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SPIRITUAL DECEPTION

(Part IV)

Travers van der Merwe

Experience vs. the Christian Relationship to God

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)..." Hebrews 10:19, 23

"Our relationship to God is based on the experience of His Presence."(1), said an eloquent Christian author.

Unfortunately, this view is shared by many Christians the world over. Not only is this statement very far from the truth, but it flies in the face of scripture. Since when is our relationship to God established on experience? Is it because the author of the above statement probably had some incredible spiritual experience? Is it because most Christians from time to time experience some form of mysticism or feeling when they contemplate the Presence of God? This concept is dangerous to say the least. It is New Age thinking - pure liberal theology. It is certainly not Bible doctrine. Often we hear ministers say with a mystical voice, "Do you feel the presence of God?" Another favorite saying is: "I feel God in this place." Most of these ministers are quite sincere. However, these expressions are misleading and are an affront to the truth of the Word of God. The Word of God teaches the beloved to build upon his most holy faith (Jude 20). Basing our relationship to God on an experience is at best most confusing, frustrating and futile. Entering into an experiential relationship to God is like taking

a ride on a spiritual roller-coaster. One moment you are high and the next you are low. When the ride is over, you are neither high nor low. It always proves a valueless experiment. Watchman Nee gives the meaning of this "experience" in the following way:

“According to the believer’s interpretation, he is at his spiritual peak when in possession of the wonderful feeling: he is at his lowest when deprived of it. He often characterizes his walk as full of ups and downs. By this he means that while he is feeling joyful, loving the Lord and sensing His presence he is at his spiritual best; but if his inward sensation is marked by dryness and pain he must be at his spiritual worst. In other words, he is spiritual so long as the warm fire of love is burning in his heart but soulish if his heart turns icy cold. Such is the common notion among Christians. Is it accurate? It is totally inaccurate. Unless we understand how it is wrong we shall suffer defeat to the very end.

A Christian should recognize that 'feeling' is exclusively a part of the soul. When he lives by sensation, no matter what the kind, he is being soulish. During the period that he feels joyful, is loving the lord and senses His presence, he is walking by feeling; likewise, during the period that he feels just the opposite he is still walking by feeling. Just as he is soulish whose life and labor are dictated by a refreshing bright and joyous sensation, so is he equally soulish whose walk and work are determined by a dry, gloomy and painful one. A real spiritual life is never dominated by, nor lived in, feeling. Neither does it regulate feeling. Nowadays Christians mistake a life of feeling for spiritual experience. This is because many have never entered in genuine spirituality and hence interpret happy sensation to be spiritual experience. They do not know that such feeling is still soulical.”(2)

To base our relationship to God on an experience in whatever form or guise renders faith null and void. The Bible emphatically declares the believer's life as one of faith. The binding faith in God is based strictly on the written Word of God. It is the only valid criteria we have of knowing God, the person, His salvation and His relationship to man. Throughout history men have always conscientiously sought to relate to heaven by building ladders of experiential thoughts in their attempt to attain heavenly truth. The tallest ladder always proved too short. “The world by wisdom (philosophy and science) knew not God. Truth, that tells man how to pass from earth to heaven, must be sent down from heaven to earth. In other words, man needs a revelation.”(3) God proffered man heavens truth in the revelation of His Son, Jesus Christ. By this means He related His presence to man. God condescended to the likeness of man through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (Philemon 2:5-8). Jesus, the living Word now revealed by the Written Word is the total basis of our relationship to God. It is scripturally impossible to relate to God or receive or know anything of God other than through faith in God according to the Scriptures (Hebrews 11:6). Even "faith" apart from Scriptures cannot relate one to God and least of all, an experience.

Our relationship to God is not based on whether we perceive His Presence or whether we intuitively know or feel His Presence. It is exclusively based on the truth found in His written Word. It is by faith alone that Christ dwells in the heart of the believer (Ephesians 3:17). It is by the grace of God that we with our natural reasoning faculties freely choose to believe that He has established His Presence amongst His people, according to His covenant of grace. By faith we simply receive His covenant of grace regardless of our experiences. The author believes His Word is “*Yea and amen*” and that settles it. That disposes of all the strange array

of mysticism or weird feelings and notions that originate in self-indulgence. For the majority of Christians to accept God's relationship purely on the basis of scripture and faith without unbeknown or bekknown forms of mysticism is a real problem. The Bible discloses that our relationship to the Father is a walk of faith. "*The just shall live by faith.*" (Romans 1:17); "*The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God.*" (Galatians 2:20).

