

STRAIGHTWAY

**"AND STRAIGHTWAY THEY FORSOOK THEIR NETS, AND FOLLOWED HIM" (MARK 1:18).
CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP**

Strangers Ruling in a Strange Land

Dr. H. T. Spence

The previous issue of *Straightway* presented three articles dealing with the *strangeness* from which God has delivered us—the strangeness of the world and its culture as well as the growing strangeness of the institutional church's Neo-Christianity of today. This issue of *Straightway* will continue with two additional burdens concerning the strangeness of our times.

John the Baptist was prophesied by Malachi to be a forerunner of the first coming of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. His appointment of life was brief, dying before reaching the age of thirty-one. Nevertheless, within the six months of his public ministry, he fulfilled all that God appointed for him as this forerunner. Likewise, the Bible reveals that a forerunner will precede the public second coming of Christ. In addition to Malachi's mentioning of Elijah, Revelation 11 speaks of another prophet, possibly Moses or Enoch (like Elijah, the only other man that has not seen death yet).

Satan (whose name was Lucifer before he fell) is clearly mentioned in Isaiah 14 and in Ezekiel 28. Being created an archangel very close to the Son of God, he was viewed as the "son of the morning." It may be that the three named angels in Scripture—Gabriel, Lucifer, and Michael—were created specifically to assist the Trinity: Gabriel for the Father, Lucifer for the Son, and Michael for the Holy Spirit. Gabriel is seen announcing the Word of God (to Daniel, Zacharias, and Mary). Michael is seen in battle (Dan. 10:13; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7).

Revelation 2 and 3 speak about an angel (a messenger) to each particular church or church age. Will there be a group of men who will be raised up by God in the End Time, before the Rapture, to be stars in Christ's right hand, who will make ready (as John was to do) a people prepared for the secret coming of the Lord? Likewise, in imitation to Christ, the Devil may have his forerunners before Christ's secret

second coming. These demonic messengers in Satan's hand will be fore-runners of the coming of Antichrist.

Genesis 6 speaks of the offspring from the sons of God marrying the daughters of men. Their children became men of renown, or (Heb.) "men of the name." They were notorious, well-known men in their day. In the days of Moses similar men arose. These included Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and another 250 princes of the assembly who were "famous in the congregation, men of renown," or "men of the name" (Num. 16:1, 2).

It seems that in the End Time there will be demonically gifted men to arise to prepare the world for the coming of the Antichrist. The preceding generation to the Antichrist will be the critical generation. This is the time

when all the plans of the dragon will be set in place for the appearance of this beast to rise up out of the sea of humanity. He will be a man of renown. The apostle Paul declares him to be "the man of sin," or sin's man, and "the son of perdition." He will be the culmination of the mystery of iniquity, or as John the Beloved candidly declares, he will be *anti*-Christ. He will rise to project himself both *against* Messiah and as a *substitute* of Messiah. It seems that Israel, the Jews, will accept him as Messiah as he rises in world notoriety. Only when he projects himself into the holy of holies of the temple will they realize he is not the Messiah. Messiah, being of the tribe of Judah, would never take on the duties of the tribe of Levi.

We are witnessing a unique hour filled with the rising of "men of the name," or "men of renown." These men are strangers arising to lead and rule this strange land, this growing world system. In contrast, note God's warning to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 17:15:

Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother (emphasis added).

The Coming of Strangers to Rule

The biblical Christian should be

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shocked at how the previous President of the United States was elected and how his two administrations promoted much against the Constitution of the United States and against God. The shocking victory of Donald Trump in 2016 seemed to be a providential reprieve in some areas. However, in the past year we have seen the powers of darkness rising among many “strangers” taking their place both in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. From whence came they? What is their background? Why have we not heard of these strangers before? While some may be more seasoned in contemporary political correctness, others are clearly neophytes to politics. Nevertheless, they are all strangers to the United States’ founding principles, its Constitution, and its history. They are strangers with a voice empowered by the dragon, both men and women of “renown” promoted by the media. They have taken a demonic hold upon the land and have intensified the strangeness of this land. As America embraces these strangers of rulership, stranger ways, stranger teachings, and stranger living will become the norm of our increasingly strange land.

Like our nation, our world is embracing a realm of new strange leadership. They are strangers to truth, to righteousness, to morals, and to honorable governance of the people. Truly a new breed of leaders, now in a deeper league with the Devil, have made their

debut from the kingdom of darkness in most recent years. They are a new lineage of leadership far beyond the old liberals in politics. They have aggressively, boldly, and recklessly taken hold of nations, leading us and our children into a power of evil that will be the final devouring of the strange land. Pernicious laws of irreversible defiance against God are passed so quickly that we have little time to regroup our hearts from the previous laws passed. The words of Isaiah 1:7 reveal our time:

Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

The Powers of Rock and Roll: Increasing the Strangeness

Since World War II, our beloved country and its national thinking have radically changed. In the 1950s and 60s, the rise of rock ‘n’ roll brought great changes to the fabric of American society. The voice of this music became the new lawmakers of America. Its various leaders were the pied pipers of the baby-boomer generation. This new generation was determined never to go to war again, never to live under rationing, and refusing to live with the simple things of life. The rock ‘n’ roll of that generation fed a subtle growing rebellion in them.

Three major events of 1961 marked

this generation. The first was the inauguration of John F. Kennedy, America's youngest president. They saw him as a King Arthur (along with his beautiful wife) who would bring a utopian Camelot for the youth of our nation and the world. That year also marked the construction of the Berlin Wall by the Soviet Communists to keep the people of the communist bloc from trying to escape their oppression. The third event of 1961 was the first eruption of race riots in the United States. Thousands of stores were burnt and looted while the police looked on. These riots are an insight that amidst the hope in Kennedy, our nation was beginning to rip apart.

Coming out of all this, the rock 'n' roll poet-philosophers began to write about the crumbling and desolation of Western civilization. Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and others realized that rock 'n' roll music was not simply to have a visceral effect on the generation in America. There was also a possibility to use the power of their music (which initially promoted fornication) to reshape the philosophy of an entire generation of youth. With such a manipulative weapon, these powers of darkness opened up a strange land that has continued to become stranger.

