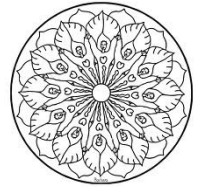




Contemplative or Mystical Spirituality



Contrasted with



Biblical Christianity



Topics to be Exposed in the Light of Scripture

Pantheism	Panentheism	Meditation
Emptying the Mind	The Silence	The Stillness
Altered State of Mind	Mantra	“Jesus Prayer”
Breathing Exercises	Kundalini	Contemplative Prayer
Centering Prayer	Breath Prayers	Spiritual Formation
Spiritual Director	The Desert Fathers	Vintage Christian
The True Self	The Higher Self	The New Age
The Age of Aquarius	The Metaphysical Realm	The Alpha State
Mysticism	Labyrinth	Reiki
Lectio Divina	Sacred Space	New Thought
Ancient Wisdom	Interspirituality	Universalism
Contemplative Spirituality	Contemplative Leaders	Spiritual Disciplines

The Middletown Bible Church

Contemplative or Mystical Spirituality Contrasted with Biblical Christianity

Contemplative Spirituality	Biblical Christianity
GOD’S RELATIONSHIP TO CREATION	
<p>Pantheism—God is all things; all things are God. The universe and all life are connected in a sum. This sum is the total reality of God. Thus, man, animals, plants, and all physical matter are seen as equal. All is one and all is deity.</p>	<p>Creationism—God is totally distinct and separate from His creation. He is holy and set apart from all that is earthly and created. The Creator must never be confused or identified with the creature. The creature is not God. Man must never worship the creature (Rom. 1:19-23).</p>
<p>Panentheism—God is <i>in</i> all things. In panentheism God is both personal and is also in all of creation. This widely held view insists that God is in all people and that someday all of God’s creation will be saved and be one with Him. The goal of life is to discover the God who is within.</p>	<p>God is only in believers, those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The unsaved are dead in their sins (Eph. 2:1-3), separated from God (Eph. 4:17), having no hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). If they die in this state they will perish (2 Thess. 1:8-9), as sadly will be the case with the majority of humanity (Matt. 7:13-14).</p>
<p>God is in everything and everything is in God. A person’s outer personality is not God, but God is still in this person as his true identity. At the mystical level this God-force flows through everything and everybody.</p>	<p>Deity is found in man only when Jesus Christ is dwelling in the heart of the believer. “Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20). “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). The unsaved are “without Christ” and without deity (Eph. 2:12).</p>
<p>“He (Bernard of Clairvaux) realized that God permeates the whole of creation. His experience was that God is the ‘stone in the stones, the tree in the trees,’ and in the same way, the center point of his own soul. God resides at the heart of all that exists” [Joseph Chu-Cong, <i>The Contemplative Experience</i>, p. 3].</p>	<p>We must never confuse the Creator with His creation. God is the Source of all that exists because He created all things (Col. 1:16; John 1:3). But God is distinct and separate from His creation. We must never reduce God to the level of those things which are created. He is ever the Holy One (separate, distinct), high and lifted up.</p>
GOD (DEITY) IN MAN	
<p>“I believe that the Holy One lives in every soul” [Morton Kelsey cited in Charles H. Simpkinson, “In the Spirit of the Early Christians” (<i>Common Boundary</i> magazine, Jan./Feb. 1992), p. 19].</p>	<p>The Holy One only lives in believers: “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?” (1 Cor. 6:19). Only those who believe in Christ have the Holy One (John 7:37-39).</p>

Contemplative Spirituality

Biblical Christianity

“God is the core of my being and the core of all beings” [William Johnston, *The Mystical Way*, p. 224].

Men would not need to be reconciled to God if He is already there (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Why do people need to receive Christ if He is already in them (John 1:12)?

“We need to become aware of the Cosmic Christ, which means recognizing that every being has within it the light of Christ”—Fox, from a Steve Turner interview of Matthew Fox.

Unbelievers are in the darkness (Eph. 5:8; compare John 8:12). Those who are unsaved are “in darkness even until now” (1 John 2:9). They love darkness and hate the light and refuse to come to the light (John 3:19-20).

“When you look past the different terminologies employed by the different mystical systems, you see clearly that they are each talking about the same overwhelming truth—that we are all *essentially children of the Divine*” [Andrew Harvey, *The Direct Path*, p. 34].

All people are divided into two spiritual families: the children of God and the children of the devil (1 John 3:10; John 8:44). Only those who believe in Christ and who have received Him as Saviour have been given the right to be the children of God (John 1:12).

MEDITATION

Meditation is practiced by all major world religions. Mystical meditation is used to experience altered states of consciousness which allow the person to have esoteric (occult) experiences.

