



**LIGHTHOUSE TRAILS RESEARCH PROJECT January 22, 2025 LIGHTHOUSE
TRAILS RESOURCES**

WHEN PRINTING: To print this e-newsletter, click the green Print button above. There will be an option to remove all images. Also if the PDF format doesn't format well for you, just use the regular print option after you click the green Print button. We have recently improved this feature so that the font size is larger. You may also go to our blog, enter the title of any individual article in the search engine and print just that article in a nice PDF format.

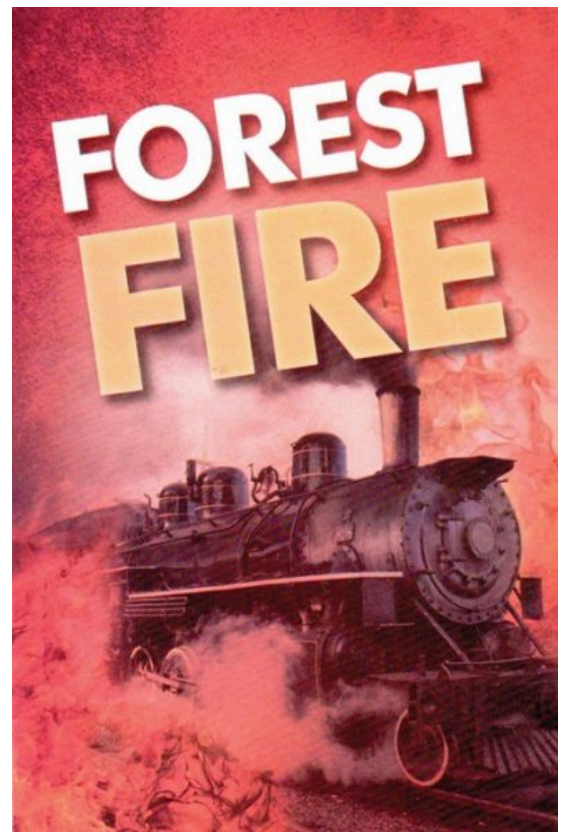
If you like this e-newsletter that you are reading, you might also like the **Lighthouse Trails Research Journal**: Our low-cost subscription-based print journal is mailed out to homes, churches, and offices 4 times a year. The 40-44-page journal contains the most important stories from our e-newsletter from the previous period and also other features. You may wish to receive that *in addition* to this free e-newsletter. You can sign up any time during the year for the print journal. You can also buy individual or past issues [here](#). For common questions about the journal, click [here](#). **See a sample issue [here](#).**

Note: Because we are a research ministry, we do post news articles from various secular and Christian sources along with our own in-house articles if we believe our readers can benefit from the information. We also post video clips from YouTube at times.

*Photos used in this e-newsletter that are not exclusive to Lighthouse Trails are either 1) in the public domain, 2) used in accordance with the US Fair Use Act, 3) or are from bigstockphoto.com unless otherwise mentioned; used with permission.

Want to make a comment? You may do so on any article on our research blog.

Forest Fire



On September 1, 1894, in the deep woods of Minnesota, a huge forest fire came raging into a little lumber town named Hinckley. As walls of flame roared towards them, the terrified inhabitants raced in panic toward the railroad tracks, the only clear pathway through the forest.

As they ran wildly away from the town and its igniting buildings, they saw a passenger train heading down the tracks toward the town, bound for the city of St. Paul. Jim Root, the engineer at the throttle, saw the fire and thought that he could race past the inferno, but as he neared Hinckley he realized that it was too late. The trestle ahead had collapsed in flame.

Reversing his engine, Jim held his train there long enough to let the fleeing crowd of people clamber aboard. By the time the last person had climbed on, the flames were surrounding his train. Then it was full speed backward toward the nearest deep water, Skunk Lake, six miles back down the line.

Through a furnace of fiery flames they plunged. Overheated air exploded against the locomotive, and glass flew everywhere as the windows shattered. The baggage car caught fire, and their path led over burning railroad ties.

Flying pieces of debris tore into Jim's face and shoulders; flame scorched his hair, face and hands. Faint from the smoke, he slumped into unconsciousness until Jack McGowan, the fire tender, threw a bucket of cold water on him. Gritting his teeth, he shifted the throttle back open, and the train continued through the inferno with its load of screaming, crying, praying people.

This content will be included.

Forest Fire

“Freed hostages reunited with families after 471 days in Gaza”

“Los Angeles Fires Push Crews to Limits as Critics Blame Government Policy”

The Final Outcome of Practicing Contemplative Prayer: Interspirituality

Lighthouse Trails 2024 YEAR-IN-REVIEW – Part I: Top 5 Letters to the Editor

Lighthouse Trails 2024 YEAR-IN-REVIEW – Top 10 Articles

Episcopal Church May Be Dying Out . . . But Evangelical Church Shares Same “Missing” Link

End-of-Year Bryce Homes Kenya Report

Lighthouse Trails Sends Out 24th Mailing to over 1000 Christian Pastors and Leaders

New Booklet: *Haunted Souls – From Meditation Into Hallucinations*

2024 Book and Booklet New Release Packs

Supporting Lighthouse Trails

SIGN UP FOR THE LIGHTHOUSE TRAILS RESEARCH PRINT JOURNAL (not this e-newsletter)

INFORMATION ABOUT LIGHTHOUSE TRAILS

At last, Jim could tell through his swollen eyes that they were at the lake. He slammed on the brakes and collapsed. The passengers tumbled off and broke down the fencing around the water and dived into its cool wetness as the fire roared over them. McGowan and two other men pulled Jim Root from the cab. They dragged him, badly burned, into the lake.

The fire passed, leaving the train looking like a skeleton of twisted metal. Jim Root survived, but he was scarred for life. His bravery and courage had saved many lives, but at a terrible cost to himself.

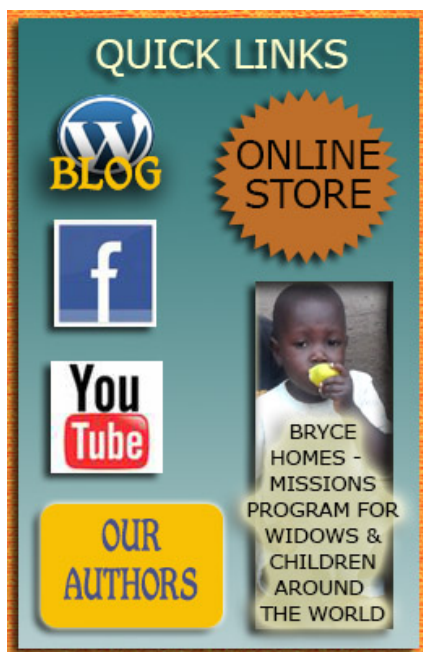
There is another one who went through fire — the awful fire of the judgment of God upon sin. It was the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who suffered more on the cross than we can ever know or understand — and He did it to save others. (“He saved others; Himself He cannot save,” taunted the watching crowd at the crucifixion.) He too was wounded and scarred to bring us salvation: **“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed”** (Isaiah 53:5).

The fleeing villagers near Hinckley climbed aboard Jim Root’s train and were deeply grateful for his sacrifice in saving them from the fire. Those who accept Jesus’ sacrifice are saved as well, saved from the terrible fire of hell. The passengers were saved — are you? **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31).

Let us pray for the victims of the Southern California fires that are currently happening, that lives and homes can be saved and that many would turn to the Lord.

(The above story is from a Bible Truth Publishers Gospel tract by the same name.)

“Freed hostages reunited with families after 471 days in Gaza”



**IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR INFORMATION,
DEFINITIONS, AND MORE, USE OUR
TOPICAL INDEX.**

or Our Blog Search Engine

**If you are NOT a subscriber to our 40-page
quarterly Journal delivered to your home,
office, or church (not this free e-newsletter
you are reading) and want to be, click
button to subscribe:**



Only \$14/year for U.S. addresses.

**(The subscribe button above is for the hard
copy journal delivered to your home, office, or
church, not this free e-newsletter you are
reading.)**

**E-NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE
(21 years of newsletters)**

**SUBSCRIBE TO THIS FREE
E-NEWSLETTER**

Who We Are



Former Hamas hostage Emily Damari, 28, is seen after her release at Sheba Tel Hashomer Medical Center in Ramat Gan, Jan. 19, 2024. Photo by Maayan Toaf/GPO.

LTRP Note: The following is posted for informational purposes. See video below story.

**By Akiva Van Koningsveld
*Jewish News Syndicate***

Released hostages Emily Damari, Doron Steinbrecher and Romi Gonen were reunited with their families at Sheba Tel Hashomer Medical Center in Ramat Gan on Sunday night after 471 in Hamas captivity in the Gaza Strip.

The three women were the first of the 33 captives expected to be freed during the first phase of the ceasefire agreement with Hamas that went into effect earlier in the day. The women were handed over to the Israel Defense Forces by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross inside the Gaza Strip.

A Hamas propaganda clip released after the women left the terrorist group's control showed them being forced to accept bags of "mementos" from their time in captivity, including a Hamas "certificate of appreciation," as hundreds of Gaza civilians looked on. Click here to continue reading.

"Los Angeles Fires Push Crews to Limits as Critics Blame Government Policy"

Lighthouse Trails is a Christian publishing company and research project ministry. We work with a group of Christian journalists and authors, all who understand the times in which we live from a biblical perspective. While we hope you will buy and read the books and booklets we have published, watch the DVDs we have produced, and support our ministry, we also provide extensive free research, documentation, and news on our Research site, blog, e-newsletter, and now our subscription-based print journal. We pray that the products as well as the online research will be a blessing to the body of Christ and a witness to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, trusting in Him for the salvation of their souls.

[Click here for contact information.](#)

SUPPORT LIGHTHOUSE TRAILS

LIGHTHOUSE TRAILS READERS SUPPORTING BRYCE HOME'S INTERNATIONAL IN KENYA SINCE 2011. Visit the Understand the Times website for the latest updates on the Bryce Homes International missions outreach in Kenya, helping Christian widows and children.

