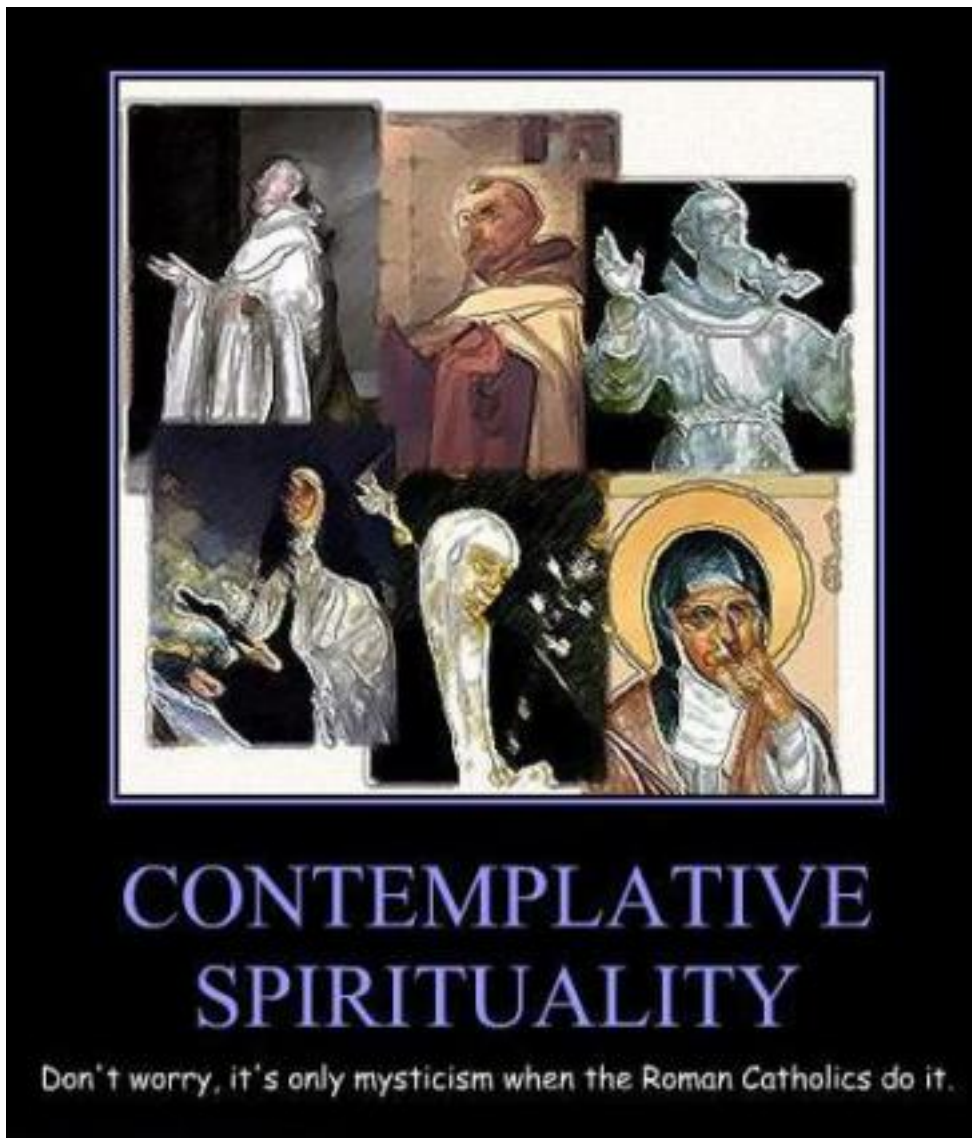


***SADDLEBACK CHURCH, RICK WARREN, AND SPIRITUAL  
DISCIPLINES***

*By Rev. Ken Silva, Southern Baptist pastor-teacher, Jun 15, 2010*



*Your  
boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole  
lump? ([1 Corinthians 5:6](#))*

**A Lump Of Mystic Leaven Is Rising**

[Apprising Ministries](#) picks up where we left off in [Rick Warren Saddleback Church, And Spiritual Disciplines](#), which began in [Steve Gladen, Saddleback Church Small Groups, And Quaker Mystic Spirituality](#), where I had introduced you to [Steve Gladen](#), who's "now the Pastor of Small Groups at [the] Saddleback Church" [1] of pretending to be Protestant Purpose Driven Pope [Rick Warren](#). In the former post I shared I'd become greatly concerned about the spread of corrupt [Contemplative Spirituality/Mysticism](#) (CSM); particularly within the neo-liberal cult of the sinfully ecumenical [Emerging Church](#).

