



Preamble – Evans Nicholson, Choosing Truth Ministries www.ctmin.org

I am a former member of the Masonic Order set free by Jesus in a ministry with a focus on the deadly deception of Freemasonry. As a Christian I entered into the occult indoctrinated by witchcraft ritual swearing allegiance to the god of Freemasonry, The Great Architect Of The Universe. Wearing pajama type attire, blindfolded with a noose around my neck I was led to a door. After my conductor knocked the Worshipful Master called out, “Who goes there?” My conductor replied, “Evans Nicholson, who has long been in darkness, now seeks the light of our ancient fraternal order”. With a nudge I confirmed this to be true by saying, “I do”. As a Christian I had just denied Jesus, the Light of my life and the Light of this world. Kneeling at the altar I swore to keep all of the secrets of Freemasonry ‘upon penalty of having my throat cut from ear to ear, so help me god’. I did all of this and much more my first night into the Masonic lodge.

Was it an isolated incident that a Christian would become a Mason? The other Masons in my church wouldn’t have thought so. When you consider Christians and pastors from almost every denomination involved and that up to 40% of pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention are Masons you begin to recognize the deadly power of deception. As Christians in the lodge we sought more light with each ascending degree and what could be wrong with that? Since few Masons go beyond the third degree or Master Mason degree they can’t answer. However, around the 28th degree you begin to learn that The Great Architect Of The Universe has another name, Lucifer. Held up in worship, Masonic authorities have referred to him as being, ‘the son of the morning who bears the light’. One day during my journey I realized I couldn’t serve the light of Lucifer and Jesus. I chose Jesus and was set free from darkness even though I had been seeking light. “...for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light’. 2 Cor. 11:14. This was Scripture I now understood.

So, what does this have to do with the contemplative prayer movement, silent prayer, centering prayer or other names synonymous with this movement? A movement with various teachings incorporating such things as mantras, meditation, inner silence, seeking the inner christ or the light, calling itself a spiritual reformation. Until attending a conference a short time ago I wasn’t paying attention to these things. However, as I listened, I recognized the snares and traps I had once embraced during my journey in Freemasonry. Reading Ray Yungen’s book I saw more of what had once been part of my life. I recognized the light I sought until being set free. The same light that had drawn me into darkness. Other things began to happen; the following news article came to my attention. Then I received an email from a lady asking if I knew anything about this movement. About then, His timing in all of this began to get my attention.

I had considered Freemasonry to be the greatest threat to the church. Now I was seeing a movement with threat comparable, if not far greater considering the volume of Christians becoming involved. It seems that those of us who were once involved in the occult, Freemasonry, Satanism, the New Age or whatever have a greater discernment from our personal involvement. We also share an eternal gratitude for the ultimate sacrifice Jesus paid to provide for our freedom from darkness. It seems that many in the church are either forgetting or are being distracted from the price He paid, being swayed by another light in a journey towards darkness. It’s not the way to go. As former Masons, Satanists, New Agers we will tell you, darkness is not the way to go.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world”. 1 John 4:1 JB You may agree or disagree with what is being presented but in obedience to His Word you are required to try (test) the spirits, pray about it and to be vigilant. “Be temperate and vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour...” 1 Pet. 5:8

If you choose not to obey the Word of God in these matters, you will be devoured, your families and your churches. “Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, listening to spirits of error and doctrines of demons;” 1 Tim. 4:1. Through Jesus, freed from darkness, I learned that God’s Word is explicit concerning these matters, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons;” 1 Cor. 10:21

The following is a news article, which ran in the Vancouver Province, Sunday June 19, 2005:

Canadians flock to Ottawa for Christian meditation conference

Quieting the Brain: Mantra movement alive in 114 nations

By Bob Harvey Ottawa Citizen Canwest News Service

OTTAWA – Unbeknownst to most of us, Ottawa has become the Canadian capital of Christian meditation. Meditators came here Friday from as far away as Victoria and the Maritimes for a weekend conference aimed at sharpening their call.

