

## **Emanuel Swedenborg's Occultic Beliefs Influence Rick Warren's Health Advisor and Now the Christian Church**

by John Lanagan  
Free-Lance Writer  
My Word Like Fire Ministries

“You can become a Reiki master in three weekends.” –Lisa Oz, wife of Dr. Mehmet Oz

Perhaps it is not surprising Dr. Mehmet Oz, a key teacher in Rick Warren's 52 week health-and-wellness Daniel Plan, has been influenced by occultist Emanuel Swedenborg. Although Swedenborg rejected the biblical Christ, and communed with familiar spirits, some of Swedenborg's admirers have been culturally significant figures. At this point in his career, Dr. Mehmet Oz certainly qualifies as such.

Those who have either appreciated or followed Swedenborg's theology have included Helen Keller, Johnny Appleseed, Sherlock Holmes creator Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Carl Jung, Henry James Sr., the poet Robert Frost, and Bill Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Swedenborg, who died in the 1700s, has been called the father of modern day spiritualism. It is likely Alcoholics Anonymous co-founder Bill Wilson's bondage to the spirit world began with his introduction to Swedenborg's teachings. Despite erroneous claims he was a Christian, Wilson's spirituality was one of seances, familiar spirits, and the Ouija board. [1]

Just like Dr. Mehmet Oz, Bill Wilson was introduced to the teachings of Swedenborg through his own wife. Early in their romantic relationship, Bill Wilson “learned that [his future wife's family] were all Swedenborgians, and the mystic aspect of the faith so fascinated them they vowed to explore it more deeply one day.”[2]

In Pass It On (AA co-founder's official biography), Bill Wilson states, “The Ouija board began moving in earnest. What followed was the fairly usual experience-it was a strange melange of Aristotle, St. Francis,

diverse archangels with odd names, deceased friends—some in purgatory and others doing nicely, thank you! . . . Then, the seemingly virtuous entities would elbow them out with messages of comfort, information, advice—and sometimes just sheer nonsense.”[3] (Bold added.)

Swedenborg had power. This cannot be denied. It was stunning to learn Swedenborg had written of a spiritual “twelve steps” more than a century before Alcoholics Anonymous was birthed.[4] Did Wilson copy this term from Emanuel Swedenborg? I do not believe so. I believe that Wilson, having opened himself up to communication with unclean spirits, received his 12 Steps from the same source as had Swedenborg.

Emanuel Swedenborg experienced mystic dreams, trances, and meditation. He believed that he was visited by Christ, who informed him he was the human appointed to write the real meaning of the Bible. He believed he communicated with Moses, Luther, Mary, Aristotle, the apostle Paul, and many others.

Author Wilson Van Dusen notes, “Swedenborg used a fairly intense form [of meditation] in which he would focus on an idea of the exclusion of all else and his breathing would slow down. There have been whole books on the breathing aspect alone.”[5] Swedenborg, writes Van Dusen, “thought highly” of meditation.[6]

We are in a time when spiritual terms have been given confusing meanings; when words such as “Salvation,” are not necessarily presented as biblically intended. This is particularly true of the term, “meditation.” Rick Warren’s Daniel Plan, his association with Oz, Hyman, and Amen, may make comprehension of this even more murky.

The meditation used by Swedenborg and numerous New Age devotees, Buddhists, and Hindus, is not biblical meditation, which is essentially reading Scripture and “chewing” (reflecting and pondering) upon it. With biblical meditation, the brain is always active, and thinking.

But thinking is the enemy of the mystical meditator. As one mystic proponent put it:

Do not reflect on the meaning of the word; thinking and reflecting must cease, as all mystical writers insist. Simply “sound” the word silently, letting go of all feelings and thoughts. (Zen master, Willigis Jager, *Contemplation*, p. 31, cited in ATOD)

This is the Eastern meditation advocated by Rick Warren’s Daniel Planteam members Dr. Mehmet Oz, Dr. Mark Hyman, and Dr. Daniel Amen. This meditation, used by Swedenborg and others, involves stilling the mind, sometimes by focusing on a word or phrase to “the exclusion of all else,” as Van Dusen puts it. By repeating the word or phrase over and over, a state of altered consciousness is reached. This is known as the silence. Historically, around the world, much has been experienced in this meditative silence. Spirit guides. Oneness. False “christs.” “Kundalini effect” . . . and so forth.

Deception.

This is also often portrayed in scientific terms, and portrayed as beneficial, but is an invitation to the spirit realm. As others have pointed out, when the mind is stilled and void, something else may well fill that void.

There is a battle going on—between those who hold to the Word of God and those who promote the mysticism inherent in these meditative techniques. Already the Body of Christ is infected with the “contemplative spirituality” of Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, Gary Thomas, Keri Wyatt Kent and so many others. Contemplative prayer is simply saying a “Christian-ized” word or phrase to still the mind and enter the silence. It is virtually the same as Eastern or New Age meditation, yet it has gained acceptance due to its “Christianese” disguise.

Occultist Alice Bailey, who was informed by her spirit guides, said that the New Age “illumination” would indeed come to the world through the Christian church, and she instructed her followers to leave the outer shell of Christianity intact for the time being and change it from the inside. Is this not what is happening today! (Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, p. 510)

But now, it seems, we are “advancing” past the stage of disguising. Now, it seems, outright Eastern/New Age meditation is poised to enter the church. The realm of these spirits is the realm of deception that the Bible talks about. The Bible says that in the days before Christ’s return, the mystery of iniquity will prevail and deceive vast numbers. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:7 and Revelation 12:9.)

