

# CANA

## Christian Answers for the New Age

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### CONTEMPLATING CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER: IS IT REALLY PRAYER?

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[First published in *Midwest Christian Outreach Journal*, February, 2005; this version has been modified with additional information]

*"God's first language is silence."*<sup>1</sup>

*"Progress in intimacy with God means progress toward silence."*<sup>2</sup>

*"The important thing is that we are relaxed and our back is straight so that the vitalizing energies can flow freely."*<sup>3</sup>

*Contemplation is "a pure and a virginal knowledge, poor in concepts, poorer still in reasoning, but able, by its very poverty and purity, to follow the Word 'wherever He may go.'"*<sup>4</sup>

Contemplative Prayer, also called Centering Prayer or Listening Prayer, has been taught by Roman Catholic monks Thomas Merton, Thomas Keating, and Basil Pennington, as well as by Quaker Richard Foster, and is being advocated by many others. There is no one authority on this method, nor is there necessarily a consistent teaching on it, though most of the founding teachers quote medieval mystics, Hindu, and Buddhist spiritual teachers.

According to [www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org), "Centering Prayer is drawn from ancient prayer practices of the Christian contemplative heritage, notably the Fathers and Mothers of the Desert, Lectio Divina, (praying the scriptures), The Cloud of Unknowing, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila. It was distilled into a simple method of prayer in the 1970's by three Trappist monks, Fr. William Meninger, Fr. Basil Pennington and Abbot Thomas Keating at the Trappist Abbey, St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts." It should be added, "During the twenty years (1961-1981) when Keating was abbot, St. Joseph's held dialogues with Buddhist and Hindu representatives, and a Zen master gave a week-long retreat to the monks. A former Trappist monk who had become a Transcendental Meditation teacher also gave a session to the monks."<sup>5</sup>

The influence of Buddhism and Hinduism on Contemplative Prayer (hereafter referred to as CP) is apparent. Words such as "detachment," "transformation," "emptiness," "enlightenment" and "awakening" swim in and out of the waters of these books. The use of such terms certainly mandates a closer inspection of what is being taught, despite the fact that contemplative prayer is presented as Christian practice.

Themes that one finds echoed in the CP movement include the notions that true prayer is: silent, beyond words, beyond thought, does away with the "false self," triggers transformation of consciousness, and is an awakening. Suggested techniques often include breathing exercises, visualization, repetition of a word or phrase, and detachment from thinking.

## BEYOND WORDS: THE SILENCE

As we see from the quotes above, silence is assumed to be God's "language." This seems contradictory since language usually involves the use of words, or at least symbols. From whence did this idea arise? Some quote Ps. 62:5, "*My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him.*" But the passage is about depending on God for refuge and salvation, and is not instructing how to pray. The emphasis is expectation for God only - only God can save. Even if the psalmist is praying, it is not telling us that silence is the only way to pray, or that we must approach God in silence. However, Keating states that vocal prayer is not "the most profound prayer."<sup>6</sup>

According to St. John of the Cross, who is heavily quoted by CP advocates, entering an "advanced state of Contemplation" requires education and training.<sup>7</sup> This type of prayer has "nothing to do with the words and petitions of what is commonly called prayer. It is not articulate; it has no form."<sup>8</sup> Certainly one of the ironies of CP is that it essentially is not prayer.

It is a Zen Buddhist concept that truth is beyond words (this is also a Taoist view; Zen's roots are in Taoism and Buddhism). Zen teaches that truth must be realized as one practices sitting meditation (zazen), cultivating an empty mind by letting go of thoughts so that rational thinking is transcended; or perhaps, as in the Rinzai school of Zen, one's awareness is triggered by koans such as, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" or "What was your face before you were born?" According to Zen, Buddha's "real message remained always unspoken, and was such that, when words attempted to express it, they made it seem as if it were nothing at all."<sup>9</sup>

The Unity School of Christianity, a church founded on New Thought principles, and whose founders were influenced by Eastern beliefs, is a forerunner of the New Age Movement. Jesus is known as a "Way-Shower" and is believed to have become the Christ when he attained perfection; all people are believed to have the inner potential to be the same as Christ. In a Unity booklet, "The Adventure Called Unity,"<sup>10</sup> it states that prayer involves

