

The Spread of "Contemplative Prayer"

Contemplative mysticism is promoted by influential pastors. Consider **RICK WARREN of Saddleback Church**, who is doubtless the most influential of all Southern Baptist pastors. He frequently quotes from Roman Catholics to promote meditation, centering prayer, and other forms of contemplative spirituality. In *The Purpose Driven Church* and *The Purpose Driven Life*, Warren advises his readers to “practice his presence” as per Brother Lawrence (of the Roman Catholic Carmelite Order) and to use “breath prayers” as per the Benedictine monks.

Warren quotes from John Main (Catholic monk who believes that Christ “is not limited to Jesus of Nazareth, but remains among us in the monastic leaders, the sick, the guest, the poor”); Madame Guyon (a Roman Catholic who taught that prayer does not involve thinking); John of the Cross (who believed the mountains and forests are God); and Gary Thomas (who defines Centering Prayer as “a contemplative act in which you don’t do anything”). Warren quotes from Mother Teresa and Henri Nouwen, who believed that men can be saved apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ. Nowhere does Warren warn his readers that these were dangerous false teachers.

Warren recommends mystic Richard Foster (*The Purpose Driven Church*, pp. 126-127) and states that the contemplative movement will help bring the church into “full maturity” and that it “has had a valid message.”

Richard Foster builds his contemplative practices unequivocally upon ancient Catholic monasticism. Foster recommends Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, Francis of Assisi, Augustine, Julian of Norwich, Brother Lawrence, Dominic, John of the Cross, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Madame Guyon, Thomas à Kempis, Catherine Doherty, Meister Eckhart, Thomas Aquinas, Alphonsus de Liguori, Bernard of Clairvaux, Henri Nouwen, John Main, Thomas Merton, John Michael Talbot, and others. There is no warning of the fact that these Catholic mystics trusted in a works gospel, venerated Mary, worshipped Christ as a piece of consecrated bread, believed in purgatory, and scores of other heresies.

Bill Hybels and Willow Creek endorse "Contemplative Prayer"

Bill Hybels and the Willow Creek Community Church have jumped onboard the mystical bandwagon, and Willow Creek is not only one megachurch that is located west of Chicago; it is also a network of more than 12,000 churches that hold the same philosophy. The fall 2007 issue of Willow magazine featured “Rediscovering Spiritual Formation” by Keri Wyatt Kent. It is a glowing recommendation for mystical practices, including monastic communities. She cites Richard Foster and other contemplative mystics. While noting that some conservatives are suspect of the new mysticism, she says that the practices have largely become mainstream.

Willow Creek’s Leadership Summit in August 2006 introduced Jim Collins to the 70,000 participating Christian leaders. Since 1982 he has been a disciple of New Ager Michael Ray. That year Collins took Ray’s Creativity in Business course, which “takes much of its inspiration from Eastern philosophy, mysticism and meditation techniques” and promotes tapping into one’s inner wisdom. It describes an “inner person” called “your wisdom keeper or spirit guide” that “can be with you in life” (“Willow Creek Leadership Summit Starts Today,” Lighthouse Trails, Aug. 10, 2006). Collins wrote the foreword to Ray’s 2005 book *The Highest Goal: The Secret that Sustains You in Every Minute*, which claims that man is divine and recommends Hindu mind emptying meditation. The book quotes Hindu gurus Ram Dass, Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Swami Shantananda. Yet Collins calls it “the distillation of years of accumulate wisdom from a great teacher.” Following is a quote from the book:

“I attended a meditation-intensive day at an ashram [Hindu spiritual center] to support a friend. As I sat in meditation in what was for me an unfamiliar environment, I suddenly felt and saw a bolt of lightning shoot up from the base of my spine out the top of my head. It forced me to recognize something great within me ... this awareness of my own divinity” (Michael Ray, *The Highest Goal*, p. 28; the foreword is by Jim Collins; quoted from “Willowcreek Leadership Summit Starts Today,” Aug. 10, 2006, Lighthouse Trails).

Again we are reminded that the evangelical-emerging church contemplative movement has intimate and growing ties with the New

Age.

Beth Moore, a Southern Baptist who is influential with a broad spectrum of evangelical women, is also on the contemplative bandwagon. She joined Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, and other contemplatives on the Be Still DVD, which was published in April 2008 by Fox Home Entertainment. Shortly after it was released she issued a retraction of sorts, but she soon retracted her retraction. In a statement published on May 26, 2008, Moore's Living Proof Ministries said: "We believe that once you view the Be Still video you will agree that there is no problem with its expression of Truth" (<http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/bethmoorestatement.htm>).

