

The Willow Creek Dilemma: Why Our Association with Them Is Wrong

The following report, gleaned from various sources, was presented to an overseers committee at my local Christian Church in the Fall of 2001 in an effort to confront the church leadership about their increasing involvement with the Willow Creek Association and their Church Growth Movement principles. Although the overseers ultimately rejected the basic premise expressed in this letter and have continued their relationship with Willow Creek's church resources and leadership training, I believe it is important that the specific arguments about this issue continue to be heard despite the dated references. Since I am no longer a member of this church, and I bear no ill will against many dear friends who have remained there, I have respectfully edited out the name of the church.

In the past several months (our church) has strengthened its relationship with Willow Creek Church, not only by joining the Willow Creek Association (WCA), but also by frequently using Willow Creek resources, seminars and conferences to train our church leadership. It is all part of a noble, heartfelt effort by (our church) to adopt a more dynamic, aggressive program of evangelism in order to better reach the unchurched in our city area. Truly, it is a commendable endeavor on the part of (our church), and on the surface, the strong ties to Willow Creek would seem to be an advantage.

A closer examination of the general philosophy of the Willow Creek organization, however, poses a dilemma for (our church) and brings into question whether it is in the best interest of (our church) to continue to be under the tutelage of the WCA, its leadership and its resources. After weeks of personal research into the Willow Creek phenomena, I have discovered that the organization is subtly embracing a worldly, humanistic viewpoint in order to succeed in their evangelistic mission. This pragmatic evangelism has admittedly brought them success, but it has come at a cost to their solid Christian position.

One of the most damaging aspects of this Willow Creek pragmatism is their association and promotion of several "Christian" leaders and experts that are espousing unbiblical teachings. Not only is Bill Hybels a supporter and friend to some of these people, but the Willow Creek establishment is actively promoting their books and ideas throughout their system. Shockingly, Willow Creek is seemingly unconcerned about associating with people who openly promote Eastern mysticism, humanistic psychology, and radical ecumenism.

The question (our church) needs to ask itself as it ponders its current association with Willow Creek is "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). In other words, is our "walking together" with Willow Creek exposing us to their apparent endorsements of unbiblical positions? And should we be "agreeing" with this?

Frankly, I am fearful that the unbiblical influences that have filtered into Willow Creek's prominent ministry will eventually affect the solid Christian foundations of other WCA members, including (our church). Therefore, out of love and concern for (our church), I feel compelled to warn others about some of the questionable people and teachings that Willow Creek seems to be endorsing to unwary churches like (our church).

The following roster of people are members of what I like to call the "Willow Creek Family Tree." This is a long and growing list of so-called Christian leaders, New Age philosophers and humanistic psychologist who are directly or indirectly validated by Willow Creek and/or its leader, Bill Hybels. Bear

with me: it is a dense, interconnected directory of names that might make you dizzy from its complexity, but it speaks volumes about how deeply networked these false teachers are within the Willow Creek organization and how insidious their influence could become to unsuspecting churches like (our church).

Robert Schuller

Schuller espouses the unbiblical “Self-Esteem Christianity,” and is openly an universalist who commends all forms of religion and philosophies, including TM, Zen Buddhism, Unity, Islam, Hinduism, New Age thinking and more. (Biblical Discernment Ministries, website.) His article in the Summer 1986 issue of Possibilities magazine declared that, “The Christ Spirit dwells in every human being, whether the person knows it or not.” (pg.12)

Especially troubling is Schuller’s connection with pagan philosophies, his stance on Transcendental Meditation and his promotion of Hindu teachings. He says, “It is important to remember that meditation in any form is the harnessing, by human means, of God’s divine laws.... We are endowed with a great many powers and forces that we do not yet understand.... The most effective mantras employ the ‘M’ sound. You can get the feel of it by repeating the words, ‘I am, I am’ many times over ... Transcendental Meditation or TM... is not a religion nor is it necessarily anti-Christian.” (Peace of Mind Through Possibility Thinking (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), pp. 131-132. (Of course, it may be important to note that in fact TM is a religious practice, one that is used in Hinduism, and that the repetition of “I am, I am” over and over is a direct replication of Hindu meditation, which is the very first step in the Hindu attempt to find the universe within oneself.)

Schuller is also a strong believer of “Self-Esteem” Christianity, which really isn’t Christianity at all, but more humanistic and New Age. Among the many disturbing quotes from his book, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, are these sacrilegious gems:

- “Classical theology has erred in its insistence that theology be ‘God-centered,’ not ‘man-centered.’” (p. 64)
- “The Cross sanctifies the ego trip. For the Cross protected our Lord’s perfect self-esteem from turning into sinful pride.” (p. 75)
- “Christ is the Ideal One, for he was Self-Esteem Incarnate.” (p.135)
- “And what is hell? A person is in hell when he has lost his self-esteem.” (p.14-15)

These quotes and many more like them reveal Schuller’s mistaken doctrine. Despite this, however, it is widely known that Schuller and Bill Hybels have a mentor/disciple relationship that began in the 1970s and is still going strong today.

Hybels readily admits his close ties, friendship, and influence with Robert Schuller in his book, *Rediscovering Church*. Hybels describes Schuller as “a man so highly esteemed” and “the only credible adult who had given us any encouragement” when Hybels was first starting Willow Creek. Hybels describes this 1976 meeting as a “divinely staged encounter” (p. 69). Schuller also revealed his mentoring relationship with Bill Hybel when he gave this statement: “I am so proud of him ... I think of him as a son. I think of him as one of the greatest things to happen in Christianity in our time. ... Bill Hybels is doing the best job of anybody I know!” (G.A. Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seekers Services*:

Evaluating a New Way of Doing Church, Baker: 1996., p. 56)

Their strong relationship is also publicly evidenced by Hybels' willingness for many years now to attend Schuller's annual Institute of Successful Church Leadership conference at the Crystal Cathedral as teacher and speaker. Hybels, in fact, just made an appearance at the 2001 conference this January. More recently, Hybels was the guest speaker on Schuller's Hour of Power telecast in May 2001. (Crystal Cathedral and Hour of Power websites.)

The unmistakable Schuller-Hybels connection is quite disturbing, regardless of whether Hybels technically agrees with all of Schuller's "self-esteem" gospel or not. Basically, by ignoring Schuller's heretical teachings and publicly associating with him, Hybels has given the impression of endorsing and approving Schuller's wayward theology and knowingly leading his Willow Creek followers into deception. Wouldn't it be prudent for (our church) to distance itself from an organization that appears to support Robert Schuller's teachings?

