

# The Marketing of Evil

David Kupelian

10 Last, Best Hope The Fall and Rise of  
American Christianity

# The Fall of American Christianity

- Despite relentless attacks on our moral and spiritual foundation, America has remained overwhelmingly Christian.
- At least our political leadership and church attendance give that impression.
- While many of us claim to be Christian, America's popular culture has seduced us as well and we have become progressively un-Christian.
- Our churches are our last, best hope for bringing the rebirth of Western Judeo-Christian culture, which is why they are the number one target of the marketers of evil.

# The Fall of American Christianity

- A form of Christianity for everyone has evolved to whether you are politically liberal, conservative, into high-voltage music, hateful and racist, or gay, there is a form of Christianity to support you and your priorities.
- Many Americans search for a religion to be compatible with their world attitudes.
- The marketers have worked hard to infiltrate all levels of religion to spread their propaganda gospel.
- We even have major religious denominations such as the Episcopal Church embracing a homosexual clergy.

# The Fall of American Christianity

- Some religions attempt to take on the image of the secular world to appeal to people, especially youths, and have gradually taken on many more characteristics and attitudes of the enemy than they even realize.
- This all leads to a counterfeit religious experience where many Christians are told that as long as they are 'saved,' there is a safety net that will be there no matter how they live their lives.

# The Bottom Line

- It's no coincidence that Jesus' first recorded word of ministry was 'repent.'
- In order to truly do so, we must know the truth and embrace it.
- Many of us are reluctant because it is painful and our pride works against us.
- We have to love the truth and find the spirit of humility and honesty, which will invite self-understanding and repentance.
- The truth is that we all are born with God's living law, the ability to discern right from wrong.
- Our conscience lets us know, but our pride and denial have their own way and fight against us.

# The Bottom Line

- Every transaction has both a seller and a buyer.
- Every con job requires not only a con, but a hapless victim that didn't see the obvious.
- That is us; Americans who aren't seeing the obvious because the marketers of evil fed us the beguiling lies that the hidden selfish, prideful part of us wanted to embrace.
- It's time to give up a life of pride and reject the impatient, self-serving, pleasure-seeking and egotistical part of us.
- It's time to take a good, long and honest look at ourselves in the mirror, take a deep breath and ask God to help us break the spell.
- When we do, the marketers of evil will have to go out and get an honest job.

# LAST, BEST HOPE

- Despite decades of relentless attacks on its moral and spiritual foundations, America is still overwhelmingly a Christian nation.
- Or is it?
- The numbers certainly give that impression.
- Four out of five Americans describe themselves as Christians—54.7 percent self-identifying as Protestant, 22 percent as Roman Catholic, and another 2.7 percent as “other Christian,” according to a 2004 survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. These numbers show a significant decline in Christianity in America.
- Recent statistics indicate the profound effect that the Marketing of Evil and associated agendas have had on America since 2005 when this book was written.
- <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>

## Christians Decline as Share of U.S. Population; Other Faiths and the Unaffiliated Are Growing

	2007	2014	Change*
	%	%	%
<b>Christian</b>	<b>78.4</b>	<b>70.6</b>	<b>-7.8</b>
Protestant	51.3	46.5	-4.8
Evangelical	26.3	25.4	-0.9
Mainline	18.1	14.7	-3.4
Historically black	6.9	6.5	-
Catholic	23.9	20.8	-3.1
Orthodox Christian	0.6	0.5	-
Mormon	1.7	1.6	-
Jehovah's Witness	0.7	0.8	-
Other Christian	0.3	0.4	-
<b>Non-Christian faiths</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>+1.2</b>
Jewish	1.7	1.9	-
Muslim	0.4	0.9	+0.5
Buddhist	0.7	0.7	-
Hindu	0.4	0.7	+0.3
Other world religions**	<0.3	0.3	-
Other faiths**	1.2	1.5	+0.3
<b>Unaffiliated</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>+6.7</b>
Atheist	1.6	3.1	+1.5
Agnostic	2.4	4.0	+1.6
Nothing in particular	12.1	15.8	+3.7
<b>Don't know/refused</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>-0.2</b>
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

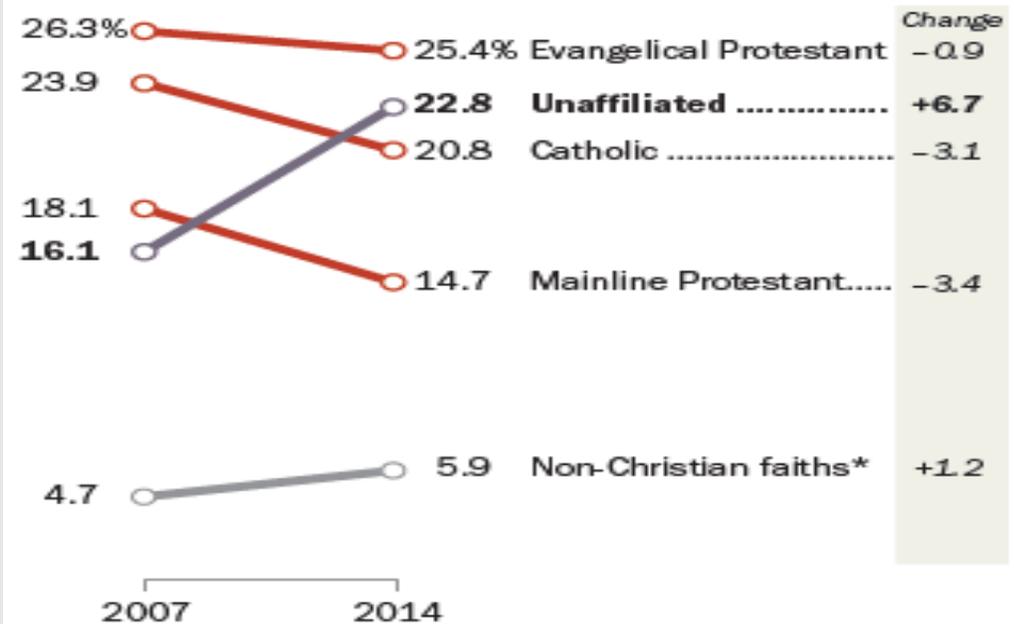
\*The "change" column displays only statistically significant changes; blank cells indicate that the difference between 2007 and 2014 is within the margin of error.

\*\*The "other world religions" category includes Sikhs, Baha'is, Taoists, Jains and a variety of other world religions. The "other faiths" category includes Unitarians, New Age religions, Native American religions and a number of other non-Christian faiths.

Source: 2014 Religious Landscape Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014. Figures may not add to 100% and nested figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

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*Between 2007 and 2014, the Christian share of the population fell from 78.4% to 70.6%, driven mainly by declines among mainline Protestants and Catholics. The unaffiliated experienced the most growth, and the share of Americans who belong to non-Christian faiths also increased.*



\* Includes Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, other world religions and other faiths. Those who did not answer the religious identity question, as well as groups whose share of the population did not change significantly, including the historically black Protestant tradition, Mormons and others, are not shown.