Categories of Our Resources



Some local critics have pointed to the council's \$17.6 million fire department budget cut—initially proposed at \$23 million by the mayor—as a major concern.

By Brad Jones
The Epoch Times

1/9/2025 - As four massive fires engulf Los Angeles, critics are blaming the government for putting lives, homes, and businesses at risk.

Amid it all, Sam Digiovanna, chief at the Verdugo Fire Academy in Glendale, Calif., told *The Epoch Times* that more than 1,000 firefighters are doing their best “to stop the forward progress of this fire” and “get a containment line around it.”

“Our first priority is the protection of life, which means a lot of times we’re evacuating people and making sure people get out safely,” said Digiovanna, a former fire chief in Monrovia, part of Los Angeles County. [Click here to continue reading.](#)

(photo from a 2-second YouTube video clip:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVD2Oje2y5c>;
used in accordance with the U.S. Fair Use Act.

The Final Outcome of Practicing Contemplative Prayer: Interspirituality



LTRP Note: Occasionally, we hear, through the *proverbial* grapevine, the words, “Why does Lighthouse Trails keep talking about contemplative prayer?” With the majority of the Christian colleges and seminaries introducing students to contemplative spirituality via Spiritual Formation programs, and with Christian publishers continuing to vigorously publish books promoting the mystical spirituality, and with countless pastors and church teachers giving it a thumbs up to their congregations, what else *can* we possibly do but to continue warning about it? Of course, if Christian pastors, leaders, publishers, and schools would diligently warn about this dangerous false teaching themselves, Lighthouse Trails could pack it up and call it a day. But we continue to stand in amazement that after nearly 23 years of warnings, we have witnessed very few in positions of Christian leadership taking on the task, or frankly, even taking the time to understand it. So to answer the question, “Why does Lighthouse Trails keep talking about contemplative prayer,” it is because the final outcome of contemplative prayer is interspirituality, which means contemplative prayer leads practitioners away from the Cross, not toward it. It is for this reason, we cannot stop.

The Final Outcome of Practicing Contemplative Prayer

By Ray Yungen

The final outcome of contemplative prayer is *interspirituality* (i.e., *all paths lead to God*). If you have truly grasped the portrait I have tried to paint in my book, *A Time of Departing*, and articles I have written, you have begun to see what this term signifies. The focus of my criticism of mystical prayer must be understood in the light of interspirituality.

Just what exactly is interspirituality? The premise behind interspirituality is that divinity (God) is in all things (panentheism), and the presence of God is in all religions; there is a connecting together of all things, and through mysticism (i.e., meditation) this state of divinity can be recognized. Consequently, this is a premise that is based on and upheld by an experience that occurs during a self-hypnotic trance linking one to an unseen world rather than to the sound doctrine of the Bible.

It is important to understand that interspirituality is a uniting of the world’s religions through the common thread of mysticism. New Age teacher Wayne Teasdale, a lay monk who coined the term interspirituality, says that interspirituality is “the spiritual common ground which exists among the world’s religions.”¹ Teasdale, in talking about this *universal* church also states:

She [the church] also has a responsibility in our age to be a bridge for reconciling the human family . . . the Spirit is inspiring her through the signs of the times to open to Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Taoists, Confucians, and indigenous peoples. As matrix [a binding substance], the Church would no longer see members of other traditions as outside her life. She would promote the study of these traditions, seek common ground and *parallel insights*.²

An article in my local newspaper revealed just how well received interspirituality has become in certain circles. One Presbyterian elder, who was described as a “Spiritual Director,” made it clear when she said:

I also have a strong interest in Buddhism and do a sitting meditation in Portland [Oregon] as often as I can. I considered myself ecumenical *not only in the Christian tradition, but with all religions*.³ (emphasis mine)

There is a profound and imminent danger taking place within the walls of Christianity. Doctrine has become less important than feeling, and this has led to a mystical paradigm shift. Sound doctrine must be central to this debate because New Ageism has a very idealistic side to it, offering a mystical approach to solve human problems. Everyone would like to have his or her problems solved. Right? That is the practical aspect I have previously written about—a seemingly direct route to a happy and fulfilled life. However, one can promote the attributes of God without actually having God.

People who promote a presumably godly form of spirituality can indeed come against the truth of Christ. Then how can you be assured what you believe and practice is of God?

The Christian message has been clear from the beginning—God has sent a Savior. If man only had to practice some kind of mystical prayer to gain access to God, then the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a fruitless, hollow endeavor.

Sound Christian doctrine comes from the understanding that mankind is sinful, fallen, and separated from God. Man needs a saving work by God! A teaching like panentheism (God is in everybody), which is the foundational root behind contemplative prayer, cannot be reconciled to the finished work of Christ. How could Jesus be our Savior then? New Age constituents will say He is a model for *Christ consciousness*, but the Bible teaches He is the Savior of mankind. Therefore, panentheism cannot be a true doctrine.

The problem is that many well-intentioned people embrace the teachings of panentheism and interspirituality because it sounds so good. It appears less bigoted on God’s part. No one is left out—all are connected to God. There is a great appeal in this message. Nevertheless, the Bible does not teach a universal salvation for man. In contrast, Jesus said:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)

Christ’s message is the polar opposite of these universalist teachings. Many people (even Christians) today think only a few really bad people will be sent to Hell. But in Matthew, the words of Jesus make it clear that this just is not so.

While God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of the world, He did not say all would be saved. His words are clear that many would reject the salvation He provided. But those who are saved have been given the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18) making an appeal to those who are perishing (2 Corinthians 4:3). The Christian message is not samadhi, Zen, kundalini, or the contemplative silence. It is the power of the Cross!

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)

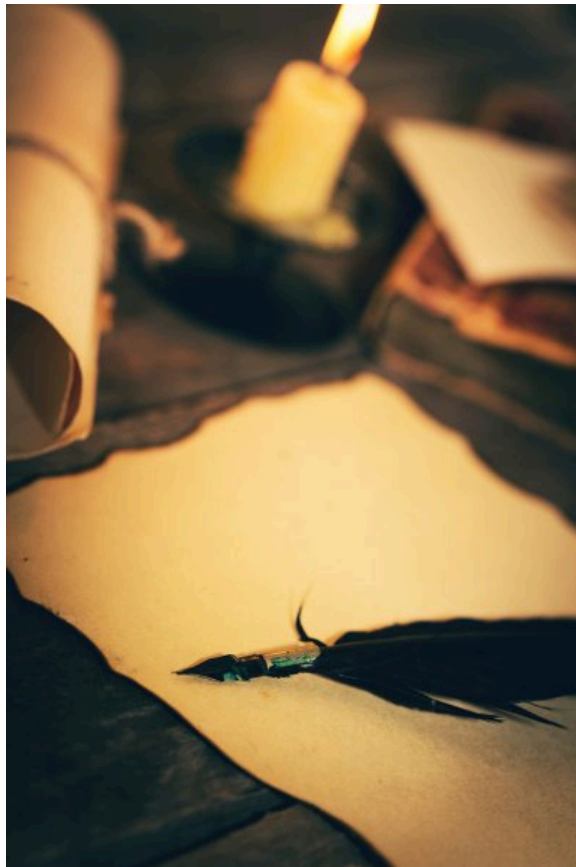
Yes, perishing, and not just unaware of their *true self* (a term used by contemplatives to indicate man’s supposed divinity).

In an opinion poll, the startling results describe how Americans actually view God. *Spirituality and Health* magazine hired a reputable pollster organization to gauge the spiritual beliefs of the American public. This national poll revealed that 84 percent of those questioned believed God to be “everywhere and in everything” rather than “someone somewhere.”⁴ This means panentheism is now the more popular view of God. If true, then a high percentage of evangelical Christians in America already lean towards a panentheistic and interspiritual view of God. Perhaps many of these Christians are fuzzy about the true nature of God.

How could this mystical revolution have come about? How could this perspective have become so widespread? The answer is that over the last forty years, a number of authors have struck a deep chord with millions of readers and seekers within Christendom. These writers have presented and promoted the contemplative view to the extent that many now see it as the only way to “go deeper” in the Christian life. They are the ones who prompt men and women to plunge into contemplative practice.

Endnotes:

1. Wayne Teasdale, “Mysticism as the Crossing of Ultimate Boundaries: A Theological Reflection” (*The Golden String* newsletter, <https://web.archive.org/web/20030210032238/http://clarusbooks.com/Teasdale.html>).
2. Wayne Teasdale, *A Monk in the World* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2002), p. 64.
3. Jan Alsever quoted in *Statesman Journal*, January 27th, 1996, Religion Section.
4. Katherine Kurs, “Are You Religious or Are You Spiritual?” (*Spirituality & Health Magazine*, Spring 2001), p. 28.



At the end of each year, Lighthouse Trails presents its Year in Review, divided into different parts. Below is the first part of our 2024 Year in Review. While we receive numerous letters, comments, calls, and e-mails throughout the year, and consider them all important and of value, we believe the 5 below illustrate very well what many of our readers are concerned about in these difficult days.

1. Letter to the Editor: I Was in a Dark and Dangerous Spiritual Deception: I used to be a Clinical Psychologist. I had a humanistic view and understanding of life, quite liberal and “politically correct” with that “good person” kind of idea. I also went into New Age, eastern ideas, esoteric, although I grew up in a traditional Protestant church.
2. Letter to the Editor: Churchless in the Church: A while back, I sent either links or material to those who, in increasing numbers, find themselves in churches where they are no longer welcome, be they founding or sustaining members, or new arrivals seeking a place to worship and share with likeminded believers.
3. Letter to the Editor Warning: Craig Groeschel’s Life Church Introducing New Age/Contemplative Practices to Tens of Millions Through Its YouVersion Bible App: I attend Life Church with Pastor Craig Groeschel. I have loved my church and the YouVersion Bible app for years. Life Church is the creator of the YouVersion Bible app, which was created in 2008. But in the last couple of years, I have seen error creep into both my church and the app.
4. Letter to the Editor: My Pastor Left and Joined the Eastern Orthodox Church!: Our church’s pastor recently resigned and turned to Eastern Orthodoxy, leaving our Chinese speaking congregation without a pastor. He and his family have been attending an EO church since then.
5. Letter to the Editor: Being Caught Off Guard by “Jesus Calling” Led to Dangerous Spiritual Encounter: My husband passed away in 2016 after some very difficult years. I was distracted and not as spiritually aware as I should have been. A friend recommended *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young. I had never heard of this book, and for the first time, I did not investigate a book before reading it.

