DOCTRINE

- Why doctrine is being relegated to the background: They say, William Miller was a deist, and had faulty methods of Bible study, which led him to wrong conclusions and the big disappointment of 1844. Since SDA's have adopted his methods of Bible study, and many of our SDA beliefs and doctrines are derived from his study of the Bible, our doctrines are also Godless and wrong, and should be set aside.
- Some are saying, "The proof-text method of Bible study and giving the Gospel message is bad, because it leads people away from focusing on Jesus."
- Instead of doctrines, the "new" Emerging Church slant on Adventism is that we should just focus on Jesus.

#### "SPIRITUAL FORMATION"

- This is a RC term, rarely, if ever, previously used by non-Catholics.
- This term is loaded with many connotations.
- To some, SF is regarded as a loosely-defined term that can mean Christian maturity or spiritual growth and development. For them there is "good" SF and "bad" SF. "Bad" SF comes from the oriental religions, but they see in it no connection with the RC agenda for today.

#### DEFINITION OF SF

- *"Spiritual formation is a rather general term referring to all attempts, means, instructions, and disciplines intended towards deepening of faith and furtherance of spiritual growth. It includes educational endeavors as well as the more intimate and in-depth process of spiritual direction. (Gerald G. May, Care of Mind, Care of Spirit, Harper, 1982, p. 6)*
- It involves massive numbers of books, DVDs, Christian celebrity endorsements, classes, and retreats.
- We are told we must do certain things to become "spiritually formed," certain exercises, attend retreats and seminars.
- Most importantly, they say we must read certain incredibly important books. Bible study is de-emphasized in favor of many books written by so-called "Christian mystics."

#### TRUE OR FALSE SPIRITUALITY?

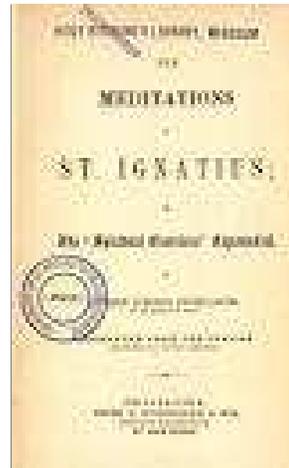
- Many authors and proponents of EC/SF say they are only “re-discovering” the rich spiritual heritage of the Desert Fathers and certain Christian mystics from the Dark Ages.
- These EC/SF leaders are basically saying, You can keep your doctrines, but we’re going to come together on something much bigger—on spirituality.”

#### WHO STARTED THE CURRENT POPULARITY OF EC/SF?

- The best known Quaker in the world today is Richard Foster—the current living Guru of SF.
- Richard Foster wrote, *The Path to Spiritual Growth*, Harper, 1978, in which he gives the “lost” spiritual disciplines that are necessary for SF.
- Some of this book was good (pray more, slow down, become less materialistic, do community service). However, these acts are the RESULT or FRUITS of a born-again Christian lifestyle.
- SF’s big problem: it makes these activities the WAY to spirituality and not the RESULT. It is almost completely self-focused and works-based.



- Richard Foster, undergraduate George Fox University in Oregon, Doctor of Pastoral Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary from Houghton College, New York State.
- His best-known book is *Celebration of Discipline*, where he talks of the discipline of prayer, fasting, meditation, study, submission and service, confession, worship, and celebration.
- He founded *Renovaré*, an organization which holds ecumenical conferences trying to unify Christians across denominational lines for spiritual renewal.
- He is aggressively working for the world-wide ecumenical movement. He may not realize it, but he’s playing totally into the hands of Rome.
- His books are considered the holy grail of the EC/SF movement, often quoted.