The following testimony by Florence Bulle, author of "God Wants you Rich and Other Enticing Doctrines", is a typical example of many Christians who are unknowingly involved in New Age philosophy. It is a beautiful and warm testimony. She is sincerely trying to please God. However, her techniques for experiencing the presence of God are dramatically in conflict with the doctrine of faith.

"Recently, I attended a retreat led by the Reverend Morton Kelsey, Episcopal priest, theologian, psychologist, prolific writer, and probably the foremost teacher today on the subject of Christian meditation. Because of the risks involved, he relentlessly warns against imageless prayer and meditation.

As I listened to him and read his books, I began to realize the part that imagery plays in my own personal prayer life. Before, I never gave it much thought. It just seemed natural to 'practice the Presence of God' - Brother Lawrence's terms for Christian meditation. I know of no better way to protect oneself from the intrusion of evil. One means to inner quietness is to repeat Scripture, saying the verses slowly, trying to feel and picture what they mean. The picture a word evokes gives the word content. The name of a person causes us to visualize that person - his face, something about him, and perhaps his action in a certain situation. As I read or quote Scripture, my mind pictures the words to make them come alive for me.

In practicing His presence, I also find that softly praying in tongues, the language of the Spirit, is remarkably calming. Time and the push of doing, planning, or trying to figure out the weighty problems of life are suspended. I experience a oneness with the Spirit of God by letting my spirit flow with the mind of the Spirit in praise, worship, and intercession. Then, as I wait quietly in His presence, God often speaks - in a variety of ways.

Visualizing Christ himself near me is another helpful means of making me more aware of Christ's immanence. Consciously relaxing my body, I visualize Jesus sitting in the large easy chair in our living room. I am at His feet, looking up into His face. We smile, but do not talk. Breathing slowly and deeply, I relax and allow His peace to permeate my mind and body. I am content simply to be near Him, secure in His love and presence-my lord and Savior, Redeemer, and Friend.

Another imaginative experience I still employ first took place years ago, during a critical illness in the hospital. I was undergoing some tests which were frightening to one as sick as I was. As I lay on the X-ray table, I closed my eyes, held out my hand and whispered, 'Jesus, please hold my hand.' Since I knew He was with me, it was simple to image His taking my hand and holding it firmly in His. A few deep breaths exhaled slowly and I settled down, letting myself feel His hand clasping mine. To this day, I remember the heightened awareness of His presence and the serenity that it brought." (4)

Florence Bulle's experiences neatly ties in with New Age mystic exercises. The following New Age publication, "Creative Visualization" by Shakti Gawain, in more ways than one parallels Mrs. Bulle's practices of visualization and imagery.

“Here is an exercise in the basic technique of creative visualization:

First, think of something you would like. For this exercise choose something simple, that you can easily imagine attaining. It might be an object you would like to have, an event which you would like to happen, a situation in which you'd like to find yourself, or some circumstance in your life which you'd like to improve.

Get in a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down, in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Relax your body completely. Starting from your toes and moving up to your scalp, think of relaxing each muscle in your body in turn, letting all tension flow out of your body. Breathe deeply and slowly, from your belly. Count down slowly from 10 to 1, feeling yourself getting more deeply relaxed with each count.

When you feel deeply relaxed, start to imagine the thing you want exactly as you would like it. If it is an object, imagine yourself with the object, using it, admiring it, enjoying it, showing it to friends. If it is a situation or event, imagine yourself there and everything happening just as you want it to. You may imagine what people are saying, or any details that make it more real to you.

You may take a relatively short time or quite a few minutes to imagine this - whatever feels best to you. Have fun with it. It should be a thoroughly enjoyable experience, like a child daydreaming about what he wants for his birthday.

Now keeping the idea or image still in your mind, mentally make some very positive, affirmative statements to yourself (aloud or silently, as you prefer) about it, such as:

'Here I am spending a wonderful weekend in the mountains. What a beautiful vacation: or 'I now have a wonderful, happy relationship with _____ (e.g. Jesus).
(5) We are really learning to understand each other.

