Evangelical Leaders Continue to Share Platforms with Emerging/New Spirituality Teachers

Dear Lighthouse Trails reader,

If your head is spinning, trying to keep up with the latest happenings of the leaders of the evangelical Christian church, it's no wonder. For many, it's becoming more and more difficult to see clearly through the muddy waters of organized Christianity. It seems, more than ever, that leaders who have been considered orthodox and traditional are ending up on speaking platforms with those from the emerging/contemplative/new spirituality arena.

These minglings are not occasional or isolated events any longer. They are happening with more and more frequency. And to date, no one (the leaders that is) appears to feel badly about the confusion it is causing.

Some of those watching this unfold are angry that ministries like Lighthouse Trails would dare criticize their “heroes.” For others, they laugh and say, “See, I told you there was nothing wrong with this new paradigm spirituality.” And still others say, “I thought at one time it was wrong, but one of my favorite leaders shows no concern (and in fact stands with them), so now I believe this new spirituality is not wrong at all.” And in the midst of all this, confusion mounts, and the Gospel message is looking more and more obscure.

Examples, you ask? Too many to list them all. But here are a few:

1. Joel Rosenberg and Frank Peretti have joined with New Age/New Spirituality teachers Leonard Sweet, William Paul Young, and a host of other contemplative/emerging figures to speak at the upcoming Break Forth conference in Canada in January. This is in spite of the fact that Peretti himself has written fiction stories that actually expose the darkness of the New Age.

2. Greg Laurie invites Rick Warren to give opening prayer at his 2009 Harvest Crusade and asks Chuck Smith to publicly welcome Warren at the event.

3. Apologetic figures Norman Geisler and Greg Koukl join other “apologists” at Saddleback Church for an apologetics/discrimenation conference. Future Saddleback apologetic conferences are already being planned.


5. Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa invites emerging church author Mike Erre to speak to thousands of youth at their 2009 Movement event. In opening remarks at the event, concerned ministries were called “haters” for publicly stating their concerns.


7. Andy Stanley (son of Charles Stanley), who says he is not part of the emerging/new spirituality, shares a platform at Youth Specialties 2009 National Youth Workers Convention with contemplative/emerging figures Donald Miller (Blue Like Jazz), David Crowder, Duffy Robbins, Tony Campolo, Jim Burns, and a number of others in that camp. In fact, Youth Specialties is one of the main avenues through which the contemplative/new spirituality is entering the church today and has been for many years.

8. The 2009 National Worship Conference brought together Calvary Chapel leader Greg Laurie and Jesus
movement singer, Chuck Girard, with new spirituality leaders Leonard Sweet, Brennan Manning, David Crowder, and Sally Morgenthaler.

This is just a sampling of conferences that have brought together the “traditional” with the heretical. These conferences throughout North America are happening at a furious pace, and we believe are being used by Satan to converge and blend truth with error, so that soon there will be no distinction. Christians are flocking to these events, showing their full support. But this is one fast moving train that Christian believers should hop off of before its too late.

Last week, Lighthouse Trails posted a report titled, WHY are Joel Rosenberg and Frank Peretti Appearing With New Age/New Spirituality Sympathizers? This week, Joel Rosenberg issued a public statement. He said:

> A few of you have expressed concern that I’ve agreed to speak at the “Break Forth 2010” conference in Edmonton, Canada Jan 29-31 because there are some other speakers slated to attend whose theology is questionable. Chief concern: William Young, author of “The Shack,” a novel I and others have found heretical. The reason I am attending is because it is the largest Christian conference in Canada (some 15,000 evangelicals are expected) and I’m not ready to concede such ground to those who are peddling false teaching. I’ve been asked to come there at teach the Word of God and preach the gospel, and that’s exactly what I’m going to do. I can’t explain why Young, for example, was invited. But why cede the entire stage to him. Moreover, at this critical juncture, I plan on explaining why God loves Israel so much and why He wants us to help mobilize a global movement to stand with Israel while so much of the rest of the world is turning against her. Thanks for your concerns. I would appreciate your prayers. May God bless you guys.

Joel Rosenberg implies that Break Forth is bringing in just one heretical teacher, William Paul Young, but the conference has brought in a plethora of them, and in fact, this is the dominant element in the conference. Even though Rosenberg’s rationale sounds plausible on the surface and even though his message is valid, unless he specifically challenges what these other speakers are saying, he in essence gives credibility by sharing a platform with them because his respectability will be implanted in the minds of the attendees. It is logical that because Rosenberg is respected and trusted, the others will be too because in people’s mind’s you don’t have heretics and proclaimers of the Gospel on the same bill in a non-debate scenario.

In Rosenberg’s earlier announcement on his blog about Break Forth, he called this a “powerful Christian conference.” But to say this indicates that Rosenberg may not understand the gravity of what is going on in the church. This is not just a doctrinal issue – it’s at the very core of what Christianity will look like in the future. Will it be mystical, panentheistic, and New Age, or will it be the Gospel once delivered to the saints? Please read our initial report on Break Forth to see what we are talking about here.

As the new spirituality becomes more widespread and acceptable, we’ll be seeing in the future a lot more of this kind of dicotomy: the defenders of the faith sharing platforms with those who are undermining the very Gospel these defenders are seeking to uphold.

While Rosenberg says he is attending Break Forth to “defend Israel,” does he realize that by giving credence to Sweet, Young, and other emergent-influenced speakers, he is indirectly abetting the emerging philosophy that sees NO prophetic importance in Israel whatsoever. If Rosenberg really wants to help the 15,000 expected attendees, he needs to point blank tell them that a flood of Christian leaders are turning their backs on Israel merely by promoting the emerging/contemplative spirituality. That would include a majority of the speakers at Break Forth as well as some of the sponsors.

We want to make some thing very clear. Lighthouse Trails believes Israel has a biblical prophetic role, and we agree
with Rosenberg that antisemitic as well as anti-Israel sentiment is growing. We too are vitally concerned, which is one of the reasons we publish and distribute books and DVDs by Holocaust survivors and resistance workers. But Rosenberg and other dedicated Christian leaders must understand that it is also vitally important for defenders of the faith to warn against the devastation of spiritual deception that is quickly overtaking much of the evangelical Church. If they can steer their own devotees away from this hideous deception, they will do more to help thwart anti-Israel sentiments than they can know.

Does Rosenberg realize that the very emerging spirituality that is represented at Break Forth will help to usher in a “kingdom” that will allow no room for Israel? Roger Oakland explains:

“As the world becomes more and more resentful toward Israel, the view that the church takes the place of Israel, leaving Israel no prophetic significance (replacement theology), will become increasingly accepted within Christianity at large. Those who believe the Book of Revelation predicts an apocalyptic future will be considered a danger to society and the well-being of this new kingdom of God.”

New Agers believe these dangers of society (Bible-believing Christians) will need to be gone before the world can truly be healed. (Please read Reinventing Jesus Christ by Warren B. Smith for documentation on this selection process.) This is where the emerging, apostate church is heading. And whether they realize it or not, many are helping her to get there through their promotion of this spirituality.

Are we being extreme in saying these things? We think not. Watch, and see as the events and deception that the Bible warns about unfolds before your very eyes. And pray that there will be some courageous Christian leaders who will take a stand no matter the cost. It is possible that Rosenberg could do more harm to Israel than help by attending such conferences. We pray he will consider the possible implications that his attendance could bring.