Source: 2014 Religious Landscape Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014

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# LAST, BEST HOPE

- There's an additional problem with these statistics.
- While a majority of the nation's citizens consider themselves Christians, America's popular culture, its laws, its public education system, its news media, and other major institutions have become progressively un-Christian—even anti-Christian, as we have documented in the pages of this book.
- The reason for this, of course, is that Christians, like everyone else, have been seduced by the marketers of evil.

# LAST, BEST HOPE

- For example, they've been taken in by no-fault divorce—the failure rate for marriages among Christians is virtually the same as among non-Christians.
- Similarly, Christians have fallen prey in mass numbers to abortion, sexual liberation, gay rights, multicultural madness, and all the rest of the marketing seductions of our age.
- This is very troubling to church leaders who are increasingly aware they are losing a spiritual tug-of-war with the powerful and corrupting secular culture.
- Many in their congregations are being converted before their eyes, becoming strangers to the church that once was their spiritual home.
- Indeed, it's a dangerous situation for America.
- The churches are, and always have been, the seat of this nation's moral strength.

# LAST, BEST HOPE

- Revolutionary War citizen-soldiers were commonly recruited from the pulpit, slavery was excoriated from the pulpit, our war dead have been memorialized from the pulpit, and our citizens have ever been exhorted and challenged and comforted from the pulpit.
- It is from the pulpit that every social evil to plague this nation has been confronted and rebuked while a higher, better road to glory has been promoted.
- Even today, despite what amounts to an all-out war on the nation's founding values waged from without and within, the churches remain the last, best hope Americans have for bringing about a rebirth of Western Judeo-Christian culture.
- But for this very reason, it shouldn't surprise us to discover, as we soon shall, that America's churches themselves have been the number-one target of the marketers of evil.

# LAST, BEST HOPE

- Unfortunately, once the churches—the fortresses of America's goodness and strength—are overcome, there is no longer a substantial defense against the forces of corruption.
- And there is no longer a powerful counterforce to fight for a spiritually wholesome culture in which future generations may grow up safely and soundly.
- Thus it is imperative that we look honestly, dispassionately, and courageously at America's churches, at those who lead them, and at those who attend them.
- In other words, it is time to focus our spotlight of inquiry on ourselves.
- Once we've explored honestly and completely the underlying causes and nature of the malady, the cure will be self-evident.
- First, the symptoms.

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- A recent study (2005) by respected Christian pollster George Barna showed that born-again Christian adults in the United States think and act virtually the same as nonbelievers.
- Questioning respondents about everything from parenting priorities to education and from moral absolutes to the importance of their religious beliefs, Barna said there was almost no difference between those professing to be born-again Christians and non-Christians.
- “For years we have reported research findings showing that born-again adults think and behave very much like everyone else,” he said. “It often seems that their faith makes very little difference in their life. This new study helps explain why that is: Believers do not train their
- children to think or act any differently. When our kids are exposed to the same influences, without much supervision, and are generally not guided to interpret their circumstances and opportunities in light of biblical principles, it’s no wonder that they grow up to be just as involved in gambling, adultery, divorce, cohabitation, excessive drinking and other unbiblical behaviors as everyone else.”

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- March 6, 2009 –If Jesus were to ask, “Who do you say I am,” the question He famously asked his disciple Peter, He would be disappointed by some of the answers He’d receive from contemporary Americans.
- A new nationwide survey conducted by The Barna Group among a representative sample of adults explored how many have what might be considered a “biblical worldview.” The report from Barna compared current results to the outcomes from a similar survey the company conducted in 1995, 2000 and 2005.
- **Defining Terms**
  - For the purposes of the survey, a “biblical worldview” was defined as believing that absolute moral truth exists;
  - the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches;
  - Satan is considered to be a real being or force, not merely symbolic;
  - a person cannot earn their way into Heaven by trying to be good or do good works;
  - Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth;
  - and God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today.
- In the research, anyone who held all of those beliefs was said to have a biblical worldview.

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

## • **National Results**

- Overall, the current research revealed that only 9% of all American adults have a biblical worldview.
- Among the sixty subgroups of respondents that the survey explored was one defined by those who said they have made a personal to commitment to Jesus Christ that is important in their life today and that they are certain that they will go to Heaven after they die only because they confessed their sins and accepted Christ as their savior.
- Labeled “born again Christians,” the study discovered that they were twice as likely as the average adult to possess a biblical worldview.
- However, that meant that even among born again Christians, less than one out of every five (19%) had such an outlook on life.
- The same questions were asked of respondents in national surveys by Barna in 1995, 2000 and 2005.
- The results indicate that the percentage of adults with a biblical worldview, as defined above, has remained unchanged for more than a decade.
- The numbers show that 7% had such a worldview in 1995, compared to 10% in 2000, 11% in 2005, and 9% now.
- Even among born again adults, the statistics have remained flat: 18% in 1995, 22% in 2000, 21% in 2005, and 19% today.

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- **Components of Worldview Thinking**

- Varying numbers of Americans embrace the different aspects of biblical worldview thinking. The survey found that:

- One-third of all adults (34%) believe that moral truth is absolute and unaffected by the circumstances.
  - Slightly less than half of the born again adults (46%) believe in absolute moral truth.
- Half of all adults firmly believe that the Bible is accurate in all the principles it teaches.
  - That proportion includes the four-fifths of born again adults (79%) who concur.
- Just one-quarter of adults (27%) are convinced that Satan is a real force.
  - Even a minority of born again adults (40%) adopt that perspective.
- Similarly, only one-quarter of adults (28%) believe that it is impossible for someone to earn their way into Heaven through good behavior.
  - Not quite half of all born again Christians (47%) strongly reject the notion of earning salvation through their deeds.
- A minority of American adults (40%) are persuaded that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life while He was on earth.
  - Slightly less than two-thirds of the born again segment (62%) strongly believes that He was sinless.
- Seven out of ten adults (70%) say that God is the all-powerful, all-knowing creator of the universe who still rules it today.
  - That includes the 93% of born again adults who hold that conviction.

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- **Differences among Demographic Segments**

- The research data showed that one pattern emerged loud and clear: young adults rarely possess a biblical worldview.
- The current study found that less than one-half of one percent of adults in the Mosaic generation – i.e., those aged 18 to 23 – have a biblical worldview, compared to about one out of every nine older adults.

- Other groups that possess a below average likelihood of having a biblical worldview included people who describe themselves as liberal on social and political matters (also less than one-half of one percent); Catholics (2%); Democrats (4%) and residents of the Northeast (4%).