"[C]oncentrating one's entire intellect on God, affirming a positive statement of truth, meditating on Divine Principles, and finally turning within one's own being in a wonderful time of quiet which Unity calls 'the silence,' wherein one becomes receptive to the 'still small voice' of God."<sup>11</sup>

The above, with the exception of the phrase "Divine Principles," is similar to statements found in CP literature. Unity also asserts that "spiritual communion takes place through prayer and meditation **in the silence.**"<sup>12</sup>

A popular Bible passage used to advocate silent meditation as prayer is Ps. 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God." However, this is being taken out of context.<sup>13</sup> A study of this Psalm shows this is actually a rebuke from God to those striving against Him. Some translations render this as "Cease striving and know that I am God," (NASB, ESV). Charles H. Spurgeon's remarks on verse 10 are "Hold off your hands, ye enemies! Sit down and wait in patience, ye believers! Acknowledge that Jehovah is God, ye who feel the terrors of his wrath! Adore him, and him only, ye who partake in the protection of his grace."<sup>14</sup>

Praying in silence, or ruminating on a passage of scripture in silence, is normal, but silence should not be regarded as superior to words; nor does the Bible give any support to the notion that the "language of God" is silence. Interestingly, Foster even warns about silent CP, saying that it is for more mature believers, that "we are entering deeply into the spiritual realm" where we may encounter "spiritual beings" who are not on God's side. He suggests a prayer of protection in which one surrounds himself with "the light of Christ," saying "all dark and evil spirits must now leave," and other words to keep evil ones at bay.<sup>15</sup> I could not help but think of my New Age days when I was taught to invoke a white light of protection before psychic activity or contact with the dead. Jesus, in teaching the disciples to pray, said, "Keep us from the evil one," but this was a petition to guard us from Satan's schemes, not a formula for warding off evil spirits while we pray.

In the preface to a book about Christ, an author states that Jesus is not outside our mind, but that "it is in your mind that Jesus addresses you. He is your most intimate friend speaking to you, sometimes in words, often beyond words."<sup>16</sup> This book is a classic New Age book, yet these words are not that dissimilar to many statements made by CP authors.

Silence can be soothing and comforting; we can get deep insights when we are quiet. But simply trying to be quiet is not prayer, and there is no biblical basis for the belief that real prayer is wordless. After all, God has given us a written revelation, and God's laws and words are acclaimed throughout the Bible, such as Psalm 119, which extols God's word as a treasure and lamp. In Is. 40:8, we learn, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever," and Jesus declares to the Father in Jn. 17:17, "Your word is truth."

### **BEYOND THE MIND: NO-THINKING**

According to Keating, CP should be "detachment" from thought, getting into a state of "no-thinking" and that "it is the time to let go of all thoughts, even the best of thoughts," so that only "pure awareness" exists.<sup>17</sup> He even claims that the Holy Spirit will not "barge in" if we are using reason and intellect, and it is "only when we are willing to abandon our very limited human modes of thought and concepts and open a welcoming space that the Spirit will begin to operate in us at this divine level . . . when we Center we practice leaving our human thoughts and reason behind and attending to the Divine, to the Spirit."<sup>18</sup> This presents a radical redefinition of prayer, as well as a false duality between thought or reason and spirituality, a concept common in the New Age.

Pennington discusses "a shift in consciousness" and going beyond "ordinary consciousness" into a state of "pure consciousness" in which we leave the "false self" for the "true self," and attaining a "unity-consciousness" with God.<sup>19</sup> He quotes "the Fathers"<sup>20</sup> as saying that "so long as a man is aware he is praying, he is not yet praying," and he agrees with Merton that we should "rise above thought."<sup>21</sup> Pennington has a chapter titled "Pure Consciousness" in which he states that God "is known in pure consciousness rather than by some subject-object knowledge."<sup>22</sup>

A writer for Youth Specialties, an organization devoted to youth ministries, states that his interest in CP began by reading Dallas Willard and Richard Foster, and later, mystics like Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila, and Morton Kelsey.<sup>23</sup> He built a prayer room and reports: "In that space I lit candles, burned incense, hung rosaries, and listened to tapes of Benedictine monks. I meditated for hours on words, images, and sounds. I reached the point of being able to achieve alpha brain patterns, the state in which dreams occur, while still awake and meditating." This sounds like going into an altered state of consciousness -- a light trance state -- which is the same state one enters in Eastern/New Age meditation, and which parallels techniques of self-hypnosis. In fact, the purpose of Eastern and New Age meditation is to go beyond the mind because the belief is that the mind is a barrier to spiritual enlightenment. This same writer also states that at a retreat, "We held 'thin place' services in reference to a belief that in prayer, the veil between us and God becomes thinner. Entire nights were devoted to guided meditations, drum circles, and "soul labs."<sup>24</sup>