- Ignatio de Loyola (1491-1556) founded the Jesuit Order on 15 August 1534. It is called the *Society of Jesus* or *Jesuits*. He was born 8 years after Martin Luther.
- A short time later, Pope Paul III, convoked the Council of Trent, and the Jesuits were commissioned to destroy Protestantism, which they tried hard to do with theology, as well as persecution.
- Loyola composed his *Spiritual Exercises* from 1522-1524, a set of Christian meditations, prayers and mental exercises. They are divided into 4 thematic weeks, and supposed to be carried out over 28-30 days. This booklet was formally approved by Pope Paul III in 1548.

#### LOYOLA'S *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*

- The Catholic mystics in the early centuries had practiced these exercises, but Loyola refined and codified these disciplines.
- Of his rules, Rule #1 was that these disciplines were to bring people to the true mother RC Church.
- He was charged with stopping the Protestant Reformation.
- The Jesuit Order was responsible for killing millions of Christians during the Reformation times.
- Isn't it ironic that modern Protestants, including many SDA's are going back to his writings to learn how to understand and know God?
- Much of the EC/SF belief system comes from the writings of this Jesuit founder.



- Another RC Priest and author that is very frequently quoted by the EC/SF promoters is Henri Jozef Machiel Nouwen (1932-1996).
- The EC/SF leaders today very frequently recommend Nouwen's books, as one of the best sources to understand God and grow in Christ.
- He supposedly had an intimate walk with God, and in order for us to know God, we should read his books, they say.
- Unfortunately, Nouwen teaches that we should pray to the departed saints, partake of the Eucharist, and many other doctrines completely opposite to what SDAs believe.
- He wrote about 40 books on spirituality. Many Catholic and Protestant pastors consider his books among their favorites.

#### HENRI NOUWEN'S ADVICE ON HOW TO BECOME SPIRITUAL

- *"As we grow older we have more and more people to remember, people who have died before us... They can become part of our spiritual communities and gently help us as we make decisions on our journeys. Parents, spouses, children, and friends can become true spiritual companions after they have died. Sometimes they can become even more intimate to us after death than when they were with us in life."* (*Bread for the Journey, A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith*, by Henri Nouwen, Harper One, 1997, August 29 reading)

#### HENRI NOUWEN'S EXPLAINS THE LORD'S SUPPER

- In the same book, in the readings for September 30, and October 4-15, Nouwen explains the Eucharist as actually eating Christ's Body and drinking His blood. We are here instructed subtly in the doctrine of transubstantiation, one of the main Roman Catholic doctrines for which millions of people were martyred during the Dark Ages!

#### SHOULD WE READ HENRI NOUWEN?

- He struggled with clinical depression, and wrote a book about it, *Inner Voice of Love*. He tried to reconcile his depression with his Christian faith.
- One fact that is either overlooked or hidden by those who love Henri Nouwen, is that he struggled with his sexuality. Only those close to him knew he was a homosexual, since he never publically claimed to be homosexual. He did, however, acknowledge his struggle to his friends and in his private journals.
- Michael Ford wrote the book, *Wounded Prophet*, which was published after Nouwen died. Ford thinks that Nouwen didn't become comfortable with his

homosexual orientation until the last few years of his life, and that his homosexuality was at the root of his chronic depression. (Michael Ford, *The Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J. M. Nouwen*, Doubleday, 1999)

#### NOUWEN'S LEGACY

- Amazingly, although Nouwen wrote so much about what he considered true spirituality, Ford found that Nouwen never found consistent peace in his own life, rather he was tormented by anxiety, insecurity, loneliness, and struggles with his sexuality. This is hardly the person one would want to go to for advice on how to live a happy, peaceful, Christian life!
- Yet, Catholic and Protestant leaders (including SDA pastors and theologians) continue to insist that we cannot be “spiritually formed” unless we read and understand Nouwen’s version of spirituality and his understanding of God!