If all this is new to you, please take the time to research.

His people perish from lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:6)

With Dr. Oz having been granted potential influence into the lives of thousands (potentially eventually millions) of Christians through Rick Warren’s Daniel Plan, it is important to consider Lisa Oz as well—because people who seek out Dr. Oz’s books will likely be exposed to his wife’s work also. The couple have worked together on projects and public appearances. Lisa Oz serves as the reader for many of Dr. Oz’s audio books.[7] And Dr. Oz does not hide his high estimation for his wife.

In her book, Lisa Oz acknowledges, “After my parents, the most influential [teacher] by far was and is Emanuel Swedenborg, an eighteenth century scientist and theologian who saw the Bible as a divinely inspired metaphor. ... His writings on the nature of God, humanity, and marriage not only shaped my views but ultimately shaped who I am. For this reason you will find his doctrine, widely and wildly interpreted, as the foundation for just about every chapter in this book.”[8]

Lisa Oz is a Reiki master. This is an ancient system of occult energy, one that brings with it the risk of familiar spirits. [9] Lisa Oz states, “You can become a Reiki master in three weekends.”[10] Many people were exposed to Reiki for the first time when Dr. Oz featured it on his popular television show. In an interview, Mrs. Oz shared that she has used Reiki on her own children.[11] The point here is not that Swedenborg used Reiki—he did not—but, rather, that Swedenborgian doctrine is often a precursor that leads into New Age practices such as meditation and Reiki.

Of course, this makes sense, because Swedenborgianism itself can be defined as a New Age belief system. The New Age, after all, is really the Old Age, and familiar spirits for thousands of years have taken the openings offered through meditation. So it is with the increasingly popular Reiki.

In fact, consider this collective Reiki/meditative experience facilitated by Lisa Oz, which took place at a workshop she conducted along with her husband: “She followed with a couple of similar exercises, then finished with what for me was the day’s highlight: the hatsurei-ho meditation,[12] this time for hundreds. The energy in that cavernous room at the Javits Convention Center shifted palpably as Mrs. Oz led the crowd through progressive relaxation, envisioning a golden light all around, drawing the light inside and then breathing it back out into the space around us, adding our own energy with each exhalation. There was no need to explain what Reiki was—everyone felt it, even without touch.”[13] (Bold added)

Lisa Oz then told the crowd, “Go in wellness, knowing you have brought light into the world.”[14]

What is going on with Rick Warren? Does he believe he can bring in Oz, Hyman, and Amen, and simply share only their medical teachings? Stick to the brain, Daniel Amen. Just talk about the heart, Mehmet Oz. Is that what Pastor Warren intends? Because even if these doctors don’t say anything about meditation, or Reiki, their resources are still available to all who have seen and heard them at Saddleback. Exposure to these practices therefore seems certain, all from authors highly praised by Rick Warren.

This decision to use these meditation gurus is no fluke. The list of Rick Warren’s ill-advised spiritual decisions is too long to believe that. It goes hand in hand with he and his wife’s public admiration for mystic advocate Henri Nouwen, his promotion of Gary Thomas who tells readers to repeat a word for 20 minutes in *Sacred Pathways* (p. 185) and who points readers to tantric sex advocate Mary Ann McPherson Oliver in *Sacred Marriage*, and who carries Adele Alberg Calhoun’s book, *Handbook on Spiritual Disciplines* in his Resource Center even though the book is riddled with New Age/panentheist references. It goes hand

in hand with his own book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, where he tells over 30 million readers they can become “world-class Christian[s]” if they practice “breath prayers” (Day 38). It goes hand in hand with Rick Warren’s first book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, where he tells readers that Richard Foster’s spiritual formation movement is a “valid message” and a “wake up call” to “the body of Christ” (pp. 126-127). And it goes hand in hand with Rick Warren’s connections with New Age sympathizers Leonard Sweet and Ken Blanchard. (paragraph notes)

No, Rick Warren’s decision to use Oz, Amen, and Hyman is no fluke. But it sure is a spiritual trap for the Christian church.

Endnotes:

1. Seances, Spirits, and 12 Steps

<http://mywordlikefire.wordpress.com/2008/09/24/seances-spirits-and-12-steps/>

2. Robert Thomsen, Bill W., pg. 85

3. PASS IT ON, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., pg. 278

4. The first version of the 12 Steps

<http://mywordlikefire.wordpress.com/2009/04/08/the-first-version-of-the-12-steps/>

5. Wilson Van Dusen, commentary, Swedenborg’s Journal of Dreams, pg.189

6. Ibid., pg. 191

7. <http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Lisa-Oz/47284370/books>

8. US: Transforming Ourselves and the Relationships That Matter Most

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Books/us-transforming-relationships-matter-lisa-oz/story?id=10288653&page=3>

9. Reiki warning <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14N2URu4avY>

10. [http://www.expressnightout.com/content/2007/07/fit\\_mad\\_about\\_you.php](http://www.expressnightout.com/content/2007/07/fit_mad_about_you.php)

11. [http://www.expressnightout.com/content/2007/07/fit\\_mad\\_about\\_you.php](http://www.expressnightout.com/content/2007/07/fit_mad_about_you.php)

12. [http://www.aetw.org/d\\_hatsurei\\_ho.html](http://www.aetw.org/d_hatsurei_ho.html)

13. <http://reikidigest.blogspot.com/2007/08/its-all-about-you-and-some-of-it-is.html>

14. <http://reikidigest.blogspot.com/2007/08/its-all-about-you-and-some-of-it-is.html>