

“CHRISTIAN” MYSTICISM

(PART 2)

2. Lectio Divina

Evangelical and Protestant leaders are quickly endorsing lectio divina, a slow, repetitious reading/quoting of Scriptures, as a “spiritual” mantra. Claimed objectives:

- Over several minutes the “suppliant” gets rid of extraneous thoughts, tuning out distractions.
- Then one can hear “God’s” voice and feel His presence.

This is a form of contemplative prayer – but the words or phrases are taken from the Bible. As previously noted:

- With such repetition, the sacred content loses its inspired meaning.
- This binds the mind into a mystical trance, disengaging the higher centers of the mind where discernment, reason and understanding reside.
- An “altered state of consciousness” follows.

Paul listed the virtues of holiness. Then he admonished his readers: “**think** on these things” (Philippians 4:8). Such repetitions mock the sacred purpose of His Word.

This practice goes back to the early monks and Jesuits who were “inspired” by many “worship **rites**” used in Hinduism and Buddhism.

In Lectio Divina, God’s Word is misused. God did not intend for us to be able to approach His throne through a ritualistic exercise. This is contrary to Christ’s counsel in Matthew 6:7 to avoid the “vain repetitions” that the heathen practice!

- Paul advised us how to make the beautiful “God connect:”
- “*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need* (Hebrews 4:14-16).
- We can talk with Him directly – in faith we can connect with God Himself as though we were standing right in front of His throne!

Individually, we can come to God as **rational beings**. There is no need for an alternative sensory experience to make contact with the very center of the universe!

- Jesus Christ even stands at that throne as our representative (Hebrews 9:15, I John 2:1). Through Him – the Way – we can approach God (John 14:6), assured of a personal connection!
- Jesus is there, constantly affirming our prayers.

The Lord’s Prayer is a rational model – “after this manner ... pray ... Our Father” (Matthew 6:9)! Amazing – we can even address Him as if we were already in His family.

3. The Labyrinth Journey

A circular labyrinth is painted/created on the ground or floor that ends at the center.

- It is a complex winding path one embarks on, praying a repetitive word or phrase with each step until that center is reached.
- It is a “prayer path” used by Rosicrucians, Catholics, mystics and, now, Protestants.

The “center” symbolizes the center of one’s self – a “sacred place” – the “inner temple” – where the divine is. It is claimed that it is there that the Sacred Sustainer, Creator of Possibilities, Forgiving Releaser or Supporter resides – who can be met.

- This again refutes God’s Holy Word:
- “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).¹

The Bible reveals that in the heart (center) of man our true self is not “God” but rather a sinful and wicked being:

- “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies” (Matthew 15:18, 19).
- This worship premise is not based on divine spirituality but pagan assumptions. It is another form of spiritualism.

4. Energy Touch

A mystical force – a “divine energy” – a self-actualizing “enlightenment” is called **Kundalini**.

- This is often sought after in **Yoga exercises**, especially when accompanied by a “guide.”
- It is described as a “**spiritual touch**” experience.

With “guided touches” it is called **Reiki** – and is claimed to be a “healing technique.” This comes from Tibet and refers to a “universal life” or “God’s energy” that comes through another person.

- A “spiritual guide” places his hands on the recipient.
- The guide “channels” the energy from the “cosmos.”
- Both experience “virtue” – power. At times, a visible light is seen surrounding both.

This experience is at times accompanied by the visible appearance of mysterious **beings**.

“During the Reiki attunement process, the avenue that is opened within the body to allow Reiki to flow through also opens up the psychic communication centers. This is why many Reiki practitioners report having verbalized channeled communications *with the spirit world*.”²

¹ Teichrib, Carl; *The Labyrinth Journey* (Lighthouse Trails Publishing – 2013).

² Phylameana lila Desy, *The Everything Reiki Book* (Avon, MA: Adams Media – 2004), p. 144 – as quoted in Yunger, Yungen, Ray; *A Time of Departing* (Lighthouse Trails Publishing, MT – 2002, 2006), p. 97.

God has warned us:

*“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or **that useth divination**, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch” (Deuteronomy 18:10).*

It is said that even a “centering prayer” is made “more effective” if there is a **touching spiritual guide**. That is claimed to be “powerful” and “very spiritual.”³

These are all forms of mysticism, tapping into another “world,” making contact with a “realm” at war with God!

The power of another “principality” is being channeled.

- The touch experiences are often described as pleasant (physically and mysteriously “spiritual”).¹
- At times the voices being heard give counsel. This can be from none other than Satan’s communicants.

Often, spiritual guides receive “confessions” from their subjects – not unlike a priest during confession. Things that belong only to God and the suppliant become known to others. This weakens the will and the significance of sin.

- “I can always return to my accepting ‘spiritual’ leader. So, I don’t have to urgently address my errors.”
- “No matter what I do – they are there to hear and help – and often with the assurance of a supernatural presence.”

