

FOREWORD

False Dawn may be the most important book you read this year. Everyone, whether you consider yourself liberal or conservative, secular or devout, should heed its warning.

At a time when many of the religions are at war with each other, a simple notion is gaining popularity: that what humankind needs to save itself is a single über-religion and global governance that will bring humanity together in life-saving global harmony.

To understand why the idea of a one-world religion is such a bad idea, it may help to first understand why it can sound so good. Many supporters of a “one-world religion” have aims that, in fact, appear to be both visionary and vitally necessary. Throughout history, there have been endless divisive, bloodthirsty edicts from rabbis, Popes, ministers, and imams—demands for life-or-death allegiance to Yahweh, Christ, or Allah.

Now, our world is armed to the teeth, and members of all the great religions have access to nuclear weapons—weapons that we can use to act out the Apocalypse ourselves. There are teenaged Saudi fundamentalists who would happily immolate themselves to truck-nuke the White House, in order to avenge the Crusades. As some people see these dangers, they are creating a movement to unite the nations and the religions of the world, establishing a religious and political form of Esperanto in the hope for peace.

In *False Dawn*, Lee Penn reveals the history of this movement and its key contemporary champions—among whom are Mikhail Gorbachev and global power broker George Soros. (Strange bedfellows, indeed: Gorbachev, who seemingly fell on his sword to save Western civilization—and now wants to remake the world as a Green, and Soros, the tycoon who tanked the British pound and the Southeast Asian stock markets.) He also explains in chilling detail why the development of a “one-world religion” would be a disaster for us all.

I first became aware of *False Dawn* after reading Lee Penn’s stories about the threat of a “one-world religion,” articles that he had written for *New Oxford Review*, *Touchstone Magazine*, and the *Journal of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project*. I had known Lee for many years as a very perceptive and fair-minded scholar of religious issues, as someone who was suspicious of easy answers and who was not afraid to take unpopular stands. When I first read his accounts of the new world religion and its architects, Lee was helping me research a book, soon to be published by Grove-Atlantic, that traced mankind’s concepts of immortality and the hereafter. During our collaboration, he reminded me that typically faiths that were meant to serve God end up serving men—after the original beliefs are corrupted by the very leaders who had vowed to protect them.

A one-world religion is only the latest, and certainly the greatest, example of this corruption of faith. In the new global village of Gorbachev and Soros, there would be only one chapel—an “interfaith temple” where worshippers would take spiritual direction from a new, alloyed sacred text. Such a “Scripture” would, presumably, combine all the best aspects of the Torah, the Bible, the Koran, and the wisdom of the East. In the broadest sense, *False Dawn* speaks to the worst aspect of the communications age: the destruction of all cultures through homogenization. We live in a time that may soon see kids in Modesto, California and kids in Calcutta, India all wearing the same clothes, playing the same sports, watching the same movies, and even using the same slang. In this same vein, we can see a world approaching in which these children all come together to worship some great amalgamated “savior.”

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Notwithstanding the tortuous compromises of faith that would be required, the idea that one could create a single, superior global spirituality makes no more sense than the notion of making a “perfect automobile” by combining the best parts from a Mercedes, a Cadillac, a Ferrari, and a Rolls-Royce. In either case, the result would be a jalopy that goes nowhere. However, to understand why so many powerful world leaders, from the political left and right alike, feel that a one-world religion is a world-saving panacea, you will have to take up *False Dawn*.

Lee Penn explains how a religion meant to satisfy everyone will be doomed to satisfy no one; he also suggests some vital solutions.

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