In 1964 the Beatles debuted in America. Though already known throughout Europe as the number one rock 'n' roll group, they came as un-

knowns to America. Instead of sporting leather jackets, thick sideburns, and long hair as they appeared in Europe, Brian Epstein (their sodomite manager) had them change their image so that America would accept them. He cleaned them up, gave them a haircut, got rid of the mutton chops, and put suits on them (though they looked a size too small) with high-heeled shoes. He convinced them initially to not make too much movement on stage (to contrast with Elvis Presley). Their music was simple and somewhat innocent, singing songs of only wanting to hold the hands of the daughters of America.

However, from 1964 to 1966 their image began to change as this group started bringing drugs into their music—"Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." This latter recording was said to have contributed to an increase of at least twenty percent of drug use in America. The Beatles embraced the hippie movement's look and philosophy as well.

By 1968-70 America entered another dimension in its music. Rock musicians enamored with the Eastern religions introduced these philosophies to Western civilization through their mutating music. The strange land became even stranger. Chaos, confusion, wretchedness, and debauchery abounded in the culture of their mu-

sic. By the 1970s even the occult was introduced to America's young people. When the Beatles disbanded in 1970, ten percent of all rock music was on the theme of religion; themes of "Jesus," lords, spirits, and gods of the Eastern religions were being openly popularized.

In 1971 (after the disbanding of the Beatles) John Lennon and his "strange" wife Yoko Ono sat down at an upright Steinway piano in their home in England and began to write a song that would reach to the ends of the earth. With a very simple melody and accompaniment, he gave it the one-word title "Imagine." Lennon became the philosopher-poet of a hope for what he sought for everyone in a new world order. Although many individuals have written about utopias, how is one to interpret this word *utopia*? The Greek origin of this word allows for two understandings. First, it could be understood as "good+place," suggesting a place of perfection. Or, secondly, it could be understood as "no+place," or a nonexistent place.

Although Lennon did not use the word *utopia*, his simple phrases suggest he longed for such a place. One's imagination is called upon to conceive the hope of such a future existence by asking, can you imagine a time when there are no countries, no religions, no heaven, no hell, no possessions, nothing to live or die for, only an ex-

istential world where all is one?

Although Sir Thomas More coined the word *utopia*, its concept goes all the way back to Plato's *Republic*, three hundred years before Christ. Plato's work seems to be the blueprint that the strangers in leadership today are using to bring about such a hope in America. Lennon's song is its simplistic presentation. He reduced what could be three hundred pages of philosophy down to a few phrases that enraptured a world of hedonism (the doctrine of living for pleasure and the pursuit of happiness).

How may this utopia come? It must come without religious faith. It must come without national pride or sovereignty of nations. It must come when there is nothing any longer to fight for, where there is no longer any private property, where everything is community, where the world is one government. The chorus of Lennon's song declares,

You may say that I'm a dreamer;
But I'm not the only one.
And some day I hope you'll join us;
And the world will be as one.

Until two years ago John Lennon was given the singular credit for writing this song. Since then, Yoko Ono has wedged her way into being credited as its co-author, in order to gain more money from its copyright usage rights.

It is interesting to note that in every world-utopian scheme—from Karl Marx to the lyrical rhetoric of a Bernie

Sanders, Nancy Pelosi, or Alexandria Cortez—never are the words of the rising common man heard. It is always the rhetoric from the wealthy ones. At his death in 1974, John Lennon's estate had amassed a value of over \$250 million while his song longed for a day of no possessions. It is also interesting to note that the World Council of Churches has repeatedly asked Yoko Ono to permit them to use "Imagine" as their theme song, but changing one phrase, "and no religion" to "and one religion." Yoko Ono has not only repeatedly denied permission but has also denounced them for even trying or desiring to change the lyrics from "no religion."

The Rise of the Strangers Leading the Strange Land

The strangers now emerging within the governmental leaderships of the world are aggressively pressing for one theme: a new world order to arise out of the present chaos. An exhausted 4,500-year-old world system now seeks a completely new order. All is ripe for this transition in the earth. There must be only one government! There must be one-world police force, one-world court, one-world banking and currency, all directed by a singular world elite. This unified elite believe that all wealth (except their own) must be redistributed equally to all others. To accomplish their one-world religion, Christianity must be eliminated. These

elite even believe that at least a third of the world's population (two to three billion) must die in the next twenty-five years to successfully usher in their one-world rulership.

Yet, in almost every world-utopian scheme, there is a chasm between the lyrical rhetoric meant to ensnare the masses and the personal lifestyles of the expositors of such a utopia. We see such hypocrisy in Bernie Sanders, Nancy Pelosi, Alexandria Cortez, the Muslim women who condemn America, as well as Hillary Clinton, the patroness of liberalism. These all make their millions of dollars scheming off the poverty of others through the American government. The strangers and haters of God that have made their way into the governmental leadership are now rapidly vocalizing the global cry, "There must be a new world order!"

A few years ago, the director of the UN World Health Organization, Brock Chisholm, made the following statement:

To achieve world government, it is necessary to remove from the minds of men their individualism, loyalty to family traditions, national patriotism, and religious dogmas.

This is a strange saying in our strange land. The strangers ruling the strange land today are deepening the world-order agenda. Perhaps today's President,

balking at this New World Order, is helping to reveal their vast corruption that is partly manifested by their intense efforts to overthrow him and his agenda.

Oh, these are strange sayings and strange workings in a strange land ruled by strangers! These rulers have now taken over to deepen this world-order agenda. But how can they accomplish this desire? Through socialism? Through dictatorship? Amidst the varying approaches, all are at least unified in the pursuit of a new world order soon.

We must remember that all the extreme political ideologies of the world come from the privileged classes. These individuals determine how the poor should live, while they themselves never will endure such poverty. Socialism is a creature of the aristocracy; Communism is the brainchild of German-Jewish intellectuals. Such grand ideas do not come from the slums; they come from idealists and dreamers. The poor and beaten down in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America do not have time to think about idealistic theories.