Yet in the Bible, meditation on God or on the words of God is never presented as an exercise without thinking. Many of the words translated as "meditation" in the Bible are words meaning to muse, ponder, utter, or make a sound. Most of these words are in Psalms where the psalmist is praising the precepts and words of God and affirming that these are what we should learn, obey, and think upon. This is definitely not leaving ordinary thinking for another level of consciousness. Nor do we take actions to make a (non-existent) "veil" between God and us thinner. Did not the death of Jesus on the cross rip the heavy veil in the Holy of Holies of the Temple, forever serving as a symbol of how Jesus opened the way to God for those who believe?<sup>25</sup>

Due to Eastern and New Age influences in our culture, the word 'meditation' has come to mean a technique to enter another state of consciousness, to go inward, to go beyond thinking, or to realize spiritual enlightenment. We cannot read these techniques and purposes into the Biblical word translated as "meditation," which originates from several different Hebrew words that do not carry the Eastern-New Age meanings. The contexts of these words indicate an active pondering, thinking and learning, not a technique nor a disengagement from the mind.

### **BEYOND SELF: THE FALSE SELF VS. THE TRUE SELF**

Thomas Merton claims that "the superficial 'I' is not our real self," but only our "individuality" and "empirical self," not the "hidden and mysterious person in whom we subsist before the eyes of God."<sup>26</sup> This kind of thinking is found also in Keating and Pennington.

Keating states that CP takes us to a place "in which the knower, the knowing, and that which is known are all one. Awareness alone remains. The one who is aware disappears along with whatever was the object of consciousness. This is what divine union is."<sup>27</sup>

Little realizing that he was anticipating many of the teachings of CP today, one writer on mysticism asserts that the "highest state of the mystic life can only be reached when there has been a complete death of the selfhood" and when one enters the "Dark Silence, that Nothingness, that Wayless Way."<sup>28</sup> The author goes on to say that mystical states are "more than states of feeling, they are states of knowledge."<sup>29</sup> This is a gnostic view of knowledge-- a secret knowledge obtained only by those able to attain these higher states.

Keating and Merton both discuss the false self and the true self. Keating capitalizes Self, and states, "God and our true Self are not separate. Though we are not God, God and our true Self are the same thing."<sup>30</sup> According to Merton, our "external, everyday self" is mostly a "fabrication" and is not "our true self" which "is not easy to find. It is hidden in obscurity and 'nothingness,' at the center, where we are in direct dependence on God."<sup>31</sup> Likewise, another writer asserts that the "basic idea always found in God-mysticism is that of the return of the spirit to its immortal and infinite Ground, which is God."<sup>32</sup> Note the word "return," as though our spirits were originally with God, a distinctly unbiblical notion.

Buddhism teaches that our identities are merely fleeting images or impressions, like images on film, or a "sequence of happenings, of processes,"<sup>33</sup> and that we must discover our true nature, the Buddha nature. The "conventional 'self' or 'person' is composed mainly of a history of consisting of selected memories."<sup>34</sup> As one Zen Buddhist says, "There is no you to say 'I.' What we call 'I' is just a swinging door which moves when we inhale and when we exhale . . . when your mind is pure and calm enough to follow this movement, there is nothing: no 'I,' no world, no mind nor body; just a swinging door."<sup>35</sup> Self is illusory in Hinduism, Taoism, and Buddhism, because the only reality is the Absolute, the Tao, or the Buddha nature.

The CP teachers do not say that we are really God, but they present a dichotomy between a false and true self. The Bible talks about the old sin nature versus the "new creature" in Christ; it is not put in terms of "true" and "false" selves, or illusion and truth, but rather in terms of bondage to sin and regeneration. It is not a matter of awareness, but rather a matter of being born again and being regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Merton does acknowledge this point in one book,<sup>36</sup> though he still speaks of false and true selves, sometimes in Freudian psychological terms, sometimes in spiritual terms. Is our sin nature a "false self?" Not false in the sense of not being real, certainly. Such terms echo Eastern concepts, and, at the very least, are confusing and misleading.