In Hebrews 10: 19-22 the believer is assured in precise terms of all Christ is and has done. That a believer, having been purged by the blood of Christ is free from doubts of evil "conscience and cleansed from defilement. Thus, the believer is enabled, purely on the merits of Christ to draw near (come to God intimately and frequently) with a sincere heart in the full assurance of faith. A Christian is guaranteed that "faith" in the all sufficient blood of Christ is the only prerequisite for a full assurance of his entry into God's immediate presence. Nothing he does earns him the entitlement to come to God no matter how spiritual are his works or how blessed are his experiences. The only legitimate way to God is by faith.

"Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:6

The scriptures are abundantly clear that a Christian's relationship to God is not based on a subjective spiritual experience however good it may feel at the time. There is not a single text

in the Bible that encourages this form of relationship. If some actually quote a scripture in support of this view, then it is quite certain that the scripture is being misquoted. This practice is most common amongst the New Age proponents. However, if a believer for whatever reason, be it to develop his spirituality or to be intimate with God, resorts to occult practices such as: visualization, imagery, transcendental meditation, mystic exercises, etc., not only does he do it in vain, but, worst of all at the risk of demonizing his soul.

The Bible teaches two exercises that assures a believer of His presence. The first is "faith" in the Word of God. The second is doing the Word of God.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." John 14:21

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." I John 2:5

Christians, rejoice in the truth that your assurance of His presence is not in self-centered experiences, but rather in Jesus Christ through faith.

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." I Peter 1:8, 9

For a Christian to imagine the image or shape of Christ during his meditation or prayer is idolatry through and through. The author warns Christians against this sort of practice. It is an abomination to God and it will render you vulnerable to demonic forces. Imagining the likeness of Christ is how the worship of graven images started. To project your thoughts on an image of your imagination as a means of experiencing the presence of Christ, is in fact, another form of self-gratification and spiritual perversion.

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh yet now henceforth know we him no more." II Corinthians 5:15

"That no flesh should glory in his presence." I Corinthians 1:29

For anyone to assume that his relationship to God is constituted on an experiential relationship is in error. To persist in that error knowingly is rebellion toward God's Word. Why professing Christians look for an experience to persuade them the Word of God is real is painfully perturbing and lamentable. The only answer to this indifference to God's faithful Word is either they are ignorant or are deliberately, *"the enemies of the cross."* The Word of God is sure and final and is why we don't look for results or experiences to confirm its veracity. His promises are all it takes to confirm His Word in our lives. We will believe whether or not His promises are fulfilled or experienced this side of the grave (Hebrews 11:39). However, we are *"fully persuaded that, what he had promised; he was able to perform."* (Romans 4:21)

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." II Corinthians 2:20

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- 1 Larsons Books of Cults, by Bob Larson, Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Wheaton, IL, p.64
 - 2 The Spiritual Man – Volume II, by Watchman Nee, Christian Fellowship Publishers, Inc., pp. 229-230.
 - 3 Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible, by Myer Pearlman, Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, MO, p. 17
 - 4 God Wants You Rich and Other Enticing Doctrines, by Florence Bulle, Bethany House Publishers, 1983.
 - 5 Creative Visualization. by Shakti Gawain. Bantam Books Inc., 1978

A NEW DAY IS DAWNING

by Jewel van der Merwe

Our recent trip to South Africa coincided with the World Cup Rugby tour. Watching thousands of South African fans of every hue singing and weaving together, as their country claimed victory after being out of the games for so many years, was indeed a momentous event. The thought of a New South Africa encourages those who are tired of strife.

There are "new" things on the horizon and it was most disturbing to see that South Africa is also being led down the path toward a global harmonic convergence.

The word "new" is a signal of refreshing. This also seems to be a jumping off point for those who are looking for an experiential relationship with God. Yet God's Word is timeless and His truths do not rely upon our feelings.

Weary souls are invariably quickened and invigorated at the thought of being able to start afresh. In Christ Jesus, all things become new. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."* (II Cor. 5: 17)

According to the Scriptures, there is only one way to become a new creature. When Nicodemus asked Jesus, *"How can a man be born when he is old...?"* Jesus' answer is as true today as it was at that poignant moment in history, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."*

The water in this scripture refers to the Word of God. Yes, we are born again by the Word of the Almighty God. By faith we accept what the Word of God says!

