

THE CURRENT END-TIME APOSTASY OF THE CHURCH

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There is little doubt that we are today in the midst of widespread apostasy. By that term we mean: Departure from *the faith* once for all delivered to the saints, for which we are to earnestly contend.¹ I believe that apostates include two types of people:

1) Those who have knowingly turned completely from Christ and no longer even pretend to be Christians; and

2) Those who still claim to be Christians but have departed from the faith.

The latter would likewise be divided into two groups:

- a) Those who deliberately twist the Scriptures, perverting the gospel “to draw away disciples after them”² or who endorse false teachers (though they know better) because they want to share their fame and power³—or who simply want to be “positive” so as to “offend” no one; and
- b) The naïve, who are genuinely deceived by false prophets/teachers.

Apostasy, of course, in some measure, has existed as long as the church. (Most of the epistles involve, to some extent, correction of false doctrine and practice that was already in the early church in the days of the apostles.) It is the mushrooming, widespread incidence of the apostasy described under 2) above, however, among those who claim to be Christians, that I believe Scripture points to as a specific sign of the last days just *prior to the Rapture*.

The question, of course, must be faced whether today’s apostasy (as this paper proposes) has anything to do with prophecies concerning the last days. If so, it would seem that this “sign of the last days” has been largely overlooked by many, if not most, prophecy teachers. They usually cite as “last-days signs” only “wars and rumors of wars... nation shall rise against

¹ Jude 3.

² Acts 20:30.

³ Jude 16.

nation...kingdom against kingdom...famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes,”⁴ unusual weather, the move to a cashless society, the revival of the Roman Empire, etc.

I have been criticized for years by those who complain, “Deal with prophecy, if you wish, but stick to your subject—don’t mix in apostasy!” In fact, one cannot adequately deal with the former while ignoring the latter. When asked by His disciples, “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world,”⁵ the first words from Christ identified apostasy as the *foremost sign* of the last days. In His response, He emphasized religious deception three times—and He specified what it would involve:

Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many....⁶ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many....⁷ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.⁸

Christ’s warning made several things clear:

- 1) The major sign of the nearness of His coming would be *religious deception* by professing Christian leaders;
- 2) A central feature of the deception would be false prophets showing “great signs and wonders,” which, though convincing, would also be false;
- 3) The repetition of the word, “many,” indicated that this religious deception would be widespread, apparently worldwide; and
- 4) The words *Christs, prophets, signs and wonders, and elect* indicated that the deception would be among professing Christians, i.e., inside the church.

This warning was echoed by Jude. The first reason he gave why we must “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” was the fact that “there are certain

⁴ Matt 24:6-10; Mk 13:7-13; Lk 21:9-19.

⁵ Matt 24:3.

⁶ Matt 24:4-5.

⁷ Matt 24:11.

⁸ Matt 24:24.

men crept in [inside the church] unawares...ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁹

“*False Christs*”?! There have been many in our day (from Jim Jones to David Koresh), who gathered followers by claiming to be Christ. There are numerous gurus in India who claim to be the latest reincarnation of Jesus Christ. The false “Christs” presented by novels, videos, and movies have multiplied since *Jesus Christ Superstar* beyond reciting. None is even close to the true Jesus Christ of Scripture. The “Jesus” of *The DaVinci Code* is a complete fraud dreamed up by atheists. The “Jesus” of the ABC-TV presentation of *Judas* confessed to Judas that he “blew it” in chasing the moneychangers out of the Temple: “I lost my temper.”

That Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ* received almost universal praise as “biblically accurate” from solid evangelical leaders is another indication of apostasy that has crept into the best pulpits unawares. In fact, it was *almost all unbiblical*. Christ stomping on a huge serpent slithering into Gethsemane, and Satan tempting him there; Pilate’s wife giving linens to the two Marys to wipe up Christ’s blood; Jesus knocked off a bridge on the way to the cross, where he dangles from a chain and confronts Judas hiding beneath it; Saint Veronica giving her veil to Christ to wipe his face, and the image of his face remaining on it as the first icon; a raven plucking out the eye of one thief on an adjoining cross; the endless beatings by Roman soldiers, giving the impression that Christ suffered more physically than any other person, and that his physical sufferings (which could only condemn us) paid for our sins; not a hint that “the LORD laid on him the iniquity of us all...it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin”¹⁰—all of this and more was unbiblical, much of it from the visions of a mystic nun or devices from the imagination of the director to arouse emotions. Nor did anyone seem disturbed that a sinful man was pretending to be the One who declared, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,”¹¹ and whom Paul described as “God manifest in the flesh.”¹²

The most prominent false Christ today is Sun Myung Moon, who openly declares that he is the Messiah come to earth to complete the mission Jesus failed to accomplish: establish the “perfect family.” Yet some prominent evangelicals have spoken at conferences convened by

⁹ Jude 3-4.

¹⁰ Isaiah 53:6-10.

¹¹ Jn 14:9.

¹² 1 Tim 3:16.

Moon, sharing the platform that featured the man who says he is perfecting the work “left unaccomplished by Jesus.”¹³

But what is *the faith*, a departure from which marks one as an apostate? Some might say that as long as a person believes that Christ died for his sins, was buried, and rose the third day, he is saved. But that declaration does not express the true gospel. As defined by Paul, the gospel declares the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ *according to the Scriptures*.¹⁴ Surely that involves who the biblical God is, who the biblical Christ is, what the biblical problem between God and man is, the biblical and only means of man’s forgiveness by God, and the eternal consequences as taught in the Bible for those who reject the biblical gospel. None of these is a peripheral point of doctrine to be ignored or compromised. To do so would be a departure from the faith into apostasy to proclaim a false gospel.

The *entire* Word of God, of course, is foundational to *the faith*. The Bible is one book and it is all interrelated, every part to every other. Sadly, the church and world are being robbed of the pure Word of God—and by those who claim to be evangelical Christians. Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* (NavPress, 1993) is one example. Instead of “that the world through him might be saved,”¹⁵ *The Message* says, “He came to help, to put the world right again.” That sounds like social and political action, the same old “social gospel,” downgrading salvation to earthly improvement, and it is found throughout this entire “version” of Scripture. John 3:31 says, “He that cometh from above is above all....” *The Message* says, “The One who comes from above is head and shoulders over other messengers from God.” First Peter 5:10 says that God has “called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus....” *The Message* says God “will have you put together and on your feet.” What Peterson has done to God’s Word is blasphemous!

Peterson dares to change the words and meaning of Scripture! Hebrews 11:4 declares, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,” but *The Message* says, “It was what he *believed*, not what he *brought*, that made the difference.” Obviously, both belief and action are important and interdependent. Moreover, Peterson has robbed his readers of the major theme of Scripture: the Lamb slain for our redemption.

¹³ *Washington Post*, 7/30/96; 8/1/96; *Washington Times*, 8/1/96.

¹⁴ 1 Cor 15:3-4.

¹⁵ Jn 3:17.

Men like Peterson have no conscience about changing what God says, replacing His words with their own. Yet *The Message* is quoted more than 80 times by Rick Warren in *The Purpose-Driven Life*, which has now sold about 26 million copies, unprecedented in history. No greater promotion of this mass of heresy could be given than Warren's endorsement! Sadly, this huge bestseller quotes paraphrases far more than it quotes the Bible, encouraging a growing trend of departure from the *words of God* ("thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart"—Jeremiah 15:16) to misrepresentations thereof coming out of men's imaginations. This is exactly what God condemns two chapters earlier.¹⁶

Yet Peterson's *Message* is also praised by other Christian leaders such as J. I. Packer, Warren Wiersbe, Jack W. Hayford, and Richard Foster. Peterson is "Consulting Editor, New Testament," for the *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005) edited by Richard J. Foster. A host of "scholars" contributed commentaries, among them Bruce Demarest, Professor of Theology at Denver Seminary in Denver, CO; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., President of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, MA; Tremper Longman III, the Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA; Earl F. Palmer, on the Board of Trustees of the long-apostate Princeton Theological Seminary and senior pastor of University Presbyterian Church in Seattle, WA, and many others.