When the poor are seen rising up, it is instigated by the upper-class elite. Strangers such as the wealthy George Soros are behind the scenes. The migrations in Europe, Africa, and Latin America are all connected to wealthy social reformers. Perhaps the most

highly placed players are centered in the banking corporate foundations of big money, and their principal goal is to gain control of all the world's money. In turn, this power enables their control over appointments of politicians and their policies.

The New World Order and the New Age Movement

The New World Order's spiritual dimension is found in the New Age movement. Tal Brooke, a prominent author for the New Age movement, drew his book title *When the World Will Be As One: The Coming New World Order* from a phrase in John Lennon's song "Imagine." For a number of years, Brooke studied as a disciple of the Hindu holy man Sai Baba (Hinduism is heavily involved in the new age as well as the new world order). Brooke declares that a group of men called "ascended masters" who are possessed by powerful spirits will arise to become the controlling minds of the New World Order. Brooke further states the following:

One of the dangers of the New Age movement is that it is the perfect creed for globalism. It can syncretize with any faith except Christianity. It does not use the language of judgment or sin but speaks in sweeping terms about sacredness of nature, the spark of divinity in the human race. It issues positive language and ideal-

izes human potential. It is utterly post-modern and outwardly far more attractive to post-Christian baby boomers than the outmoded church. It is up-to-date, vogue, and politically correct. It could also undergird the planetary faith or spawn something else that will be such as Gaia. In brief, the New Age movement and its progeny Gaia are spiritually correct for a new world order. Christianity is not. *A generic spirituality is necessary to fuse diverse, even hostile, cultures and faiths into a unity. To fit the world together, religious boundaries must be eliminated* [emphasis added].

Gaia is the personification of the Earth and one of the Greek primordial deities. Gaia is the ancestral mother of all life, the primal Mother Earth goddess. The clamor for climate control to combat global warming is to protect Mother Earth. She must be cared for; she must be enabled to continue to do what she needs to do.

Various groups and beliefs fall under the New Age movement's assistance in this New World Order. The group of paganism includes polytheism, pantheism, panentheism. Animism is the belief that all living entities—plants, animals, humans—possess a spirit. And finally, the wicca group worships the mother earth goddess through her professed occult powers.

The New Age movement seeks to spiritually contribute to this New

World Order. Within this strange land, the End Time is witnessing strangers trying to overthrow the existing world order and its God-centered roots. To achieve their goal, a new-age world religion must emerge. This pursuit has become paramount to the new strange rulers of our strange land. They are aggressively pressing this parallel thought of human potential.

Included in their world religion is the promotion of self-esteem. However, in their context, self-esteem is the potential of man to control the invisible powers of Gaia in order to become a greater ruler, a greater leader in civilization. (The Harry Potter books, which have made their pauper author J. K. Rowling a billionaire, came at the right time and were couched in the fictional story of a boy and two close friends who were seeking their human potential.)

To the Christian it should be clear that occult demonic powers lead back to that of the Devil himself. Satan is the adversary, the accuser, Abaddon, the destroyer, the destructive one (or, bringer into a wasteland). Hitler and his Nazi empire were a miniature of this occult pursuit. More and more books are revealing the intensity and depth of the darkness of the occult forces that the leaders of Nazi Germany under Hitler were deeply involved in. These men were demonic leaders, strange leaders. Such strangeness in

our strange land will become pre-dominant in the days ahead. Though sin brings strangeness, sin in and of itself does not have the accompanying power of the Devil. Only certain sins of humanity invite the Devil's assistance. Idolatry and witchcraft are two examples. When Satan deepens sin in humanity, strangeness in the land and its leaders increases and can take over a nation.

The esoteric author Alice Bailey (1880–1949) was probably the first to use the term *New Age*; she also inculcated the phrase “the Christ” in speaking of her perverted view of His imparting cosmic energy into humanity. In her work *Problems of Humanity* (1944) she stated the following:

The kingdom of God will inaugurate a world which will be one in which it will be realized that politically speaking, humanity as a whole is of far greater importance than any one nation. It will be a new world order, built upon different principles to those in the past, and one in which men will carry the spiritual vision into their national governments, into their economic planning, and into all measures taken to bring about security and right human relations.

This author is only one of many strange voices to have arisen in our land. The intensity of such demonic voices is only ever increasing.

For decades another movement in our strange land has been feverishly seeking for democracy to replace America's Republic. Now the establishment press is pressing for a democratic socialism. Included in its agenda is the seizure of personal guns, even though our Constitution allows for personal gun possession fearing the rise of a dictatorial government. These new political and media leaders are strangers to the Republic. They are making marked strides toward greater control of all land as well as control of the birth and abortion of children. In their intense hatred for innocent lives, they even seek the abortion of a child outside the womb. In their insanity they strangely reason the expenditure of the elderly, aborting lives that no longer benefit society. Additionally, they sympathize with the Muslims' brutal killings of Christians around the world, their burning of churches, and now their takeover of cities, courts, schools, and textbooks in America.

The strangers to the strange land are now becoming the very rulers of the strange land. These rulers include sodomites given to “strange flesh” (Jude 7) who bring with them transgenders, who blaspheme God by insanely denouncing their sovereignly appointed gender by the Creator. Their dark wisdom is filled with perversion, corruption, confusion, hatred against God, and an abhorrence of the Christ of God.

Yes, our country is desolate, our cities are burned with fire, and the controlling evil passions of these strangers have become the new breed of terrorism. These strangers are devouring our land in our very presence. With such an increase of strangers now ruling the strange land, fear and timidity are intensified. Oh, dear reader, we are being overthrown by strangers to our Constitution, to our Republic, to our Christian way of life, and to our very God!

The Final Stranger to the Strange Land

But the strangest of the strangers in this strange land is coming—

And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory (Dan. 11:36–39).

We know this strange god will be Satan, the dragon who will give the

power to the beast (Revelation 13), the strange man of sin, the son of perdition (2 Thess. 2:3), who will come to rule the world. He will come as Antichrist, intensely against the Christ, and to boldly take the place of Christ.

Conclusion

These coming days of the strangest of rulers are going to be the most difficult to face. By the time these men and women have reached their pinnacle of ruling power, they have already been consumed and obsessed in their evils wrought by the strange land. Every generational leader becomes stranger; in turn, they make the strange land even stranger.

Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged again that this is the generation God has appointed us to live in. Our appointed season of history is the End Time of the last days. In contrast to Lot who volitionally chose to live in Sodom, we did not choose to live in this generation. Yet we find ourselves in the same described moral and spiritual darkness and filth of Lot's Sodom.

We may wonder why God placed 2 Peter 2:6–9 in the New Testament in light of Lot's life as seen in Genesis 19. In 2 Peter chapter 2, the Holy Spirit speaks of Lot as a righteous man living in a wrong place yet a place that he chose. Although we have not chosen to live in this hour of history, the Lord included this passage in Peter's words

about End-time apostasy to warn us to be discerning of our powerful times.

Second Peter 2:7 declares, “And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.” Only just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. The word *vexed* means “to tire down with toil, to be exhausted with labor,” therefore signifying “to afflict, to oppress, or to beat down.” This Greek present passive participle indicates a continuous action of vexing that constantly came upon Lot day by day from the wickedness of Sodom. The words “filthy conversation” reveal an insolent disregard of decency; there was continual wanton and shameless conduct among the inhabitants of the city. They truly were rebels against nature and conscience.

Second Peter 2:8 continues, “For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.” Again, we repeat that Lot chose to dwell among the people of Sodom. The recollection of this sad mistake must have added bitterness to the daily distress caused by the sin of his sodomite neighbors. God only knows the motive of his moving there. Was it a choice of his own? Was it because of his wife or his children? Did his family press to get to the big city with all of its provisions of life? Nevertheless, it seems that he carried deep regret for his choice, though still remaining there.

Our situation as to why we are here is different from Lot’s. We have not chosen to live in this worldwide strange land. We cannot get away from the filthy living found all around us. About the only place of refuge is our homes. Yet will there be days ahead that such “strange flesh” will be forced upon our children and homes? It was the constancy in seeing and hearing all of the city’s deep sins, day in and day out, that brought this vexing upon Lot’s soul.

Nevertheless, amidst the great continuous vexing and tormenting of our souls in the End Time, 2 Peter 2:9 includes the great truth that God is able “to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” This passage affirms that God cares for His dear people in this last and desperate hour! He knows the righteous, and He knows how to deliver them! We need to pray (according to the Model Prayer of the Lord) for God to “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” He can save us from being exposed to temptation, when He knows that the temptation is too great for us; He can deliver us out of the midst of temptation! We may be left alone, like Elijah of old, in a tumult of corruption and rebellion, but the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers. We must look to Him to keep ourselves pure and by His grace try to


lead a godly life in an ungodly world.

As our duties bring us into the common market of life, it is vexingly obvious that the strange is getting stranger, the music is getting stranger, the hideous attire of people is getting stranger, and the talk is getting stranger. The open indignities are becoming more grievous. Through such an open deplorable public environment that boldly flaunts its sins in present society, the Devil may try to draw from one's memory of past sins to defile him or her once again. We know that God has both forgiven and delivered his people from such sins, but the flashbacks may become the avenues through which the temptations arise.

Even today's workforce is becoming more difficult to be a part of, or even to some, intolerable to the soul because of its temptations and defilements. There is little regard or respect for God; and more and more, there is no consciousness of God in the living. Such dark powers becoming more prevalent and more permissible should cause us to increase our prayers and cries to heaven, "Lord, how long?" We did not choose this generation; God appointed us for this hour.

The words in 2 Peter 2 are crucial truths for us today. If Lot had not been a righteous man, he would not have known this vexing of soul. This is the reason carnal, fleshly professing Christians find no vexation in the

worldliness they have settled into. If professing Christians have no vexation of soul today, it is evident they are not saved and not delivered from this world. Familiarity with the world finally brings tolerance of the world. One of the reasons we live in a house is to separate us and our family from the world, to keep our children from seeing it. The safest place is the home. But thank God for the promise of verse 9: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations"!

May God help us as we see the strangers pervading Washington with voices and lifestyles representing perversions of strange flesh, powers of socialism, and hatred of our Constitution and national legacy. "The powers that be" are rising to rule with greater strangeness in the strange land. The Rapture has not taken place yet, so we must trust God to enable us to overcome here until He takes us out. It may be that the Rapture will occur when there is no other way for God to deliver us in this present trial. For this season of prayer, "Dear Lord, as we witness in our country a new breed of leadership leading us into a deeper strangeness within the strange land, enable us to overcome through the blood of the Lamb and the testimony of His Word. Amen." 

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The Strange Religion in a Strange Land

Dr. H. T. Spence

Having witnessed the ravaging effects of World War I upon Europe, in 1940 the socialist author George Orwell made the following observation while the League of Nations (later, the United Nations) was being established:

For two hundred years, we have sawed and sawed and sawed at the branch we were sitting on, and in the end, much more suddenly than anyone had foreseen, our efforts were rewarded, and down we came. But, unfortunately, there had been a little mistake. The thing at the bottom was not a bed of roses after all; it was a cesspool full of barbed wire. It appears that amputation of the soul isn't just a simple surgical job like having your appendix out. The wound has a tendency to go septic.

The Soul of a Nation

Whereas the Scripture declares every human has a soul, it is proper to also say that every nation has a "soul." How does one describe the soul of a nation? Where does it reside? How does it come into existence? What is its purpose? If the soul of a nation once knew a natural righteousness, can it know a moral and spiritual death? It may be that the United States of America has had a unique soul that influenced the souls of other nations.

Perhaps a nation's soul may be simply described as its invisible spirit or mood as well as its national consciousness and conscience. If such a nation's soul ever dies, there is no hope of its recovery. Although such a nation may continue to keep a natural existence, it will never be alive as it once was.

To define the soul of the United States of America, we would have to say that a major part of its composition has been true Christianity. It is important to observe that in our country's formative years, there was no other prominent religion of great influence, including Roman Catholicism. Although Islam now is claiming it had some influence in the formation of our nation, this simply is not true. The major pulse of the soul of America has been Christianity. We are not stating our nation was born a Christian nation; however, any spiritual life that pulsed in its founding years came from Christianity.

