

Major Christian conference accused of 'pushing mysticism'

Controversial prayer technique at evangelical gathering

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By [Jim Fletcher](#)

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea follows this article.



A major Christian church-leadership organization, which brought thousands of pastors and church workers together in Carrollton, Texas, this week, raised the eyebrows of some attendees because of its promotion of “contemplative spirituality.”

The event, called “Catalyst Dallas,” was sponsored by Atlanta-based Catalyst and featured speakers Craig Groeschel of LifeChurch.tv, filmmaker Ryan Leak, corporate management expert Patrick Lencioni and author Jen Hatmaker, among many others.

In a workshop Tuesday afternoon, Phileena Heuertz led the audience in a “centering prayer,” which detractors argue opens the door to altered states of consciousness and possibly occult influences.

The critics say that centering prayer, in contrast to meditating on Scripture and on God, is a non-thinking, emptying of the mind in pursuit of knowledge that cannot be perceived through the natural senses and the mind.

A common theme throughout Catalyst Dallas was the work of Roman Catholic mystics Thomas Merton, Thomas Keating and Henri Nouwen.

According to author Phyllis Tickle, there are “seven ancient disciplines,” including centering prayer, or “fixed-hour prayer,” that are making a comeback among younger Christians. Included in these disciplines is the practice of solitude and “centering prayer.”

In her session at Catalyst Dallas, titled “Find Out Who You Really Are: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer,” Heuertz said that she became aware, 20 years ago, of the teachings of Keating, a priest and Trappist monk, and expert in the practice of centering prayer.

“I practice centering prayer twice a day for 20 minutes,” Heuertz said.

Heuertz rebutted criticisms that centering prayer is about “emptying the mind.” At the conclusion of her session, she stood in front of the group and led in centering prayer.

[Read Warren Smith's expose of the New Age in “The Light That Was Dark.”](#)

In her book “Pilgrimage of a Soul,” Heuertz describes the methods she advocates. “The Christian contemplative tradition navigates our path toward a posture of receptivity to the One who can save us from our chaos and destruction — whether that is on a small, personal and social scale or on the grand landscape of global politics. All we have to do is submit to the process. That’s it. Submit. Surrender.”

However, Ken Silva, director of Apprising Ministries, said he was dismayed at the presence of the mystical form of prayer at Catalyst. He notes its growth among mainstream evangelicals through the influence of the Emerging Church movement, which has promoted it as a core doctrine. For the past couple of years he has seen it recommended by influential evangelicals such as Rick Warren.

“Even so,” Silva said, “I was a bit taken by surprise that straight ahead contemplative mysticism was being openly taught at such a major mainstream evangelical conference as Catalyst.”

He said Catalyst's stamp of approval "will embolden more evangelical churches to incorporate it with their congregations and will serve to quickly spread that spiritual cancer far throughout the heart of the professing 'Protestant' community."

Author Warren Smith, who researches various forms of Eastern spirituality and their influence on the West, notes that mainstream Christian leaders have been promoting such mysticism for decades.

He points to the ...

To read this article in its entirety, go to:

<http://www.wnd.com/2014/05/christian-confab-raises-mystical-eyebrows/>

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: *Some years ago, so-called "Christian" book retailers began to carry so-called "Christian" books that promote New Age, occultist practices under the guise of biblical, Christ-centered spirituality.*

Only those believers who have been diligent to read and study for themselves the words of God in the Bible, rather than the words of false teachers, can even see the deception. The deception is now wide spread, few see the danger, and those sounding the alarm are portrayed as negative spoilers who are resisting a new move of God.

Yes, there is a new move sweeping the land. But is it not a move of the true God of the Bible, but rather of the god of this fallen world. The prophesied days of apostasy are truly upon us.

But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

2 Corinthians 4:2-4 NKJV