They follow a 1500-year-old Christian practice of repeating a mantra over and over again to quell the chattering of the brain and make room for God.

It is a fast-growing movement that got its real impetus in Canada when two English priests came from London to Montreal in 1977.

Dom John Main and Rev. Laurence Freeman founded a monastery dedicated to the revival of a tradition pioneered in the deserts of Egypt by fourth-century monks.

Now it is a worldwide movement, from Mauritius to Japan, with practitioners in at least 114 countries.

Australia has become the most meditating nation of all, with 300 groups throughout the country.

“There is an extraordinary contemplative renewal taking place all over the world”, says Paul Harris, an Ottawa leader of the movement and author of several books on meditation.

A decade ago, there were only 12 Christian meditation groups in Ottawa. Now there are 30, made up mostly of Catholics and Anglicans.

Freeman, now based in London, was the drawing card this weekend for the meditators who paid \$225 to participate in the conference.

His approach is just a matter of finding a quiet place and spending 10 to 20 minutes both morning and evening, repeating a mantra – a sacred word. Ma-ra-na-tha is the mantra most often chosen. It is a word in Aramaic, the language that Jesus spoke and means “Come, Lord Jesus”.

With time and practice, what meditators say comes to them is a tranquility, an inner silence and, perhaps, a sense of God’s presence.

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A Time of Departing – Ray Yungen. Lighthouse Trails Publishing Company, Silverton Oregon, USA 2002
ISBN 0-9721512-0-6

Page 7 What Others Are Saying About A Time of Departing

Is contemplative prayer really a vehicle to a closer walk with God? *A Time of Departing* documents clearly that far from being such a vehicle, contemplative prayer is more akin to a Trojan Horse. You may be very surprised to read of who the prime pawns are in this spiritually dangerous deception. CECIL ANDREWS TAKE HEED MINISTRIES –NORTHERN IRELAND www.takeheed.net

The church is under subtle attack. Pantheistic theology and occult practices have become a serious danger to the purity of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Ray Yungen is a Watchman sounding the alarm. PHILLIP ARNN SENIOR RESEARCHER, WATCHMAN FELLOWSHIP, INC. www.watchman.org

Ray Yungen exposes in a clear and documented manner both Catholic and Evangelical mysticism, which has affected mankind in its core beliefs and values. I highly recommend this book to understand a massive undetected plague facing us in our day. RICHARD BENNETT FORMER CATHOLIC PRIEST, NOW EVANGELIST – BEREAN BEACON www.bereanbeacon.org

Page 12

New Age wolves are feasting on the flock again, and their latest sheep costumes are state of the art. Any Christian leader who takes his flock protection duty seriously needs to read *A Time of Departing* – A vital book. MARK VRANKOVICH DIRECTOR OF CULTWATCH INC. – NEW ZEALAND www.cultwatch.com

Page 14-15

By using Eastern mystical techniques such as the repetition of words (mantras) and the emptying of the mind, professing Christians are testifying to powerful experiences in the spiritual realms. In Christian circles these techniques are being called: the silence, breath prayer, centering prayer, or contemplative prayer. Through these mystical prayer practices the church today has opened its door to a subtle abandonment of the gospel.

Page 17

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. 1 Tim. 4:1

In the decade of the 1980s the term *New Age movement* inspired a sense of dread in many conservative Christians. This fear stemmed from the conviction that something evil and sinister surrounded this movement and that ominous clouds were on the spiritual horizon. In the '90s this backlash largely subsided, and most Christians forgot about or ignored what seemed so threatening a few years earlier.

But this movement has *not* gone away. In fact, it is very much with us and in ways that may surprise many Christians. By the time the new millennium arrived, the New Age had so quietly soaked into our Western culture that many Christians today are literally acclimated and accepting of Gnostic and Eastern spirituality. *A Time of Departing* unveils this new spiritual paradigm and reveals the many different manifestations it has taken.

