

# T. A. McMahon & Ray Yungen

- McMahon, T.A.
- The Berean Call

## **Program Description:**

Tom welcomes his guest, author Ray Yungen, as they discuss the great influence that the New Age movement has had on today's evangelical church.

## **Transcript:**

**Gary:** Welcome to *Search the Scriptures 24/7*, a radio ministry of The Berean Call with T.A. McMahon. I'm Gary Carmichael. Thanks for being here.

In today's program, Tom welcomes author Ray Yungen to discuss the impact of the New Age movement on today's evangelical church. Now, along with his guest, here's TBC executive director, Tom McMahon

**Tom:** Thanks, Gary. My guest for today's program and, the Lord willing, next week as well is Ray Yungen. Ray is the author of - in my opinion and others' that I know - he's the author of some very valuable books regarding biblical discernment - in particular, adverse teachings and practices that have infected Christianity in our day.

Ray, welcome to Search the Scriptures 24/7!

**Ray:** Thank you, Tom. I'm glad to be here.

**Tom:** You know, two of Ray's books that I want to discuss are *A Time of Departing* and *For Many Shall Come in My Name*. Now, you also have another book out, Ray, coming out soon, and hopefully it will be available by the time this program is aired or released or whatever, whatever the cyber term - cyber space term is. Anyway, we have it in stock - hopefully we'll have it in stock when you're hearing this program. We'll talk about that book in more detail next week.

Ray, let's start with how you got started writing the books that you have.

**Ray:** Actually, Dave Hunt, you know, one of the founders of The Berean Call, was instrumental in getting me into this work. It was back - in fact, this last month, January, was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my becoming a New Age - or anti-New Age researcher, and it was a seminar that Dave Hunt gave in April of 1984 in my hometown here that actually motivated me to become a researcher in this area, and originally in the '80s I researched - you might call the secular, or the general New Age, and I wrote *For Many Shall Come in My Name* in the late '80s, and the original version came out in 1990. Then in '94, I became aware - a youth pastor in one of the large local evangelical churches told me about a so-called "prayer practice" that was gaining popularity within the evangelical church, and I started to look into that probably around the summer or fall of 1994, and I realized that there was a major phenomenon going on within evangelical Christianity, so I started to research that. And then in 2002, the book you mentioned, *A Time of Departing*, was published. And I continued research in this area ever since.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm. Now, the subtitle of your book *A Time of Departing* says, *How Ancient Mystical Practices Are Uniting Christians with the World's Religions*. Ray, explain that to us.

**Ray:** Okay, yeah. Probably a lot of people don't even really know what mysticism is, but in the context of what we're talking about, I'll try to explain it. I have some quotes here. Karl Rahner was thought to be the brains behind Vatican II. He's a Catholic theologian, and he said, "The Christian of the future will be a mystic, for he will not exist at all."

Okay, another writer Carl McColman, who wrote *The Big Book of Christian Mysticism* says, "In the future, all Christians will be mystics. We need to let go of the idea that some Christians are mystics while some are not." And, you know, some of the audience may be thinking, "Well, what do they mean by mystics?"

**Tom:** Mm-hmm.

**Ray:** Well, the term used most commonly is called "contemplative prayer," or "contemplative spirituality," and it's a very, very misleading title if you don't know what it actually means. Now, in the secular sense, the word "contemplate" means to think deeply on a subject. You know, it has a very benign connotation. But in the world of mysticism, it takes its root from a very ancient Latin word called *contemplar*, which is literally translated "in the temple." And what that entailed was that you would have these augurs or soothsayers who would go into a temple of various deities - this was back, you know, the pre-Christian era - they would go into these temples of various deities and would mystically commune with the deity that supposedly dwelled in that temple. So the word *contemplar* meant to actually engage the presence of a god or goddess within the temple, and that stuck concerning this so-called "prayer practice." Well, what *is* that prayer practice?

**Tom:** Well, Ray, before you go there, I'll just throw some things at you. So it's experiential? It's not...

**Ray:** Oh, yes, it's very experiential.

**Tom:** ...it's not based on a doctrine or teaching, which is interesting, outside of the Scriptures?

**Ray:** Oh, certainly not. When I read you the next quote, you'll see that there's nothing in the Old or New Testament that even comes close to, you know, promoting this.

**Tom:** Yeah, because...Well, in fact, the Scriptures, the Word of God, talks about contemplation, which would be the same as when you phrased it as a secular understanding of the word. Well, that's also the biblical understanding. We think things through.