C. Peter Wagner

Peter Wagner is a radical Pentecostal/Charismatic who came from the academic halls of Fuller Theological Seminary and has strategically placed himself into the middle of an international network of "Christian" activities to help implement, organize and dominate a Global Church within the coming New World Order. (If this sounds disturbingly New Age, then your feelings are correct.) Currently, Wagner is President of Global Harvest Ministries whose main objective states: "From day one we have joined hands with Jesus of whom it was said, "The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn. 3:8). Our mandate is to weaken the "god of this age" that he will no longer be able to blind the minds of men and women who are lost. We know that you are ready for war!" (Doesn't Scripture say that Jesus Himself will destroy the devil, not any effort by Global Harvest?)

Through Global Harvest Ministries and its offshoots, Wagner Leadership Institute and the World Prayer Center (WPC), Wagner is training future Christian leaders, tracking thousands upon thousands of churches by computer, and creating a "New Way" in which the Holy Spirit is working in this age. Dr. Wagner says, "We see our task as getting people in touch with one another to form interactive, human web networks that are properly equipped to wage effective spiritual warfare." The WPC is "a fully equipped nerve center with data and information about prayer needs throughout the world [which]... networks prayer ministries, denominations, churches and cell groups. This creates a united prayer front that will end Satan's attempt to divide and isolate believers, and to blind so many to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (These are quotes from the World Prayer Center website. My emphasis.)

For anyone who has studied the current push in today's headlines for a One World Order and a unified Global Church, Wagner's agenda conjures up an endtime scenario straight out of the Book of Revelation. My question is, as this WPC network becomes stronger and more powerful, how will it be used to identify Christians who don't agree with Wagner's global, ecumenical One World Church? Will WPC label them as part of "Satan's attempt to divide believers" and make war with them? Let's hope not.

So what specifically is Wagner doing? As part of his networking plan, he recently founded the idea of the "New Apostolic Reformation" where apostles and prophets are rising up to take control of the Church. Dr. Wagner recently proclaimed himself "presiding apostle" of a coalition of 200 "true"

apostles by forming the “International Coalition of Apostles.” Their mandate, of course, is to build and usher in the Kingdom of God. Wagner and his apostolic brethren purport to speak for our Lord and they claim to hold the greatest authority over the direction of the Church and the lives of God’s people. These apostles & prophets are the people that the majority of the other leaders in the charismatic movement look to for new insights, revelation, and vision for the future of the Church.

For the last fifteen years, Wagner’s Apostolic Conferences all over the country are boldly proclaiming in their advertisements that God is “shifting and establishing His governmental foundation.” They urge, therefore, that we must all come under their apostolic authority. (Source: Inner-City Discernment Ministry.) Among his Apostolic buddies are Ted Haggard, Bill Hamon, Cindy Jacobs, John Eckhardt and Chuck Pierce. (Pierce, who oversees Wagner’s World Prayer Center, has said he has the “authority to gain the keys...” and often gives unbiblical first-person revelations from God to “entire tribes and nations.” --- C. Peter Wagner’s Prayer Track News, 1997.)

The most disturbing thing about Peter Wagner is that he is never really in the forefront of the Apostolic network and their adjacent false movements, and he is very shrewd about not being in the limelight. On the contrary, he merely aligns himself with this specific group of questionable Christian leaders, “apostles and prophets,” and allows them to blatantly spread their false gospel, while he quietly supports them in the background. At all these “Apostolic” conferences, Wagner is called the “convener,” which clearly reveals him as the power behind the movement. In fact, he describes himself as a “horizontal” apostle, which means that he is the behind-the-scenes apostle who organizes and empowers the “vertical” apostles within his looseknit organizations who deal with God’s message. (Global Harvest website.) Wagner’s true colors, however, are exposed when you see the list of his closest associates, which include the late John Wimber, James Ryle, Jack Deere, Mike Bickle, Paul Cain, and more. Some of their false doctrines, movements, and organizations include Vineyard, Latter Rain, Manifested Sons of God, Cleansing Stream, Holy Laughter, and being slain in the Spirit.

Wagner is also involved in Spiritual Warfare, or what I call, “demon-chasing.” In a 1997 memo to participants in Wagner’s International Spiritual Warfare Network, Wagner urged members to do spiritual battle against a demonic entity known as the “Queen of Heaven.” There is no Biblical basis for this, but apparently, Wagner and others are actively working to uncover the “seat” of this Queen of Heaven and destroy her influence there. They are using extra-biblical revelations from some of their operatives and are also using bizarre, mystical interpretations from Scripture to track this demonic influence in the world and “take that land back for the kingdom.” This, unfortunately, is all part of Wagner’s belief that the main reason people do not accept Christ is because of demonic, territorial spirits, and not because of people’s sinful natures. (John Hart’s Review of Peter Wagner, Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society, Spring 1997.) Much of Wagner’s teaching points to the devil, but very little on the Person of Jesus Christ.

Wagner’s interest in demonology seems to stem from his tendency to merge paganism and Christianity in a shocking but subtle manner. In “Territorial Spirits” p.179 he states: “In this way the Jews resolved the problem of the one and the many. There was only one God, and he was their god for ever. All other spiritual forces, be they good or bad, were ultimately of his creation, under his control and assigned as tutelary deities to other nations. ...The nations which ruled the ancient world were under the supervision of their angel-princes, who in their turn were under the ultimate control of Yahweh, the Lord of heaven and earth...” (Note that pagan ‘gods’ and spirits are seen as under Yahweh, and acknowledged as “tutelary deities.” Where does the Bible teach about a hierarchy of

little gods under the control of one big god?) Unfortunately, much of what Wagner uses to back up his claims are based upon extra-biblical sources, since none of his ideas have any connection to Scripture. For example, Wagner's spiritual warfare book, "Territorial Spirits," is a compilation of the writing of such people as Paul (David) Yonggi Cho, Larry Lea, Jack Hayford and others who accept the neo-dominionist doctrines. This book is an anti-biblical book which teaches that Christians can dispossess Satan's angels from their seats of authority over geographical areas. (Biblically, these spiritual entities will not be put down until Jesus Christ returns. [Revelation 19-20.] Wagner, again, has usurped Christ's authority.)