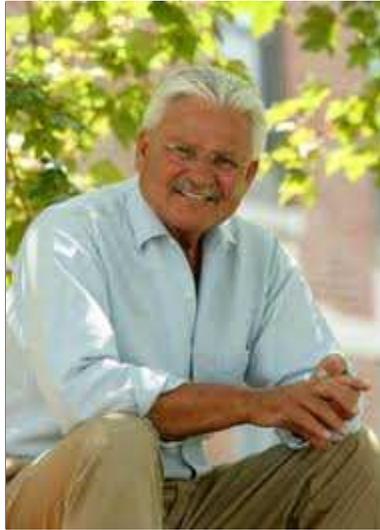
#### ANOTHER MAIN TENET OF SF

- A big concern about Spiritual Formation is that one its main tenets is that for a person to be spiritually formed, you must have a “spiritual director.” This is about as Catholic as you can get. We don’t need another human being to “direct” us in our spiritual life. This takes the place of the Bible and the Holy Spirit. This is why study of Scriptures is not heavily emphasized by the gurus of Spiritual Formation.
- While Catholics are to confess to their local priest, Protestants can now confess to their Spiritual Director. Amazingly, even Adventists are seeking out trained Spiritual Directors who know nothing of our unique SDA message of the Gospel, and even if they are acquainted with some of our beliefs, they do not accept or believe them. How crazy!

#### SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

- In Spiritual Formation, if you just follow the directions of your Director or Mentor, you will supposedly become like Jesus.
- The problem is, only Jesus can make you like Jesus, through the reading, understanding, and application of His Word, the Holy Bible, with the help of the promised Holy Spirit.
- *“Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. The arch deceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth.” (GC 488)*

## ROBERT EUGENE WEBBER (1933-2007)



- He was one of the key people who started the EC/SF movement. He wrote many books on worship.
- *“The primary source of spiritual reading is the Bible. But we now recognize that in our love of Scripture we dare not avoid the mystics and the activists. Exposure to the great devotional literature of the church is essential. More and more people are turning to the great work of the mystics. Richard Foster has called us to recover Augustine’s Confessions, Bernard of Clairvaux’s The Steps of Humility...”* (Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*, Baker Academic, 1999; p. 135)

### WEBBER’S RECOMMENDATIONS

- He promoted the reading of the ancient Catholic mystics.
- *“To immerse ourselves in these great works is to allow our vision to be expanded by a great treasure... the value of all these books as well as many not mentioned is indispensable to spirituality. Those who neglect these works do so to their harm, and those who read them do so for their inspiration and spiritual growth.”* (Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*, Baker Academic, 1999; p. 135)

### ECUMENISM PROMOTED BY WEBBER

- *“A goal for evangelicals in the postmodern world is to accept diversity as a historical reality, but to seek unity in the midst of it. This perspective will allow us to see Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches as various forms of the one true church—all based on apostolic teaching and authority, finding common ground in the faith expressed by classical Christianity.”* (Ibid, p. 85)

### CONTEMPLATIVE SPIRITUALITY

- “This is a belief system that uses ancient mystical practices to induce altered states of consciousness (“the silence”). It is rooted in mysticism and the occult,

but often is wrapped in Christian terminology. The premise is pantheistic—God in all.” (*Lighthouse Trails Research Project*)

#### CONTEMPLATIVE MEDITATION AND PRAYER

- This is also called “Centering Prayer.” It is used for personal renewal and peace.
- It involves emptying the mind of all thoughts and, mindlessly repeating a single word over and over. This technique of entering into a trance-like state comes from ancient Catholic mystics, who inherited it from Buddhist priests and Hindu gurus. This is essentially a form of self-hypnosis, striving to go deep within oneself, concentration on just one thing or word, disengagement from other stimuli, and a high degree of open-mindedness. “*A single word may be repeated over and over for the purpose of “opening the heart up to communion with God.”*” (Vance Ferrell, *The Truth About Spiritual Formation*, Harvestime Books, 2011; p. 25.
- This is not the same as genuine Biblical meditation, which involves conscious thought processes as we thoughtfully read and apply the Biblical principles to our lives. It is a thinking mind that is in contact with God—directly with prayer, submitting to God’s control of our lives.
- We “*should all without shame enroll as apprentices in the school of contemplative prayer.*” (Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, p. 13)
- Richard Foster is the Quaker who introduced Contemplative Prayer to the Evangelicals in the 1970s.

