

A Biblical Evaluation of Spiritual Mapping and Warfare

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The following is an article by Art Moore titled “Spiritual Mapping Gains Credibility Among Leaders.” Mr. Moore writes for the magazine “Christianity Today” or CT. CT typically publishes writings that reflect viewpoints which have nothing to do with Biblical Christianity. I consider the teachings covered by this article to be heretical and extremely detrimental to the spiritual life of those who would follow his form of spiritual warfare. My comments to this article are in bold.

Spiritual Mapping Gains Credibility Among Leaders by Art Moore in Tacoma

Shortly after Bob Beckett learned that the Hemet, California, property he planned to occupy had been a transcendental meditation hot zone, he pulled out an area map and marked the spot.

His finding eventually turned into a concerted, ongoing probe into the dark, spiritual underside of the desert community, southwest of Palm Springs. Beckett, who later planted a church in the city, believes that this spiritual reconnaissance--which he now recognizes as spiritual mapping--provided the fuel for focused prayer that not only unleashed church growth, but has begun to transform Hemet's social fabric.

Pastor note: The book of Acts is a record of events in the early church which turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). None of these events included “spiritual reconnaissance,” “spiritual mapping,” or “focused prayer.” These are practices of modern day shamanists and animists, not Christians. The Christian Saints of the New Testament simply went from town to town preaching Jesus, the fact of His resurrection and making disciples of all men who would believe.

Beckett's report was one of a half-dozen success stories presented to 400 participants from 31 countries at the first International Consultation on Spiritual Mapping in Tacoma, Washington, in November (1997). Other descriptions of transformation came from Kenya, Nigeria, Colombia, Ecuador, and Guatemala, where Christians claim that a breaking of a territorial spirit's power over their country resulted in unprecedented church growth and the end of 36 years of civil war (CT, Feb. 3, 1997, p. 76).

A PRAYER TOOL: Spiritual mapping is a term coined in 1991 by the Tacoma meeting's organizer, George Otis, Jr. (**Who I would warn you is leading many away from the power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit as he promotes his human power message - a sign of a false teacher**), but enthusiastic proponents say it is really the reprise of an old practice (**witchcraft**) that can help propel the church (**false church**) toward fulfillment of the Great Commission (**as they have redefined it**).

Pastor note: Biblically, we don't fulfill the Great Commission, we obey it. We are to go into the world and teach people about the salvation found in Jesus. It is God who works in the hearts of man to bring them into His Church (Acts 2:47) until the fullness of the Gentiles is complete (Rom 11:25). Prior to the Lord Jesus' return, the Gospel will be preached to the whole world (Matthew 24:14). Rev 14:6-7 teaches that the complete fulfillment of this prophecy will be accomplished by angels, and not by man. George Otis and other teachers (false teachers) of Dominion Theology interpret the prophecy of Matthew 24:14 to mean Jesus cannot return until the Church has taken its political influence to all the nations of the world. This influence must include subduing all resistance to “the church”, thus conquering these nations for the

“cause of Christ.” Similarly, they also interpret Matthew 28:18-20 (the Great Commission) with a militant slant. I have marked up this section of Matthew to show how a dominionist thinks.

Matt 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth (**and if you figure out how to spiritually map the earth, you too can have this authority**). 19 "Go therefore and make disciples (**originally meant “followers of Jesus, and His teachings.”** **The dominion theology teachers have changed disciple to mean followers of family values and morality**) of all the nations (**using political power and force if necessary**), baptizing them (**people who submit to the political will of the church**) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them (**forcing them if necessary**) to observe all things that I have commanded you (**or the men of the church command**); and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

A dominionist believes Jesus is “with us always” while the church forces the pagan world into submission, which must be accomplished before He can return. This view directly contradicts Biblical teaching.

Spiritual mapping, says Otis, president of the research agency the Sentinel Group, is nothing more ethereal than creating a spiritual profile of a community based on careful research. It is a tool, he says, for intelligent prayer aimed at opening spiritually blind eyes to the gospel.

Pastor note: The Bible does not ask us to pick up man invented, carnal “tools.” This teaching replaces the leading and power of the Holy Spirit with a corporate marketing survey. The apostle Paul would have rejected Otis’ “tools” (2 Cor 10:4).

Otis poured seven years of global research into his new book, The Twilight Labyrinth: Why Does Spiritual Darkness Linger Where It Does? (Chosen Books). He has identified 15 "transformed communities," of which 14 incorporated spiritual mapping. Two factors present in all 15, Otis says, are "persevering leadership" and "united prayer." (**The false teachers of this movement, place an emphasis on “united prayer.” They imply God cannot move unless all denominations in a community are “united.” By denominations, they mean both Christian and non-Christian “church” organizations, which they redefine as “Christian.” Again, this concept is forbidden in the Bible (2 Cor 6:17).**) Commitment is the key, he says. "God didn't move in Hemet until Bob bought a burial plot in the city." (**Does this make Bob the Savior of Hemet?? I talked with the Mayor of Hemet, Robin Lowe, on April 19, 2001. She has lived in Hemet since 1986 and was surprised to hear the claims made in this article pertaining to Bob Beckett bringing a “movement of God” to their city as a result of Bob’s spiritual mapping and “commitment.” She is unaware of any profound revival in their community and asked, compared to what other town? She also stated that Hemet, “has never been an Antichrist community.” She attends the Presbyterian church in Hemet and has spoken at Bob Beckett’s church (The Dwelling Place) twice in the capacity as City Mayor. She was completely unaware of the claims being made about their city in the Sentinel Group literature, something she is now looking into.**