Wagner's obsession with demons and "signs and wonders" seems to have started at Fuller Theological Seminary where he was a "think tank" genius who created methodologies and strategies for the reintroduction of fake gifts and mission to the churches. He was the professor of Fuller's School of World Mission, and was a disciple and close associate of John Wimber. He co-authored the Fuller course MC510 Signs and Wonders with Wimber and took this course globally to every continent. He and Wimber were the implementers of the so-called restoration of the missing holy spirit to the Churches.

Because of this unbiblical belief in a "new and improved" holy spirit, Wagner has publicly affirmed many charismatic deceptions, like the "gold fillings" miracles in Latin America, where people have reported having regular fillings in their mouth changed to gold by the power of God. (Wagner's *Confronting the Powers*, p. 59.) His reliance on extra-biblical spirituality is so strong, in fact, that Wagner seems to indicate that occult practitioners have superior knowledge to Christians. He states in *Confronting the Powers* that "certain people such as shamans, witch doctors, practitioners of Eastern religions, New Age gurus or professors of the occult on university faculties are examples of the kind of people who may have much more extensive knowledge of the spirit world than most Christians have." He goes so far as to advocate that Christians attempt "first-hand research into the world of darkness" and chides those who are unwilling to listen to "independent expertise in demonology." (Powers, Wagner. p. 147.) This, however, is a direct contradiction of God's command not to attempt contact with the spirit world.

In mainstream Christian circles, however, little is known about his bizarre charismatic leanings; Wagner is mostly recognized as one of the founders and advocates of the "Church Growth Movement" that has heavily influenced Willow Creek and Saddleback Church. As a leader in the growth movement, Wagner has consistently pushed for extreme ecumenicalism as a way to bring forth a global church. On page 87 of *Territorial Spirits*, Wagner says a "spirit of religion" and its insistence on dogma is dividing Protestants, Catholics, and others. He says we must resist this "spirit" and "insist that everyone who names the name of Jesus Christ and holds that name as their only hope of salvation is our brother or sister." (Don't Mormons "name the name" of Jesus, too?) Unfortunately, Wagner does not differentiate between doctrinally-sound churches and those churches that proclaim Christ under a false gospel. As a result he preaches unity over truth and leads others to accept error for the sake of global evangelism.

Nonetheless, Bill Hybels has been indoctrinated by Wagner's work through the Church Growth field, and continues to follow his teachings. Hybels' books frequently quote Wagner as an expert, they have spoken together at Schuller conferences, and in *Christianity Today*, September 8, 1989, there was a picture of Hybels with Schuller and Dr. Wagner at Schuller's Crystal Cathedral. As of July 2001, Wagner had a best-selling book, *Finding Your Spiritual Gifts*, in Seeds bookstore at Willow Creek.

It is not hard to see Wagner's influence on Willow Creek as a ecumenical organization that has linked up with thousands of other churches through the WCA. Willow Creek is the perfect Wagnerian prototype megachurch and has definitely set itself up to be at the forefront of Wagner's vision for a global church. Unfortunately, (our church) has allowed itself to be put in the Wagner database through WCA.

(NOTE: As early as 1996, (our church) has favorably cited both Robert Schuller and C. Peter Wagner. Both men are referenced often in (our church)'s Leadership Community Retreat Handbook of April 1996. This was the church's first such "leadership" event in its history, and the handbook exclusively used quotes from Schuller or Wagner as a guide for (our church)'s future vision. Though the quotes are void of controversial theological content, their inclusion was certainly an indirect promotion of these men's false teachings among (our church) leadership. Just seeing these quotes in (our church) publications can only lead our congregation into believing that Schuller and Wagner are men to be trusted and revered as solid Christian leaders.)

Brennan Manning

Brennan Manning is a New Age/Christian mystic who used to be a Roman Catholic priest. In the last ten years he has become a popular author and speaker among the "evangelical" church, yet he shouldn't have even gotten his foot in their door. His teachings of "spiritual contemplation" are filled with unbiblical ideas, Eastern mysticism and dangerous New Age meditation techniques, and yet Manning is so charming, seductive and cunning that he easily takes advantage of undiscerning Christians.

Manning overemphasizes the love and grace of God while ignoring His attributes of justice, righteousness and holiness. He teaches that Jesus has redeemed all mankind. (Beware of Wolves in Sheeps Clothing by Mike Gendron, from Reaching Catholics for Christ website.) In Manning's bestselling book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel* he writes: "False gods—the gods of human understanding—despise sinners, but the Father of Jesus loves all, no matter what they do. But of course this is almost too incredible for us to accept." (My emphasis.) Of course, Manning doesn't point out that God's word thinks it is too incredible to accept, too: "Thou dost hate all who do iniquity." Psalm 5:5.

It's obvious, however, that Manning has little use for Scripture and he shows his disdain for those who do. He says, "I am deeply distressed by what I only can call in our Christian culture the idolatry of the Scriptures. For many Christians, the Bible is not a pointer to God but God himself. In a word—bibliolatry... I develop a nasty rash around people who speak as if mere scrutiny of its pages will reveal precisely how God thinks and precisely what God wants." (*The Signature of Jesus*, Manning)

Unfortunately, Manning's answer to ascertaining God's thinking is by using occult meditation practices instead of Scripture. In his book *The Signature of Jesus*, Manning teaches his readers how to pray by using an eight-word mantra. He says, "the first step in faith is to stop thinking about God at the time of prayer" (p.212). (WHAT?) The second step is "without moving your lips, repeat the sacred word [or phrase] inwardly, slowly, and often." If distractions come, "simply return to listening to your sacred word" (p.218). He also encourages his readers to "celebrate the darkness" because "the ego has to break; and this breaking is like entering into a great darkness" (p.145). Manning's direction is in direct conflict with Jesus who said, "He who follows me shall not walk in darkness" (John 8:12), and is a practice that sets people up for serious deception and demonic influence.

This dangerous technique, however, is just one of the many New Age mind-emptying methods that Manning teaches in *The Signature of Jesus*. Some of the unbiblical techniques include: centering prayer, paschal spirituality, the discipline of the secret, mineralization, practicing the presence, inner integration, yielding to the Center, notional knowledge, contemporary spiritual masters and masters of the interior life.