The *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* was touted as "THE BIBLE AS IT WAS INTENDED TO BE" in a two-thirds-page ad in the July 2005 issue of *Christianity Today*, next to the masthead declaring that Billy Graham was the founder (of *CT*) and that James I. Packer is one of the Executive Editors. It is odd that Richard Foster and some 50 "biblical scholars" would go to the trouble to create and publish this "Bible," considering the fact that Eugene Peterson, its New Testament editor, has said, "Why do people spend so much time studying the Bible? [Christians] should be studying it less, not more.... I'm just not at all pleased with all the emphasis on Bible study as if it's some kind of special thing that Christians do, and the more they do the better."¹⁷

Showing the apostate contempt of these men for God's Word, the *Renovaré* explanatory notes (bringing to evangelicals the old "higher criticism" of 150 years ago and still popular

¹⁶ Jer 13:10.

¹⁷ "A Conversation with Eugene Peterson," *Mars Hill Review*, Fall 1995, Issue No. 3, 73-90.

among liberals today) deny the Divine authorship of much of Scripture—even that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Yet the Introduction hypocritically declares, “we read the Bible literally, from cover to cover...[and] in context.”¹⁸ *Renovaré* cynically declares that Genesis 1-11 is neither historic nor scientific,¹⁹ and that the entire book of Genesis is merely a collection of myths:

Genesis began as an oral tradition of narrative stories passed down from generation to generation.... As these stories were remembered and retold again and again, they...took on theological meaning.... Over time what began as stories told...were written down and collected together (Genesis 12-50), and a prologue (Genesis 1-11) was added.... From this rich oral tradition many different kinds of literary material came to make up this book of beginnings.... Borrowing from other creation accounts...stories with parallels to ancient Near Eastern religious narrative and mythology were reshaped with monotheistic intent.... These strands of varied materials were gathered and edited into the written text....²⁰

Of Daniel, the *Renovaré Bible* declares, “We do not know who wrote it or exactly when it was written...it was most likely partially written during Antiochus Epiphanes’ persecution of the Jews in Babylon, which began with the desecration of the Temple in 167 BC.”²¹ So it is the work of an imposter pretending to be Daniel 400 years too late! Apparently overlooked is the fact that perhaps a century before Antiochus, the Greek Septuagint was translated from even earlier Hebrew manuscripts, and it contains the book of Daniel as we have it today.

The *Renovaré* “scholars” continually downplay the powerful Old Testament prophecies of Christ²² upon which the gospel is based, and which are the foundation of *the faith* committed to and preached by the apostles.²³ The key prophecy in Isaiah 9:6-7 of the coming Messiah, who is “The mighty God, The everlasting Father,” is said to speak of “human agents.”²⁴ They reduce Isaiah’s prophecies to “tradition,”²⁵ would have us believe that much of it was not written by Isaiah (there are “Three” authors),²⁶ and even deny that chapter 53 prophesies Christ’s sacrifice

¹⁸ Richard J. Foster, ed., *The Renovare Spiritual Formation Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), General Introduction, xxxi.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

²¹ *Ibid.*, From the introduction to Daniel, by James M. Rand, 1245.

²² Foster, *Renovaré*, 22, 32, 1375, 1377-78, 1384, etc.

²³ Lk 24:25-27, 44; Acts 9:22; 10:43; 13:15-41; 17:2-3; 18:28; Rom 1:1-5; 1 Cor 15:1-4, etc.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 997.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 982-83.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 982, 1068.

for our sins!²⁷ *Renovaré* describes Isaiah as “poetic imagination...interpretive imagination... Isaiah imagines,” etc. The *Renovaré* “scholars” declare: “The prophets of Israel are not to be thought of primarily as...predictors of the future...they were poets....”²⁸ Through poetry, Jeremiah attempts “to make sense of the events of his day....”²⁹ This is blasphemy!

The powerful prophetic promise from God in Jeremiah 31:8-14 to bring home the Jews scattered around the world is interpreted as a promise to all homeless people (nothing about Israel) and God’s promise that Israel can never be destroyed (31:35-37) is ignored! Israel is treated as having been replaced by the church.

How does this relate to departure from “the faith once delivered to the saints”? The Messiah doesn’t step off of a UFO and say, “Voila! Here I am!” He comes in fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies and with a genealogy that proves His authentic identity. Israel takes up most of the Bible, and its history and its prophets’ inspired pronouncements are foundational to the Messiah’s identity. If the Bible is not 100 percent true in what it says about Israel, then we cannot believe what else it says about Christ and our “redemption through his blood.”³⁰

Incredibly, the valley of dry bones brought back to life in Ezekiel 37, which is clearly declared to be “the whole house of Israel,”³¹ is interpreted as the birth of the church at Pentecost.³² The marriage of the Lamb to His bride in Revelation 19 is not a real event in heaven but “symbolic of the many different celebrations that bring joy and jubilation” into our lives.³³ The thousand-year reign of Christ in Revelation 20 is not a real event, and the armies of the world coming against Christ and the saints at Jerusalem after Satan’s release merely symbolize “the armies of darkness [which] surround us.”³⁴

If this “trashing” of the Bible, endorsed by many leading evangelicals and tolerated without opposition from others, is not part of the apostasy, then what is? We are losing the Bible in many ways, raising a generation on the spiritual junk food of religious videos, movies, youth entertainment, and comic book paraphrases of the Bible. The Word of God is being rewritten, dumbed down, and dramatized in order to cater to the tastes of the carnal mind.

²⁷ Ibid., 984.

²⁸ Ibid., 1079.

²⁹ Ibid., 1080.

³⁰ Eph 1:7; Col 1:14.

³¹ Ezek 37:11.

³² Foster, *Renovaré*, 2284.

³³ Ibid., 2287.

³⁴ Ibid., 2288.

The emphasis throughout Scripture is always on the *words*. The Bible is not a *picture* book! We are to live by “every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of God,”³⁵ a fact so important that Christ quoted it to Satan in His temptation.³⁶ But the Bible is today being “improved” by script writers, movie directors, and actors who are replacing the actual “incorruptible...word of God” by which we are “born again,”³⁷ with dramatic representations (the entire New Testament is now on video) that may soon be the only “Bible” youth know.

The Roman Catholic Church has been in full-blown apostasy for 1,300 years while persecuting and killing true Christians. It has never repented of this evil and is now enjoying the support of leading evangelicals in a way that would have shocked biblical Christians only 50 years ago. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) brought together the leading bishops and cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church in order to counter the Reformation. The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent contain more than 100 anathemas condemning every point of the true gospel and damning to hell those who believe it. For example: “If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law [Catholic rituals] are not necessary for salvation but...men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification...let him be anathema”;³⁸ “If anyone says that baptism is...not necessary for salvation, let him be anathema”;³⁹ “If anyone says that in the Mass a true and real sacrifice is not offered to God [but] a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross [and] not a propitiatory one...let him be anathema.”⁴⁰

On December 31, 1995, honoring the 450th anniversary of the opening of Trent, Pope John Paul II declared that its anathemas are still in full force: “Its conclusions maintain all their value.”⁴¹ Yet Billy Graham—like those signing ECT—has declared that Rome preaches the same gospel he does.⁴²

Those who deny purgatory, where Rome says that in spite of Christ’s “It is finished!” one must suffer in flames for one’s sins, and those who deny the power of indulgences in shortening

³⁵ Deut.8:3

³⁶ Matt 4:4, etc.

³⁷ 1 Pet. 1:23.

³⁸ H.J. Schroeder, trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1978), Seventh Session, Canons on the Sacraments in General, Can 4.

³⁹ Ibid., Seventh Session, “Canons on Baptism,” Can. 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Twenty-second Session, “Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass,” Cans. 1, 3.

⁴¹ *Christian News*, July 10, 1995, 1.

