

# THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

VOLUME XXVII ISSUE 1

JANUARY 20, 2003

## One Nation Under gods

Last August marked the fortieth anniversary of my ordination by the Calvary Baptist Church in Connersville, Indiana. Through the intervening Decembers, I do not recall any in which the question has not been asked, sometimes with obvious malice aforethought and once or twice with sincerity, whether or not I "believed in celebrating Christmas." Some interrogators have made the inquiry seem a veritable test of the orthodoxy of my faith—"Do you believe that *Christians* should observe Christmas?" One preacher that writes annually always spells the word as "Christ-Mass," to ensure that the full implications of his question are understood.

I have become accustomed to the annual pilgrimage of scalding scoldings and 'righteous' rebukes arriving to condemn any alleged consorting with the Babylonian, Celtic, Druid, and assorted other pagan originations of the trees, flowers, gifts, colors, lights, the Yule log, roasted chestnuts, tinsel, evergreen wreaths, the jolly, weight-challenged, elderly gentlemen and his merry band of elves, some ragamuffin urchin with a snare drum, various wooden-headed toy soldiers, Dancer and Prancer and their band of swinging and swaying reindeer, and even that twentieth century tag-a-long reindeer with the red light

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# this and that

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This edition begins the twenty-seventh year of The Baptist Heritage and, this month, I begin my twenty-eighth year as pastor of The Heritage Baptist Church of Pensacola. As I do on the annual anniversary of my first sermon as pastor, I will once more this year reaffirm to the congregation that, without reservation, I believe and practice the doctrines of this church as written in her Confession of Faith. I trust that I have indeed grown in my understanding and matured in my capability of expressing those doctrines; but I have not altered one letter.

This past year was a trying one personally, in many ways. I began 2002 with pneumonia, followed with an obstructed bowel, and ended the year with heart surgery. The church began construction on a classroom and assembly expansion. During the year, we had families walking the valley and we saw the homegoing of some saints. The circulation of this paper increased; a fact that continues to amaze me.

The year that is unfolding now will be a year that brings us  
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# this and that

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closer to the return of the LORD Jesus Christ. As we approach the day the Trumpet is to sound, we should not expect this vile world to become "a friend to grace, to help us on to God." We shall soon discover, if any of us have forgotten, that we are "on the battlefield." Past engagements will seem to have been but simple skirmishes as we

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face the advancing storm of the devil's wrath. Wiser than we, he knows that he has but a short time (Revelation 12:12) and will 'redeem the time' that he has. The warfare will become more intense almost daily. The opponents of biblical Christianity will become as bold as roaring lions. Casualties will come. Defections from the faith will bring grief to our hearts. The fall of standard-bearers will break our hearts. Holding the fort will prove more than some will want to do because compromise will seem a convenient season. Standards will be lowered and the mixed multitude will be welcomed. Fortresses of Faith will crack; Citadels of Conviction will crumble; Encampments of Evangelism will

collapse: apostasy will flourish where righteousness once held sway. Paganism will rule and reign as this land of liberty increasingly becomes a land of license. Anti-Christ will be foreshadowed in a thousand ways.

Even so, Come quickly, LORD Jesus.

May the Lord bless you and may you know the inner peace and soul security of dwelling in the hollow of His hand.

—Pastor Manley

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LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Psalm 2)

*Whence Came The Origin Of These Pagan Concepts?*

Who spoke the first lie and sowed the seed that caused all of this that we call paganism? That question is easily answered—Satan. In its original form, the first challenge was “Yea, hath God said?” The “father of lies” explicitly and implicitly declared, by his words, that God did not exist or that, if He did exist, He was incapable of the exercise of authority. Through all the various translations, rephrasings, and adaptations by assorted humanity during the six thousand years since, the ring of rejecting defiance is retained. The battlefield from the Garden to Armageddon remains the same—the authority of God.

