

“The Bible is God’s Word!”

-Dave Hunt

August 1, 2005, from “The Berean Call”

God never adjusts Himself or His Word to the tastes of men. He never changes anything to appeal to the corrupt appetites of the ungodly in any age—all must come to Him on His terms. He commands all men everywhere to repent because of coming judgment (Acts:17:30 , 31). “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord...” (Isa:55:7 ). There is no softening of the gospel to make it “seeker friendly.”

Many claim to seek God but never find Him. Yet He has promised: “Ye shall seek ME, and find ME, when ye shall search for ME with all your heart” (Jer:29:13 ). The true God must be sought on His terms. It is not a question of music, videos, or other gimmicks to attract the youth, or of icons, candles, rituals, or other embellishments to create an aura of “sacredness.” The truth asks no props, only our fervent desire. The earnest seeker must come to God in repentance and cry out to Him for mercy.

God has spoken in His infallible Word. We must honor what He has said. Truth is not negotiable. Yet many Christian leaders promote wicked Bible versions such as Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* (NavPress, 1993: see Q & A *TBC* Oct '95) that pervert God’s Word. Men like Peterson have no conscience about changing what God says, replacing His words with their own.

Peterson is praised for this perversion by many Christian leaders such as J.I. Packer, Warren Wiersbe, Jack W. Hayford, and Richard Foster, founder of the Renovaré Movement and General Editor of the *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005). Foster loves *The Message* because it supports that movement. Peterson is “Consulting Editor, New Testament” of the *Renovaré Bible*. He reduces much of Paul’s vital treatment of the gospel in Romans to metaphor, which he says is the “opposite [of] precise use of language” (p. 2045).

The Renovaré movement’s major purpose is to subtly lead the church back into the occultism of the mystics of the early Roman Catholic

Church through “spiritual disciplines” and “spiritual formation.” The *Renovaré Bible* is a major effort in that direction. A host of “scholars” contributed commentaries, among them Bruce Demarest, Professor of Theology at Denver Seminary; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., President of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Tremper Longman III, Professor of Biblical Studies at Westmont College; Earl F. Palmer, pastor of University Presbyterian Church in Seattle, WA and on the Board of Trustees of the long-apostate Princeton Theological Seminary (as was Sir John Marks Templeton).

The *Renovaré Bible* includes the Apocrypha and declares, “Most of the Church throughout much of history has accepted the Deuterocanonicals as Scripture....”<sup>1</sup> Not as *Scripture*. Nor were these 13 books, written during the time between Malachi and the birth of Christ, ever accepted by Israel as inspired. Indeed, 1 Maccabees states that God was not speaking through prophets and apologizes for its errors (9:27 and 14:41). Obviously, anything written during that silence from God could not be Scripture.

From the Apocrypha, the Roman Catholic Church justifies purgatory, prayers for the dead and their eventual redemption through a propitiatory sacrifice (thereby justifying the Mass), purchase of forgiveness of sins, worship of angels, prayers to the “saints” and their ability to intervene. Yet *Renovaré* asserts, “The Deuterocanonicals do not affect any central doctrine of the Christian faith.”<sup>2</sup>

The Apocrypha were never quoted by Christ or by His apostles, though the Old Testament is quoted in the New more than 250 times. Even *Renovaré* does not put the Apocrypha on the same level as the Bible but as helpful for “spiritual formation.” Then why include it in the same volume as Scripture—and without any warning concerning its heretical teachings?!

The *Renovaré Bible* introduces what it calls “Spiritual Disciplines” to help one’s “spiritual formation.” Neither term is found in the Bible. *Renovaré* declares that the purpose of this study Bible is the “discovery, instruction, and practice of the Spiritual Disciplines.” In fact, many of these are occult “disciplines” not found in Scripture but advocated by the mystics as a means of getting in touch with God. Foster has been a major influence in seducing today’s church with the same practices—

and now has edited a Bible for the express purpose of justifying this seduction.

A number of commendable “Spiritual Disciplines” are mentioned, and some that are not commendable: “solitude, confession...meditation and silence...secrecy, sacrifice, celebration.” These innocent words have a special meaning for Foster. Explaining his view of “celebration,” he writes: “We of the New Age can risk going against the tide. Let us with abandon...see visions and dream dreams....The imagination can release a flood of creative ideas [and] be lots of fun” (*Celebration of Discipline*, Harper & Row, 1978, p. 170).