Nonetheless, now we have come to the hour where our nation's spiritual soul has died. Several years ago, John Stormer declared this in his book *The Death of a Nation* (1968). Each passing year confirms our nation's increasing wickedness amidst the death of true biblical Christianity here. The façade of public Christianity today is not

biblical Christianity. It has a name and an outward form, but it is not biblical Christianity. The death of true Christianity throughout our nation has brought the death of our nation's soul.

What factors contributed to the death of our nation's soul? In the nineteenth century, Liberalism and Modernism washed ashore from Germany and made its way into prominent churches and schools. These theologies had already devastated many theological camps throughout Europe. Liberalism denied the literality of Scripture, the inspiration of Scripture, and the credibility of Scripture. It publicly declared Scripture to be a dead book. Then Modernism arose to provide a false hope, using what it saw as a book of sagas, legends, and myths and interpreting them through contemporary philosophies. When these theologies spread in America, we began to bleed.

Then came the ideological teachings of Evolution. Charles Robert Darwin was unique in that he took the hypothesis of evolution and placed it into a philosophical context of the social sciences. This anti-God theory soon began to make its way into every fabric of the sciences.

The twentieth century saw the rise of several formidable enemies which followed in the wake of Liberalism and Modernism. Neo-orthodoxy first arose from Karl Barth, a student of Adolf von Harnack (father of Liberalism).

Neo-orthodoxy declared that although the Bible was dead, perhaps we could return to it with a new presupposition and perspective to gain some benefit. Barth suggested we embrace the growing philosophy of existentialism (of Soren Kierkegaard) as a tool of interpretation. This approach nullified any sense of absoluteness about the Scriptures.

Existentialism advocates the embrace of an illusion, that is, believing subjectively something imaginary is a reality. It is man's self bringing into existence his own illusion of reality or truth. Barth applied this illusory interpretation to the Scriptures. However, couching his illusion in the traditional terminology of Protestantism and Reformed Theology, he birthed a new existential orthodoxy. His self-made subjectivity was forced to appear real by adopting traditional but redefined orthodox vocabulary. Though denying the Trinity, he spoke of the illusion of a Trinity. Though denying the deity of Christ, he spoke of the illusion of God's Son. His traditional vocabulary provided a "virtual reality" for his false theology. Emil Brunner became the preacher of this new theology, and Rudolf Bultmann became its exegetical scholar.

As the earliest enemy to arise in the twentieth century, Neo-orthodoxy then paved the way for Neo-Evangelicalism. Neo-Evangelicalism was a false

Evangelicalism that befriended Neo-orthodoxy by first denying the necessity of separating from the apostasy that Fundamentalists were attacking. With biblical separation discarded, Neo-Evangelicals began to broaden their base of the interpretation and understanding of Scripture.

Drawing from the expanding influence of existentialism, Neo-Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement brought another dimension to Christianity. As public Christianity moved further from the Bible, it corrupted the true understanding of a biblical experiential Christian life. What has remained is the illusion of true Christianity. The Charismatic movement only gives an illusion of the Holy Spirit. Having rejected the literal revelation of God's Word, their revelation arises outside of and separate from the Bible. The apostasy of Christianity has been the weapon to destroy the national soul of America.

The National Witness of Kurt Cobain

If Christianity was the stabilization of the American soul, what was the music of the nation's soul? Music has been defined as the expression of the soul. And, America has given the world an unprecedented proportion of music. When the soul is in its most vibrant moments, it can bring forth some of its greatest music. When that soul is dying, such decay will arise in

that soul's song. The death of the soul will bring death to that soul's song.

Perhaps the best example of the death of America could be the suicide of Kurt Cobain. At the time Kurt Cobain took his life in 1994, he probably was the most powerful figure in the rock music world—greater than the Beatles or Elvis, selling more records than Michael Jackson! As an icon throughout contemporary Western civilization, in some ways Kurt Cobain's suicide testified that the soul-song of not only America but also Western civilization was dead. His self-inflicted death was a new American experience. Although there had been rock stars who had taken their lives before, Kurt Cobain made this decision in such a brutal way that his death became the commentary of the finality of his philosophy.

In a 1994 magazine article from the *Rolling Stone*, Donna Gaines observed that although teenage suicide was extremely rare in the 1960s, by 1980 almost four hundred thousand teens were attempting suicide. And although by 1987 suicide had become the second-leading killer of youth after automobile accidents, the only reason it had declined in the early 1990s was due to teens killing each other.

Rock 'n' Roll began in the latter part of the 1940s, escalated viscerally in the 1950s, and transformed itself into a political and religious pied piper

for a whole generation in the 1960s. Rock music has been the product of the souls of the young people of each of the decades. What was their philosophy? In a post-world-war era, they believed that Western civilization had failed and collapsed; they rejected Western civilization and its God. Having rejected Western civilization, they turned to the existentialism of rock music as their illusion and escape.

The generation of the 1990s began to set forth postmodernism. Postmodernism is the product of a society rejecting sanity and logic and embracing an existential illusion of vain hope. This kind of life is the only life this generation believes is left.

Because Kurt Cobain understood his generation more than most, he became its legitimate icon. He understood his generation had adopted a language of mere illusion and that rock music excelled in painting for them their illusionary world. Donna Gaines continues a description of this generation that sought escape through rock music:

The 1980s offered young people an experience of unsurpassed social violence and humiliation. Traumatized by absent or abusive parents, educators, police, and shrinks, stuck in meaningless jobs without a livable wage, disoriented by disintegrating institutions, many kids felt trapped in a cycle of futility and despair. Adults...utterly failed

across the board and abandoned an entire generation by failing to provide for or protect them or prepare them for independent living. Yet, when young people began to exhibit symptoms of neglect, reflected in their rates of suicide, homicide, substance abuse, school failure, recklessness and general misery, adults condemned them as apathetic, illiterate, amoral losers.

Kurt Cobain and Buddhism

When Kurt Cobain came on the scene as a rock star, he had embraced Buddhism. Buddhism to Cobain represented possibly the last hope for his generation.