- **Why It Matters**

- Ongoing research by The Barna Group on these matters consistently demonstrates the powerful impact a person’s worldview has on their life.
- A worldview serves as a person’s decision-making filter, enabling them to make sense of the complex and huge amount of information, experiences, relationships and opportunities they face in life.
- By helping to clarify what a person believes to be important, true and desirable, a worldview has a dramatic influence on a person’s choices in any given situation.
- Barna’s research has discovered that there are unusually large differences in behavior related to matters such as media use, profanity, gambling, alcohol use, honesty, civility, and sexual choices.
- The firm’s studies have also pointed out that a person’s worldview is primarily shaped and is firmly in place by the time someone reaches the age of 13;
- it is refined through experience during the teen and early adult years; and then it is passed on to others during their adult life.
- Such studies underscore the necessity of parents and other influencers being intentional in how they help develop the worldview of children.

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- George Barna, who has directed this tracking research since the early Nineties, pointed out,
  - “There are a several troubling patterns to take notice.
  - First, although most Americans consider themselves to be Christian and say they know the content of the Bible, less than one out of ten Americans demonstrate such knowledge through their actions.
  - Second, the generational pattern suggests that parents are not focused on guiding their children to have a biblical worldview.
  - One of the challenges for parents, though, is that you cannot give what you do not have, and most parents do not possess such a perspective on life.
  - That raises a third challenge, which relates to the job that Christian churches, schools and parachurch ministries are doing in Christian education.
  - Finally, even though a central element of being a Christian is to embrace basic biblical principles and incorporate them into one’s worldview, there has been no change in the percentage of adults or even born again adults in the past 13 years regarding the possession of a biblical worldview.”

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- Barna concluded by noting that the lack of movement in the worldview status of adults reflects the fact that children are not provided with the basic ability to think in ways that correspond to foundational biblical teachings.
- He noted that Christian families, Christian schools, and Christian churches would be wise to invest more effort and tangible resources into helping young people understand and adopt the core ideas of Christianity, and to reinforce those concepts through their own lives.
- He pointed out that without such an investment, the current generational patterns indicate that the future Christian Church is likely to be one that has even less of a connection to biblical principles than is evident today.

<https://www.barna.org/barna-update/21-transformation/252-barna-survey-examines-changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years#.VXdkWGOg5WM>

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- Not only do far too many Christians apparently think and act just like unbelievers these days, but the number and variety of different and contradictory Christian world views and practices—all presumably based on the same Bible—have grown astronomically.
- In recent decades, it seems, myriad new types of churches have evolved to accommodate every conceivable temperament and world view, regardless of whether that world view is biblical.
- No matter what kind of person you are, a form of Christianity has evolved just for you.

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- There’s a politically liberal Christianity and a politically conservative Christianity.
- There’s an acutely activist Christianity and an utterly apolitical Christianity, a Christianity that holds up a high standard of ethical behavior and service, and a Christianity for which both personal ethics and good works are irrelevant.
- There’s a raucous, intensely emotional Christianity drenched in high-voltage music, and there’s a quiet, contemplative Christianity.
- There’s a loving Christianity and a hateful, racist Christianity,
- A Christianity that honors Jews as God’s chosen people and a Christianity that maligns Jews as Satan’s children.

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- To bring this heavenly issue of biblical interpretation down to earth a bit, consider the difficulty people have in agreeing on the meaning of a much shorter, more recent, and more concrete document—the Constitution of the United States.
- Unlike the Bible, which is mystical, written by many different authors in different languages over the course of many centuries, the Constitution was written with simplicity and clarity of expression in mind by a single group of people only two centuries ago (except for the later amendments).
- Moreover, it was written in English, so translation is not an issue.
- To top it off, there’s an abundance of contemporaneous writings, most important The Federalist Papers, explaining clearly what the Founding Fathers meant.
- And yet, depending on their agenda and political views, politicians, bureaucrats, attorneys, judges, and others come up with fantastically divergent and contradictory interpretations of the simple document that is meant to be America’s common rule book.

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- In the same way it appears that millions of Christians interpret the Bible—their religion’s constitution, if you will—to be compatible with their world view and attitudes, rather than to convey the original meaning and intent of the Holy Scriptures.
- If it can be interpreted in so many ways, imagine how confused things get when we start radically changing the Bible itself, as is happening with increased frequency.
- In one recent example (circa 2005), the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, head of the seventy-million-member Anglican Church, enthusiastically endorsed a brand-new version of the Bible that flatly contradicts traditional core Christian beliefs on sex and morality.
  - Titled Good as New, the new Bible was rewritten by former Baptist minister John Henson for the “One” organization, to produce what the group calls a “new, fresh and adventurous” version of the Christian Scriptures.

# “LIKE EVERYONE ELSE”

- The One organization that produced the new Bible version is dedicated to “establish[ing] peace, justice, dignity and rights for all.”
- Echoing all the familiar leftist code words, the group claims it is also dedicated to “sustainable use of the earth’s resources,” challenging “oppression, injustice, exclusion and discrimination” as well as accepting “one another, valuing their diversity and experience.”
- Such disconcerting “symptoms” as we’ve been describing here—
  - surveys showing born-again believers think and act the same as nonbelievers,
  - endless and contradictory versions of the same gospel,
  - wacky Bible translations that smile on fornication and homosexuality—
- Become suddenly understandable when we identify the underlying disease.
- And disease is an apt metaphor, since the church has been under relentless invasion by foreign elements attempting to sicken and cripple the body of Christ.
- Let’s examine some of the major invaders.

# “THE RELIGIOUS LEFT”

- Many churchgoing Christians scratch their heads and wonder why America’s mainline denominations so frequently seem to support leftist organizations.
- It’s because many of these mainline churches, at least at the leadership level, have virtually become leftist organizations!
- Front and center is the notoriously radical umbrella group, the National Council of Churches, which represents three dozen denominations, including the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Episcopal Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- How can an organization supposedly championing the interests of tens of millions of Bible-believing Christians be so passionately, obviously—indeed, almost comically—supportive of hardcore leftist causes?

# “THE RELIGIOUS LEFT”

- Writer Jacob Laskin explains in “The Church of the Latter-Day Leftists:
  - “Founded in 1950, the New York City–based NCC has, for more than half a century, remained faithful to the legacy of its forerunner, the Communist front-group known as the Federal Council of Churches.
  - At one time an unabashed apostle of the Communist cause, the NCC has today recast itself as a leading representative of the so-called religious Left.
  - Adhering to what it has described as “liberation theology”—that is, Marxist ideology disguised as Christianity—the NCC lays claim to a membership of 36 Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox Christian denominations, and some 50 million members in over 140,000 congregations.
  - Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the NCC has soft-pedaled its radical message, dressing up its demands for global collectivization and its rejection of democratic capitalism in the garb of religious teachings.
  - Yet the organization’s history suggests that it was—and remains—a devout backer of a gallery of socialist governments.

