
DISCERNMENT NEWSLETTER

“...how is it that ye do not discern this time?” Luke 12:56

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Is Discernment Scriptural?

Recently Discernment Ministries received a letter from a critic. Below is an excerpt of Pastor Larry DeBruyn's informative response. It is good to be reminded of why we do what we do:

Dear _____, Your letter to Discernment Ministries is appreciated because we are always interested in what our critics have to say. Thank you for your attempt to discern the discerners.

First, discernment is based not on one verse of Scripture as you think. We would invite you to read the articles that say so as written by one of our group's members. See <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2009/10/open-letter.html>, and/or <http://apprising.org/2010/05/22/pastor-larry-debruyn-discerning-x-men/>.

Second, we would invite you to read some New Testament letters (2 Peter, Jude, 1 & 2 & 3 John, 1 & 2 Timothy) to see if the apostles invite believers to examine other people's Christian teachings to see they contain error. Church history is littered with example of devout Christians who did (We think of Martin Luther and other of the Reformers). Some even died for it (Foxe's Book of Martyrs) and many are dying for God's truth as contained in the Scriptures that bear witness to our Savior today.

Third, perhaps you are right that there's no spiritual gift of discernment in the gift passages you cite. But prophecy may involve it (1 Corinthians 14:23-25) as also the gifts of wisdom and knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8). So you are not quite correct in your understanding on this point.

Fourth, you criticize Discernment Ministries for fleshing out examples of heresy by using names. It should be pointed out that this is not without New Testament precedent. Ever hear of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 19-20)? Or Diotrephes (3 John 9)? The accusation is that using names is unchristian and unloving. Ever think that it might not be, in fact just the opposite (Jude 22-23)?

Fifth, discernment can be encouragement. Read Malachi 3:16-18. By the way, pay close attention to verse 18. Don't you think that OT example teaches how encouragement derives from discernment? Maybe, we're a little like Barnabus after all.

Sixth, by your mention of Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7) is the inference that discerners are proud? We would say that none of us are immune from this spiritual disease. But the ultimate hubris before God involves unsubmission to His Word. We are not a perfect people. But we do desire, however imperfectly, to submit to God's truth, and sometimes a thorn in the flesh is helpful to that end.

Finally, your parenthetical dig—“(Maybe Sherlock Holmes could see a clue somewhere in this scripture? Did you

consult with him?)”—was unnecessary. We're not like him. In discernment we're not concerned with clues, but with evidence, and the evidence is everywhere as we're living in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:36 ff.). The ministry is quite evident, don't you think? By the way, did you know Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a "spiritualist"?

In conclusion, we would repeat the warning of Jesus to His disciples about what would be the sign of His Coming and the end of the age. The first point of His answer was, “*See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.*” No one wants to be misled, do you? If you don't, then whether you like it or not, you're a discerner.

“Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?”
(Jesus, Luke 12:56)

The PASSION of the PRESENCE & the Purpose of the Passion

[Ed. Note: The following article is an excerpt from a recent Herescope article. This quickly became one of our most widely read posts. We are especially thankful for the assistance of Dr. Orrel Steinkamp whose insightful comments assisted our research. In this article in the newsletter we have omitted all of the footnotes, and deleted some portions of the original. To read or download the whole article, go to <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-passion-of-presence.html>. Stay tuned to the www.herescope.net blog for more in-depth writing on this topic.]

Now we come full circle to Francis Chan's appearance along with the aforementioned Jesus Culture at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) Young Adult Conference 2013 One Thing, which just wrapped up Tuesday, December 31st.... In my opinion IHOP is using Francis Chan's comments at One Thing as propaganda in order to borrow Chan's credibility within the wider evangelical community and promote their leader Mike Bickle. How foolish of Francis Chan to just gush enthusiastically:

"I go, man, there's a lot of great things going on [at IHOP]. And today was the first time I ever met Mike Bickle. And, I love that guy. I do. ...there's people who told me not to hang out with him. Like, you know, words like 'creepy' came up. And yet, I get to know this guy and I'm going, 'Man, I love his heart.' And I just want to publicly say I love Mike Bickle." (Francis Chan)

IHOP In An Era of Celebrity-Driven Christianity

Evangelical leaders are currently rushing to associate themselves with major youth events that are becoming increasingly popular in the Christian world. These mass youth rallies were developed over the course of several decades by Mike Bickle's IHOP (International House of

Prayer) movement, which is interconnected to the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). IHOP and the NAR share both personnel and doctrine, with roots that go back into the Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God cult. Previously we have extensively documented the history of the camaraderie of IHOP and NAR.