#### LECTIO DIVINA

- Involves repeating a word over and over to cause the mind to become confused. Ignatius Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* are based on this practice.
- Certain Bible words are repeated over and over many times in a ‘meditative fashion.’ All other thoughts must be banished from the mind, and prayer directly to God is forbidden.
- “*By taking passages of Scripture, which have an intended meaning, and breaking them down into smaller, separate segments, often for the purpose of chanting over and over, the true meaning of the passages are lost. Rather a form of occult mysticism is practiced—with the hope and intention of gaining a mystical experience that God never intended when He gave the inspired words to His servants.*” (Brian Flynn, *Running Against the Wind: The Transformation of a New Age Medium and His Warning to the Church*, Lighthouse Trails Publishing Company, Silverton, Oregon, 2005; pp. 133-134)

#### HENRI NOUWEN RECOMMENDS LECTIO DIVINA

- “*The quiet repetition of a single word can help us to descend with the mind into the heart. This repetition has nothing to do with magic. It is not meant to throw a spell on god or force him into hearing us. On the contrary, a word or sentence repeated frequently can help us concentrate, to move to the center, to create an inner stillness and thus to listen to the voice of God.*” (Henri Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, pp. 80-81)

- “*But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them.*” (Matthew 6:7-8 KJV) Here the Bible condemns this type of prayer.

#### “CENTERING DOWN”

- The person is supposed to remain absolutely still and should not move any part of the body, focusing on the “silence of the universe.” This “recreating silence” is a New Age term, and has nothing to do with prayerfully seeking God.
- “*This time is for learning to ‘center down,’ or what the contemplatives of the Middle Ages called ‘re-collection.’ It is a time to become still, to enter into the recreating silence, to allow the fragmentation of our minds to become centered.*” (Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, p. 24)
- The mystics love to be silent and empty their minds, but true Christians love to talk to God.

#### SCRIPTURAL ADVICE

- Jesus said, “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with ALL THY MIND.*” (Matthew 22:37 KJV) How can you love Jesus with all your mind, if you are supposed to empty your mind of all thoughts as you meditate? Obviously, Contemplative Prayer is not Biblical.
- The apostle Paul told Timothy, “*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith.*” (1 Timothy 6:20-21 KJV)

#### “LABYRINTH WALKING”

- This is an ancient meditation tool for reflection. The labyrinth has only one path leading to the center and back out again.
- “*Labyrinth walking is an ancient way of praying. Read Lauren Artress’ book, Walking A Sacred Path...*” (Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, p. 432)
- “*The labyrinth is a large, complex spiral circle which is an ancient symbol for the divine mother, the God within, the goddess, the holy in all creation... is truly a tool for transformation, a crucible for change, a blueprint for the sacred meeting of the psyche and the soul, a field of light, a cosmic dance. It is a center for empowering ritual.*” (Lauren Artress, *Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1995; p. 67, 176)
- “*You walk to the center of the labyrinth and there at the center, you meet the Divine.*” (Lauren Artress, *Veriditas*, Volume I, No. 2, Summer 1996; p. 18)

#### FOLLY OF LABYRINTH WALKING

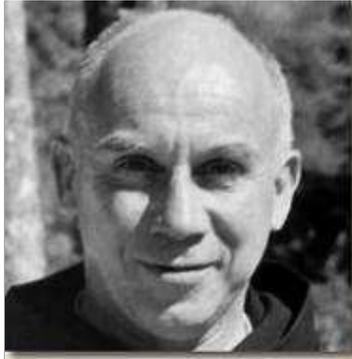
- So, we see that the labyrinth teaches that God lives in us, and that God is a woman. This is the panentheistic ‘god within,’ which Satan has always taught.
- “*Through the various myths, rites, and devices of spiritual formation, you become important; you become god.*” (Vance Ferrell, *The Truth About Spiritual Formation*, Harvestime Books, 2011; p. 36)

- Churches all over the world are installing labyrinths in their yards and gardens. It is estimated that there are over 5,000 labyrinths in the United States alone.

