

He was of course referring to Richard Foster's book in which Foster referred to *himself* in the 1978 edition as "We of the New Age..." (pg. 170 -First Edition). And — now — it *is* found on the shelves of *many* New Testament Church Elders and Ministers. How quickly that virus has spread since its initial introduction to the New Testament Church as a *textbook* used at a Christian College!!

NTCV-10 — This virus instills the belief that all Bibles have flaws and *as a result*, can not be depended on for knowing God's Word. That's a lie! While there are some modern day translations that *have* been published with a specific agenda in mind and are *absolutely in error* — not to mention *dangerous* — most of the time-tested versions *are* reliable even though there *are* differences. Some of those very modern day versions however should be viewed as spiritual hemlock that should be avoided.

NTCV-11 — Christians should be *so* tolerant and full of "love" that they are liked by *everyone*. Really? Get your Bible and read Luke 6:26; John 15:19; I Peter 4:12-14; II Tim. 3:12 and Jer. 23:16-29. Some of these viruses we have already mentioned have been able to get a footing in the Church *because* Christians have bought into the world view that claims they are showing "love" when they fail to declare the full word of God to those who are headed for eternal damnation. That's a virus of hate masquerading as a virus of love. Real Christians will demonstrate love by professing the Gospel of Jesus Christ *even when* it makes them unpopular.

NTCV-12 — The importance of the Lord's Supper is waning. Some Christians seem to think that communion time allows them the opportunity to share pictures of their new grandchild, or visit with the person seated next to them.

"For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep" (I Cor. 11:29-30 NIV)

This is surely not *all* of the viruses that are attacking the New Testament Church but we've listed enough for you to sense the danger. It's up to *every* Christian to see that his or her spiritual immune system is at its peak — *always* keeping ones anti-virus "scanner" active. These viruses are a *cancer* in the brotherhood that must be recognized for what they *are*. They need immediate treatment to stop their spread.

"God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he appealed to God against Israel: 'Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me'? And what was God's answer to him? 'I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace." (Rom. 11:2-5 NIV)

If you truly love the remnant, you'll want to know about these viruses.

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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

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Life is busy! We know not everyone reads every issue of Diligence. PLEASE take the time to read this one.

Norton, McAfee and AVG

Those of you who have a computer probably recognize those names above. They're anti-virus software. Those of you who *don't* have a computer — well, you really don't care! You don't *need* protection from the latest quick spreading virus (or worm) that can erase all your data, send out unauthorized things from your e-mail, interfere with the operation of your computer or even spread to the computers of your e-mail friends or network. Viruses *can* be a very big problem for you and your computer — hence a good anti-virus software is almost a necessity if your computer has *any* kind of connection with the world outside your own four walls.

There is also of course the kind of virus with which *all* of us are unfortunately more familiar than we would like to be. And we can most assuredly *promise* that the list of names at the top of this article will do absolutely *nothing* to protect from *this* kind of virus. *This* virus would be the causative agent of an infectious disease. According to *Science Dictionary* the common cold, influenza, chickenpox, smallpox, measles, mumps, yellow fever, hemorrhagic fevers, and some cancers are among the diseases caused by viruses." We've probably all had our own experience with a "12-hour" or "24-hour" or whatever-hour virus that completely knocks us off our feet. And — just like the computer virus — *any* kind of connection with the world outside our own four walls seems to be an open invitation for invasion.

According to the *Science Dictionary* once again, "viruses are not technically considered living organisms because they are devoid of biological processes (such as metabolism and respiration) and cannot reproduce on their own but require a living cell (of a plant, animal, or bacterium) to make more viruses."

Even though some of us may take extra precautions to protect ourselves from an infectious virus — like washing our hands more often or getting more rest — we *still* may "catch the bug" while someone else does *not*. Perhaps different immune systems just react differently to certain viruses. Maybe those who *don't* "get it" have been exposed to something similar in the past and as a result of that exposure built up an immunity to a certain virus.

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Since we're speaking of immune systems — how would you rate your *spiritual* immune system? Although the Scriptures don't call them by this name, it's pretty easy to catch a *spiritual* virus if one's spiritual immune system is not strong. Spiritual viruses have been around since the very early days of the Church. In Galatians 3 verse 1, Paul wrote — “*You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?...*” He then went on to admonish them for not recognizing a “spiritual virus” they had “caught.” He explained to them that they *should* have been immune to it because of their past experience and knowledge — but they weren't!