This rapidly rising youth movement in evangelicaldom is characterized by its emphasis on generating fervent *passion*. Why are evangelical leaders rushing onto this bandwagon? Why are Francis Chan, John Piper, Matt Chandler and other prominent teachers placing themselves on center stage (literally) of these IHOP-orchestrated mass rallies?

Superficially, one might assume that it is merely for the immediate stardom and pizzazz that comes with such celebrity status in a youth event rocking with fervor, bright lighting, and loud acclamations. *What an ego trip!* But is it conceivable that these leaders also happen to agree with some of the IHOP doctrine? After all, it is impossible to separate the activities at these youth events without encountering the foundational beliefs that give rise to them. Of course, it can be argued that just because an esteemed evangelical leader shares the stage with adherents and promoters of these IHOP/NAR doctrines doesn't mean he/she agrees with their teaching. However, it is important to note that an evangelical leader's very appearance at these events lends legitimacy and credibility to this movement—a movement that has been aggressively attempting to distance itself from its former cult status, remake its image and become respectable.

The doctrine of the IHOP believes that these mass youth stadium rallies are for the “purpose” of invoking the “presence” of God through generated “passion.” These three terms – *passion*, *presence* and *purpose* – are derived from some very strange esoteric doctrines that originated in the Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God cult.

“Presence” is popular. Recently Warren Smith published a book titled *“Another Jesus” Calling* in which he made us aware of an increasingly popular belief that Christians can invoke the “presence” of “God” (or “Jesus”) by their contemplative activities. But there is another practice of “presence” that is taking the evangelical world by storm. In the IHOP/NAR the passionate invocation of the “presence” (which they call the “Spirit”) isn't just done via contemplative meditation. They believe that the “presence” is achieved via the elaborate staging of flashy lighting, noisy music and hypnotic manipulations in the context of what they call “worship.” The clear intent is to create an altered state of consciousness – a spiritual/emotive state in which the participant is susceptible to heretical suggestions, “feels” closer to God, and learns that he/she may even become a god. Thus their “passion” is believed to invoke the “presence” of God.

Invoking God's “Presence” via “David's Tabernacle”

A recently published *Rolling Stone* article, “Love and Death

In the House of Prayer,” explains IHOP's history and beliefs, and describes their “passionate” form of worship:

At IHOP's frequent, **frenetic** conferences, attendees learn that they are “in the early days of the generation in which Jesus returns,” as IHOP founder Mike Bickle puts it....

In 1983, Bickle says, God instructed him to “establish 24-hour prayer in the spirit of the **tabernacle of David**.” The tabernacle was the tent erected by King David to house the Ark of the Covenant after the conquest of Jerusalem; it became **a dwelling place of God and a site of ecstatic worship....**

Bickle believes that **unceasing, euphoric worship and song** at IHOP and in prayer rooms across the globe, which should never close or be empty, will promote **passionate intimacy** with the Lord, revive the church and demolish demonic strongholds. And so IHOPers pray all day and night, through blizzards and blackouts, in hours-long sessions of **mesmeric, musical worship, repeating the same phrases over and over**, expecting to precipitate the Great Tribulation and the final battle between good and evil that precedes the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

This is IHOP's most alluring tenet: God needs IHOPers to effect the Tribulation and bring Christ back to Earth. “The church causes the Great Tribulation,” Bickle has preached. Before founding IHOP, he argued that “God intends us to be like **gods**. God has conceived in his heart of a plan to make a race of men that would live like **gods** on Earth.” ...At IHOP, where prophetic experiences are endemic, the mortal and divine commingle liberally.

The vanguard of God's **End Times army**, according to Bickle, will be made up of **young people**, or “**forerunners**,” **seers** specially attuned to the will of the Lord, “the **best of all the generations** that have ever been seen on the face of the Earth.” For seven years of Tribulation, they will battle the Antichrist....

IHOP is not the only charismatic movement in America to adopt this theology of **aggressive prayer**. A constellation of ministries shares its vision. Together, they make up what has been called the **New Apostolic Reformation**, a decades-old rebellion against traditional Christianity that counts millions of adherents worldwide; it has become such a force in evangelical America that Texas Gov. Rick Perry hosted an NAR prayer rally in Houston for his 2012 presidential campaign. As prayer rooms are established in ever more locations, according to NAR, the “**seven mountains** of culture” – government, business, family, educational systems, the media, arts and religion – will fall under its influence.