In the West, meditation means to think deeply about something, but in the East it means to empty the mind in order to open it to the spirit world, leading to mystical experiences of “God.” Purporting to reject Eastern mysticism, Foster says, “Christian meditation is an attempt to empty the mind in order to fill it.” He seductively suggests: “John was ‘in the Spirit on the Lord’s day’ when he received his apocalyptic vision (Rev:1:10 ). Could it be that John was trained in a way of listening and seeing that we have forgotten?...Let us have courage to...once again learn the ancient...art of meditation” (*Celebration*, pp. 14,15). The idea that John had a special technique for hearing from God is heresy of the worst sort, but foundational to *Renovare’s* promotion of “spiritual disciplines” and “spiritual formation”!

The arousal of the imagination through fantasy and visualization is a major theme in Foster’s *Celebration*. He acknowledges that “prayer through the imagination” was taught to him by Agnes Sanford, who popularized “inner healing,” a major source of much of the occultism in the Charismatic movement. (For documentation of her full-blown occultism, see *TBC July ’89* .) We have dealt with these errors in detail in *The Seduction of Christianity*, *Beyond Seduction*, and *Occult Invasion*.

Foster writes in *Celebration*, “In your imagination allow your spiritual body, shining with light, to rise out of your physical body....Reassure your body that you will return....Go deeper and deeper into outer space until there is nothing except the warm presence of the eternal Creator. Rest in his presence. Listen quietly [to] any instruction given” (p. 27).

This is astral projection and occult contact through the imagination and is the major technique used by shamans to contact their spirit guides.

Yet Foster claims that it leads to Christ and God: “Take a single event [from Scripture]. Seek to live the experience, remembering the encouragement of Ignatius of Loyola (Jesuit founder) to apply all our senses to our task...represent to your imagination the whole of the mystery...as an active participant...You can actually encounter the living Christ in the event, be addressed by His voice...touched by His healing power...Jesus Christ will actually come to you” (p. 26). *Not so!* You cannot call Jesus Christ from the right hand of the Father to appear to you—but any demon will be happy to pretend to be Jesus .

In like manner, the *Renovaré Bible* honors Catholic heretics and occultists as “saints” and their writings as a framework within which to understand Scripture. *The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola* are endorsed even though they involve occult techniques that have caused many to be demonized (see *TBC* [Mar '00](#) ).

Sadly, the *Renovaré* explanatory notes deny the Divine authorship of much of Scripture—even that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Yet they hypocritically declare, “We read the Bible literally, from cover to cover...[and] in context.”<sup>3</sup> *Renovaré* claims that Genesis 1-11 is neither historic nor scientific,<sup>4</sup> and that the entire book of Genesis is merely a collection of myths:

Genesis began as an oral tradition of narrative stories passed down from generation to generation....These stories [gradually] took on theological meaning....Over time [they] were written down and collected together (Gen 12-50), and a prologue (Gen 1-11) was added....Borrowing from other creation accounts...stories with parallels to ancient Near Eastern religious narrative and mythology were reshaped with monotheistic intent....These strands of varied materials were gathered and edited into the written text....<sup>5</sup>

What wickedness for Christian “scholars” to unite with skeptics to declare that Genesis, which is foundational to the Bible, is just an edited compilation of mythology and folk tales! If Genesis is not literally inspired of God, then how can we have confidence in any other part of the Bible? What about Paul’s statement that “All scripture is given by

inspiration of God” (2 Tim:3:16  
) , or Peter’s “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pt 1:21), or Christ’s many quotations from Genesis and references to “the things that Moses commanded” (Mat:8:4 ; 19:7; Mk 1:44; 7:10; 10:3, 4; 12:19, 26; Lk 16:29-31, etc.)?

Contrary to *Renovaré*, the Bible itself declares in numerous places that *under the inspiration of God* Moses wrote the Pentateuch: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book...and Moses wrote all the words of the LORD...and Moses wrote this law, and delivered it...unto all the elders of Israel....And...Moses...commanded the Levites...put it in...the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God....” (Ex 17:14; 24:4; Deut 31:9, 25, 26, etc.).

“The law of Moses” is referred to repeatedly (Jos:8:31-32 ; 23:6; 1 Kgs2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 23:25; 2 Chr:30:16 ; Ezr 3:2; Neh:8:1 ; etc.). Jesus called the Pentateuch “the law of Moses” (Lk 24:44). The Gospel of John is filled with affirmations that Moses was a prophet who wrote much Scripture (Jn:1:17 , 45; 5:45, 46; 7:19-23, etc.).

Of Daniel, the *Renovaré Bible* declares, “We do not know who wrote it or exactly when it was written...it was most likely partially written during Antiochus Epiphanes’ persecution of the Jews in Babylon, which began with the desecration of the Temple in 167 B.C.”<sup>6</sup> So it is the work of an imposter pretending to be Daniel 400 years after the fact! To escape admitting that Daniel prophesied centuries in advance the breakup of Alexander’s empire under four generals, the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the pollution of the temple, skeptics had to invent a later date for these prophecies. *Renovaré* echoes this lie, robbing Christians of an essential proof of the validity of the Bible and depriving the unsaved of life-giving truth!