If you are a person who believes we have reached the “latter times” or are right on the threshold, then 1 Timothy 4:1 should be of keen interest to you. Why? Because if we are indeed in those times, some evidence of this abandonment should be around somewhere. Furthermore, what kind of Christian would be so vulnerable and susceptible to “deceiving spirits?” The nominal Christian? The carnal Christian? You might be surprised at the answer.

Page 22-23

What Exactly is Meditation?

The meditation most of us are familiar with involves a deep, continuous thinking about something. But New Age meditation does just the opposite. It involves ridding oneself of all thoughts in order to *still* the mind by putting it in the equivalent of pause or neutral. A comparison would be that of turning a fast-moving stream into a still pond. When meditation is employed by damming the free flow of thinking, it holds back active thought and causes a shift in consciousness. This condition is not to be confused with daydreaming, where the mind dwells on a subject. New Age meditation works as a holding mechanism until the mind becomes thoughtless, empty and silent.

The two most common methods used to induce this thoughtless state are *breathing* exercises, where attention is focused on the breath, and a *mantra*, which is a repeated word or phrase. The basic process is to focus and maintain concentration without thinking about what you are focusing on. Repetition on the focused object is what triggers the blank mind.

Since mantras are central to New Age meditation, it is important to understand a proper definition of the word. The translation from Sanskrit is *man*, meaning to “think”, and *tra*, meaning “to be liberated from”. Thus, the word literally means *to escape from thought*. By repeating the mantra, either out loud or silently, the word or phrase begins to lose any meaning it once had. The conscious thinking process is gradually tuned out until an altered state of consciousness is achieved.

But this silence is not the final objective; its attainment is only a means to an end. What that end entails was aptly described by English artist Vanora Goodhart after she embarked on the practice of zen meditation. She recounted:

[A] light began seeping through my closed eyelids, bright and gentle at first, but growing more and more intense ... there was a great power and strength in this Light ... I felt I was being drawn upwards and in a great and wonderful rush of power that rose eventually to a crescendo and bathed me through and through with glorious burning, embracing Light.

Such dynamic experiences as this are what New Age mysticism is really all about – not just believing in some doctrine or a faith that is supported by some creed but rather a close personal contact with a powerful *Presence*. The renowned occultist Dion Fortune acknowledged: “shifting the consciousness is the key to all occult training”. In other words, meditation is the gateway to the “light” Goodhart experienced.

Page 28

Modern Day Wizards

From a Christian perspective, it becomes obvious this paradigm shift to the public’s greater acceptance of New Age teachings is a very dangerous opponent to Christianity’s core message. One New Age proponent made this clear when he noted that meditation “brings with it a curious kind of knowing that there is somebody else there with you; you are not alone”. One woman who came under this influence shared the instructions she received during meditation. Her guide told her: “I love you, ... Stay in my light, my love ... Trust in me, your Lord”.

This, I believe is a classic example of what Leviticus 19:31 warned: “Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God”. (KJV)

Page 32

If a belief system does not teach the preaching of the Cross, then it is not “the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). If other ways are correct, then Christ died in vain, His blood unnecessary.

Because of this conflict, one would certainly think Christendom would be the most formidable obstacle to the New Age, standing like a bulwark against this tide of meditation teachers and practical mystics. But, incredibly, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the most successful practical mystics are appearing from within Christendom itself. Instead of retarding the momentum of New Age spirituality, it is our own churches that may very well be the decisive catalysts, which propel the New Age into prominence. Certain spiritual practices are becoming entrenched in our churches that, like an iceberg, seem beautiful and impressive on the surface but can nevertheless cause great damage to the impact of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Page 38 **The Language of God is Silence**

For many years during my research I would come across the term *contemplative prayer*. Immediately I disregarded it as having any New Age connotation because I thought it meant to ponder while praying – which is the normal association with that term. But in the New Age field, things may not always be what they seem to untrained ears.

What contemplative prayer actually entails is described very clearly by the following writer:

When one enters the deeper layers of contemplative prayer one sooner or later experiences the void, the emptiness, the nothingness ... the profound mystical silence ... an absence of thought”.