This Trojan Horse that squishy evanjellyfish leaders would bring into their own camp was the vehicle from which this spurious spirituality, a romanticized version of the Counter (hello) Reformation spirituality of the apostate Roman Catholic Church—they've been pawning off for years as so-called [Spiritual Formation](#)—would be unloaded. I've also pointed out that it's an incontrovertible fact that the main purveyors of CSM would be the [Living Spiritual Teacher](#) and [Quaker](#) mystic [Richard Foster](#), along with Southern Baptist minister [Dallas Willard](#); who is quite literally Foster's spiritual twin.

I also told you, in no uncertain terms, that it's well past time for recognizing the inclusive, and increasingly universal, fruit of the [Emerging Church](#) and the spiritual skubalon of Foster-Willardism. Jesus tells us we are not to *judge by appearances*; no instead, we are to *judge with right judgment* ([Jn 7:24](#)). In other words, it's one thing to look good before the world by ramping up involvement with social causes, but it's quite another to enter through *the narrow gate* Jesus speaks of in [Matthew 7:13](#). You see, to do that takes the Gospel of repentance and the forgiveness of sins through the Name of our crucified and risen Savior Jesus Christ because of His finished work on the Cross.

You saw in [Rick Warren Saddleback Church, And Spiritual Disciplines](#), from the [Spiritual Disciplines](#) page at the *The Spiritual Growth Center* of highly influential [Saddleback Church](#) where, in addition to the Quaker mystic spirituality of Foster-Willardism, we also found a couple of other interesting books which are also right in lock-step with its sinfully ecumenical squishy spiritual skubalon; each sold at Saddleback's [Pavilion](#). One we looked at was [The Life You've Always Wanted](#) by John Ortberg, which contains the obligatory bowing before the usual mass cast of

mushy mystics e.g. universalist [Henri Nouwen](#) and CSM Golden Buddha [Thomas Merton](#).

Next we began to look at [The Spirit of the Disciplines](#) by Dallas Willard; with an assist from from pastor Bob DeWaay and his excellent [Critical Issues Commentary](#) article [The Dangers of Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Disciplines: A Critique of Dallas Willard and The Spirit of the Disciplines](#) where he explains that:

The spiritual disciplines that are supposedly necessary for spiritual formation are not defined in the Bible. If they were, there would be a clear description of them and concrete list. ([Online source](#))

This is a critical point; these “disciplines” of an asceticism-lite are a form of Pietism where, in a confusion of Law and Gospel, we are to *do* things that allegedly are necessary to bring us “closer” to God when Christ has already *done* that for us. Now DeWaay strikes the center pillar upon which Willard rests his case for these disciplines of Pietism:

Dallas Willard bases his entire spiritual disciplines book on his understanding of [Matthew 11:29, 30](#), which says, “*Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.*” Willard cites this passage at the beginning of a chapter entitled “The Secret of the Easy Yoke,”... He claims that the “yoke” is to try to emulate Jesus’ lifestyle in every possible way. Willard interprets Jesus’ “yoke” as the practice of spiritual disciplines like solitude, silence, and simple living... ([Online source](#))

As we continue in our attempt to *judge with right judgment* it’s important that we not *judge by appearances* of the spirituality of men like Willard ; instead we need to look specifically at what these purveyors of spurious CSM teach about God and then compare it to the Word of God, which we know is inspired. [2] As a Southern Baptist minister myself (for now), as well as a former Roman Catholic, I know from studying the teachings of Dallas Willard that he is largely at odds with Reformation theology; in addition, contra the Protestant Reformers Willard also accepts the apostate Roman Catholic Church as a viable form of Christianity, despite its—never amended—anathema of the Gospel of Jesus Christ itself!

We've seen, e.g. in [Rick Warren Deception Already Invading Reformed Camp](#), that Willard's fellow SBC minister does as well; rather odd when one considers that the SBC (*Slowly Becoming Catholic?*) is supposed to be the largest Protestant denomination in the United States; but its own Idol of Autonomy makes it a perfect screen to hide behind. That aside, the following is beyond question as DeWaay informs us that:

Willard is very critical of traditional Protestant doctrine and practice, declaring it a massive failure. His remedy for this failure is to see the body and certain ascetic practices using the body as the means of change... He claims that we have been misguided by being concerned with the forgiveness of sins and "theories of the atonement."... So evidently, rather than concerning ourselves with the blood atonement, averting God's wrath against sin, salvation by faith through grace, we should be practicing spiritual disciplines with our bodies so that we could then be more like Jesus.