Is it any wonder that Manning practices these techniques and claims to have had visions and so-called encounters with God? No doubt Manning has truly had these experiences, and so will his followers who try his techniques, but they will not find true intimacy with God. Yes, they may have special feelings and experiences, and they may “feel” closer to God. However, in the process they will actually move away from Him as a result of a counterfeit spirituality.

For example, one of Manning’s dreams was about judgment day. In his dream, Manning describes how everyone from Adolf Hitler to Hugh Hefner are seen going before Jesus to be judged, as is Manning. When Manning comes forward, however, God does not really judge. Instead, says Manning, “He takes my hand and we go home.” The implication, of course, is that everyone from Hitler to Hefner will be similarly treated. In Manning’s teaching, God is a universalist who accepts everyone. (*The Signature of Jesus*, p. 239-242.) In an earlier book, *Gentle Revolutionaries*, Manning recounted the same dream and wrote that God told him, “I am not your judge.” This part was strangely omitted from his later accounts.

Brennan Manning, then, is a dangerous influence on the Christian world. His books promote the use of psychology, New Age/occult meditation, ecumenism, and universalism, and yet he is still popular in Christian circles. One of his popular books written for children, *The Boy Who Cried Abba*, is a mystical parable about the journey of a boy who must go into a dark cave called Bright Darkness to find acceptance from God. Again, Manning is leading his readers to embrace darkness and error. Even worse, he is targeting his message to kids, too.

Worse still, these Manning books are accepted by the Willow Creek organization, which proudly sells them in their bookstore. In fact, Manning’s book *Ruthless Trust* is currently #9 on Seeds Bestseller List. (Willow Creek website, July 2001.) So why does (our church) lean on the expertise of a Manning supporter and New Age propaganda machine like Willow Creek?

Father Med Laz

Father Med Laz, a Catholic priest from the Chicago area, is not a prominent figure in mainstream Christianity, but I make mention of him because he was recently asked by Bill Hybels to speak at Willow Creek to tell his Protestant audience about the virtues of Catholicism. In fact, Hybels wanted his congregation to learn about ways the Catholics are superior to them.

In a message entitled, “What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics” (Seeds Tape Ministry, # M9010), Hybels told the congregation, which looks to him for leadership and guidance, “I believe that there are some things we can learn from the Catholic Church and I’d like to ask Med... to tell what are some of the praiseworthy things of the Roman Catholic Church that you think Protestants can learn from...”

Priest Laz stepped forward and began to boast of Mother Teresa, Covenant House shelter, and Rome’s firm commitment to marriage. During the whole presentation, Hybels had nothing but praise for Roman Catholicism and the points Laz made. Apparently differences were too minor to mention. The

point of this message was for Hybels to promote the idea of unity and ecumenism between the two faiths, and to show the basic equality of their beliefs as “brothers in Christ.” Ultimately, this approach was a slap in the face to the martyrdom of thousands upon thousands of Christians throughout history who were killed by Rome because of their desire to reject Catholicism’s false dogmas and cling to the true Gospel. What exactly did Martin Luther risk his life for? Was Luther’s zeal to return to the simple truths of Jesus Christ so misguided that Hybels felt a need to lead his congregation back into a loving acceptance of Catholicism? What exactly was the point of this exercise?

Surely there were people in the audience who had left the burdens of Catholicism for a more biblical Christianity, only to be confused by Hybel’s implied endorsement of Rome. Were they wrong in leaving the Papal church? Should they go back? Clearly, Hybels was irresponsible in his eagerness to embrace his Catholic brothers and promote them in his church. What purpose did it serve, except to be a repudiation of the Protestant position?

Worse yet, Hybels let his priest friend make statements that went unchallenged, thus implying that his statements were correct. Not only did Hybels not enlighten his congregation to the unscriptural authority and infallibility of the Pope and the Catholic priesthood (with its heretical worship of Mary, the lie of purgatory, and the grievous transubstantiation of their Communion), but he also allowed Laz to freely promote several examples of Catholic “superiority” as truth.

For example, there is overwhelming proof that Mother Teresa had a deficient testimony, by her open acceptance of Hinduism and Buddhism within her ministry, for example. Covenant House is a chain of runaway shelters run by nuns that seeks to rescue desperate, lost youth, but does not try to save them with the gospel of Jesus Christ, even when they ask about salvation. And the myth of the solid institution of Catholic marriages is laughable, when the fact is exposed that the Catholic Church makes a mockery of marriage by granting more than 60,000 annulments each year for a fee. Just ask the faithful Catholic wife who is suddenly “not married” after 30 years because her husband wants to marry someone else “in the Church.” Is this really a “commitment to the sacredness of matrimony” as Hybels concurred with Laz? (Way of Life website: Bill Hybels and the Roman Catholic Church, David Cloud.)

That Hybels would allow such Catholic propaganda to be dispensed from the Willow Creek pulpit is a sad indication at how misled Hybel’s passion for ecumenism has become. If Hybels came to (our church) and did the same thing, I am aware of a number of ex-Catholics in our congregation who would be very disturbed or confused by this presentation, in light of their heartfelt conversions to Protestantism. In fact, if our church really accepts this Willow Creek call for “Christian unity,” why don’t we just have a spokesman for the local RLDS (Community of Christ) Church come to our church so we can learn about the “praiseworthy things” in their so-called “Christian” faith?

By associating with Willow Creek and their irresponsible support of ecumenism, (our church) is indirectly endorsing their action of “watering down” the importance of the truth of essential Protestant doctrines that instead should be maintained and vigorously defended.

William Bridges

William Bridges, Ph.D., is the nation’s leading “Change Theorist”, and was past president of the Association for Humanistic Psychology, which is grounded in the application of the tradition in psychology. AHP is “concerned with psychotherapy and issues of social concern. And it is in

Transpersonal Psychology (Association for Transpersonal, Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, New Age, East-West, the Consciousness Movement, Noetic Sciences); the Growth Center and Human Potential Movements; the Self-Esteem and Addiction Recovery Movements; Family Therapy, Holistic Health and Hospice, and Organizational Development and Organization Transformation. It is philosophically aligned with the post-modern philosophy of science, constructivist epistemology, structuralism, and deconstructionism. We also could include green politics, deep ecology, the feminist and gay rights movements, and the psycho-spiritual wing of the peace movement.” (AHP website. My emphasis.)

Although Bridges is not a Christian author, his new book, *Way of Transition* is sold at Willow Creek’s Seeds Bookstore and is on their Top Ten bestseller list as of July 2001. (Willow Creek website.)