Satan himself instituted the first form of paganism—“a life lived without recognition of the God of the Bible or a religion apart from the God of the Bible”—the members of his followers among humanity have expanded and elaborated on the form, but the substance has ever remained: “There is no god for me, but by my choice.” The pagan is simply one who has determined that he or she will not have this God, the God of the Bible, to reign over her or his world. Any god, except the God of Heaven, is the popular choice of humanity.

The only issue left to discuss is to determine what is it that you believe? Have you have followed the lie of Satan or have you accepted the truth from God? Your answer to that question will determine where you spend eternity.

—Pastor Manley

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acknowledgment appreciated.**

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for a nose—the Rudolph that Cowboy Gene Autry made famous, after he got back in the saddle, even though he said it was the silliest song he ever recorded. In case, my reader is wondering, I have been ‘authoritatively’ advised that the red nose on this Norse-worshipped reindeer is a representation of the inebriated wassailing of the ‘spirits.’

While I have never doubted the passion displayed by the inquisitors in these challenges regarding the assorted things each deemed questionable, nor have I doubted the general accuracy of the records of history that these earnest folk have cited, I do wonder if those vaunted records are complete. In particular, do the sources, purported as providing authentic ancient facts, actually extend backward far enough to be a sufficient and ultimate authority of the origin of pagan practices? This article will explore that possibility.

One additional cause of wonderment also strikes me annually. These who are vehement in the disapproval of all things pagan in origin never feel the internal pressure to avoid using the names of the gods associated with every day of the week and each month of the year and two-thirds of the vehicles on the roads. To identify Sunday as the Lord’s Day and chaff over Christmas is more than a little inconsistent; “but wisdom is justified of her children.”

Personally, I am not convinced that the name of the first day, Sunday, and the name commonly used for the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth, Christmas, are happenstance—but let me not give away the entire article.

*Whence Came The Origin Of These Pagan Concepts?*

My Merriam-Webster defines pagan as “a follower of a polytheistic religion; one who has little or no religion and who delights in sensual pleasures and material goods: an irreligious or hedonistic person.” My simple working definition of paganism

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would be, "a life lived without recognition of the God of the Bible or a religion apart from the God of the Bible." Sadly, no more accurate description of the average present-day citizen of America or subject of England could be written than the word "pagan." The words of the definition almost have a 'prophetic' sound to them: "one who has little or no religion and who delights in sensual pleasures and material goods." The strength of both nations always was rooted in the religious character of the people. The one land is a shattered relic of her past; the other is headed for a cataclysmic wreck in the not so distant future.

It must surely be evident to any honest, intelligent observer, in this new century, that pagan religions and practices have assumed ('usurped' or 'stolen' might be a better word) the primary position, sharing more influence than do the followers of the sundry forms of either Judaism or Christianity combined, in determining and defining the social, moral, ethical, and cultural practices of the Western World. Since the days of Constantine, the West has been titled 'Christendom,' inferring that the nations of the western hemisphere have some brand or branch of 'Christianity' as the predominant religion of affiliation for the majority of the residents, with the assorted attendant non-Christian minority groups lacking serious popular influence on legal or moral standards. The Western nations commonly refer to themselves as 'Christian' in laws, by resolutions, and through declarations. Through hundreds of years, the West sent 'missionaries' to reform the societies of the East, to change their cultural faults, and, in a smaller measure, to convert those 'pagans' to Christianity. In particular, England and the United States were 'evangelical Christian nations,' proud of their religious heritage and missionary zeal. The British Isles had her "God save the Queen" and the American Republic had her "God bless America." Both expressions are centuries old and are entwined in the heritage of the lands.

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man" is not to be confused with the "original man," Adam. Anthropologists and all their "-ist" buddies are merely guessing, and poorly at that. Scripture reveals the truth.

Paganism filled the earth before the Flood. Truth was almost swallowed by error. Darkness nearly prevailed over light. In the ten generations from the Flood to Abraham, the light grew very dim again. Abraham was not the founder of the monotheist view; he was among the remnant among the pagans.