To my dismay I discovered this *mystical silence* is accomplished by the same methods used by New Agers to achieve their silence – the mantra and the breath! Contemplative prayer is the repetition of what is referred to as a *prayer word* or *sacred word* until one reaches a state where the soul, rather than the mind, contemplates God.

Page 46

Consequently, the desert fathers believed as long as the desire for God was sincere – anything could be utilized to reach God. If a method worked for the Hindus to reach their gods, then Christian mantras could be used to reach Jesus. A current practitioner and promoter of the desert fathers’ mystical prayer still echoes the logical formulations of his mystical ancestors:

In the wider ecumenism of the Spirit being opened for us today, we need to humbly accept the learnings of particular Eastern religions ... What makes a particular practice Christian is not its source, but its intent ... this is important to remember in the face of those Christians who would try to impoverish our spiritual resources by too narrowly defining them. If we view the human family as one in God’s spirit, then this historical cross-fertilization is not surprising ... selective attention to Eastern spiritual practices can be of great assistance to a fully embodied Christian life”.

Do you catch the reasoning here? Non-Christian sources, as avenues to spiritual growth, are perfectly legitimate in the Christian life, and if Christians only practice their Christianity based on the Bible, they will impoverish their spirituality. This was the thinking of the desert fathers. So as a result we now have contemplative prayer.

Page 56

Is contemplative spirituality of God or not?

There certainly is a *perceived* presence of God in the contemplative practice as noted by Brother Wayne Teasdale who stated: “[I]n the silence is a dynamic presence. And that’s God, and we become attuned to that”. But is this presence really God? Based on the criteria put forth in the previous chapter, it may not be God they are attuned to at all but rather the “dynamic presence” of familiar spirits. The problem with addressing this issue is the proponents of these practices are devout and virtuous, which highly impresses a great many Christians.

Page 57

What I am saying may appear controversial, but please keep in mind what New Age writer Marilyn Ferguson discovered: 31 percent of New Agers she quizzed said it was “Christian mysticism” that got them involved.

Thomas Keating/Basil Pennington

In the book *Finding Grace at the Center*, written by these two Catholic monks, the following advice is given:

We should not hesitate to take the fruit of the age-old wisdom of the East and “capture” it for Christ. Indeed, those of us who are in ministry should make the necessary effort to acquaint ourselves with as many of these Eastern techniques as possible ...

Many Christians who take their prayer life seriously have been greatly helped by Yoga, Zen, TM and similar practices, especially where they have been initiated by reliable teachers and have a solidly developed Christian faith to find inner form and meaning to the resulting experiences.

Thomas Keating and Basil Pennington have taken their Christianity and blended it with Eastern mysticism through a contemplative method they call *centering prayer*.

No longer is the contemplative movement confined just to the Roman Catholic church and mainline Protestant camps. With a sincere desire to find a deeper walk with God many conservative, evangelical Christians are starting to explore and even embrace the spirituality of those individuals I have just profiled. This pursuit oddly covers the whole gamut of evangelical Christendom from charismatic to Baptist. Only the most discerning and Biblically grounded Christians seem aware of the dangers of the contemplative prayer movement. A lack of discernment or a misleading view of Scripture can open the doors to becoming a *contemplative* evangelical. The list of these evangelicals is growing, and you may be surprised who is involved in moving the evangelical church toward a new mystical paradigm.

Dr. Rodney R. Romney, Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Seattle is a person frequently quoted as an example of a New Age Christian. He very candidly revealed what was conveyed to him in his contemplative prayer periods. The “source of wisdom” he was in contact with told him the following: “I want you to preach this oneness, to hold it up before the world as my call to unity and togetherness. In the end this witness to the oneness of all people will undermine any barriers that presently exist”.

Clearly, this is a familiar spirit speaking here. Jesus Christ did not teach all people are one. There are the *saved* and the *unsaved*. And Jesus Christ is the catalyst for this partition. But the spirit who spoke to Dr. Romney also revealed something else vitally important. It declared, “Silence is that place, that environment where I work”.

