

Labyrinth Revival Choosing Truth Ministries www.ctmin.org

Our friend Carla shares concern for deception within the Christian community. Towards Christians led astray by the New Age infiltration and other occult practice being accepted into the Church. Her passion evident by her research as she reaches out to the Church embracing occult and New Age mysticism in defiance of God's Word.

Her blog with it's resources can be found on our web site under Contemplative Spirituality or her address <http://foolsonly.blogspot.com/>. The following comes from Carla's blog starting with Labyrinth Revival, Tuesday January 03, 2006 up to Last Links, Friday January 13, 2006.

Tuesday, January 03, 2006 Labyrinth Revival

Who is the Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress?

She is behind the Labyrinth revival in North America. She is also the canon (for special ministries)of Grace Cathedral in San Fransisco, California, and has been credited with installing two permanent labyrinths there(indoor and outdoor). Reverend Artress has apparently been the key figure for the revival of labyrinths in churches all over the U.S., having recreated models of the labyrinth of Chartres Cathdral in France. These last few years she has been very busy giving workshops with her portable fabric labyrinths and writing books on the labyrinth.

Some of the information I will be using this week is from a book called 'The Complete Guide to Labyrinths' by Cassandra Eason. The reason I picked this particular book as a research source out of so many books about the labyrinth is because there is an endorsement on the back cover by Lauren Artress herself that says: 'The Labyrinth movement in the Western world is growing broader and deeper with each labyrinth laid in the ground. Unique people are stepping forward to offer their understanding of this powerful blueprint for healing.' Then she goes on to say that 'this book is a must read handbook for those who hang out in the higher zones of vibration.'

According to The Complete Guide to Labyrinths, not only has 'a labyrinth revival...developed in Canada, especially in and around Edmonton', and even Europe, but it goes on to say that the 'Church and secular movements have made a happy marriage'.

So if the Christian church has adopted the labyrinth, and there is a labyrinth revival around the world, where exactly did the labyrinth come from in the first place? And why is the labyrinth at the center of a growing interest in spiritual practices?

Next ...a look into the labyrinth's beginnings...

Wednesday, January 04, 2006 Labyrinth Beginnings

So what about the female divinity element of the labyrinth?

Cassandra Eason in The Complete Guide to Labyrinths suggests that labyrinths drawn on cave entrances since the beginning of civilization could have been used in goddess worship, as they represented the womb. 'Labyrinths may also have been drawn in the earth near sacred wells, which were considered another entrance to the earth mother womb for fertility rituals.' (pg. 21) The labyrinth is based on one of the most ancient mother goddess symbols, the spiral. (pg. 26)'The spiral shell and the coiled snake symbolized the mother goddess and the earth mother in some ancient civilizations'.(pg 14)

Then there's the Greek legend about Theseus, Ariadne and the man-eating Minotaur. Legend has it that the Minotaur lived in the Labyrinth.

In the chapter on Labyrinth Basics the author writes that 'sites like Chartres Cathedral have enduring connections to the earth mother. Even before Christianity, Celtic Druids at Chartres created an underground shrine and wooden statue of the Black Madonna and her child(a pre-Christian version of the virgin, made from dark wood, sometimes associated with the Egyptian mother goddess, Isis, and her son Horus).' This statue was destroyed in 1793, but there is another one called 'Our lady Pillar'. The author goes on to say that 'the earth force rises from the well in the crypt, through the floor, and into the pillar above it in the main cathedral...this life force flows into the nearby labyrinth and is energized by the labyrinth's powers.'

'The Black Madonna's other sources of identity may be Artemis, Diana of Ephesus, or Queen of Earth or Mother Nature'. (pg. 253)

As with many other non-Christian symbols and practises, the labyrinth came to be associated with the Christian church to ease the transition from the pagan religion to Christianity. The first known Christian labyrinth dates from the year 328 and was dedicated to the mother church, or Sophia, goddess of wisdom. (pg.70)

It was probably the Roman Christians who began the idea of the labyrinth as the symbolic path to Jerusalem. (pg. 71) The labyrinth survived through the medieval Christian era because it was used as this symbol of the sacred journey to God and to the Holy land.

By the 1800's many labyrinths in churches had been destroyed. It hasn't been until recently that interest has been revived. Near the end of the 20th century, the author says 'the divine mother 're-entered' Christian philosophy and enjoyed a great revival in nature religions and Wicca. In the new century, the labyrinth is once again being celebrated as a mother goddess icon'. (pg. 53)

It's interesting to note that there is a connection between the labyrinth and Catholicism through the Virgin Mary (pg. 104) and that many Catholics walk labyrinths reciting the rosary prayers and talking to Mary, who waits for them, although you can choose any mother goddess figure you want. (pg. 21)

And so that brings us up to 1995 and Labyrinth Enterprises, the world's foremost labyrinth resource that was founded 'to meet the increasing demand for technical and instructional information pertaining to labyrinths. It is associated with Veriditas: The Worldwide Labyrinth Project. Founded at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco by the Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress, a pioneer in promoting the labyrinth as a spiritual tool. Dr. Artress needed someone who could produce canvas labyrinths and organize pilgrimages to Europe. And so, Labyrinth Enterprises was founded.'

And only ten years later the labyrinth is now being introduced into many Bible believing churches here in the Fraser Valley. Do they know what they are inviting in?

Next... The Power of the Labyrinth...

Wednesday, January 04, 2006 BE(A)WARE

How can you beware unless you are aware? If your church is having a prayer labyrinth, take a look at these pictures. They are all recognized by labyrinth promoters as the source of its divine power. Who did the Lord send with power to answer your prayers? The Black Madonna, Isis, Sophia, Gaia, Diana, or His Holy Spirit?

This is The Black Madonna where the labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral is: http://www.joytravelonline.com/chartres_bm.jpg

There are lots of pictures of the Black Madonna here: <http://suzar.com/BOTW/BOTW-ch1b-pages3-4.html> ...The most sacred icons of the Catholic Church are the Black Madonna and Christ child. Historians recognize that the statue of the Egyptian Goddess Isis with her child Horus in her arms was the first Madonna and Child. ...Titles such as Our Lady, The Great Mother, are the same titles attributed to Isis. The word "Madonna" itself is from mater domina, a title used for Isis!

This is an Isis/Horus statue: <http://www.pharaohjunior.com/photos/All%20Egypt/imagepages/image128.htm>

Here is Sophia, goddess of wisdom: <http://www.crystalinks.com/sophia.html>

Here's another source of the labyrinth's power, Mother Earth (Gaia): <http://acoustic-dream.com/pics/gaia.jpg>

If you have been deceived into thinking it's 'okay' to bring a labyrinth, the symbol of the mother goddess, into your church, maybe you'd better read up on The Allure of the Goddess and Isis: "Queen of Heaven".