It is not shocking, therefore, to find in our generation that paganism is again filling the earth, attempting to swallow truth and to extinguish light. Paganism did not succeed in the past; it will not now. There is a Supreme Being that does have Final Authority and Who will bring this world into Judgment. The God of Heaven sits on His throne and laughs at those who believe themselves capable of overthrowing Him. The remnant may shrink to a very thin, persecuted minority, but The Sun of righteousness will return.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the

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ness." A twisting of that type or picture led to the worship of the sun instead of the Son. The oldest Book of the Bible, Job, gives abundant incidental evidence of this relationship as it speaks of sun worship (31:6), and yet describes the LORD (JEHOVAH) as a light shining upon the wicked (10:3), of men rebelling against the light (24:13), and of the light of the LORD shining upon all men (25:3).

The first day of the week is called "Sunday" to worship the sun because some descendent of Adam rejected the "truth of God" and changed it into a lie. The sun replaced the Son.

Some trace the origin of Christmas all the way back to a worship of Nimrod or, more accurately, the worship of the wife of Nimrod and her child, which she claimed was a reincarnation of Nimrod. While that may not be *early enough* in human history to date the origin of the celebration of a 'messianic' birth, an incarnation of deity, it is certainly not too early. I believe that Adam and Eve knew that the promise we read in Genesis 3:15 required the birth of a son. This seems clear from the name that Adam gave his wife: Eve, the mother of all living—and from her declaration, "I have gotten a man from the LORD." Therefore, I have no doubt that truth was known at the time of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel; and that it was deliberately rejected and intentionally corrupted. Thus, a yearly commemoration of the birth of a messiah and the linkage of that event with the winter solstice would not be at all surprising to anyone looking for evidence of corrupted truth. Instead, such a find would be a confirmation that history is accurately recorded in Scripture.

Anthropologists are 'right' in suggesting that 'Primitive man credited the earth for his origin, the sun for his provisions, and the weather for his protection.' However, the primitive man who did so did so to substitute his invention of three gods for the Godhead (Trinity) that he knew existed. "Primitive

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The national anthems of both nations are, in actuality, prayers. (Read *all* the verses of "The Star Spangled Banner" and you will agree; *but, please, do not tell the ACLU or the Ninth Circuit Court in California that this is so.*) While their anthems have remained (thus far), neither nation in 2002 is the land she was in 1942, 1952, or 1962. High noon has passed; the sunset approaches.

The Supreme Court of the United States would never again hand down a decision that "the United States is a Christian nation" as the learned Justices did in a ruling in the matter of the Church of the Holy Trinity v. US, in 1892 (only 110 years ago)—a ruling that contemporary Justice Brennan cited in official Supreme Court papers as being "arrogant" and a sad hold-over of a time "long past." Justices such as Brennan have a vastly different 'opinion' of the character of the nation than did their judicial forefathers on that High Bench.

Somewhat strangely, even Germany in the 1930's and 1940's, though the Fatherland was under the brutal rule of the Nazis, remained identified as the land of Lutherans and Roman Catholics. That incongruity, somehow, did not seem to bother the European or American sensibilities. Japan, however, was described as a heathen enemy, while Italy and German were deemed 'Christian,' though they were also the enemies of the American way of life.

While nearly every sixteenth through twentieth century community in Great Britain and America had the resident atheist or 'free-thinker,' those individuals were termed eccentrics and considered aberrations that should cause no great concern, though everyone expressed pity for the (most often) Methodist or Baptist women who were the pitied wives of such pathetic specimens of manhood. Certain notable atheists were respected as patriots, intellectuals, and businessmen, but not one ever gained a substantial religious (or political) following. While genuine biblical Christianity was never in any measure or

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fashion the majority 'religion' of the West, a vaguely nominal form of Christianity was, in fact, continually the strongest cultural influence in Europe and the Americas for nearly twelve hundred years. This direct Christian influence was so strong and so pervasive, that the culture was mistakenly equated with Christianity by millions both of the East and the West.