To the contrary, the very fact that it features **Richard Foster** and **Dallas Willard** are serious problems!

Lighthouse Trails issued the following discerning warning:

"In the DVD, there are countless enticements, references and comments that clearly show its affinity with contemplative spirituality. For instance, Richard Foster says that anyone can practice contemplative prayer and become a 'portable sanctuary' for God. This panentheistic view of God is very typical for contemplatives. ... The underlying theme of the Be Still DVD is that we cannot truly know God or be intimate with Him without contemplative prayer and the state of silence that it produces. While the DVD is vague and lacking in actual instruction on word or phrase repetition (which lies at the heart of contemplative prayer), it is really quite misleading. What they don't tell you in the DVD is that this state of stillness or silence is, for the most part, achieved through some method such as mantra-like meditation. THE PURPOSE OF THE DVD, IN ESSENCE, IS NOT TO INSTRUCT YOU IN CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER BUT RATHER TO MAKE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HUNGRY FOR IT. The DVD even promises that practicing the silence will heal your family problems. ... THIS PROJECT IS AN INFOMERCIAL FOR CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE, and because of the huge advertising campaign that Fox Home Entertainment has launched, contemplative prayer could be potentially introduced into millions of homes around the world.

“[On the DVD Moore says], ‘... if we are not still before Him [God], we will never truly know to the depths of the marrow of our bones that He is God. There’s got to be a stillness.’ ... [But is] it not true that as believers we come to Him by grace, boldly to His throne, and we call Him our friend? No stillness, no mantra, no breath prayer, no rituals. Our personal relationship with Him is based on His faithfulness and His love and His offer that we have access to Him through the blood of Jesus Christ, and not on the basis of entering an altered state of consciousness or state of bliss or ecstasy as some call it”
 (“Beth Moore Gives Thumbs Up to Be Still DVD,”<http://www.lighthouse Trailsresearch.com/bethmoorethumbsup.htm>).

In her book *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things* (2002), Moore recommends contemplative Roman Catholics Brother Lawrence and **Brennan Manning**.

Of Manning she says that his contribution to our generation “may be a gift without parallel” (p. 72) and calls *Ragamuffin Gospel* “one of the most remarkable books” (p. 290). She does not warn her readers that Manning never gives a clear testimony of salvation or a clear gospel in his writings, that he attends Mass regularly, that he believes it is wrong for churches to require that homosexuals repent before they can be members, that he promotes the use of mantras to create a thoughtless state of silent meditation, that he spent six months in isolation in a cave and spends eight days each year in silent retreat under the direction of a Dominican nun, that he promotes the dangerous practice of visualization, that he quotes very approvingly from New Agers such as Beatrice Bruteau (who says, “We have realized ourselves as the Self that says only I AM ... unlimited, absolute I AM”) and Matthew Fox (who says all religions lead to the same God), and that he believes in universal salvation, that everyone including Hitler will go to heaven. (For documentation see “A Biographical Catalog of Contemplative Mystics” in our new book *Contemplative Mysticism: A Powerful Ecumenical Glue*.)

If Moore truly wants to disassociate herself from the contemplative movement, that would be a simple matter. Let her issue a statement renouncing Richard Foster and Brennan Manning and their Roman

Catholic contemplative friends and unscriptural practices. But don't hold your breath, dear readers. As of 2011 she has done no such thing. - Rev. David Cloud

Mark Driscoll and Acts 29

Contemplative mysticism has also infiltrated the Mars Hill Church of Seattle, Washington, where the senior pastor is Mark Driscoll, and the associated Acts 29 church planting network. In an article entitled "Obedience," Driscoll recommends "Celebration of Discipline" by contemplative guru **Richard Foster** and "Sacred Pathways" by **Gary Thomas**.

Driscoll's web site also features an article entitled "Meditative Prayer: Filling the Mind" by Winfield Bevins, an Acts 29 pastor. Bevins, too, recommends Foster and claims that "Christian" contemplative practices are different from their "pagan" counterparts in that "Eastern meditation is an attempt to empty the mind," whereas "Christian meditation is an attempt to fill the mind."

