

Rethink Conference

Schuller and Christian Leaders Gather to Help Bring About

Interspiritual Dream

Rethink Conference: Crystal Cathedral, California

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Robert Schuller once said: "Standing before, a crowd of devout Muslims with the Grand Mufti, I know that we're all doing God's work together. Standing on the edge of a new millennium, we're labouring hand in hand to repair the breach." He made that statement in his 2001 biography, *My Journey* (p. 501), and today he has taken a giant step forward in seeing his dream of an all-inclusive spiritual body come true. What's more, Christian leaders and organisations are helping to bring it to pass.

Today, the Rethink Conference at Schuller's Crystal Cathedral began. Schuller and popular emerging futurist Erwin McManus host this three-day event.

In addition to McManus, the Rethink Conference has several other Christian leaders speaking: Gary Smalley, Henry Cloud, Chuck Colson, and Kay Warren, to name a few. While the speaker list includes several names outside the Christian camp (Larry King, George Bush Sr., Rupert Murdoch, etc.), a majority of the speakers, both Christian and non-Christian, are proponents of mystical spirituality. The reason this is important to know is because Schuller's vision of an all-inclusive global religious body cannot happen without mysticism. It is in fact the vehicle through which Schuller's dream will occur. He discloses a little more of this vision in his book:

I met once more with the Grand Mufti (a Muslim), truly one of the great Christ-honouring leaders of faith. ... I'm dreaming a bold impossible dream: that positive-thinking believers in God will rise above the illusions that our sectarian religions have imposed on the world, and that leaders of **the major faiths** will rise above doctrinal idiosyncrasies, choosing not to focus on disagreements, but rather to transcend divisive dogmas to work together to bring peace and prosperity and hope to the world. (p. 502).

In order for this "bold impossible dream" to occur, change agents such as Schuller and McManus realise that Christianity needs to be redefined. Thus, the term rethink McManus has believed this for some time. In an interview, *he* stated:

My goal is to destroy Christianity as a world religion and be a recatalyst for the movement of Jesus Christ.... Some people are upset with me because it sounds like I'm anti-Christian. I think they might be right! (1)

It's easier to understand what McManus means by this by reading this next statement from him:

The Barbarian Way was, in some sense, trying to create a volatile fuel to get people to step out and act. It's pretty hard to get a whole group of people moving together as individuals who are stepping into a more mystical, faith oriented, dynamic kind of experience with Christ. So, I think was my attempt to say, "Look, underneath what looks like invention, innovation and creativity is really a core mysticism that hears from God, and what is fuelling this is something really ancient." That's what was really the core of The Barbarian Way. (From *Relevant* magazine)

To put this in plain terms, there is a three-step process in making this new vision become a reality. First, reeducation: convince Christians that the Christianity of today has to be thrown out and replaced by a whole new way of thinking. Second, get these new thinking Christians to incorporate mysticism into their

*lives* and hear the *voice of* a new kind of God, not one that is described in the Bible but one that is found through altered states of consciousness. McManus put it this way: "I build my life not on the Word of

God, but the voice of God. The Scriptures are to me the instruments that God has placed in history for me to learn the voice of God." (2) The voice Of this mystical god will direct people to the final step of the Process, and that will be to bring about a supposed kingdom of God where all will be one, and where man finally realises his own divinity, Unfortunately, it will be a kingdom built, not on the truth of the Word of God, thus not on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The rethinking of Christianity is taking Place right now before our very eyes. The mystical practices are now being implemented by countless people around the world, including g huge numbers of professing Christians through the spiritual formation movement. It is just a matter of time before this new age dream will take effect, and a great spiritual delusion will overtake the masses.

Roger Oakland, author of Faith Undone (the hard-hitting expose on the emerging church), spent this morning at the Crystal Cathedral listening to speakers share their hopes for the rethinking of Christianity. Oakland heard one popular evangelical speaker say that the emerging church is energising Christianity.

What that evangelical leader may not realise is that this energising is happening through mystical practices. One person who does understand this concept is Robert Schuller. Ray Yungen explains:

[W]hat many might not know about Schuller is his New Thought proclivities. Interspiritual scholar Marcus Bach once related the following incident that took place at a Unity church in Hawaii in which Bach was speaking:

Dr. Schuller attended the first of three services, this one at 7:30 am. When we shook hands at the door, he tarried to assure me how much Unity principles meant to him and how helpful they had been to him in his work. (The Unity Way, p. 267)

What could some of these Unity principles be? Bach explains:

Hinduism's emphasis on meditation fit[s] well into Unity's patterns for enlightenment.(Ibid, p. 104)

This is one of the major principles that Schuller was making reference to. In his own book, Prayer: My Soul's Adventure with God, he says:

Move into mighty moods of meditation. Draw energy from centres of sacred solitude, serenity and silence.... Find yourself coming alive in the garden of prayer called meditation.... Yes, the "New Agers" have grabbed hold of meditation.... Hey, Christian! Hear me! Let's not give up the glorious, God-given gift of meditation by turning it over to those outside our faith. (pp. 14 1, 15 1 )

The point that Schuller misses is that meditation is what makes a person a New Ager! This perspective is something to consider in light of the quarter million pastors who have trained and been mentored under Schuller at his Leadership Institute. (For Many Shall Come in My Name, ch. 3)

The line up at Rethink further confirms that Schuller and McManus see mysticism as playing a vital role in the rethinking and energising of Christianity. Many of the speakers share McManus and Schuller's propensity on mysticism's role in transforming the **world**.

Equally disturbing is knowing that CCN (Church Communication Network) sponsors and is helping to broadcast the Rethink Conference. CCN represents many of today's Christian leaders from Rick Warren, to James Dobson, to Joni Eareckson Tada, to Max Lucado and many many others.

What this means is that mainstream Christianity is going mystical, just as Alice Bailey, the woman who **coined the term** New Age, predicted so very many years ago. Yungen ties this all together:

"Bailey eagerly foretold of what she termed the regeneration of the churches' (Problems of Humanity, p. 152).

Her rationale for this was obvious:

The Christian church in its many branches can serve as a St. John the Baptist, as a voice crying in the wilderness, and as a nucleus through which world illumination may be accomplished. (The Externalisation of the Hierarchy, p. 5 10)

"In other words, instead of opposing Christianity, the occult would capture and blend itself with Christianity and then use it as its primary vehicle for spreading and instilling New Age consciousness! The various churches would still have their outer trappings of Christianity and still use much of the same lingo, If asked certain questions about traditional Christian doctrine; the same answers would be given. But it would all be on the outside; on the inside a contemplative spirituality would be drawing in those open to it. "In wide segments of Christendom. This has indeed already occurred.... Thomas Keating alone taught 3 1,000 people mystical prayer in one year. People are responding to this in large numbers because it has the external appearance of Christianity but in truth, is the diametric opposite --- what a skilful spiritual delusion!"

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For more information on Schuller's "dream" read Deceived on Purpose by Warren Smith