Bible Meditation is the practice of “chewing” on God’s Word by the active use of the mind, and inwardly digesting the Word so that the truth is assimilated into the believer’s very being (Psalm 1:2; Josh. 1:8; Col. 3:16).

Mystical Meditation is a mindless and thoughtless process designed to unite a person with divinity.

Biblical Meditation is a normal thinking process of reflecting on the truths of God as clearly revealed in the Bible (Psalm 1:2; Col. 3:16).

Emptying the mind of all thought (and in so doing, the person is open to demonic deception; a vacuum must be filled). No mystic empties the mind just to have it empty. It is always a prerequisite to having it filled with what is perceived to be the “divine.”

Filling the mind with God’s truth (Josh. 1:8; Psalm 1:2; Phil. 2:5). “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

Eastern meditation empties the mind; Christian meditation fills it.

The silence—absence of normal thought, the goal of mystical meditation. Described as “the emptiness, the nothingness...the profound mystical silence...an absence of thought” (William Johnston, *Letters to Contemplatives*, p. 13)

The stillness—a conscious, thoughtful recognition of the Person and Power and Presence of God: “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Contemplative Spirituality

Biblical Christianity

<p>An altered state of consciousness (the goal of meditation).</p>	<p>A blessed state of God-consciousness which is based on the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7)</p>
<p>Mantra—word or words repeated either silently or verbally to “escape from thought,” and to induce an altered state of consciousness. “Do not reflect on the meaning of the word; thinking and reflecting must cease. Simply ‘sound’ the word silently, letting go of all feelings and thoughts” [Willigis Jager, <i>Contemplation: A Christian Path</i>, p. 31].</p>	<p>Mantra warning: “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do” (Matthew 6:7). If the Lord carefully instructed His disciples not to pray as the heathen do, then why is today’s church looking to heathen Eastern religions (as well as mystical Catholicism) to learn how to pray?</p>
<p>Jesus Prayer—A popular version of this prayer is <i>Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner</i>, often abbreviated to <i>Jesus</i>. It is a repetitious prayer, a part of a mystical ritual.</p>	<p>Sinner’s Prayer—“God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). This cry comes deep from the heart of a person who recognizes that Christ is his only hope. Compare Luke 23:42; Rom. 10:13.</p>
<p>Breathing exercises—meditative techniques used to induce a thoughtless state (the emptying of the mind). “Breath prayers” involve repeating a certain word or phrase (this practice is recommended by Rick Warren).</p>	<p>“Pray without ceasing”—not a mindless state but a constant exercise of being conscious of God and His Power and Presence and Promises.</p>
<p>Kundalini—powerful energy that is brought on through meditation, associated with the Chakras (seven energy centers in man which open up during meditation).</p>	<p>Dunamis (Greek word for power)—the power that works mightily in believers, associated with the resurrection of Christ (Eph. 1:19-20, 3:20; Phil. 3:10).</p>
CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER	
<p>Contemplative Prayer—going beyond thought by the use of repeated words or phrases, the goal being to become one with deity.</p>	<p>Biblical Prayer—delighting in thoughtful recognition of the Person, Presence and Power of God who is able to meet every need of His dependent and trusting child.</p>
<p>Centering or Centering Prayer—another term for contemplative meditation (going deep within one’s center), often promoted in churches under the guise of prayer.</p>	<p>Christ-centered Prayer—praying to the Heavenly Father in Jesus’ Name according to the will of God and in line with the Scriptures (John 14:13-14; 1 John 5:14-15).</p>

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Spiritual Disciplines—fasting, praying, performing good deeds for others, meditation. When the spiritual disciplines are taught, they almost always include the discipline of the silence (mystical meditation). Therefore, when the term is used, it is almost always incorporating contemplative spirituality.

Spiritual Life—the outflowing ministry of the Holy Spirit of God: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23). Every believer is commanded to be filled with the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16).

Spiritual Director—one who promotes or trains people in the spiritual disciplines including the silence.

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you” (2 Pet. 2:1). “Try [test] the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1)

Spiritual Formation—the teachings and application of the *spiritual disciplines*. The Spiritual Formation movement that has provided a platform and a channel through which contemplative prayer has entered the church. Many Christian schools and seminaries are adopting this term and are offering courses on spiritual formation. Often they claim that it is merely a course on spirituality and living the Christian life and forming Christ-like character, but it almost always involves contemplative spirituality. If the course contains no mystical or contemplative elements, then why would they choose to use a catchword so commonly employed by contemplative adherents?