This might be good to read as well: <http://www.keyway.ca/htm2002/20020906.htm> It's about what the Bible has to say about dangerous Diana of the Ephesians.

Churches, what on (mother) earth are you doing! It's time to be aware!

Thursday, January 05, 2006 The Power in the Labyrinth

The Grace St. Paul's labyrinth website says that people have different experiences walking the labyrinth. As with all practices of prayer or meditation, your experience will grow and deepen the more you do it... 'Some people feel a sense of peace. Others find old memories rising up as they walk. Others find themselves thinking about an immediate situation or person. Others walk at varying speeds as different thoughts and emotions come and go. Some people experience physical sensations, perhaps become light-headed, or have a feeling of floating above, a feeling of weight, or of great warmth. Some people have profound insights. Others have very small experiences or none at all. The experience of walking the labyrinth is different for each person, each time. Whatever you experience, it is your experience. Relax and see what happens.'

Is there that much power in the labyrinth? Does it have a physical effect on our mind, that opens us up to the supernatural?

People everywhere are rediscovering the Labyrinth as a potent tool for self-transformation. Some say its twists and turns the pathways of the Soul, of the Feminine that mirror the flow of psychic energy as Jung described it. 'There is a continuous repetition of movement

forward (progression), which is always followed by a movement backward (regression), like the movement of life. It is the flow between any two opposites, darkness and light, introversion and extroversion, or joy and sorrow. To walk the labyrinth with our physical bodies allows us to learn this message in a way that bypasses the mind and penetrates the nervous system.'

The Complete Guide to Labyrinths agrees that the labyrinth alters brainwaves(pg18). Even the act of tracing a small labyrinth with your finger or eyes creates an altered state of consciousness, akin to a light trance."(pg. 122) "Why should such magical power exist in and round labyrinths? It helps us to shed our conscious thoughts and barriers as we move closer to the center." The author also says that even first time users can have an experience of multi sensory psychic awareness... 'you will meet god, goddesses, angels and planetary energies while learning to pray, dance, chant and heal yourself and other. The secret lies in the energies of the labyrinth'. (pg.10) At least she doesn't lie to us about a divine light when she states: 'entering spiritual darkness takes courage'(pg. 39) And that's where the labyrinth will take you, into the power of the darkness.

Thousands are testifying that the labyrinth is a powerful tool alright. Walking the labyrinth, they say, can deepen spirituality, help access intuition and creativity or provide a way to connect with your community. People have been known to cry, laugh out loud and even jump for joy during their labyrinth walks. Comments from labyrinth walkers include: "Even though I walked with a group of 10 people, I felt calm, peaceful and relaxed at the end. I know my blood pressure went way down!" "I feel centered, grounded, and more in touch with my spirit. The labyrinth quiets my anxiety and leaves me in peace." "I have a labyrinth in my yard that I walk every day. My husband says that since I started walking the labyrinth regularly I am more directed, passionate about my work, more calm and more loving." "It's a guided walking meditation and you can't get lost — really! I just walk and pay attention to what comes up. I find it very quieting."

According to this article for the May 2000 AFR Canada magazine: http://www3.telus.net/st_simons/arm08.htm 'an ex-new-ager who attends our congregation participated a year ago in the Labyrinth. Upon walking to the centre of the circle, she immediately sensed a dark spiritual vortex sucking her down. Fortunately, being a Spirit-filled Christian, she later renounced her involvement in the Labyrinth and through prayer was cut free from the bondage that she was sensing.'

Is the Labyrinth a harmless fad? Or can it have a significant spiritual impact on our lives? Is this one more "new" (old)thing that claims to have rediscovered an ancient secret technique? Could it possibly be that many well-meaning Christians are being deceived?

Next...you won't believe what well meaning objections some Christians are making in defense of the Labyrinth...

Thursday, January 05, 2006 Buy Now Pay Later?

By the way, in this day and age of 'buy new', and 'buy it now, pay later', how do we know what to do with all the latest fads coming into our churches? I like what Greg Laurie says:

If it's new, it's not true, If it's true, it's not new.

Here are some guidelines posted on herescope that might help. Check them out!

As Christians, we need to always go to the Word of God to check everything first. If we do this, we will never fall into the 'buy now, pay later' trap! This goes for books, labyrinths, or any thing that looks attractive and popular, but will cost us dearly down the road because it wasn't the truth.

Thursday, January 05, 2006 Defending the Wrong Thing

I've heard some amazing reactions and comments from Christians defending the labyrinth. (It just occurred to me that they were all made by Mennonites) There are so many quotes that I decided to list them...if you think it's strange that I keep track of these things, you could be right, but I found them so sad I just haven't been able to forget them. Seven of these comments can actually be found in the MB Herald archives, but I would rather keep them anonymous(wouldn't you be embarrassed if this was you?):

-it's got nothing to do with occultic activity(prove it)

-it might not be real good, but it's not so bad...(the old 'Would you eat the whole bowl of icecream if there's only a little piece of doggy doo doo in it?' story comes to mind)

-perhaps you should experience it and then make a judgement(let's see, maybe you should go burn incense and bow down to a few gods in the local Sikh temple before you decide to follow the One true God)

-it's in the local Bible college library (so is alot of other very questionable material)

-I saw one at the Bible book store(so what, they also sell books on Catholic Saints, Robert Schuller and centering prayer...I think that's called 'business')

-it's Christ centred(no,the Bible is Christ centered, the labyrinth is mother earth centered)

-a labyrinth is not good or evil by itself – what those in the past may have used it for is irrelevant, since in the case of these churches it is being used for guided prayer (tell that to the Wiccans all around the world who are meeting the mother goddess of their choice in their labyrinths at this very moment)

-the prayer path was a kit produced by Group Publishing, based on a prayer labyrinth that Youth for Christ (in London, England) created(I'm sorry to hear that)

-the experience takes about 40 minutes and includes stations focused on world missions and repentance, there is even an opportunity for communion(and you need a labyrinth or detailed floor plan to do this?)

-We shouldn't be so quick to judge something just because it was used for evil in the past.(could you mention that to God in regards to those 'high places' that were used for evil?)