According to Bridges, transition is the internal journey caused by change, and that internal journey of transition has three parts. First, “transition always starts with an ending.” Bridges writes: “In the ending, we lose or let go of our old outlook, our old reality, our old attitude, our old values, our old self-image. We may resist this ending for a while. We may try to talk ourselves out of what we are feeling, and when we do give in, we may be swept by feelings of sadness and anger.” (*The Way of Transition*, William Bridges, p. 5)

Next comes the middle place. As Bridges describes it: “The . . . zone between the old and new . . . This confusing state is a time when our lives feel as though they have broken apart or gone dead. We get mixed signals, some from our old way of being and some from a way of being that is still unclear to us. Nothing feels solid. Yet for that very reason, it is a time when we sometimes feel that anything is possible. So the in-between time can be a very creative time too.” (*The Way of Transition*, William Bridges, p. 5-6)

Finally, comes the last step in transition, the new beginning. Here, Bridges writes: “We take hold of and identify with some new outlook and new reality, as well as new attitudes and a new self-image. When we have done this, we feel that we are finally starting a new chapter in our lives. We have . . . a new sense of purpose and possibility.” (*The Way of Transition*, William Bridges, p. 6)

Bridges also gave a keynote address at the Friends of the Center Leadership Conference 2000, “Personal and Professional Renewal in a World of Constant Change.” Bridges challenged his audience to think about their own transitions and about “self-renewal.” Self-renewal doesn’t start with doing something, he said; it starts with letting go. “It’s another kind of dying — to your old life, your old habits. You have to let go of whatever got you this far. It’s counterintuitive. You have to ask, ‘What’s really over now?’ ‘What am I holding on to, out of habit?’”

So why are Bridges’ ideas of “change” so dangerous? Because Bridges’ “Change Theory” ideas are not only being promoted at Seeds, but have already been integrated into Willow Creek’s teachings. In a Willow Creek Seminar Tape, for example, teacher Jim Dethmar says, “Change only occurs when there is significant disillusionment with the status quo. This is ‘Change Theory’ “. (This is evidence that Mr. Bridges’ secular “change theory” has already crept into Willow Creek teaching.) Later on in the lecture, Jim Dethmar gives a suggestion on how one might implement change when he says, “...a simplified view of how to do change is find something that is wrong, it might be a little one, and rub it raw, irritate it”. (Willow Creek Seminar Tape) The implication is that if a church wants to adopt Willow Creek “changes,” then it has to “irritate” the status quo, i.e. congregants who resist change.

It is very disturbing to see a church organization base their teachings on humanistic psychology that overrides the sufficiency of the Bible to guide our lives and make us new creatures in Christ. Frankly, I don't understand what this humanistic propaganda is doing in a church bookstore. This is yet another example, however, of Willow Creek's willing promotion of secular psychology that relegates the Bible to a secondary source for edifying their membership. Can (our church) really avoid being infected by this partiality when they rub shoulders with the WCA?

M. Scott Peck

Peck is a New Age "guru," who professes Christianity, but teaches otherwise. Life magazine, in fact, said "the Scott Peck gospel is an amalgam of psychiatry and Christianity drizzled with Greek myth and Buddhism" (11/18/95, World). Though he claims conversion to Christianity in 1980, M. Scott Peck has never refuted or modified in subsequent books the views expressed in the 1978 *The Road Less Traveled*. In fact, his later books continue to express the same New Age world-view.

Here are a few of Peck's false and dangerous beliefs:

- "God wants us to become Himself (or Herself or Itself). We are growing toward godhood. God is the goal of evolution." ---from *The Road Less Traveled*, 1978. (Sounds like Mormonism to me.)
- "God does not punish.... God cannot destroy; He can only create." --- *People of the Lie*, 1983. (Denying God's Holy Judgment.)
- "It is the principal thesis of this work that these specific [evil] people - as well as human evil in general - need to be studied scientifically..... A psychology of evil must be a healing psychology.... a psychology of evil must be a religious psychology...it must not only embrace valid insights from all religious traditions but must also recognize the reality of the 'supernatural'". --- *People of the Lie*, 1983. (Embracing the occult and other false religions to understand sin.)
- "It is important for people who find the concept of emptiness frightening to remember that meditation - emptiness - is not an end in itself but the means to an end. It is said that nature abhors a vacuum. So it is that the moment we become empty something comes into our emptiness. The virtue of meditation is that whatever comes into emptiness is beyond our control. It is the unforeseen, the unexpected, the new. And it is only from the unforeseen, the unexpected, the new that we learn." --- *The Different Drum*, 1987. (An irresponsible suggestion to unsuspecting Christians. A dangerous, dangerous practice that invites major deception.)
- "Our responsibility as individuals to empty ourselves in order to achieve peace was stated clearly by the Hindu mystic Krishnamurti twenty years ago in his book *Freedom from the Known*. --- *The Different Drum*, 1987. (Why is a Christian advocating a Hindu mystic?)
- In an interview which appeared in *Christianity Today*, Peck was asked "what he meant when he called Christ 'Savior.'" The reviewer writes, "Peck likes Jesus the Savior as fairy godmother (a term I'm sure he does not use flippantly) and an exemplar, or one who shows us how to live and die. But he does not like the idea of Jesus the Atoner" (3/1/85, *Christianity Today*, p. 22).

From these examples (and there are many, many more) it is easy to see why Peck is embraced by the New Age community and featured in their bookstores. Peck, in fact, makes no bones of the fact that

he is aligned with their beliefs. In 1988, for example, Peck endorsed Cosmic New Age Christ by Matthew Fox, a mystical New Age Catholic priest (defrocked in 1995).

The most amazing and dangerous fact about Peck, however, is that his influence is also accepted in many Christian circles, even reaching to the top of the Willow Creek organization. Unbelievably, Bill Hybels in his book *Honest to God* uses Peck as a positive resource from *The Road Less Traveled* and *The Different Drum* (a book that Marilyn Ferguson, New Age author, endorsed by stating, "Peck has done it again!"). Hybels also wrote an article for the Grand Rapids College newspaper entitled "Truth Telling" which favorably and extensively quoted Peck (12/15/95, Calvary Contender & Logos Resources website).