# “THE RELIGIOUS LEFT”

- Although the National Council of Churches justifies its controversial political activities as support for human rights, it consistently condemns Israel—the one nation whose very right to exist is threatened more often and more severely than any other.
- In a world filled with totalitarian regimes inflicting unimaginably brutal human rights abuses, the NCC seems most offended by the Mideast’s tiny Jewish democracy, surrounded by hostile Arab neighbors sworn to annihilate it.
- In the same way, some of America’s largest mainline Protestant denominations—just like the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches—have taken to attacking Israel as though it were a singularly evil blight on the modern world.
- In July 2004 the Presbyterian Church (USA), which claims three million members, voted by an overwhelming 461-to-62 majority of its general assembly to side with Palestinian Arabs and against Israel, choosing to divest from the Jewish state as it has done only once before—with apartheid-era South Africa.

# “THE RELIGIOUS LEFT”

- Shortly thereafter, some leaders of the Anglican Church, which in America includes the Episcopal Church, announced they were considering joining the Presbyterian Church (USA) in the divestment campaign against the Jewish state.
- But the Anglican Church’s most controversial position recently has been its open embrace, on both sides of the Atlantic, of homosexual clergy.
- In America, the consecration by the Episcopal Church (USA) of openly homosexual Gene Robinson as New Hampshire bishop in 2003, as well as its decision to bless same-sex unions, has threatened to split the church in two.
- And in Britain that same year, after becoming the Anglican Church’s new leader, Rowan Williams immediately made waves by supporting homosexual priest Dr. Jeffrey John as the bishop of Reading.
- Although John ultimately withdrew in the face of widespread and intense opposition, Williams has continued with his open support of homosexuals ever since.

# “THE RELIGIOUS LEFT”

- The Emergent Church
- The emerging, or emergent, church movement takes its name from the idea that as culture changes, a new church should emerge in response.
- In this case, it is a response by various church leaders to the current era of post-modernism.
- Although post-modernism began in the 1950s, the church didn't really seek to conform to its tenets until the 1990s.
- Post-modernism can be thought of as a dissolution of "cold, hard fact" in favor of "warm, fuzzy subjectivity."
- The emerging / emergent church movement can be thought of the same way.

# “THE RELIGIOUS LEFT”

- The Emergent Church
- The emerging / emergent church movement falls into line with basic post-modernist thinking—it is about experience over reason, subjectivity over objectivity, spirituality over religion, images over words, outward over inward, feelings over truth.
- These are reactions to modernism and are thought to be necessary in order to actively engage contemporary culture.
- This movement is still fairly new, though, so there is not yet a standard method of "doing" church amongst the groups choosing to take a post-modern mindset.
- In fact, the emerging church rejects any standard methodology for doing anything.
- Therefore, there is a huge range of how far groups take a post-modernist approach to Christianity.
- Some groups go only a little way in order to impact their community for Christ, and remain biblically sound.
- Most groups, however, embrace post-modernist thinking, which eventually leads to a very liberal, loose translation of the Bible.
- This, in turn, lends to liberal doctrine and theology.

# “THE RELIGIOUS LEFT”

- **The Emergent Church**

- For example, because experience is valued more highly than reason, truth becomes relative.
- Relativism opens up all kinds of problems, as it destroys the standard that the Bible contains absolute truth, negating the belief that biblical truth can be absolute.
- If the Bible is not our source for absolute truth, and personal experience is allowed to define and interpret what truth actually is, a saving faith in Jesus Christ is rendered meaningless.
- Another area where the emerging / emergent church movement has become anti-biblical is its focus on ecumenism.
- Unity among people coming from different religious backgrounds and diversity in the expression of corporate worship are strong focuses of the emergent church movement.
- Being ecumenical means that compromise is taking place, and this results in a watering down of Scripture in favor of not offending an apostate.
- This is in direct opposition to passages such as Revelation 2:14-17, Jesus' letter to the church of Pergamum, in which the Church is warned against tolerating those who teach false doctrine.

# “THE RELIGIOUS LEFT”

- **The Emergent Church**

- False doctrine seems to abound within the emerging / emergent church movement, though, as stated previously, not within every group espousing emerging / emergent church beliefs.
- Because of this, care must be taken when deciding whether or not to become involved with an emergent church group.
- We all need to take heed of Matthew 7:15-20,
  - "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them."
- While seeking new ways to witness to a changing culture is admirable, utilizing ways which compromise the Truth of the Gospel in any way is nothing more than promoting false doctrine and leading others away from Christ instead of to Him.
  - <http://www.gotquestions.org/emergent-church-emergent.html#ixzz3cc4ALqZg>

# Key Figures in the Emergent Church

- **Brian McLaren**
  - The person most commonly associated with the movement. Former English professor who is now a pastor, traveling speaker, and author of several books. [22] Recognized as one of TIME magazine's "25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America," he serves on the board of the social activist organization, Sojourners. His book, *A New Kind of Christian* won an award of merit from Christianity Today in 2002. Another of his works, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, has achieved something akin to Scripture status in the Emerging Church movement. (website at <http://www.brianmclaren.net/>)
- **Tony Jones**
  - National Coordinator of Emergent, an organized network of cooperating emerging ministries (<http://www.emergentvillage.com/Site/index.htm>). He is a doctoral fellow and senior research fellow in practical theology at Princeton Theological Seminary whose books have been highly influential in the movement
- **Dan Kimball**
  - Author of several books, including *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (a Christianity Today best book of 2004). He is the pastor of Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz, California. (website at [http://www.dankimball.com/vintage\\_faith/](http://www.dankimball.com/vintage_faith/)).
- **Brad Kallenberg**
  - Professor of Religious Studies at University of Dayton. His primary interest is in ethics
- **Doug Pagitt**
  - The pastor of Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis. Author of several books who is a recognized leader in the movement. (website at <http://pagitt.typepad.com/>)
  - Professor of church growth at the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. Author of several books including *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (which he coauthored with Ryan Bolger). His book *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* was a Christianity Today best book of 2001.
- **Erwin McManus**
  - Author and speaker who is described on his website as "The lead pastor and Cultural Architect of Mosaic in Los Angeles. Known around the world for its spiritual creativity and cosmopolitan diversity, Mosaic is a community of followers of Jesus Christ committed to live by faith, to be known by love, and to be a voice of hope. Since the early 90's, Erwin has led Mosaic in a pioneering enterprise whose primary focus is to serve the post-modern, post-Western, and post-Christian world."(website at <http://www.erwinmcmanus.com/>)
- **Stanley Grenz**
  - Now deceased, former professor of theology who co-authored the influential book, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*.
- **John Franke**
  - Professor of theology at Biblical Seminary in Hartfield, PA. Co-author of *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*.
- **Stanley Hauerwas**
  - Professor of Theological Ethics at Duke Divinity School. Named "America's Best Theologian" in 2001 by TIME magazine. Heavily influenced by postmodern philosophers, he has in turn had a profound affect on the Emerging Church movement. Known to frequently use profanities in his speaking engagements.