Prior Year-in-Reviews

(image from istockphoto.com; used with permission)

1. From a Former Nazarene to the Church of the Nazarene: Why Now Do You Practice These Things? (Manny Silva): There are some Christians in the Concerned Nazarenes group who sincerely have asked questions about Lent and our objection to participating in it. Some believe there is no harm and it helps their spiritual growth. Perhaps that is the case with some people. They have legitimately asked the question: what is wrong with practicing Lent, putting ashes to the forehead, and giving something up for forty days?
 2. Warning: Jennie Allen's "Gather 25"—Another Effort for "UNITY" Outside the Confines of Truth (LT Editors): All one has to do is take even a brief look at the various organizations involved with Gather 25 to see this is not a biblically sound effort. From IF: Gathering to Right Now Media to 24/7 Prayer to Bible Project to Global 2033 to World Evangelical Alliance to the Alpha Course and to numerous others, it's clear the objective of Gather 25 is UNITY under the broadest sense possible.
 3. Christian Reconnaissance (Maria Kneas): Spiritual warfare is increasing. The spiritual atmosphere keeps getting darker. And in the world around us, we are seeing more and more evil—shameless, in-your-face evil that we never could have imagined a few years ago—rampant delusion and insanity—and widespread lawlessness that keeps increasing.
 4. On *The Chosen*, "At Home in Rome: Do We All Love the Same Jesus?" (The Berean Call): Do we all "love the same Jesus"? Do we need the Catholic Church, the Abrahamic Family House, Rick Warren, the Finishing the Task Coalition, and *The Chosen* to fulfill the Great Commission?
 5. Throwing Out the Ministry of the Apostle Paul? (LT Editors): In a time when the church is being overrun with unbiblical teachings and off-the-wall opinions and recommendations by so many of today's pastors and leaders, we have been puzzled at Lighthouse Trails why even the "good" pastors and teachers rarely talk about what's going on *in* the church with regard to these teachings; and it's even more rare to hear a pastor actually identify those (naming the names) who are bringing in false teachings and opinions.
 6. Book Review: Beware of John Mark Comer's 2024 Book, *Practicing the Way* (Bruce C.) It is difficult to write a summary for this review because the book is so full of error, but since few people will be willing to wade through the pages of details, here goes.
 7. Necromancy in the Church—No Statute of Limitations on False Teaching (Jim Fletcher) The death of a child has rightly been called soul-crushing. Whether a miscarriage, stillbirth, or the death of an adult child, the parents are never quite the same. The tragedy usually lingers; it can also negatively impact a marriage. As has been said many times, a parent should never outlive offspring. Our human pattern in this was set with the first death: Abel dead at the hands of his own brother.
 8. Are Today's Christians Duped by Fatalism? (David Dombrowski) Today, I would like us to ask ourselves, as the body of Christ, a question, "Are we being fooled by a fatalistic mentality?" I believe it's an important question, and depending on the answer, it could affect our future in more ways than one.
 9. Should I or Should I Not Prepare for the Great Tribulation? (Tony Pearce) When considering the question of the timing of the Rapture, some have brought forward objections including the accusation that the pre-Tribulation view is not preparing people for the time of trouble that is coming. It is said by some that those who believe in the pre-Tribulation Rapture will find themselves in time of trouble instead of being raptured away to paradise. . . . Is this the case?
 10. Episcopal Church May Be Dying Out . . . But Evangelical Church Shares Same "Missing" Link (LT Editors) The Episcopal Church has had severe spiritual deficits for a long time (long before Covid), but perhaps members such as Joseph didn't see this coming. Just the fact that the denomination welcomed ex-communicated Catholic priest Matthew Fox into its fold a few decades ago tells a lot. After being defrocked by the Roman Catholic Church, Fox became a priest in the Episcopal Church in 1993 and brought with him his New Age views and his book *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, which teaches that all humans have christ-consciousness and God within.
-



According to various reports, it appears the long-standing Episcopal Church is dying out. A December 27, 2024 *Federalist* article titled “The Destruction of a Beloved New York Choir School Epitomizes the Fall of the Episcopal Church” states:

It is hardly a novel observation that the Episcopal Church (the American version of the Anglican Church) is in freefall — its once-immense cultural influence reduced to a mere whisper, its ancient liturgies now little more than quaint relics in a world that has long ceased to value the transcendent. . . .

The leadership, having spent decades more preoccupied with virtue-signaling on fashionable social justice causes, identity politics, and the moral imperative of appeasing the ever-changing winds of political correctness, now finds itself on the brink of irrelevance. It is as though the church decided to exchange its eternal spiritual heritage for the transient concerns of modernity, only to discover, with a bemused shrug, that the transaction has rendered it hollow. (source)

A May 2023 article from the *Anglican Watch* titled “It’s official: The Episcopal church is dying” states:

The past 18 months have been rough, but for the Episcopal Church, things are about to get worse. Specifically, the results of the annual parochial reports are about to come out, and they won’t be pretty. And that’s not the worst of it—folks who left the church during the pandemic by and large won’t be back. Nor is the church willing to face facts. In other words, the Episcopal Church is no longer just declining. It’s dying. (source)

Interestingly, a comment left on the blog where that article was posted, written by a long-time Episcopalian man named Joseph, stated:

The problem began when Episcopal priests started apologizing for instead of proclaiming the Gospel. The last time and I mean the last time I attended an Episcopal service, the priest on the first Sunday of Lent, greeted me with “Namaste:” (a Buddhist greeting) from the pulpit and then turned things over to a guest speaker. A Black woman who harangued the congregation for 45 minutes about the “1619 Project” and our hereditary guilt as White people of “racism” and our perpetual obligation to apologize to and serve Blacks. Missing was any mention of God, Jesus, forgiveness and sin. My family has been Episcopalians for at least four generations. Combine that with the cowardly compliance with the anti-Christian social engineers in Washington during the Covid “Pandemic” has completely turned me off.

The Episcopal Church has had severe spiritual deficits for a long time (long before Covid), but perhaps members such as Joseph didn’t see this coming. Just the fact that the denomination welcomed ex-communicated Catholic priest Matthew Fox into its fold a few decades ago tells a lot. After being defrocked by the Roman Catholic Church, Fox became a priest in the Episcopal Church in 1993 and brought with him his New Age views and his book *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, which teaches that all humans have christ-consciousness and God within. Ray Yungen explains Fox’s beliefs:

The Coming of the Cosmic Christ, is a book in which New Age leader/Episcopal priest Matthew Fox puts forth the idea that “mysticism” should become the praxis around which all the world’s religions can unite—something he calls “deep ecumenism.” The “cosmic Christ,” Fox explains, is the “I AM in every creature” and Jesus is someone “who shows us how to embrace our own divinity.”¹

So while it may seem to some Episcopalian members, such as Joseph, that their denomination took a tailspin after Covid under the influence of wokeism and “progressivism,” the downfall started long before that. And you can be sure it began even before Fox entered the picture. No church or denomination goes directly from Scriptural integrity (which the Episcopal Church may never have even had) to Matthew Foxism. As Yungen puts it, it’s a “creeping” effect² that takes place where the deception enters in one increment at a time . . . and occasionally some big leaps take place (such as welcoming someone like Matthew Fox into a denomination).

The “Missing” Link

But the Episcopal Church isn’t the only denomination that is guilty of allowing dangerous incremental steps of deception into its fold. Just about every evangelical denomination today began at some point allowing contemplative spirituality (via the Spiritual Formation movement)* into the framework of church life. It largely started in 1978 with Richard Foster’s book *Celebration of Discipline* where he stated that “we should all without shame enroll as apprentices in the school of contemplative prayer.”³ And after that, Christian publishers that had trusted reputations within the church (e.g. Navigators, InterVarsity Press) began pouring into Christianity hundreds, if not thousands, of books promoting and teaching contemplative spirituality and Spiritual Formation.

And just in case there are some reading this article who are wondering why we are connecting contemplative spirituality with churches (like the Episcopal) that have gone “woke” and “progressive,” this is really the “missing” (ignored?) link that explains so much yet is usually overlooked. Here’s a nutshell explanation: Catholic mystics (e.g, Thomas Merton, Basil Pennington, Thomas Keating) who were having esoteric experiences while in altered states of consciousness brought on by contemplative meditation morphed into panentheists (God in all) and interspiritualists (all paths lead to God). This is basically the “fruit” of contemplative prayer.

As Ray Yungen so carefully and meticulously showed through his years of research and study, the reason the fruit of contemplative prayer is identical to the outcome of New Age mystics is because both are drawing from the same source (i.e., the occult). The occult, which is the heart of the New Age movement, is panentheism (God in all) and interspiritual (all paths lead to truth or God). Those who enter mystical states through mantra-type meditation often begin to embrace the view that God is in all religions and in all people. We believe this happens because the mystical realm entered is a realm of familiar spirits (i.e., the occult) that draws practitioners away from the Gospel and into an interspiritual belief system that negates the view that Jesus Christ is the only path to God and salvation (meaning a rejection of the Cross).