Lighthouse Trails refutes this error as follows:

"Bevins has got this very wrong, as does Richard Foster. Contemplative proponents say that, while the method practiced by Christian contemplatives and eastern-religion mystics may be similar (repeating a word or phrase over and over in order to eliminate distractions and a wandering mind), the Christian variety is ok because the mind isn't being emptied but rather filled. But in essence, both are emptying the mind (i.e., stopping the normal thought process). That is where the contemplatives say making a space for God to fill" ("Mark Driscoll Is a Contemplative Proponent," Lighthouse Trails, Dec. 21, 2009).

Everywhere we look "evangelicals" are turning to Roman Catholic styles of contemplative spirituality (which in many cases were borrowed from pagan sources), such as ritualistic rote prayers, chanting, meditation, centering prayer, the use of prayer beads, Stations of the Cross, lectio divina, labyrinths, and "the daily office."

The cover story for the February 2008 issue of Christianity Today was “The Future Lies in the Past,” and it describes the “lost secrets of the ancient church” that are being rediscovered by evangelicals. The ancient church in question happens to be the Roman Catholic, beginning with the so-called “church fathers” of the early centuries.

The article observes that many young evangelicals dislike both “traditional Christianity” and the seeker sensitive churches. Traditional Christianity is described as too focused on “being right,” too much into “Bible studies” and “apologetics materials.” Instead, the young evangelicals are lusting after “a renewed encounter with a God” that goes beyond “doctrinal definitions.” This, of course, is a perfect definition of mysticism. It refers to experiencing God beyond the boundaries of Scripture.

Christianity Today recommends that evangelicals “stop debating” and just “embody Christianity.” Toward this end they should “embrace symbols and sacraments” and dialogue with “Catholicism and Orthodoxy”; they should “break out the candles and incense” and pray the “lectio divina” and learn the “Catholic ascetic disciplines” from “practicing monks and nuns.”

Christianity Today says that this “search for historic roots” will lead “to a deepening ecumenical conversation, and a recognition by evangelicals that the Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox are fellow Christians with much to teach us.”

This is a no-holds-barred invitation to Catholic mysticism, and it will not lead to light but to the same darkness that has characterized Rome throughout its history, and it will lead beyond Rome to the paganism from which Rome originally borrowed its “contemplative practices.”

The January 2001 issue of Christianity Today contained a lengthy description by Mennonite pastor Arthur Boers of his visit to four ecumenical religious communities—Taizé, Lindisfarne, Iona, and Northumbria--and HIS INCREASING LOVE FOR LITURGICAL PRACTICES. Boers testifies: “About two decades ago, on a whim, I bought a discontinued book by a famous Catholic priest. As a convinced

evangelical Anabaptist, I was skeptical. But I was also curious. As it turned out, this book became the starting point in my recovery of a fuller prayer life through the daily office.”

THE TAIZÉ APPROACH

The mystical movement is strongly influenced by Taizé (pronounced teh-zay). This is a religious community that was formed in southeastern France during World War II by Roger Schutz, a Swiss Protestant pastor who went by the name of “Brother Roger” and who led the community until his death in 2005. Its goal is to work for world peace and ecumenical unity.

The Taizé monastic order includes some 100 allegedly “celibate brothers” from different countries and denominations, including Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and Reformed.

While the Taizé community itself is very small, the Taizé philosophy has influenced churches throughout the world. Tens of thousands of congregations in the U.S. and elsewhere hold Taizé prayer services and sing Taizé songs.

Taizé is a major force for non-doctrinal ecumenism. Each year tens of thousands of people make a pilgrimage to Taizé. These include Protestants, Baptists, Catholics, Jews, Buddhists, and others. The Roman Catholic connection is very strong. Schutz participated in the Second Vatican Council, and Pope John Paul II visited Taize in October 1986. In 2006, at John Paul II’s funeral, Schutz was given Eucharistic communion by the hands of Joseph Ratzinger, who a few days later became Pope Benedict XVI. Since Schutz’s death (he was stabbed to death by a deranged woman during a Taizé service), the organization has been led by a Roman Catholic priest named Alois Loeser.

The Taizé services are non-dogmatic and non-authoritative. There is no preaching. “It does not dictate what people must believe. No confessions of faith are required. No sermons are given. No emotional, evangelical-style testimonials are expected. Clergy are not required.” Schutz described the philosophy of Taizé as, “Searching together--not wanting to become spiritual masters who impose; God never imposes. We want

to love and listen, we want simplicity” (“Taizé,” Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, Sept. 20, 2002).

