Terms and definitions

Please be aware: The following terms are used today by SDAs. While these are not all bad in themselves, many are included in Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and the ecumenical, charismatic, New Theology, New Age, and emerging church movements. (Most of these terms are underlined throughout the chapter.)

Agape feast:

- A religious meal also known as a “love feast” and a historical form of the Eucharist.
- Although it died out, it was again introduced by eighteenth-century groups and churches such as in Methodism and revived recently in groups like the Anglicans and the “house church” movement.
- Contemporary Christians celebrate the Eucharist and afterward participate in an informal agape feast that is called “fellowship hour” or “coffee hour,” sometimes along with education.
- Some Eastern Orthodox Christians have an agape meal after the “divine liturgy” and at the conclusion of Easter.
- A tradition in freemasonry since at least the eighteenth century.

Authentic; authenticity: Means to downplay trying to prove doctrines and instead to discover truth through conversation and relationships with other Christians.

Bridge: “This mystical stream [contemplative prayer] is the Western bridge to Far Eastern spirituality.” —Tilden Edwards, Spiritual Friend, p. 18.

Catalyst: To bring about change or speed up a process.

Celebration: The observance of a feast, a special day or season, and the honoring of an event by religious ceremonies, festivities, etc., such as the celebration of Easter and the Eucharist. Celebration is a word used hundreds of times in the Vatican II liturgical document and has been used for decades in the SDA organization, being used profusely today.

Community; community of faith; faith community; global community; sense of community: Encompasses ecumenism in a call to unity in a supposed all-
inclusive community of faith with a universal god, with diversity significant to a
multi-cultural and multi-generational community acceptable to both Protestants
and Catholics. It is interesting to note that those in the Dark Ages were taught to
support the decisions of their community.

Connect; connecting; connection; connectivity: In relation to popular
spiritualism today, a term from pantheistic monism which believes that “all is one”
(syncretism or monastic), “one is all,” and “all is God,” that everything and
everyone are all connected in oneness; and that God is in all religions and
individuals, so all things and people are connected.

Contemplative prayer:

- Also known as centering prayer, listening prayer, mantra prayer, silence
  prayer, soaking prayer, and breath prayers (using a single word or short
  phrase to repeat along with breathing). There is also the “Jesus prayer” or
  “Prayer of the heart” that is constantly repeated and said silently or aloud,
  while walking, sitting, or working and used by Protestants and Catholics. It
  can be traced back to the sixth century.
- A “Christian” form of Eastern meditation and prayer promoted as a way to
  experience an “intimate relationship” with God.
- Through interaction between monks and practitioners of Eastern meditation,
  this practice was formed to be easily practiced by anyone and leads into “the
  silence” but actually leads away from God.
- A type of meditation that goes beyond thought by using repeated words or
  phrases while sitting or lying comfortably with eyes closed. If thoughts enter
  into the mind, the person is to return to the mantra. At the end of the prayer,
  the individual is to remain in silence for several minutes.
- An effort to go “deep” within oneself. Once the person moves away from
  thoughts “into the presence of God” in silence, it is then time to listen, not
talk, to God. If one is struggling with a problem, he is to gently ask for
  guidance and then listen for the response. This is a form of self-hypnosis that
  can lead to contact with fallen angels. True listening to God comes from
  reading the Bible and discerning the Holy Spirit.
- Modern promoters include Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, Richard Foster,
  Brennan Manning, Ken Blanchard, Chuck Swindoll, Larry Crabb, Henry
  Blackaby, etc.

Contemplative spirituality:
• Belief system that uses mystical practices to induce altered states of consciousness (the silence) and is rooted in occultism but often hidden in Christian terminology.
• Terminology includes “spiritual formation,” “spiritual disciplines,” “the silence” or “the stillness,” “ancient-wisdom,” and many others.
• Includes pantheism (the belief that the universe is God) and panentheism (the belief of all in God, a god that is part of nature but still an independent identity).

Creative; creativity: Involves everything from expressive, charismatic worship including contemporary music and drama to ancient liturgical customs.

Deep; deeper; deepen: Going “deep” or “deeper” to know God more fully in contemplative prayer. God asks us to go deep by searching the Scriptures.

Discipleship: A way of mentoring or training “disciples,” which includes the indoctrination into contemplative spirituality and “establishing, empowering, and equipping” for “spiritual growth.”