Jesus Christ came to save sinners and those needing help (I Timothy 1:15).⁴ He commissioned no man to be a moral savior, nor did He condone any power beyond His divine realm.

5. Mind Magic

Paul noted: *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (I Timothy 4:1).*

- Everything noted as mysticism to this point is a sign of the “latter times.”
- As the search for that “god” within proceeds, it leads to:
“The claim that the Spirit of God, angels, demons, and man’s spirit all inhabit the same dimension. Again the transcendence of God is denied. This, in fact, is the basis for

³ Rogo, D. Scott; *The Potentials of Therapeutic Touch*, Interview with Janet F. Quinn, Ph.D., R.N. (*Science of Mind*, May 1988), p. 87.

⁴ Yunger, *op. cit.*, *The Truth About Energy Healing*.

Satan's claim, 'I will make myself like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:14), which in turn was the basis for his promise to Eve that she could be like the gods also."⁵

- On the contrary, the Bible presents God as totally in a class and realm by Himself: who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see (1 Timothy 5:16).⁶
- Yet, at the center of all these mystical practices there is a drive to discover one's inherent "divine" within. This is totally against Scripture. These techniques redefine man's nature and view Satan's realm as "right."

These "tools" claim the ability to tap into the "latent power" of our "very souls." Here is one claim by a spiritual guide:

"Would it shock you to learn that God's healing power is available through your own mind and you can trigger it – by faith! ...

"If you had DIRECT ACCESS to your unconscious mind, you could command ANY DISEASE to be healed in a flash. That's how much power is at hand. Jesus obviously had access to it, for He produced COMMAND healings.

"But God has purposely placed this power beyond our awareness. That way fallen man can't tamper with it. However there is a way to get to it – indirectly – BY FAITH."⁷

What kind of "faith" is this? What kind of "self" has creative energy to progress upward? It's not found in the Word of God!

*"For there will be a time when **people will not tolerate sound teaching**. Instead, following their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves, because they have an insatiable curiosity to hear new things. And they will turn away from hearing the truth, but on the other hand **they will turn aside to myths**" (II Timothy 4:1-4 – NET).*

God, the Creator, warned:

"Despite your many incantations and your numerous amulets.... Disaster will overtake you; you will not know how to charm it away. Destruction will fall on you; you will not be able to appease it. Calamity will strike you suddenly, before you recognize it." (Isaiah 47:9, 11 – NET).

A Protestant pastor noted: "Mysticism, once cast to the sidelines of the Christian tradition, is now situated in postmodernism culture near the center.... In the words of one of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century, Jesuit philosopher of religion/dogmatist Karl Rahner, 'The Christian of tomorrow will be a mystic, one who has experienced something, or he will be nothing.' [Mysticism] is metaphysics arrived at through mindbody experiences."⁸

⁵ Hunt, Dave and T. A. McMahon; *The Seduction of Christianity* (Harvest House Publishers; Eugene, OR – 1985), p. 112.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Personal Christianity Newsletter*, August 1979. C. S. Lovell, "The Medicine of Your Mind."

⁸ Sweet, Leonard; *Quantum Spirituality* (United Theological Seminary; 1st ed., December 1991), p. 76.

As Protestant churches adopt these experiential practices, the distance between themselves and the mystical dogmas of the papacy is lessened.⁹ There is an appeal to “expect something spiritual” through “multi-sensory worship” by participating in something “mystical.”¹⁰ ***If mystical, it doesn’t have to be defined.***

The Bible warns that heaven’s divine-oriented connect, faith, “*cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17). It originates with the Creator!

New Thinking

“As the Word of God becomes less and less important, the rise in mystical experiences escalates, and these experiences are presented to convince the unsuspecting that Christianity is about feeling, touching, smelling, and *seeing* God. The postmodern mindset is the perfect environment for fostering *spiritual formation*. This term suggests there are various ways and means to get closer to God and to emulate Him. Thus the idea that if you do certain practices, you can be more *like* Jesus. Proponents of spiritual formation erroneously teach that *anyone* can practice these mystical rituals and find *God within*. Having a relationship with Jesus Christ is not a prerequisite. In a DVD called *Be Still*, which promotes contemplative prayer, Richard Foster says that contemplative prayer is for anyone and that by practicing it, one becomes ‘a portable sanctuary’ for ‘the presence of God.’”¹¹

“Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD. You, LORD, have abandoned your people, the descendants of Jacob. [Why?] They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and embrace pagan customs” (Isaiah 2:5-6 – NIV).