Please pay attention to this! God does not work in *the silence* – familiar spirits do. Moreover, what makes it so dangerous is that they are very clever. One well known New Ager revealed what his guiding (familiar) spirit candidly disclosed: “We work with all who are vibrationally sympathetic; simple and sincere people who feel our spirit moving, but for the most part, only within the context of their current belief system”.

The term “vibrationally sympathetic” here means those who suspend thought through word repetition or breath focus – inward mental silence. *That* is what attracts them. *That* is their opening. *That* is why Tilden Edwards called this the “bridge to far Eastern spirituality,” and this is what is being injected into the evangelical church!

The Coming One

In the early twentieth century, a figure who would have a major impact on the Western esoteric movement came out of the occultic Theosophical Society. The popularization of the very term *New Age* has been attributed to her writings. Her name was Alice Ann Bailey.

To occultists, the significance of the Alice Bailey writings has heralded anticipation of the appearance of a *World Healer and Savior* in the coming Aquarian Age (the astrological age of enlightenment and peace). This savior would unite all mankind under his guidance. Bailey termed him the *Coming One*. This person was not to be the Lord Jesus Christ, whom Christians await the return of but an entirely different individual. This man is to embody all the great principles of occultism, chiefly the *divinity and perfectibility of man*.

There is also a movement occurring in Jewish circles that parallels the contemplative spirituality of Catholics and Protestants. Based on the Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical text, this version of contemplative prayer is spreading like wildfire through Judaism. Take a look at any section on Judaism at a local bookstore and find it saturated with books on this subject.

This new spirituality within Judaism is widely known as the *Jewish Renewal* movement. This is significant to the prophecies of Matthew, chapter 24, because the mystic Jews also refer to the higher states they enter as the “Messianic Consciousness”. So, in effect, to be in this state of being, in their view, makes one a messiah or in the Greek language a *christos* – a christ.

The Great Apostasy

In light of the many who will be coming in Christ’s name, I also believe the Alice Bailey prophecies can provide further insight into what the apostle Paul called in 2 Thessalonians the *falling away*. Bailey eagerly foretold of what she termed “the regeneration of the churches”. Her rationale for this was obvious:

The Christian church in its many branches can serve as a St. John the Baptist, as a voice crying in the wilderness, and as a nucleus through which world illumination may be accomplished.

In other words, instead of opposing Christianity, the occult would capture Christianity and then use it as a vehicle for spreading New Age consciousness! The various churches would still have their outer forms of Christianity and still use much of the same lingo. If asked certain questions about traditional Christian doctrine, the same answers would be given. But it would all be on the outside; on the inside a contemplative spirituality would be drawing in those open to it.

In wide segments of Christendom this has indeed already occurred. As stated earlier, Thomas Keating alone taught 31,000 people mystical prayer in one year. People are responding to this in large numbers because it has the external appearance of Christianity but in truth, is the total opposite – a skillful spiritual delusion. I believe what we are seeing here is the *falling away* Paul speaks of:

Let no one deceive you by any means: for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Note this departure is tied in with the revelation of the Man of Sin. If he is indeed Bailey's Coming One, then both prophecies, Bailey's and Paul's, fit together perfectly – but obviously, from opposite perspectives.

This is very logical when one sees, as Paul proclaimed, that they will fall away to “the mystery of iniquity” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). The word here in Greek is the same word we derive mysticism from. The departure is to occult mysticism!

Page 120

The world is opening its arms to a new spirituality that will allow diversity to exist under the umbrella of mysticism. The correlating theme will be – we are all One. Further, not only will the man of lawlessness rise to power with a one-world economy and political base but with him will come a contemplative spirituality that will allow many to find their own *Christ Consciousness*.

Page 129 – 130

Merton or The Holy Spirit

Two authors from Great Britain portrayed a stunningly clear picture of New Age spirituality. They explained:

[T]he keynote of it appears to be a movement for synthesis derived from an understanding of the underlying unity behind all things and the sense of oneness that this brings ... This oneness of all life is the crux of the New Age movement.