Disciplines: See “Spiritual disciplines/exercises.”

Emergent: Involved in the emerging church movement and in a more limited way refers to Emergent Village, which is advertised as a “growing, generative friendship among missional Christians seeking to love our world in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” It is associated with Brian McLaren and veers from doctrinal truths of the Bible, teaching that we should not limit ourselves to Scripture but to see God “out of the box” (see definition below). This would agree with the Roman Catholic Church which denies that the Bible is the only authority.

Emerging church (Ancient-Future church):
• A worldwide ecumenical movement initiated in the 1990s by Leadership Network but inspired by successful businessman Peter Drucker in the 1950s and grew with the help of other successful businessmen. Bob Buford started Leadership Network in 1984.
• Supported by multi-million dollar corporations and influenced by mystics.
• Concentrated in North America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and Western Europe.
• Consists of a religion which is believed will bring spiritual transformation by reverting back to the beliefs and ideas from A.D. 100 to 600.
• Called a “Christian” movement because of the altered terminology, yet where doctrines and the Bible are minimized.
• Redefines Christianity with a mixture of various theologies and practices such as contemplative spirituality, Catholic liturgy, charismatic worship, and Eastern spirituality (New Age or old occultism) in which those involved wish to live their faith in what they see as a postmodern world. Does the term “postmodern” simply define a more evil society, and is it used as an excuse to turn religion into something that pleases the majority?
• Includes mysticism: an experience with the supernatural; a system of contemplative prayer and spirituality aimed at achieving direct intuitive experience of the divine; unites religions in a new way of experiencing God; tied to Catholicism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. It is being taught to lay people through retreats, books, seminars, small groups, etc. God’s Word tells us in Hosea 4:6 that we are destroyed because of forgetting His law, not from a lack of mysticism.
• Includes those not satisfied with the traditional church structure, evangelism, worship (prefer stories rather than sermons), and mission/community outreach, where worship occurs in denominational, independent or house churches.
• Emphasizes social networking, activism, and politics (mixing church and state).
• Involves diversity in beliefs and practices, including plurality of biblical interpretations.
• Includes a preoccupation with sacred rituals and “good works.”
• Involves the Protestant Reformation in reverse.

**Experiential:** The spiritual disciplines as practiced through such methods as contemplative prayer, which can lead to experiencing demons.

**Festival/Fest:** A word overused in churches today and borrowed from the world, such as a family fun festival; music festival; Christmas festival; film festival; Jewish festival; harvest festival; children’s worship festival; festival of praise; festival of the laity; ring fest (handbells); choir fest; song fest; and power fest.

**Incarnational:** Assumes that anyone who claims to be a Christian can serve “incarnationally” because Jesus lives in and through them; therefore, an incarnational ministry may completely ignore the true gospel, hiding the “divisive” messages of salvation.
Innovative; innovation: Initiatives; introducing something new, such as new worship services.

Interspiritual; interspirituality: Interfaith dialogue that aims at common ground in beliefs by concentrating on similarities between faiths, understanding values, commitment to the world, education and community-building efforts; based on religious universalism that teaches all people will be saved because everyone has God within them and that no religion is fully right or wrong; desired outcome of contemplative prayer.

Intuitive; intuition: Does not refer to divine discernment but rather a mental way of learning knowledge through a “deeper level” other than through reason, memory, or the five senses for creativity, inspiration, insight, self-understanding, and personal growth. Includes intuitive individual counseling and business consulting to “make advances” in science, medicine, history, language, health, etc. Often taught by New Age consultants through conferences, lectures, classes, publications, websites, etc.

Kingdom Now theology (dominionism):

- A liberal theology that believes the kingdom of God will be established here on earth by human effort either by political or even military means, making it a “Christian” world.
- The Roman Catholic plan to make the emerging church a bridge to Rome and win the world to the Eucharistic Christ, which to them is the Second Coming.
- Stresses environmental issues such as the “green” movement—the plan to “save-the-planet”—which worships the earth and believes that a perfect world will come into existence through the help of man becoming better.
- Tendency to use the word “kingdom” rather than “heaven.”
- An effort by Satan to merge all religions, which denies the gospel message. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).