In this newness of life we are separated from the world. Our life now belongs to God and we are born again into His Kingdom. Therefore, old things pass away! All things become NEW. The word "separation" seems to be a very hard pill for today's Christian to swallow. The emphasis has somehow changed as a "paradigm" shift is taking place. Self has been put on the throne in place of Christ. Instead of living lives obedient to His Word, a mixture has entered to make the Word palatable to today's self-centered society.

We have been promised a NEW Heavens and a NEW earth - wherein dwelleth righteousness. Our eyes must be fixed on Jesus Christ as never before. It is by simple faith and trust that we will forage our way through today's abysmal myths and deceptions. As the web becomes

thicker and the atmosphere tenses - the Christian whose feet are planted solidly on the SOLID ROCK will not shake when the storms attack.

Those who are courting with NEW philosophies and teachings being labeled generically "Christian" will find that the ground under them is sinking sand. It is strange to find that leaders and pastors are some of the first today to be caught in the deception. So many have been so busy building great churches with mammoth programs that they have lost sight of the fact that they are called first of all to be Shepherds (one who guides and guards the sheep). Many Shepherds today compromise for the sake of "unity" or for fear of losing their sheep (that would not look good for the annual report).

With all the information readily available, there are still many who do not understand the deceitfulness of the New Age and how it is in direct conflict with what we believe as born-again Christians. There are many strange "doctrines" that are making tremendous inroads in the Church. Terminology that was always just linked to "off-the-wall" practices is now becoming commonplace language. No one even bats an eye when someone speaks of "centering" or even levitating in the "spirit". Has everyone undergone a paradigm shift?

Music that once was associated with the worship of the ancestors and satanic in origin, is now being played as part of the "celebration" in services. The meaning of "worship" is even subtly being changed. The hymns of the Church have been left behind in our anxiety to keep up with the lyrics and music of the "new" generation. I found a treasure of a book at a book sale entitled. "Famous Hymns of the World", published in 1905. The following was in the forward:

"Blessed be God for these hymns of penitence and faith and love! They renew within us the fervor of the days when at the Cross we first saw the light, and the burdens of our hearts rolled away; and they bring us as penitents anew to the pierced feet of Him who died to wash away our sin." - Rev. Floyd W. Tomkins

In the same book there was a yellowed CHRISTIAN HERALD published by J.C. Penney (May 25, 1929). The page had been ripped out of the above paper and used as a book-mark. The following quote was in that paper:

"Hymns in a Jazz age? Why, certainly. For the depth of feeling that brought these fine old songs into being will be recognized and will stir human hearts long after the popular-for-a-day, made-to-order lyrics that seep over into the radio week after week have been forgotten. There is something about the quality of sincerity that makes itself felt, that manages somehow to impress, a something that makes lesser works crumple for having missed."

The main concern of the article was that somehow "jazz" would find its way into the Church. Unfortunately today our young people do not even know what hymns are!

So-called "Christian" bookstores have inundated their shelves with such an admixture of New Age books that when you pick up a book on prayer, it isn't certain if it is on connecting to a Spirit Guide or genuine.

All that is being proclaimed "new age" today is actually not new at an, but a revival of old religions that have held souls captive for decades. America has sent missionaries all over the

world to preach the Gospel of salvation to those who have been blinded by the darkness caused by these lies, but now this same darkness is taking root in every area of our own society. The various tribes of Africa have had ritual markings of their bodies for many generations. This heathen custom is now on the rise in modern culture.

The 'Modern Primitives'. In a bizarre article in U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, July 31, 1995, the new pagans, witches and New Agers are using piercing of the body as "symbolic of unspecified spiritual transformation." Piercing of the body includes tattooing, corsetry, branding and scarring by knife. The article says that,

"It's a sign of the times that the more bizarre expressions of this movement keep pushing into the mainstream."

Another side of the movement is:

"...the conscious attempt to repudiate Western norms and values by adopting the marks and rings of primitive cultures."

The most frightening statement was:

"It plugs into a wider dissatisfaction with traditional Western rationality, logic and sexual norms, as well as anger at the impact of Western technology on the natural environment and anger at the state of American political and social life...the rapid spread of this movement is yet another sign that the crisis is here."