-I remember singing the German Christmas carol "O Tannenbaum" and meditating on the symbolism in that evergreen tree. For centuries the evergreen tree has been used symbolically by Christians even though in the past it was part of pagan rituals.(then throw out your tree)

-The labyrinth is a sacred circle with a single path that leads to its centre. Walking the path lends itself to prayer and meditation. As a circle, it is a universal symbol of unity and wholeness. The labyrinth invites us to journey with the God who encircles us and knows us through and through.(Time for you to do some reading up on pagans and Wiccan's and those sacred circles)

-No inanimate object is inherently evil or good but attains significance by the meaning we attach to it. Rather than being alarmist over minor trivialities, we should be upset over the judgmental attitudes and the lack of love we so often display as Christians. (bringing the power of darkness into your church with the symbol of mother goddess worship is trivial?)

Well there you have it. I wonder if the people who insist on defending the labyrinth have possibly walked it and had an experience...and now they want more....you know that awful sound you hear about 10 seconds after taking candy away from a baby? I realize that might have sounded disrespectful, but these excuses sound alot like something you might hear from your teenagers ('everyone else is doing it, why can't I?' syndrome).

Now isn't it true that you get what you go after? Remember Samson? He didn't take the advice of his parents, went looking elsewhere for satisfaction, became unreasonable, got what he wanted...and look how sin lead to his destruction.

Is it an experience you desire, or do you trust God at His Word? Isn't the Bible enough? These people I have quoted are defending the wrong thing! Instead of defending the labyrinth, let us defend the faith...the truth of the gospel!

This from Ephesians: But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ (not by the interactive prayer labyrinth)(2:13) ...for through Him(not prayer stations) we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father (v.18) ...in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him(not through the Stations of the Cross). (3:12)

Friday, January 06, 2006 Dangerous Doors

If you've been reading here this week, you will understand by now what gives the labyrinth it's power.

What doors might be opening to those who choose to walk to the center of the labyrinth?

Cassandra Eason, who says that in the centre of the labyrinth you can talk to your chosen diety and ask for strength (p.249 of The Complete Guide to Labyrinths) also writes:

"The labyrinth reopens the channels that often close with the ending of childhood. Once the channels are open again these powers remain accessible and will enrich all you psychic explorations "(pg.124) ..."the center(of the labyrinth) is also a doorway into another world, like the wardrobe in C.S. Lewis's The Chronicles of Narnia, or like the rabbit hole in Alice in Wonderland. The realms, sometimes called "Astral Planes", can also be accessed through prayer, meditation, or dreams. In the labyrinth, you can walk your way out of your body, travel through time and space... or channel the wisdom or angels or spirit guides" (pg.16)

Now I have no idea why Campus Crusade would approve of a labyrinth, and I'll bet that most people within this organization don't even know what a labyrinth is. Nevertheless, they have made a labyrinth kit. Now if these spiritual labyrinth 'doors' symbolize the entrance to the supernatural realm, I wonder what doors are being opened through the labyrinth path called The Journey by Campus Crusade for Christ?

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep... I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture (John 10: 7 and 9)

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Rev. 3:20

Friday, January 06, 2006 Ecumenical Labyrinths?

“But we pray and experience Jesus in the prayer labyrinth...”

Lauren Artress describes ‘walking the labyrinth as a three fold process, and the result of this spiritual journey as the experience of ‘the presence of something holy.’ (The Complete Guide to Labyrinths)

Okay, so what kind of prayers are being said in labyrinths all over the world today? Apparently it doesn’t matter what you pray in the labyrinth, as long as you pray, whether the prayer be Buddhist, Hindu or even from the Old Testament. Or, as chapter 5 in The Complete Guide to Labyrinths suggests, close your eyes and listen to the silence, and connect with your own center of divinity in your soul. Just remember that the prayers or chants with the closest connection to this spirituality are the ones adapted from spirit guides. The three fold path to enlightenment is entry and purgation, followed by meditation and prayer in the center, followed by union on the outward journey. These prayers of enlightenment, that will help you experience the presence of ‘something holy’, include the prayers of the Druids, Native Americans, Saint Patrick, Eastern Mantras, and Irish triple goddess prayer, and Ignatius prayer, founder of the Jesuits. This I found to be an interesting mixture as countless Christians in churches are also using the Ignatius prayer. In fact, this Druids prayer doesn’t sound much different than some you might heard in some churches lately: ‘Deep within the center of my being, May I find peace’. Or you can use a Hebrew prayer or this Tibetan Buddhist prayer(which is the most famous mantra to pass into Western spirituality): just chant om, ma, pad, hum a few times, and the sounds will flow...

So that’s quite a prayer combination...seems labyrinths are ecumenical too.

Hey, I know of a real good prayer adapted from my Spirit guide...it’s in the Word of God, was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and was spoken by Jesus.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

Friday, January 06, 2006 The Journey to Where?

So what kind of Journey is Campus Crusade taking us on?

In October 2003 about 100 students throughout Los Angeles joined together to participate in a Prayer Labyrinth the Campus Crusade staff created for their alone times with the Lord. This was an experiential prayer journey with eight stations to help them reflect and meditate. Two months later, at the Upper Midwest’s annual 2003 Christmas Conference, just under 1000 university students also had an opportunity to go through “The Journey,” a ‘modified’ interactive prayer labyrinth.

The Journey is made by Campus Crusade for Christ International. But it is 'modified', it hasn’t got anything to do with the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in Northern France, does it? You know, the one Reverend Lauren Artress has recreated and revived? The labyrinth whose power reportedly comes from the Black Madonna or Isis? This can’t have anything to do with Campus Crusade, can it?

Well...is that what it says here?

Oops...

If you are interested, take a tour through The Journey's prayer stations on-line and read the instructions. If they are too small you can enlarge them.

So, are students really so bored with the Word of God that Campus Crusade needed to create this experience? By the way, Youth for Christ even has an on-line labyrinth here: <http://www.yfc.co.uk/labyrinth/online.html#>

You can read about it here: (<http://www.challies.com/archives/000630.php>) Tim Challies concludes with this:“The labyrinth is described as a place of "meditative prayer" and "contemplative prayer" - two concepts that have been largely absent from Protestantism until recent days when the teaching of Catholic mystics like Nouwen and Manning have found wide acceptance by evangelicals. Today such concepts, which might involve chanting a single word for 20 minutes or deliberately turning off one's mind, are considering effective ways of deepening one's walk with Christ - or at least appealing to those who have no use for the church. It is tragic, isn't it? When did the Bible stop being enough? Why are believers turning away from the Word, and turning instead towards mysticism and attempts to know and experience God apart from His complete revelation of Himself. And when did we lose sight of the preaching of the gospel as they way to reach the lost? Throughout history people have rejected God and rejected our best efforts to convince them to accept Him. Changing our methods to more closely mimic the world's will do nothing to change the fact that the number of those who hate God will always outnumber those who love Him. Avoid the labyrinth and any other method that might seek

to convince you that you can know and experience God apart from His Word. Immerse yourself in the Word and God will speak to you with clarity, conviction and power!”