Lectio Divina:

- A form of mental prayer developed in the early centuries that means “divine reading” and is similar to the method of Ignatius of Loyola that leads to contemplative prayer. A text, such as a passage from the Bible, is slowly read in a repetitive fashion as the person thinks about it and the practical applications as a way to “encounter the presence of God.”
The modern form taught by spiritual directors involves reading, reflection, prayer, and contemplation. These correspond with the four functions of sensing, thinking, feeling, and intuiting suggested by psychologist Carl Jung. It is popular among Catholics and gnostics, and now with emerging churches.

Wikipedia online explains that Lectio Divina includes four stages, the fourth being when “the prayer, in turn, points to the gift of quiet stillness in the presence of God, called contemplation.” In September 2005, Pope Benedict XVI stated: “I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of Lectio Divina: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart (cf. Dei Verbum, n. 25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church - I am convinced of it - a new spiritual springtime.”

**Liturgical dance:**
- Originated in non-Christian pagan religions.
- Entered Christianity in the late twentieth century.
- Used as an expression of worship or prayer by using body movement.
- Accompanied by different kinds of music.
- Usually performed by women.

**Liturgy:** Forms of public church services; the Eucharistic celebration.

**Mantras:** See “Positive self-talk.”

**Maturity:** A word used by contemplatives, who teach that true maturity comes only through time spent in contemplative silence; also a reference to those who have been trained in emerging church practices.

**Meditation (New Age, Eastern):**
- Also referred to as “the silence” or “brainwave training.”
- Satan’s counterfeit for God’s meditation and practiced in Buddhism and Hinduism.
- Used to experience altered states of consciousness to achieve “spiritual enlightenment,” yet controlled by a spirit that is not the Holy Spirit.
- An attempt to train, calm, or empty the mind by focusing on a single object. When the mind is “emptied,” that is when the enemy comes in.
• Growing in popularity as evidenced by the increase of New Age spiritual retreats and yoga studios.
• Transcendental meditation is where the mind, released by the repetition of a mantra, becomes “calm” and “creative.”

**Mentor; mentoring:** Also known as a counselor, teacher, adviser, or guide. In this case, we are referring to those who teach emerging church ideas.

**Missiology; missiological:** The study of a church's mission as it relates to missionary activity. This word was popularized by Fuller Seminary’s School of World Mission (Pasadena, California).

**Missional:**

• A term used in the ecumenical, emerging church movement in which the mission comes from people’s desires and thoughts rather than from the Bible.
• Focuses on small group mission activities, church planting, and “kingdom growth” versus church growth.
• Connected with Emergent Village, social activism, hospitality, acts of kindness, global justice, community involvement, and café ministries.

**Out of the box:** Think or do things in a new way; may include the belief that we must not limit ourselves to the Bible but to see God “out of the box.”

**Paradigm shift; new paradigm:**

• Belief that all is God and all is one.
• New pattern or model as an integral part of the emerging church movement in order to restructure “Christianity,” involving all denominations in a clever strategy by basically changing theology and worship services to resemble more closely the Roman Catholic traditions.

**Positive self-talk:**

• A New Age auditory mental technique also known as mantras or “affirmations” believed to create new mental processes and positive new life results, whether in the area of health, business, self-help, or sports improvement, etc.
• Use of a word or short statement that is mentally or verbally repeated at regular intervals “until the subconscious mind accepts it and brings the command to a reality.”
• Affirmations used by practitioners with their mental training and self-help programs during the relaxed state, in the form of hypnotic suggestions, to supposedly bring about positive changes in a person’s life.
• A mantra in Hinduism is used as an invocation of a god or as a magic spell.
• Continual repetition of a mantra or even of music (such as a syncopated drum beat) is a call for demonic possession. (Syncopation is an interruption of the regular flow of rhythm.) Taize prayer/singing is also similar in that just a few words are used repetitively to give it a “meditative character” and a way to “listen to God” and enter into the “contemplation of His presence.” Different languages are used to represent its international and ecumenical nature. It is usually held in a darkened church with participants lighting candles, and all face an icon such as a cross. The monastery at Taize, France, has become a popular place to participate in this practice, especially for young adults from around the world, where as many as 10,000 of all faiths gather at one time. One participant stated that humanity forms a single family and that God lives in every human without exception. The Pope gave his blessing to this practice, which includes silence and chanting, more directed and focused than centering prayer.