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- **Nancy Murphy**
  - Professor of Christian Philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary. Her book, Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism has influenced many emergent leaders.
- **Steve Chalke**
  - British Baptist once known for his doctrinal orthodoxy who has embraced the movement, retreating from his former views. His book, The Lost Message of Jesus created great controversy in the UK. [23]
- **LeRon Shults**
  - Professor of theology at Bethel Seminary. Author of books such as The Postfoundationalist Task of Theology.
- **Chris Seay**
  - Baptist pastor and author who is collaborating with Brian McLaren on The Voice project, a retelling of the Bible as a collection of stories, poems and songs.
- **Spencer Burke**
  - Creator of theooze.com., traveling speaker, and author of several books. (website at <http://cavepainter.typepad.com/> [also see <http://www.theooze.com/about/ourteam.cfm>])
- **Rob Bell**
  - Pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church, in Grandville, Michigan. Author of Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith. (website at <http://www.mhbcmi.org/findex.html>)
- **Bill Dahl**
  - Freelance writer, social activist, and speaker who frequently contributes articles to various publications and websites. (website at <http://theporpoisedivinglife.com/>)
- **Donald Miller**
  - Author of several popular books, including Blue Like Jazz. His works have been highly coveted in the movement, and he is contributing to the Voice project. (website at <http://www.donaldmillerwords.com/index.php>)

# HOMOSEXUAL INFILTRATION

- If the Protestant world—already divided between the liberal mainline denominations and the conservative evangelicals and others—is facing new and stunning denominational splits over homosexuality, the Roman Catholic Church has been downright devastated by the issue.
- The Roman Catholic Church has striven mightily against the tides of immorality in an increasingly secular world and held with admirable strength to traditional, biblical, life-affirming principles.
- But it has also—at least in the United States—been profoundly affected not only by the leftist liberation theology but also by a major infiltration of its seminaries by homosexuals.
- In fact, widespread cases of predatory homosexual priests have created a full-blown crisis for the church.
- “The real problem the Catholic Church faces,” explains Father Donald B. Cozzens, author of *The Changing Face of the Priesthood*, is the “disproportionate number of gay men that populate our seminaries.”

# HOMOSEXUAL INFILTRATION

- Former California Congressman Bob Dornan states it more bluntly when he says,
  - “The Catholic Church in this country has been penetrated by an aggressive homosexual network.”
- And National Review senior writer Rod Dreher puts it even more bluntly:
  - “This is chiefly a scandal about unchaste or criminal homosexuals in the Catholic priesthood....
  - For Catholics, to start asking questions about homosexuality in the priesthood is to risk finding out more than many Church members prefer to know.
  - For journalists, to confront the issue is to risk touching the electrified third rail of American popular culture: the dark side of homosexuality.”

# HOMOSEXUAL INFILTRATION

- In his book, *Amchurch Comes Out: The U.S. Bishops, Pedophile Scandals and the Homosexual Agenda*, Likoudis explains how “homosexuals, pedophiles and other perverse persons in the priesthood rose to prominence in the Church,” especially in the United States and Canada—the “Amchurch.”
  - “The evidence,” says Likoudis, “is now irrefutable that an influential and very powerful coterie within the Catholic Church—well-embedded and well-protected by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and their peers in the police, the courts, legislatures and the media—is successfully advancing a sexual liberation agenda that will not end until every social stigma attached to any sexual activity, no matter how bizarre, has been erased.”

# HOMOSEXUAL INFILTRATION

- Although Likoudis “firmly believes that the Catholic Church was established by Christ and is protected by Him,” t
- The truth must be exposed, he explains, that “cliques of ‘devils’—to use Dostoyevsky’s term—managed to come to power in the Church, and have used their power and the Church’s resources to:
  - destroy her from the inside,
  - to wreck her credibility,
  - to sully her image,
  - to make her appear ridiculous in the eyes of the world and in the minds of the faithful.
- In the end,” concludes Likoudis, “they will be on the losing side of history, but the damage they will have wrought will be enormous.”

# ABANDONMENT

- AS WE have seen, churches that are more structured as top-down authority-based institutions can readily be subverted from the top.
- The ultimate authority church on earth, the Roman Catholic Church, has been attacked (in North America) by an invasion at the authority level—that is, in its seminaries.
- In the same way, the big, traditional, top-down mainline Protestant denominations under the umbrella of the National Council of Churches have drifted so far to the left that they demonstrate little disagreement with the dominant, secular culture.
- But what about the bottom-up churches—like those in the evangelical world—where religious doctrine and practice are more decentralized and less dependent on a vertical hierarchy of authority?
- Obviously, if top-down, authority-based organizations are vulnerable at the top, bottom-up faith-based or relationship-based churches are susceptible at the bottom.
- In other words, churchgoers and pastors alike are in danger of being influenced and corrupted by the powerful currents of the surrounding culture.

# ABANDONMENT

- Let's take a close look at the millions of American evangelicals, and those the media derisively like to label fundamentalist Christians, who still hold strongly to traditional values.
- First, let's give credit where it's due.
- Many evangelicals, just like many believers from other regions of Christendom, not only take their religion seriously, “walking their talk” and putting biblical principles first in their lives, but they also believe they have a duty to stand up for God's principles in the larger world.
- Indeed, it is evangelical Christians who comprise the most active and passionate component of the Republican Party and who are most responsible for getting out the vote at election time.

# ABANDONMENT

- But then there are also large numbers of Bible-believing, traditional-values-affirming Christians who are, for want of a better term, just waiting for the end to come.
- This is not a criticism of Christians who have an interest in end-times prophecy—that’s a shared interest in all believers as it’s a major theme of the New Testament.
- Rather, we’re talking about Christians who have become “invisible”—that is, of no account when it comes to standing up to the evil all around them.

# ABANDONMENT

- In his book *Abandonment Theology*, author John W. Chalfant describes and laments that many mainline pastors simply folded in the face of increasingly audacious attacks against biblical truth and morality.
- He blamed faulty religious teaching as the only way to explain why so many well meaning Christians were paralyzed into inaction.
  - The Abandonment Clergy and their followers have been teaching, preaching and saturating the media and their church members with the doctrine of surrender and political non-involvement.
  - They are not teaching us to surrender to Christ through obedience to the commandments of God.
  - Rather, they tell us that America is finished, that the collapse of our heritage and our freedoms has been predetermined within a definable near-future time frame and is therefore beyond our control.
- With their beloved country being de-Christianized at 100 miles per hour, what is this powerful seduction that has succeeded in neutralizing so many Christians from mounting any effective defense?

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- FRANCIS A. SCHAEFFER is widely regarded as one of the most influential evangelical thinkers of the twentieth century, having written twenty-three books translated into twenty-five languages, including *The God Who Is There*, *Escape from Reason*, and *How Should We Then Live?*
- Shortly before he died in 1984, Schaeffer published a book with the spine-straightening title *The Great Evangelical Disaster*.
- In it, he reflected, just as we are in these pages, on the culture wars raging in America and why Christians were so seemingly absent from the struggle.
  - “Most of the evangelical world has not been active in the battle,” Schaeffer lamented, “or even been able to see that we are in a battle.
  - And when it comes to the issues of the day the evangelical world most often has said nothing; or worse has said nothing different from what the world would say.
  - “Here,” he said, “is the great evangelical disaster—the failure of the evangelical world to stand for truth as truth.
  - There is only one word for this—namely accommodation: the evangelical church has accommodated to the world spirit of the age.”