So where can you purchase this labyrinth kit? At the Youth for Christ Online Store. There’s even a Labyrinth Journey CD-Rom (since October, 2003) which is a seven-week discipleship course that includes the Labyrinth.

So who is doing this particular labyrinth? It’s interesting that the pastor of this church in California was introduced to the labyrinth at a national pastors’ conference. The Mennonites are also among the churches promoting this labyrinth.

There is a very different perspective on this if you are interested at: <http://www.ship-of-fools.com/Columns/Collins/Collins0301.html>

So it’s interesting that Campus Crusade calls their interactive prayer labyrinth ‘The Journey’. Isn’t that what the Roman Catholic church called the labyrinth to cover up the paganism that it always was? ‘The labyrinth is a metaphor for the spiritual journey. It is found in many religious traditions and in various forms. The labyrinth at Christ Church is modeled on the one laid into the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France in the thirteenth century. It was known as the ‘Journey to Jerusalem’. Believers walked it in lieu of an actual pilgrimage to the Holy Land.’ (<http://www.historicchristchurch.org/spirituality/labyrinth.htm>)

This may have nothing to do with it, but it’s also an interesting note that Bill Bright’s (of Campus Crusade) last book was also called ‘The Journey Home’. (I have that book and it is very good.)

Well those are the facts. Now you decide what Journey Campus Crusade is leading people on. Does ‘The Journey’ really lead to Christ?

Stay tuned...

Monday, January 09, 2006 The Journey: Station #1

Is The Journey Prayer Labyrinth by Campus Crusade a real labyrinth?

I’ve spent some time going through The Journey’s prayer stations (on-line) and reading the instructions. It’s been quite a journey! I have found some interesting and disturbing similarities between these stations of the Campus Crusade Christianized prayer labyrinth and the rituals done in non-Christian prayer labyrinths. I suppose in today’s post-modern terminology those would be called the ‘un-churched’ labyrinths, while the labyrinths in the churches would be called the ‘seeker’ labyrinths of this incredible ‘labyrinth growth’ movement!

Over the next few days I will be posting a step by step comparison of Campus Crusade’s The Journey with the prayer labyrinths being used all around the world today. Don’t forget that it’s not only Christians who pray. I will again be using the book most highly endorsed by Lauren Artress herself, The Complete Guide to Labyrinths, whose author Cassandra Eason is a Quaker and a Druidess (pg.300). I will also be doing a quick word search on blueletterbible.org to see if these concepts are in the Bible.

(*An interesting side note: unusual symbolism not related to Christianity is used on some of the Campus Crusade Station printout pages...I will mention them here as well.) And remember, I am just presenting some facts through quotes and other people’s information. You may come to your own conclusions...

The Journey: Station #1 Beginning...‘you are on a journey to the light...a journey to the center...’

Are these concepts in the Bible? The word ‘center’ does not even come up on a word search. What about a ‘journey to the light’? There is one verse, but notice that Jesus was the initiator here: ‘And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ Acts 22:6,7

On the other hand, the phrases ‘journey to the center’ and ‘journey to the light’ are commonly used New Age terms.

Next: Station #2...

Monday, January 09, 2006 The Journey: Station #2

THE JOURNEY Prayer Labyrinth by Campus Crusade Station #2 Burdens...take a stone to represent your troubles...carry it with you

Is this concept in the Bible? Couldn’t find it. Leaving stone altars as memorials to God’s faithfulness, yes. But nothing about carrying around stones representing our own burdens.

On the other hand, The Complete Guide to Labyrinths(CGL)states that not only are many outdoor labyrinths made out of stones, but stones are commonly used as a talisman, and the blessing and casting of stones is a common (pagan) ritual of divination in the labyrinth(pg. 163). A talisman is an object carried for protection or other goals that has been ritually charged with power for a purpose, to attract a specific energy or force to it's bearer, such as gemstones, shells, drawings and virtually any small object that one may carry. The Labyrinth Society of Edmonton advises under 'Use Accessories' to: 'wear a coloured scarf as symbolic of something for you; carry an object of significance to you (votive candle, flower, stone, etc.) as you walk the labyrinth.

Now the Bible does have something to say about those who use charms and divination... "And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger." 2 Kings 17:17 "And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards". Isaiah 19:3

Think that's far fetched? Stay tuned...more to come...

Tuesday, January 10, 2006 The Journey: Station #3

THE JOURNEY Prayer Labyrinth by Campus Crusade Station #3 Self...talks about being knit together in your mother's womb(Psalm 139)...you are unique, you are loved by the Creator who is proud of you...

Is this concept in the Bible? Yes, of course! God knows us and knit us together in our mother's womb, but what about the phrase: 'the Creator is proud of you'? And if you feel God is 'proud of you', would that make you proud of yourself? The Bible does say alot about pride, but in a negative way. It tells us that not one is righteous and that our righteousness is as filthy rags, and that 'Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD...' (Proverbs 16:5), "...and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5)

On the other hand, the psychology of this world (and even now the church) teaches that we need a high self esteem. In fact, Robert Schuller says that sin is actually just 'low self esteem'. In this sermon he said: "Salvation accepted leads to self-esteem. If you know that you are forgiven for your sins, and God is your Father and Friend, then you have a tremendous sense of self respect." Now, isn't it amazing that this prayer Station is actually called "Self"?

As far as the labyrinth and the 'mother's womb' connection, The Complete Guide to Labyrinths talks alot about mothers and wombs, the labyrinth being THE symbol of the womb, mother earth and rebirth(pg.14).

*Symbolism sidenote: I hesitate to even post this one, but Campus Crusade has put it there, so let's look at it... At the bottom of the page for this Station there is a triangle (or pyramid?) in a circle with a sun blaze. Now, either some naive person has randomly picked this symbol for their labyrinth, or it has been purposely selected. Don't all symbols have a meaning behind them? That's why they are called symbols. So why this one? Where else do we see a similar seal of approval or ownership? The closest one that comes to mind is this: <http://www.radioliberty.com/Symbolsandtheirmeaning.html> Now what does that have to do with the Labyrinth? This symbolism has it's roots in Egypt and Horus, whose mother was Isis, another name for the Black Maddonna at Chartre Cathedral labyrinth in France. Yes, the same labyrinth that Campus Crusade mentioned at the beginning of this labyrinth. Just one more interesting note: this is the third station...the 'all-seeing' Eye of Horus is known as the Third Eye.