Through all the generations from its first European settlements, this country popularly and legally recognized Sundays as worship days and religious overtones were discernible in both public and private activities. Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, all with serious Christian overtones, were officially recognized as national holidays. Successive administrations in America and England officially recognized days of prayer and times of thanksgiving—no publicly identified atheist held major political office in either land. An ambitious man in private enterprise or a 'public servant' might be a heavy drinker and known as 'not above reproach' morally, but he would never stoop so low as to be an atheist. Presidents and Prime Ministers routinely praised the Bible as the Book of the nation and called for Days of Prayer or Thanksgiving to God. The successive Congress of the United States appointed 'Christian' chaplains, opening each session with prayer. The Queen (or King) of Great Britain is the head of the state church. Recognition of the existence of God was a vital part of the American and English fabric—after all, our own national motto is "In God We Trust." Christianity exerted a restraining influence on the national life in both nations—that constraint produced the mistaken notion that Christianity and the culture are somewhat synonymous.

All of the influence of that lengthy record of history has vanished, leaving a meager residue, within the last forty years. The result is that at the entrance into this new century, neither nation is strongly influenced, much less dominated, by Christian principles or biblical philosophies. America and Great

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After the Flood, spiritual rebellion once more was not long in coming—just over one hundred years—at the Tower of Babel. Those who came off the Ark knew the truth and transmitted it to their children; but again, spiritual perversion was quickly in dominance. The wicked lineage of 'tents, cattle, harp, organ, brass, and iron' was not broken by the Flood. Living without recognizing the true God, and a religion apart from the worship of the true God, paganism, rose rapidly, until it dominated the human race.

Paganism is the corrupting, the twisting, the perverting, and the distorting of truth, the addition to truth, or the subtraction from truth. But, it must be noted that truth comes first. Every false doctrine rose only after the truth was given, was understood, and was rejected. The "truth of God was changed into a lie."

Scripture (Malachi 4:2) gives the name or title of "Sun of righteousness" to the Son of God, the LORD Jesus Christ and identifies Him as the "Day Star" (2 Peter 1:19), the Light of the world (John 8:12), and the "Dayspring from on high" (Luke 1:78). Psalm 84:11 says plainly, "For the LORD God is a sun and shield." Psalm 50:2 rejoices that "God hath shined." Numbers 6:25 is the record of a blessing bestowed: "The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." The Apostle uses the very descriptive terminology to explain salvation: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). The sun in the heavens above is a type or illustration of the Son of man, which is in heaven (John 3:13).

Some men did in ancient times, as some do now worship the star identified as the sun. They did so, and do so, because some descendent of Adam corrupted the truth and worshipped the golden disc in the sky instead of the "Sun of righteous-

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truth can or should be connected to either Sunday or Christmas. I contend that the fact that a descendent of Adam was the first pagan has a direct connection to both Sunday and Christmas (as well as to the names of the rest of the days and months on our calendars and to a great deal more). Remember, I am saying this in the context that paganism is a corruption of truth and not a source from which 'truth' developed. Everything any pagan ever believed or practiced is a distortion of revealed truth. One might say that paganism never produced an original thought.

Specifically, Christianity is not a refinement of paganism; paganism is a corruption of true biblical faith, commonly described now as Christianity. The worship of the God revealed through the Bible was the first worship offered by man; every other form of worship is a corruption of that first faith or a further perversion of some previous distortion. Adam knew the truth, as did Eve; but some offspring of the two "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." We know that Cain rejected the truth (1 John 3:12) and set about to establish his own form of worship. One reads the names of the descendants of Cain and finds two of the same names as in the line of Seth (Enoch, Lamech) and Methusael, meaning "man of God"; yet, these men certainly were not worshippers of JEHOVAH. They continued to corrupt the truth, accumulating wealth (tents and cattle), and quickly introducing polygamy, harps, organs, iron, and brass. The implication may well be that these 'inventions' of "imagination" were part of their worship. Solomon was describing man well, when he wrote, (Ecclesiastes 7:29) "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Those "imagination of the heart" brought the judgment of God in the Flood.