There are *many* viruses infecting the New Testament Church today. They are quick spreading and since they can not survive without a “host” in which to live, they will attack *anyone* who provides an opening of any sort. As soon as a spiritual virus infects one part of the Body, it can very quickly spread *throughout* the Body. Some individuals are “carriers” and don't even know they are infected. They're like the Galatians. They *should know* they have a virus, but because they don't recognize it, the spread is rapid — from one individual to another — from one Body to another Body. It spreads so rapidly because it was “picked up” from association with someone who was trusted by the one who “caught it.”

Viruses are also spreading rapidly throughout the Church because the immune system of the New Testament Church is at an all time low and it is therefore being attacked from the inside out. The viruses are numerous and spiritually deadly for many. The only vaccination that will prevent spiritual viruses is Bible knowledge — and that itself has succumbed to a virus — a virus of indifference toward study of the Word. Just that one virus alone is so weakening the Church's immune system that *other* viruses are finding it *easy* to target hosts and establish residence within the Body. The Church is sick unto death because of spiritual viruses spreading like wildfire throughout its membership. What are some of these deadly viruses currently within the Body?

New Testament Church Virus-01 — or — **NTCV-01** — Postmodern Thought — There is no right and no wrong — the Bible says something different to every person who reads it. Doctrine is no longer a part of Christianity. Each person “assembles” his or her own “christianity” from a smorgasbord of beliefs — picking and choosing *only* those parts that he or she *wants* to believe and practice.

NTCV-02 — “Innovative” Christianity — The Scriptures no longer say what they said at the time the Church was first established. This virus convinces those infected with it that the Bible must be adapted and changed to meet the needs of the current culture. *Culture* sets the rules and the *Bible* must change to suit those rules.

NTCV-03 — Emergent philosophy — *Anything* goes with this school of thought. *Whatever* one believes the Bible says to him or her *is indeed* what the Bible says. There will never be a doctrinal position on *anything* because it says something different to *every* person. This virus *might* also include the use of candles, prayer rooms, prayer boxes, incense (to enhance the mood) — or — meeting at Starbucks for lattes and worship — which usually consists of nothing more than

discussing a passage of Scripture without drawing any conclusion.

NTCV-04 — New Age Thinking — This is usually blended in with Emergent philosophy but may also include prolific use of horoscopes, crystals, nature worship, earth worship (extreme environmentalism), channeling, etc.

NTCV-05 — “Infected” College Students — Many “Christian” Colleges are — like Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:1) — “sick unto death.” They have *multiple* viruses. Professors are often “carriers” — believing that they have become “enlightened to a bigger and better” way to practice their faith. They endorse and even *teach* books (see NTCV-09) written by authors who have completely left New Testament Christianity. A real danger lies in the fact that the college students return to their respective congregations and began infecting the entire Body with viruses they “caught” at school. The unfortunate result has been (and continues to be) division in numerous congregations. **NTCV-06** — The Biblical teaching that there is *only* one way to God (through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ — John 14:6) has started to be viewed as bigoted, narrow-minded and intolerant of the beliefs of others. This rapidly spreading virus eats away at the very *core* of Scripture. The spread of this virus does away with the need for a Savior and the need for the Bible. When every person chooses his/her own way — the Scriptures no longer matter.

NTCV-07 — The belief that an open discussion of one's *own* religious point of view demands the *admission* and *recognition* that all *other* views expressed are of *equal* value with Christianity. That is a lie! Christianity is the *only* way to eternal life with God. It *is* in fact *superior* to other beliefs because it is the *only* belief established by God Himself. This virus reduces the Bible to the same level as other literary works — and denies that it is the Inspired Word of God.

NTCV-08 — “*Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.*” (Matt. 10:16 NASB) We should *all* commit this verse to memory as an inoculation against *this* virus. To *blindly* embrace those who practice the Islamic faith — with absolutely *no* understanding that the *Qur'an teaches* (Qur'an 16:106 and 3:28) that Muslims should *lie* to non-Muslims (“infidels”) when it is useful for self protection and softening their hearts for the purpose of furthering the Islamic faith — is a *most dangerous* virus that has the potential to completely erradicate the open practice of Christianity in our Nation. We can not as Christians contending for the faith (Jude 1:3 KJV) allow ourselves to become infected with this virus that *masquerades* as tolerance and love.

NTCV-09 — So called “Christian Disciplines” are words that are wolves in sheep's clothing. The current meaning of that phrase is nothing more than a “cover-up” for the introduction of and teaching of Eastern Religious techniques to unsuspecting Christians. The meditation and contemplative prayer encouraged by authors who espouse these disciplines are pure New Age and exhibit an *extreme danger* to the New Testament Church. Ken Silva of *Apprising Ministries* recently made this statement on a *Crosstalk* radio program.

“I can walk into the office of almost any pastor in the country and that stupid book “*Celebration of Discipline*” will be on their shelf as if it was worth anything.”