This allegorical “Tabernacle of David” (TOD), said to be the “dwelling place of God” by Bickle, is the key to understanding the rationale for these frenzied mass youth rallies.

30 years ago (in 1983) God spoke to [Bickle] to do 24 hour prayer with worship in the Spirit of the **Tabernacle of David**. For 16 years this word hung on their wall until they actually began to do it in 1999.

In 2002 Dr. Orrel Steinkamp authored a key paper on “The Restoration of Davidic Warfare/Worship,” which exposed Bickle's beliefs. Dr. Steinkamp explained how Bickle's TOD teaching had its roots in the old Latter Rain cult:

The **Tabernacle of David** (TOD) teaching is not new at all but was clearly a part of the restoration scheme of **Latter Rain** teachers. George Warnock, writing during the hey day of the Latter Rain (early 50's), often referred to the **Tabernacle of David**. It was in the mid 60's however, that Latter-Rain restoration teachers... began to flesh out TOD teaching.

The TOD teaching is based, in part, on a faulty hermeneutic of Acts 15:16 and Amos 9:11. According to Dr. Steinkamp, "Those promoting the restoration of Davidic Worship/Warfare base everything on the assertion that this refers to the form of worship that was employed in David's tabernacle." In this Latter Rain cult teaching they believe that their TOD worship can manipulate power in the heavens:

Worship is taught as something which actually **accomplishes something in the spirit world** and is linked to prophetic revelation and spiritual warfare.... [They] are proclaiming that God is restoring to the overcoming end time church forms of worship that purportedly occurred in **David's tabernacle**.

Music is an essential component of this Tabernacle of David worship system. Mike Bickle of IHOP has written that "one key aspect of God's kingdom being expressed on earth as it is in heaven will be in the realm of anointed music and singing." Another writer explains more of the theological construct:

"...Bible teachers of our day... have discovered God's anointed plan to restore the **Tabernacle of David**, which is the **perfect pattern of praise and worship** all **New** Testament believers are to follow. The restoration of the **pattern** of praise and worship that once prevailed in King David's day will **release** a prophetic stream of praise in our day that will **energize** the church with **new power and demolish the works of Satan**. Believers will approach God in new ways such as singing in tongues to activate revelations, prophesying in song, dancing rhythmically in the Spirit and all the traditional charismatic methods (hand clapping, raising of hands etc.). **Those who resist this restoration of worship will fall short of God's standard** and will continue to operate in a faulty form of worship and **will be in danger** of the **glory** of God departing from their churches."

The above reference to the "glory of God" means God's "presence." They believe their frenzied worship activities will bring down "the glory of God." In the 1990s, IHOP leaders took these Latter Rain cult teachings on the Tabernacle of David and put them into practice by launching a global prayer initiative (sometimes referred to as "Harp & Bowl" worship):

"The International House of Prayer [IHOP] is a 24-hours a day, citywide, worship and warfare, inter-denominational prayer ministry serving the body of Christ. This ministry is modeled after the **tabernacle of David** with singers and musicians being released to lead corporate intercession and worship 24-hours a day. This is an **effective method** for the churches in the county to come together and DWELL in unity so that God can **unlock** His commanded blessing.... This House of Prayer for All Nations ministry includes continuous praise and prayer **dethroning the principalities and power over a region**

declaring Gods sovereignty. This... "Harp & Bowl" worship and warfare prayer gatherings... is at the **heart of David's Tabernacle**."

"On May 7 1999, Mike Bickle and the IHOP ministry team dedicated a building to facilitate this ministry that began with 13 hours a day of intercession and **spiritual warfare** led by trained worship teams. In Sept. 1999,... they completed the full 24-hour a day schedule with singers and musicians leading each session. **They believe that this model is the most effective context**.... Their prayer goal is to see a 24 hour a day, citywide, House of Prayer (in the spirit of the **Tabernacle of David**) established in every major city of the earth before the Lord's return...."

"We along with all of creation are longing for the unveiling of Gods power as **God waits in heaven** for the bowl of the prayers of the saints to be filled up so He can show His power."

This last phrase in the quotation above is a direct reference to the Manifest Sons of God (MSOG) cult belief that they themselves will manifest and become "the glory." This teaches that there will be a

powerful endtimes revelation of **believers as glorified, transformed and perfected, and possessed by Christ** to such a degree that they become One with him and **become a living corporate Son of God on the earth, ruling with him**. This will be accomplished by the descent of "the glory" in a final overwhelming event that will transfigure all those who receive it.

Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God doctrine teaches that the "glory" of God (His "presence") must descend upon the church, and that this "glory" will transform and perfect them so that they can become the "literal corporate Son of God on earth." This core doctrine forms the basis of what is being taught by Mike Bickle and the other leaders in the IHOP/NAR. There is an essential eschatological component to it—specifically that of dominion and rule over the earth. This Dominion is the "purpose" behind generating all of the "passion" about God's "presence." Adherents of this worship system explain how their militant prayer and aggressive praise will cause God's "glory" (His "presence") to manifest "in the church":

- There is even a dimension of **spiritual warfare and Kingdom authority released** during times of high praises to God....
- **Praise is a weapon of war**, because **praise arouses the Lord** to a place of zeal. **Praise releases judgment against our enemies**.
- Wherever there is true worship, we also see a release of a dimension of **authority** that is characteristic of the **apostolic**. **Heaven's authority visits earth....** Restored dimensions of worship release **restored dimensions of authority**, out of which **apostolic order is released** on the earth.
- Prayer is essential for the **release of heaven's rule on the earth....** Prayer **fuels the fire of God's manifested Glory** in the church.

This "manifested" Glory is God's manifested "presence" said to be operating in and through the church. The IHOP/NAR eschatology also teaches that there will be a "restoration" of Old Testament style "apostles" and "prophets" in the endtimes. The purpose of this "restoration" of this apostolic

“authority” is so the church can become properly “aligned” to rule the earth. This strategic apostolic alignment for dominion (networking hierarchical structures) is embedded in their teaching about the Tabernacle of David:

David's rule on earth represented **God's rule through man**.... A restoration of **David's fallen tabernacle** is not only a return to worship, but a return to God's rule among men.

There is an “element of judgment upon sinners and the rebellious who fail to conform to this Davidic Rule.” This judgment is ominous – they believe that their extreme worship will jumpstart things in the heavenly realm to come down to earth. They look forward to an endtime scenario where they will act both “in and through” a “warrior” Jesus, implementing His will and “purpose,” so that they can become rulers and judges over the earth. For example:

When we are releasing the ministry of the harp... [and] of the bowls... we then see His rule as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah begin to happen in and through his people. We have known Jesus as the Lamb of God, our Savior, but soon we will see Him **manifested as a Lion, a ferocious Warrior** and the King and Judge of all the earth. ... He is about to be revealed as **Ruler and Judge**. With that revelation will also come the realization that the last-days church is being called **with Him and through Him** into that **same role of ruler and judge**....

Note the eschatology: “They believe that Christ must come TO His Church before He comes FOR His Church.” They believe that through their “passion” they will embody Christ (the “presence”) and thus become the instruments for His dreadful judgment (the “purpose”). This faulty theology puts the church in the place of Christ, reading into the book of Revelation as if it were an instruction manual for how the church can wreak judgment upon the face of the earth. Keep in mind that even though in recent years Bickle has tried to distance himself from the more aggressive military aspects of this judgment, his Latter Rain associates have continued with their violent prophecies and rhetoric.

A related IHOP heresy involves a corruption of a familiar Bible verse, Ps. 22:3 which states: “*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*” They teach that God’s “presence” actually “inhabits” their worship. The more fervent, frenzied and feverish their worship, the more God’s “presence” will come down and “inhabit” them:

the idea of God **enthroned upon praise** actually mean that when we praise and worship God long enough and strong enough **he actually comes down in his manifest presence to "inhabit" the Church** - sometimes as a visible glory cloud of blue smoke or an overwhelming sensation of heaviness, or whatever....

Dr. Steinkamp summarizes the concerns about these IHOP Tabernacle of David worship beliefs and practices:

Beyond the fact that “Tabernacle of David” teaching is simply wrong and an example of illegitimate restoration teaching, there are pastoral and practical concerns. Rather than worship directed to God, simply to express praise, Davidic worship/warfare is practiced in order to produce a so-called spiritual effect. It hints at a kind of **spiritual formula or recipe**. The teaching that

restored Davidic worship somehow allows or even attracts the physical manifestations of God's **presence** seems to border on **spiritual magic**.

Next, we will examine this specific “spiritual formula or recipe” that is employed in order to invoke the “presence.” This formula involves generating a lot of “passion.”