Evangelical David Brooks noted of Pastor Rick Warren (Saddleback Church; Orange, CA – involved in alternative worship experiences):

“And when I look at the evangelical community, I see a community in the midst of a transformation – branching out beyond the traditional issues of abortion and gay marriage, and getting more involved in programs to help the needy. I see Rick Warren, who through his new PEACE initiative is sending thousands of people to Rwanda and other African nations to fight poverty and disease ... I see evangelicals who are more and more influenced by Catholic social teaching, with its emphasis on good works. I see the historical rift healing between those who emphasized personal and social morality. Most of all, I see a new sort of evangelical leader emerging.”¹²

Intriguingly, with this “new emerging Christianity” the social gospel is so encompassing that the spiritual gospel is compromised. Warren, as a spinoff, has a diminished regard for Bible prophecy. He writes:

“When the disciples wanted to talk about prophecy, Jesus quickly switched the conversation to evangelism. He wanted them to concentrate on their mission in the world.

⁹ White, Ellen G.; *Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1894.

¹⁰ Kimball, Dan; *The Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI; Zondervan – 2003), pp. 127, 143.

¹¹ Oakland, Roger; *Faith Undone* (Lighthouse Trails Publishing, MT – 2007), p. 91 – quoting Richard Foster, *Be Still* DVD (Fox Home Entertainment – 2006 – section “Contemplative Prayer”).

¹² Brooks, David; *A Natural Alliance* (New York Times, May 26, 2005).

He said in essence, ‘The details of my return are none of your business. What is your business is the mission I have given you. Focus on that!’

“If you want Jesus to come back sooner, focus on fulfilling your mission, not figuring out prophecy.”¹³

Didn’t Jesus say: “*Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching* [“watching” for His “signs”] ... *Be ye therefore ready*” (Luke 12:37, 40).

“*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts*” (II Peter 1:19).

Other Emerging “Spiritual” Leaders Hostile to End-Time Events

Any warning about “end-time scenarios of upheaval and the return of Christ opens the door for plenty of hostile comments. Tony Campolo says that Christians who ‘make a big thing of their claim that we are now living in the final stage of church history prior to the second coming of Christ’ have been the cause of ‘extremely detrimental’ consequences. They ‘discount the Sermon on the Mount,’ they don’t care about the needy, and they have had such a negative ‘impact on geopolitics,’ which Campolo says ‘can lead only to war.’ Basically, according to Campolo they are the reason the world is in such a mess, and they are holding back progress of a more emerging spirituality. Rick Warren states that these types of Christians (he calls them fundamentalists) are ‘one of the big enemies of the 21st century,’ and he likens them to Islamic fundamentalists (terrorists).”¹⁴

Evangelical and emerging church leader Erwin McManus noted:

“My goal is to destroy Christianity as a world religion and be a recatalyst for the movement of Jesus Christ ... Some people are upset with me because it sounds like I’m anti-Christian. I think they might be right.”¹⁵

In spite of minimizing the traditional Messianic hopes of Christianity, within this new spirituality there is still the anticipatory hope of the arrival of some “healer” or “savior.”

“The reappearance of the Avatar [world teacher], by whatever name he may be known, has been prophesied in many religions as well as in the esoteric [occult] tradition. **A major manifestation is expected.**”¹⁶

“**The coming one will not be Christian**, a Hindu, a Buddhist, not an American, Jew, Italian or Russian – his title is not important; he is for all humanity, to unite all religions, philosophies and nations.”¹⁷

¹³ Warren, Rick; *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI; Zondervan – 2002), pp. 285-286.

¹⁴ Oakland, *op. cit.*, p. 160 – quoting Tony Campolo, *Speaking My Mind*, p. 209, 211, 217, 212-13, 215 and Paul Nussbaum, *The Purpose Driven Pastor* (*Philadelphia Enquirer*, January 8, 2006, <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/1555425/posts>).

¹⁵ CE Staff Reporter, citing Erwin McManus, “Pastor, noted author takes uncivil approach in new offering” (*Christian Examiner*, http://www.christianexaminer.com/Articles/Articles%20Mar05/Art_Mar05_09.html)

¹⁶ Roof, Simons; *About the Aquarian Age* (The Mountain School for Esoteric Studies – 1971), p. 7.

“The work of the Christ (two thousand years ago) was to proclaim certain great possibilities and the existence of great powers. **His work when he reappears** will be to prove the fact of these possibilities and to reveal the true nature and potency of man.”¹⁸

Through mediums and guides to “worshippers” comes this account:

“Instantly my body felt as though it were filled with white light and I became weak in my knees and I started swaying. Soon, I became unable to stand, and someone helped me to sit in a chair. Thereafter, I felt extreme heat beating down into my head, particularly on the left side. All during this experience, I was completely conscious and my body was filled with waves of ecstasy. I had heard about and visualized white light before, but had never experienced being totally infused with it. I immediately made an association to the healing power of Jesus Christ, and had no doubts that this was the nature of the energy being transmitted to me.”¹⁹

- These “mysterious acts” of worship, seeking to “contact” a “central source” of power, knowledge or feeling, is Satan-driven **spiritualism** –
- Where one can make contact with “God” within self.