### **BEYOND NATURAL: SPECIAL SPIRITUAL TECHNIQUES**

Most of the CP teachers announce that CP is not a technique, and then they go on to recommend various techniques. Pennington offers three "rules or guides," which include being relaxed, to be "in faith and love to God who dwells in the center of your being," to "take up a love word," and "whenever you become aware of anything, simply, gently return to the Lord with the use of your prayer word."<sup>37</sup>

Merton, Keating and Pennington, and sometimes Foster, suggest repeating a word or phrase such as Jesus, Lord, Father, Friend, or the Jesus Prayer<sup>38</sup> during CP. This can be repeated aloud or "deep within," or used as a word to return to when one become aware of anything else. Pennington advises, "Memorize it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas."<sup>39</sup> Keating credits the mystical *Cloud of Unknowing* for this idea, and states that it should be a "love word" which will take us "beyond our ordinary consciousness" as "an outreach of love to the Infinite."<sup>40</sup>

In Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism, Transcendental Meditation, and sometimes in New Age meditation, a word, called a mantra, is given to the meditator to repeat. This is often the name of a deity, or sometimes a phrase meaning, "I am That," "Not this, not that," or simply, "I am." The purpose of this mantra is self-purification,

and to become open to spiritual truths. Repeating a word or phrase over and over is also one of the tools of self-hypnosis.<sup>41</sup> Many of the terms used by CP teachers are the same terms used in hypnosis and in Eastern/New Age teachings (i.e., "shift in consciousness," "pure consciousness," "emptying the mind," "creating a space," "go beyond thought," etc.).<sup>42</sup>

Foster quotes heavily from CP teachers and mystics. There are problematic statements such as, "Let me suggest we take an experiential attitude toward spiritual realities;" "We are working with God to determine the future! Certain things will happen in history if we pray rightly;" and, when praying for others, we should not pray "if it be Thy will" to God.<sup>43</sup> He advocates using a visualization technique when praying in order to bring about the results.<sup>44</sup> He also comments that "God is not a male deity as opposed to a female deity."<sup>45</sup>

The focus on relaxation, repeating a word or phrase, concentrating on breath, detaching from thought, and trying to go beyond reasoning should cause concern. Having learned and practiced various forms of Eastern and New Age meditation for many years before becoming a Christian, I can attest to the ability to enter a light trance state using the techniques suggested by CP advocates. This state is one which New Agers and others call "pure consciousness," where one is suspended from active thought and the ability to make judgments. In fact, Zen Buddhism teaches that one needs to cultivate the ability to detach and to set aside judgment. The mind is open and receptive, without critical thinking skills in place.<sup>46</sup> Although Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are not immune to deception or delusion; otherwise, the Bible would not so consistently warn believers about deception and false teachers.

Do techniques bring closeness to God, especially when such techniques are parallel to Eastern religious practices? Ephesians 2:13 tells us, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." We draw near to God through Christ (Heb. 4:16), not through techniques. When First John talks about abiding in Christ, it speaks of following Christ's commandments and showing love for each other.

### **BEYOND THE WEST: WISDOM FROM THE EAST**

Keating quotes from a major Buddhist text, the Diamond Sutra, to discuss "letting go," and tells the reader that although psychic powers such as levitation may result from CP, such powers "are like the frosting on a cake and we cannot survive on frosting alone," and so, if the reader is interested in psychic phenomena, to "be sure to practice them under an approved master."<sup>47</sup> Such warnings about getting attracted to psychic gifts resulting from meditation are commonly issued by those teaching Hindu and Buddhist meditation.

One author on mysticism, who also discusses many of the same techniques as used in contemplative prayer, declares: "[M]ay we not see in the mystics the forerunners of a type of consciousness, which will become more and more common as mankind ascends higher and higher up the ladder of evolution?"<sup>48</sup> This idea is parallel to one in the New Age, which posits that as man spiritually progresses, he will gain an expanded consciousness that will include psychic or super mystical powers and insights into the nature of reality. Referring to mystics and practitioners of the medieval practice of contemplation, the author states that the contemplative has contact "with the same Reality" as the mystic, and that he "feels he has received a pure, direct vision of truth."<sup>49</sup> This idea is found in Eastern meditation beliefs that teach one perceives or attains truth in a more pure form through meditation techniques and in non-thinking states.