**Ray:** Yeah, the biblical understanding is to ponder, to think deeply, you know. There's a stream of thoughts on one subject. You're actually dwelling on the truth of what a particular passage in the Bible says. But this is what we're talking about. *News Week* magazine in 1992 did an article on talking to God. That was on the cover, "Talking to God," and it said, "Silence, appropriate body posture, and above all," now, that's very important to get here, "...and above all, emptying the mind through repetition of prayer have been the practices of mystics in all the great world religions, and they form the basis of which most modern spiritual directors guide those who want to draw closer to God." And in the context, a spiritual director - that is within Christendom, or within, you know, the various Christian denominations...

**Tom:** Right.

**Ray:** And it didn't say, "some," it didn't say, "many," it said, " *most* modern spiritual directors," you know, teach this emptying the mind through repetition.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm. Now, just to add one more thing to that, when the Bible talks about - it doesn't talk about mysticism per say, but it talks about mystery, and...

**Ray:** Right.

**Tom:** ...that's true to the Word of God. But the mysteries are things that were not revealed earlier, but now are revealed today, so that's the mystery, but you couldn't call it mysticism as you've described it, right, Ray?

**Ray:** Well, in - I may be jumping ahead here...

**Tom:** That's all right.

**Ray:** ...in 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul talks about the "mystery of iniquity." And the word in the Greek there is *mysterion* where we get the word mysticism from, and it means, "to keep the mouth shut," which is exactly what the word "occult" means, hidden or kept secret - in other words, only for the initiated. So what we're dealing with here is actually something that has been not made known in centuries past to the general population, only the initiates, the members of the mystery schools or various occult orders, would have access to this type of knowledge.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm. So in the context of biblical Christianity, certainly things are revealed later, but they're revealed objectively, not experientially, which, as our listeners follow us through this, they'll see a huge difference, absolutely a huge difference between these two.

**Ray:** Oh, yeah, yes, without a doubt. Now, I should comment on this, because they claim there are scriptural references, and one they use is in Psalms, and it says, “Be still, and know that I am God.” And you’re probably very familiar with that.

**Tom:** Yeah.

**Ray:** But what it means there is, you know, Israel is being threatened. You know, there’s danger. And that “be still” means just to not become over agitated. It doesn’t mean to empty the mind through repetition, it just means to calm down and relax and know that God is in charge and that He will defend Israel.

**Tom:** Yeah, it involves patience, as well.

**Ray:** Yeah, patience. So it has nothing to do with any type of mantra-type mystical practice.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm. Now, Ray, your book *A Time of Departing* - well, actually both books deal with this - but give us a little information. You’ve been talking about mysticism in the church, primarily Catholic mystics, Desert Fathers, and so-called. But what about the New Age movement? Give us some understanding about that. The reason I’m asking is because I forget that we have young listeners - I’m talking about people in their 20s, maybe late teens, 20s, who - “New Age? What’s that all about?” But it was huge...

**Ray:** Well, yeah...

**Tom:** ...it was huge three decades ago.

**Ray:** Well, the term was huge three decades ago. The term was used extensively by, you know, people in this movement in the ‘60s and ‘70s, and it was a reference to the Age of Aquarius from astrology, that we were leaving the Age of Pisces and we were entering the Aquarian Age, Age of Aquarius. There was even a pop song I think in 1969 that was about that from the musical *Hair*, and that’s what many people think of when they hear the term “Age of Aquarius.” And a lot of writers use it kind of tongue in cheek, you know, as a reference to the ‘60s.

Well, then in the early ‘80s, there was a number of books that came out - you know, Dave Hunt’s *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust* among them - that kind of alerted the evangelical community to what was going on, that there was a mystical revolution that was starting to really gain momentum, and of course these Christian writers used the term “New Age Movement...”

**Tom:** Mm-hmm.

**Ray:** ...and that became embedded in the thoughts of evangelical readers, you know, of these books. Well, Shirley MacLaine at that time was kind of like the icon of that movement. She had written a couple of books and they had become very popular and

sold millions of copies, and she became kind of like a figurehead, and amongst a lot of more conventional people, they started to make fun of that term - you know, Johnny Carson, people like that - they would mock reincarnation and the idea of channeling things like that. So what happened was the people in the movement shed that title; it was never an official title, it was never like the Watchtower Society, or Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was never official; it was always a slang term. It was always an informal term. So what happened was once they shed that - they saw it as kind of something that crippled them in the eyes of the public, and they replaced it with the term "spirituality," and since people like us, we don't like to refer to them as being spiritual, we were always stuck using that term "New Age Movement," because that's what we knew it as.

**Tom:** Right.

**Ray:** But what happened was it literally exploded. It literally went mainstream, and here's a good example of what I'm talking about: in 1984, when I first started researching, you remember B. Dalton? They were always in malls, B. Dalton Booksellers...