**Postmodern Christianity:** A term closely associated with philosophy, Catholicism, and mysticism; stresses nature, science, being social, and exploration of the inner self; and now infiltrating Protestant churches.

**Power:** A word used in abundance in churches today, such as power-packed, powerfest, power-filled, Holy Ghost power, power night, power hour, and empower, yet the majority are using the wrong power and the wrong spirit.

**Prayer circle:** Recent resurgence in popularity attributed to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement.

**Prayer or meditation labyrinth:**

• The labyrinth has been reintroduced to the U.S. in the past decade and is a mystical Catholic ritual that dates back to the Middle Ages (around the 12th century) and possibly predates Christianity through pagan practices. It was a substitute for making a pilgrimage to the dangerous Muslim-controlled Holy Land to trace the "passion route" of Jesus. While walking the labyrinth,
Catholics meditated on Christ’s sufferings in their imagination, supposedly obtaining the same pardons to shorten their suffering time in “purgatory.”

- The labyrinth comes in many sizes and shapes made from either stones in a garden landscape, mounds of dirt, etched in hard floors worldwide such as in cathedrals, and now comes in portable canvass or on computers. It is commonly called an “eleven-circuit labyrinth,” because of its singular path that lies in eleven concentric circles with thirty-four turns that go into the twelfth circle at the center called the rosette. It has only one winding path to the center and back out again. The center symbolizes enlightenment and that all paths lead to God, which is universalism.
- This “sacred path” includes three stages or journeys. The inward theme is about letting go of things that hinder our approach to God. The center is for meditation and peace. The outward theme is about relationships between us and the planet, all as seen in relationship with God.
- Used for contemplative prayer, meditation, personal reflection and renewal, a form of pilgrimage and a way to “connect with God in a higher spirituality” and contemplate the “deeper things of life.”
- Associated today with New Age mystical practices and the occult.
- A “tool for personal, psychological and spiritual transformation,” according to the Labyrinth Society.
- Called the Medicine Wheel in Native American culture, the Never Ending Circle for Celts, and the Kabala in Judaism.
- Becoming popular today with contemporary Christianity, especially the emerging church movement. Uses a mixture of rituals, visuals, contemporary ambient music, art, media, symbolic activities, as well as Catholic and Orthodox icons. Participants can use a “guided tour” CD for instructions, meditations, and music relating to part of the labyrinth.
- A “finger labyrinth” provides the same experience in a small space. Before entering the participant is to spend a few moments becoming stilled and inviting the “Holy Spirit” in. Upon entering the path, the person is to move at his own pace, pausing, and feeling the curves. Reaching the center, he is to spend time seeking awareness of God’s presence as a time for clarity, self-offering, or healing. Returning to the path outward, he is to carry any blessings or insights received.
- The religious and medical communities promote this practice not only as a way to pray but for reducing stress, calming the mind, and relaxing the body. Said to encourage healing, clarity, peacefulness and “connecting with the deepest part of self” (inner knowledge).
- A labyrinth prayer walk is what occurs in a prayer labyrinth as a person walks through the maze-like pattern.
**Prayer stations:** A place set aside for prayer with a combination of such items as candles, crosses, miscellaneous icons, Bible verses, devotional questions, a prayer notebook, etc. and similar to the Catholic “stations of the cross.”

**Prayer walking:** It is believed that prayer walking in neighborhoods will help to dispel the demons.

**Prayer warriors:**
- Those committed to praying for others and used by many evangelical and Protestant Christians.
- In Dominion theology, prayer warriors believe they are engaged in spiritual warfare against demonic forces. This is common in Christian Reconstructionism and Kingdom Now theology in which they mix politics and theology (church and state) and claim they have strongly influenced the Christian Right in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. They might pray for individuals or entire states or regions (“prayer expeditions”). Some groups have flown over the areas to be prayed for. Prayer for nations is known as “prayer journeys.”

**Revolution; revolutionary:** The “overthrow” of traditional worship and changing theology, replacing these with the emerging church ideas.

**Sacred space:** A place where someone goes to perform a mystical practice such as “the silence” or the state of “being” during that experience.

