

# **Theological Responses to Folk Religions**

## ***Dangers in dealing with the 'middle zone'***

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- **syncretism: Christo-paganism or a Christian animism**
- **weak view of sin, seeing humans as innocent victims**
- **human centeredness – concerned with our own well being**
- **experience-based theology**
- **reinforcing secularism**
- **generating a false sense of guilt**
- **faith in leaders rather than God**

**MASS SPIRITUALITY**

# **SATAN SEEKS TO DISCOURAGE US PHYSICALLY**

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**[Job]**

- **by causing illnesses**
- **by hardships that discourage  
us**

# **SATAN SEEKS TO DISCOURAGE US PSYCHOLOGICALLY**

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- **he tempts us:**
  - **temptation**
  - **desire**
  - **act**
  - **habit**
  - **addiction**
  - **“bondage”**
- **he deceives us (2 Cor. 4:3-4)**
  - **confusion**
  - **darkness**
- **he creates fear in us**

# **SATAN SEEKS TO DISCOURAGE US SOCIALLY**

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- **by rewards:**
  - money
  - honor, status
  - security
- **by social control:**
  - gossip
  - ostracism
- **by suffering:**
  - beatings, imprisonment
  - death

# **SATAN SEEKS TO DISCOURAGE US IDEOLOGICALLY**

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- **by blinding us from seeing reality by means of false ideologies**

# **GOD WORKS IN US PHYSICALLY**

- **by giving us life**
- **by answering our prayers**
- **by strengthening us in times of trial**
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# **GOD WORKS IN US PSYCHOLOGICALLY**

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- **by his presence in us in the Holy Spirit**
- **by illuminating our minds**
- **by our consciences**
- **by experiences of joy and hope**
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# **GOD WORKS IN US SOCIALLY**

- **through the church as his body**
- **through Christian families**
- **through Christian friends**
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# **GOD WORKS IN US IDEOLOGICALLY**

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- **through Scripture**
- **through the teachings  
of the believers**
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# **GOD WORKS IN US DIRECTLY**

- through his providence
- through his presence
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# **CHRISTIAN ANSWERS TO THE 'MIDDLE ZONE'**

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## **1. Medieval Catholics:**

- *Mary and the saints*

## **2. Reformers:**

- *Doctrine of Providence*

## **3. Anabaptists and Pietists:**

- *Living with the sense of God's immediate presence*

## **4. Charismatics:**

- *Work of the Holy Spirit*

## **5. Cults:**

- *Commands of the leader*

# Characteristic of New Independent Christian Movements

- identify with the Old Testament
- read the Scriptures from a position of poverty and oppression
- stress wisdom literature and its emphasis on the transiency of life
- identify with lamentation bemoaning the fall of society and state