#### REAL AGENDA IN EC/SF

- The main agenda is to direct you to the RC fathers, authors, mystics, and RC practices, such as Contemplative Prayer.
- “*Thomas Merton when asked, ‘How can we best help people attain union with God?’ said, ‘We must tell them that they are already united with God.’ Contemplative prayer is nothing other than ‘coming into consciousness’ of what is already there.*” (Brennan Manning, *The Signature of Jesus*, p. 211)
- “*Choose a word (Jesus or Father, for example) as a focus for contemplative prayer. Repeat the word silently in your mind for a set amount of time (say 20 minutes) until your heart seems to be repeating the word by itself, just as actually and involuntarily as breathing.*” (Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, p. 185)
- “*You will never find God by looking outside yourself, you will only find God within. It will only be when you have to experience God in your own heart and let God into the corridor of your heart (or rather found God there) that you will be able to ‘know’ that there is indeed a God, and that you are not separate from God.*” (William Shannon, *Silence on Fire*, p. 99)
- William Shannon is an internationally known Thomas Merton Scholar.

#### THOMAS MERTON (1915-1968)



- He was a famous Catholic monk. He said,
- “*It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race... now I realize what we all are... if only they could all see themselves as they really are...I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other... at the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusions, a point of pure truth...this little point... is the pure glory of God in us. It is in everybody.*” (Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, pp. 157-158)

#### GOOD ADVICE ON HOW TO PRAY

- “*We may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life. Prayer is the opening*

*of the heart to God as to a friend... Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.” (EGW, Steps To Christ, p. 93)*

#### WE DON'T NEED A HUMAN SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

- *“Do not depend upon human beings for spiritual help. Resist the temptation to make flesh your arm. Look to God as children look to an earthly Father. Believe that He loves you and that He will help you, even as He has promised. If you will believe, you will have confidence, trust, reliance, and rich blessings, because you will realize that Christ is the foundation of your faith.” (EGW, Gospel Herald, March 1, 1901)*

#### PANTHEISM AND PANENTHEISM

- Both are strains of pantheist philosophy. Both stress freedom of belief, and that there is no right religious belief, doctrine, or creed.
- **Pantheism:** The belief that God is everything; God is present in everything, and all God; belief and worship of all gods and deities, cultures and peoples. It denies the personality of God, and identifies God with nature. God's presence is an overriding presence that cancels the possibility of anything else existing. Human existence is at best a mystery.
- **Panentheism:** The belief that all is IN God (like as if God were the ocean and we are the fish). God and the world are not identical. The universe is part of God.

#### SPIRITUALITY

- The term “spirituality” has to do with religion or religious beliefs. This term has come to mean many different things to different people.
- It is helpful to speak of Biblical spirituality and non-Biblical spirituality.
- The word “spiritual” is found 23 times in the KJV
- “And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” (1 Cor 10:3-4 KJV)
- Spiritual Gifts: (Rom 12, 1 Cor 12, Eph 4 KJV)

#### TRUE BIBLE SPIRITUALITY

- Col 1:27 (KJV) “Christ in you, the hope of glory”
- 2 Cor 3:18 (KJV) “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”
- “The attributes of God are goodness, mercy, long-suffering, and patience, and his followers are to possess the same attributes of character, representing Christ in true spirituality.” (EGW, “Blessed are the Meek,” *Signs of the Times*, August 22, 1895)
- “Train your thoughts so that it will be easy for them to dwell upon pure and holy things. Cultivate a love for spirituality and true godliness.” (EGW, 2T 315)