Otis has developed a 28-stage scale to measure the progress of a community from the "spiritual beachhead" phase to "spiritual breakthrough" to "spiritual transformation." Spiritual mapping does not begin until stage nine, Otis points out. "When you reach that point you have a core of intercessors in a community really petitioning God for a visitation," he says.

Pastor note: This is so occultic it is hard to believe Christians are falling for it. Witches and Animists practice required steps, incantations and procedures necessary to call upon the spirit entities to do their bidding. George Otis is now trying to “Christianize” these demonic rituals. What is his source for these new insights? Certainly not the Bible, which does not contain a single example of Otis’ principles (old or new Testament). Could it be that Mr. Otis is fulfilling the warning of N.T. prophets (1 Tim 4:1, 2 Tim 4:3-4). Otis’ theology has God sitting in heaven waiting for us to develop a 28 stage program culminating in a “critical mass” of fleshly unity so we can overcome God’s reluctance to save. The Bible teaches that God performs His will regardless of the number of people going along with it. Many times God would thin

down the number of Saints before performing His will in order to prevent the Saints from thinking it was “their power” which accomplished the great work (examples - 1 Sam 14:6, Judges 7:2).

"LESS FLAKY": Though it still raises many eyebrows among evangelicals, spiritual mapping is gaining broader acceptance, as evidenced by the AD 2000 United Prayer Track's Spiritual Mapping Division, which Otis heads. United Prayer Track coordinator C. Peter Wagner teaches a class on spiritual mapping at Fuller Theological Seminary which is capped by a field trip to Hemet guided by Beckett.

"There's a lot less flaky stuff in 1997 than in 1990," Wagner says. "We're on a learning curve."

Many of spiritual mapping's detractors have less of a problem with spiritual mapping than with its most common applications, "strategic-level warfare"--defined by Wagner as discerning and praying against territorial spirits assigned to a community--and "identificational repentance."

John Dawson's bestseller *Taking Our Cities for God* (Creation House, 1989) (**The title should have kept it from being a best seller - The Bible doesn't tell us to “take cities” for God. We are told to preach the good news about Jesus in a city if the inhabitants will listen to us. If they don't, then we are to shake the dust off of our feet and move on to the next city (Matthew 10:14-15, Acts 13:50-52).** We don't see Paul breaking out a 28 step program and prayer walking around Iconium, thus calling down the spirit power to “take the city for God.” We can do nothing for God, He does everything for us. There is not a single exhortation in the New Testament to “take” anything for God. When the disciples asked what they could “do” for God, they were told to simply believe in Jesus. (**John 6:28-29**)) *John Dawson's bestseller Taking Our Cities for God* (Creation House, 1989) promoted identificational repentance as a way of breaking Satan's hold on a city and bringing reconciliation through confessing and repenting of community sins (**If a large number of people from a community repent of sin and turn to Jesus as their savior, then change will come (see Ephesus in Acts 17).** But this happens one soul at a time until a group of people are willing to burn their witchcraft and sorcery books in an act of true repentance and salvation. **The power of repentance comes from God in the heart of the believer not by some surrogate doing the repentance for the city as Dawson's “identificational repentance” strategies suggest).**

CAUTION URGED: Biola University Talbot Theological Seminary professor Clinton Arnold, author of *Three Crucial Questions About Spiritual Warfare* (Baker Books, 1997), finds no biblical basis for taking an aggressive posture against high-ranking evil powers, and he is cautious about a leader repenting for sins in which he did not participate. But Arnold does see value in spiritual mapping "to guide intercessors" as they pray for the lost (**how can there be value in false teachings which have no Biblical basis?**).

Greg Boyd, author of *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (InterVarsity, 1997), cautions that there is no clear New Testament precedent for strategic-level warfare. "That doesn't mean you need to rule it out, but it does mean you've got to be careful about excesses," says Boyd, a professor at Bethel College in Minnesota. "I've seen this get real wacko, where people are rebuking a demon over Minnesota. It's better to spend more (**I would say all!!**) time on things that have clear precedent."

Otis places the emphasis of spiritual warfare on battling strongholds of the mind rather than of geographical locations, though he does believe that places can become strongholds when they become focal points for deceptive practices. "People who begin spiritual mapping with a focus on trying to identify and name prevailing territorial spirits are likely to get sidetracked," he says.