In his book *A Time of Departing*, Yungen was able to clearly show the connection between the New Age/occult and “Christian” contemplative prayer. One of the most compelling pieces of evidence was his quote by occultist Kirby who said, “The meditation of advanced occultists is identical with the prayer of advanced mystics [contemplatives]: it is no accident that both traditions use the same word for the highest reaches of their respective activities—contemplation.”⁴

So Foster’s contemplative prayer was the open door to bring the occult into the church; once that happened, the stage was set for the formation of the emergent church (birthed through the efforts of Bob Buford, Rick Warren, and Bill Hybels, all who promoted the Spiritual Formation movement),⁵ which eventually became the woke progressive church. Show us a church or Christian college that has gone woke, and we’ll show you the incremental steps that began with contemplative spirituality. We see Christians scratching their heads, asking, “How did my church become woke so fast?” Well, it didn’t happen fast. It just looks that way because the dots haven’t been connected.

A Deadly Path

Fast forward to today, and we see evangelical churches behaving just like the Episcopal church, where this New Age/occultic contemplative prayer has conditioned the ground for seeding heavy-duty apostasy and thus, the sudden burst of growth. Some may think that’s an extreme and irrational thing for us to say. But just look at Catholic panentheist Richard Rohr, who, according to one of his publishers, has as his biggest readership young evangelical men. And that’s just one example of countless ones.

By the way, one of the other “fruits” of contemplative prayer is a move away from believing in substitutionary atonement (i.e., the Cross where Jesus Christ paid the penalty for mankind’s sins, taking them upon Himself). Episcopal priest Alan Jones (who is also a New Age-sympathizing contemplative mystic) stated:

The Church’s fixation on the death of Jesus as the universal saving act must end, and the place of the cross must be reimagined in Christian faith. Why? Because of the cult of suffering and the vindictive God behind it.

The other thread of just criticism addresses the suggestion implicit in the cross that Jesus’ sacrifice was to appease an angry god. Penal substitution [the Cross] was the name of this vile doctrine.⁶

For those who still can’t see the link between contemplative spirituality and wokeism, consider this statement by Alan Jones: “I see the mystical and contemplative as the necessary grounding for social action and involvement in issues of justice.”⁷ These “issues of justice” that identify the contemplative/woke church include promotion of LGBTQ, transgenderism, evolution, critical race theory, and mystical meditation. Is that really what the evangelical church wants to be known for? You can be sure, there is no room for the Cross where these “issues of justice” prevail. Like one prominent New Age meditation figure said, “The era of the single savior is over.”⁸

If the evangelical church keeps going down the contemplative/Spiritual Formation path, like the Episcopal Church has so heartily done with their Matthew Fox and their Alan Jones, then the Cross of Jesus Christ will be squeezed out, and truth will be replaced with apostasy. Perhaps the Episcopal Church is indeed dying out, and perhaps it is for the best. But it’s long past time for the pastors and leaders of the evangelical church to wake up and see they are heading down the same path.

*For those who are unfamiliar with the terms “contemplative spirituality” and “Spiritual Formation,” please refer to this article: <https://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/booklet-highlight-is-your-church-doing-spiritual-formation-important-reasons-why-they-shouldnt>.

Related Articles Regarding the Episcopal Church (2006-2014):

(2006) Marching toward Global Solidarity

(2007) Episcopal Priest: “I Am Both Muslim and Christian” — OK With Emerging Church

(2008) Episcopal Church and the Resurgence of the Labyrinth and Meditation

(2009) Mystical Practices Lead Episcopalian Priest Into Interspirituality

(2010) Episcopal Church ordains 2nd openly gay bishop

(2012) Episcopal Church Approves Same-Sex Blessing Rite

(2013) Spiritual Directors and Episcopalians

(2013) Episcopalian National Cathedral Leader: 'Homophobia' a Sin; Same-Sex Marriages Will Be Performed

(2014) In a first, Washington National Cathedral to host Friday Muslim prayer service

(image from istockphoto.com; used with permission)

Endnotes:

1. Ray Yungen, *A Time of Departing* (Roseburg, OR: Lighthouse Trails, second edition, 2006), p.37, citing Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 154, 232.
2. Ibid., p. 94.
3. Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1978 edition), p. 13.
4. Richard Kirby, *The Mission of Mysticism* (London, UK: SPCK, 1979), p. 7.
5. In Roger Oakland's 2007 book *Faith Undone*, he chronicled the birth of the emerging church, dating back to the 1950s with Peter Drucker who eventually inspired another business guru, Bob Buford. Around 1998, Buford's organization, Leadership Network, with encouragement and enthusiasm from Leith Anderson, Rick Warren, and Bill Hybels, pulled together a group of youth pastors from around the country to form what would be called Terra Nova. Some of these young men included Brian McLaren, Mark Driscoll, Dan Kimball, Doug Pagitt, Chris Seay, and Tony Jones.
6. Alan Jones, *Reimagining Christianity*, p. 132, 168. On page 133, he suggests that the doctrine of the Cross is a myth made up by man. He also said the following in the book: "The image of the child Jesus sitting on the Buddha's lap appeals to me and captures the spirit of this book. It is an image of the Kingdom. "The Kingdom" is a sort of shorthand signifying an inclusive community of faith, love and justice." p. 12 "The phrase, 'I am a practicing Christian but not a believing Christian' is extraordinarily wise." p. 16 "Christianity as a set of beliefs doesn't work for me. At the same time, I acknowledge the need for ritual and celebration in my life and find fulfillment and joy in many traditional practices. I light candles and ask for the prayers of the saints. . . . These disciplines . . . do not require me to believe literally in angels and the Virgin Birth." p. 31.
7. Ibid., p. 88.
8. Neale Donald Walsch, *The New Revelations: A Conversation with God* (New York, NY: Atria Books, 2002), p. 157.



LTRP Note: Lighthouse Trails began supporting the Understand the Times (Roger Oakland) missions outreach – Bryce Homes of Kenya – in 2011. Since then, many Kenyan Christian families (primarily widows and children) have been assisted. Lighthouse Trails readers have been a vital part of the ongoing support of this missions work. For more information and ways to support Bryce Homes in Kenya, visit Understand the Times, International.

Letter below sent from the Bryce Homes Kenya Board Members in Kenya (written by Lukio, board member)

As we reflect on this season of blessings, Bryce Homes Kenya is so THANKFUL! Throughout the lifespan of Bryce Homes Kenya over a decade ago, many lives have been positively impacted in rural Kenya. Widows and orphans who were privileged to be in this Program have a lot to share as testimonies. I will beg to be quite particular on the tidings of the year 2024 in this case. Every household is full of testimony. Every month, I have relentlessly, on behalf of our Board and Bryce Homes Kenya family, written the updates on every household. Because of you and your willingness to respond with the Love of Christ, Bryce Homes Kenya have always been reached with essential foodstuff as well as laundry soap. The impact is so great and we are very thankful.



Widow Julita has fully been rehabilitated and now leads a normal life with her grandchildren.

Over 35 households always get supported at a time and this has seen approximately 180 households reached from the beginning.

The most striking of this year's testimonies is the case of Julita 2 who because of being a widow was faced with a lot of challenges owing to the poor state of her life. This led to her psychological torture, and she slowly began to live a lunatic lifestyle. One of the reasons (we were told) was that she was disowned by her in-laws and had to live in the thicket in a very remote village. When we were out visiting the villages (mostly in the rural), we came across her when she asked us for drinking water. The conversation continued, and we made efforts with the help of Pastor Lucas, who coincidentally lives in that village, to rehabilitate her back to normal life. We convinced his son to put up a temporary structure that has been housing her despite some challenges with the shelter. Our greatest testimony is her fully rehabilitated life and her being in Bryce Homes. She was a blessing in disguise to her grandchildren who are now able to share in the blessings as they are reached with foodstuff every month.



Agnes (right – BH #8) and Consolata (below – BH #14) giving testimonies on their journey of life before and after Bryce Homes Program. They are full of excitement as the program continues to impact their lives.

Concerning children of Bryce Homes Kenya, we are so grateful for the favor of God that has seen them throughout the year. Majority of them have been attending day schools meaning the food support has been so helpful for their nutrition. It is worth noting that most of these children were left as partial orphans at very tender ages. Bryce Homes Program has indirectly supplied for their educational needs in many ways. For instance, provision conducive environment for their study at home which was made possible to some households by improved shelters. Others even received solar lamps for lighting, and they still use them to date.



As we enter into the festive season, Bryce Family circle Kenya children shared with us about their expectations, and we are hopeful they will have a wonderful experience in December. Above everything else, we are asking for your prayers for their safety throughout this holiday and beyond.



When every child wants to be counted in Bryce Homes Kenya. These are children of Bryce Homes in the same neighborhood. They gathered in wait of the November support which was well received with gratitude. We are thankful for the readers' acts of generosity for these little ones.

Lighthouse Trails Sends Out 24th Mailing to Over 1000 Christian Pastors and Leaders



Since 2016, Lighthouse Trails has been sending out topical booklets (usually two-three times a year) to a growing list of pastors and Christian leaders. On January 22nd, Lighthouse Trails is sending out our first mailing of 2025 to Christian leaders and pastors. Our current list has around 1100 names. **If you would like your pastor or a church leader to begin receiving these free mailings, please send the name and a valid mailing address to us at editors@lighthouse Trails.com.** The names and addresses on this list will remain confidential and not be given or sold to anyone. **Please note**, if you are sending a church address, we need a mailing address (which is not necessarily a street address). Many churches do not have a mail receptacle on location (and thus those envelopes are returned to us, and we are charged a fee).

In this January 2025 mailing, we will be mailing out the following two booklets:

Overlapping Narrative for a False Christ (The Deceptive New Age Terms That Have Entered the Church)

Richard Rohr, His Cosmic Christ, and Young Evangelicals

Note: These mailings cost you or your pastor nothing. However, if you would like him to receive, in addition to this current batch and future batches, some of the booklets we have sent out previously, you might wish to purchase one of our 15-booklet Pastors Packs. If you do buy any of those packs, you can put your pastor's name in the ship-to section of the online check-out of our store or our mail-in form. We will send *you* the receipt and send *him* the pack(s). Your name will not be included unless you request it. Your name will also remain anonymous if you e-mail us to add your pastor's name to the free booklet mailing list.

