

- 1) an impersonal god or force
- 2) The evolution of man into Godhood
- 3) continuing revelations from beings beyond the world
- 4) a need for meditation or other consciousness-changing techniques
- 5) occult practices such as astrology, crystals, Tarot cards, witchcraft, etc.
- 6) vegetarianism and holistic health practices
- 7) unity of all religions
- 8) an illusionary nature of matter (or — we create our own reality)
- 9) pacifism (or — anti war activities)

These are certainly not *all* of the doctrines — just a few of those typical to New Age. *Christians* must be *especially* careful of unknowingly drifting into New Age doctrines since many of the *terms* used by New Agers are the *same* as those used by Christians but are *miles* away from the same meanings. You may want to go to the web address listed at the bottom of this page and read Volume 1, Issue 13 of *Diligence* if you would like a bit more information concerning New Age beliefs.

Post Modernism —

Post Modernism is by far the most complex and diverse of the philosophies we are discussing here. It is transforming every aspect of our lives. The impact of it is not easy to grasp but it is influencing even such things as literature, history, law, education, psychotherapy, science, healthcare and of course religion. Post Modernism undermines objective truth — or truth that is true whether or not we believe it to be true. The political correctness movement is a result of Post Modernism as well as tolerance gone to an extreme. The move in academia toward a reluctance to correct, confront, grade or group children in school is also a direct result of this philosophy. New Age was the beginning of the tip of the gigantic Post Modern iceberg. Like the other two philosophies, it too is a belief that society is based on the decline of absolute truths, and the rise of relativity. We don't have nearly enough room here to begin to describe its impact but because Post Modernism is having so much impact on our lives today, we hope to dedicate several articles to Post Modernism sometime in the near future.

As Christians, we must not only have great respect for the Word of God but also have a thorough knowledge of it as well as a *determination* to adhere to that Inspired Word *as ABSOLUTE Truth*. Only then will we understand that it *can not be changed or revised* at the whim of humankind. Anything less than that will allow false teachers and false doctrines to creep into Christian's lives as well as into the church — unnoticed.

*"Diligence" is a privately funded publication of:
Dennis and Sherri Owens — Cincinnati, Ohio
diligence@gorfsystems.com — <http://www.gorfsystems.com/diligence/>*



DILIGENCE

"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure." — Hebrews 6:11

A ministry of Dennis and Sherri Owens

Volume 6

May 1, 2007

Issue 7

Unnoticed

There has probably never been a time in History when the effort to cast doubt on the Inspired Word of God has been any greater than it is now. There are serious efforts being made to cause people to question the very existence of God as well as belief in Jesus Christ as the Savior for mankind. Well, perhaps we should make a slight correction of that statement. The *effort* may have been there at certain times in the past but the vehicles to propagate that effort have never existed as they do today. The world wide web and other media now provide the means to spread doubt and undermine the Scriptures at a pace never before seen in society. There are numerous web sites *dedicated* to denouncing God and any Christian beliefs. Television channels such as *National Geographic*, *The Discovery Channel* and *The History Channel* are running "documentaries" at an almost frantic pace aimed at cleverly undermining Christianity as well as basic teachings of the Bible. To briefly sum it up — respect for God and His Word is rapidly descending to an all time low.

Perhaps the *most* unfortunate side of this whole discussion is that many *Christians* are aiding in this decline and are not even aware of their involvement. How is that happening? Too many Christians are slowly but steadily buying into a number of philosophies that are becoming more and more prevalent in the world today — and the effects of those philosophies are so gradual and subtle that often even those who consider themselves to be dedicated Christians do not notice the slow but constant shift — a shift *away* from what is taught in the Word of God.

"For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4 NASB)

Is it possible that those "certain persons" creeping in unnoticed in *today's* world are those who are embracing these new philosophies? Could they be Christians who are *drifting* into them without even *noticing* they are doing so? Could they be Christians who no longer have the same respect for the Word that they once had — and don't even realize the change?

There seems to be an attitude in the Lord's Church today that the only way to show love for others is to "relax" our view of certain sins. To do anything less than that is an "unloving" attitude toward those engaged in whatever sin is in question. So are we then saying that God's Word is not the same as it was a few

years ago? Does His Word not condemn the same sins that it did a few years ago? Has *God* changed the way we are to view such sins as homosexuality, greed, lust, adultery, and so on?