Pastor note: People get sidetracked because they listen to and embrace false teachers. The Bible never names demons other than Satan, who actually has many names. If naming demons was so important, then why is there not a single case of it in the Bible? Could it be because the Bible teaches demons are loser fallen angels who are not worthy of a name? We know (and the demons know - Matthew 8:29, James

2:19) they will someday be judged and thrown into the lake of fire which was prepared for them (Matthew 25:41). Therefore, they don't deserve the credit of a name, just like the rich man of Luke 16:19-31, who is destined for the same lake of fire, does not have a name, but the poor man headed to heaven is named Lazarus.

GAINING ACCEPTANCE: Otis predicts that by the end of the century spiritual mapping will become mainstream. Most of his teaching and training is with evangelicals, whom he finds generally more responsive than charismatics. Still, many evangelical leaders are concerned that this may be a passing fad. Otis says spiritual mapping is especially needed now because Satan will increase his resistance to the church as it moves toward fulfillment of the Great Commission.

He isn't just predicting it will become mainstream by the end of the century; he is counting on the Biblically naive to make it so. Why? Because these false teachers are convinced the Great Commission (as they define it) must be fulfilled with human effort rather than the Gospel of Jesus. They feel we must subdue the godless, using force or coercion if necessary. Once they have done so, Jesus will then be able to return and hand out "well done" awards to these men. These lovers of self who have a form of godliness but deny its power (2 Tim 3) are marketing this false doctrine to this end.

"The 1990s are not the 1790s," Otis says. "God is very wise and very resourceful, and he brings to his church different emphases, different methodologies, different strategies to commend the gospel to the prevailing culture." **(And Otis is the self proclaimed conduit by which we are to receive these new strategies God has been working on. Otis teaches doctrines which directly conflict with the written Word of God.)**

In 1998, Otis's Sentinel Group, Wagner's Global Harvest Ministries, and Ted Haggard's Christian Information Network plan to move into the high-tech World Prayer Center on the grounds of Haggard's New Life Church in Colorado Springs (CT, May 20, 1996, p. 78). Spiritual mapping will be central to the operation of this "electronic nerve center to connect the intercessors and let each other know what they're hearing from the Holy Spirit," Wagner says.

The Bible says our faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom 10:17). Otis wants the thousands of intercessors across the country (and the world) to tie into a central database and record what they are "hearing" from his form of the holy spirit, rather than from the Word of God. What spirit would tell these people to do such a thing?; certainly not the Biblical Holy Spirit who is a comforter which leads us into all truth (John 16:13). Jesus prayed we would be sanctified (set apart) through God's truth, saying God's Word is Truth (John 17:17). Nothing about this movement has anything to do with God's Word or the historic Christian faith. No, the spirit of George Otis Jr. is not the Holy Spirit of the Bible, it is the spirit of the Antichrist and his "electronic nerve center" could easily become a great tool of the Antichrist.

Rev 13:7 It was granted to him **(the last days Antichrist)** to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. **(Interesting, the same thing the dominionists are trying to do.)** 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

In summary, George Otis Jr. and the other proponents of this new movement are creating a book, tape and seminar empire (which I will guess is in the millions of dollars) by soliciting the affections of sincere Christians who desire to see revival in their communities. In the above paragraphs I warn the reader that they are false teachers, who are feeding off of the sheep to fill their own bellies (Phil 3:17-19). I am sure they would disagree.

I offer them a sincere challenge. If they really believe what they are teaching and are convinced their 28

step program to defeat Satan is effective, then they can easily prove it and expose me as a liar.

Here is the challenge. George charters a Boeing 747 for an around the world flight in the Northern Hemisphere. He takes all those who are the movers and shakers within this movement with him. No unbelievers are allowed since a doubting Thomas might disrupt their power to command demons during their flight. As they fly around the world, they command all the demon spirits to depart.

How will we know if they have been effective? Simple. The Middle-East crisis will be solved, no more mad-cow or hoof-and-mouth disease. In fact, all the hospitals and jails will be emptied as George and his cohorts rid the Northern Hemisphere of all demonic influence.

If they are successful, then I will pay for a full page add in the USA Today apologizing for misrepresenting these men of God. Then I will pay for their Southern Hemisphere flight, thus being able to show fruits of repentance while also being able to take some of the credit for ridding the entire world of Satan's influence.

I am not too worried about having to pay for their flight or for an add in the USA Today. I am not even worried they will accept the challenge. I wonder what their excuses will be? Will it be that they need to be closer to the ground for their 28 step program to work?

I encourage all true Christians to flee from these false teachers. Instead of buying one of their tapes or paying to attend one of their seminars, buy a Bible for a neighbor and personally take it to them and offer to share the gospel of Jesus with them.

**Sincerely,
Kevin Lea
Pastor, Calvary Chapel Port Orchard**

2 Pet 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. (NKJV)

The video tape "Delivered from the Power of Darkness" (available from New Tribes Missions by calling 1-800-321-5375) is a powerful example of how the preaching of the Word of God has tremendous power over the forces of Satan.