Let's hope this symbol is just a random ,although very appropriate, choice, made by some unknowing office employee who works at Campus Crusade(we hope)... because IF it was intentional, it certainly could not have been a more accurate one.

Now here is where I must leave the facts and insert abit of my (humble) opinion as I can't fathom the thought of thousands of young impressionable students sitting at this third Station called "SELF" meditating on themselves. The term 'contemplating your navel' comes to mind here, as this is basically what this Station is.

Next...Station #4: Contemplation...

Tuesday, January 10, 2006 The Journey: Station #4

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station #4 Contemplation...go towards the light...

Is this concept in the Bible? Kind of.... we are to "walk in the light as He is in the light" (1 John 1:7), but do we need a labyrinth to follow Jesus? And if you need to walk towards the light, does that mean you are presently in the darkness? Jesus said, " I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12

On the other hand, people of all belief systems who walk the labyrinth also talk about a divine light. 'Enlightenment', 'illumination' and 'going towards the light' are New Age terms (they even have 'light centers'). A very common theme of those who have had near death experiences (and come back very confused) is also 'going towards the light '.

In the Bible we also find a warning about the light: "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:15)

So as Christians, do we walk towards the light in the labyrinth, or are we already in the light?

Next...Station #5...it is very planetary, (that rhymes)...stay tuned....

Tuesday, January 10, 2006 The Journey: Station #5

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station #5: Mosaic of Life...our relationships to the planet and ourselves have been broken? You can see this all right here: (<http://www.proost.co.uk/labyrinth.html>) where it says 'centre on God and reflect on your relationships with others, yourself and the planet as you take your encounter with God back into the world'.

Is that concept in the Bible? Nothing showed up when I typed in the key words, so I substituted 'friendship' for 'relationships', and 'world' for 'planet' and got this: "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." James 4:4

This planetary relationship stuff is hardly a Christian concept! First of all, The Complete Guide to Labyrinths says there are ceremonies for healing relationships, such as in the Native American Hopi mother Earth labyrinth (pg.190) as well as many other Wiccan and Druidic relational and planetary healing rituals (chapter 13). If you need proof, one such labyrinth workshop is listed here (among other things), that uses stones to "perform a healing ritual for ourselves and the planet". Then there is the whole New Age agenda of world, community and planetary peace, but we won't get into that here.

This whole 'planetary' Station is way too far out there for me, but then the website for this labyrinth is called the Global Prayer Movement. Beam me up Scotty! Mork to Ork...nanu...nanu....

Next...Station #6...getting wet...

Tuesday, January 10, 2006 The Journey: Station #6

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station #6 Washing...bowl of water is used with perfume added, wash your hands in the fragrant water...

Is this concept in the Bible? Yes, there were lots of bowls used in the temple, lots of washing and cleansing and anointing going on, all for godly purposes. And later, instead of all the rituals, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:25-27) And "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5)

Of course bowls of water are not evil. However, there is an association with bowls of water and pagan labyrinth rituals. In The Complete Guide to Labyrinths, there are also instructions how to use bowls of water in a labyrinth walk for many rituals, such as how to use a dish of empowering water in your winter rebirthing 'mother earth' labyrinth ritual (pg. 30), water also being a symbol of the mother goddess.

Why would Christians want to copy this practise?

Only 7 more Stations to go...

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 The Journey: Station #7

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station #7: Obstacles... "What obstacles are there in your relationship with God? Is there something that's holding you back? Ask God to help you overcome those obstacles, to step over the wall, and continue your journey on the path he has set out for you."

I drew a complete blank when I read this one. I feel as if I am up against an obstacle here...

Now, is this concept in the Bible?

I couldn't find anything at blueletter.org (it's a King James search), but the New American Standard Bible uses the word 'obstacle' three times. It's another word for 'stumbling block':

“And it will be said, " Build up, build up, prepare the way, Remove every obstacle out of the way of My people." Is 57:14 - ('stumbling block' KJV) "Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he will die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand". Ez 3:20 -('stumbling block' KJV) “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this--not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.” Romans 14:13 -(stumbling block or an occasion to fall- KJV) ...these scriptures can speak for themselves.

Now, is there any other connection with obstacles and labyrinths?

"Walking the labyrinth provides us a bridge to the sacred within. Navigating through her curves and deep pools, we find initiation, reflection, and stillness. As it washes away the mental obstacles we begin to feel and hear her divine guidance which we are so thirsty for at this place in history". (<http://www.surrendertotheheart.com/>)

Apparently there is a psychological significance of the Labyrinth that has something to do with opposites, obstacles and conflict expanding an awareness of 'self'. “The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the psychological significance of the labyrinth, especially in regard to the relevance of the life-long process of individuation with particular attention to the transitional period of adolescence. Ten adolescents walked the labyrinth while contemplating two images in response to: "What matters to the heart?" and "What is the opposite of your heart's yearning?" Art-making and interviewing were employed as means of documenting the experiences of the subjects before walking the labyrinth, during the labyrinth walk, and during follow-up meetings. Data analysis showed that the first two art-making images from each subject revealed opposites, obstacles, and a conflict, or a tension, existing between the images. The third, new image of each subject discovered in the labyrinth, contained something of the first two images, either in content or through shape, color, or form, and expanded each subject's awareness of self.”

...*Symbolism: what is that strange picture on the bottom of that page anyways?

Next Station: the pearly gates...

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 The Journey: Station #8

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station #8 Pearls...take a pearl as a reminder of the pain in your life...

Is this concept in the Bible?

Not quite. Shouldn't it be the other way around? Shouldn't we rather be reminding ourselves of the pain Jesus suffered to purchase us?

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it“. Matt. 13:46,47

In THE CASE OF THE VALUABLE PEARL, Ray C. Stedman says: “I wonder if any of us at any time fully grasp the significance of that. Most of us have tried to think through the sacrifice of Jesus. Oftentimes we think of it as a kind of commercial enterprise -- "The Lord paid the price" -- as though he were merely making a purchase in a marketplace... ..What symbol of that more perfect than a pearl could ever be given? Something hurts an oyster, but the oyster's response is to transform and transmute the injurious object, covering it with a soft and delicate nacre which is built up layer by layer until it forms a lustrous and shining and beautiful jewel. That is what our Lord has chosen as a symbol of the church. You can see how true it is. We are the ones who have wounded our Lord, as in that hymn we often sing: Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me who Him to death pursued? Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?”