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS—

- List found in 3 places in NT: Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4 (KJV)
  - Wisdom
  - Knowledge
  - Faith
  - Healing
  - Miracles
  - Prophecy and Prophet
  - Discerning of spirits
  - Different tongues (languages)
  - Helps
  - Government (administration or ruling)
  - Ministry (service)
  - Giving
  - Mercy
  - Teaching
  - Exhortation (urging someone to do something)
  - Apostle (one “sent forth”, such as a missionary, vigorous pioneering advocate of a cause)
  - Evangelist (a layperson engaged in Christian missionary work, one seeking to bring others to Jesus)
  - Pastor (a minister of a Christian church or congregation, shepherd (from feeding or grazing))

## PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Eph 4:12-14 (KJV) “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- Gal 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

## THE “NEW” SPIRITUALITY

- Spirituality has come to mean many things. It might mean “connecting with your inner self.” It might mean many activities in Hinduism, Buddhism, or other world religions. It is not always a good thing.
- It’s important to clarify what kind of spirituality you’re talking about.
- In the “new” spirituality:
  - Revelation and inspiration is re-interpreted
  - The kingdom of God is re-interpreted
  - The mystical and experimental is emphasized

- Mystery is to be embraced
- EC leaders are urging a return to Catholic mystic spirituality.

#### PROTECTION FROM *FALSE* SPIRITUALITY

- Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against **SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS** in high [places]. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit..." (Eph 6:10-18 KJV)

#### ECUMENISM AND NON-SEPARATISM

- In the EC there is a big push on ecumenism: The idea that all religions are equally good and valid, and that we should embrace each other's traditions and beliefs and find common ground.
- The concept is that everybody should be accepted as part of Christ's body, no matter what they believe. Distinctive doctrines are bad, since they separate the believers of Jesus and bring disharmony.

#### SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

(11 October 1962 – 8 December 1965)

- Convoled by Pope John XXIII. 2,500 bishops and heads of religious orders from all over the world attended. He envisioned all religions coming back to the RC Church.
- This was the most important council in the history of the RC Church. There was an "apparent" attitude of openness toward the Protestant "separated brethren."
- It issued 16 major "pronouncements" covering RC authority of hierarchy, interpretation of Scripture, and proper roles of clergy and laity.
- Catholics were exhorted to speak and cooperate with followers of all other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, etc.)

#### "YEAR OF FAITH"

(11 October 2012 – 11 October 2013)

- The current Pope, Benedict XVI, has recently declared that on 11 October of this year all the bishops and theologians, who like him, served as members or experts at the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council, are invited to be present in St. Peter's Square for the opening ceremonies and a special Mass.
- There will be many special ceremonies, events, celebrations, publications, and academic conferences to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> (golden) anniversary.

- Every RC bishop and priest all over the world, in every worship service, is supposed to find ways to bring back the Protestants into the RC faith during this entire year.

#### ARE WE READY FOR THIS?

- Satan is working to blind the eyes of Adventist leaders, theologians, professors, teachers, pastors, and general laity to what is happening in this EC/SF movement.
- Could it be possible that we, the SDA Church, could be pulled into all this hype and “new” spirituality movement?
- Our purpose for existence is to give the Gospel of Jesus to a needy world, in the context of the 3 Angels’ Messages. We must not be distracted by a false reformation that is occurring at this time.