The formation of the character of Christ in the life of one surrendered to Him by way of the fruit of the Spirit: “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23). “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

ANCIENT MYSTICAL PRACTICES

Desert Fathers—Monks who lived as hermits beginning around the third century who first taught the practice of contemplative prayer. The Christian Contemplative movement has its roots in Catholicism.

We are not to follow any “Fathers” or monks who have **deserted** from the truth, but instead we are to continue steadfastly in the teaching of Christ and the true apostles (Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-16).

Contemplative Spirituality

Biblical Christianity

Vintage Christian—The term stems from the emergent church movement. “Vintage” refers to something good from the past. This type of “Christianity” draws from knowledge or practices from antiquity, in particular from the spiritual disciplines drawn from mysticism.

Back to the Bible Christian—This is the believer who tests all things by the Word of God and holds fast that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21). He rejects any practices which are contrary to Scripture because the Bible is his final authority for all matters of faith (what he believes) and practice (how he lives).

BECOMING ONE WITH GOD, ONE WITH THE UNIVERSE

Christ consciousness—taught by New Agers to be the state of awareness, reached in meditation, in which one realizes that one is divine and one with God and thereby becoming a Christ or an enlightened being. “It is for the individual to become totally, wholly God” [M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*, p. 283].

From the very beginning Satan’s deceptive message was this: “You shall be as God” (Genesis 3:5), reflecting Lucifer’s very own ambition to usurp God’s place. Lucifer’s ambition: “I will be like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:14).

True Self—The **false self** is the ego or personality that is observable by others. One rids oneself of the false self to find the *true self* through mantra-meditation. New Agers consider people like Buddha, Ghandi, and even Jesus Christ as examples of people who found their true self.

Dead Self—“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). “Ye died and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3-4).

Higher Self—Supposed God-self within that New Agers seek to connect with through meditation. Also called the Christ-self or True-self.

Decreasing Self—The growing believer in Christ only wants Christ to be magnified (Phil. 1:20-21). “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

The worship of self: “It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race,...now I realize *what we all are*....If only they [people] could all see themselves as they really are...I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and *worship each other*....At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusions, a point of pure truth....This little point...is the pure *glory of God* in us. It is in everybody” [Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, pages 157-158].

The worship of any other than God is forbidden and condemned: “Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 4:11). Even when exalted angels are worshiped, a strong rebuke is given: see Revelation 22:9. Man is not God and God alone is worthy of worship. Never confuse the creature with the Creator!

Contemplative Spirituality	Biblical Christianity
-----------------------------------	------------------------------

<p>Oprah Winfrey, in praising the book <i>Discover the Power Within You</i> by Eric Butterworth said this: “This book changed my perspective on life and religion. Eric Butterworth teaches that God isn’t “up there.” He exists inside each one of us, and it’s up to us to seek the divine within” [front cover of the above mentioned book].</p>	<p>Our Lord taught His disciples to pray, “Our Father who art in heaven” (Matt. 6:9). He did not teach them to pray, “Our Father who is the divine force within every single person.” Learn about true spirituality from the Bible, not from popular celebrities, as charming as they may seem.</p>
---	---

<p>The exaltation of self—“Kneel to your own self. Honor and worship your own Being. Chant the mantra always going on within you. Meditate on your own self. God dwells within you as you” [David Eastman, <i>Yoga Journal</i>, Issue 64, p. 43].</p>	<p>The exaltation of God and the Lamb—“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11).</p>
--	--

THE NEW AGE (AGE OF AQUARIUS)	
--------------------------------------	--

<p>The New Age or the Age of Aquarius—the supposed golden age that mankind will enter, when man becomes aware of his power and divinity.</p>	<p>The Bible speaks of the present age and “the age to come” (the future millennial reign of Jesus Christ). Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30. In the age to come men will recognize Christ’s power and divinity and “every knee shall bow” (Phil. 2:9-11).</p>
---	--

THE SPIRIT WORLD	
-------------------------	--

<p>Occult/Occultism—that which is kept secret or hidden; the practice of metaphysics throughout history. Metaphysics pertains to that which is beyond the physical realm or pertaining to the supernatural.</p>	<p>The Bible makes it very clear that there are spiritual beings (unclean spirits, demons, fallen angels), all under Satanic authority, that are the source of occult practices, all of which are strongly condemned in Scripture (Deut. 18:9-14).</p>
---	--

Contemplative Spirituality

Biblical Christianity

“The science of Witchcraft is based on our ability to enter an altered state of consciousness we call ‘alpha.’ In alpha the mind opens up to nonordinary forms of communication, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. Here we also may experience out-of-the-body sensations and psychokinesis, or receive mystical visionary information that does not come through the five senses. In alpha the rational filters that process ordinary reality are weakened or removed and the mind is receptive to nonordinary realities” [Laurie Cabot, *Power of the Witch*, p. 173].