**Tom:** Right, bookstores, yeah.

**Ray:** ...Yeah, well, anyhow, a B. Dalton Bookstore in the local mall here, their New Age section was five shelves in 1984, and the title was "Astrology/Occult." There were five shelves, and the top two shelves were just mainly astrology and the bottom two shelves was more or less occultic type books, and they all had that look of being published in somebody's garage, you know? They all had that seedy kind of a fly-by-night look about them.

Well, fast-forward to the late '90s and the 2000s, at Borders Bookstore, before they went out of business, the local one here, their New Age section, which was called "Metaphysics," had ballooned to 65 shelves! Sixty-five shelves, and in Eugene, in the Borders there, their metaphysical and Eastern Religious section was 90 shelves! So you can see there was a major explosion, okay? It gets - let me illustrate even further: Baylor University, you know, a Baptist University in Texas, did a national religious survey I think in 2007, and they found up to 26 million American adults saw God as a "cosmic force," which is basically what New Age spirituality is. Now that is more adherents than there are Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Presbyterians put together, you know? A massive number of people, okay? Like there's various denominations in this movement. On the internet, there's a wiccan website - Wicca is one of the denominations - and there's a wiccan website called The Witch's Voice, and it's just, basically, everything you want to know about becoming, you know, a wiccan, or a witch. It came online in 1997. Since then, that website has gotten 476 million hits, nearly half a billion hits just on that one website. So as you can see, you know, that term New Age has [gone] the way of the dinosaurs, so it's no longer used. So everybody out there who's active in New Age spirituality will never, ever use that term.

**Tom:** Right.

**Ray:** We only use it because that's what we know it as. We don't want to honor them with referring to them as being "spiritual," but this movement, from what I've just told you, I could go on and on and on, you know?

**Tom:** Well, Ray, let me add to it. Dave and I did a book called *America: The Sorcerer's New Apprentice*, which dealt with the New Age Movement. Now, what was I just thinking about that - this was early on when, as you said, the term New age was really popular. But we saw the same thing as you did, and our publisher Harvest House saw the same thing, so later, years later, they changed the title of the book to *The New Spirituality*. Now, the goal for Dave and me in this book was to make a book dealing with all of the elements related to the New Age Movement, as it were. But our thinking was, "Wait a minute, this is for Christians to give to their friends and neighbors and so on to explain to them what the New Age Movement was about," and the heart of it was the perennial wisdom - this is Eastern mysticism...

**Ray:** Yeah, the perennial wisdom, yeah.

**Tom:** Yeah, which there were other books, other leaders out there who were really heavy into this, the so-called scholars of this movement, and so on. So...but all we wanted to do with this book is get it in the hands of Christians so they would understand what their friends and - it wasn't a big thing at that time, but it was [that] some Christians were getting involved...Well, it was mainly their friends (who were not believers) of Christians, so we wanted to inform them what this was about, and so on. But the title, the new title that Harvest House came up with, was *The New Spirituality*, which is consistent with what you've just been saying. This is where it is, and it is the perennial wisdom, also called the Eastern mysticism, or really a view of the universe, the cosmos, it's metaphysics, but it was also pantheism - that is, God is all, God is in everything, everything is God, or panentheism...

**Ray:** Yeah, that's really...yeah. That is exactly - you just defined what the perennial philosophy is. You know, "perennial" means it's always been around, you know, it's always been there, like [a] perennial plant never loses its leaves or whatever. But anyhow, you explained it exactly, that God is within every - in fact, you've heard of Louise Hay, right?

**Tom:** Mm-hmm.

**Ray:** Anyhow, she has her own publishing company called Hay House, and they have sold 250 million books - 250 million. I mean that's almost the population of the United States, and their motto - they have their logo, you know - and underneath it says, "Hay House," and underneath it says, "Look within." Look within, because that is, like I said, there's all these different denominations. There's Wicca, there's, you know, Hinduism, there's Buddhism, there's Shamanism, there's self-help, your Wayne Dyers, and your Marianne Williamsons, and there's just this - and then there's...

**Tom:** Your Oprah Winfreys. [chuckles]

**Ray:** Yeah, your Oprah Winfreys, you know? And she was a major figure. We could do a whole show just on her.

**Tom:** Exactly.

**Ray:** Anyhow, there's all these different approaches, but the main component is that God is within, and not just - this isn't just - I want to make this really clear to your listeners that... You know, they might say, "Well, how can anybody believe that they're God?" Well, that's where the mystical element comes in - they don't believe they're God, they *feel* like they're God, because they open themselves up to supernatural forces. Can I read a quote?

**Tom:** Sure, go for it.

**Ray:** Okay, this is important to understand when you're talking about this view that God is within. Okay, this is from my book *For Many Shall Come in My Name*, and I have three quotes here from various sources.

"Meditation is the doorway between worlds, the pathway between dimensions."