M. Basil Pennington defined the contemplative spiritual worldview in his book, *Thomas Merton My Brother*. He related:

The Spirit enlightened him [Merton] in the true synthesis [unity] of all and in the harmony of that huge chorus of living beings. In the midst of it he lived out a vision of a new world, where all divisions have fallen away and the divine goodness is perceived and enjoyed as present in all and through all.

The first viewpoint describes God as the oneness of all existence. In Merton's new world, God is perceived as being present “in all and through all”. It is clear the same spirit enlightened both parties. The only difference was Merton's revelation worked in a Christian context just as Alice Bailey predicted. Unfortunately, this context is now commonplace in Catholic circles, becoming so in mainline Protestant churches, and being eagerly explored by an ever-increasing number of evangelical Christians.

Page 133

The Christian of the Future?

The cover of the July/August 1999 issue of *Group Magazine*, a leading resource magazine for Christian youth leaders, featured a teenage girl, eyes shut, doing contemplative prayer. The article, “Ancient-Future Youth Ministry” begins by declaring:

It's Sunday just after 5 P.M., in the youth room ... Seven adults are sitting around a “Christ-candle” in the youth room. There is no talking, no laughter. For 10 minutes, the only noise is the sound of their breathing ... now it's 7 p.m. – one hour into the night's youth group gathering. There are 18 senior highers and five adults sitting in a candlelit sanctuary. A gold cross stands on a table ... They're chanting the “Jesus Prayer”, an ancient meditative practice”.

According to this article two Christian organizations, Youth Specialties and San Francisco Theological Seminary (Presbyterian Church, USA), have teamed together to do a three-year test project to develop an approach to youth ministry that incorporates contemplative practices. These two organizations are sponsoring the project in 16 churches of various denominations. The article was very open to the fact that sacred word repetition was at the heart of this project. The article revealed that, in all 16 test congregations, middle school and senior high youth “were eager to learn contemplative spiritual practices”. One of the church’s associate pastors even went so far as to say, “We shouldn’t be surprised it’s working so well. It’s kind of a no-brainer. If you make the space, the Spirit will come”.

Page 136

In the spiritual climate of today a unifying mystical prayer practice fits the paradigm necessary to unite the various world faiths. In Western civilization, this model is the contemplative prayer movement. I believe this movement is on the slippery slope that will lead to the great apostasy. For this to happen, as the Bible says, there will be “seducing spirits” who design a spirituality very closely related to the truth. Every Christian must therefore discern whether or not the contemplative prayer movement is a deeper way of walking with God or a deception that is attempting to undermine the very gospel itself.

Page 137

Let us be mindful that deception is subtle, and we must be alert. All of life and truth are resting on what God has proclaimed in the Scriptures. Any teaching not supported in the Bible is not of God. May you know in your heart and mind that you are not one of the deceived and may you, with all your heart, show your love for God by loving His Living Word. And finally, may you press on towards the upward call of God and be found ready – for there will indeed be *a time of departing!*

**For false christs and false prophets will rise
and show great signs and miracles to deceive,
if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you
beforehand. (Matthew 24:24,25)**

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A Time of Departing

Send \$12.95 U.S. funds plus \$2.95 within the USA, \$3.50 to Canada, \$7.00 to Europe for shipping to:

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Brian Flynn www.onetruthministries.com

Link resources offering information on deception:

www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com Publishers of A Time of Departing and other books.

www.erwm.com

<http://cana.userworld.com> Marcia Montenegro, a former professional astrologer and New Age practitioner who engaged in various occult practices such as having a spirit guide etc. reveals the contemplative prayer movement as having many of the same techniques and views she once had.

http://cana.userworld.com/cana_home.html

www.shalach.org What is Yoga? Judaism and the dangers of Torah Kabbalah or Torah Yoga.

www.shalach.org/TorahYoga/YogaWarning.htm

[Noah's Dove Ministries](#) A local ministry here in Canada providing information on contemplative spirituality, articles and other resources.

You can check our web site under 'Contemplative Spirituality' on an ongoing basis for further dialogue and documents.

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