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Britain have dramatically declined in their Christian religious lives. In both nations, the fastest growing religious influences are those historically defined by Americans and the British as either Eastern or pagan.

The Eastern World, culturally, morally, and socially, is anchored to pagan religions—primarily, Hindu, Shintoism, and the followers of Confucius and Buddha. Animism and other 'native' religions permeate Africa, South America, the Australian outback, the jungles of Southeast Asia, and the frozen North. Islam, reaching from Morocco to Indonesia is a strange amalgamation of the religions of East and West.

United Nations geo-political projections indicate that by the year 2050, Islam will be the dominant religion in Europe—not by conquest through wars, but through simple numerical replacement. According to these studies, European birth rates will not sustain the population (The deficit attributed, say the reports, to legalized—and encouraged—abortion, intentionally childless homes, reduction in the size of families, and the rise of feminism.); the 'vacuum' created will require imported populations. Birth rates of Americans with European descent are in the same decline—producing the 'need' for immigration.

The Islamic governments are currently exporting their populations into the West, not as refugees from oppression as has been the historic pattern, but as 'missionaries' of Islam. The Saudi Arabian government allegedly provides the funds, derived from oil revenue drained from the West, for one thousand new mosques in America and Europe every year. Through 'replacement' immigration and active proselytizing (Even though the right of evangelism is denied Christians in every Islamic nation: the denial enforced by penalty of death.), the religion of Mohammed has attained the status of a respected, powerful minority in England and a steadily growing, acceptable influence in America. For nearly twenty years, American presidents have recognized Islam as a viable religious choice

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for the citizens of this nation and have observed, or at least recognized by personally attending, 'services' for Islamic holidays. As much media attention is currently granted Ramadan as is given to Hanukkah or to Christmas.

American prisons, in particular, are virtual incubators for birthing converts to the Islamic message—a minority becoming Muslims because of the appeal of the religion, the majority becoming social Muslims, with a fanatical hatred for 'Christian' America, the scapegoat for the ills of the world. The repayment for the goodwill and generosity of generations of Americans who gave enormous sacrifices to give freedom to the rest of the world—without claiming sovereignty over the war-conquered nations nor monetary tribute over the freed peoples—is a residual hatred of Americans and a voracious covetousness for all things American.

America has always been the great melting pot of nations—the unforeseen change in the last forty years, however, is that 'melting' is no longer taking place. As a matter of fundamental principle of the religion, Islam, for example, under the Quran, cannot 'melt,' cannot accommodate—*except as a tool of conquest*. Arriving ethnic groups do not assimilate; they isolate, organizing enclaves and expelling Americans. Since her inception, people came to America to become Americans; now they come to change America. Our national motto of E Pluribus Unum—"from many, one"—has been re-crafted by the multiculturalists to read "from one, many." Many immigrant parents forbade their children from speaking 'the language of the old country' and insisted on English as the tongue of the home; new arrivals demand classrooms and teachers to perpetuate the foreign sounds. Miami, for instance, reportedly has 195 languages or dialects in the public school system.

American may not be conquered by a foreign nation; she may very well be assumed by 'foreign' Americans. My point is not connected with immigration—except as a warning that the

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Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. (Romans 1:16-25)

Accepting the word of God as the sole and final authority, I believe that man was created by the direct act of God and knew His Creator. Man did not 'originally' devise three (or more) gods to worship: the earth for his origin, the sun for his provisions, and the weather for his protection. Man walked and talked with his Creator. The Apostle uses the term "Godhead," the biblical term for the Trinity, in his description of what humanity knew (and continues to know intuitively) 'originally.' Adam in the Garden—of course, present-day humanity wishes to swap Adam in the Garden for a protoplasmic glob in the primeval slime—started with ultimate truth. Somewhere, sometime, some descendent of his rejected that truth and began the trek of paganism.