⁴² *The Gastonia Gazette*, November 22, 1967.

one's time of purgatorial suffering, are anathematized by Rome to this day.⁴³ Yet, in *The Body*, Charles Colson denied that indulgences are still offered by Rome.⁴⁴ I sent him a copy of the seventeen pages on “the revision on indulgences” from Vatican II⁴⁵ including Pope Paul's anathema pronounced upon those who deny that the church has the power to grant indulgences today.⁴⁶ Colson never responded to acknowledge his error, which has led multitudes astray—and, unless it was done recently, did not correct it in subsequent editions. Isn't this apostasy?

In Augsburg, Germany, on October 31, 1999, representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and of the Roman Catholic Church signed a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), the fruit of 30 years of dialogue between Lutheran and Catholic theologians. (If justification by faith is that complicated, who can be saved? Paul didn't need 30 years to answer the Philippian jailor's question of how to be saved!) The choice of the city where the Augsburg Confession (foundation of Lutheranism ever since) was read, and the very day of the month on which, in 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the Wittenburg door, could hardly be coincidence. The Reformation was being overturned! Indeed, Charles Colson has said that “justification by faith alone...doesn't mean today among evangelicals what it meant in the reformers' time.”⁴⁷

For 1 billion Roman Catholics, nothing has changed. Catholics continue to pray to Mary for salvation, to wear her scapular (as John Paul did from childhood to his death), which declares, “Whosoever dies wearing this scapular shall not suffer eternal fire. Mary's promise.” To wear that in reliance upon such a promise would be an abomination to any true Christian. Yet it is worn by tens of millions of Catholics. They continue to believe that “the merits and graces Christ won on the cross” can be received only in small installments that can never fully save and come only through the sacraments of the Church by Mary's agency, and they must therefore still offer good works and suffering for salvation—finally in purgatory.

⁴³ *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, ed. and trans. H. J. Schroeder, O.P. (IL: Tan Books, 1978), Sixth Session, Can. 30, p. 46.

⁴⁴ Chuck Colson, *The Body*, (W. Publishing Group, 1994), 271.

⁴⁵ Second Vatican Council, Apostolic Constitution on the Revision of Indulgences, *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, January 1, 1967.

⁴⁶ Paul VI, *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, Norm 12.

⁴⁷ *Our Sunday Visitor*, June 2, 1996, 6-7.

The very doctrine of indulgences that angered Luther and sparked the Reformation remains a mainstay of Catholicism. (How can Colson be so wrong?) In fact, shortly after JDDJ was signed, John Paul II offered new indulgences for the “Jubilee Year of 2000”: give up cigarettes for one day and receive a plenary indulgence; walk through one of the four “holy doors” the Pope opened for that year in Rome, and receive a plenary indulgence (Catholic pilgrims came by the millions to do so, ignorant that Christ is the only door to eternal life!), etc.

When the Pope opened his eyes and rose from praying on his knees in front of the first “holy door” he opened (this one at St. Peter’s), he saw George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, spiritual head of the Church of England, kneeling in agreement beside him. Doesn’t this denial of the gospel by Carey qualify as full-blown apostasy?

John Paul II boasted that pilgrimages to Rome for plenary indulgences began in 1300 under Pope Boniface VIII, of “blessed memory,” a “pope” who had both a mother and her daughter among his many mistresses and who gave indulgences to his troops to destroy the historic city of Palestrina, slaughtering its 6,000 inhabitants and reducing it to a plowed field, which was sown with salt. Yet Boniface was hardly the most evil of the popes whom the present pope looks proudly upon as Peter’s successors who have handed that authority down to him. In 1302, Boniface issued the “infallible Bull,” *Unam Sanctam*, making absolute allegiance to the Pope a condition of salvation—still in full force today.

Martin Luther said, “We are not the first to declare the papacy to be the kingdom of Antichrist, since for many years before us so many and so great men...have undertaken to express the same thing so clearly....” But it is no longer fashionable in “Protestant” circles to state the truth. We must only be “positive” for fear of giving offense, forgetting the far greater offense of condoning a false gospel that is sending hundreds of millions to hell. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association received the rights to publish a special “Crusade Edition” of *Halley’s Bible Handbook* and, in doing so, removed from it everything Halley had so carefully researched and documented of the evil of the Popes and the slaughter of true Christians through the centuries. If this cover-up to avoid “offending” Catholics is not contributing to apostasy, then what is?

Zondervan published a revised version of the *Handbook* in 2000, which also contains no reference in its index to Albigenses, Waldenses and other evangelical Christians slaughtered by

Rome by the millions. This new version declares: “The Roman Catholic Church responded to the Protestant Reformation by reforming and renewing itself⁴⁸...worked toward ecumenism during the latter half of the 20th century and has engaged in cooperative ventures with evangelicals and fundamentalists.... There are Catholics whose theology is virtually indistinguishable from evangelical theology...the charismatic movement crossed over the theological dividing lines as the Holy Spirit began to work in the Catholic Church, creating a unity with other believers that could not have been achieved with theological debates.”⁴⁹

What a perverted promotion of apostasy! When challenged about this, Stan Gundry, Vice President and Editor-in-Chief responded, “The purpose of the rewriting was not to cover up the ugly truth about traditional RCC belief...but to give a more balanced portrayal of the history of Christianity.”⁵⁰ How could white-washing essential facts of official Catholic doctrine and practice, and leaving out the slaughter of millions of Christians by the Roman Catholic Church give a “more balanced” history?!

Incredibly, Zondervan is now in anti-Christian hands. It is owned by FOX News, which is owned by Rupert Murdoch. He has been knighted by the Pope as a member of the Pontifical Order of St. Gregory the Great after donating \$10 million for construction of a new Catholic cathedral in Los Angeles.⁵¹ Murdoch has consistently made TV shows aimed at destroying the family and pursues his godless ambitions through a vast empire, of which “Christian publishing” has become one part. Aren’t such ungodly alliances one sign of apostasy?

Christian publishers began to put profits ahead of sound doctrine, made a lot of money by compromising in order to give customers what they wanted instead of the biblical truth they needed, then sold out to the world monetarily as they already had spiritually. Is this not part of the “end-time apostasy of the church,” the major sign Christ gave of the nearness of His return?

For at least 50 years, Billy Graham has affirmed Roman Catholicism as the true gospel and has sent Roman Catholics who come forward at his crusades back to the Catholic churches they had left. Billy has praised John Paul II as a preacher of the true gospel,⁵² has declared that he and the Pope agree on almost everything, and has hailed Bishop Fulton Sheen as the “greatest

⁴⁸ *Halley’s Bible Handbook*, (Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 997.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1009-1010

⁵⁰ Letter on file with author.

⁵¹ <http://www.traditioninaction.org/Cultural/d003cpKnighthood.htm>.

⁵² *Saturday Evening Post*, January/February 1980.

communicator of the 20th century.”⁵³ Though Sheen preached a false gospel, claimed to turn a wafer into Christ and to offer Him repeatedly in a propitiatory sacrifice for sins, Billy thanked him for their “common commitment to evangelism” and expressed his gratitude to Sheen “for his ministry and his focus on Christ.”⁵⁴ Yet Sheen’s hope of heaven was that Mary would let him in because of his 40 pilgrimages to Marian shrines at Fatima and Lourdes.⁵⁵ When Sheen died, Billy said, “I mourn his death and look forward to our reunion in heaven.”⁵⁶

J. I. Packer, a signatory to ECT, who called John Paul II “a fine Christian man,”⁵⁷ had many years earlier declared, “Catholics are among the most loyal and virile brothers evangelicals can find these days.”⁵⁸ Likewise John Stott said, “Evangelicals should join others in the Church of England in working toward full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.”⁵⁹

Manifestations of apostasy are legion and subversive. There are evangelical leaders who generally preach the true gospel, yet they commend, approve of, and praise those who clearly deny the gospel. Are they not contributing to apostasy? What could be the difference between leading multitudes to embrace a false gospel by preaching it oneself or leading them to believe a false gospel by commending those who preach it? Is it any less damaging to souls for Billy Graham to praise and endorse Norman Vincent Peale, Robert Schuller, Pope John Paul II, and others who preach a false gospel than to preach it himself? Would not one approach contribute as much to apostasy and the eternal doom of souls as the other?