And yes, we will suffer...but suffering for Christ's sake makes us perfect in Him, and understanding that prevents us from having our own personal pity party. This is a short 'must read' devotional about the value of suffering(i.e. no pain/no gain):

<http://www.backtothebible.org/devotions/classics/streams/8>

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us“. Romans 8:18

On the other hand, is there any connection between healing of pain by the powers of the labyrinth? Yes, in fact, many Hindu, Wiccan and New Age healing rituals are also done in the labyrinth. (CGL chapter 8: Labyrinths for Healing)

We need to stay far away from any source of healing other than Jesus Christ! Sure, carry a pearl around, but may it be a reminder of the great price Christ paid for you. Nothing else compares!

Next Station...make an impression...

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 The Journey: Station #9

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station #9 Impressions...make a hand or footprint in sand...take time to look at it...

My first impression was...why? You can go to the beach and do this.

Is this concept in the Bible?

Lots about sand, but the only verse I could find about leaving anything in the sand is: "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand." Matthew 7:26

On the other hand, many labyrinths are drawn or built on the sand, and sand is also used in the labyrinth for the ancient Hopi Mother Earth, Father Sky, Spider Woman healing tradition(chapter 8, The Complete Guide to Labyrinths).

Next...throwing stones...

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 The Journey: Station #10

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station #10:Leave the Burden...as you approach the center of this pilgrimage, think again about the burden you have been bearing so far...if you can give it over, throw your stone in the basket...if you can't, throw it in and take a smaller one...maybe you'll be ready to come back and give it all to God later...

Well now they say this is supposed to be nearing the center of the labyrinth, I guess my math is out. Anyways, is this concept in the Bible? Leaving stone altars as memorials to God's faithfulness, yes. Stoning people to death, yes. Ritually tossing rocks into labyrinths, no...

On the other hand, the experts say that stones are widely used in all labyrinths, as one labyrinth walker relates about her experience with an 'assortment of objects accumulated in the center. In mottled light of sun and shade I had knelt to observe the carved wooden box with a talisman inside, the many shells and stones, the silver heart pendant with a jagged line through the center (a broken heart), the woven basket, a clay bowl, beads, coins, burnt candles, a bill of foreign currency (India), a bone, a cameo, a picture of the Virgin Mary, a wooden disk, a mirror, an angel, and more. Here, people had prayed, shared of themselves, expressed their hope, pain and joy — and I felt it fully...In my pocket is a small rock that I will leave in the center...I walk the labyrinth slowly, stepping around the occasional stones that jut up in the pathway. At the center I place my stone and pray'

Sounds kind of Wiccan to me. Why introduce this practise to Christians?

Not much farther to go...

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 The Journey: Station #11

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station #11...Rest...'keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly'(Matthew 11:28-30 paraphrase)...that quote is from The Message (paraphrase)

It strikes me how the re-wording of this verse could be taken as an invitation to the wide road as well. The literal Bible translation says: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light".(The yoke being slavery, laws imposed on one, as a balance, pair of scales. The burden being the obligations Christ lays upon his followers in contrast to the oppressive rules of the Pharisees)

On the other hand, there are many labyrinth practises that also claim to offer spiritual freedom: (you've really got to read the rest of this to get the picture...) "In order for your mind to be free, you need to feel that same freedom in your body. Listen to your breath. Every breath you take brings freedom into your mind and into your body. Let your mind relax and focus only on freedom as your fingers trace the labyrinth"...

*Symbolism: odd picture: when enlarged, the picture is two black hands tattooed with red lines, holding a red heart with 6 black lines(hand tattooing is an ancient tribal and Hindu tradition) Out of all the hand symbol pictures to choose from, why this picture???

Jesus says that He will give us rest if we come unto Him, not walk unto the labyrinth...

Next...a few more Stations and I'm outta here...

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 The Journey: Station #12

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station #12 Others - 'Jesus...came...to provide a way for us to have a relationship with Him' There is truth to this. Jesus came to save us from the wages of sin. While we can have a relationship with God, through Christ, there is so much casual talk today about having a 'relationship with God' and not much teaching about repentance or the Holiness of God. People seem to want the benefits of relationship without obedience. Interesting note: I was not surprised that I couldn't find the word

relationship in the Bible. Then I read (at: <http://www.oldtruth.com/blog.cfm/.id.2.pid.139>) that there is no mention of love or a relationship with God a single time in the entire book of Acts. It doesn't support the notion that the central focus of Christianity is one's love-relationship with God and personal life enhancement. Emphasis is on the resurrection of Christ, prophetic fulfillment and forgiveness, and responsibility to preach the Gospel. Hmmm...

*Symbolism researchers might find another interesting symbol here...small triangle and labyrinth (or pyramid and eye, if you turn your head sideways?) On that same theme, there is an interesting Virtual Exploration of the Lost Hawara Labyrinth Pyramid Complex here: http://www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/digital_egypt/hawara/enco2000/enco2000_web.html

We are nearly at the end...

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 The Journey: Station #13

THE JOURNEY by Campus Crusade Station 13...People of Impact ...you can thread beads to remember and thank God for each person who has influenced you...

Is this concept found in the Bible? No.

On the other hand, that's almost like praying the Rosary. It's very common to see people walking the labyrinth praying with their rosary beads.

*there is another interesting symbol on this page that could bring anyone who has studied symbolism to some interesting conclusions...you might find something like that here(arrows? geometric shapes?)at: <http://www.radioliberty.com/Symbolsandtheirmeaning.html>. On the other hand, it could mean absolutely nothing.

I counted wrong...there are still two more Stations left and I am exhausted...

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 The Journey: Station #14

The Journey by Campus Crusade Station #14: Chains...as a child of the living God, you are no longer bound by chains, but set free...take a broken chain link as a reminder...

I totally agree! And you need to walk the labyrinth to realize this?

I am just surprised that the Bible verse used is Psalm 119:32... "I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free." No scripture about HOW we are set free, about the blood of Jesus, or the death and resurrection...but hopefully, if you were one of the (deceived)Christians walking through a Christianized labyrinth, you would already know that...hopefully.

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 The End of the Journey

The Journey by Campus Crusade Station #15: Thank you...this is where you take time to write in a book something you would like to say to God..

Thank you God that now we have the boldness to enter into the your Holy presence by the blood of your Son Jesus,(Hebrews 10:19) and we don't need to do rituals or walk labyrinths to know that.

Amen!

Thursday, January 12, 2006 So What's the Difference?

So back to that question: is the Campus Crusade prayer labyrinth a real labyrinth?

First of all, is there a difference in the floor plan of the Campus Crusade labyrinth and a real labyrinth?