Buddhism arose out of Hinduism; Hinduism is a religion of many gods (over 33 million gods). The man Buddha (6th century BC) believed that Hinduism was hopeless. He rejected the existence of Hinduism's gods and advocated finding meaning to life through suffering. Mankind's life is an accumulation of physical, mental, and emotional suffering. Mankind's only hope is to escape it by finding Nirvana. Nirvana is a state of mind a person reaches in which there is absolutely nothing in his thinking. Such an individual becomes an expressionless mind. Nirvana is being free from or oblivious to pain, worry, or any thought of the external world. To reach the emptying power of Nirvana is to reach a state of true hope.

The youth of Kurt Cobain's America had come to believe that suffering and despair were synonymous with life. Endeavoring to bring them hope, Cobain even named his rock band Nirvana, the apex of Buddhism's false hope. His most classic song was entitled "Never Mind." The title phrase means, "Don't bother, don't concern yourself with something." If you don't believe that there is anything out there that gives meaning, or value, or significance to life, then "never mind." Though he had a wife and daughter, he had come to believe that nothing in life had any meaning. Nothing was worth investing any more thought. "Never mind, never mind. Life, never mind."

Evolution provides no meaning or purpose to life or living. Once an individual, a society, a generation, or a nation accepts the hypothesis of evolution, what meaning does life have? Only God, only a Creator gives meaning and value to anything. All that Cobain's hope of finding Nirvana gave to his generation was, "Don't think of anything; do not think anything in life is important; remember that life is futile; there is nothing in life that will ever help you; it will never bring purpose." Without God, he could finally only sing, "never mind, never mind—don't be bothered by this; don't invest any thought in this."

Nirvana as the Buddhist term for salvation rises to mean "a cessation

of existence, expressional extinction." Buddha, for many good reasons, rejected the Hindu idea of gods. There were too many gods; they were too wicked, not worth following; they became like the Greek gods and goddesses. Buddha rejected the idea of any concept of God, and he understood even more profoundly that if one can get everything out of the mind, one may come to Nirvana. He supposed such a state of emptiness would bring happiness.

Cobain concluded that the only way to bring about a thoughtless (and thus happy) mind was suicide. If there is no purpose, if there is nothing to be mindful of, then perhaps the thing to do is to end it all. Since one comes to believe there is no life after death, there is no judge after death, and there is no purpose in living, why not end it all? As a young multi-millionaire, Cobain concluded, "never mind." Slipping into an upstairs room above his garage, Cobain killed himself, hoping that no one would find him for several days and believing this was the best in life.

Cobain's perspective toward life is not a new philosophy. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) came to a similar nihilistic perspective, believing there was no purpose in life, which drove him into insanity. His deeply immoral and perverted life brought him to final hopelessness. Cobain and Nietzsche are examples of where our society now resides.

We live amidst a strange land that is becoming stranger as its sins abound and the soul of our nation lies dead. At the same time, Washington leadership on Capitol Hill abounds with those who believe they can create some sanity out of the nation's insanity. Yet, their very lives are filled with tragedy while they lead us into a deeper condition of a soulless nation.

Only true Christianity can give our nation hope! But this hope must be the "biblical" Christianity, the true gospel of the true Christ. Because contemporary Christianity has no hope, it has resorted to Charismatic Existentialism, living in an illusion of safety and security. Contemporary Christianity or "Christianity Today" provides no more hope than Hinduism does.

Again, Christianity was the only religion that brought hope, and America in its history lived on this hope of God in the nation: it was the hope and the reality that Christ died on the cross; the hope that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; that there is a purpose in living, and that is to do the will of God, to fulfill the divine appointment for one's life. Yes, this is what brought hope to America. This was once the life of the soul of America.

Music of Western Civilization

Having considered Kurt Cobain's

music, we must briefly review the rise of music in Western civilization. There has been little great music in the history of false religions such as Islam or Buddhism. Due to the influence of Western civilization, only in recent years has some music become an increasing part of Islam and Buddhism.

Only Christianity's teachings of God the Creator have given man true purpose for living. Was it this sense of divine purpose that brought music to the forefront of Western civilization? Our English word music comes to us from an older English word meaning "to muse, to think." Inherent in this word is the thought that music is the "expression" of the soul. The thought life is not only what a man truly believes but also what he expresses in his music. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas were locked up in a dungeon singing praises to God at midnight. They were not morbid or given to death chants! "They prayed, and sang praises unto God" (v. 25).

Whereas Augustine (AD 354—430) was the first church leader to bring to the forefront music in the church for expressions concerning God, Martin Luther (1483—1546) was the next important figure regarding church music. Taking the burden of Augustine's writings, Luther brought music out of the cloisters and into the congregation as an expression of the laity's redeemed soul. He firmly understood God had

brought a universal priesthood to all believers! This perspective has pervaded Christianity and Western civilization since his days.

Such expressions from the priesthood of all believers continued to expand in the ministries of Isaac Watts and the Wesley brothers, spilling onto the shores of America in the eighteenth-century revivals. Protestant churches had grown beyond the objective doctrines and theological details of God; the subjective workings of God's grace in the human heart began to be manifested in song and worship. As Christianity thrived, music became an increasing part of the soul's existence. The Reformation had brought God back to the life of man, proposing a genuine and meaningful expression of a heart for God.

Much of the foundation of America's musical legacy is rooted in the music of the Puritans and the early Methodists. Music was a genuine expression of their souls. Amidst many changes during the nineteenth century, the music of both America's churches as well as its secular venues still maintained some sense of God in their worldview. By the 1950s, however, the expression of America's soul began to die.

Even while Elvis Presley was aiding in the dying of America's soul, Christian music still had an influence in our nation. It is often forgotten that Elvis Presley sold more of his gospel

recordings than he did his secular ones. A type of gospel music was the heartbeat of his expressions. It was not a spiritual understanding of Elvis that catapulted him into his fame; however, his perverted view of gospel music did assist in the transition of America from life unto its death. Elvis tapped into the powerful heart of Christian music in the American consciousness. He endeavored to keep it alive, even though perverted. His secular music was heavily and eclectically mixed with his love of gospel music.