The Formula for “Passion”

John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard movement, and later a key force in launching the obscure “Kansas City Prophets” (now IHOP) into the mainstream, is the original architect of a formulaic worship method. Wimber’s method has gone on to become mainstream throughout all Christendom, and is even utilized widely in Catholic and Protestant denominations. His formula relied on five phases of passionate worship to “invoke” the Holy Spirit’s “presence.” In a 1995 article Wimber described his worship method as “Phases in the heart.” He described his 5 phases as an “experience of God”:

To understand how we worship God, it is helpful to learn about our fellowship’s history, which goes back to 1977. At that time my wife, Carol, was leading a small group of people in a home meeting that evolved into the Anaheim Vineyard....

In the Vineyard we see five basic phases of worship, phases through which leaders attempt to lead the congregation. Understanding these phases is helpful in our **experience** of God. Keep in mind that as we pass through these phases **we are headed toward one goal: intimacy with God**.

Phase 4 is “a zenith, a climatic point, not unlike physical lovemaking” – in other words, pure “passion.” This whipped-up sensual passion culminates in a “visitation” from God (i.e., His “presence”):

We have expressed what is in our hearts and minds and bodies, and now it is time to wait for God to respond. Stop talking and wait for him to speak, to move. I call this, the fourth phase, **visitation**: The almighty God **visits** his people.

Wimber gives no criteria for discerning whether some other spiritual “presence” might have been invoked through this frenzy (e.g., 2 Cor. 11:14). Al Dager summarized the multitude of problems associated with Wimber’s “Method Ministry” approach to worship:

There were many ways in which Wimber's attempts at **signs and wonders** differed from the simple, direct, and unailing ministry of the Holy Spirit.... Their methods include **inner healing techniques, visualization, meditation, and psychological integration**.

The evangelical world, desensitized by the allurements and attractions of this style of worship to their senses, was then ready to make adjustments to their doctrinal beliefs as well.

Mainstreaming the “Passion”

John Wimber believed that conjured up “passion” could invoke God’s “presence.” This belief then merged with the heresies of the “Kansas City Prophets.” Wimber’s formula for worship combined with the doctrines of the Latter Rain

cult, resulting in a powerful new synthesis of error. By the early 1990s the IHOP leaders were anxious to put a global prayer movement in operation. "Some of the main prophets and/or leaders in the movement included Paul Cain, Mike Bickle, Bob Jones, Rick Joyner, John Paul Jackson, Francis Frangipane, and others." As we have summarized previously:

- IHOP is just one arm of a multi-faceted group (with many names, entities and offshoots) known as the "Kansas City Prophets" that has been around since the mid-1980s.
- These Kansas City "prophets" are leaders who track a direct lineage back to the old Latter Rain cult.
- John Wimber became an overseer of the KC group in the late 1980s when their cult excesses became public and controversial, and set them up under his Vineyard denomination.
- John Wimber was a mentor to C. Peter Wagner and vice versa, and the two of them have a history that tracks back into the mid 1970s at Fuller Theological Seminary where they concocted doctrines together.
- C. Peter Wagner's "Third Wave" movement, the predecessor to the NAR, was founded on Wimber's signs and wonders mysticism.
- C. Peter Wagner's "New Apostolic Reformation" was founded on the convergence of the mystical streams of John Wimber, the Kansas City group, and Fuller Theological Seminary.

This history of John Wimber's association with IHOP becomes important because Bickle held a very specific view about the necessary "purpose" for generating extreme "passion" in an "army" of impressionable youth. This youthful army was destined, according to their Latter Rain prophets, to become the foot-soldiers for Dominionism on earth:

The Latter Rain prophecies about the necessity of a **NEW BREED** of youth for an endtime revival were given by Kansas City Prophets Bob Jones, Mike Bickle and Paul Cain in the late 1980s. Bob Jones, in a conversation with Mike Bickle, described a vision in which he saw "**elect ed seeds**" that would be an "**end generation**" that would be predestined to inherit all things." He claimed they would "set the church on the proper foundations.... They'll birth the church.... be the leaders of the last day church.... [and be] **the best of all the generations.**" He claimed **they would "move into things of the supernatural" to the point where they would actually "put death itself underneath their feet."**... This **New Breed would be a "warfare" generation** that would "take the promised land" and "possess it."

Mike Bickle replied that this "**end-time army**" would have "300,000 enlistment notices" for the "next generation." This "300,000... would be the main leadership over one billion converts in the earth" and they would "bear a distinct **anointing.**" This army generation was referred to in racial terms as "**the best of every blood line** in the earth" and "superior" to every other "**seed**" on earth. Bickle explained that there would be a "**time of war** and transitioning of whole new orders in the body."