Another quote is, "Meditation is the key, the indispensable key, to the highest states of awareness."

And the next one is, "Meditation is a key ingredient," this is a quote, this isn't me, "Meditation is a key ingredient to metaphysics as it is the single most important act in a metaphysician's life." Now, why is that? Okay, here's another quote. This is from a woman who did meditation, and again, by meditation, we're not talking about the biblical or secular term where you're just kind of thinking about a subject, or dwelling on a subject; this type of meditation is radically the opposite.

She says, "One starts by silencing the mind. For many, this is not easy." So you can see right off the bat that by meditation, she means something the polar opposite. "But when the mind has become silent and still, it is then possible for the divine force to descend and enter into the receptive individual. First it trickles in, and later it comes in waves. It is both transforming and cleansing, and it is through this force that divine transformation will be achieved." So your listeners out there, they have to understand that when these people say that they're God, that God is within, it's not like being a Democrat or Republican or a liberal or conservative or whatever; it's not intellectual - they have been possessed by a supernatural force, and this is going on, on a vast scale, all over the Western world. This is becoming very commonplace, and that's why, you know, radio programs like this are so vital, because there has to be a warning given that this is not just a bunch of, like, silly, kooky people that just think they're God.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm. Well, Ray, let me add to that: you're talking about, we've both been discussing, a view - Eastern mystical view - being promoted in the world. But as you're aware, when Dave and I - I had the privilege of helping Dave with *The Seduction of Christianity* - we dealt with these ideas coming into the church. For example, you know, Rodney R. Romney, senior pastor of a church in Seattle wrote a book *God Within* that they were promoting this idea. And then the word-faith teachers were teaching that we were little gods under God, so...

**Ray:** Oh, yeah!

**Tom:** ...we're seeing across the board, not just the world, not just Eastern mystics, not just the religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and so on, as you described, but we're talking about this idea, this concept, which is right out of **Genesis:3:1-3**, "You will be as gods." So...

**Ray:** I know, it's incredible that in the evangelical church, this is sweeping through the evangelical church. And not just through the contemplative prayer avenue, but also through things like yoga.

I was speaking at a conservative evangelical college once, and I was talking about yoga, and this girl, young girl, probably about 19 or 20 or so, sitting in front of me, rolls her eyes like, "Oh, come on give me a break. How come you're - there's nothing wrong with yoga. Yoga's just exercise, it's just stretching." But there's a variety of avenues. They can go to a doctor or whatever and the doctor will prescribe meditation as something that will reduce stress in their life. Just...creativity you know, there's a book out called *The Artist's Way* about how to become more creative artists through meditation and getting involved with your inner divinity. Just yesterday I saw a book on weight loss, how to become thin through connecting with your higher self or inner divinity. It's just everywhere, and unless you know...There's even a book on menopause and how to go through menopause by using metaphysics.

**Tom:** Right. Ray, we're about out of time for this segment of our program, but we'll pick up with this next week. But I do want to talk specifically about yoga, because of its growth, its incredible growth, and then its involvement - you know, the church being used as places where they're teaching yoga right in the sanctuaries. Maybe not on a Sunday morning, but certainly for evening...

**Ray:** Yeah, yeah, a lot of churches have yoga classes now.

**Tom:** Right.

**Ray:** Some refer to it as "holy yoga" or [chuckles] something like that.



**Tom:** Right. So we're going to get with that, get onto that next week. In the meantime, I just want to say to our listeners, I'm speaking with Ray Yungen, the author of *A Time of Departing* and *For Many Shall Come in My Name*, and we'll talk about a new book that he's working on that hopefully is out as you hear this. We're certainly recording this much in advance of the release date, but we'll talk about that book next week.

So, Ray, I appreciate what you've said. I think it's really important for the body of Christ to hear these things, and for people like you who are taking the time - how important it is to research these things, to bring it before the body of Christ, to inform them...

Now, look, folks, you've got make up your own mind about this. The name of the program is Search the Scriptures 24/7. What we're talking about you need to hold up to the scriptures and see if these things be so.

So again, Ray, thanks for joining us, and we look forward to our next program.

**Ray:** My pleasure, my pleasure.

**Gary:** You've been listening to *Search the Scriptures 24/7* with T.A. McMahon, a radio ministry of The Berean Call. We offer a wide variety of resources to help you in your study of God's Word. For a complete list of materials and a free subscription to our monthly newsletter, contact us at PO Box 7019 Bend, Oregon 97708. Call us at 800.937.6638. Or visit our website at [thebereancall.org](http://thebereancall.org). I'm Gary Carmichael. Thanks for joining us, and we hope you can tune in again next week. Until then, we encourage you to Search the Scriptures 24/7.