Traditional labyrinth PATH: There is only one path, a single pathway in to the centre and the same path brings you out. When you have reached the centre you are halfway along the path.

Campus Crusade Labyrinth: This floor plan differs from the traditional labyrinth in that it is more of a back and forth pattern, but still left to right. Like the traditional labyrinth, there is only one path to follow. It is not clear which station is the center of this labyrinth as it is not circular.

Secondly, is there any similarity between the prayer labyrinth, the Stations of the Cross, and Campus Crusade's labyrinth?

The Parts of the Labyrinth: PATH: there are 11 circuits (the 12th is the centre). $12 = 3\text{heaven} \times 4\text{earth} = \text{creation}$ There are 34 turns: 28 U-turns and 6 right-angled turns.

Stations of the Cross : There are usually 14 Stations, although many are 11 or 12. Some advocate the addition of a 15th station, depicting Christ's resurrection. They are mostly done on Good Friday.

Campus Crusade's labyrinth has 15 Stations.

In conclusion, the Campus Crusade labyrinth does not seem to be an authentic prayer labyrinth, but has borrowed many pagan practises in order to 'Christianize' it. It seems to incorporate themes similar to a real labyrinth, such as tokens or reminders, and has similarities to the Stations of the Cross of Catholicism. On the other hand, it is not exactly the same as either. In other words, it is a method of borrowed religious ceremonies and traditions of men, as opposed to the worship of God in spirit and in truth. I would call it an eclectic ecumenical synergistic style labyrinth that substitutes the power of the gospel by appealing to the flesh under the guise of spirituality.

So why do they call The Journey a labyrinth if it's not a 'real' labyrinth? In fact, why do this at all? Are the symbols for this labyrinth chosen for a reason or out of ignorance? If Christians (who already have access to the Father through the blood of Jesus by faith, Eph 2,3) need a labyrinth to have a Christ centered experience, then isn't this labyrinth ritual a replacement for Jesus? If so, what place does walking a labyrinth have in your church? Or in your Christian walk, for that matter, when the Bible says to...

'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.' Eph 5:15,16
Circumspectly: to walk exactly, accurately, diligently, carefully, (as one preacher has said, as a cat would step expertly across a floor littered in thumb tacks, knowing where to place all four paws safely, and where not to place even one back paw.)

Is choosing to walk (unwisely)through the labyrinth the same mistake King Solomon made? He didn't heed God's warning either...
"Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: 1 Kings 11:2 ...For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father "(v. 5,6)
(Ashtoreth was the Queen of Heaven, or the Ishtar of the Accadians and the Astarte of the Greeks: Isis to the Egyptians, aka Black Madonna of the Chartres Cathedral labyrinth, copied and revived in the last ten years and thriving in churches all over North America)
(Side note: by the way, did you know....until a few months ago there was a tiny shop in the centre of downtown Abbotsford, B.C. where they sold Isis statues, trinkets, crystals, etc.)

Isis is alive and well and coming to a church near you. What will your church do when she knocks on their door?

Next...'But our labyrinth is totally Christ centered'...

Thursday, January 12, 2006 So What's the Big Deal?

'But our labyrinth is totally Christ centered'...

Don't forget that just because something talks about Christ, the center, and light doesn't mean it is of God... Jesus even warned, "Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them." Luke 21:8

For example, there are others who also talk about Christ, the center, and light of God...they too await the return of Christ to this earth...but read what they also write at the end of their prayer called:

THE GREAT INVOCATION From the point of Light within the Mind of God Let light stream forth into the minds of men. Let Light descend on Earth. From the point of Love within the Heart of God Let love stream forth into the hearts of men. May Christ return to Earth. From the centre where the Will of God is known Let purpose guide the little wills of men The purpose which the Masters know and serve. From the centre which we call the race of men Let the Plan of Love and Light work out And may it seal the door where evil dwells. Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth. This Invocation or Prayer does not belong to any person or group, but to all Humanity. The beauty and the strength of this Invocation lies in its simplicity, and in its expression of certain central truths which all people, innately and normally, accept the truth of the existence of a basic Intelligence to Whom we vaguely give the name of God; the truth that behind all outer seeming, the motivating power of the universe is Love; the truth that a great Individuality came to earth, called by Christians, the Christ, and embodied that love so that we could understand; the truth that both love and intelligence are effects of what is called the Will of God; and finally the self-evident truth that only through humanity itself can the Divine Plan work out. Alice A. Bailey NOTE: In some translations of the Great Invocation the name by which the Coming One is known in different religions is used, e.g. the Lord Maitreya, Krishna, the Imam Mahdi or the Messiah.

Isn't that interesting? So what else is this group up to? One of the purposes of this group is to prepare and seed the group mentality for what they call the 'real' work—group meditation. They say Buddha's last sermon was that "every atom of substance has within it a point of light." Knowing this... that the thread that would lead us, like the mythical Theseus, out of our self-created labyrinth that is anchored within our own nature—the Buddha commanded "Be a lamp unto your own feet. Look not to anyone outside yourselves for salvation." They also believe that "Through the Christ and the Buddha, humanity can establish a close relationship with Shamballa and then make its own contribution to the planetary life. Pervaded by light and controlled by the Spirit of Peace... humanity will become eventually the planetary mediator". How will this happen? They say "by charting its course, through right values and choices, learning duality; ... the links that unite—that which seems opposed. "Do we not begin this by looking for common ground with those whose thinking seems (and often, only seems) opposed to ours? The increasing globalisation now occurring on an outer level demands it, and the recent impact of Shamballa force—the energy of synthesis, of the will-to-good—last year now reinforces every tendency within humanity to seek out common ground and those values and choices that serve the good of the whole. This impulse is now expressing as ecumenism in the field of religion, and in the United Nations and the European Union on the level of government, among other expressions. This impulse to find common ground is a divine tendency within humanity, but like all that is good, it is evoking an opposing reaction from the forces that would divide and separate human beings from each other."

Their meditation step #6 could be a prayer one might say in a labyrinth: "In the centre of all Love I stand. From that centre I, the soul, will outward move. From that centre I, the one who serves, will work. May the love of the divine Self be shed abroad, in my heart, through my group, and throughout the world. ... Visualise the downpouring spiritual inflow released from Shamballa through the Hierarchy and streaming into humanity through the prepared channel. Consider how these inpouring energies are establishing the "Pathway of Light" for the coming World Teacher, the Christ."

Who is this group? They are called Lucis Trust and they sincerely believe that Lucifer is the good guy. They are not Satanists, they are Luciferians, and believe that he is the true light. (You can easily find all this stuff on their website. I am not posting it here, but if you are interested, just type it into a search engine.)