For our readers' information, below is a list of the booklets we have sent out so far:

2016

10 Scriptural Reasons Jesus Calling is a Dangerous Book (Smith)

5 Things You Should Know About Contemplative Prayer (Yungen)

Rick Warren's Dangerous Ecumenical Path to Rome (Oakland)

Setting Aside the Power of the Gospel for a Powerless Substitute (Dombrowski)

Is Your Church Doing Spiritual Formation? (Editors)

2017

The Shack and It's New Age Leaven (Smith)

Yoga and Christianity: Are They Compatible? (Lawson)

A Serious Look at Richard Foster's "School" of Contemplative Prayer (Yungen)

The New Missiology: Doing Missions Without the Gospel (Oakland)

Shack Theology: Universalism, TBN, Oprah, and the New Age (Smith)

2018

Israel: Replacing What God Has Not (Oppenheimer)

D is for Deception: The Language of the "New" Christianity (Reeves)

Mindfulness: What You May Not Know and Should Have Been Told (Kneas/Putnam)

Lectio Divina: What is it, What it is Not, and Should Christians Practice it? (Editors)

A Course in Miracles: The New Age Book That is Redefining Christianity and Fooling the World (Smith)

Oprah Winfrey's New Age "Christianity": Neale Donald Walsch, "God," and Hitler (Smith)

The Jews: Beloved by God, Hated by Many (Pearce)

2019

Eugene Peterson's Mixed Message: Subversive Bible for a New Age (Smith)

The New Evangelization From Rome or Finding the True Jesus Christ (Oakland)

Transgenderism and Our Children (Kneas/Putnam)

The Dangerous Truth About the Social Justice "Gospel" (Danielsen)

The Big Picture: How the World and the Church Are Being Deceived (Smith)

Dominionism, Kingdom Now, and What Does the Bible Say? (Oppenheimer)

The New Age, Meditation & the Higher Self (Yungen)

Butterfly Illusions (Reid)

Broken Vessels for Christ (Ironsides)

2020

The Enneagram—An Enlightening Tool or an Enticing Deception? (Putnam)

Critical Race Theory, Southern Baptist Convention, and a Marxist "Solution" That Will Not Work (Editors)

S is for Social Justice: The Language of Today's Cultural "Revolution" (Danielsen)

Three Vital Questions on Navigating Discernment (Ironsides/Proctor)

2021

The Titanic and Today's Church – a book (Smith)

Six Questions Every Gay Person Should Ask (Michael Tays Carter)

Yoga: Exercise or Religion—Does It Matter? (Yungen)

Beth Moore & Priscilla Shirer: Their History of Contemplative Prayer (Lanagan)

2022

The Chosen Series: 10 Critical Concerns (Editors)

Drugs, Meditation, & "A Fully Developed Spirituality" (Dombrowski)

All for One and Theft for All—The Fallacy of the Social-Justice Movement (Teichrib)

Calvinism, Catholicism, or Blessed Assurance: Which One Will It Be? (Dombrowski)

My Conversion and My Journey Out of "the Holiness Movement" (Ironsides)

2023

An Epidemic of Apostasy: How Christian Colleges Must Incorporate "Spiritual Formation" to Become Accredited (Editors)

Global Revival or Global Deception: 10 Critical Warnings From the Titanic to the Church (Smith)

10 Scriptural Reasons Jesus Calling Is a Dangerous Book (Smith)

The Cross and the Marijuana Leaf (Nathan)

Israel: A Burdensome Stone to the Nations and the Apple of God's Eye (Oppenheimer)

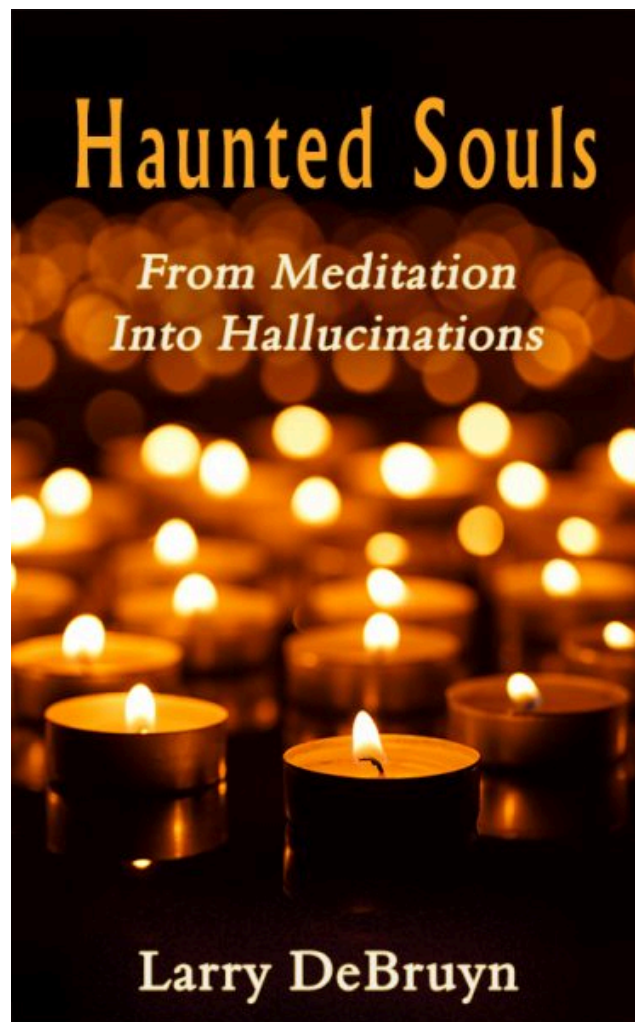
The Truth About Energy Healing (Yungen)

2024

Neglecting to Test the Spirits (Dombrowski)

The Chosen and the Bible (SRN)

(photo from istockphoto.com; used with permission)



Lighthouse Trails is pleased to release our latest topical booklet: *Haunted Souls – From Meditation Into Hallucinations* by Larry DeBruyn. The booklet is 18 pages long and sells for \$1.95 for single copies. Quantity discounts are available. Our booklets are designed to give away to others or for your own personal use. Below is the content of this new booklet. **To order copies of *Haunted Souls – From Meditation Into Hallucinations* click [here](#).**

Haunted Souls – From Meditation Into Hallucinations

By Larry DeBruyn

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

As borrowed from the eastern mystical religions, meditative or contemplative spirituality—the operation which involves retreating into solitude (getting alone with God) and silence (remaining quiet before God) and engaging in ascetic practices—has emerged among evangelical Christians as a popular way to experience God’s love and receive revelations from Him.¹ Interestingly, this discovery among evangelicals about how to find “spirituality” now parallels the “mindfulness” revolution taking place in secular society.

By shucking their ever-present cell phones, tabloids, iPods, and other distractions, increasing numbers of people from all walks of life—athletes, educators, corporate execs and workers, politicians, government workers, and members of the military—attempt to “de-stress” their lives by attending “mindfulness” retreats where under the direction of spiritual tutors, they learn to meditate with the hope they will discover “a new consciousness” to help them cope with life.² To promote “mindfully” working, playing, parenting, test taking, and even going to war, the practice of meditation has risen significantly in America. Based on a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 35 million American adults have practiced meditation.³

But amidst the rising popularity of this mindfulness revolution, a dark secret lurks in the background. One advocate of “Christian” contemplation, the Quaker Richard Foster, recommends meditation as a means for developing a *deeper* spirituality. But as to its practice, he also issues a disclaimer:

I also want to give a word of precaution. In the silent contemplation of God we are entering deeply into the spiritual realm, and there is such a thing as supernatural guidance that is not divine guidance . . . there are various orders of spiritual beings, and some of them are definitely not in cooperation with God and his way!⁴

Though a significant majority of non-Christian meditators report benefits derived from the activity, some indicate that the exercise does not invariably promote psychological wellness.⁵

So it would be well for any would-be meditators, Christian or otherwise, to consider what could happen to their minds if they engage in the practice. Meditators can go mad. Examples where this has happened, both modern and ancient, are known. We begin with reports from a rehab center which focuses on helping people restore the soundness of mind they possessed before they began to meditate.

“The Dark Knight” of the Soul

An article in the *The Atlantic* reported about a spacious 19th-century house owned by a university professor/researcher. Located in a well-established neighborhood in Providence, Rhode Island, the house’s atmosphere is inviting. All four floors exude a sanctuary-like atmosphere of welcome, peace, and quiet. Organic foods stock the cupboards. A large dining room and table can accommodate a dozen guests. Decorative plants are placed throughout the house. Private living quarters in the basement often host “a rotating cast of yogis and meditation teachers.”⁶ From the description given by *The Atlantic*, one might get the impression that the residence, named Cheetah House, provides the ideal environment for seeking souls to congregate and practice the art of meditation. But surprisingly, notes reporter Tomas Rocha, the visiting guests are “not there to restore themselves with meditation—they’re recovering from it.”⁷ Consider the following two testimonials taken from *The Atlantic* article:

Testimony 1

Attracted to meditation by attending a retreat, one polite and well-spoken guest named David, 27 years old, relates that though at first he found stress-relief from meditating, his life changed for the worse. “Everything [David] had found pleasurable before the retreat” Rocha says, “‘turned to dirt.’”⁸ The beautiful and delightful plate of spiritual food that served his soul at first, to repeat his words, “turned to dirt.”

He “started having thoughts like, ‘Let me take over you,’ combined with confusion and tons of terror.”⁹ David relates having “had a vision of death with a scythe and a hood. The thought ‘Kill yourself’ [ran] over and over again [through his mind].”¹⁰ David described the paranormal world he experienced as “Psychological hell.” He tells the reporter that these altered states of consciousness “would come and go in waves. ‘I’d be in the middle of practice . . . and what would come to mind was everything I didn’t want to think about, every feeling I didn’t want to feel.’”¹¹ David’s experience also possessed a physical sensation. “Pebble-sized” spasms would emanate from a “dense knot” inside his abdomen. Other fantasies would captivate and obsess his mind.¹² So in 2013, he arrived at the house for treatment.