Thus, in one ominous sense, IHOP's revved-up "passion" is necessary to create a heightened warfare mentality in the troops. This is the Latter Rain teaching that a generation of youth is arising that would become an elite, special army on

earth who could achieve superior supernatural feats that no prior generation had yet done. One IHOPer has just publicly confirmed that this was the recent teaching that he and others received:

...over the next five years I saw a whole group of friends get pulled into a whirlpool of self-heroic narcissism. I witnessed at close quarters the devastating consequences of thinking that we can defy the natural laws of age and death. We were going to do what so many Christians before us had failed to do, because we were truly special. Bullets would bounce off of us; the devil would flee at our approach. A new world was about to begin, bathed in the glorious light of a cosmic revolution.

This profound sense of spiritual elitism, of unique purpose and special destiny, then becomes a central facet of the *esprit de corps* of the IHOP movement.

Becoming the "Presence"

Mike Bickle developed an endtime scenario, called "Forerunner Eschatology," which teaches the Latter Rain belief that

"Prior to Jesus Christ's physical return, His living **presence** will companion the church in ever increasing power. During this time the visible **glory** of the Lord will rise and appear upon God's people."

The "presence" according to Latter Rain eschatology, is when Christ will come to indwell the church, thus there "will be a special "glory" or "presence" anointing released for mobilizing the army of the Lord" to take Dominion over the earth. This is *not* talking about the literal physical return of Christ Jesus:

The **Glory**, in the Latter Rain understanding, is the **visible manifestation of the Spirit**... [D]eceived Christians are being led to expect a **manifested spirit** and *not* the visible return of the Lord Jesus. I believe the way we are headed is into teaching about the return of the 'lord' to his church, in glory, before (or perhaps even instead of?) the physical return of Jesus.

Dr. Orrel Steinkamp explains the theology of this indwelling "glory" or "presence":

...some Dominion teachers assert that Jesus can be an ongoing incarnation of God in His body (church) upon the earth. Consequently scriptures pertaining to Christ's ruling on earth are often seen as referring to **the church** rather than to Jesus. The church is viewed as a kind of Virgin Mary who must give birth to Jesus the indwelling spirit. Francis Frangipane teaches a similar message:

"When the Spirit of Christ comes into the physical world, He must enter through a physical body. When Christ first entered our world as a child, it was Mary whom God chose to give Christ birth. Mary's life symbolized the qualities the church must possess to walk in the fullness of Christ. **God is preparing us** as He did Mary **to give birth to the ministry of His Son.** Even now, in the spiritual womb of the virgin church, the Holy **purpose** of Christ is growing, awaiting maturity, ready to be born in the power and timing of God. The virgin church is in labor and in pain to give birth...."

Francis Frangipane, a longtime associate of Bickle, has written extensively about this “presence.” In a recent *ElijahList* article, Frangipane explained his view of “presence” by mentioning a dream he had in 1973 where he was “overwhelmed by the intense fire of His presence.” Frangipane stated that that this “presence” had to do with heaven coming to earth, an eschatological scenario:

...the **emanation of Christ's presence** was like a burning fire upon my consciousness. A great procession of heavenly beings was descending through a night sky; I knew that this was a glimpse of **Heaven coming to Earth**....Instantly I was utterly overwhelmed by the intensity of the Lord's **presence**. I felt that I could not... bear the increase of His **glory**. It was as though my very existence would be consumed by the **blast furnace** of His radiance....**The radiance of His presence will increasingly pour into the spiritual realms surrounding our world....** Simultaneously two events will manifest on earth, they will be the result of one, eternal source. The same increasing **presence that causes wrath to descend upon the wicked** will cause God's **glory** to be seen upon the righteous.

Notice the last sentence. That this “same increasing presence” will cause “wrath to descend upon the wicked.” This sort of “presence” is the dark side of the “Forerunner Eschatology” taught by Bickle:

At the end of December 2008, Bickle ratcheted up his end-time enthusiasm by passionately announcing that IHOP's **OneThing Conference** would mark a major defining moment within the IHOP prayer movement, and would primarily center around his interpretation and implementation of the Book of Revelation. Bickle declared that it was time for the prayer movement to realize that it will be the **primary agent** to transition human history to the age to come through “prayers of faith that not only heal, but also **kill**,” releasing the heavenly **arsenals** through intercession that will strike the Antichrist's political, military, and economic power bases across the earth. The end times will reveal a “**killng Jesus**” who is **covered with blood** as He marches through Jordan to free Jerusalem while engaging the Antichrist's army in physical combat.