My point? Anything can be called Christ centered, but that does not necessarily mean it's the truth. And that is a big deal!

Now let's finish up with the truth on inner light and meditation: <http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?month=01&day=09>

Friday, January 13, 2006 Leaving the Labyrinth

I want to leave the topic of the labyrinth today as I am very tired of it. I have tirelessly spent the first two weeks of this year researching this one topic. So why have I put so much time and energy into going over the labyrinth? Not because I want to, but because I am very alarmed at how many churches are incorporating them into their prayer and worship themes, and Christians need to know what this trend is really about! Fortunately, the labyrinth that was going to be set up at a local Mennonite church for a whole week has been quietly cancelled. How did it almost get that far? Because other churches within their denomination have been doing them. Today I'm going to list some of these sources that provide labyrinths to show how wide spread this has become:

*Central District Mennonite Youth Resources Prayer Resources: <http://centraldistrict.mennonite.net/Youth/Resources> Recommends On Line Labyrinth: <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/paradigm/> Designed for young and old alike, the labyrinth provides a mixture of rituals and visuals, of contemplative words and contemporary ambient music, of symbols and media to help guide the spiritual traveler. It's for anyone who wants a break from surfing the surface of culture to contemplate the deeper things of life. Prayer Resources: <http://im.mennonite2.net/Youth/Prayer%20Exercises>. See and download over a dozen different ways for you and your youth group to pray. Includes consciousness examen, lectio divina, praying our anger, praying with water, prayer through drawing, etc. (adapted by Bob Yoder)

*MB Forum, MB Conference <http://www.mbforum.ca/viewtopic.php?t=159&view=next> The Prayer Path – Steve Collins (Proost, 2001- Group Publishing). Great experiential encounter for a group. Kit includes CD's and everything needed for each station. "A Christ – centered labyrinth experience."

*Eastern Mennonite Seminary <http://www.emu.edu/news/index.php/962/seminary> EMS Labyrinth: A Prayerful Walking Space in Preparation /Sept. 2005 With a \$15,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment – an EMU program supported by the Lilly Endowment Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation - EMS broke ground in September for the labyrinth, planned by the seminary's Spiritual Formation course faculty in cooperation with "<http://www.emu.edu/studentlife/campusministries/>" personnel Brian Martin Burkholder and Julie Haushalter and C. Eldon Kurtz, director of "<http://www.emu.edu/physicalplant/>". ...Labyrinths have recently made a come-back in Western culture, a trend Miller attributes to "a renewal of spiritual life." Alley has discovered that many hospitals are building labyrinths – in fact, to assist concentration, one Johns Hopkins University surgeon always walks a labyrinth before entering an operating room. Burkholder hopes the campus labyrinth may be completed by Christmas. Users are expected to include special groups such as the EMS Summer Institute for Spiritual Formation. The EMS proposal also notes that "With the possibility of promotion and education through the Congregational Resource Center, we envision use by local church groups and the community."

(*By the way, notice that the Lilly Endowment gave a huge grant for this? If you followed last fall's book study on The Emotional Healthy Church, you will remember that they also funded Peter Scazzero, who is leading churches down the contemplative prayer path...seems like they are funding a lot of contemplative prayer stuff lately).

*Mennonite Women USA! (under: Prayer Suggestions): <http://www.mennonitewomenusa.org/SpirPrayer.asp> As a group visit a nearby labyrinth—an increasingly popular tool for contemplative prayer. A feature of many medieval cathedrals, it is marked out on the floor, and—unlike a maze—has only one path, so you can't get lost. A Web page that can help locate a labyrinth near you is found at: "<http://www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth/>". See also *Praying the Labyrinth* (Pilgrim Press, 1999)

*Mennonite Church Canada <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/14/4647> The Prayer Path: a Christ-centered labyrinth experience

*Goshen College, established in 1894, is now a private, coeducational, four-year, residential, Christian college of the liberal arts and sciences rooted in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition Goshen, Indiana (pop. 30,000), near the Indiana-Michigan state line.
<http://www.goshen.edu/bibrelphil/links.php>

-(they recommend) "<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/paradigm>" - On-line Labyrinth Designed for young and old alike, the labyrinth provides a mixture of rituals and visuals, of contemplative words and contemporary ambient music, of symbols and media to help guide the spiritual traveler. It's for anyone who wants a break from surfing the surface of culture to contemplate the deeper things of life.

*Note: They appear to be amazingly involved in all things contemplative!

-(they also recommend this link): <http://www.youthspecialties.com/>

-(and this link to the Jesuit prayer method: http://www.sacredgateway.org/first_time.asp)

*Direction Journal <http://www.directionjournal.org/article/?1238> -in favour of Mennonites doing labyrinth, youth specialties, ancient disciplines, etc.

*Columbia Bible College library <http://www.columbiabc.edu/pdfs/library/YouthWorkbib.pdf> The Prayer Path, a Christ Centered Labyrinth Experience

*Note: Columbia Bible college also has in its library a book called Soul Shaper by Tony Jones. It's about Postmodern Youth Ministry, and how you can put postmodern ideas to work by learning powerful disciplines such as—Sacred Reading, The Jesus Prayer, The Ignatian Examen, The Daily Office, Stations of the Cross, Sabbath, Silence and Solitude, Centering Prayer, Spiritual Direction, The Labyrinth, Pilgrimage, Service... and eventually implement them into the life of your youth ministry!

Friday, January 13, 2006 Last Links...

And finally here are a few more links to articles by those who are concerned about the use of labyrinths in churches:

http://www.svchapel.org/Resources/Articles/read_articles.asp?ID=109

<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/05/teichrib/labyrinth.htm>

<http://www.christianity.ca/faith/christian-living/2003/10.002.html>

<http://www.cuttingedge.org/news/n1189.cfm>

Friday, January 13, 2006 Lullaby Labyrinth

Before we say farewell and goodnight to the labyrinth, don't forget that this isn't only a danger to the church.

These things are popping up everywhere... <http://www.labyrinthcompany.com/>

They are a danger to our children... http://www.labyrinthsociety.org/html/in_schools.html

Just look how nicely they fit in the school system... <http://www.mosaic-madness.co.uk/mazes/>

I guess they want to start them young... <http://brain-station.com/products/gr-h847287.html>

What's next, a nursery crib set complete with Labyrinth Lullaby CD?

So be warned, be on the look out for the labyrinth. You never know where you will come across one next...and if you do? Hold onto your children, and don't go in!

Note: If you have received this document in hardcopy you can simplify access of the links Carla provides by going to either our web site or her blog site where these links are live links.