



# Soul Food

## Hybrid?

By Ken Ortize

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For decades Christian leaders have complained about the increasing secularization of American society. Soon they may wish that were the case. What is coming may prove to be far worse. Instead of a total turning away from Christianity, we are facing a bastardized hybrid; a Christ-less, Cross-less Christianity!

In his book, *Jesus the King*, Tim Keller explains how this happens: "When Christianity is in a place of power and wealth for a long period, the radical message of sin and grace and the cross become muted or even lost. Then Christianity starts to transmute into a nice, safe religion; one that's for respectable people who try to be good. And eventually it becomes virtually dormant."

Social scientist Christian Smith adds,

"Its not so much that Christianity is being secularized. Rather it is subtly... degenerating into a pathetic version of itself... displaced by a different faith... We see God as a teacher on the playground who steps in only when things get out of control."

In a comprehensive survey of those who profess to believe in Jesus and the Bible, Smith found four "core beliefs" that have almost nothing in common with Christianity.

1. God watches over human life on earth, but is not particularly involved in a person's life, except when He is needed to resolve a problem.

2. God wants people to be good, nice and fair to each other, as taught by most world religions.

3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about one's self.

4. Good people go to heaven when they die.

Additionally, those surveyed were altogether tolerant of other religious views, except on one point: Certainty. In a world filled with conflict, they are "convinced that the only way for people to get along is if no one had strong convictions that their beliefs are true." If you are assertive about your beliefs, you are either mentally unstable, a jihadist, and a danger to the rest of us.

Though most grew up in the church, they prefer to identify themselves as spiritual rather than religious. They are "into faith, not Christianity." Like the characters in Steven Turner's *Creed*, they believe that, "Jesus was a good man just like Buddha, Mohammed and ourselves. He was a good moral teacher although we think his good morals were bad. We believe that all religions are basically the same, at least the ones that we read... They only differ on matters of creation, sin, heaven, hell, God, and salvation."

Need I say it? What they believe is more a religious parody than a spiritual path. No wonder Jesus preferred that men were either "hot" or "cold," (Revelation 3:16). Then the differences are obvious. Distinctions are clear. But when we are lukewarm, words loose meaning, lines become blurred, and it is harder to know what someone

means when he says he is a Christian. Which prods me to leave you with this question: Are you a Christian? Is it clear?

*Editor's Note: You can connect with Calvary Spokane Church on their social media community, The City, at <https://calvaryspokane.onthecity.org>. You can also check out their many resources available including podcasts at [www.calvaryspokane.com](http://www.calvaryspokane.com) or call their office at 509-467-2860 for more information*



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