Testimony 2

Another guest, Michael, age 25, was a certified Yoga teacher. Michael explains to *The Atlantic* reporter that physically “during the course of his meditation practice his ‘body stopped digesting food. I had no idea what was happening,’” he relates. For three years Michael thought “he was ‘permanently ruined’ by meditation.”¹³ *The Atlantic* notes that descriptions like “recovery” and “permanently ruined” are “not words one typically encounters when discussing a contemplative practice.”¹⁴ Nonetheless, this is the “dirty laundry”—as some call it—that can result from doing meditation.

This third testimonial is from my personal encounter with an ex-meditator:

Testimony 3

For a time in his life, Bill Smith, (not his real name) with whom I stayed while ministering in Sydney, Australia, testified that his devotion to eastern meditative practices induced within him psychological disorder, which necessitated he be institutionalized. In combination with engaging in other New Age spiritual practices, Bill related that meditation temporarily drove him insane. But by trusting the Gospel, the Lord delivered Bill; and today, in his right mind, he has a wonderful marriage and family, successfully works for a large corporation, and maintains a stable Christian witness as he pastors a church which regularly meets in his home.

Though admittedly anecdotal, Smith's admission bears similarity with the previously cited testimonials from the recovery center for former meditators run by Brown University neuroscientist and researcher Dr. Willoughby Britton.¹⁵

The Doctor and “The Dark”

Dr. Britton's “effort to document, analyze, and publicize accounts of the adverse effects of contemplative practices (what elsewhere are called “rockier parts of the mindfulness path,”¹⁶) is known as “The Dark Knight Project.”¹⁷ Because of what she saw in recovering meditators who visited her research and rehab center, Dr. Britton (herself a trained and experienced meditator) decided that, like her patients, she should attend a retreat to experience firsthand what they had been exposed to. And experience it she did! She described how, like those undergoing treatment at her rehab center, she too fell into “an extreme and distressing mental state” after meditating .¹⁸ She testifies:

I thought that I had gone crazy. I thought I was having a nervous breakdown . . . like terror was a big symptom of mine.¹⁹

These testimonies fall in line with accounts of other persons who either sought out or were forced to experience solitary. Though perhaps not normal—whatever normal is in a paranormal world—these testimonies indicate the effect which isolation and meditation can have upon a soul's sanity. Consider, for example, the effect that solitary confinement, employed by many penal systems to handle incorrigible prisoners, can have upon a human soul.

Solitary Confinement

Within the Pennsylvania penal system at Eastern State Prison around the time of the Civil War (circa 1860), solitary confinement arose as a way, it was hoped, to rehabilitate prisoners. Inspired by the Quakers, the theory goes that placing criminals alone would help bring them “closer to God.”²⁰ Interestingly, “solitary” seems to have been used as a method to rehabilitate prisoners rather than, as is true now-a-days, to punish them. It was hoped that being placed in isolation would help them to reflect upon their crimes and restore their “relationship with God.”²¹

It must be noted that in denial of the biblical teaching of the separation of the human soul from God because of sin (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12), Quakerism assumed that “true religion consisted in ‘the divine light of Christ’ in every man.”²² So it can be seen how, given Quakerism's influence upon this theory of criminal rehabilitation, it was hoped that “solitary confinement” might quicken a prisoner's awareness of “the divine light of Christ within” and, in a rehabilitative way, to fellowship with it. The method of solitary confinement became popular and crossed over the Atlantic where European prison systems began to employ it. But news drifted back to America that the method did not work.

“Clinicians in Germany, which built multiple prisons modeled on Eastern State,” reported *Rolling Stone*, “attributed hundreds of cases of psychosis to solitary confinement, concluding that it caused ‘elementary hallucinations’ and ‘suicidal and maniacal’ outbreaks.”²³ Danish psychiatric studies revealed how solitary confinement induced the same affect upon that nation's prison population.²⁴

Worth noting, the experiences of prisoners in solitary confinement resemble those of early Christian monks who in order to draw closer to God and cure their hearts of idolatry, retreated into the desert to escape society's worldly influence.²⁵ They too, like today's recovering meditators, experienced altered states of consciousness resulting from having engaged in ascetic practices and the discipline of meditation. Basically, this is how Christian monasticism entered the church.

Deserts, Demons, and Deceptions

In early Christian history, devout men renounced the world and fled to the desert to focus their attention on God and interact with the supernatural realm, with powers that included angels and demons. According to Rowan Williams, a liberal Welsh Anglican bishop and the former Archbishop of Canterbury,

The desert was seen as a place teeming with hostile spirits, and a major part of the monk's vocation was repeated confrontation with the destructive and deceptive power of demons. Sometimes this might mean spending time in the ruins of a pagan shrine, exposing oneself to the wiles of the evil spirits who had served there. More often, though, it was a matter of learning to discern between authentic and

inauthentic “religious experiences”—acquiring a degree of suspicion of vivid or consoling visions and revelations, easily manufactured in the extreme conditions of hunger and isolation, learning to endure faithfully, in boredom, depression, frustration, without taking refuge in the devilish lure of dazzling spiritual dramas (angelic voices and visitations, etc.).²⁶

St. Anthony of Egypt

St. Anthony (c. 251-356) was born into a wealthy and respectable Coptic Christian family. From his youth and because he was illiterate, Anthony had “little interest in matters of worldly learning” but was possessed of “deep religious feeling, and a craving after the intuition of divine things.”²⁷ While attending church one day, he heard a sermon on “The Rich Young Ruler” (Luke 18:18-27). Jesus’ words convicted his soul, and he proceeded to liquidate his inherited wealth, give the money to the poor, and move to the desert to cultivate his devotion and love for God. Though he did not found the monastic movement (the separatist and isolationist spirit of it was imported into Christianity from the animists, Eastern religions and Egyptian Therapeutae i.e., Jewish holy men who isolated themselves from society to pursue “the contemplative way”), St. Antonius (as he’s also known) became known as the father of monasticism within the Christian tradition.

By isolating himself in the desert and engaging in ascetic and meditative disciplines, Anthony sought to purge his heart from worldly distractions in order to bask in God’s love. As a teacher, Anthony instructed monks to keep diaries of their secret thoughts (i.e., “journaling”) because self-improvement was the cost of eternal life.²⁸ He also taught that ecstasy characterizes perfect prayer.

Awful (not Awesome) Asceticism

He, as others who followed him, retreated into the desert to experience the supernatural, and that they did. The record of Anthony’s life contains “strange stories of his visions, in which he describes himself as engaged continually in deadly conflict with evil spirits manifesting themselves not infrequently in forms more ludicrous than terrible.”²⁹ On one occasion, after having separated himself in a cave away from the village to seek God, the German theologian and church historian Augustus Neander (1789-1850) states:

Here, as it is probable, by excessive fasting, and by exhaustion from his inward conflicts in the unnatural place of abode, he brought himself into states of an over excited imagination and nervous derangement, in which he fancied he had received bodily harm from the spirits of darkness. He fell at last into a swoon and was conveyed back to the village in a state of unconsciousness.³⁰

Like other modern examples of meditation gone mad, Neander assessed that, “the extravagances of asceticism . . . [gave] birth to many wild sallies of the fanatical spirit, and many mental disorders.”³¹ This was in contrast to that one fruit of true spirituality—“temperance” (i.e., self-control) (Galatians 5:23), quite the opposite of desert spirituality where there is the common occurrence of men going “out-of-control”!

These many examples, modern and ancient, call into question the optimism that, “Meditation causes nothing but good for those who practice it. It is one of the healthiest things a human being can do for mind and body.”³²

Dark Night of the Soul

Interestingly, of seeing visions, hearing voices or having visitations, the contemplator reaches a point where experience exhausts itself.³³ A day comes when the music dies. As such, the contemplator feels abandoned and alone, and “No matter what the mystic does—praying, contemplating, meditating—the sense of God’s presence cannot be regained.”³⁴ A “dark night” or a “cloud of unknowing” engulfs their psyche. Buddhists refer to this as “falling into the Pit of the Void.”³⁵

To comprehend the meaning of darkness in the meditative experience, one must understand the context of “the mystic way”; that is the stages of “knowing” which meditators go through to experience the presence of God with the goal of realizing union with Him (i.e., *unio mystica* or *theosis*). Some view the phases to be as many as seven while others as few as three (the three being *contemplation* of the supernatural, *illumination* by the supernatural, and personal *unification* with the supernatural).

The occurrence of paranormal phenomena (i.e., altered states of consciousness) most often happens during the illumination phase.³⁶ Upon entering this zone, the meditator hears voices, sees visions, and experiences visitations. This stage anticipates that ecstasies, raptures, and dark nights will occur. From the meditative perspective, these paranormal experiences might be called *normally abnormal*. Nathan

Fisher, manager of Dr. Britton's "Dark Knight Project" understands this when, in line with other scholars and students of the mystic way, he explains that negative experiences from meditation may be accounted of for two reasons. First, the director's instructions on how to meditate may have been misguided. Or second, the meditator may have incorrectly pursued the discipline. Yet whatever the explanation, intimidating psychological/spiritual experiences are considered "necessary and expected stages" of meditation and as such, "useful signs of progress in contemplative development."³⁷ Negative experiences are an expected part of the mystic way.

The Light That's Not Dark

But do descriptions of experiencing darkness by meditators indicate they have moved nearer to or farther away from the heart of God? Scripture tells us "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5); that God is "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Timothy 6:16); that God is "the Father of lights" (James 1:17); and that the Lord "appeared unto [Moses] in a flame of fire" (Exodus 3:2). Christian believers are declared to be "children of light, and the children of the day" (1 Thessalonians 5:5). And furthermore, Jesus "transfigured" Himself before three disciples—"His face did shine as the sun . . . his raiment was white as the light" (Matthew 17:2). The experience of spiritual darkness belongs to those who are running away from, not to, Jesus the Light (John 3:19-21). Also, in the present reality, Satan and his cohorts are known as "rulers of the darkness" (Ephesians 6:12). Scripture also describes with regard to salvation how He has "delivered us from the power of darkness" (Colossians 1:13). So when set against the backdrop of Scripture, the soul's enduring of darkness becomes difficult to understand. What if in reality the expressions "the dark night of the soul" or "cloud of unknowing" are descriptions of a state experienced by meditators which indicate they have moved away from, not nearer to, the heart of God?