Strangeness and the Death of America

After Elvis Presley, the secularization of music became more prominent in Western civilization. Remembering that only God can give meaning to life, Western civilization's soul more rapidly began to die. The Devil knows that only God can give purpose; only God can give reality to life. Outside of Him, there is no life. Just as Satan inspires the abortion of life in the womb of a mother, he inspires the abortion of life in the years that unfold after birth. It is an *a priori* [first principle] that man is a religious creature. When man stops his natural religious quest, there remains no purpose left except nihilism and suicide.

Once a nation enters this state, it may work tirelessly to prop up its artificial life with some semblance of meaningful existence. However, it is

in this deplorable state that strange gods invade a society such as America. Strange gods beget strange children. America witnessed this in the latter part of the 1960s with its flower children of the Hippie movement, strange women, strange men, strange vanities, strange clothing, strange flesh, and strange thinking. That generation had no purpose of life left.

Because people have no true purpose for life or even their bodies, such strangeness has continued to mutate toward even strange desecrations of the body. If you reject the truth that the body is for God to be the temple of the Holy Ghost given in consecration to God, then what is left? When man denounces the truth of God and the purpose of life in Him, hedonism takes over that body. This hedonistic approach is manifested in body piercings, tattoos, alcohol and drug abuse, all forms of fornication, as well as flirtations with death. The Devil knows that if he cannot stop a person from becoming a Christian, he can at least damage both his spiritual heart and physical body. Even if he eventually gives his heart to God, Satan hopes there will be little left of his body for God.

The strangeness of the Charismatic movement brought finality to the death of public Christianity. My dear father Dr. O. Talmadge Spence said that it was the Charismatic movement

that attempted to give to a dying public Christianity an artificial stimulant that made it appear alive. It kept many denominations going and encouraged an ecumenicity among them for survival. However, Christianity had already lost its genuineness by the time the Charismatic movement was born in the latter part of the 1960s. Although there are still small remnants here and there across America, true biblical Christianity is publicly dead. The soul of America died with the death of Christianity.

One might ask, "How do you create life in such a death as today? How do you create spirituality in the very religious entity that destroyed it? In the secular world, Kurt Cobain was the commentary seeking this answer. If you throw God away, if you throw His Son away, and if you throw the hope of Christianity away, there is no purpose for living. Life comes to *nothingness*. And a life that has come to nothingness then climaxes its journey with suicide.

The Strange Fire

Globally, public Christianity is a religion without God. Christ is outside this Laodicean Church, this last Church Age of history. Though there may be a small remnant of true Christianity in America, it is not large enough to contribute to the soul of our nation today. The only reason we are witnessing strangers such as Muslims

and sodomites ruling our country is because the spiritual power of Christianity is absent in this land. The Devil knows there is no power in the public contemporary Christianity today! The Charismatic movement simply exists today to animate the corpse of the institutional church, giving to the world the illusion of life and power.

On the day of dedication of the tabernacle (Leviticus 10), two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, were required to take fire from the brazen altar and place it upon the golden altar of incense before the veil in the holy of holies. Leviticus 9:24 states at the dedication of the brazen altar, "And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all of the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces." It was from this fire that hot coals from the brazen altar were to be taken into the holy place to ignite the fire upon the golden altar of incense.

However, Leviticus 10:1 reveals that Nadab and Abihu did not take fire from the brazen altar; instead, they "offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not." Because of this transgression "there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD." Although the Bible does not reveal where they secured this fire, Leviticus 10:8, 9 does state, "And the

LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die." These verses may imply that these two young men were drunk when they committed this offense before the Lord. Three times the Bible calls it a "strange fire" (Lev. 10:1; Num. 3:4; 26:61). *We have a trilogy here.*

Initially, the Lord's fire came out from the holy of holies, supernaturally going through the veil (without burning it), bypassing the golden altar of incense, and reaching the offering upon the brazen altar. From this point in the history of the tabernacle, this fire was never to go out. This fire was started by the Lord Himself, dwelling between the cherubim over the mercy seat in the holy of holies. All fire used in the tabernacle context had to come from the altar's fire.

God sent His Son to earth where He died. The brazen altar is one of those mysterious types and shadows that represent several things. It was constructed of acacia wood (a very tight-fiber wood) overlaid with brass, making it airtight. This altar was used for centuries, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and its structural wood was never burnt up. This brazen altar was a perpetual altar, representing Christ. The brazen altar was also a type and shadow of the cross upon which Christ died. Any fire used in

any other dimension in the tabernacle had to come from that fire that was sent by God.

On the day of Pentecost, there were cloven tongues, *like as fire*, that came down upon the hundred and twenty. These cloven tongues symbolized this fire, the Shekinah fire, that now will be in these men and women as a perpetuation of the witness of Christ. Thus, in the type and shadow, unless the fire comes from the brazen altar of Christ's death on the cross, there can be no true praise nor true prayer from the golden altar of incense before the veil.

In 1967 the Charismatic movement was born within the apostate Protestant denominations. It did not come from the sacrifice of Christ; the true Sacrifice these denominations had rejected. Whatever religion they purported to have, it was an illusionary language and liturgy. By 1969 this existential movement made its way into the Roman Catholic Church, where it flourished. By 1972 this strange fire had begun consuming the rest of Protestantism, including the Pentecostal churches. In all these movements, this strange so-called revival fire bypassed the sacrifice of Christ, having found its source in an apostate concept of Christ.

Although most will believe it was a shame that Kurt Cobain took his life, it should at least be noted that he probably was the most honest of his

generation. Believing that if God was not there, he honestly acknowledged that life is not worth living; for, he refused to live an illusionary, existential, false life. This is why Cobain initially turned to Buddhism. Although he thought his hope was in gaining Nirvana, he never found it.

How sad it is that public Christianity today is still outwardly functioning. We have the emerging megachurches, the self-esteem religion of Joel Osteen, the existential Charismaticism of Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, and John Hagee. All these churches appear to be flourishing. Nevertheless, it is all an artificial, synthetic, existential illusion; their fire is not the fire from Calvary; it is not from the true Christ.