In 1984, on the Phil Donahue program, Peale said, “It’s not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God; I have mine. I found eternal peace in a Shinto shrine....” Shocked, Donahue responded, “But you’re a Christian minister; you’re supposed to tell me that Christ is the way and the truth and the life, aren’t you?” Peale replied, “Christ is one of the ways. God is everywhere.”⁶⁰

Peale also declared, “God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize His energy, you will be reenergized....”⁶¹ “Just as there exist scientific techniques for the release of atomic

⁵³ Ad for *Sheen Gems: The Best of Fulton J. Sheen* (video), vol. 1-2, quoting Billy Graham.

⁵⁴ Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (HarperSanFrancisco/Zondervan, 1997), 692-93.

⁵⁵ *The Woman I Love* video (Clifton NJ: Keep the Faith).

⁵⁶ *Nashua Telegram*, December 10, 1979.

⁵⁷ Take Heed Ministries, Belfast, Northern Ireland, March 1999.

⁵⁸ *Christianity Today*, May 17, 1985.

⁵⁹ Arthur Johnston, *Battle for World Evangelism* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1978), 328.

⁶⁰ *Christian News*, May 12, 1997, 11.

⁶¹ Norman Vincent Peale, *Plus: The Magazine of Positive Thinking*, Vol 37, no. 4 (Part II), May 1986, 23.

energy, so are there scientific procedures for the release of spiritual energy through the mechanism of prayer.”⁶² “Any method through which you can stimulate the power of God...is legitimate [any] scientific use of prayer....”⁶³

Yet Billy Graham praised Peale many times, endorsed his books, even declaring in an interview on national TV that he knew no one who had done more good for the cause of Christ than Ruth and Norman Peale. In fact, one would be hard-pressed to find anyone who had done more *harm* to the gospel! Based upon Billy’s endorsements, how many souls followed Peale’s false gospel into hell? Surely this is at least contributing to apostasy!

Billy Graham likewise endorsed and praised Robert Schuller, though his denials of the gospel are no less clear and reprehensible than Peale’s. Schuller has defined sin as “lack of faith in yourself.... Jesus Christ...has saved me from my sin which is my tendency to put myself down and not believe that I can do it...negative thinking is the core of sin...Jesus died to...change us from negative thinking...to positive thinking...”⁶⁴ [He] bore the cross to sanctify your self-esteem...*the cross will sanctify the ego trip!*⁶⁵

Beginning 50 years ago, Billy Graham has repeatedly declared that his beliefs are “essentially the same as those of orthodox Roman Catholics...we only differ on some matters of later church tradition.”⁶⁶ He praised Pope John Paul II for “his strong Catholic faith”⁶⁷ and called him “the greatest moral and spiritual leader of the last 100 years.... I don’t know anyone else that I could put as high as he is. He’s traveled the whole world...spreading the Catholic faith. And I’ve admired him....”⁶⁸ He and I agree on almost everything.”⁶⁹ Isn’t it apostasy for the leading evangelical to praise the Pope for spreading a false gospel and damnable heresies?

Do we no longer believe that “the gospel is the power of God unto salvation”? How then can we possibly condone and even praise those who preach a false gospel? Nor can it be denied that the Roman Catholic Church is dedicated to destroying the gospel that saves. If its members believed the true gospel, that Church would be out of business!

⁶² Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (Fawcett Crest, 1983) 52-53.

⁶³ Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (Center of Positive Thinking, 1987), 17.

⁶⁴ *Hour of Power*, April 12, 1992.

⁶⁵ Robert Schuller, *Living Positively One Day at a Time* (Hour of Power, 1983), 201; Robert Schuller, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation* (Waco, TX: Word Publishers, 1982), 115.

⁶⁶ *McCalls*, January 1978.

⁶⁷ Adelle M. Davis, Religion News Service, April 11, 2005.

⁶⁸ *Larry King Live*, February 24, 2005.

⁶⁹ *Larry King Live*, January 21, 1997.

The Pope and his entire Church reject the biblical truth that Christ paid the full penalty for sin once and for all on the Cross. At the very heart of Catholicism is the lie that a wafer is turned into Christ to be endlessly sacrificed for sin in the Mass, that infant baptism makes one a child of God, and that no one can be certain of heaven. New York's Cardinal O'Connor declared: "Church teaching is that I don't know...what my eternal future will be.... Pope John Paul II doesn't know absolutely that he will go to heaven, nor does Mother Teresa of Calcutta...."⁷⁰ Cardinal John Krol, as spiritual leader of Philadelphia's more than a million Catholics, admitted that his personal major worry was about "getting to heaven."⁷¹ There could be no clearer denial of the biblical gospel with its promise of eternal life for all who believe. Yet Billy Graham boasted of his friendship with Roman Catholic leaders and expressed only approval, never once warning those who believe Rome's false gospel that they are lost.

Instead of obeying Jude's injunction to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," Billy Graham has never raised a voice against heretical denials of the true faith. Charles Dullea, Jesuit Superior of Rome's Pontifical Biblical Institute, urged Catholics to attend Graham's crusades because "A Catholic will hear no slighting of his Church's teaching authority, nor of papal or Episcopal prerogatives, no word against Mass or Sacraments or Catholic practice."⁷² Indeed, Graham called the Mass "a very beautiful thing and certainly straight and clear in the gospel I believe...."⁷³ He has recommended Catholic books and literature, including a biography of Pope John XXIII (whom Billy commended for his ecumenical stand), which he called "a classic in devotion" and that contained page after page of John XXIII's devotion to Mary and the Saints, worship of the host and trust in the sacraments for salvation.⁷⁴

It is indisputable that John Paul II, whom evangelicals have praised, trusted Mary instead of Christ for his eternal destiny. In a February 1980 addendum to his Last Will and Testament of March 6, 1979, John Paul II entrusted "that decisive moment [of death] to the Mother of Christ and of the Church [and] of my hope.... In life and in death, Totus Tuus through the

⁷⁰ *The New York Times*, February 1, 1990, B4.

⁷¹ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 16, 1975.

⁷² *Newsweek*, June 23, 1969.

⁷³ *Plains Baptist Challenger*, May 1975.

⁷⁴ Lawrence Elliott, *I Will Be Called John: A Biography of Pope John XXIII* (NY: Readers Digest Press, 1973).

Immaculate.” Embroidered inside all of his robes was the phrase, *Totus tuus sum Maria*, “Mary I am all yours.” His Apostolic Letter of Oct. 16, 2002, ended with these words:

O Blessed Rosary of Mary, sweet chain which unites us to God, bond of love which unites us to the angels, tower of salvation against the assaults of Hell, safe port in our universal shipwreck, we will never abandon you. You will be our comfort in the hour of death: yours our final kiss as life ebbs away. And the last word from our lips will be your sweet name, O Queen of the Rosary of Pompei, O dearest Mother, O Refuge of Sinners, O Sovereign Consoler of the Afflicted....

In “The Holy Father’s Prayer for the Marian Year,” John Paul II asked Mary to do what only God can do: to comfort, guide, strengthen and protect “the whole of humanity....” His prayer ended, “Sustain us, O Virgin Mary, on our journey of faith and obtain for us the grace of eternal salvation.” She would have to be God to do so. Yet like Graham, Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptists’ Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, emphasized that any disagreements Protestants may have had “with John Paul II are [irrelevant] to the foundations of the faith.” Land praised the Pope’s “staunch defense of traditional Christian faith....”⁷⁵ Pat Robertson enthused, “Pope John Paul II stands like a rock...in his clear enunciation of the foundational principles of the Christian faith.”⁷⁶ In his 1994 video, *Pope John Paul II: Startling Revelations*, Jack Van Impe hailed the Pope as a staunch Christian and defender of the faith. On his television program, he claimed that the Catechism of the Catholic Church is biblical.

Popes are the worst of apostates, condoning all religions so long as they submit to papal authority, and leading billions of souls to hell! What must be said of evangelicals who commend the popes and their false gospel? Is it not apostasy to promote those who preach a false gospel and damnable heresies even though one does not preach such lies oneself?