Based on Bickle's end-time teaching, Jesus' second coming has preconditions. He teaches that Jesus will not return until the global church is crying out “Come, Lord Jesus” with a full understanding of her identity as the Bride of Christ. Jesus will only return when the church is functioning in the unity of the Spirit and is anointed in prayer to release the destructive end-time tribulation judgments.

Notice how this “passionate” Bride of Christ is wearing combat boots. If one grasps that “Jesus” in Latter Rain eschatology means the church acting as His agent (or actually incarnating Christ), then this becomes a particularly disturbing scenario. Although most often couched in the language of prayer and worship, there is a continual reference to physical violence. Most of the Latter Rain teachers have talked about engaging in a literal, physical violence, not just prayer warfare or hyper-spiritual passionate worship. Note Bickle's endtime teaching:

Bickle envisions that the end-time forerunner church will be an

advanced “apostolic” movement. They will experience “greater things” than the apostles themselves. They will function as the last day Moses who through **prayer releases God's plagues** on the Antichrist, the end-time Pharaoh. Bickle emphasizes that during the end times, Moses' miracles and the miracles of the Book of Acts will be combined and multiplied on a global level as the **praying church looses God's judgments** on the earth. This is why Bickle calls the Book of Revelation the “End-Times Book of Acts,” meaning that the Book of Revelation reveals the acts of the Holy Spirit that will be demonstrated through the end-time praying church.

Bickle imagines that millions of praying Christians will one day be unified in prayer by knowing exactly how and when to pray next because the judgments and events in the Book of Revelation are numbered and in sequential chronological order.... [T]he end-time **church will be able to loose or bind God's judgments** exactly as they unfold in history....

By praying Revelation's Great Tribulation events into existence, this will result in billions of men, women and children being killed.

Passion and Intimacy

In order to activate passion, there are no holds barred. Lust is considered a viable method of inducing an altered state of consciousness; and it should be noted that sexual lust is part of many occult worship systems. There is considerable evidence that IHOP generated this sort of “passion” purposefully to excess:

One July day in 1988, Mike Bickle was sitting in his office, reading a wedding card inscribed with a verse from the Song of Solomon. “Jesus, seal my heart with your seal of love,” Bickle spontaneously prayed. Unaccountably, he began to weep. The phone rang. A prophet had heard the “audible voice of the Lord” for Bickle: The Song of Solomon, a dialogue between King Solomon and his beloved, should become a focus of Bickle's ministry. It eventually came to Bickle that true believers must see Jesus “through the eyes of a bride with loyal, devoted love” – they must “*feel* loved and in love” with Christ. **Without this intimacy in worship, Christ would not return to Earth.**

But the Song of Solomon is a paean to sexual desire. “Let the king bring me into his chambers” and “kiss me with the kisses-of his mouth,” the beloved says. “His fruit” is “sweet to my taste.” IHOP's website states that one of its prayer guides, Bridal Intercession, “presents prayer as the joyful and romantic communion between the lover and his beloved. . . . Readers will find themselves . . . eager to encounter this lovely Lord who is their bridegroom.”

Many critics, observing that IHOP recruits post-pubescent youth, have wondered where, if they are to approach their Lord as Solomon's beloved approaches Solomon, their **imaginings** are supposed to go. “[Jesus] is not coming until the people of God are crying out globally in intercession with a bridal identity,” Bickle has preached. If the Second Coming depends upon “romantic communion” with Christ, and the alternative is satanic hegemony, then any error in worship should be made on the side of **erotic intimacy – to lust and repent** is surely better than abandoning Jesus in his hour of need.

Bickle makes a point of warning his followers that bridal

theology is not sexual. To IHOP's detractors, though, the introduction of any suggestion of sensuality into worship invites transgression. Aggravating the **libidinal diciness**, they argue, is the nature of that worship. IHOPers spend 20, 30 or more hours every week in the prayer room, often for three or four hours at a time.

Across the IHOP complex, in cafeterias, hallways and the prayer room, music composed to enhance the **ecstatic experience** is "omnipresent," according to an ex-member. Among the lyrics to two popular songs: "God is a lover looking for a lover/So he fashioned me" and "Do you understand what you do to me? . . . How you ravish my heart with just one glance?" Some former IHOPers have talked of being **addicted** to it – they become nervous and irritable when they turn it off. Another IHOPer has written about **addiction** to the sedative atmosphere of the prayer room itself: "A common refrain around anxious, discouraged IHOPers is, 'I just gotta get to the prayer room.'"