Pennington writes of his admiration for "the great Yogi, Swami Satchidanandaji" and his (Pennington's) approval of an American professor who, "in search of true wisdom," had gone to India to study under a Hindu Swami.<sup>50</sup> He states that for "most Hindus, Jesus is just one of the many manifestations of the one God" but that "each person is entitled to have his or her own chosen deity or manifestation of God. Jesus is the manifestation for the West."<sup>51</sup> Pennington also acknowledges that both Merton and another person saw the parallels of CP with Sufi meditation and prayer,<sup>52</sup> and he approves of Christians' participation in Transcendental Meditation.<sup>53</sup> He writes that CP can be learned and used effectively by anyone (i.e., non-Christians), and that he has not "hesitated" to share it with anyone.<sup>54</sup>

Another CP teacher heavily influenced by the East is Thomas Merton. Merton was a man of great intelligence, and this is apparent in his writings. But he writes of his meetings with the Dalai Lama in Asia, saying he felt a "spiritual bond" with him; he stated that he found parallels between the meditation concepts

and methods of the Catholic monks with the Tibetan Buddhists, and he was even discussing establishing a Tibetan Buddhist meditation center in the U.S.<sup>55</sup> He also called Tibetan Buddhist leader Chogyam Trungpa "wise" and a "genuine spiritual master."<sup>56</sup> Merton was even considering being initiated into *dzogchen*, an esoteric Tibetan Buddhist meditation practice, and was thinking of editing a book of Buddhist writings.<sup>57</sup> These projects were cut short by his sudden accidental death in Asia in December, 1968, although he had written on Zen Buddhism previously.

Merton's *Asian Journals*, the last words he penned, reveal his fascination with Eastern beliefs and practices. While never showing an inclination to substitute Eastern beliefs for Christianity for himself, he seemed to acknowledge Eastern religions as equally valid and showed a willingness to adapt some of their beliefs into his Christian ones. What else can one think when he writes of seeking advice on initiation into *dzogchen* and thinking of helping to establish a Tibetan Buddhist meditation center? Most Christians instead would be in quest of dialogue with these Buddhists in order to present Christ to them, not seeking initiation into their practices or to spread their teachings.<sup>58</sup>

### **BEYOND CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER: BACK TO GOD'S WORD**

Reflecting on God's word, in the sense of thinking it over and letting it sink in, are normal ways of learning and understanding. Using our mind is not a barrier to understanding God or his word. In fact, in Matt. 22:37-38, Jesus says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." This references Deut. 6:5, which is rendered in many versions as loving God with all one's "heart," soul, and strength (or might).

The NET Bible gives this explanation about the Hebrew word, *lebab*, which is translated "heart" in Deut. 6:5: "Heb 'heart.' In OT physiology the heart was considered the seat of the mind or intellect, so that one could think with one's heart."<sup>59</sup> Even the Greek word for "heart," *kardia*, used in Matt. 22, is translated as "mind" in other passages. Another explanation: "The Hebrew word for heart is 'LEB' . . . The Greek counterpart is 'KARDIA.' Zodhiates says in his Hebrew Lexicon that the main use of the word heart refers to 'the totality of man's inner or immaterial nature' . . . The heart is the seat of your intellect, feelings and will. It is 'almost a synonym for mind.'"<sup>60</sup> Vine's Expository Dictionary states, "The heart, in its moral significance in the O.T., includes the emotions, the reason and the will."<sup>61</sup> The words translated as "understanding," "mind," and "heart" are often interchangeable in the Bible. "The *heart* in the Scripture is variously used; sometimes for the *mind and understanding*, sometimes for the *will*, sometimes for the *affections*, sometimes for the *conscience*, sometimes for the *whole soul*. Generally, it denotes the *whole soul of man* and all the faculties of it, not absolutely, but as they are all one principle of moral operations, as they all concur in our doing good or evil."<sup>62</sup>

The false dichotomy in our culture between mind and heart does not exist in the Bible! Our culture associates feelings and often spirituality with the heart, and separates that from thinking, but this is a modern concept, not a Biblical one.

We see this fictitious dichotomy in CP between the mind or reasoning on the one hand, and feelings or spiritual experiences on the other. Foster creates a theme of this in one of his books in which he endorses the prayer of the mind apart from the prayer of the heart.<sup>63</sup> The message comes across clearly that if one is using one's mind, one is unable to truly commune with God - one must go beyond the rational in order to actually experience closeness with God. One must go beyond words into silence to have true union with God. Not only are these concepts not supported by the Bible, but they also set up false expectations and are likely to evoke artificial experiences.