The Promise of the Spirit's Presence

Jesus promised that He would not desert His disciples but would send "another" Comforter (i.e., the Holy Spirit) to be with them (John 14:16-18). So all these feelings of being forsaken by God must find comfort in the Divine promise where the Lord has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). Amidst all this Scripture, it becomes difficult to understand how the "darkness" or "cloud" metaphors can provide comfort to persons who, on their mystic journeys, encounter a dead end of darkness or a depressing cloud of unknowing. The Bible describes the Christian journey as that of walking in and drawing closer to the Light! Experiences of forsakenness are not from the Comforter. In fact, if Jesus' promises mean anything at all, such experiences are quite the contrary. ("I am with you always," Matthew 28:20).

Several hundred years after the desert monks, the contemplative life proved to be a breeding ground for the religion of Islam. Interestingly, the story of Mohammed bears similarity to that of St. Anthony (i.e., their youthful inclination toward the contemplative life, their relative illiteracy, their pursuit of the isolated life to experience God, and respectively, their seeing, hearing, and experiencing supernatural visions, voices, and visitations).

Mohammed the Prophet

The historian Robert Payne (1911-1983) noted that by the age of eight, Mohammed's pattern of life "was being determined—long days of contemplation, swift journeys, the sense of being abandoned, visitation of spirits, and always the dream of Paradise."³⁸

When he was about 25 years old, Mohammad attracted the attention of a wealthy and beautiful twice-widowed woman who was fifteen years his elder. They married, and together Mohammed and Khadija had six children. Because of Khadija's wealth, for ten years Mohammed's life was secure and comfortable. During this time, he lived in contact with and exchanged religious ideas with other spiritual men, whether they were animists, Jews, or Christians. One such man was his wife's cousin, a man named Waraqa, with whom Mohammed experienced deep spiritual kinship. But Waraqa was a spiritually restless man who, though he translated both the Old and New Testaments into Arabic, returned later in life to the primitive faith he held in earlier years. Despite his illiteracy, Mohammed remembered everything others taught him, and perhaps because of Waraqa's counsel, also refined the practice of meditation, the disposition toward which he had possessed since he was a young boy. But as Payne points out, the early years of his comfortable life with Khadija and his four daughters (their two sons died prematurely) "was the quiet before the storm." Allow the historian to describe what Mohammed experienced:

The storm came suddenly one night, at the hottest time of the year, after a long period of meditating alone in a cave outside of Mecca. No one knows what brought him to the cave. It may have been the memory of ascetic monks in the Syrian desert who also worshipped their God in caves, alone with the Alone. Or perhaps he was influenced by the wandering hermits called Hanifs, meaning “those who have turned away from idol worship,” who emerged . . . to proclaim the virtues of solitude and the worship of the One God. It may have been the seed of restlessness communicated to him by the visionary Waraqa which sent him out into the desert to live for weeks on end in silent contemplation. What is certain is that the storm broke over his head, and the world was never to be the same again.³⁹

Wrapped in his coat, lying alone in a cave in the dark, whether asleep or in a trance is not known, the illiterate prophet heard a voice that told him to write the first great visionary revelation of what would become a part of the *Qur'an*. The point is: Communications can be received, in fact are to be anticipated, when practicing meditation. Voices will speak. Visitations will occur. Visions will be seen.

The Mind Possessed

As we can see from this brief survey of the last 2,000 years, retreating into solitude and silence to meditate can become a breeding place for experiencing psychological derangement and/or altered states of consciousnesses, which meditators interpret to be encounters with God or other divine beings, perhaps angels or worse, demons. So the question becomes, what relation does contemplative spirituality have to the Christian life? Is it a benefit or a detriment? Can the contemplative life become a dangerous pursuit that might pave the way to encounter unfriendly powers or entities? To deal with these questions, the Scriptures need to be consulted.

The Bible and Meditation

Aided by their profiteering publicists and publishers, Christian celebrity-gurus (i.e., Richard Foster, Beth Moore, Sarah Young, et. al.) advocate meditation as a “spiritual discipline” by which to “draw near to God,” “experience His Presence,” and “hear Him speak” because intimacy breeds revelation.⁴⁰ They do so based upon their interpretive abuse of Psalm 46:10 (the “poster verse” for advocating contemplative prayer, “Be still, and know that I am God” as well as other Scriptures in which they grope to find biblical precedent and support for recommending mystical meditation (Psalm 46:10; 1 Kings 19:12; Habakkuk 2:20; Psalm 62:1;41). But as we have seen, meditation in isolation does not invariably benefit the human soul.

Solitude's Slippery Slope

Gargoyles in Gadara

Madness is what characterized the man from Gadara possessed by demons named “Legion.” He lived in isolation from society on the cliffs and in caves overlooking the Sea of Galilee on the lake's east shore (Mark 5:1-20). The application to be taken from the man's example is not that demons possessed him because he was an ascetic and a mediator, a Therapeutae—he might have been—but that he lived in a sort of “solitary confinement” like a hermit-monk, and in his isolation, Legion attacked, tormented, and possessed him. Though in comparison his experience appears to have been far more extreme—“on steroids” as it were—his recorded behavior (“And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones,” Mark 5:5) indicates severe psychological derangement, not unlike what some of today's recovering meditators say they have gone through.

But Jesus healed the man from the presence of demons who had possessed, afflicted, and terrorized his soul and body. Knowing him only as “a crazy caveman,” his neighbors were astounded when, after Jesus healed him, they observed him “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind” (Mark 5:15).⁴² This man represents the spiritual danger of what might happen to the human soul when a person retreats into solitude. In such a state, he/she becomes prey to the influence of, even possession by, evil entities.

Sound Minds and Sober Souls

It is most likely that both the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul were aware of the contemplative life (i.e., *De vita contemplativa* practiced by Jewish mystics who were called Therapeutae throughout the Hellenistic world of the dispersion. In their epistles, the two apostles advised believers on how to care

for their minds; and their recommendations did not include soliciting solitude and silence in order to meditate. Rather, Peter told believers that because “the end of all things is at hand” they were to “be . . . sober, and watch unto prayer” (1 Peter 4:7) and “gird up the loins of your mind, be sober” (1 Peter 1:13). Peter calls upon believers to be sober, not silent! Paul too taught Christians to ponder whatever is “honest . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report” (Philippians 4:8). On this basis, meditation, which has a possibility of inducing insanity, runs counter to the counsel of the apostles and one fruit the Spirit works—namely self-control! (Galatians 5:23)

Resist the Devil

Furthermore, James advises believers to “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Paul tells the Ephesians, “Neither give place [i.e., an opportunity] to the devil” (Ephesians 4:27). Apparently, Richard Foster is aware of the danger of meditation because he warns about it in his book, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* where he says:

In the silent contemplation of God we are entering deeply into the spiritual realm, and there is such a thing as supernatural guidance that is not divine guidance . . . there are various orders of spiritual beings, and some of them are definitely not in cooperation with God and his way! . . . [P]ractice prayers of protection.⁴³

We must wonder, which spirits are involved with Foster's “all-embracing silence,” and where in Scripture are we told to pray “prayers of protection” before we approach our Heavenly Father with prayer.⁴⁴ From the examples of eastern gurus, the desert fathers, and monastery monks, Foster is aware of the trauma and disorientation, even insanity, that deprivation and meditation can work in the souls and minds of contemplators. He knows that the practice can lead to encounters with not-so-benevolent-spiritual beings who “want to take a person over.”⁴⁵ Incidents of such “takeovers” litter the history of contemplative spirituality.

Yet despite offering a “tongue-in-cheek” caution against it, Foster, perhaps disingenuously, recommends the practice anyway! That's like a state trooper parked alongside an Interstate highway, with flashing lights and screeching siren, warning drivers of an obstacle on the road ahead but telling them to continue to drive full speed ahead anyway. So it must be asked, in light of Scripture's admonition to “resist the devil” and “submit” to God (James 4:7), why should Christians flirt with any spiritual practice that might expose them to see, hear, or experience an evil entity⁴⁶ or to hear the unsubmissive voice of Satan or a demon speak to them?

Discerning Deception

Because of the negative consequences that can potentially happen when someone pursues meditation, in the Christian DVD *Be Still*, there is a segment rightfully called “Fear of Silence” because as stated in the presentation, “intimacy automatically breeds revelation.”⁴⁷ So who might give the revelation? What might be the origin of the speaking voice, appearing vision, or materializing visitation? Richard Foster offers advice about how to discern who might communicate in the stillness. He states:

Learning to distinguish the voice of God . . . from just human voices within us . . . comes in much the same way that we learn any other voice. Satan pushes and condemns. God draws and encourages. And we can know the difference.⁴⁸

Though there could be others, Richard Foster admits to a cacophony of voices that might speak: first, human voices within and without (that would involve listening to oneself or others speak); second, Satan's or a demon's voice; or third, God's voice. Regarding Foster's characterizing Satan's voice as one which invariably “pushes and condemns,” what if the tempter—given his wily nature (“the wiles of the devil” Ephesians 6:11) and telling Eve, “Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4) and telling Jesus, “All these things will I give thee” (Matthew 4:9)—“draws and encourages”? Foster's categories for discerning Satan's as opposed to God's voice do not always fit the truth of the Bible: At times, the evil one can be quite positive!

Doctrines of Devils

The apostle Paul warned of the devil's deceptions. He wrote that “the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of

devils” (1 Timothy 4:1). John the apostle warned, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test] the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1).

