



Suicide or Salvation?

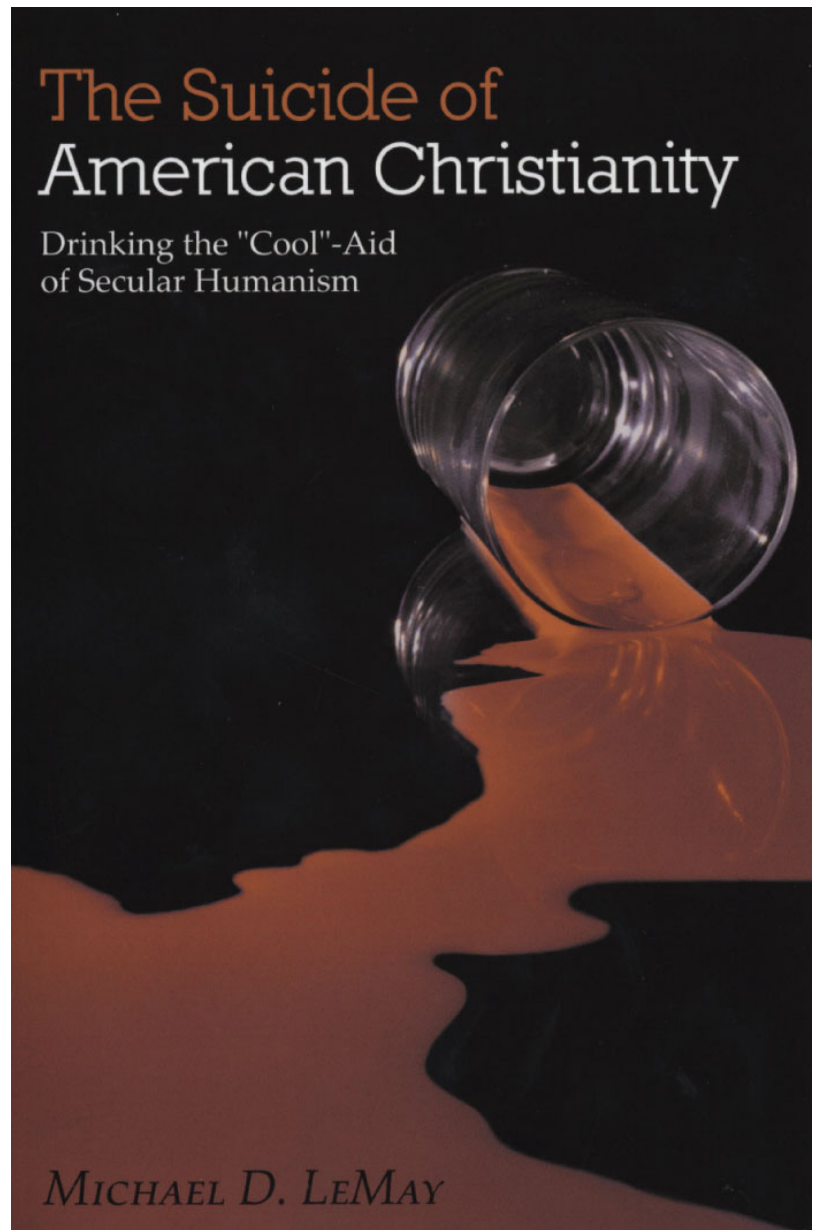
The Suicide of American Christianity, by Michael D. LeMay, Bloomington, Indiana: WestBow Press (a division of Thomas Nelson), 2012, 309 pages, paperback.

Christianity in America is dying. She is not dying of attempted murder, according to Mike LeMay; she is dying of suicide. What's worse, she is not likely to survive.

The Suicide of American Christianity: Drinking the "Cool"-Aid of Secular Humanism is meant to serve as a warning and a wake-up call to a nation of what Michael D. LeMay feels are compromising, apathetic Christians. In keeping with the boldness of the book's title, LeMay is certain to ruffle a few feathers and maybe step on a few toes with the book's content. However, the subjects are well researched, and the information is backed by plenty of footnotes so that the reader can do his own investigation. Furthermore, LeMay presents his arguments with a palpable humility and sincerity, fully acknowledging that while what he writes is controversial, he is deeply convinced that it needs to be written.

LeMay begins the book by briefly describing the current state of affairs in our nation, pointing out the prevalence of humanistic philosophy and immoral lifestyles in our modern culture. Instead of exposing these problems and opposing the culture, LeMay writes, American Christianity ignores the problems and embraces the culture. This can only result in the death of true biblical Christianity in this country.

The battle against the forces of secular humanism began for LeMay in the summer of 2010. As the manager of the Christian radio station Q90 FM, located in Green Bay, Wisconsin, LeMay works with many area pastors and is acquainted with more than a few nationally recognized Christian leaders. When asked by an area pastor if Q90 FM would support Lifest — an annual Christian rock concert near Oshkosh, Wisconsin, that draws thousands of Christian youth — even though Jim Wallis was the keynote speaker, LeMay admitted he had never heard of Jim Wallis and would have to do some research before





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giving an answer. Needless to say, what he found shocked him.

Wallis, a Marxist sympathizer and a spiritual advisor to President Obama, is the CEO of the Christian social-justice organization Sojourners and is popular in many Christian circles, particularly among youth. Sojourners, as could be expected of a social-justice organization, supports government as the solution to many of the world's problems. Immigration laws, the BP oil spill, global warming, poverty, and disparity between the rich and the poor are considered "sins," while issues such as abortion or homosexual marriage are neither discussed nor condemned. Sojourners is an interfaith organization as well, partnering with other religions to promote their social agenda.