#### TRUE MEDITATION

- *“Christians should . . . cultivate a love for meditation, and cherish a spirit of devotion. Many seem to begrudge moments spent in meditation, and the searching of the Scriptures, and prayer, as though the time thus occupied was lost. I wish you could all view these things in the light God would have you; for you would then make the kingdom of Heaven of the first importance. To keep your heart in Heaven, will give vigor to all your graces, and put life into all your duties. To discipline the mind to dwell upon heavenly things, will put life and earnestness into all our endeavors.”* {SD 109}
- *“Prepare for eternity with such zeal as you have not yet manifested. Educate your mind to love the Bible, to love the prayer meeting, to love the hour of meditation, and, above all, the hour when the soul communes with God.”* {2T 268}
- *The words of Christ must be meditated upon and cherished and enshrined in the heart. They should not be repeated, parrot-like, finding no place in the memory and having no influence over the heart and life.”* {4T354-355}
- *There is too much talking by nearly all, and too little meditation and prayer.”* {2T 187}
- *“Youthful minds fail to reach their noblest development when they neglect **the highest source of wisdom--the word of God.** That we are in God's world, in the presence of the Creator; that we are made in His likeness; that He watches over us and loves us and cares for us--these are wonderful themes for thought, and lead the mind into broad, exalted fields of meditation. He who opens mind and heart to the contemplation of such themes as these will never be satisfied with trivial, sensational subjects.”* {CT 138-139}
- *“The Christian life is not made up of unceasing activity, or of continual meditation. Christians must work earnestly for the salvation of the lost, and they must also take time for contemplation, for prayer, and the study of the Word of God.”* (Review and Herald, Nov. 7, 1893)

## WE ARE NOT TO EMPTY THE MIND

- God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures.” {COL 59- 60}
- “Walk continually in the light of God. Meditate day and night upon His character.” (MH 514)
  
- “Be strong and of good courage...Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do all the law... This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success... Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” (Joshua 1:6-9 KJV)
  
- “Blessed is the man... his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.” (Psalms 1:2 KJV)
- “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches, because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice.” (Psalm 63:6 KJV)
  
- “I will meditate also of all Thy work, and talk of Thy doings. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?” (Psalms 77:12 KJV)
- “My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes... that I might meditate in thy Word.” (Psalms 119:48, 148 KJV)
- “I meditate on all Thy works.” (Psalms 143:5 KJV)
  
- In 1 Timothy chapter 4 (KJV), Paul gives Timothy some critically important advice: “In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils... be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity... give attendance to reading, to doctrine... Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

## SUMMARY

- We should not be known to others for what we don't do:
- “Those Adventists, they don't smoke, they don't eat pork, most of them don't drink alcohol, etc.”
- We should be known for what we stand for and do:
- “Those Adventist are always helping people who are in trouble, they are always honest and good to do business with. They are always lifting up Jesus and trying to follow His teachings, even when it's not popular to do so. They really care about people, they are some of the kindest people around.”

## BEST STRATEGY: OFFENCE, NOT DEFENSE

- TABLE TENNIS (PING PONG) LESSONS IN PORTLAND AT THE “PADDLE PALACE”
- The best way to face this danger of EC/SF is not to attack these doctrines, attacking and criticizing the leaders in our Adventist Church who are huge proponents of it. Many people caught up in this movement are innocently deceived. We must treat them with love and respect, but stand firm for truth.
- The City Church should not become known as “The church in the Adventist community of Walla Walla that is ANTI-EC/SF.
- The WW City Church should be continued to be known because we lift up Jesus, we serve others unconditionally, we stand for Bible truth, we are loyal to the doctrines of Jesus, and we're always willing to help those in need.
  
- We should allow nothing to distract us from personal Bible study, prayer, and true meditation on Jesus and His Word, serving others, and sharing the good news of the Gospel in the context of the 3 Angels' Messages.
- “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25 KJV)

Let's all read these verses together:

- “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2 KJV)

## WE MUST LIFT UP JESUS

- “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life... And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 3:14-15; 12:32 KJV)

## TRUTH WILL TRIUMPH

- “And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18 KJV)
- “Jesus Christ, Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph 2:20); “Christ is the Head of the church” (Eph 5:23)
- God’s true Remnant Church will go through to the end, but sinners will be sifted out. We need to stay firm and loyal to Jesus and to His Church.