Daniel is written in the first person, telling events that happened to the writer four centuries before 167 B.C.: “When I...Daniel, had seen the vision (8:15)...I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days (8:27)....In the first year of Darius...I Daniel understood (9:1,2)...I Daniel was mourning three full weeks (10:2),” etc. (For evidence that Daniel authored his book in the sixth century B.C., see Q&A Sept and Oct ’01.)

The *Renovaré* “scholars” continually downplay the powerful Old Testament prophecies of Christ (pp. 22, 32, 1375, 1377-8, 1384, etc.). The key prophecy in Isaiah:9:6-7 of the coming Messiah, who is “the mighty God, the everlasting Father,” is said to speak of “human agents” ( p. .997).

The notes reduce Isaiah’s prophecies to “tradition” (pp. 982, 983), would have us believe that much of that book was not written by Isaiah (there are “three authors”– pp. 982, 1068), and even deny that chapter 53 prophesies Christ’s sacrifice for our sins (p. 984)! *Renovaré* describes the book of Isaiah as “poetic imagination...Isaiah imagines,” etc. The *Renovaré* “scholars” declare, “The prophets of Israel are not to be thought of primarily as...predictors of the future...they were poets” (p. 1079). Through poetry, Jeremiah attempts “to make sense of the events of his day...” (p. 1080). Blasphemy!

*Renovaré* rejects the powerful prophecies of Daniel, including the proof of 9:24-26 that Jesus is the Christ. There is not a word about the image foretelling the four world kingdoms and revival of the fourth (Roman Empire) under ten heads (2:36-45) to be destroyed by the Messiah when He sets up His everlasting kingdom. Nor is there a word about the future apocalyptic significance of the four beasts of Daniel 7 coinciding with Revelation 13. The wrath of God poured out upon earth during the Great Tribulation (*Renovaré* avoids that term) are described as “natural disasters straight out of Exodus” (p. 2268). Yet even the magicians in Egypt told Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God” (Ex 8:19).

All of the major prophecies so crucial in proving the Bible to be the Word of God and Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah are either not commented upon, or are spiritualized away as pertaining to the “faith community” and its “spiritual formation.” There is no recognition of the great prophecies in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc., of Israel being brought back into her own land in the last days, and that she must endure forever (Eze 35-37, etc.). For example, the powerful prophetic promise from God to bring back the Jews scattered around the world (Jer:31:8-14 ) is interpreted as a promise to all homeless people (nothing about Israel), and God’s promise that Israel can never be destroyed (31:35-37) is ignored!

Israel is treated as having been replaced by the church. Incredibly, the valley of dry bones brought back to life in Ezekiel 37, which is clearly declared to be “the whole house of Israel” (37:11), is interpreted as the birth of the church at Pentecost! Ezekiel 38-39 is not about Armageddon, with real armies attacking the nation of Israel back in her land in the last days to be rescued by the Messiah, but is about “dark forces” always at work in the world.

There is no commentary at Revelation:1:7 about the Second Coming of Christ (p. 2269), no evidence of belief in the Rapture; only that Christ will one day “return and overcome the wicked powers” (p. 2266).

Revelation is reduced to a “pastoral letter meant to sustain the suffering and hearten the weary faithful” (p. 2267). The Antichrist and False Prophet (Rev 13) are depersonalized as “dark forces of evil” (p. 2281). The woman on the beast (Rev 17) has no prophetic significance but “embodies those institutions that across the ages have sold themselves to the dark forces...” (p. 2284). There is nothing about the city that it is clearly said she represents. So the fall of Babylon (Rev 18) “pictures the ultimate collapse of all human institutions given over to the lust for power...” (p. 2285).

The marriage of the Lamb to His bride (Rev 19) is not a real event in heaven but “symbolic of the many different celebrations that bring joy and jubilation” into our lives (p. 2287) The thousand-year reign of Christ (Rev 20) is not a real event, and the armies of the world coming against Christ and the saints at Jerusalem after Satan’s release merely symbolize “the armies of darkness [which] surround us” (p. 2288).

This “Study Bible” is one more step on the slippery downward path into deepening apostasy. The Bible is being mocked in the church. Let us stand firmly, vocally, and actively in defense of God’s holy, infallible, inerrant, and sufficient Word! **TBC**

### **Endnotes**

1. Richard J. Foster, ed., *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), xxx.
2. Ibid., Foreword, xvii.

3. Ibid., General Introduction, xxxi.
4. Ibid., 14-15.
5. Ibid., 13-15.
6. Ibid., From the introduction to Daniel, 1245, by James M. Rand.