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- The dangers of this accommodation were Schaeffer’s final warning to Christendom:
  - This accommodation has been costly,
  - first in destroying the power of the Scriptures to confront the spirit of our age;
  - second, in allowing the further slide of our culture.
- Thus we must say with tears that it is the evangelical accommodation to the world spirit around us, to the wisdom of this age, which removes the evangelical church from standing against the further breakdown of our culture.
- It is my (Kupelian) firm belief that when we stand before Jesus Christ, we will find that it has been the weakness and accommodation of the evangelical group on the issues of the day that has been largely responsible for the loss of the Christian ethos which has taken place in the area of culture in our country over the last forty to sixty years.

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- To Schaeffer, who for decades nurtured, exhorted, and lectured Christian audiences worldwide, this accommodation was no light matter of secondary importance to the believer’s Christian walk.
- It was a sign of grossest hypocrisy, he said.
- And let us understand that to accommodate to the world spirit about us in our age is nothing less than the most gross form of worldliness in the proper definition of that word.
- And with this proper definition of worldliness, we must say with tears that, with exceptions, the evangelical church is worldly and not faithful to the living Christ.

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- These were, and are, stunning words from one of our era’s most revered evangelical leaders.
- But other respected Christian authors have sounded the same alarm over what Schaeffer called accommodation.
- Theology professor David F. Wells of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary asks in his book *No Place for Truth*:
  - “Why is it that with more than a third of the nation’s adults in 1990 claiming a born-again experience and many more beyond that claiming allegiance to Christian values, the society moves on oblivious to its religious citizens, reshaping laws and policies as if they were not there?”

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- Chillingly, Wells explains,
  - “The answer, in a sense, is that they are not there.
  - They are the people of the inner life whose relation to the external world is largely a matter of cognitive disjuncture.
  - Whatever follies the Marxists committed—and their follies and wickedness have been manifold—they always had the wisdom to know that if they yielded their world view, they yielded their reason for existence.
  - Evangelicals are not quite so wise.”
- Schaeffer and many other Christian leaders have long bemoaned this disastrous Christian accommodation, and indeed much of it emanates from very commonplace human weaknesses like doubtfulness, fear of rejection, need for acceptance and approval, and desire for advantage.
- In response to the evangelical Christian burden to answer the call of the Great Commission, a growing mindset swept through churches that to get the attention of the unsaved you have to go where they are, look and act like them, in hopes of winning their trust and hopefully their conversion.

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- Unfortunately, far too much of today’s evangelical world has been swept up in the powerful magnetic field of the secular popular culture.
- Thinking they’re doing God’s work behind the enemy lines of the atheistic popular culture, they’ve gradually and inadvertently taken on many more characteristics and attitudes of the enemy than they realize.

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- Unfortunately, it doesn't appear to be appealing to the secular world.
- Walter Kirn, literary editor for GQ magazine wrote a biting critique of contemporary evangelical Christian Culture bearing the familiar title “What Would Jesus Do?”

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- “Today I will leave behind the fallen world of secular American pop culture and enter the self-contained parallel universe of American Christian pop culture, within which I’ve vowed to dwell, exclusively for seven days and nights, watching PAX instead of NBC and letting Pat Robertson be my Tom Brokaw.
- The old Ark, the biblical Ark, constructed to save the chosen from the Great Flood, had two of every creature in existence. The new Ark, the cultural Ark, built to save the chosen from the Great Media Flood, also has two of everything, I’m learning.
- You say you’re a Pearl Jam fan? Check out Third Day. They sound just like them—same soaring guttural vocals, same driven musicianship, same crappy clothes, just a slightly different message: Repent!
- You say you like Grisham- and Clancy-style potboilers? Grab a copy of Ted Dekker’s “Heaven’s Wager”—same stick-figure characterizations, same preschool prose, just a slightly different moral: Repent!
- Your kids enjoy Batman, you say? Try Bibleman. Same mask, same cape, just a slightly different ...

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- That’s the convincing logic of the Ark: If a person is going to waste his life cranking the stereo, clicking the remote, reading paperback pulp and chasing diet fads, he may as well save his soul while he’s at it.
- Holy living no longer requires self-denial.
- On the Ark, every mass diversion has been cloned, from Internet news sites to MTV to action movies, and it’s possible to live inside the spirit, without unplugging oneself from the modern life, twenty-four hours a day.
- What makes the stuff ... so thin, so weak and cumulatively so demoralizing (even to me, a sympathetic journalist who’d secretly love to play the brash contrarian and rate the “Left Behind” books above Tom Clancy) has nothing to do with faith.
- The problem is lack of faith.
- Ark culture is a bad Xerox of the mainstream, not a truly distinctive or separate achievement.
- Without the courage to lead, it numbly follows, picking up the major media’s scraps and gluing them back together with a cross on top.

# “INVISIBLE” CHRISTIANS

- How far can this Christian mimicry of a thoroughly unchristian popular culture go?
- Under sway of the vain belief that we’re somehow gaining the trust of the unsaved in hopes of leading them to Christ, are there any lower limits beyond which we won’t go?
- Unfortunately, in some cases today’s evangelical accommodation has led to some very strange and scary things.

# GROSS-OUT GAMES

- In one of the more disturbing trends that I've read about in this book, I was shocked to read about a trend of 'gross-out' games had become a fad in youth ministry. (I hope I can speak of this in past tense)
- Gene Edward Veith chronicled in World magazine the appalling tale of a youth pastor in Indiana playing a game called the Human Vegematic, which resulted in some of the youth getting sick and the church being sued for causing physical and mental harm.
- Kupelian goes on for several pages to detail other youth 'icebreakers' that are disturbing and shockingly inappropriate.
- Obviously, these activities are degrading and in some cases unhealthful.
- But they do appeal to many youths, so if keeping them coming back for more is the church's primary object, and if that could in turn lead to their conversion or membership in the church, then such "harmless icebreakers" are seen by some youth leaders as a good thing.

# GROSS-OUT GAMES

- In reality, such activities are both corrupting and unchristian, and they teach some very questionable lessons to impressionable young people, as Veith notes the rationale often given to defend the indefensible activities:
  - **Lose your inhibitions.** Young people usually have inhibitions against doing anything too embarrassing or shameful. These exercises are designed to free people from such hang-ups.
  - **Give in to peer pressure.** Defenders of these kinds of activities maintain that they help create group unity. The way they work, though, is to overcome a teenager's inhibitions with the greater desire to go along with the group.
  - **Christianity is stupid.** Status-conscious teenagers know that those who are so desperate to be liked that they will do anything to curry favor are impossible to respect. Young people may come to off-the-wall youth group meetings, but when they grow up, they will likely associate the church with other immature, juvenile phases of their lives, and Christianity will be something they will grow out of.