This is blind mysticism loosed from the authority of Scripture.

In fact, Taizé’s non-doctrinal ecumenical Christianity is fueled by mystical practices. A “shadowy medieval” atmosphere is created with the use of such things as candles, icons, and incense (Vancouver Sun, April 14, 2000).

The goal is to bring the “worshipper” into a meditative state, “to a place beyond words, a place of just being.” There is a lot of repetition, with “one-line Taizé harmonies repeated up to 15 times each.”

Schutz taught that truth is found through mysticism. In 1995 he told a group of 100,000 young people in Paris, “We have come here to search, or to go on searching through silence and prayer, to get in touch with our inner life” (“Brother Roger, 90, Dies,” New York Times, Aug. 18, 2005).

Taizé is heavily involved in the same social-justice issues that are popular with youth today in secular society (e.g., environmentalism, AIDS, African poverty, anti-nuclear proliferation, military disarmament).

The Taizé philosophy is spreading quickly throughout evangelicalism.

RICHARD FOSTER: THE CONTEMPLATIVE SPARK PLUG

More than any other individual, Richard Foster has spread Roman Catholic and Pagan mysticism throughout Protestant and Baptist churches.

Foster’s book Celebration of Discipline, which has sold more than two and a half million copies, was selected by Christianity Today as one of the top ten books of the 20th century.

He grew up among the Quakers (the Religious Society of Friends), was trained at George Fox College, has pastored Quaker churches, and has taught theology at Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, and at George Fox College.

The Quaker connection is important, because one of their doctrines is direct revelation via an “inner light.” This is defined in a variety of ways, since Quakerism is very individualistic and non-creedal, but it refers to a divine presence and guidance in every man. There is an emphasis on being still and silent and passive in order to receive guidance from the inner light.

Quaker founder George Fox claimed that he received the doctrine of the inner light without help from the Scriptures (The Journal of George Fox, revised by John Nickalls, 1952, pp. 33-35).

This is an unbiblical and very dangerous idea that opens the door for every sort of heresy. The Scripture is able to make the man of God perfect; obviously, then, nothing more is needed (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

It is easy to see how the Quaker philosophy paved the way for Foster to accept Catholic mysticism. It did this by its emphasis on an “inner light” and its tendency not to judge things in an exacting manner by Scripture.

Other Quakers have followed the same path, and some, like Mary Conrow Coelho, have followed it all the way to the New Age. Conrow believes in evolution, the oneness of the universe, and the unity of man with God, and she traces her New Age mysticism to deep third generation Quaker roots and its inner light teaching:

“The adults in our Quaker community spoke often of the Inner Light, the seed of God, the indwelling Christ. [Thomas Kelly] said, ‘It is a Light within, a dynamic center, a creative Life that presses to birth within us’” (“Of Leadings and the Inner Light: Quakerism and the New Cosmology,” <http://www.thegreatstory.org/QuakerMetarelig.html>).

(Richard Foster quotes Thomas Kelly favorably and frequently in his books, and the Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible quotes Kelly as saying: “Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the

soul, a holy place, a Divine Center.”)

Foster advocates Roman Catholic mysticism with absolutely no qualms, building his contemplative practices unequivocally upon this heretical foundation.

He recommends Ignatius of Loyola, Francis of Assisi, Benedict of Nursia, Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Genoa, Julian of Norwich, Brother Lawrence, Dominic, Catherine of Siena, John of the Cross, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Madame Guyon, Thomas à Kempis, Catherine Doherty, Meister Eckhart, Thomas Aquinas, Hildegard of Bingen, Francis de Sales, Alphonsus de Liguori, Bernard of Clairvaux, John Henry Newman, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, G.K. Chesterton, André Louf, Henri Nouwen, Dorothy Day, Karl Rahner, John Main, Mother Teresa, Thomas Merton, Brennan Manning, John Michael Talbot, and many others.

Foster’s recommendation of these Catholic mystics is not half-hearted. In the introduction to the 1998 edition of *Celebration of Discipline*, he says that they taught him spiritual depth and substance (pp. xiii, xiv), and he calls them “Devotional Masters of the Christian faith.” Of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola, Foster says, “... it is a school of prayer for all of us” (*Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*, p. 59).