One of the major marks of the “last days” apostasy has been an ecumenical movement led by John Paul II that has swept even evangelicals into its maelstrom. Ecumenism is one more form of the denial of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which “is the power of God unto salvation to

⁷⁵ Adelle M. Banks, Religion News Service, April 11, 2005.

⁷⁶ Pat Robertson, *The Turning Tide* (Word, 1993), 279.

everyone that believeth.”⁷⁷ Robert Schuller exhorted “religious leaders...whatever their theology...to articulate their faith in positive terms.” He called for a “massive, united effort by leaders of all religions [to proclaim] the positive power...of world-community-building religious values.”⁷⁸

In his 1992 book, *The Body*, Chuck Colson called for ecumenical union with Rome. In an article titled, “Why Catholics are Our Allies,” he wrote: “And let’s be certain that we are firing our polemical rifles against the enemies, not [allies] fighting in the trenches alongside us in the defense of the Truth.”⁷⁹ It would be shocking to Calvin, Luther, Zwingli and the other Reformers (and especially to the millions Rome tortured and slaughtered for their faith in Christ) to learn that the enemies of the gospel were actually their allies “in defense of the Truth”!

One of these strange “allies” is apparently Roman Catholic apologist Peter Kreeft of Boston College who, in the spirit of Rick Warren and his P.E.A.C.E. Plan, advocates a coalition of all religions to fight society’s social ills. Kreeft imagines that prayer to Islam’s Allah or any Hindu idol is compatible with Christianity. He praises John Paul II for gathering “representatives of all the major religions” to pray together and declaring that they all pray to the same God. He claims that God is blessing Islam to grow because Muslims are obeying His laws. Confucius is God’s “prophet” in purgatory on the way to heaven;⁸⁰ Buddha and Muhammad are both already there;⁸¹ Muhammad, because he honored Mary, is “closer in spirit” to true Christianity than most Protestants; through the Mass, the entire universe is being transformed into one giant Cosmic Eucharistic Christ;⁸² and everyone, including evangelicals, will be united in the Eucharist and Mary.⁸³ That both J.I. Packer and Chuck Colson gave their enthusiastic endorsements on the back cover tells us much of the nature of today’s apostasy.

In Los Angeles, the Pope told Rabbis Harvey Fields and Alfred Wolf that everyone serves the “same God...no matter what their religion.”⁸⁴ Yonggi Cho recently addressed a Buddhist convention, declaring that Buddhism and Christianity each have their way of salvation

⁷⁷ Romans 1:16.

⁷⁸ *The Orange County Register*, 1993.

⁷⁹ *Christianity Today*, November 14, 1994.

⁸⁰ Peter Kreeft, *Ecumenical Jihad* (Ignatius Press, 1996), 96,

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 96-111.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 158.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 144-45

⁸⁴ <http://www.jewishjournal.com/home/preview.php?id=13922>

and that neither should oppose the other.⁸⁵ John Paul II on more than one occasion gathered together for prayer with doctors, spiritists, animists, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and other leaders of world religions and credited their prayers with generating “profound spiritual energies” that would create a “new climate for peace.”⁸⁶

Yet with full knowledge of Rome’s heresies and its alliances with paganism, evangelical leaders signed “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium.” That document claimed that Catholics (though they believe and preach Rome’s false gospel that only damns those who believe it) are our “brothers and sisters in Christ.” Billy Graham did not need to sign that document because he long has been a key ecumenical leader. Nearly 50 years ago he declared, “Anyone who makes a decision at our meetings is...referred to a local clergyman—Protestant, Catholic or Jewish.”⁸⁷ Ten years later he rejoiced that “Protestants and Catholics could meet together and greet each other as brothers....”⁸⁸

Peter Howard, executive assistant to Bishop Michael Sheridan, head of the Catholic Diocese of Colorado Springs, warned Catholics that they must not attend Protestant services. In ecumenical response, Ted Haggard, Senior Pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, and President of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), said that “New Life doesn’t try to ‘convert’ Catholics.” He said that New Life would never discourage its members “from becoming Catholic or attending Catholic Mass.”⁸⁹

Those commending instead of contending against untrue religions encourage the lost in their false hope and deceive the world as well as the church. Is this not also a form of apostasy?

The fact that a major element of the last-days apostasy would be a false “signs and wonders” movement among professing Christians involving false prophets was declared more than once by our Lord: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”⁹⁰ He must be referring to pre-tribulation events. “Christian” leaders would hardly be performing “signs and wonders” in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ after Antichrist is in charge of the

⁸⁵ http://www.youaregood.com/yonggicho_english_yskim.htm

⁸⁶ *Our Sunday Visitor*, November 13, 1988.

⁸⁷ *San Francisco News*, November 11, 1957.

⁸⁸ *The Gastonia Gazette*, November 22, 1967.

⁸⁹ *The Gazette*, October 17, 2005.

⁹⁰ Mt 7:22-23.

world. And here we gain further insight that isn't as clear from Matthew 24: those performing false signs and wonders do so in Christ's name, calling Him Lord, yet they are not Christians at all. As Christ will say, "I *never* knew you!"

Nevertheless, those doing "miracles" in Christ's name must be professing Christians and widely accepted as Christian leaders. This is a further indication of apostasy within the church, on the part of both leaders and followers, involving a strong delusion centering upon false signs and wonders. These "miracles" are the accepted "proof" of the "prophet's" authority. The similarity in the language in Matthew 7 and 24 indicates that Christ was referring in both places to the same important last-days sign.

Paul uses similar language to that which Christ uses and adds that Satan and his minions will be behind this last-days deception and will use it to promote "doctrines of devils":

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith [apostatize], giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron....⁹¹

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men [shall be] ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.... Now as Jannes and Jambres [two of the magicians in Pharaoh's court] withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.⁹²

Paul thus declared that the major opposition to the truth in the last days would be from false prophets who would counterfeit miracles by the power of Satan just as Jannes and Jambres did in opposition to Moses. Although only God can do genuine miracles, what Pharaoh's sorcerers did in mimicking the first two plagues was so impressive that Moses declared, "And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments...."⁹³ But when it came to the third, "the magicians...could not."⁹⁴

Surely we are seeing this prophesied opposition to the truth today. There is an entire "signs and wonders" movement among charismatics led by false prophets who pretend to do miracles in Christ's name. It is precisely these "miracles" that cause millions to follow them and to believe their false doctrines. There is no clearer sign of "last-days apostasy."

⁹¹ 1 Tim 4:1-2

⁹² 2 Tim. 3:1, 2, 8.

⁹³ Ex 7:22; 8:7.

⁹⁴ Ex 8:18.

Yet the great success of *The Purpose-Driven Life* and the growth of megachurches such as Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church in Houston (30,000 each weekend) have sparked a new optimism among evangelicals that even embraces the false "signs and wonders" movement. In *Megashift*, James Rutz writes:

We are now winning the world at an astonishing pace, swept along by a vast array of miracles....[God] has apparently decreed that plain folks like you and me are now a central part of an accelerated plan for a total transformation of the world.... As national strongholds of sin are dismantled and pits of misery cleaned up, the true purpose of God for many nations will be revealed. We are in the early stages of total transformation of our planet.... The family of Jesus Christ is growing so fast that if our growth simply continues at today's pace, most of us living today may see the fulfillment of Revelation 11:15: "Now are the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah! And he shall reign for ever and ever."⁹⁵

This is a delusion that harks back to the Manifest Sons of God heresy but is now gaining acceptance among evangelicals. There is no Rapture and no Great Tribulation. We are already in the Millennium, with the church taking over under the leadership of "miracle-working prophets." These people expect to meet Christ with their feet planted on planet earth, rather than being caught up to meet Him in the air and taken to heaven as His Word promises. It is one more form of apostasy that is preparing a false church to welcome Antichrist. While I don't think Rick Warren has been deluded to this extent, he avoids prophecy and his emphasis is upon changing this world rather than being raptured to heaven.