Is it any wonder that M. Scott Peck is also referenced by John Ortberg, associate pastor at Willow Creek? You'll find Peck quoted in Ortberg's new book called *If You Want to Walk on Water, You Have to Get Out of The Boat*, which is currently #1 on the Seeds Bestseller List.

Remember, M. Scott Peck is a man who not only distorts the true Gospel of Jesus Christ into blasphemous New Age drivel, but he is also the man who, in a March 1991 *Playboy* interview, said he thought pornography was good. Not a very good resource to draw upon. But Hybels doesn't seem to have a problem with it, and he draws his Willow Creek followers further into deception by associating with a person like Peck.

Melody Beattie

Like M. Scott Peck, Melody Beattie claims to be a Christian, but is teaching unbiblical ideas that preach "Self-Love" psychology and New Age perspectives. Author of the best-seller *Codependent No More*, Beattie says that we "suffer from that vague but penetrating affliction, low self-worth" and that "self-love" is the cure. One of the chapters in her book, in fact, is entitled, "Have a Love Affair With Yourself." She suggests we stop torturing ourselves and try to raise our view of ourselves. How do we do that? She says: "Right now, we can give ourselves a big emotional and mental hug. We are okay. It's wonderful to be who we are. Our thoughts are okay. Our feelings are appropriate. We're right where we're supposed to be today, this moment. There is nothing wrong with us. There is nothing fundamentally wrong with us." (What about Romans 3:23, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.")

In an excerpt from her original meditation in *The Language of Letting Go*, Beattie writes: "Trust yourself. Trust what you know. Sometimes, it is hard to stand in our own truth & trust what we know, especially when others would try to convince us otherwise... Ask to be shown the truth, clearly – not by the person trying to manipulate or convince you, but by yourself, your Higher Power & the Universe. (The New Age terminology I underlined is blatant and decidedly unchristian. How is the "Universe" or your "Higher Power" going to show you truth? Do we have "our own" truth? Isn't Jesus the only truth?)

In a 1997 interview Beattie reveals more of her "New Age spirituality" by erroneously comparing the holiness of the crucifixion with the "holiness" of human despair. She stated: "The crucifixion has become one of the holy places, but I'm sure it didn't feel all that holy going through it. But he (Jesus) took his pain and made it count for something. He owned his power within that situation, he did what he wanted to do and he handled it creatively. That night when we bottom out on drinking and we've never hated ourselves so much, that's a holy place. That day when we're ready to blow our brains out

because he won't change and do something differently so we can be happy, and someone says why don't you try Al-Anon, it becomes a holy place." (To describe Christ's plan of salvation as a creative exercise in overcoming pain and then compare it to people struggling with their sinful nature is nothing short of blasphemy.)

In this same interview Beattie implies that people living today had the opportunity (before their birth) to choose to live at this particular time in history: "I know it sounds kind of new-agey, [she rubbed her hands together and grinned gleefully] but I think there are some of us who just went: I know there's going to be some stuff happening there [on earth in this time] and I want to be part of it. We might be having second thoughts as we grind through the nineties, but I do think it's going to pay off. As we go around the tip of this decade, I think we're going to see and remember why we're here." --- *The Power of Self-Love: Conversations with Melody Beattie*, Phoenix, Vol. 17, No. 10, Oct. 1997. (I agree with you, Miss Beattie, it sounds A LOT "new-agey!")

Unfortunately, Melody Beattie has strong ties to Willow Creek despite her obvious New Age leanings. Bill Hybels' book, *Fit To Be Tied* gives ample evidence that he has been strongly influenced by the psychological writings of Melody Beattie. Beattie is footnoted more than any other person in *Fit To Be Tied*. For example, in chapter 12, there are eight footnotes referring authoritatively to Beattie and her book *Codependent No More*. On p.196, the whole page is devoted to Beattie's theories, with five footnote references to Beattie's *Codependent No More*. The reader is given the clear impression that Beattie is an expert to be trusted. There is no indication by Hybels who Beattie really is and what she teaches.

Worse yet, Melody Beattie's books are also sold at Willow Creek's Seeds bookstore where, G. A. Pritchard reports, most of the books sold are psychological and self-help books, with the decidedly anti-Christian *Codependent No More* by Melody Beattie the top seller at the time of his publication. (Pritchard's Willow Creek analysis, pp. 227, 235)

Hybels and Willow Creek's promotion of Beattie's teachings, therefore, will only mislead unsuspecting Christians into the notion that her New Age ideas are valid and edifying when they are really dangerous and misleading. And if the leadership of Willow Creek is actively involved in this unbiblical pop psychology, isn't it safe to assume that these aberrant ideas will be sprinkled throughout Willow Creek resources under the guise of solid Christian teachings? Can (our church) really afford to associate with an organization that openly supports people like Melody Beattie?

Carl Jung

The overwhelming majority of Christians have probably never heard of Carl G. Jung, but his influence in the church, especially Willow Creek, is vast and affects sermons, books, and activities. Carl Jung was an internationally renowned Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist who, along with Sigmund Freud, popularized psychoanalysis. Jung believed that psychoanalysis was a way to achieve both personal and cultural renewal and rebirth. He believed that we could become one with god by finding "the god within."

Carl Jung was the disgruntled son of a Protestant minister (Martin and Deidre Bobgan, *Psycho-Heresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity*, p. 12). He found the Christian Communion to be dull and lifeless, so he renounced Christianity. Jung did not follow his mentor, Dr. Sigmund Freud, in denying all religions. Instead he concluded they were myths that contained some truth about the human psyche.

Since he viewed all religions as containing some truth, Jung denied the authority of the Bible and Jesus' claim to be the only way of salvation.

In repudiating Christianity, Jung became involved in idolatry. He replaced and renamed all things Christian with his own mythology of archetypes (humble fellow). As his thinking progressed, the archetypes took form and served him as familiar spirits (Bobgan, p. 14). Jung even claimed to have a personal spirit guide named Philemon, another named Ka. Jung thought he could talk to the dead, and the dead could talk back (Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 18, 70-199).

Obviously, Jung was deeply involved in the occult. He went through what he described as a deification process, whereby he believed he became a god through an initiation in "the Land of the Dead". (*Aion: Researches in the Phenomenology of Self*, 1951.) Most of his psychological ideas came after his "deification" and inspiration came from his 'spirit guide', Philemon. He was involved in astrology, automatic writing, casting horoscopes, divination methods and other occult practices. It was through these personal occult experiences that he developed a new belief system called psychoanalysis, which ultimately defames man's spirituality by declaring all religion, especially Christianity, to be fable and fantasy.