# GROSS-OUT GAMES

- Veith is correct in identifying the negative side of these rationalizations, but through this process, something much worse is being done.
- Degrading someone is a classic preparatory step to brainwashing him.
- Kupelian is not saying church youth leaders are intentionally trying to brainwash anyone.
- But the fact is, someone who has been tempted to cross ethical boundaries—in response to peer pressure, or out of fear of ridicule or other adverse consequences—is wide open to being reprogrammed by a strong personality.
- This dynamic is made all the more powerful by the presence of a group pulling in the same direction as the leader.

# GROSS-OUT GAMES

- By encouraging the violation of our own God-given inhibitions by engaging in shameful or titillating games at church is not just tasteless and moronic.
- It can also make us vulnerable to a counterfeit religious experience.
- When we're angry, emotional, upset, or just excited, we're simply more susceptible to outside suggestion than when we're calm and composed.
- But when, in addition, we have actually violated the subtle laws of God—"going against our conscience," we call it—out of weakness, insecurity, and a need for approval, any religious experience or even religious feeling that may follow surely has nothing to do with being touched by God.
- But it has everything to do with being emotionally reprogrammed, which can lead to lots of religious words and feelings, but no actual connection to God.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- AMERICA IS full of people who have accepted the idea that Jesus Christ died for their sins and that this belief guarantees them a place in heaven.
- Some are very sincere.
- They are truly mortified at their former sins, genuinely contrite before God and those they have offended, and they grieve over their continuing compulsions.
- They have awakened from their former life of gross sin and now want nothing more than to do the will of their Creator—whatever that may be, wherever it may lead them, whatever they may suffer.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- They take seriously the commandments and principles given by their Savior and make their life revolve around emulating Him to the best of their ability.
- They are, quite literally, followers of Christ—in other words, Christians.
- They are a wholesome and upgrading influence wherever they go and whatever they do.
- They are “salt and light,” to use the popular expression.
- It is because of them that America hasn’t fallen completely into the socialistic, post-Christian, secular decadence and deadness that already grips Europe.
- They are the reason there is still hope for America.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- Others are not so sincere.
- There are countless Christians who believe they have a ticket to heaven, and nothing else really matters very much to them.
- They live lives of shallowness and selfishness, of petty emotions and jealousies, of gossip and escape, of ego and pride, and sometimes of gross corruption and treachery.
- The worst of them are prideful, selfish, and brazen.
- Living it up under the smug delusion that they're "saved," they drive other people crazy (and away from real Christianity) with their hypocrisy.
- Such people, whether in family or business relationships, whether as church leaders or leaders of nations, sow confusion, rebellion, and suffering everywhere they go.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- Others are more decent but powerfully in the grip of sin and confusion.
- They go to church and sing hymns and sometimes read the Bible.
- They may even “try to be a good Christian,” but they’re basically clueless.
- Their marriage is on the rocks, and their children are wearing tongue studs.
- They believe in society’s atheistic experts, and they’re even addicted to Internet porn.
- They are easily taken in by the marketers of evil.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- This is not a judgment of these people.
- Many are moving in the direction of being more Christian, but many, unfortunately, are moving in the direction of being less Christian.
- In fact, some so-called Christians, I'm (Kupelian) sorry to say, are actually worse off after being "saved" than before. (I put saved in quotes because of course I'm not referring here to the real thing.)

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- At least before they were “saved,” they had a natural respect for, or fear of, ultimate justice—an inborn sense that somehow we all reap what we sow.
- After being “saved,” that’s gone for the insincere “Christian.”
- For him or her, belief in Jesus amounts to a “get out of hell free” card, a sort of spiritual diplomatic immunity.
- It’s like the profligate teenage son of an important Arab diplomat who knows he won’t be prosecuted under U.S. law while living here, so he drives recklessly, molests women, and generally lives it up with impunity.
- And because the natural and necessary fear of consequences has been unwisely removed from his life, he falls that much more easily to the temptations of his lower nature.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- Christianity—the deepest, most meaningful and awe-inspiring religion ever, the magnificent driving force behind Western civilization, and the transcendent hope of mankind’s future—has been dumbed down by such as these into a caricature,
- Such cynical calls to conversion are little more than an insurance pitch,
- For this type of “Christian,” there’s no need to stand up to evil, because they’re “saved by grace, not works” (despite repeated biblical admonitions that “faith without works is dead”).
- No need to obey God’s commands, because they’re already saved, so why bother?
- No need to try to help make it a better world, no need to help widows and orphans, because they’re going to be “raptured” soon, and those who remain behind can sort out the mess.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- Is it any wonder that the church—and America—are in such trouble?
- What's missing in all of this, of course, is a genuine love of truth.
  - “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me,” said Jesus (Matthew 15:8).
- But the kind of truth we're talking about here is a special kind—and I'm (Kupelian) not even talking about theological doctrine.
- Rather, the truth that sets the sincere child of God apart from the insincere imitation revolves around our humility and willingness to patiently face our own imperfections and failings.
- If we stand close to God, He illuminates what's wrong with us so we can repent and change.
- It's no coincidence that Jesus's first recorded word of ministry was, “Repent.”

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- We all like to assume that we embrace truth.
- But in reality, truth can be painful to bear.
- It puts us on edge.
- It makes us squirm.
- Why?
- Because we're "born in sin" and have a certain part of us called pride that is at war with reality.
- Thus many of us bristle when confronted with the truth about our defects and shortcomings.
- (In fact, a lot of us spend virtually our entire lives escaping from truth—usually without ever realizing that's what we're doing.)

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- So what is meant by “love of truth”?
- For one thing, if you have a love of truth, you’re never really satisfied with anything else.
- Counterfeit religious experiences and exciting escapes don’t satisfy you.
- You’re always hungry for real experiences, for a genuine relationship with God, for true repentance and change, even if you don’t know how to get there.
- You want to know the truth about everything—especially about yourself. If you’re wrong about something, you want to know it. If you’ve been living a lie, you’re willing to see it—no matter what the cost.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- Is it good enough to say, “Well, I follow the Bible”?
- That depends.
- As we have seen, depending on our personal honesty, or lack thereof, we can justify virtually anything with the Bible.
- Every deluded belief, every perverted lust, every selfish ambition—whether it’s to become rich, advance communism, live a self-serving and self-satisfied life, prove you’re righteous by drinking poison, celebrate homosexuality, or hate the Jews—has generated a form of “Christianity” to justify that particular form of prideful deception, all sugarcoated with selected and even retranslated Bible verses.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- What we need is that missing ingredient—the spirit of humility and honesty that invites self-understanding and repentance, which will faithfully guide our true understanding of the Scriptures.
- Ask yourself, Is stealing wrong because the Bible says it's wrong, or does the Bible say stealing is wrong because it is wrong?
- Which came first?
- What about murder?
- Was murder wrong before God gave Moses the Ten Commandments?
- When Cain slew Abel, there was no Bible and no Ten Commandments.
- Yet God held Cain accountable and set a curse upon him.
- But why should Cain have known killing his brother was wrong if there was no law?