What do we have to replace Western rationality and logic? Naturally, the New Age religion which is based on feelings and "finding god within". Our learning now is based on centering for an "experience" based relationship to the Divine. It is even being taught that the scripture, "where two or three are gathered in His Name", means that this creates an energy source. That is a lie of Satan which is no more true than when we pray in a circle holding hands we are creating some kind of power. All of it is New Age deception. There is no way we connect into any source of "energy" or "power" by methodology.

But there is (true) power in the Name of Jesus! When our Source is the Word of God we are connected! We only connect to God through His Word. You said it God, and I believe what you have said! So be it! That is the anointing folks!

Video Games. The youth are sitting for hours in front of video games that are especially geared for the "transformation" of the child. They are become wards of someone who is cunningly watching in the wings to destroy their souls.

A young relative was proudly showing off his latest video game entitled, THE CHRONICLE OF PAGAN" (which all the kids were playing). On the cover of the accompanying book was a pentagram. A fearful look inside confirmed the connotation of the cover. It was a clever manual on casting spells, necromancy, sorcery, etc. In fact, in going over the manual carefully it was determined by an expert that the materials were lifted directly out of Eliphas Levi's work on the occult and black magic. It was taking the player one step at a time directly into heavy occultic regions that always were very secret. The expert on the subject said that he had

first hand knowledge as he had been deeply involved and knew people that "had gone through the portals".. Those people today are in mental institutions!

This is not just limited to one game. Parents need to check each and every video game out carefully. There is a battle going on for the mind of your children. It is becoming more clear every day that the scene is filled with a myriad of new actors who are skillfully playing to an audience of "seekers» who delight in eating of the fruit that will make them "wise". The buzzword "unity" has been the juggernaut to pull the church into the raging tide.

Scriptures have been twisted to accommodate new revelations that give place to seducing spirits.

Yet in the midst of the coming storm - the Blessed Hope of the Gospel remains eternally true.

Every time the morning sky stretches out in front of you with its hues of pink, gold and blue you know that it will not be long and it will be the Day of our Lord's return. He is coming to take His own. He is coming soon.

THE GREENING OF THE CHURCH

Lanette Irwin

In August of 1990, a two week seminar was held called, "The Greening of the Church." This was an opportunity for Christian denominations of all faiths, protestant and catholic, to join in on exploring the urgent needs facing the environment and the church. The stated purpose of course was to explore long standing Christian theology and the "environmental" responsibilities the church needs to continue living on Planet earth. This conference held workshops discussing the following:

“The fundamental theological and spiritual issues facing an ecologically sensitive church;

“The ways on which historic Christian theology may have fostered or condoned attitudes and values directly contributing to our destruction of the natural world;

(One is left wondering if Christian doctrine is not changed to the new improved version" will Christians of the old time Gospel be persecuted for ruining their planet?)

"The 'new story' of Gaia or the living earth, its functional cosmology and implications for Christian theology;

"The emerging creation-centered spirituality and theology...

"The development of interfaith action to foster environmental responsibility...

(Another ecumenical tie.)

"Tools and study resources for individual and church community..."

The second week of this conference was listed as "creating strategies for the greening of the church." This seminar was sponsored and held at the New Age learning center of Chinook Core Faculty at Whidbey Island Washington. Matthew Fox, lecturer and author of "The Coming of the Cosmic Christ" and Fr. Thomas Berry were some of the featured speakers. Chinook embraces the more hard core New Age types such as David Spangler, and Fritz Hull, a board member of Chinook.

Still on the surface, most Christians could say this is extreme and most Christians would see through New Age doctrine. Is it possible that a new theology is being laid at this level and has already been leaked into the church, with Christian terminology and theology attached? In Matthew Fox's book "The Coming of the Cosmic Christ", page 228 states "Deep ecumenism is the movement that will unleash the wisdom of all world religions... The unleashing of wisdom holds the last hope for the survival of the planet we call home..." On page 7 it offers, "The coming together of the historical Jesus and the Cosmic Christ will make Christianity whole at last."

