

GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION (SBC) NOW PROMOTING THE CULT OF RICHARD FOSTER

By Rev. Ken Silva, Southern Baptist pastor-teacher, Sep 14, 2008

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. ([Colossians 2:8](#))

CSM Of Apostate Roman Catholic Mystics Now Considered “Protestant”

Unfortunately in this piece [Apprising Ministries](#) must show you that [Georgia Baptist Convention](#) (GBC), which is the State Convention of the [Southern Baptist Convention](#) for the state of Georgia ([Online source](#)), has followed the egregious decision of [Baptist State Convention of North Carolina](#) (BSCNC) of the [Southern Baptist Convention](#) to not even attempt to hide its open embrace of the dubious doctrines of the spurious [Spiritual Formation](#) (SF) promulgated by [The Cult of Guru Richard Foster](#) as a viable approach to Protestant spirituality.

As I pointed out in [Apostasy, Contemplative Spirituality/Mysticism \(CSM\) in the SBC and Disease in the Church](#) with evangelicalism’s lust for so-called “Christian” mysticism we are right now immersed in an epidemic of me-no-wanna-see-i-tis. A couple of examples would be the feature interview with [Living Spiritual Teacher](#) and [Quaker](#) mystic [Richard Foster](#) in this month’s edition of *Christianity Today* magazine discussed in [Christianity Today Promoting the Cult of Richard Foster](#) and [Christianity Today Promoting the Roman Catholic Mystic Catherine of Siena](#).

But you need to understand this highly subjective and spiritually corrupt [Contemplative Spirituality/Mysticism](#) (CSM) with its [Contemplative/Centering Prayer](#) (CCP), all of which flowered in the antibiblical monastic traditions of apostate [Roman Catholicism](#), is spreading as a cancer within the American Christian Church. As you’ll also see below with an able assist from ordained Southern Baptist minister [Dallas Willard](#) his spiritual twin “Roshi” Richard Foster, both of whom according to [Brian McLaren](#) “key mentors” of the [Emerging Church](#), is right now spreading these so-called “spiritual disciplines” and “practices” primarily

culled from Roman Catholic and Quaker mystics throughout the Body of Christ.

With this as the necessary backdrop we turn now specifically to the GBC website. If we follow the link for *Discipleship & Family Ministries* we will then find the obligatory link for “[Spiritual Formation](#)” where we’re informed “Spiritual Formation is the on-going process of maturation into Christlikeness ([Ephesians 4:11-13](#)).” Then GBC tells us that this SF:

Spiritual Formation is the on-going process of maturation into Christlikeness ([Ephesians 4:11-13](#)) It is lifelong in the sense that one never is to stop growing in their development of the mind of Christ. It transforms a person’s values and behavior and results in ministry to others...

Dallas Willard, a Christian philosopher and author, helps us to understand the goal of spiritual formation. He has written, “As Jesus’ disciple I am learning from him how to live my life as he would live my life if he were I.” *SPIRITUAL FORMATION* is painful because of the transformation of our character, but we can be encouraged because of God’s promise to us to enable that transformation. ([Online source](#))

However, there’s a whole lot more to the story with Willard as I expose in [Delusions of Dallas Willard](#) with an able assist from my friend Bob DeWaay, pastor of [Twin City Fellowship](#) who also has an excellent ministry called [Critical Issues Commentary](#). It’s beyond the scope of this work to cover Willard’s false teachings in the area of SF so I will refer the interested reader to DeWaay’s scholarly expose [The Dangers of Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Disciplines: A Critique of Dallas Willard and The Spirit of the Disciplines](#) where he has already quite capably Biblically dismantled these “disciplines” of neo-Pietism.

Here we simply tell you that Bob DeWaay is dead on target when he says:

To hear evangelicals like Dallas Willard and Richard Foster tell us that we need practices that were never spelled out in the Bible to become more like Christ or to get closer to God is astonishing... The ideas of total depravity, the wrath of God against sin, the blood atonement, and the cross are either absent or distorted in Willard’s theology. What replaces these truths is the hope that we will realize our potential through tapping into the spiritual kingdom of God. This is to be done by the use of spiritual disciplines to

obtain the necessary power to transform the world. The terminology that Willard uses is strange and unbiblical...