The concept of Jesus' "yoke" being interpreted as an invitation to practice His life-style is reiterated throughout Willard's book; see pages 91, 121, and 235. This idea is the framework and logical foundation of Willard's entire thesis. But the question is, "Is this what Jesus meant in [Matthew 11:29, 30](#)?" ([Online source](#))

Space doesn't allow republishing pastor Bob DeWaay's entire thorough, and biblical, refutation of Willard's twisting of God's Word; suffice here for DeWaay to say:

The spiritual disciplines are not taught in [Matthew 11:29, 30](#) (Willard's primary proof test), and even Willard admits they cannot be found elsewhere in scripture... As with most unbiblical approaches, the spiritual disciplines are based on the idea of innate human powers that can be harnessed for good. Holding a false concept of sin as a "disruption of that higher [spiritual] life," Willard looks for a solution through finding our true potential, individually and corporately, through spiritual disciplines that will enable us to reconstruct the rule of God now. ([Online source](#))

**Postmodern New Calvinism: Reformed Theology With Counter Reformation Spirituality**

Little wonder why heretical [Emergent Church](#) guru [Brian McLaren](#) would tell us Willard and Foster were key mentors of the [Emerging Church](#), for this is the rotten fruit produced by the prolonged practice of corrupt [Contemplative/Centering Prayer](#) (CCP); meditation in an altered state of consciousness, which is a form of neo-Gnosticism that flowered in the antibiblical monastic traditions of apostate [Roman Catholicism](#). In leaving Willard, for now, DeWaay is dead-on-target toppling the central pillar of Foster-Willardism as he informs us:

These ideas are more akin to Eastern Religion than Biblical Christianity. Our problem is not the need to suck in more “unembodied personal power” by techniques to contact God. We are dead sinners facing God’s wrath unless we repent and believe the gospel. Willard’s concepts are foreign to the Bible... The idea of practicing spiritual disciplines was imported to the text, not found there. We live in an age of mysticism. People lust for spiritual reality and spiritual experiences.

The danger is that unbiblical practices will give people a real spiritual experience, but not from God. Deception is the likely outcome. God puts a boundary around the means by which we come to Him and grow in Him for our own protection. If we ignore the boundary set by Biblical guidelines, there is no telling where we will end up. If however, we come to God on His terms, knowing that we have a High Priest who is at the right hand of God, and that we have access through His blood into the holiest place, we can be assured we cannot be any closer to God this side of heaven. ([Online source](#))

But this kind of godly wisdom just does not compute for Rick Warren and his Saddleback flagship because at the [Spiritual Disciplines](#) page of its *The Spiritual Growth Center*, but of course, we also find Richard Foster’s magnum opus [Celebration Of Discipline](#) (CoD):

**Celebration of Discipline**  
by Richard Foster

In the twenty years since its publication, *Celebration of Discipline* has helped over a million seekers discover a richer spiritual life infused with joy, peace, and a deeper understanding of God. For this special twentieth anniversary edition, Richard J. Foster has added an introduction, in which he shares the story of how this beloved and enduring spiritual guidebook came to be.

ty as the best modern book on Christian spirituality, *Celebration of Discipline* "classic disciplines," or central spiritual practices, of the Christian faith. Along ter shows that it is only by and through these practices that the true path to rth can be found. Dividing the disciplines into three movements of the Spirit, s how each of these areas contribute to a balanced spiritual life. The inward meditation, prayer, fasting, and study, offer avenues of personal examination The outward disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission, and service, help i make the world a better place. The corporate disciplines of confession, lance, and celebration, bring us nearer to one another and to God.

es a wealth of examples demonstrating how these disciplines can become ily activities—and how they can help us shed our superficial habits and indance of God into our lives." He offers crucial new insights on simplicity, g how the biblical view of simplicity, properly understood and applied, brings ce to our inward and outward lives and "sets us free to enjoy the provision jift that can be shared with others." The discussion of celebration, often the d of the disciplines, shows its critical importance, for it stands at the heart of hrist. *Celebration of Discipline* will help motivate Christians everywhere to ourney of prayer and spiritual growth.

id by Brad Baker, Doug Fields, Steve Gladen, and Kurt Johnston

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Collins Publishers

he Pavilion

([Online source](#))

I've already shown you that, in his excellent five series called [Mysticism](#) a while back, speaking from the position of one actually holding to Reformation theology [Dr. Gary Gilley](#) correctly stated of Foster and CoD:

*Celebration of Discipline* alone, not even referencing Foster's other writings and teachings and ministries, is a virtual encyclopedia of theological error. ([Online source](#))

Like his spiritual twin Willard Foster also cannot substantiate these disciplines from the Bible, which brings us to the final book I want to highlight from Saddleback's *The Spiritual Growth Center*; [Spiritual Disciplines Handbook](#) (SDH) by [Adele Calhoun](#), a pastrix at [Redeemer Community Church](#):

## Spiritual Disciplines Handbook Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

God desires—for a more intimate prayer life, perhaps, or insight from God's Word—but we don't know how to get there. We get stuck in our pursuit, tired from wandering aimlessly, and end up further and more distant from God instead of closer. In the *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, Adele Calhoun gives us directions for our journey toward intimacy with Christ. While the word "discipline" may sound harsh, the author shows how desires and discipline work together to bring about the transformation only Christ can give. In addition to information about spiritual disciplines, this handbook is full of practical advice that helps you actually do them. Mothers, fathers, plumbers, and everyone else on a journey. And spiritual disciplines are for all of us who want to know God and be like him. Here is direction for our desire, leading us to the heart of Christ himself.

Key

[\(Online source\)](#)

You'll want to know that SDH is part of the fetid [Formatio](#) line at [InterVarsityPress](#) (IVP), which itself is absolutely chock full of CSM skubalon; and we're told SDH will teach us, "Fasting. Solitude. Contemplative prayer. *Lectio divina*." [3] My guess is this is what prompted former staff worker at IVP, J. Mack Stiles, to write [What's Happening to InterVarsity?](#) that ran recently at [9 Marks](#). And sadly, we aren't even surprised anymore to see the "Reformed" Tim Keller as the first with an endorsement for SDH:

"I have long profited from Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's gifts in the field of spiritual development, and I am delighted that she has compiled her experience with spiritual disciplines into book form. I highly recommend it and I look forward to using it as a resource at our church."

—Dr. Timothy Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, NYC ([Online source](#))

And just what “profited” Dr. Keller from the “experience” of pastrix Calhoun (in violation of God’s Word) which he would wish to so “highly recommend?” Well, right on the back cover of her SDH Calhoun tells us this handbook of heterodox (at best) practices features “how to” information on CCP and [Lectio Divina](#). O yes, as I peruse my personal copy of SDH I’m informed that I can learn how to “open myself to God” through the [Examen](#) of Counter Reformation figure [Ignatius of Loyola](#), founder of that militantly pro-Roman Catholic Church spiritual Gestapo Unit aka the [Jesuits](#); who weren’t real fond of Protestant Reformers.

We’re also told that in Calhoun’s SDH we will learn the ways we can “reliquish the false self” through mantric meditation ala Roman Catholic mystic [John Main](#) (1926-1982), which actually originated in pagan Eastern religions:

Go into silence, placing yourself in the presence of God with the words “Here I am.” As distractions come to mind, let them go by imagining they are boats floating down a river. Let the current take the distractions away. Don’t follow the distractions. Gently return to God repeating “Here I am.” Let the current of God’s Spirit carry you. What is this like for you? [4]

Well now, wouldn’t you know it; one of the “Resources on Silence” Calhoun recommends in SDH is another book on CCP by CSM guru [Ruth Haley Barton](#), trained at the infamous [Shalem Institute](#), and who also happens to endorse Calhoun’s SDH. In fact, the list of “pastor” Calhoun’s acknowledgements in SDH is itself a veritable who’s who of spurious spirituality including the aforementioned Ignatius of Loyola, Dallas Willard, and Richard Foster; as well as [Phyllis Tickle](#), [Richard Rohr](#), [Teresa of Avila](#) “and many more.” Calhoun then informs us that, “Their ideas, voices and examples have shaped my own words and experiences of the disciplines” [5]. A sad roll call indeed.

I would have to say that anyone, who professes to hold to Reformation theology, and who thinks this Foster-Willardism of romanticized [read: revisionist history] Roman Catholic contemplative mysticism is even remotely biblical seriously needs to have their spiritual heads examined. Unfortunately, as you’ll see next time, that list may now even include Dr. John Piper himself...



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Endnotes:

- [1] <http://tinyurl.com/3xmfgdv>, accessed 6/15/10.
- [2] For example, see—[Acts 17:11](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:21](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#).
- [3] <http://www.ivpress.com/cgi-ivpress/book.pl/code=3330>, accessed 6/15/10.
- [4] Adele Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*, [Downers Grove: InterVarsityPress, 2005], 110.
- [5] *Ibid.*, 10.