Already there are well funded public interest groups that are publishing their environmentalists theology, which they termed "ecothology." This is a fine blend of Christianity and mysticism. One group is "The North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology" located in Washington D.C. In their Spring 1995 ECO Letter, they advertise "Ethics in an Age of Technology," by Ian Barbour's, a set of lectures titled the Gilford Lectures. In the past these same lectures were delivered by Carl Jung and Reinhold Neibuhr. These were delivered in Scotland 1990-1991 with the purpose to relate the worlds religion, philosophy and science. Any Christian who knows Carl lung's philosophy, which is pure paganism, should question any conclusion that the environmentalists are making and the scientific data collected from such sources should be suspect.

NACRE/CORE are collaborating these efforts across the country which they call PEW GLOBAL Stewardship. This is a pilot project for congregations. One of the other projects is called Earth Stewardship program for ministers and educators. NACRE has a list of books and resources you can choose from.

1. Christianity and Ecology
2. Judaism and Ecology
3. Islam and Ecology
4. Hinduism and Ecology
5. Buddhism and Ecology

The environmental concerns and the theology behind it is entering the church under the guise of "Earth Stewardship".

In the Coalition on Revival Dominionist magazine titled "Crosswinds", Vol. I, No.2, 1992, E. Calvin Beisner, a member of COR's steering committee as of 1992, writes an eight page article titled "Environmentalism or Stewardship?"

In it he states,

“Environmentalists want to reduce human population and preserve nature untouched by human hands. It ignores the effects of God's curse on the earth and man's call, as God's steward to reverse those effects...”

"So it is with man's stewardship of the earth God calls us to restore it from the curse, to multiply its resources...”

We are to transform the earth into a garden not an inner city slum. I am predicting great material wealth for the vast majority of mankind everywhere...”

If we redistribute land to everyone, redistribute wealth, take dominion over the planet, return the world to the garden of Eden, then why believe in the Rapture, or Christ's return? In fact this would also mean Satan has his lost power. In fact we are now Co-Creators with Christ! From what I can tell from the article, it implies we are to then redistribute property out of government control into private sectors and individuals to hold private property rights, so they can enforce their Mosaic laws.

Beisner insists the term environment comes from the French word meaning to turn around and is not limited to nature, but to business', houses, cars, health care, etc.

That is fine for the French! The question is it Biblical? The Reconstructionists and Dominionists can disagree with the Environmentalist Humanist agenda, but the New Agers are not Humanist. They are very spiritual and have a dominion mandate as well. The humanist agenda argument is a straw dog that has been set up by the Dominionist to create the appearance of separation between themselves and the new age movement as a whole.

Dennis Peacock, a Coalition on Revival member, has clearly stated this in his July 1988, Vol.1, No.1 newsletter called EQUITY,

"Coalition building has become an integral tool of Public Policy influence to an increasingly threatened Christian minority in America. Better known as a tactic of 'So-Called' leftists, it might seem strange that evangelical Christians would resort to a practice that seems so associated with those who apparently oppose biblical principles.

“Coalition' is most often understood as the ability of a number of diverse interest groups, often with very little common interest, to unite around a specific objective, even if under other circumstances they might be at enmity with one another...”

Amos 3:3 *"can two walk together except they agree. "*

Peacock continues:

“An inherent danger of coalition-building is to see it as an end in itself. It is an important but limited tool which allows Christians and God-fearers of very diverse traditions to fellowship in the trenches of this spiritual war. The irony of having gone through real warfare together is that you may have more in common with these fellow warriors than with members of your own tradition.”

Alvin Toller's book "Power Shift, has a whole section on Eco-theocracy:

“Across the world, meanwhile a green tide is gathering momentum too. This movement for ecological sanity is essential - a positive example of ordinary people around the world leading their leaders... This group reduces the history of our relations with nature to biblical allegory...Now we must transit to a new 'paradise' of perfect sustainability and harmony. If not we face armageddon.”

Rudolf Bahro, an influential Green theorist now living in West Germany, explicitly holds that what is needed is "theology, not ecology - the birth of a new Golden Age which cultivates...the nobility of man." He reaches back into the 13th century to quote Meister Eckhart, the founder of German mysticism.

The fact remains what is needed is a return to the simple Gospel and Love and respect for Jesus Christ. We are waiting for the Lord to transform us. He will again make all things new. We will never accomplish what only he can and will do. He does not need our help. He created this world without us. He will transform it and make it again the same way without the co-creators doctrinal manuals.