[His] ideas are more akin to Eastern Religion than Biblical Christianity... The spiritual disciplines that are supposedly necessary for spiritual formation are not defined in the Bible. If they were, there would be a clear description of them and concrete list... ([Online source](#))

Quaker Mystic Considered A Teacher Of Proper Evangelical “Protestant” Spirituality

But at this point you might be wondering why the title GBC Promotes the Cult of Richard Foster? Well, if we go to [The Church and Spiritual Disciplines](#) link at the GBC website who should pop up at this evangelical “Protestant” but the highly ecumenical Guru of Contemplation himself:

Twenty-six years ago Richard Foster wrote a book entitled *Celebration of Discipline* that has made a significant contribution to the church of Jesus Christ. The book examines some classic spiritual practices or exercises that enable spiritual growth. Some of these are Bible reading, prayer, study, meditation, worship, and service... Spiritual disciplines are not ends in themselves even though they are wonderful practices for the Christian. ([Online source](#))

Is GBC serious; *Celebration of Discipline* (CoD) has made a positive contribution to the Body of Christ? “Spiritual disciplines” some of which “are more akin to Eastern Religion than Biblical Christianity” like the transcendental meditation-lite of [Contemplative/Centering Prayer](#) (CCP) “are wonderful practices for the Christian”?

Well, consider below what Dr. Gary Gilley says about Foster’s book CoD in his excellent series on [Mysticism](#):

Celebration of Discipline alone, not even referencing Foster’s other writings and teachings and ministries, is a virtual encyclopedia of theological error. We would be hard pressed to find in one so-called evangelical volume such a composite of false teaching. These include faulty views on the subjective leading of God (pp. 10, 16-17, 18, 50, 95, 98, 108-109, 128, 139-140, 149-150, 162, 167, 182); approval of New Age teachers (see Thomas Merton below); occultic use of imagination (pp. 25-26, 40-43, 163, 198); open theism (p. 35); misunderstanding of the will of God in prayer (p. 37);

promotion of visions, revelations and charismatic gifts (pp. 108, 165, 168-169, 171, 193); endorsement of rosary and prayer wheel use (p. 64); misunderstanding of the Old Testament Law for today (pp. 82, 87); mystical journaling (p. 108); embracing pop-psychology (pp. 113-120); promoting Roman Catholic practices such as use of “spiritual directors,” confession and penance (pp. 146-150, 156, 185); and affirming of aberrant charismatic practices (pp. 158-174, 198).

([Online source](#))

Note The GBC website has been redesigned and I’ve yet to locate every one of its current links, but you can find the PDF *Spiritual Disciplines: Pathway to Christian Maturity* mentioned below under [Discipleship Resources](#) of the [State Board of Missions of the Alabama Baptist Convention](#) (SBC) right [here](#).

In addition if you follow the [Adult Discipleship](#) link you are able to download a PDF copy of [Spiritual Disciplines: Pathway to Christian Maturity](#). There the GBC tells Southern Baptists about the Roman Catholic monk Brother Lawrence and “his insightful little book, *The Practice of the Presence of God* and instructs them in “Silence and Solitude,” which is actually how mystics refer to the “meditation” of CCP.

And GBC also encourages Southern Baptists to practice Lectio Divina with an assist from the book *The Sacred Way* by [Emergent Church](#) theologian [Tony Jones](#):

The practice of lectio divina can be traced back to St. Benedict around 500 years after the birth of Christ and has been a part of monastery life ever since. However, it must be noted that this practice is not peculiar to the Catholic Church. ([Online source](#))

What a truly sad time we live in when the SBC horn for the state of Georgia is right now telling “Protestant” Southern Baptists that “a virtual encyclopedia of theological error” from a Quaker mystic has made “a significant contribution to the church of Jesus Christ” and that as part of proper Christian discipleship they need to perform acts of religious bondage counter to the Sola Scriptura of the Reformation.