Among the dozens of false prophets we might name who claim to be part, not of apostasy but of a great "last-days revival," are Oral and Richard Roberts, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Reinhart Bonnke, the Kenneth Hagins, Rick Joyner, Kim Clement, and many others often seen and heard on TBN and elsewhere. The major one, of course, is Benny Hinn, who claims to have picked up the "anointing" from the graves of Amie Semple McPherson (founder of the Foursquare Gospel Church) and Kathryn Kuhlman (originator of the "slain in the Spirit" craze).

I watched Benny Hinn on TBN telling Paul and Jan Crouch how he knocked a man down with "the power of the Holy Spirit," and when he hit the floor his toupee flew off. To raucous laughter from the Crouches, a mischievous Benny related how four more times, when the man

⁹⁵ James Rutz, *Megashift* (Colorado Springs: Empowerment Press), 2005, 1-2, 27, 41.

struggled to his feet having replaced the toupee askew, he knocked him down again just to see the toupee fly off. There was some “power” at work, but obviously not from the Holy Spirit.

Benny Hinn has been praised by evangelical leaders (including Jerry Falwell) and is the darling of the largest Christian TV network, Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), upon which are regularly displayed false prophets to deceive the church and world. The extent of willing submission to false teachers is seen in the fact that even the most absurd “prophecies” on TBN are hailed, embraced, and then when they fail, excused and even declared by both leaders and followers to have been fulfilled. For example, according to a “Voice,” which spoke “so *loud and clear*” to a pastor John Hinkle “that it sounded like a great bell” being rung in his ear, all evil would be “ripped from the earth” on June 9, 1994. Crouch and the studio audience were overjoyed by this “wonderful revelation.”⁹⁶ Crouch backed this obviously false prophecy to the hilt in at least three newsletters⁹⁷ and on several TV shows.⁹⁸ Pat Robertson was enthusiastic about it.⁹⁹

Yet anyone with a minimal knowledge of the Bible and common sense knew that “evil” is not a “thing” to be ripped from earth but resides in human hearts. Evil will certainly be rampant under Antichrist in the Great Tribulation yet to come, and even at the end of the millennial reign of Christ when Satan will be loosed, evil will manifest itself as never before in an attack against Jerusalem and Christ by millions of earth’s inhabitants. Yet on June 9, 1994, Crouch claimed that Hinkle’s prophecy had been fulfilled!

Of course, false prophecies too numerous to mention are standard fare on TBN, from the assurance that the appearing of Christ¹⁰⁰ will take place on stage at a Benny Hinn revival—to the confident declaration that soon the dead will be resurrected by placing them in front of a TV screen on which a TBN program is being aired. Benny Hinn’s false prophecies are too many to recite. For example, on December 31, 1989, claiming that he was in the very throne room of God, Hinn declared: “The Lord also tells me...about ’94 or ’95, no later than that, God will destroy the homosexual community of America...by fire....”¹⁰¹ Amazingly, as Hinn’s false

⁹⁶ *Praise the Lord*, TBN, January 25, 1993; March 14, 1993.

⁹⁷ *TBN Newsletter*, August 1993.

⁹⁸ TBN, March 14, 1993.

⁹⁹ www.cuttingedge.org/news/n1194.cfm.

¹⁰⁰ 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Jn 3:2.

¹⁰¹ G. Richard Fisher and M. Kurt Goedelman, *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*, St. Louis, MO: Personal Freedom Outreach, 2002, 199-200.

prophecies increase, so does his audience, growing to at least one million on several occasions. Surely this growing delusion is another sign of last-days apostasy.

Hinn can't even get his "testimony" straight. In *PTL Family Devotional* he says, "I got saved in Israel in 1968."¹⁰² But in a 1983 message in St. Louis he said, "It was in Canada that I was born again right after '68."¹⁰³ Yet in *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, he says he was converted in 1972, during his *senior year* in high school.¹⁰⁴ But he dropped out before his senior year. When was he saved?!

"People of God," shouts Benny, "we must never speak such faith-destroying words as... 'If it be thy will, Lord... I am Him [Jesus]! The Word has become flesh in Meee!.... You are a little god on earth.'" Hinn and Crouch have declared this lie numerous times together on TBN, and Crouch stated in a newsletter that if we are not little gods, he would apologize in front of 10,000 times 10,000 before the "glassy sea."¹⁰⁵ If he is a "little god," he won't be there.

In reference to critics, Hinn said, "I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun. I'd blow your head off!"¹⁰⁶ The TBN studio audience loudly applauded those gracious words from this "man of God." Says Hinn, "I'm sick and tired about hearing about streets of gold [in heaven]. I don't need gold in heaven. I got to have it now."¹⁰⁷

Not to be outdone, Morris Cerullo declares, "...from the beginning of time the whole purpose of God was to reproduce Himself.... And when we stand up here, brother, you're not looking at Morris Cerullo; you're looking at God. You're looking at Jesus!"¹⁰⁸ And in fulfillment of Christ's Word, false prophets keep coming in His name claiming to be Christ.

Making it all the more dangerous, TBN is a mixture of heresy and sound doctrine because evangelicals who preach the truth are seen on it as well. Not only indirectly by implication do they support this apostasy mill, but they are almost inevitably drawn into a more direct support by becoming part of periodic fund raising for the network. This confusing mixture of truth and error encourages apostasy today. One can hardly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints while supporting—even indirectly—the false prophets who deny it. And even there we

¹⁰² Ibid., 34.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰⁵ *Praise the Lord Newsletter*, March 1993.

¹⁰⁶ TBN Praise-a-thon, April 1990.

¹⁰⁷ Mike Thomas, *Florida Magazine*, 11/24/91.

¹⁰⁸ Morris Cerullo World Evangelism, "The End Time Manifestation of the Sons of God," tape 1.

have a contradictory mixture inasmuch as many of the false prophets know how to preach the gospel, and do so at times, making it all the more bewildering.

Paul's warning that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils"¹⁰⁹ has come true with a vengeance. A major "doctrine of devils" is the occult technique of visualizing persons or events to bring them into the present for one's private use. This is how shamans (witchdoctors) contact their "spirit guides." This occult method is widely practiced in today's church. Norman Vincent Peale taught it,¹¹⁰ as does Yonggi Cho, Robert Schuller, Richard Foster, Calvin Miller, Karen Mains, John and Paula Sandford, and others who practice "inner healing," and so do many Christian psychologists.

Visualization is widely taught in the church as a means of creating the answer to one's prayers, and even calling Christ from His throne in heaven to appear in one's presence. Of course, Christ will not oblige, but there are demons that are only too happy to appear, pretending to be "Christ" in order to further their deception.

Yonggi Cho tells his readers, "You create the presence of Jesus with your mouth...He is bound by...your words.... Remember that Christ is depending upon you and your spoken word to release His presence."¹¹¹ Likewise Richard Foster (co-founder of the *Renovaré* movement and editor of the *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*) assures us that visualization in the imagination of what one desires is not mere fantasy but *reality* created in the mind.¹¹² He writes:

Take a single event [from Scripture].... Seek to live the experience, remembering the encouragement of Ignatius of Loyol [founder of the Jesuits, fanatical defenders of the Pope and Rome's heresies] to apply all our senses to our task...represent to your imagination the whole of the mystery...as an active participant.... And since Jesus lives in the eternal now...you can actually encounter the living Christ in the event, be addressed by His voice...touched by His healing power.... Jesus Christ will actually come to you.... In your imagination allow your spiritual body, shining with light, to rise out of your physical body. Look back so that you can see yourself...and reassure your body that you will return.... Go deeper and deeper into outer space until there is nothing except the warm presence of the eternal Creator. Rest in his presence. Listen quietly [to] any instruction given.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ 1 Tim 4:1.

¹¹⁰ Norman Vincent Peale, *Positive Imaging* (Fleming H. Revell, 1982), etc.

¹¹¹ Yonggi Cho, *The Fourth Dimension* (Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1979), Vol I, 83.

¹¹² Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (Harper & Row, 1978), 26.

¹¹³ Foster, *Celebration*, 26-27.