There is no warning of the fact that these mystics trusted in a works gospel, venerated Mary, worshipped Christ as a piece of consecrated bread, believed in purgatory, honored the pope as the head of all churches, and held scores of other heresies. (For extensive documentation of this see our book *Contemplative Mysticism*, chapters “A Description of Catholic Monastic Asceticism” and “A Biographical Catalog of Contemplative Mystics.”)

Foster promotes centering prayer, visualization, guided imagery, mantras, silence, walking the labyrinth, Carl Jung’s interpretation of dreams, channelling the light of Christ, healing of memories, direct experiential communion with God, even out-of-body experiences. (See “Richard Foster: Evangelicalism’s Mystical

Sparkplug” at the Way of Life web site.)

In 1988 Foster founded **RENOVARÉ** (pronounced ren-o-var-ay), which has a radical ecumenical thrust. Its objective is “to work for the renewal of the Church of Jesus Christ in all her multifaceted expressions.” Its slogan is “Christian in commitment, international in scope, ecumenical in breadth.” Renovaré’s ministry team represents men and women “from Mennonite to Methodist, Roman Catholic to Church of God in Christ, Assembly of God to American Baptist.”

Foster describes the breadth his ecumenical vision in these words:

“God is gathering his people once again, creating of them an all-inclusive community of loving persons with Jesus Christ as the community’s prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant. This community is breaking forth in multiplied ways and varied forms. ... I SEE A CATHOLIC MONK FROM THE HILLS OF KENTUCKY STANDING ALONGSIDE A BAPTIST EVANGELIST FROM THE STREETS OF LOS ANGELES and together offering up a sacrifice of praise. I see a people” (Streams of Living Water, 2001, p. 274).

At the October 1991 Renovaré meeting in Pasadena, California, Foster praised Pope John Paul II and called for unity in the Body of Christ” (CIB Bulletin, December 1991).

Richard Foster believes he is promoting a true spiritual revival within Christianity, but he is the blind leading the blind. His mysticism has brought him into contact with demons masquerading as angels of light and ministers of righteousness. His writings are an exceedingly dangerous mixture of truth and error. Pastors and teachers need to warn their people to stay away from him, for “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9).

A DESCRIPTION OF ONE OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES

To illustrate how unscriptural and spiritually dangerous the contemplative practices are we will look at the most popular one called

Centering Prayer.

Centering prayer is also called centering down. It involves quieting the mind and emptying it of conscious thoughts about God with the objective of entering into a non-verbal experiential communion with God in the center of one's being and thereby achieving direct revelation from God.

Thomas Merton, one of the modern fathers of centering prayer, claims that "the simplest way to come into contact with the living God is to go to one's center and from there pass into God" (Finding Grace at the Center, p. 28).

Here is how he describes it:

"Then we move in faith to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, dwelling in creative love in the depths of our being. This is the whole essence of the prayer. ... All the rest of the method is simply a means to enable us to abide quietly in this center, and to allow our whole being to share in this refreshing contact with its Source" (Finding Grace at the Center, 2002, p. 32).

"... savor the silence, the Presence..." (p. 35).

"As soon as we move in love to God present in our depths, we are there ... we simply want to remain there and be what we are" (p. 39).

"We might think of it as if the Lord Himself, present in our depths, were quietly repeating His own name, evoking His presence and very gently summoning us to an attentive response. We are quite passive. We let it happen" (p. 39).

"... to enter into our Christ-being in the depths" (p. 42).

"... we want immediate contact with God Himself, and not some thought, image, or vision of him..." (p. 42).

"... open yourself interiorly to the mystery of God's enveloping presence" (p. 48).

“... interior silence is the proximate goal of this prayer” (p. 52).

“... our theme is the center, that is, the place of meeting of the human spirit and the divine Spirit” (p. 80).

The practice is called “this union, this face-to-face encounter” (p. 15), “passive meditation” (p. 20), “a fourth state of consciousness” (p. 34), “savoring the silence” (p. 35), “this nothing” (p. 49), “the deep waters of silence” (p. 52), “deep tranquility” (p. 54).

Centering prayer is an attempt to enter into a non-thinking mode. Basil Pennington said: “In a meditation like Centering Prayer, you leave the rational mind and emotions behind, open yourself to rest in the Divine. St. Thomas Aquinas says, ‘Where the mind leaves off, the heart goes beyond’” (interview with Mary NurrieStearns published on the Personal Transformation website, <http://www.personaltransformation.com/Pennington.html>).

In “The Signature of Jesus,” **Brennan Manning** says centering prayer requires three steps.