“Christian” mysticism claims:

“Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continually return ... It is a Light Within that illumines the face of God and casts new shadows and new glories upon the human face ... Here is the Slumbering Christ, stirring to be awakened, to become the soul we clothe in earthly form and action. And He is within us all ... The Inner Light, the Inward Christ, is no mere doctrine belonging peculiarly to a small religious fellowship, to be accepted or rejected as a mere belief. It is the living Center of Reference for all Christian groups – yes, and of non-Christian groups as well who seriously mean to dwell in the secret place of the most High.”²⁰

“We must be willing to go down into the recreating silences, into the inner world of contemplation. In their writings, all of the masters of meditation strive to awaken us to the fact that the universe is much larger than we know, that there are vast unexplored inner regions that are just as real as the physical world we know so well.”²¹

Be Warned – Analyze Carefully:

“If Satan can so befog and deceive the human mind as to lead mortals to think that there is an inherent power in themselves to accomplish great and good works, they cease to rely upon God to do for them that which they think there is power in themselves to do. They acknowledge not a superior power. They give not God the glory which He claims, and which is due to His great and excellent Majesty. Satan’s object is thus accomplished, and he exults that

¹⁷ Davis, John and Naomi Rice; *Messiah and the Second Coming* (Wyoming, MI: Coptic Press – 1982), p. 150 – as quoted in Ray Yungen, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

¹⁸ Bailey, Alice; *The Reappearance of the Christ* (New York, NY: Lucis Publishing Company, 4th Printing – 1962), p. 124150 – as quoted in Ray Yungen, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

¹⁹ Rand, Marjorie L.; “Healing: A Gift That Awakens” (*The Whole Person* magazine – June 1988), p. 40150 – as quoted in Ray Yungen, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

²⁰ Kelly, Thomas; *A Testament of Devotion*, 1893–1941.

²¹ Foster, Richard; *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 1978.

fallen men presumptuously exalt themselves as he exalted himself in heaven and was thrust out. He knows that if man exalts himself, his ruin is just as certain as was his own.”²²

“They think there is such power in themselves to accomplish great works that they realize no necessity of a higher power. Their principles and faith are ‘after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.’ Jesus has not taught them this philosophy. Nothing of the kind can be found in His teachings. He did not direct the minds of poor mortals to themselves, to a power which they possessed. He was ever directing their minds to God, the Creator of the universe, as the source of their strength and wisdom. Special warning is given: ‘Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.’

“The teachers of spiritualism come in a pleasing, bewitching manner to deceive you, and if you listen to their fables you are beguiled by the enemy of righteousness and will surely lose your reward. When once the fascinating influence of the archdeceiver overcomes you, you are poisoned, and its deadly influence adulterates and destroys your faith in Christ’s being the Son of God, and you cease to rely on the merits of His blood. Those deceived by this philosophy are beguiled of their reward through the deceptions of Satan. They rely upon their own merits.”²³

In many stories within God’s Holy Word demons were “cast out” of individuals. There was a supernatural power, a spirit, actually residing within the individual.

- It was foreign to God’s Spirit.
- It was not some latent power of humanitarian goodness that could be “called up.”
- It was a “familiar spirit” that took over the person’s will and life.

Addressing this type of power, we read:

*“But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city **used sorcery, and bewitched the people** of Samaria, giving out that [within] himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time **he had bewitched them with sorceries**”* (Acts 8:9-11).

For those trapped in this deceptive teaching and possible experience, Luke notes in Acts 19:18-20 the hope for change – recovery from satanic power:

“And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.”

- When God’s Spirit possesses the believer
- The drive to disengage from these spirit powers is impelling!

²² White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 294.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-298.

The institutionalized Christian church is being reshaped. Its new “architecture” resembles little found in the Holy Word of God. It seems overwhelming to a fundamental Christian that the pristine truths of the Bible are being replaced by a sensory–works oriented “faith.”

This “emergent spirituality” promotes a transformation and a form of salvation apart from the Christ of the Bible. It is a sinister ecumenism that bonds pagan and Christian individuals through rites. More than that, this “form of godliness” could even attract an atheist, without ever calling upon the name of Jesus.

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” (1 John 4:2-3).

From the Wisdom of Yesteryear

“We are pressing on to the final conflict, and this is no time to compromise. It is no time to hide your colors. When the battle wages sore, let no one turn traitor. It is no time to lay down or conceal our weapons, and give Satan the advantage in the warfare.”²⁴

Paul passionately testified:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18).

The gospel of Jesus is what starts our “power journey” to heaven (John 1:12), where we will then personally meet the God of the universe – our divine Friend!

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EndTime Issues..., Number 157, September 5, 2013

²⁴ *Ibid.*, December 6, 1892.