PROMISE KEEPERS DETROIT 95

Steven Decker

Promise Keepers Detroit 95, at the Pontiac Silverdome, was attended by over 82,000 men, at \$54 a person. It was a finely orchestrated brainwashing extravaganza geared to mesmerize your emotions. Using music, videos, and loud and fast motivational speakers, the crowd was taken on an emotional ride. At one point, the Speaker said, "Welcome to Woodstock, right here... There's a lot of testosterone here."

The crowd threw airplanes, beach balls, and toilet paper. They did the "wave". They threw more airplanes after they were told not to throw them. The mob was well pleased with itself. Many times they were yelling and clapping for no apparent reason other than being progressively built up into a state of emotional frenzy. Beginning with the taped music, organizers sent participants before the rally; the appeal was geared to your emotions. The same tape can be used as an excellent psychological cue to bring back all the emotions of Promise Keepers. Some of the songs were jazzed up hymns and chorus but most of them were songs specifically expressing themes and emotions of Promise Keepers.

The two day rally was well summarized by two guys talking next to me, who said, "It really doesn't matter what they teach, as long as the anointing is here." Whatever the anointing was to them, they believed Promise Keepers had the anointing.

The speakers offered many good statements, but didn't explain them Biblically. It was a nice facade on the outside but empty on the inside. They said we were there to "celebrate the Lordship of Jesus Christ", but then spent two days celebrating Promise Keepers and emotionalism.

Luis Palau

The first speaker Friday evening was Luis Palau. He started off telling a joke. The punch line was that God was neither white or black but was really Hispanic. He proceeded to use many brainwashing and sales techniques to get people to come down to the platform. The claim was that 7,000 were saved or recommitted their lives.

He read Luke 19:10-27 but never explained it or applied it. He told impassioned stories about his son turning away from God but then getting saved again. He repeatedly used the technique of getting you to say "yes" to things and then giving you the suggestion to come down to the platform. For example, he said,

"Is God working in America? - yes!...Is Jesus Christ your friend? ...Does God reign over your morals?...Does God rule over your intellect?...Is Jesus God over your sexuality?...This weekend the power of God will come over your life...God loves your family, do you believe that? - yes!...Come forward now...Come running tonight to the platform...that's what this is all about, that God touch your life tonight... Is that the kind of man you want to be..."

Parts of the gospel were presented but it was an appeal to the emotions, not from a deep conviction of sin and a clear presentation of the gospel. The people that went forward were given a New Testament Promise Keepers Bible and told to say a prayer which ended, "You have always kept your promises, help me keep mine too." Where does the Bible tell us to make promises to God?

It was implied that if you went down to the platform and said the prayer you were a Christian and could really enter into the Promise Keepers.

He made a good Reconstructionist (but poor theological) statement when he said. "Bring Jesus back to be the King of the United States of America..." Where does the Bible say we are to make Jesus King of the U.S.?

Mr. Palau said. "The only thing we are against is evil and sin in our personal lives." But what about false teaching and sin in the church?

When he mentioned "homosexuality", he didn't call it sin but said. "Are you struggling with homosexuality? Come and pray tonight." The suggestion to come forward was repeatedly given. The gravity of sin, of clearly naming it for what it is, was lacking.

The man sitting next to me during that session was in his late sixties. He said he had taught brainwashing and prison camp experiences during the Korean War. He said that Luis' message was filled with brainwashing and sales techniques. Yet he thought that was alright. The only thing that bothered him was "all the commercialism".

E.V. Bill

Mr. Hill assumed that all those who came "forward" were saved now and thus asked the question. "What do you have, now that you have accepted Jesus Christ?" He went on to give five good points but never explained any of them Biblically. Instead he told some funny and interesting little stories.

His five good points were. "If you accepted Jesus Christ you have peace with God, the peace of God, the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide you, joy and the Word of God." If he would have really preached on these five things, it would have been a great message. Instead he told a lot of stories and worked the crowd up into an emotional high. He said, "Rise up...that's why we're here...Go do it. Go do it. Go do it, turn America around...Let's go do it...Just go do it.." It was never clear what we were supposed to do.