That much—the origin of paganism through a child of Adam—is indisputable fact for the Bible believer. Rejecting that premise is to discard the authority of Scripture. The only legitimate question in our present discussion is whether or not this

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matter of "public policy," Man as the "controlling legal authority," America ingested the virus that is now killing her. Authority shifted from the Supreme Lawgiver to the consensus opinion of individual humanity collectivized and expressed by the elite, the social engineers. American became again, what she was before the Pilgrims, a pagan land—"One Nation Under gods."

But our question is "Where did this philosophy that now has such great appeal actually begin?" So we return to my earlier question:

*Whence Came The Origin Of These Pagan Concepts?*

The record is clear, according to the anthropologists, ethicists, historians, and most theologians concerning religion: (reasoning backwards)

- (1) Christianity rose from Jewish roots.
- (2) The religion of the Jews evolved over centuries.
- (3) Primitive man credited the earth for his origin, the sun for his provisions, and the weather for his protection.

Therefore, they insist, by this self-serving standard, man was 'originally' non-Christian.

The truth is greatly different. In fact, man was 'originally' a believer in the true and living God revealed in the Bible; it is only later that man became non-sectarian pagan. I believe that the biblical record, the only genuine historical authority, is definite that paganism is a corruption of truth.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

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entrance of those who refuse to 'melt' and who promote their non-Christian religions are becoming a prevailing philosophical influence on the culture and the morals of America. America is no longer under the constraint of Christian influence; America is today a multi-cultural, religiously pluralistic society—the pluralists rejoice with this alteration, I weep.

Eastern mysticism has an even greater effect than does Islam. Introduced through 'parlor games' (such as Quija boards and Tarot cards), exercise classes (such as yoga and karate), educational innovations (such as Montessori and Transcendental Meditation), video games and movies (such as Dungeons and Dragons, Pokemon, Star Wars, Star Trek, Indiana Jones, etceteras ad nauseam), popular music (Doris Day "Ca Sera, Sera" through the Beatles, 'Rock and Roll,' and right into Contemporary Christian Music) and professed 'Christian leaders' (such as C. S. Lewis, Norman Vincent Peale, and Robert Schuler), Hinduism and its various sub-systems and variations are becoming, if not already arrived, mainstream in acceptance. Consider these suggestive facts, if you believe we still live in the land of "Fibber McGee and Molly," "the Great Gildersleeve," or live "The Life of Riley."

A prominent, national 'conservative' radio talk show has a call screener who proudly prays to birds and rocks.

A television program is dedicated to speaking with those that have "crossed over."

Another program focuses on an animal psychiatrist, who believes in reincarnation.

Television producers not only soiled the morality of Americans with the conscious, calculating introduction of the desensitizing saturation of vulgar innuendo, overt and deviant sexuality, and gruesome 'reality' gore, but now television is damning the souls of Americans through the intentional entwining of the promotional appeal for conversion to pagan religions.

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The entire ecological movement forms upon the worship of 'Mother Earth.' That which was a fringe 'hippie' element of society in the 1960's is mainstreaming America in 2002.