"Very quickly, there were **sensual escapades with God**," a former intern says, meaning that some people's **private imaginings turned explicit** after exposure to IHOP's "bridegroom" Christ. She says that an instructor told her, "God is using his word to kiss you." The intern heard stories of **IHOPers fantasizing about having "orgies with Jesus" and "sex with God."**

This type of teaching is rampant throughout the IHOP model of worship. Clearly the leaders are

creating lustful appetites for a sensual Jesus. Their Jesus is an imposter and the spiritual experiences they enjoy are not "intimacy with God" but spiritual fornication. Let us be clear; passions, desires, emotions, and feelings are sensual and creating an appetite for sensual spiritual experiences is the goal of IHOP's Passion for Jesus Conference.

Yet in the context of generating this lust, there is another equally efficient force at work: deprivation.

Contemplative Ascetic "Passion"

One way in which to exacerbate the lustful intimacy of hormone-challenged youth is to advocate an ascetic lifestyle that deprives the flesh of even basic needs such as nutrition and sleep. Under this highly charged environment, emotions and passions become vulnerable to diverse intense stimuli, especially including the spiritual temptation to sin. Indeed, there is a "Wilderness Lifestyle," a monastic-like component to the IHOP experience, which resembles much of today's contemplative activities:

Bickle claims that "on May 7, 1997, the Lord spoke to me about believing Him to raise up 10,000 forerunners who live in the spirit of John the Baptist as friends of the Bridegroom...."

... **IHOP leader Lou Engle** encourages young Christians to take Old Testament **Nazarite vows** based on Numbers 6:1-21, a practice not taught in the New Testament.

To undergird his forerunner eschatology, **Bickle exhorts Christians to follow the "wilderness lifestyle" of an Old Testament prophet**, instead of modeling their lives completely on Jesus' servant lifestyle as lived out by the New Testament apostles (Phil. 2:1-11), none of whom mention John the Baptist

as a life example for Christians to follow.

In fact, this most basic deprivation of 1) natural human affection and 2) common everyday affairs of life can be a mark of a cult. And the most recent revelation about IHOP is that this organization clearly has troubles with cult-like atrocities, including the recent murder of one of its members. According to news accounts, Bethany Deaton was allegedly murdered by Micah Moore, who was having a sexual relationship with her husband Tyler and others in their house.

Tyler had "groomed" him [Moore] to be part of their sexual group. The men said that Tyler was their "spiritual leader." He was "manipulative" and exercised "control over the members of the household." He characterized the **sexual activity** as a "**religious experience.**"

Tyler Deaton, who reportedly battled homosexuality, seemed to have been taken in by Rick Joyner's strange eschatological vision (written in a book), *The Final Quest*. Very quickly a cult-like oppressiveness settled over this group of IHOP young adults, some of whom self-professed to be "apostles" and were apparently not rebuked or discouraged by Bickle. It is reported that

Deaton often played IHOP music when he presided over worship, and the members referred to Christ as "the bridegroom" and to themselves as his "brides." For most, **the worship experience was spiritual, not sensual**, but Deaton and at least one other person were "really into the bridegroom stuff," according to an ex-member. Deaton pressed people to enter a prayerful state and "cuddle with Jesus," says an ex-member.

But anything beyond holding hands was judged to be iniquitous. "Marriage prophecies" determined dating partners. According to members, such prophecies were explicitly discouraged by IHOP, but they cropped up in the group not long after IHOP theology sank in. Suddenly, everyone had a prophecy or was the object of one.

The story of this cult-within-a-cult tells of "passion" becoming unbridled in a climate of religious extremism. It ended up precipitating the "drugging and sexual assaults" and violent death of Bethany Deaton. Note this disturbing revelation:

Certain details in the confession suggest that the men may have understood the assaults described to be **religious acts**.

Notice the unbridled spiritualizing that justified these violent acts described above. In this tragic story the "passion" of the "presence" culminated in a horrifying deadly "purpose." This is the *same script* used by Bickle and the other IHOP leaders in describing their endtime eschatological scenario. It is any wonder that their followers used this script for their own personal passionate vendettas?....

[Readers are encouraged to read the full version of this posted on the Herescope blog, which includes the conclusion.]