**Seeker-sensitive/seeker-friendly churches:**
- These attract the unchurched and are usually associated with megachurches, which are large (at least 2,000 members), independent, usually nondenominational and formed as an offshoot from a Protestant church.
- Use non-threatening “Christian” messages which are usually short and focused on self-improvement and relationships rather than doctrines (theological compromise that destroys true worship) and include contemporary music and drama.
- Include activities for families at different stages.
- May include state of the art technology, nurseries and day care.
- Community surveys and studies are done to discover what the unsaved want (felt needs) not what they really need, which is man-centered rather than God-centered. Therefore, when their circumstances do not immediately improve, they leave the church. Surveys show that these church growth ideas
do not produce spiritual growth and the fad is wearing off, while many turn to the emerging church movement. Ideas and programs come and go, but biblical truth lasts forever.

**Silence; solitude** (used with meditation):

- The closing off of all noise.
- Absence of normal thought by “quieting” the mind.
- Undirected prayer; being willing to “not know.”
- A belief that you are concentrating on God and giving Him a chance to talk.
- Option to practice a “palms-down, palms up” exercise, etc.

**Small group/cell church fellowship:** Being pushed as a way to spread contemplative spirituality. It is interesting to note that Leonard Sweet states in his book *Quantum Spirituality* that the "power of small groups is in their ability to develop the discipline to get people 'in-phase' with the Christ consciousness” (divinity of man) and “connected” with one another (interspirituality).

**Social justice:** The belief that all mankind deserves equal political, economic, and social rights and opportunities. According to the philosophy of social workers, peace is not possible if there are gross inequalities of power and money.

**Spiritual direction/director:** A method to promote or teach the spiritual disciplines and the silence. It was traditionally practiced by ordained clergy only. Recently the practice has been embraced by non-ordained persons. There are two primary forms for teaching: retreat direction and regular direction, which differ in the intensity of “reflection” and frequency of meeting. A retreat can last a weekend, a week, or even 40 days. The person usually meets with their director for one hour each day, in which exercises or new spiritual disciplines like Lectio Divina are given to the directee. Regular direction is a one or two hour meeting every four to eight weeks. While with the director, the directee shares personal experiences of “encountering the divine,” and the director listens and asks questions. The directee is to attempt the disciplines and exercises between meetings. (See next term for further information.)

**Spiritual disciplines/exercises:**

- Formulated by Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), founder of the Society of Jesus (a religious organization of the Catholic Church also known as the Jesuits). Loyola was a spiritual director and vigorously opposed the Protestant Reformation. He encouraged individual and group retreats to
practice the disciplines. Specialist retreat centers are found wherever there are large groups of Catholics.

- A set of meditations, prayers, and other mental exercises originally designed to be done over a period of about 30 days and approved of by Paul III in 1548. The more prominent prayers include contemplative, centering, labyrinth, and Jesus prayers as well as the Lectio Divina and breath prayer. The retreatants spend their days in silence, usually pray up to five hours each day, and see the spiritual director daily for one hour. Eucharistic liturgy is celebrated on a daily basis. Today the disciplines have been compressed or stretched to fit different timeframes.
- Included are solitude, celebration, fasting, simple living, Bible study, worship, “simple contemplation,” etc., as “works righteousness.”
- Used today by most major denominations.

**Spiritual formation:**

- Also known as formative or contemplative spirituality, sacred listening, and the Ignatian Way.
- Teaches and applies the spiritual disciplines, such as contemplative prayer and "inner healing."
- A movement through which contemplative prayer enters churches and brings individuals into contact with evil spirits.
- Includes the wrong theology originated from Catholicism and methods from pagan/occult Eastern mysticism.

**Spiritual retreat:** A place to train in emerging church practices, especially contemplative prayer/meditation.

**Taize prayer/singing:** See “Positive self-talk.”

**Transformation; transformational:** Most commonly used when referring to “spiritual transformation” or “transformational faith.” The act of transforming the deeper aspects of the human spirit through a self-induced or “divine” act. Used in metaphysics (a branch of philosophy), which is often unbiblical. Focuses on relationships, community, and contemplative spirituality.

**Unity in diversity:** See this chapter’s section entitled “Unity in diversity.”

You may also notice the trend of using slang words, which belittles the reverence of spirituality. Beware of words that begin with “re” such as: re-forming, reformation, re-imagined, re:church, re:frame, reimagining, reinventing, rethinking,
redefine, reJesus, reDisciple, reMission, and reOrganize as well as any terms, phrases, or practices you encounter that are unfamiliar to you.