For some mysterious reason, however, Bill Hybels is a strong advocate of Jung. In 1990, Bill Hybels wrote *Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian* which has been widely promoted by other Christian leaders in spite of the fact that it exalts the false theories of humanistic psychology and Carl Jung. Under the heading, "Different Isn't Bad," on page 70, Hybels wrote: "In the 1920's Carl Jung took a new look at the old theory that just as people are born with differing physical traits-tall or short, brown-eyed or blue-eyed, right-handed or left-handed-so they are born with differing temperament traits. In the 1950s Isabel Myers and Kathryn Briggs expanded Jung's work and devised the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test, a tool for identifying personality types based on various combinations of inborn temperament traits, an unbiblical notion to say the least.

In *Honest to God* Hybels also endorses *Please Understand Me* by David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, which advances the theories of Carl Jung on personality types from which the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator Test in the book was derived. Says Hybels:

"Please Understand Me is an in-depth look at Jung's theory and the applications made by Myers and Briggs. Lynne and I read it one year on vacation, and to say it revolutionized our marriage is no exaggeration. It dispelled the notion that there is one standard of 'normalcy' and whoever doesn't fit it is wrong."

"The theory proposes that people approach four selected areas of life in ways that are fundamentally different-but equally right. These different ways of behaving are called preferences."

As you can see, Bill Hybels is messing with error. Jungian "personality temperaments" philosophy is nothing more than a false teaching that relegates our sinful nature to inbred temperaments we cannot control. The boxing in of the four main personality traits as developed by Jung becomes a form of divination and denies that Christians can be conformed to Christ and become new creatures. The study of these temperaments, which are man-centered, self-oriented, and psycho-paganistic, are being offered to the unwitting Christian as a sophisticated, almost magical way to understand our deepest natures and our personality types. In actuality, Christians could be unknowingly lured into the occult by practicing the temperaments and other New Age personality typologies.

Unfortunately, not only is Bill Hybels deeply involved in Jungian psychology in his personal life, but he has also heartily injected it into the Willow Creek organization. Currently, it is easy to see that Willow Creek is openly mixing this godless, humanistic psychology with Biblical truth. Many leaders and teachers at Willow Creek have degrees in psychology, including prominent teaching pastor, John Ortberg, whose latest book also references Jung, as well as Jewish psychiatrist Victor Frankl, Schuller's psychotherapist hero. (See Ortberg's *If You Want to Walk on The Water, You Have to Get Out of the Boat.*) Willow Creek also endorses the work of Freudian psychiatrists Frank Minirth and Paul Meier.

So just how serious is this? Willow Creek blatantly dabbles in Jung's "religion" when they incorporate his notions about man and deity through partaking in his theories, therapies, and notions that have filtered down through other psychotherapies, through 12-step programs, through inner healing, through dream analysis, and through personality types and tests. Unfortunately, this unholy mixture is a very deceptive attack upon Biblical standards of right and wrong, truth and error. Remember, too, Jung was an occultist, astrologer, believed the Bible is a myth, and was demonically possessed by two spirit guides; Philemon and Ka. But if Bill Hybels isn't bothered by this, why should we be?

(Our church) should be very bothered by this.

Robert Bly

Robert Bly, poet and philosopher, is the founder of the New Age Men's Movement, and is an advocate of mythological, psychological and occult practices to redeem man's natural condition. Bly's books and philosophies can be found in New Age bookstores.

The works of Robert Bly present the reader with a panorama of the pagan concepts that permeate the secular men's movement. Bly's ideology assumes that the basic need of men is to "go back to ancient mythology . . . to visualize the wild man that is part of every modern male." ("Connecting With the Wild Man Inside All Males," *Utne Reader*, Nov./Dec., 1989, p. 58.) The Promise Keepers publication *The Masculine Journey* describes Bly's book *Iron John* as "a treatise on the need for men to experience the ancient occultic rites of initiation." These "occultic" rites of initiation are defined as "long and intensive training with the aim of elevating the one who undergoes it go begin (initiate) living a new, higher life, often described as being on the level of Godhood, above and beyond the state of ordinary mortals..." (*Seekers Handbook*, p. 297)

To restore a boy's male identity, Bly proposes, he must quit taking cues from "Mother" (the symbolic female influence in the boy's life) and "go down into the psyche and accept what's dark down there." (*What Men Really Want*, Keith Thompson) This sounds very much like Brennan Manning's unbiblical teaching of readily embracing the darkness through meditation and self-analysis.

In a 1999 interview Bly endorsed everything from occultist Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud, and psychotherapy to strange New Age rhetoric about the "sister of the Virgin Mary, the Baba Yaga being," and the "Mayan Lords of Death." (*Reunion of Masculine and Feminine: An Interview with Robert Bly*, by Bill Bruzy, *Creations Magazine*, February 1999)

Unfortunately, Bill Hybels also has promoted Bly by using him as a reference in his book *Honest To God*. Of course, maybe it shouldn't be much of a surprise considering the fact that Promise Keepers has also endorsed Bly's ideas in the book *The Masculine Journey*, and Willow Creek is a big promoter of Promise Keepers, an ecumenical group that appeases and embraces Mormons and Catholics alike

within their organization.

Conclusion:

Through a misguided kind of Christian “love” that denies God’s ultimate truth and holiness, Willow Creek has accepted all the people you just read about as part of their philosophy to view any professing Christian to be a “brother or sister” in Christ, no matter what doctrine they espouse. Ultimately, they even accept the teachings of several secular, non-Christian experts under the fallacious notion that “all truth is God’s truth.” But is this right?

Certainly the idea of unity among all Christians is a noble concept when it involves agreement on the essentials of Biblical Christianity. The problem with the Willow Creek method, however, is that they have opened their doors wide open to ALL religious thought (including secular thought), and embraced them under the guise of Christian love and acceptance, even when it is diametrically opposed to the fundamentals of Christianity. This philosophy, unfortunately, is far beyond the boundaries of respectable ecumenism. (Of course, this is assuming that ecumenism is, in itself, respectable ---which is very questionable.)