The Bible recognizes the realities of the spirit world and the reality of demonic activity, and God’s people have always been strongly warned not to engage in any of these practices (Deut. 18:9-14). Many who engage in contemplative prayer or Christian mysticism would strongly object to any comparisons to witchcraft, but both seek to open up the mind by way of an altered state of consciousness. Believers are strongly warned to distance themselves from any occult practice in any form. “Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

Mysticism—a direct experience of the supernatural realm

Sanctification—a process whereby a saved person is daily changed to be more like Christ, a transformation experience made possible by the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 3:18).

Labyrinth—an ancient practice involving a maze-like structure. It is not a true maze in which several different paths exist, but it has one path to the center and the same one back out. The labyrinth is a pathway for one to get into the unseen world. This is often accomplished by centering or contemplative prayer, with the goal being to reach the divinity within. Anyone can walk the labyrinth and reach divinity, regardless of one’s religion.

The narrow path: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:13-14). “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12). The Lord Jesus is the only way (John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5).

Reiki—spiritual energy that is channeled by one attuned to the Reiki power. Literally translated “God energy.” Reiki is a New Age healing method, derived from Tibetan Buddhism.

Cross power—“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18).

Lectio Divina—meaning “sacred reading.” This often involves taking a single word or small phrase from Scripture and repeating the words over and over again, a practice that can easily degenerate into “vain repetition” (Matt. 6:7).

Bible saturation: This involves allowing God’s Word to fill the heart and the mind with the result that the believer is saturated with God’s truth and able to apply its principles to every situation (Psalm 119:11; Col. 3:16; Matthew 4:4).

Contemplative Spirituality

Biblical Christianity

Sacred Space—Either a physical spot where one goes to engage in a mystical practice or the actual silence or the state of being during the mystical experience.

Privileged Place—to be “in Christ,” blessed with every spiritual blessing, accepted (highly favored) in the beloved Son of God; a new creature in Christ (Eph. 1:3,6; 2 Cor. 5:17).

New Thought—a movement that tries to merge classic occult concepts with Christian terminology.

God’s Thoughts are not man’s thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9), and we must never mix human error with God’s truth. Instead we must reject all that does not line up with God’s infallible Word (Isaiah 8:20).

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

“The minister was preaching. He was holding up a Bible...He was saying that the Bible was the sole and ultimate authority....No, No, No! The ultimate authority of my life is not the Bible; it is not confined between the covers of a book. It is not something written by men and frozen in time. It is not from a source outside myself. *My ultimate authority is the divine voice in my own soul. Period*” [Sue Monk Kidd, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 76].

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). “Thy Word is Truth” (John 17:17). “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

SALVATION

All people are connected to God. They just need to tap in to the power and energy that is already there.

Sinful men are separated from God, dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3; 4:18-19). Only through the new birth can they become connected with God (John chapter 3).

Man is basically good and all human beings have a divine center.

Man is depraved at the core of his being: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9; see Mark 7:21-22).

The cross is not necessary. Anyone, even non-Christians, can discover the deity that is within them.

The cross is essential (1 Cor. 1:17-21; Gal. 6:14). Those who despise the cross or reject the cross will perish (1 Cor. 1:18).

Mystics do not believe a **fundamental change** is needed, just an awareness of what is already there.

A **fundamental change** is needed: “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7; compare 2 Cor. 5:17; Acts 26:18).