This is occult contact with “seducing spirits [bringing] doctrines of demons” through the imagination and is the major technique used by shamans to contact their spirit guides. Yet in full agreement, popular evangelical author Calvin Miller writes:

One door opens to the world of the Spirit: imagination.... We cannot commune with a Savior whose form and shape elude us...in my conversation with Christ, I see him white robed...I drink the glory of his hazel eyes, thrill to the golden sunlight dancing on his auburn hair.... Do you disagree? His hair is black? Eyes brown? Then have it your way.... His image must be real to you as to me, even if our images differ. The key to vitality, however, is the image...block by imaginary block we define him and we adore him. The Bible writers did the same.¹¹⁴

Instead of being inspired of God, the “Bible writers” wrote from their imagination?! This is not only blasphemy, but “Christianized idolatry.” The visualization described by Miller above is delusion at best and demonic deception at worst. Every pagan image is first formed in the mind before it is fashioned out of wood or stone. Most “Protestants” are not yet openly advocating the second step (icons and images in homes and churches), but that is another growing movement among evangelicals. Icons are displayed with candles to light in “prayer stations,” and church members in evangelical churches “pray through the image” to reach God, joining in the practice of Eastern Orthodox and Catholics.

Like Miller, Foster, and Cho, Robert L. Wise, pastor of a large Presbyterian church, endorses visualizing “Jesus” based upon his experience during a “Healing of the Memories” session:

I began to visualize myself as a boy of eight...startled to see...myself carrying a large bundle on my back [of] needs and worries.... “Now see if you can imagine Jesus appearing” [I was] instructed. “Let him walk toward you.” Much to my amazement, I—an ordained Reformed clergyman with a doctorate in psychology—found...Jesus moved slowly toward me...extend[ing] His hands toward me in a loving, accepting manner.... I no longer was creating the scene.... Christ reached over and lifted the bundle from my back...with such forcefulness that I literally sprang from the pew.¹¹⁵

Wise was sure it was not his imagination—and we know it was not Jesus—so it could only have been a demon impersonating Christ that came alive in this occult experience. Yonggi Cho (pastor of the world’s largest church with some 750,000 members) writes, “We should

¹¹⁴ Calvin Miller, *The Table of Inwardness* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), 93-94.

¹¹⁵ Robert L. Wise, “Healing of the Memories: A Prayer Therapy for You?,” *Christian Life Magazine*, July 1984, 63-64.

always try to visualize the end result as we pray [or] it cannot become a reality.... Through visualizing and dreaming, you can incubate your future and hatch the results.”¹¹⁶ In the foreword to that book, Robert Schuller declares, “Don’t try to understand it. Just start to enjoy it! It’s true. It works.”

Cho and Rick Warren recently had breakfast together. In response to Rick’s question concerning his ministry, Cho replied, “As a minister, you should know that prayer is the foundation of church growth and revival.... [Y]ou should have visions and dreams because [these] are the vessels through which God works.”¹¹⁷ He failed to tell Rick that his occult practice of visualization has been the key to his success. Cho has some good teachings, but that only commends his heretical and occult teachings and makes them all the more appealing. Lutheran pastor William Vaswig writes: “I believe imagination is one of the most important keys to effective praying... God touches me through my imagination.”¹¹⁸ Yet the Bible declares: “This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart...,”¹¹⁹ “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”¹²⁰, etc.

Having been mentored by Norman Vincent Peale, Robert Schuller (who journeyed to Rome with an artist’s rendering of the Crystal Cathedral to get the Pope’s blessing before it was built) is a primary example of an apostate and a master of “religiously correct” doubletalk. He declares, “That’s what sets me apart from fundamentalists, who are trying to convert everybody to believe how they believe. We know the things the major faiths can agree on. We try to focus on those without offending those with different viewpoints, or without compromising the integrity of my own Christian commitment.” Of course, the major faiths do not agree on, but *deny*, who God is, who Jesus Christ is, the way of salvation, and all other biblical fundamentals. One can only wonder what “Christian commitment” it is that Schuller isn’t compromising. He has declared that if he came back in 100 years and found that all of his descendants were Muslims it would not bother him.

¹¹⁶ Yonggi Cho, *The Fourth Dimension* (Plainfield NJ: Logos International, 1979), 48.

¹¹⁷ <http://pastors.com/articles/ChoInterview.asp>.

¹¹⁸ William L. Vaswig, *I Prayed, He Answered* (Augsburg Press, 1977), 72.

¹¹⁹ Jer 13:10.

¹²⁰ Gen 6:5.

But Schuller is not alone in his blatantly bold apostasy. A Barna poll about this time revealed that 71 percent of Americans, 64 percent of those who call themselves born again, and 40 percent of self-proclaimed evangelicals rejected the idea of absolute truth. And Pat Robertson, responding to those asking why he had signed ECT, declared: “People of faith [in which he includes Catholics, Mormons, Moonies, Jews, et al.] are under attack as never before...by forces which wish to destroy all religious values, all worship, and all freedoms for Christians like you and me [so] we must lay aside certain Protestant differences to join hands to support those things upon which we all agree....”¹²¹

For nearly two decades, Karen Mains, author of more than 20 books and popular conference speaker, was co-host with her husband, David, of *The Chapel of the Air*. In her book, *Lonely No More* (InterVarsity Press), she tells of a Jungian therapy session with her spiritual director at a Catholic retreat center, where she is visited by the mental image of an “idiot-child...totally bald head lolled to one side...drooling...eight years of age...emaciated and malnourished” which communicates with her and reveals that it is her inner “Christ child,” her “spiritual authority.” David and Karen Mains were on the Board of Reference of Renovaré.

Incredibly (or is it to be expected?), some of the worst heretics and practitioners of the occult have gotten together in what they call the Chrysostom Society. It began with Richard Foster, Calvin Miller, and Karen Mains, joined later by Eugene Peterson and others. “They felt it was really important to just get together, write together, and believe in each other as practitioners of a craft to the glory of God.”¹²² The society has included Luci Shaw, English stylist for *The Message: Psalms* and the gender-neutral language Today’s New International Version, and co-author of *Prayerbook for Spiritual Friends* and *Friends for the Journey* with Madeleine L’Engle, also a member.

Peter reinforces the warnings by Christ and Paul: “...there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them... and many shall follow their pernicious ways...and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you....”¹²³ The language is remarkably prophetic. It is covetousness on the part both of the false prophets and those who believe their lies that allows the former to

¹²¹ Pat Robertson in form letter on The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc. letterhead, 4/19/94.

¹²² “A Conversation with Eugene Peterson,” *Mars Hill Review*, 1995.

¹²³ 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

“make merchandise” of the latter. We see this in the “seed faith” teaching invented by Oral Roberts and followed by most of the other false prophets: “Send in your ‘seed faith’ offering to get the miracles started. I have a letter from Oral Roberts with my name in it declaring that he has been up all night praying just for me and that God has promised 33 specific miracles to me if I will send in the “seed faith” offering. Of course, more than a million others received a similar letter with each of their names put in by the computer declaring that Roberts has been praying all night for them and, amazingly, God has promised the *same 33 miracles* for each of them, and a “seed faith” offering is required to start the miracles flowing. It would take minimal common sense to recognize Roberts’ unconscionable lie (has he no fear of God?), but it is the covetousness of recipients that blinds them to the truth in their desire to get “miracles from God” by feeding the covetousness of the “miracle worker.”

Oral Roberts’ many lies are legendary. There was the claim that if supporters didn’t give him \$8 million God would kill him. He said it would be used for scholarships for students at his medical school so they could go to the mission field. Not a dime went for that but into the attempt to salvage his hospital. And that debacle began with Roberts’ claim that he’d had a seven-hour conversation with a 900 -foot-tall “Jesus” who had commanded him to build a hospital that the secular planning department knew Tulsa couldn’t support. Nevertheless, the “man of God” prevailed over objections, with his “partners” pouring more than \$200 million into the project. The miracles and cure for cancer this “Jesus” had promised never materialized; the 777-bed hospital never even had more than 148 patients at its peak, and it went bankrupt, a monument to a lying false prophet who, nevertheless, is highly honored in the church to this day. In 1989 (the year he began shutting down the hospital, overwhelmed with unpaid bills) Roberts was named “Christian Leader of the Year” by the International Christian Leaders organization.¹²⁴

Joyce Meyer says, “You cannot go to heaven unless you believe with all your heart that Jesus took your place in hell.”¹²⁵ Most of the “Positive Confession” teachers agree with Kenneth Copeland that “When Jesus cried, *It is finished!* He was not speaking of the plan of redemption...the cross was only the beginning.... He allowed the devil to drag Him into the depths of hell.... Every demon in hell came down on Him to annihilate Him.... [They] tortured

¹²⁴ *Charisma & Christian Life*, January 1990, 22.