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings... (Hebrews 13:8-9 NIV)

It is society that changes — not God or His Word. Regardless of the sin, it is the role of the Church of Jesus Christ to confront sinners and teach them of the forgiveness of God when there is true repentance.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12 KJV)

There are many Christians today who want to re-write the Scriptures to condone certain sins. That desire is based on the new philosophies they are gradually accepting that are *not* in accordance with God and His Word. We don't demonstrate love when we condone, justify and tolerate sin. *That* kind of “love” allows souls to be *lost* forever. God wants souls to be saved (I Tim 2:4) — not allow them to be lost because Christians have drifted into accepting worldly philosophies.

A more specific example of this might be concerning the sin of homosexuality. Many churches are now accepting practicing homosexuals into their fellowship — some even into their leadership — claiming that it is the “loving and diverse” thing to do. Those who want to allow for the practice of that sin or participate in that sin and be guilt free must either reject Christianity completely or be convinced that they can change the nature of God by re-writing the parts of the Word that *clearly* state that practicing homosexuality is sinful behavior (Romans 1:24-32). It's quite likely that the following quote of Elton John demonstrates this in his own life. *“I think religion has always tried to turn hatred towards gay people. Religion promotes the hatred and spite against gays. But there are so many Christian people I know who are gay and love their religion. From my point of view I would ban religion completely, even though there are some wonderful things about it. I love the idea of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the beautiful stories about it, which I loved in Sunday school and I collected all the little stickers and put them in my book. But the reality is that organized religion doesn't seem to work. It turns people into hateful lemmings and it's not really compassionate.”* — Elton John, August, 2006

So — if we don't *like* what God's Word teaches, we just ban it from existence??? — And *that* will solve our problem??? And — teaching what God's Word teaches makes one a “hateful lemming”??? — because someone doesn't *like* what it says or it doesn't *fit* the lifestyle in which he or she *wants* to engage?? And — *“Christian(?) people — who are gay(???) — and love their religion(???)! —* That would definitely have to be a religion(?) based on these new philosophies — because it is certainly not based on God's Word.

We've referred to “new” philosophies but they are only new in relation to their overwhelming surge of popularity in recent years and their intrusion into the mainstream of the everyday lives of all of us — *especially* mainstream Christianity. Some of these philosophies are so splintered that it's difficult to determine exactly how far reaching an effect they have had — particularly on churches and on Christians. So our look at just three of these philosophies will be only — as they say — the tip of the iceberg. As you read the rest of this article, search your own philosophy and theology to determine whether or not you have been, or are being influenced by any of these ideas presented here. We'll begin with —

Secular Humanism —

“Secular Humanism is a way of thinking and living that aims to bring out the best in people so that all people can have the best in life. Secular humanists reject supernatural and authoritarian beliefs. They affirm that we must take responsibility for our own lives and the communities and world in which we live. Secular humanism emphasizes reason and scientific inquiry, individual freedom and responsibility, human values and compassion, and the need for tolerance and cooperation.” (www.secularhumanism.org)

That doesn't sound so bad, you say. Read it again — ve-e-e-e-ry slowly. Notice that there's no authority recognized other than that of the individual. There is no right and there is no wrong — there is only whatever *I* determine for *myself* to be right or wrong and whatever *I* determine for *myself* is good for the society around me. If you and I disagree on what is good for society, we are *both* right so you cannot teach or tell me anything different than I already believe because you would then not be tolerant of me and my belief. This philosophy is an outlook that advocates *human* rather than Godly values. There *is* no God — therefore there is no *absolute* truth concerning *anything*. Secular Humanism allows total and complete freedom of choice by the individual concerning issues such as sexual relations, reproduction, euthanasia, abortion, etc. Truth is determined *only* and *exclusively* by the individual so it is therefore *different* for *each* individual.

New Age —

New Age teachings started to become popular during the 1970's. There were those who believed that Christianity and Secular Humanism was failing to provide sufficient spiritual and ethical guidance. New Age is a combination of spiritual and consciousness-raising movements that cover a range of themes from a belief in spiritualism and reincarnation to encouraging holistic approaches to health and ecology. Its roots are traceable to such things as Astrology, Channeling, Hinduism, Gnostic traditions, Spiritualism, Wicca and other Neo-pagan traditions, etc. It is very difficult to “nail down” a specific New Age philosophy since it is so varied and is a free flowing movement. Believers share somewhat similar beliefs but often just “add on” New Age tilts and practices to whatever “formal” religion they already practice. New Age generally focuses on several typical doctrines. Some of those include —