The Euro-American religion of choice in 2002 is called, generically, New Age. New Age is the synthesis of all religions and owes its origins to a scatterbrained-swindler, the manic-depressive Madame Blavatsky, the acknowledged 'transmitter' of Theosophy. From that unlikely beginning, within fifty years this formulated fabrication of a publicly exposed (multiple times) hoaxer within fifty years of its 'founding' acquired a global membership and an unbelievable world-wide influence that exceeded the numerical strength many times over. Claiming to convey the lessons taught her by the MASTERS, survivors of Atlantis, living in inaccessible Tibetan monasteries, Blavatsky's writings were regarded as truth by a diverse collection of individuals ranging from educators and clergymen to statesmen and politicians. It is possible to trace the influence of this strange woman on the pacifist Gandhi of India, the war-monger Hitler of Germany, the hippies of the 1960's, a former President of the United States and his wife, and leaders in the environmentalist, peace, and feminist movements. The effect of Madame Blavatsky on the culture and morals of Euro-Americans now would seem to exceed that of Charles Darwin (whose theory of evolution Blavatsky rejected and ridiculed), Karl Marx, John Dewey, Sigmund Freud, John Maynard Keynes, and Søren Kierkegaard. From the acceptance of her corrupt teachings have risen the various forms of that conglomeration of religious philosophy termed the New Age, which is, in reality, the *New International Revised Standard Living Edition of Old Paganism*.

Islam, Eastern Mysticism, and their American-European adaptive branches, such as the Nation of Islam and the worship of the rivers, the rocks, and the hills are not the only forces moving Western religion toward paganism.

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6. Paganism is the acceptable religion.

The shifting of authority from the God of Heaven to man on earth has dramatic effects—effects not only culturally, but also religiously.

No ship is more stable than is its hull and no building is more solid than is its foundation. The loss of the stability of the historic American religious underpinning is a concern even to thinking American atheists. Will Durant, a historian of note and a self-described atheist has expressed his own fear in an interview with the *Chicago Sun-Times*:

"On the other hand," said Durant, "a man like me . . . I survive morally because I retain the moral code that was taught me along with the religion, while I have discarded the religion, which was Roman Catholicism." Durant continued, "You and I are living on a shadow . . . because we are operating on the Christian ethical code which was given us, unfused with the Christian faith . . . But what will happen to our children . . . ? We are not giving them an ethics warmed up with a religious faith. They are living on the shadow of a shadow." [Quoted by Norman Geisler, in *Is Man the Measure*.]

Durant has vividly described the legacy provided for his children through his rejection of the underpinning of his personal accountability to God—"the shadow of a shadow"—yet, he is unable to bring himself to "search the Scriptures" to discover the reality of the existence of God. In spite of his intellectual capacity to describe the problem, the reasoning capability to seek Truth proved non-existent. He and so many others before him and since follow a path of self-destruction in the name of intelligence: "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

Contrary to popular American Christian mythology, this self-destructive disease is not the result of the Supreme Court decision to remove God from the public schools. When this nation allowed the Congress and the Courts to recognize, as a

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tion to allow students to set their own standards of literacy.

6. New calls for segregation based on race or minority status.
7. The belief that every hurt is intentional and every accident legally actionable.
8. Historical revisionism, which purposely leaves out even major events of the past to further the agendas of special interest groups.
9. Attacks on Christian world evangelism for its "destruction of culture."
10. The belief that "male" and "female" are socially created categories intended to enslave women to men. Mankind is said to comprise not two sexes but at least five genders.
11. Hostility toward science and industry.

Unless my readership is 'blind,' the obvious connection between the general acceptance by the public of postmodernism and the current sad state of affairs in Euro-American cultures and in Baptist churches should be 'blinding' in its brilliance.

Robert Lightner, *The God of the Bible and Other Gods*, identifies the "major ramifications of postmodernism" as being:

1. All lifestyles, religions, and worldviews are equally valid.
2. Criticism of a person's view or moral choices is the only real "crime."
3. Opinions receive equal weight with objective evidence.
4. Reality becomes "virtual." Individuals create a personal reality.
5. Authority is regarded as the enemy.

I was quite interested to discover that Dr. Lightner gave as his next "ramification."