Dear reader, never give up your belief in a genuine life in God; never create a substitute for the real. There is a point in our seeking God that, if we are not careful, we will get so discouraged as we wait upon God. We may ask, "Why hasn't it happened?" It may be because of a lack of faith, or it may be that our past is still cluttering our mind and heart. If so, we must get back to Calvary. We must return to the cross, the sacrifice of Christ. Any and every aspect of a deeper life comes from Christ on that cross. There is no other way, no other fire!

Our nation is marked by a strange spirit that believes in a strange god with a strange concept of a holy ghost.

Even conservative politicians are keeping alive a strange concept of Christianity. Will a movement arise with the slogan "Let's Make Christianity Great Again"? If so, it will be a false Christianity. When it comes to another generation having a genuine experience with God, real fire in the soul, the experiential working of God in the life, a true conversion, a true purity of heart, a truthfulness, and the empowering of the Spirit, an illusion will not work. We must know a genuine working of God's amazing grace in the human heart.

The institutional church has destroyed the altar; it has destroyed the cross. It is living an illusion. It sets before the people the vain hope of a Christianity of prosperity and health. There is no true cross in its Christianity.

The New Age is strongly promoting spiritualism for its new world order. The new world order needs spirit, but its demonic spirit is a powerful illusionary substitute of God's Spirit. Will the Charismatic movement merge with the New Age movement to become the powerful (demonic) spirit it is seeking for the new world order?

Interestingly, in the Tribulation Period "the sign" to promote the power of the Antichrist before the world will be fire out of heaven (Revelation 13). The fire from the holy of holies at the dedication of the tabernacle and the

fire from Heaven at the dedication of the Solomonic Temple were true. What will be the fire of the Antichrist in Revelation 13? Will it be an illusion? Will it be "smoke and mirrors"? Or will God permit it to come from the Devil to deepen the world's delusion during the Tribulation Period? Whatever it is, it will come from above and will cause the world to wonder. It will be the strange fire of End-time deception!

Conclusion

God's saints must not leave their real walk with God! When Shishak of Egypt took from Solomon's son Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:25-28) all the golden shields that Solomon had made, Rehoboam replaced these shields with brass ones, manufactured from a man-made alloy. Although this metal may be polished to shine like gold, it is not gold! This is the danger that if an individual, a church, a Christian school, or a nation ever goes back on God, an illusion of a Christian life could be created. Public Christianity has left the true God, because it has left the true Christ of Scripture. It now lives in a time when the power of the flesh looks like the real work of the Holy Spirit. The power of the flesh in these Charismatic meetings looks like the power of the Holy Spirit, but it is not Him. Contemporary men of renown inspire themselves by their words and accomplishments convincing themselves this is of God.

Yes, there is power in the flesh today. Only God's true people can discern between the flesh and the Spirit. Strange gods and strange fire have come into Christianity. I have been in the ministry for fifty years. When I was a boy, I thought the institutional church was everything. But as the years have unfolded, I have seen the spiritual mother, the institutional church, radically change from its early years. It has changed the message of the gospel; it has changed the fire and put another fire in its place. The Charismatics have brought in a fire of illusion. No longer can we speak of the "rapture of the Church"; we simply anticipate the "rapture of the saints," the "rapture of the militant true Church," or the "rapture of the elect." Modern Christianity either denies the Rapture or believes anyone and everyone identified with the church will go up in the air.

We acknowledge the total collapse of our nation America and that there will be no return to sanity or a true historic understanding of God. Even though we are in the strangest hour of our history, there are still evidences of the tokens of God's mercy! There is still a remnant in touch with God. While this generation has turned to fatalism and self-destruction amidst their hopelessness, we must continue to be a witness to the Truth. Our own walk with God must be clearly based upon the absolutes of God's Word. When mankind comes to believe that death is the only

way out of a collapsing life, we must never lose sight of hope in God for our lives. We must separate from the vocabulary of our religious day that seeks to maintain an illusionary hope for our dead society. Only God can give meaning to life! Let us speak the vocabulary of His revealed Word.

May we ever know daily communion with God through His Spirit and Word. May we know a continued deliverance from any god that will try to take the place of the true God, whether it be materialism, money, religiousness, or self. In these days of Charismatic prayers, may our prayers be biblical. May our burnings of life be of Christ. May the fire within our soul be consecration rather than burnings of lust and the world. May we keep the strange religions from "creeping" into our homes. And may we live in such a way that we will keep the remnant churches from becoming a strange religion with the façade of Christian familiarities. Oh, that God will deliver us from compromise and neutrality, and enable us to live in such a way that we will contribute to our local church with soundness of living and conversation. May God help us! **S**

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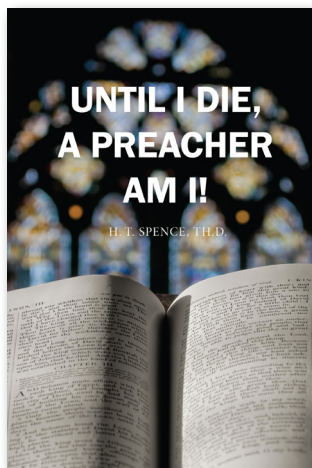
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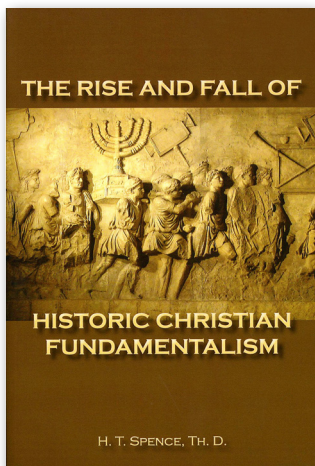
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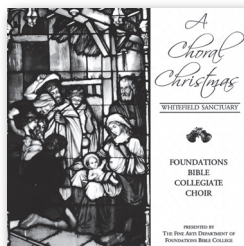
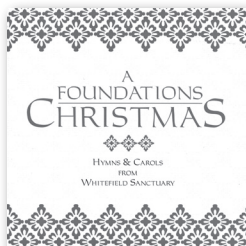
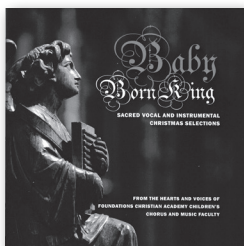
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