The Light That Is Dark

The Bible describes human reality to be one that involves warfare with unseen “powers . . . rulers of the darkness of this world [and] . . . spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12). Recovering meditators and those who, laudably, are trying to help them may dismiss the idea that psychological insanity is a result (whether in part or the whole, who knows?) of the soul’s ongoing warfare with unseen powers, as this would be too *unworldly* an explanation; rather, they choose to attribute the derangement suffered to a more this-worldly “scientific,” “researched,” and “diagnosed” complex, which involves physical deprivation, disease, sexual, alcohol, or drug abuse, and more, all of which affect the wellness of the human soul. But what cannot be denied is the resemblance between the symptoms of the devil’s work recorded in Holy Scripture and the derangements of soul reported by recovering meditators.

A word of caution: I am not of the persuasion (like many TV evangelists, exorcist priests, or witch doctors), “When in doubt, cast it out!” But I am persuaded that Satan is real, and his reality must be acknowledged. What may be at work in the souls of recovering meditators is a complex of various factors, but to get to the root of the matter, we must recognize too the reality of Satan and demonic hosts because the Scriptures tell us so.

From Scripture’s perspective, what if what recovering meditators are recovering from involves psychological derangement instigated by and affected upon the soul by a demon or the devil? In His controversy with the Jews, Jesus declared that not only is Satan a destroyer, but he is also a master deceiver. Jesus said, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.” As well as being a murderer (a destroyer of the body), he is a manipulator (a destroyer of the truth). Jesus continued, “Whenever he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). Sure, for most people, meditating may seem to produce psychological wellbeing in their mind/souls. This is why meditation can be so wrong when it feels so right. It is a light that is actually dark.

Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. (Luke 11:35)

Cure

In the spiritual reality of His soul during own His wilderness experience, Jesus neither sought nor received “personal” or “internal” revelations from His Father. The voice, which assaulted the Lord was Satan’s! To confront and counteract that voice, that visitation and those visions, Jesus quoted the Law which was “propositional” and “external” to Him! (See Jesus quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 in Matthew 4:4, quoting Deuteronomy 6:16 in Matthew 4:7, and Deuteronomy 6:13 in Matthew 4:10.) Though in the wilderness He *was* in solitude, He *was not practicing silence*.

The Psalmist tells of the “blessedness” (the inner sense of wellbeing), which can belong to the soul of a person who does not live in rebellion against God, choosing rather to “delight” and “meditate” in “the law of the Lord” (Psalm 1:1-2). As has been reviewed and shown, psychological maladjustment and affliction can result from the dark void that meditators can expect to experience on their mystical journey, and when the dark void is entered, one never knows what or who might be around to fill it. In the darkness of deception, Satan can transform into “an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

God’s Law, as it did for Jesus, exposes the fraudulent voices, visions or visitations experienced in the onslaught of the soul to be what they really are, viral attacks of Satan; and as our Example, the Lord Jesus indicates meditation on and recitation of God’s Word is the only antidote for these attacks. Only God’s Word can promote wellness in the human soul.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2)

Author Bio: Larry DeBruyn (1944-2017) was a graduate of Taylor University (B.S., 1968) and Dallas Theological Seminary (Th.M., 1974) where he received the Charles A. Nash Award in Church History. He spent some time as a public-school teacher before becoming a pastor.

In the course of forty-three years, he ministered to three churches in Michigan, Missouri, and Indiana. He also taught on the adjunct faculties of Taylor University, Upland, Indiana (1979); Crossroads Bible College, Indianapolis, Indiana (1990-1999); and Word of Life Bible Institute, Tóalmás, Hungary (2006). His website is <https://www.guardinghisflock.org>.

To order copies of *Haunted Souls – From Meditation Into Hallucinations* click [here](#).

Endnotes:

1. Larry DeBruyn, "Be Still" (<https://guardinghisflock.org/be-still>).
2. Kate Pickert, "The Mindful Revolution: Finding Peace in a Stressed-out, Digitally Dependent Culture May Just Be a Matter of Thinking Differently" (*Time*, January 23, 2014; <http://time.com/1556/the-mindful-revolution>).
3. Karen Kaplan, "A Lot More Americans Are Meditating Now Than Just Five Years Ago" (*Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 2018, <https://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-americans-meditating-more-20181108-story.html>).
4. Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1992), p. 157.
5. For example, it has been reported that Aaron Alexis, the middle-aged man accused of shooting-killing twelve people at the Washington Navy Yard regularly practiced meditation. See Maia Szalavitz, "Aaron Alexis and the Dark Side of Meditation" (*Time*, September 27, 2013, <http://healthland.time.com/2013/09/17/aaron-alexis-and-the-dark-side-of-meditation>). Reporter Maia Szalavitz, a health reporter, was roundly accused of journalistic malpractice for associating murder with meditation. By itself it should not be construed that Alexis' meditation instigated the murders. He was an alcoholic and possessed of other mental problems. Yet from a biblical perspective, it should be asked, "Did his meditating put his mind in contact with "dark forces" that lowered any inhibitions he might have possessed against committing murder?" Jesus after all warned that "the devil . . . was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). He also warned that the thought of murder begins in the emotions (Matthew 5:21-22). If there is a connection between meditation and violence, it is esoteric and, other than Scripture, lies beyond objective proof.
6. Tomas Rocha, "Dark Knight of the Soul" (*The Atlantic*, June 25, 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/06/the-dark-knight-of-the-souls/372766>).
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid. All the quotes in this section have been extracted from this article from *The Atlantic*.
9. Ibid. Of course, the question becomes, "Who or what wanted to take over David?" Was this a request for "possession" by an outside entity of some kind? I only pose the question about possession, but something transcendental is going on here.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Dr. Britton's academic credentials can be found on the Internet at Researchers@Brown (<https://vivo.brown.edu/display/wbritton>). Interestingly, it is stated of Dr. Britton that, "She spent several years in Asia studying meditative techniques and received her mindfulness instructor certification training at the Center for Mindfulness at the UMASS Medical School."
16. Maia Szalavitz, "Dark Side of Meditation," op. cit. (see endnote #5).
17. Tomas Rocha, "Dark Knight," op. cit.
18. Maia Szalavitz, "Dark Side of Meditation," op. cit.
19. Ibid.

20. Jeff Tietz, "Slow-Motion Torture" (*Rolling Stone*, December 6, 2012: 63, <http://fight2forgive.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/slow-motion-torture-jeff-tietz.pdf>).
21. "Solitary Confinement" (Wikipedia; quoting the separate research of Bruce Arrigo and Jennifer Leslie Bullock then Stephanie Elizondo Griest, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solitary_confinement).
22. Eamon Duff, Gordon S. Wakefield, Editor, *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1983), p. 327.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. "There is a sutta," a canonical discourse attributed to the Buddha or one of his close disciples, "where monks go crazy and commit suicide after doing contemplation on death," says Chris Kaplan, a visiting scholar at the Mind & Life Institute who works with Britton on the Dark Night Project. See Tomas Rocha, "Dark Knight."
26. Gordon S. Wakefield, *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, op. cit., p. 110, from the section titled "Desert, Desert Fathers" by Rowan Williams.
27. Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, Volume II, Joseph Torrey, Translator (Boston, MA: Crocker & Brewster, 1849), pp. 229-230.
28. Isaac Gregory Smith, "ANTONIUS, St.," *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrine*, Volume I A-D, (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1877), p. 126.
29. Ibid.
30. Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion*, op. cit., pp. 231-232.
31. Ibid., p. 238. Milman also notes that, "The indolence and prostration of the body produce a kind of activity in the mind, if that may properly be called activity, which is merely giving loose to the imagination and the emotions, as they follow out a wild train of incoherent thought, or are agitated by impulses of spontaneous and ungoverned feeling.
32. A comment by Therapist60, September 21, 2013, in response to Szalavitz, "Dark Side of Meditation."
33. Saint John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul and Other Great Works* (Orlando, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2007). Through meditation "the soul becomes detached . . . as the soul experiences the Crucifixion of Christ" (p. 24). During this spiritual journey "the soul leaves its bodily home in order to find union with God. This happens during the darkness of night, and the soul encounters numerous challenges, conflicts, hardships, and difficulties that must be faced and overcome in order to become detached from the world and gain union with God" (p. 21).
34. Leonard George, Ph. D., *Alternative Realities: The Paranormal, the Mystic and the Transcendent in Human Experience* (New York, NY: Facts On File, Inc., 1995), p. 63.
35. Tomas Rocha, "Dark Knight," op. cit.
36. Ray C. Petry, Editor, *Late Medieval Mysticism* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Know Press, 1957), p. 21.
37. Tomas Rocha, "Dark Knight," op. cit.
38. Robert Payne, *The History of Islam* (New York, NY: Dorset Press, 1959), p. 11.
39. Ibid. p. 15.
40. Larry DeBruyn, "On Meditating: Adjusted Living in a Maladjusted World" (<https://guardinghisflock.org/on-meditating-adjusted-living-in-a-maladjusted-world>).
41. There are numerous articles at <https://guardinghisflock.org> discussing contemplative spirituality and such verses.
42. Right mind translates the singular Greek verb *sophrone* in its present active participle form (*sophronounta*). Though previously characterized by insanity, the man came to be of "sound mind." By Jesus' healing, he experienced psychological wellness. But meditation, as has been testified to by those rehabbing from it, can induce within seeking souls a "wrong mind" or "sick mind." As to the question of the relationship of demons to insanity, only God knows. I am not of the persuasion, "When in doubt, cast it out." However, the influence upon a person's consciousness on the part of malignant spirits cannot be summarily dismissed. The desert fathers believed in those spirits, even sought them out, and experienced warfare with them, even to the point of, if only a short time, going insane.
43. Richard Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (Harper: San Francisco, 1992, First Edition), p. 157.
44. Ibid. pp. 156-157.
45. (See footnote #9.)
46. Larry DeBruyn, "Who Goes There?—Encountering Voices in the Quiet of Contemplative Prayer" (<https://guardinghisflock.org/who-goes-there>).