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Our working definition of "pagan," as given above includes those who deny the existence of a deity. Atheism is no longer the belief system of an isolated individual randomly dispersed among scattered American communities; it is an accepted, intellectually justified, alternative religion—not an alternative *to* religion as in the nineteenth century, but an alternative religion. No longer does the atheist stand in the village square during a bright Sunday noon hour, take out his watch, gaze toward the sky, and challenge God to strike him dead with a thunderbolt. Carl Sagan pontificated from the lecture hall, the college campus, and the omnipresent television and millions of Americans marveled at his amazing wisdom. Mary Madelyn Murray O'Hare, before her disappearance and death, may have been aptly described as a refugee from a vaudevillian sideshow, but Carl Sagan and his fellow believers are accorded the highest of honors and are leading multitudes to doubt the existence of a Creator.

Most, however, are not quite ready to declare that God does not exist—the bulk of Americans seem to be less than certain either way. Despite the reports of surveys showing that a majority of Americans claim to be 'born-again,' the answers given by the respondents to those same surveys indicate that the majority of that majority of Americans are practicing agnostics—not certain whether or not there is an afterlife; however, they are convinced that, if there is, the Bible does not describe it, nor does that book reveal God. Yet, these same respondents are concerned that the possibility that some god (or force, principle, cause, even just a Some-Thing) exists is greater than the probability that there is no god at all. Unwilling to be a declared atheist, they describe themselves as 'open-minded' agnostics.

An agnostic is a timid 'want-a-be' atheist, afraid to offend the god that just might be. An astounding number of the Eng-

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lish and Americans even claim they are undecided whether god is a "he," a "she," or an "it." "May the Force be with you" is not yet as popular as "God bless you," but 'it is moving up the charts.'

With the anchor rope of acceptance of the certainty of the existence of God sliced through and the compass of the revealed word of God thrown overboard, America 2002, as England, is adrift; a ship whose crew parties below decks while the vessel wanders on a perilous sea of speculation—the future is certain to foresee. The Ships Columbia and Britannia are doomed; barring a true national revival of biblical faith such as Nineveh knew neither nation shall long remain intact.

Blocking such a revival of biblical faith is the philosophical dominance of "postmodernism." First identified as a system of thought in the 1930's, postmodernism began to gain acceptance among the faculty of prestigious universities and colleges in the 1960's and by the 1990's was the dominant and ruling opinion in European and American cultures.

To grasp the concept of postmodernism, one must first understand the nature of modernism. Modernism, secular and religious, was the response to the eighteenth century Enlightenment and may be summarized as anchored to three principle ideas:

1. Reason, the acts of examination and comprehension by the use of the natural sciences, replaces faith in a revelation of God.
2. The laws or forces governing all existence will be revealed through human discovery—a mechanistic view of nature.
3. This use of science will produce an ever evolving, ever improving, ever-bettering society of educated and benevolent people.

In modernism, science was the measure of truth. In postmodernism, man is the measure of truth. The foundation of

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postmodernism is laid on a series of uncomplicated notions; however, those simple ideas produce drastic complications. Postmodernism is the belief in the following premises.

1. There is no absolute or objective truth—all truths are subjective and individualized. (It may be true for me and not for you. It may be true today and not tomorrow.)
2. There is no actual reality: all reality is virtual. (I see what I want to see.)
2. There is no universal authority. (I answer only to me.)
3. All decisions are to be based upon feelings and emotions.

If these concepts seem familiar, they are. These are the premises propounded every day by the entertainment and education industries in this nation. Even the newscasts are 'sermons' of postmodernism.

In *The Death of Truth*, Dennis McCallum provides eleven examples of postmodern influence.

1. The political correctness movement in its blatant attempts to control speech and actions.
2. The view that courts guard the privileges of the dominant culture—white males with wealth. Thus, the legal system is inherently unfair to members of racial, ethnic, or sexual minorities or less affluent socioeconomic groups.
3. A reluctance among educational and parenting experts to correct, confront, grade, test, or group children, based on the "labeling theory" that labels damage children for life.
4. Tolerance to the extreme, as in the increasingly accepted view that no moral decision by another individual or culture should be questioned.
5. An educational de-emphasis on mastering the literature, history, values, and philosophy of Western culture. There is, rather, a trend through multicultural educa-

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