Joe Garlington

Mr. Garlington spoke on worship and prayer and was one of the more Biblically sound speakers. Yet even with the better Biblical content, his message was geared to your emotions.

Videos

The sequence of events was music, speaker, music, video, music, speaker, music, video. The videos were very emotionally appealing. They had an emotional sound track in the background and then flashed between someone's testimony and a Promise Keepers message. They also flashed from black and white to color.

One of the videos was on "Pointmen and Ambassadors." These are men who are to infiltrate their local church with Promise Keepers. They are to be the link between Promise Keepers and the local church. They are to spread the "mission and core values of Promise Keepers to the church and the community". They are to start men's ministry and small groups (sensitivity, encounter type groups). They are to recruit, train and deploy more ambassadors. The requirements for this position are that you have a passion for prayer and desire a diversity of denominations to come into unity (Catholics included). The unity would be centered around the principles of Promise Keepers.

Another video gave advice on starting small groups using the "Next Step Kit". It was being sold for half price, only \$8.00, along with many other tapes, videos, books, magazines, tee shirts and bats.

Another video told the men that they had to get their pastors to go to the Promised Keepers Pastors Conference in Atlanta. The conference is to train the pastors in unity. They said they want to have at least 75,000 pastors there. They told the men to do whatever it takes, including paying all their expenses, to get them there. Because of their high emotional condition most men were in a very suggestible state. In some ways, the Promised Keepers have all the trappings of a pyramid scheme, offering supposed benefits to the many, while enriching the few at the top.

Bruce Wilkerson

Mr. Wilkerson spoke about "Three Chairs" – hot, lukewarm and cold. He did say some good, biblical things. It was one of the more challenging messages. Unfortunately, like all the messages, it appealed to the emotions more than the heart and mind. He ended his message with asking us to visualize moving from chair #2 to chair #1. He asked us to pray, "I repent of being in the second chair and commit to being in the first chair."

Willington Boone

Marriage was the topic for Mr. Boone. He read several scriptures and said that we should "Put the Word of God first place in our homes." He said, "you need to become a worm...You need worm training...Worm training says I'll out-serve my Wife...worm warfare..." He then talked about all the nice ways you can serve your wife, but never explained that it was impossible apart from Ephesians 5: 18, being filled with the Spirit. Any non-Christian could have used the suggestions that he gave to have a better marriage.

Like all the other speakers, he was a motivational speaker, talking loud and fast. He also ended with some reconstructionist/dominionist language. He said, "You are the generation to revolutionize this world... You're the ones...You're the army God sees...You are the seed for God to change this whole generation...You are revival about to happen." These hypnotic suggestions imply some special mission from God not really found in the Bible.

Jim Stowell

"Children at Risk" was Mr. Stowell's topic. He told many, many stories but did not "preach the Word." He gave many suggestions on becoming a better father that anyone could use, including non-Christians. Again, he did not explain that one must be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) before he can fulfill Ephesians 6:4. Later when he did mention Eph. 5:18, he didn't explain it.

He made two statements that were very out of place and unbiblical. He said, "after a 5th grade band concert, there's only one thing to do – go out and get drunk." Then he said he was just kidding. Later, he said he was driving and saw the "Holy Spirit sitting on his steering wheel." He asked that no one tell his board or he would be fired. He said we need to "affirm our children's worth and value by serving them." Where does the Bible teach this?

Tony Evans

Tony Evans was a powerful and talented speaker. He spoke on the brotherhood of believers. He used one illustration and story after another. He promoted being "cross cultural". By the end of his message, the crowd was at an emotional pitch.

Bill McCartney

The final speaker was coach McCartney. I left after Tony Evans spoke. Consequently, I did not hear Randy Philip's wife or Bill McCartney, except by listening to them on radio on the way home. Coach McCartney criticized pastors for not having unity. He hopes to see a single command to develop from the pastors' conference. He made everyone at Promise Keepers promise to adopt an inner city black church to further this unity he is seeking.

CONCLUSION

By attending Promise Keepers, my emotions were worked into a high state but I was not fed the Word of God. I was not drawn closer to God or His Word. The appeal was to draw nigh to

Promise Keepers. I had my emotions stimulated but my heart and mind were not spoken to. Everyone I talked with afterward said "it was great." But when I asked them what they got out of it they were speechless. It was symbolism over substance.