For example, G. A. Pritchard makes this sad assessment of Willow Creek’s practice of mixing humanistic psychology with Christianity: “Ironically, while Hybels is evangelizing those in the world toward Christianity, he is also evangelizing Christians toward the world. As the unchurched Harrys in the audience (10 percent) move closer to Christianity, the Christians in the audience (90 percent) are often becoming more psychological and worldly. ... In the effort to become relevant Willow Creek ironically is in danger of becoming irrelevant” (Pritchard, p. 238-239).

Pritchard believes that this accentuation on psychology, “instead of encouraging Creekers to know and love God, encourages them to know and accept themselves and develop a strong self-esteem. The goals and means of one’s ethics change from a God-centered to a human-centered orientation. ...” (Pritchard, p. 234).

Another Christian analyst, Dr. Jay E. Adams agrees with Pritchard’s conclusions. He states: “In my opinion, advocating, allowing and practicing psychiatric and psychoanalytical dogmas within the church is every bit as pagan and heretical (and therefore perilous) as propagating the teachings of some of the most bizarre cults. The only vital difference is that the cults are less dangerous because their errors are more identifiable.”

Yet unfortunately Willow Creek is dabbling in more than just psychology. As we’ve seen earlier, Bill Hybels has been all too willing to look the other way when people in which he associates promote false doctrine. Therefore, Willow Creek is almost practicing a much more severe and dangerous form of ecumenism call “syncretism,” which is the merging or union of conflicting religious beliefs which forms a new religious philosophy. By not openly rejecting these false teachings, Willow Creek has effectively hampered its Christian mission and damaged the ability of its leaders and members to discern light from darkness, wheat from tares, and truth from error. The result are Christians who have been indoctrinated to easily accept and incorporate ideas from a potpourri of false “isms”: Eastern mysticism, Catholicism, Mormonism, Humanism, etc.

In the end, this mixture of false beliefs with true Christianity eventually forms a new “Willow Creek Christianity” that bears little resemblance to the true Gospel. And with the international influence

Willow Creek has built, they are essentially leading many churches into the same kind of error. The antidote? Simple. Bill Hybels, Willow Creek, and all WCA member churches need to remember what the Bible clearly teaches and follow its dictates:

- We are to separate from those who are not sound in the faith ([2 Timothy 3:5](#)).
- We are not to assist the cause of the ungodly ([2 Chronicles 19:2](#)).
- We are not to give honor to one who denies the faith ([Galatians 1:6-9](#)).
- We are to examine a person's theological position and find it acceptable before cooperating with him in spiritual efforts ([1 John 4:1](#)).
- We are commanded not to join forces with unbelievers in the Lord's work ([2 Corinthians 6:14](#)).
- We are not to emphasize unity at the expense of doctrinal purity ([Jude 3](#)).
- We are not to encourage or cooperate with persons of unsound doctrine ([2 John 10-11](#)).

(Our church) needs to review these scriptures, too, and decide where they stand in their official association with Willow Creek. Just look at these two facts that show two basic doctrinal differences that separate (our church) and Willow Creek:

#1: Willow Creek believes that women can hold the position of overseer, which (our church) does not believe. Willow Creek, in fact, strongly promotes this belief and considers acceptance of female elders as a criteria for membership.

#2: Willow Creek believes that baptism by "sprinkling" (as an alternative to immersion) is acceptable, which (our church) does not believe.

Generally speaking, these two issues alone might be enough reason to feel that (our church) would be better off not officially associating with Willow Creek. I mean, are we really sure that (our church) leaders can go to Chicago, be trained by Willow Creek leaders, and not be influenced by some of their opposing doctrinal viewpoints?

And worse yet, what about the overwhelming use of humanistic psychology and worldly thinking that is sprinkled throughout almost every Willow Creek program and used to defend their pragmatic, ecumenical philosophy? How does (our church) leaders avoid being influenced by Willow Creek resources and seminars that may contain worldly, unbiblical teachings that are couched in Christian terminology?

Frankly, I believe that some of the Willow Creek pragmatism has already started to affect some of the (church) leadership. I can personally attest to a certain arrogance among some of the (our church) Creative Arts ministry leaders after they came back from a seminar at a "Willow Creek-like" megachurch in Texas called Fellowship Church. After returning from this Texas trip, the Creative Arts leaders conducted a (church) meeting to tout some of the new ideas they gained at Fellowship Church. Unfortunately, some of the new attitude that they wanted to pass on to the Worship Team were not edifying in the least.

One of the more disturbing attitudes they brought back with them, unhappily, was an almost callous acknowledgment that by implementing “Willow Creek/Fellowship” strategies into (our church), they would probably lose some valuable church members who didn’t like the “new” changes. They joked that these people might leave and (our church) would then be known as the “Church of the Blessed Subtraction.” In other words, we were to consider the loss of these people as just a necessary evil in order to bring in more Willow Creek-type “seekers” into our services. Personally, I found the insensitive categorization of offended brothers and sisters of our church as “blessed subtractions” to be a disturbing attitude that has obviously come from the Willow Creek/Saddleback mentality where “change theory” is king.

Don’t get me wrong; I am not saying there is a sinister Willow Creek “conspiracy” going on here. I am well aware that Willow Creek has a very strong desire to reach the lost for Jesus, and that is commendable. No doubt (our church) wants only to share in that kind of passion to bring salvation to others. But Willow Creek’s praiseworthy zeal for evangelism has been perverted by pragmatic and ecumenical leanings that have exposed them to the influences of the world and its false ideology. Unless and until Willow Creek changes their philosophy of worldly evangelism and returns to Biblical discernment and truth, I believe it would be in (our) Christian Church’s best interests to no longer financially support them, attend their seminars, or use their resources. The Bible clearly teaches:

[Ephesians 5:11](#) says, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

[Galatians 1:6-11](#) says, I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Based on these scriptures, should not our involvement with Willow Creek be questioned considering the dangerous influences of people like Schuller, Peck, Beattie and Wagner? Does the WCA really supply us with so many spiritual advantages that it is worth wading through their contaminated philosophy to get to it?

I stand by my conviction that God’s Word is wholly sufficient to guide His people in ALL things ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)), and until I am shown compelling Biblical evidence to the contrary, I will diligently contend for the faith and be wary of any outside worldly influence upon (our church). It is my fervent hope that the leadership of (our church) comes to the same conclusion and deems our official Willow Creek association to be wholly unnecessary and ultimately, a drawback to the proper edification of our membership.

--- Chris Carmichael, August 2001

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