The first step is to quiet down and “stop thinking about God” (p. 212).

The second step is to choose a “sacred word” and “without moving your lips, repeat the word inwardly, slowly, and often” (p. 218). The word might be “love” or “God” or something else. This is to be done until the mind is dwelling upon that one word without distraction and is carried by that practice into a non-thinking communion with God at the center of one’s being. The mantra is the key to entering the non-thinking mode.

Rev. Ray Yungen explains:

“When a word or phrase is repeated over and over, after just a few repetitions, those words lose their meaning and become just sounds. ... After three or four times, the word can begin to lose its meaning, and if this repeating of words were continued, normal thought processes could be blocked, making it possible to enter an altered state of consciousness because of hypnotic effect that begins to take place. It

really makes no difference whether the words are ‘You are my God’ or ‘I am calm,’ the results are the same” (A Time of Departing, p. 150).

The mantra, or repetition of a word, produces a mindless hypnotic state. The actual meaning of the word quickly becomes lost to the mind, and that is the objective. The mantra allows the practitioner to put aside thinking in order to reach an altered state of consciousness called “the silence place” in which one allegedly experiences God directly.

Practitioners of eastern religions recognize the power of the mantra in entering this state. Deepak Chopra, for example, says:

“A mantra ... has little or no meaning to distract us. Therefore it is an easier vehicle for going inward than prayer or verbal contemplation” (How to Know God, p. 94).

Amazingly, **Chopra, a New Age Hindu** who believes in the divinity of man, recommends the ancient Catholic contemplative manual *The Cloud of Unknowing*. He considers the centering prayer techniques to be the same as Hindu yoga.

“There is no doubt that people resist the whole notion of God being an inner phenomenon. ... Yet its importance is stated eloquently in the medieval document known as ‘The Cloud of Unknowing,’ written anonymously in the fourteenth century. ... The writer informs us that ANY THOUGHT IN THE MIND SEPARATES US FROM GOD, because thought sheds light on its object. ... Even though the cloud of unknowing baffles us, it is actually closer to God than even a thought about God and his marvelous creation. We are advised to go into a ‘cloud of forgetting’ about anything other than the silence of the inner world. For centuries this document has seemed utterly mystical, but it makes perfect sense once we realize that THE RESTFUL AWARENESS RESPONSE, WHICH CONTAINS NO THOUGHTS, is being advocated. ...

“We aren’t talking about the silence of an empty mind ... But the thought takes place against a background and nonthought. Our writer equates it with KNOWING SOMETHING THAT DOESN’T HAVE TO BE STUDIED. The mind is full of a kind of knowing that could speak to us about anything, yet it has no words; therefore we seek this knowingness in the

background” (Chopra, How to Know God, 2000, pp. 94, 95, 98).

In this same book, Chopra says, “I believe that God has to be known by looking in the mirror” (p. 9). Thus Chopra is describing meditative methods whereby the individual can allegedly come into contact with his “higher self” or divinity, yet he is using Catholic mysticism to get there! And the same manual, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, is a popular manual among contemplative evangelicals.

Chopra says that mantra-induced mind-emptying centering prayer techniques result in non-verbal revelation.

This is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear.

Richard Foster says repetitious prayers such as “breath prayers” “**BIND THE MIND**” (*Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*, p. 124).

Tricia Rhodes, in her book *The Soul at Rest*, which is “a step-by-step journey of learning contemplative prayer, suggests:

“Make every effort to stop the flow of talking going on within you--to slow it down until it comes to a halt” (*The Soul at Rest*, 1996, p. 28).

The third step is to return one’s mind to the sacred word when distractions come. Manning suggests ending the session by quoting the Lord’s Prayer in a rote manner. He recommends two 20-minute centering sessions per day.

The result of centering prayer is supposed to be mystical knowledge obtained through communion with God in one’s being.

“For in this darkness we experience an intuitive understanding of everything material and spiritual without giving special attention to anything in particular” (*The Cloud of Unknowing*, chapter 68).

“To know God in this way is to perceive a new dimension to all reality” (*Finding Grace at the Center*, p. 60).

“... we learn that our willingness to listen in silence opens up a quiet space in which we can hear His voice, a voice that longs to speak and

offer us guidance for our next step” (Ruth Barton, “Beyond Words,”
Discipleship Journal, Sept-Oct. 1999).

(Source of information: Rev. David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist
Information Service, Way of Life Literature, used with permission).