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- The truth, of course, as the Bible makes clear in Romans 1, is that God's living law, the inborn ability to discern right from wrong, was written in Cain's heart, as it is in every human being who has ever lived.
- The word conscience literally means "with knowing."
- We all know.
- We all know, deep down, right from wrong.
- We're self-contained truth machines if only we'd pay attention.
- It's only our pride, our willfulness to have our own way, to be the god of our own lives, to rationalize our compulsions and sins—and the inevitable denial of truth that follows—that disconnects us from it.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- When Kupelian's daughter, Sarah, was three years old, he used the occasion of her misbehaving with her younger brother to introduce her to the Golden Rule.
- He remembered his amazement when he realized that she clearly understood what he was saying.
- The “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” message went right home, immediately and full force, into her heart.
- He remembered thinking to myself, “Oh my gosh, a three-year-old can understand Jesus's message!”
- The fact that she could recognize the truth and rightness of the Golden Rule when she heard it for the first time in her life means she had the essence of its message already inside of her.
- Otherwise, how could she recognize it and respond to it when I spoke those few words to her?

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- We're talking about real faith—our invisible life-support connection with our Creator.
- Did you ever do the wrong thing and then, looking back to the moments just before you made the mistake, recall that you had experienced an intuitive flash, a little bit of a wordless warning, like an aversion or feeling not to do it?
- Like most of us, you ignored it and did the wrong thing anyway.
- But that “still, small voice” —a voiceless voice, really—tried to steer you away from a wrong action.
- That's from God.
- Typically, people learn to honor and respect such intuitive leadings first in hindsight, as they realize they ignored God's loving nudge, and later in foresight, as they discover by experience which impulses to obey and which to resist in life.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- Inside every truly sincere person there is an inner witness, a wordless knowing, a quiet confirmation of all truth.
- When you reverently inquire into the meaning, not only of the Holy Scriptures, but of everything in life, and—very important—when you have the courage to believe and hold onto the little glimpses of insight God gives you in response to your sincere searching, you are living by faith.
- Our quiet inner belief that stealing and murder are wrong just because we can plainly see they're wrong, this instant embrace of the Golden Rule just because we can see for ourselves that it's right, this deep and wordless understanding of both life and Scripture that graces us from beyond the borders of our education and experience—which we regard too lightly as common sense—is in reality God's communication with us through faith.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- Let's look at one final example of love of truth in action in our daily lives.
- Say you suffer from envious thoughts.
- To covet is to break one of the Ten Commandments.
- So how do we deal with these troublesome feelings?
- Certainly not by wallowing in them and indulging them.
- But also not by repressing them or attempting to manufacture "good" thoughts and feelings in their place or by escaping from them.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- The Christian answer might be to pray, but what form of prayer?
- As pastors often say, prayer isn't always talking to God.
- It's often better just to listen.
- So, in this case, if you notice envious thoughts, just observe them—honestly, sincerely, without escaping or trying to change them or making excuses for them or justifying them or getting upset over them.
- Just see what God shows you about yourself, with poise and dignity, and quietly, wordlessly, cry inwardly to Him for help.
- He will.
- This is true transparency, which is resignation of your will to His.
- It's how we're supposed to be.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- By the same token, to the truth-seeking soul, the story of Christ—not as told by a “plastic Christian,” but as told by someone who’s real, whether pastor or layman or mom or dad—has an internal reverberation of truth in the listener’s soul.
- It has the quality of a wonderful old story you heard long ago, in your childhood, but had forgotten.
- At the core of this life-changing faith—this truest of all ways of living—is the individual believer’s love and appreciation and acceptance and embrace of Christ’s perfect sacrifice, the ultimate demonstration of our heavenly Father’s love for His wayward children.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- But in far too many pulpits across America, and broadcasting over the nation's airways, Christianity is presented in such a shallow way that it doesn't require a love of truth—which is tantamount to a love of Him.
- This dumbed-down version of Christianity doesn't require honest introspection or courage or self-denial or patience.
- The only ingredient it needs is a guilty person who's sick of feeling guilty, wants relief, wants to feel better about himself, and desires an insurance policy to keep him out of hell.
- But even the most insincere person wants to feel better about himself, wants relief from guilt, and fears death and what may lie beyond.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- The compartmentalization and trivialization of Christianity into a mantra of belief—but separated from works, from obedience to God’s laws, and even more fundamentally, separated from basic honesty, integrity, love of truth, and true repentance—has ushered in a generation of shallow, ineffectual, and invisible Christians.
- Fortunately, in America there are also many deeply principled and committed believers who have stood firm and held back the tide of atheism from fully sweeping over the land.
- These Americans love the truth, but they are, sadly, in the minority, which is why the marketers of evil have been winning the war for America’s soul.
- Yet it is precisely this affinity for truth—the kind that is sometimes painful and always humbling because it exposes us to our own pride and folly—that is the cure, the antidote for the toxic marketing campaigns that have poisoned American culture, including many of her churches.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- In this book, we've surveyed the marketers of evil—who they are, what they've sold us, why they did it, and what the disastrous results of their efforts were.
- But every transaction has both a seller and a buyer.
- Every con job requires not only a con man but also a hapless victim that somehow didn't see the obvious.
- Americans didn't see the obvious.
- We didn't see the obvious because the marketers of evil fed us the beguiling lies that a hidden, selfish part of us wanted to embrace—just as the proverbial serpent in the Garden of Eden, according to the biblical account, seduced Adam and Eve by telling them lies they secretly wanted to believe.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- It's time to give up the life of pride—the impatient, vain, self-serving, pleasure-seeking, egotistical, and utterly faithless part of us that has made all of us such absurdly easy targets for con men throughout the ages.
- The fox in Pinocchio is alive and well and is still selling us on the joys of Pleasure Island.
- It's often said the Christian church in America needs revival.
- But this doesn't necessarily mean ever-bigger tents with tens of thousands of us swaying back and forth, singing songs, giving speeches, and getting pumped up—and then going home and watching television.

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- America's real revival and genuine rebirth will be much less dramatic in the beginning.
- We might never even realize exactly how it came about.
- But it can happen, and we must pray that it will.
- How will it come to pass?
- It'll happen, dear friends, when we all simply go to our rooms, close the door, take a deep breath, and take a good, long, hard, honest look at ourselves.
- And then, quietly and humbly and fervently, we ask the living God for help, for insight, for direction—for salvation.
- When that happens, the spell will be broken, the sun will shine again, and every marketer of evil will have to go out and get an honest job.