¹²⁵ Joyce Meyer, *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make* (Harrison House, 1991), 3.

Him beyond anything that anybody has ever conceived.... His emaciated, little wormy spirit is down in the bottom of [the pit] and the devil thinks he's got Him destroyed.... In a thunder of spiritual force, the voice of God spoke to the death-whipped, broken, punished spirit of Jesus [in] the pit of destruction, and charged the spirit of Jesus with resurrection power! SUDDENLY His twisted, death-wracked spirit began to fill out and come back to life.... He was literally being reborn before the devil's very eyes. He began to flex His spiritual muscles... Jesus Christ dragged Satan up and down the halls of hell... [He] was raised up a born-again man.... The day I realized that a born-again man had defeated Satan, hell, and death, I got so excited...!"¹²⁶ This is a false gospel that cannot save—another sign of today's last-days apostasy.

The gospel is “to the Jew first”¹²⁷ and Paul always preached it in the synagogue before going to the Gentiles. Yet some Christian leaders have claimed that there is a different gospel for Jews. John Hagee has said, “The Jewish people have a relationship to God through the law of God as given through Moses.... I believe that every Jewish person who lives in the light of the Torah... will come to redemption.”¹²⁸ In 1987, when Pat Robertson was running for president, he was interviewed by Phil Donahue, who asked him, “Do Jews go to heaven?” Pat replied, “The Jews go to heaven... if they keep all the commandments of the Jewish Law.... For the Jews it's a different deal.”¹²⁹ Isn't it part of the apostasy to deny the gospel that saves to Jews?

When Robertson failed to get the Republican nomination for president, he was asked, “If God called you to run, then why did you fail to get the Republican presidential nomination?” Pat responded, “I suppose we could ask the same question of Jesus... why did He fail the first time around and get crucified?”¹³⁰

One of the most shocking evidences of apostasy is the acclaim given to Sir John Marks Templeton by evangelical leaders. Rick Warren gave a speech and was one of five judges to determine the prizewinner in the recent “Power of Purpose” Essays contest (obviously inspired by his “purpose-driven” crusade) that was sponsored by Templeton. Norman Vincent Peale, Robert Schuller, and Billy Graham have been among Templeton's foremost promoters.

¹²⁶ Kenneth Copeland, TBN, April 21, 1991; “The Price of it All,” *Believer's Voice of Victory*, September 1991, 4.

¹²⁷ Rom 1:16.

¹²⁸ Julia Dunn, *Houston Chronicle*, April 30, 1988, Religion, 1.

¹²⁹ *Donahue*, NBC Television, June 1987.

¹³⁰ Bob Slosser, “The Election According to Pat Robertson,” *Charisma & Christian Life*, October 1988, 56.

Templeton's books are New Age to the core and blatantly proclaim a false god and false gospel. Yet one of his major works, *Discovering the Laws of Life*, was promoted in a full-page back cover ad in *Christianity Today*, 4/24/94, headlined, "WILL INSPIRE MILLIONS OF READERS." The ad contained endorsements by Norman Vincent Peale (who also wrote the foreword), Robert Schuller, Billy Graham, and two prominent Catholic New Age leaders, Theodore M. Hesburgh (former president of Notre Dame University) and J. Peter Grace (head of the Knights of Malta, sworn to defend the Pope). In that book, Templeton declares: "The basic principles for leading a 'sublime life' ... may be derived from any religious tradition.... Astronauts traveled into outer space [and] did not bring back any evidence of heaven. And whereas drills had penetrated the earth, they'd found oil, not hell...spiritual theorists are inclined to conceive of [heaven and hell] as states of mind...we create our own heaven or hell right here on earth.... Our innate goodness is an essential fact of our existence...the God within us...the godhood within you...is in a state of becoming perfect."

He has made no secret of his anti-Christian, anti-biblical beliefs which include:

As the religious forms of traditional Judaism and Christianity are losing their powers to inform the contemporary mind, the West desperately needs religious geniuses who can create new imaginal forms.... Theologians must begin to explore the vast unseen dimensions of our evolving universe.... I am hoping to develop a body of knowledge about God that doesn't rely on ancient revelations or scripture [such as the Bible!]...that is scientific...and is not disputed because of divisions between religions or churches or ancient scripture.... The truly humble should...welcome religious views from any place in the universe that is peopled with intelligent life...the humble approach to theology is ongoing and constantly evolving....¹³¹

Christians think God appeared in Jesus of Nazareth two thousand years ago for our salvation.... But we should not take it to mean that...progress stopped...that Jesus was the end of change.... God is billions of stars in the Milky Way.... Time and space and energy are all part of God.... God is five billion people on Earth.... God is untold billions of beings on planets of millions of other stars.... God is in all of you and you are a little part of Him.... The next stage of human divine progress on the evolutionary scale needs...geniuses of the spirit, blazing trails for the rest of us to follow. To encourage progress of this kind, we have established the Templeton Foundation Prizes for Progress in Religion.¹³²

¹³¹ John Marks Templeton, *The Humble Approach* (Contium, 1981, revised in 1994), 130.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 48, 53.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever; Christianity is not a religion and it does not “progress” toward a better form. No Christian could possibly accept the Templeton Award as the person who had contributed the most during the year toward the Antichrist religion that Templeton is promoting. Yet Billy Graham did (1982), as did Chuck Colson (1993) and Bill Bright (1996). Colson gave his acceptance speech at the 1993 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago to an audience of cultists and occultists. On the stage behind him were representatives of many religions in their various robes. The meeting was opened with a Muslim chant and closed with a Buddhist prayer. These deluded people desperately needed to hear the gospel, but Colson did not give it to them.

Bill Bright received the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion in a Roman Catholic Church in Rome on May 9, 1996, with four cardinals present. He began his acceptance speech with, “Your Eminence Cardinal Cassidy.” Cassidy was the Pope’s representative who was the guiding hand behind Richard John Neuhaus (apostate Lutheran minister turned Catholic priest) and Colson in writing ECT (Evangelicals and Catholics Together). Bright continued, “The prestigious Templeton Prize, to me, because of the nature of its objective, is greater than any other prize that could be given for any purpose.... I would like to thank and commend Sir John Templeton for establishing this prize...!” Sadly, Bright failed to present the gospel that his audience desperately needed to hear. His lengthy speech was filled with “religiously correct” ecumenical terms: *moral standards...unseen hand of God in my life...falling in love with Jesus...personal spiritual journey...worldwide spiritual awakening*, etc. He came so close to the gospel (Christ had “an elaborate plan to redeem me”) but didn’t explain that plan.¹³³ Bright referred to “His free gift of love and forgiveness” but never explained that the forgiveness is for our *sins* and is only possible because Christ paid the penalty we deserve.

Constraints of time and space have prevented a full recitation of apostasy and examples of the church’s abandonment of the Word of God—the words of life itself. Just as His people Israel, to whom He sent His prophets to warn them of their apostasy and its dire consequences, would not listen, so it is today with many professing Christians. Glad to follow any pied piper who plays an enticing tune, and unwilling (and one day unable) to hear the Lord (“who is my strength and my song”—Exodus 15:2), they dance merrily on to judgment.

¹³³ Eph 1:7; Col 1:14.

“When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”¹³⁴ Time on this earth is quickly drawing to a close. Let us determine once again to remain true to and earnestly contend for “the faith once delivered unto the saints.” And in that perseverance, may our example give renewed courage and conviction to many others—and may we rescue many before it is forever too late.

¹³⁴ Lk 18:8.