LeMay, concerned about what he discovered, offered to fly Wallis to Green Bay to hear firsthand about his views. Wallis refused, and later telephoned LeMay and accused him of being a right-wing fanatic who was trying to silence alternative viewpoints. When questioned, Wallis would not label homosexuality and abortion as sin, and stated that humanity needed to stop global warming because "we need to have a pristine planet before Jesus can return." These views espoused by Wallis and Sojourners are typical of social-gospel theology, and caused LeMay to withdraw his support for Lifest and continue to research what he saw as a dangerous trend in American Christianity. He discovered that this liberalization of Christianity is nearly ubiquitous, and he feels it is destroying the faith.

The body of LeMay's book contains the results of his research into the influence of secular culture, humanism, the rapidly growing "Emergent" movement, and religious syncretism on biblical Christianity in America. These issues are also frequently discussed on LeMay's daily radio show on Q90 FM, *Stand Up for the Truth*.

LeMay exposes the beliefs of popular and influential Emergent leaders such as Brian McLaren, Tony Campolo, and Rob Bell. Those beliefs are essentially identical to those of Wallis and Sojourners. Emergent theology attempts to "change the conversation" about Jesus and the Bible in Christian circles, calling into question fundamental beliefs about Jesus, salvation, heaven and hell, sin, eternity, and the cross. Many questions are posited, but few answers are offered, and Christians are often left with a "maybe we've been wrong about all this" feeling. Social justice and achieving a global "utopia" are quite clearly the goals of popular Emergent leaders. Activities that have traditionally been viewed as "sin," such as homosexuality and abortion, are largely ignored. People are certainly free to hold and express their viewpoints, but the fact that Wallis, McLaren, Campolo, and Bell are all highly influential pastors, authors, and speakers is cause for concern for LeMay. For instance, mega-church pastors, such as Rick Warren and Bill Hybels, have practically "joined hands" with these Emergent leaders and are now promoting little more than a Christianized social-justice message to "save the world" from pollution, disease, and poverty. Presumably a world government will play an integral role in this "salvation." LeMay points out that when he and others with similar concerns attempt to contact leaders such as Rick Warren in regard to their association with Emergent leaders, they are ignored or criticized.

The Word of Faith movement and the closely related Prosperity Gospel are also examined, as LeMay reveals what he believes are blatantly heretical teachings and practices that dovetail more with New Age and occult doctrines than biblical Christianity. The beliefs that people can "speak things into existence" and "create their own reality," and that Christianity is merely about achieving material wealth and temporal happiness are not biblical, LeMay notes, and are damaging American Christianity.

LeMay speaks out against the growing phenomenon of the so-called "Chrislam" movement in American Christianity, which seeks to unite Christianity and Islam. While "Chrislam" is promoted by Emergent



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leaders and mega-church pastors under motives such as “promoting dialogue” and “loving our neighbor,” he believes that this movement can only result in the watering-down and compromising of biblical Christianity. Dovetailing with this is a noticeable anti-Israel sentiment among Emergent leaders, giving the current tension in the Holy Land a liberal social-justice spin that champions the cause of the “oppressed” Palestinians against the Israeli “colonial oppressors.”

LeMay also devotes a significant portion of the book to castigating American Christianity for its stance on traditional moral issues such as abortion and homosexuality. While some groups have made a bold stand against them, he notes that, by and large, modern Christianity in America has either openly endorsed these activities, quietly “accepted” them, or raised merely a small whimper of opposition to what were once unquestionably regarded as sins. This state of affairs, he believes, results from a desire among Christians to be viewed as “tolerant” and “loving,” in order to be “seeker-friendly” and to not offend the radical Left. LeMay also postulates that perhaps leaders are reluctant to preach too strongly against sin in fear that their own sins may be brought to light, referencing the embarrassing number of prominent Christian leaders who have been scandalized by adultery or other issues.

While Christian leaders are certainly to blame for the “suicide” of American Christianity, rank-and-file church members are just as guilty, LeMay declares. Many are complacent in their faith, or want leaders who will only tell them what they want to hear. This gets to the root of the problem in LeMay’s eyes. Christianity, through willing leaders and church members, has allowed the onslaught of modern culture to weaken it to the point where it no longer resists. He feels that this just may be the great “apostasy” or “falling away” that the apostle Paul wrote about in II Thessalonians, chapter 2.

For many readers the book may seem overly pessimistic, even judgmental. An open-minded reader will note, however, that LeMay does approach the issues with humility, never afraid to admit his own shortcomings. He recognizes that criticizing the beliefs of popular leaders may make him, to say the least, unpopular, but he is convinced that believers are to question “new” doctrines and are not to believe every teaching that they hear. The message, not the messenger, is what is to be criticized. Additionally, LeMay does not reveal his own particular denomination, nor does he write about doctrinal issues on which various Christian denominations disagree, but focuses instead on basic beliefs that historically all of Christendom has been united on.

So what’s the point? LeMay admits that, in his opinion, American Christianity will never return to its former strength. Most of the church will fall into apostasy. However, he is writing to warn any who will listen in the hope that a faithful remnant may be preserved until the second coming of Jesus Christ. Those faithful Christians need to take a stand against what Christianity is becoming, reaching out with the Gospel in love yet never compromising biblical beliefs and values. The back cover of the book gives a good summary into LeMay’s view on this matter:

With a lack of strong, principled leaders, and with followers who want their ears tickled instead of being challenged to pursue righteousness, American Christianity is writing its own epitaph as it slowly dies. Unless we reverse course by embracing the complete, absolute truth of God’s Word and stop trying to redefine God in our selfish human image, only a remnant will remain from a once-powerful church.

Do we have the courage to challenge our leaders and ourselves to reject secular culture and its influences? Or will we continue to die a slow death at our own hands as we continue to inhale the cancer of secular humanism? Time is running out.



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