Contemplative Spirituality	Biblical Christianity
A person can get to God by way of a mystical experience, and in so doing, he can become one with God.	God sent a Saviour into the world to be sinful man's only remedy (1 Tim. 1:15). The only way to gain access to God is through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). There is no salvation apart from Him (Acts 4:12).
When Christians ask if "you believe you are a sinner," respond with, "We have not perfectly realized our divine potential, but are in the process of unfolding it through meditation and higher states of consciousness" [Ledy Hammock, <i>Questions, Answers and Ultimate Answers</i> pamphlet]	A man must recognize his sinful state. Isaiah said, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). Paul said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom. 7:24).
Ancient Wisdom =learning to see one's own divinity	Godly Wisdom =learning to see one's own depravity and God's remedy found in Jesus Christ
Testimony from one who had a mystical experience: "Soon I began to notice unusual sensations in my body while meditating. It felt like energy flowing through me. I woke up feeling happy and energetic and filled with a glowing warmth. Gradually the sensations became stronger and after a while it seemed like electric currents were coursing through my body. My fingers tingled and I felt a slight throbbing in the palms of my hands" [Mary Lafferty, <i>Life Times</i> , Issue Number 3, p. 59]. Another describes the experience in similar fashion: "You may experience a lot of energy flowing through you or a warm radiant glow in your body. These are signs that you are beginning to channel the energy of your higher self" [Shaki Gawain, <i>Creative Visualization</i> , back cover].	Testimony from one who had a salvation experience: "That happy day when I found the Saviour was a day never to be forgotten by me...I listened to the Word of God and that precious text led me to the cross of Christ. I can testify that the joy of that day was utterly indescribable. 'I am forgiven! I am forgiven! A monument of grace! A sinner saved by blood!' My spirit saw its chains broken to pieces, I felt that I was an emancipated soul, an heir of heaven, a forgiven one, accepted in Jesus Christ, plucked out of the miry clay and out of the horrible pit, with my feet set upon a rock and my goings established Simply by looking to Jesus I had been delivered from despair, and I was brought into such a joyous state of mind. I had found the Saviour and knew myself to be forgiven" (Charles Spurgeon).
"Christianity's greatest sin is to think that other religions are not saved" [M. Scott Peck, <i>Further Along the Road Less Traveled</i> , audiocassette].	"I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). If other religions consist of saved people, then there would be absolutely no need of missions. If they are already saved, they do not need the gospel.

<p>“The fundamentalist continually waves one or two out-of-context gospel passages in front of us...Thus the quotation ‘No one comes to the Father except through me’ (John 14:6) is often used to declare that no one except the Christian can attain to God—or for that matter be ‘saved.’ This we know is nonsense.” [Frank Tuoti, <i>The Dawn of the Mystical Age</i>, p. 86].</p>	<p>“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:10-12).</p>
<p>INTERSPIRITUALITY (THE ACCEPTANCE AND MERGING OF ALL RELIGIONS)</p>	
<p>Interspirituality—the view that all the world’s religions are identical at the mystical level and therefore there should be solidarity among them.</p>	<p>Doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1; 1 John 4:1)—all the world’s religions are Satanic in origin and opposed to the true gospel of the grace of God.</p>
<p>“It may be advisable in many circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish contexts”—Brian McLaren, <i>A Generous Orthodoxy</i>, p. 260.</p>	<p>A true follower of the Lord Jesus must renounce every false way. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test] the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). “I hate every false way” (Psalm 119:104).</p>
<p>“We are all caught up in the Divine Mystery we call God...the Spirit is in everyone...At the cathedral we “break the bread” for those who follow the path of the Buddha and walk the way of the Hindus” [Bishop Alan Jones, <i>Reimagining Christianity</i>, p. 89].</p>	<p>Most people, sad to say, are energized by the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:1-3). The Holy Spirit is not in everyone, but He only indwells true believers (Rom. 8:9). Those following the path of the Buddha and those who walk the way of the Hindus desperately need to be evangelized and to hear the true gospel, because without the true Christ they will perish.</p>
<p>A merging together of all faiths (Interspirituality)—Divinity (God) is in all things and therefore the presence of God is in all religions.</p>	<p>Earnestly contending for the one true “faith which was once delivered to unto the saints” (Jude 3).</p>
<p>Universalism—the belief that all humanity has or will ultimately have a positive connection and relationship with God. Conversely it is a denial of hell and eternal punishment.</p>	<p>Narrowism—“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).</p>

Beware of the writings coming from the following men (to name just a few): M. Scott Peck (1936-2005), Thomas Merton (1915-1968), Henry Nouwen (1932-1996), Thomas Keating, Alice Ann Baily, Basil Pennington, Tilden Edwards, Gerald May, Morton Kelsey, Matthew Fox, Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, Brennan Manning, Sue Monk Kidd, Henri Nouwen, Eugene Peterson, Jack Canfield, Gary Zukav. Christian leaders who have endorsed certain aspects of contemplative spirituality (to name just a few): Rick Warren, David Jeremiah, Charles (Chuck) Swindoll (documentation regarding these men is found in the book cited below).

This chart is based primarily upon the excellent book by Ray Yungen, *A Time of Departing—How Mystical Practices are Uniting Christians with the World Religions*, 2nd Edition, Lighthouse Trails Publishing Company, 2006. Ray Yungen and Lighthouse Trails gave me permission to use *A Time of Departing* as the basis for this chart. For more information on these important issues, go to the Lighthouse Trails website.

349 East Street
Middletown, CT 06457
(860) 346-0907

A Complete Literature List is Available Upon Request
www.middletownbiblechurch.org

The Middletown Bible Church