Christian prayer should be taught as it is modeled in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament. Some key passages include: Matt. 5:43-45 (pray for our enemies); Matt. 6:6 (pray without showing off); Matt. 6:9-13 (the Lord's Prayer); Matt. 7:6 (do not pray with repetitions); Matt. 9:38 (pray for God to send workers into His harvest); Matt. 21:22 and James 1:6 (pray in faith); Lk. 18:1-8 (pray/petition without losing heart); ask in the name of Christ (Jn 16:23-24); Rom. 8:25-27 (the Holy Spirit prays for us when we do not know how to pray); 1 Cor. 14:15 (pray with the spirit and with the mind); 1 Thess. 5:17 (pray without ceasing - not mindlessly, but having an attitude of prayer and being in the Lord in all things); and James 5:14-16 (pray for the sick). Our prayers are to make use of words and thought.

A feature article on the Roman Catholic apologetics website, Catholic Answers, warns: "Many people assume centering prayer is compatible with Catholic tradition, but in fact the techniques of centering prayer are neither Christian nor prayer. They are at the level of human faculties and as such are an operation of man, not of God. The deception and dangers can be grave."<sup>64</sup>

## FINAL WORDS

People promoting CP often present a false dilemma between "neatly packaged" evangelical Christianity oriented toward logic and reason, versus the experiential, mystical aspects of CP. This idea is becoming more common now with the influence of postmodernism. This has been shown to be a false dilemma. By supporting reason and thinking as part of communication with God, one is in harmony with the biblical text; one is not discriminating against silent prayer, feelings or experiences.

Nowhere in the Bible is prayer a technique or a way to go beyond thinking. Creating a whole theology of prayer apart from the Bible is dangerous, precisely because we are entering an area fraught with subjectivism, truth based on experience, and therefore, an area where we can be deceived. CP teachers tell us that prayer is listening to and having "divine union" with God,<sup>65</sup> but the Bible presents prayer as words and thoughts. CP tells us to focus inward, but the Bible admonishes us to focus outward on the Lord. An evaluation of CP reveals it to be a mélange of New Age and Eastern-tinged techniques and concepts that exist outside the Bible.

CP is a misnomer, since it is neither contemplation nor prayer as found in the Bible. We should be wary of any instruction that advises us to:

- Breathe a certain way before or during prayer
- Maintain a certain posture or bodily position
- Repeat a word or phrase, even if it's from the Bible, or use a word or phrase to stay "focused"
- Go beyond thinking or thought
- To turn inward in order to find or be with God
- Be in silence in order to truly pray
- Believe that CP is true prayer

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart* (Rockport, MA: Benedict's Monastery, 1992), 57.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (NY: HarperCollins, 1992), 155.

<sup>3</sup> M. Basil Pennington, *An Invitation to Centering Prayer* (Liguori, MO: Cistercian Abbey of Spencer, Inc., 2001), 20.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (Abbey of Gethsemani, Inc., 1961), 4.

<sup>5</sup> The Rev. John D. Dreher, "The Danger of Contemplative Prayer," <http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/1997/9711fea1.asp>; also <http://www.saint-mike.org/Library/Occult/CenteringPrayer.html>

<sup>6</sup> Keating, 89.

<sup>7</sup> F. C. Hoppold, *Mysticism: A Study and An Anthology* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 73.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Watts, *The Way of Zen* (NY: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1957), 55. The writer of this article studied both Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, and was taught Tibetan and Zen Buddhist meditation by teachers in those traditions; she practiced both forms of meditation.

<sup>10</sup> By Charles R. Fillmore, the founder of Unity along with his wife, Myrtle; (published by Unity, Unity Village, MO).

<sup>11</sup> "The Adventure Called Unity," 9.

<sup>12</sup> Phil and Mary Stovin, revised and edited by the Executive Ministry Team and Management Staff of the Association of Unity Churches, "twenty questions and answers about Unity," (Lee Summit, MO: Association of Unity Churches), 10. [Bolding is mine].

<sup>13</sup> For a fuller discussion of this passage, see my article at [http://cana.userworld.com/cana\\_Meditation\\_Psalm.html](http://cana.userworld.com/cana_Meditation_Psalm.html)

<sup>14</sup> The Treasury of David at <http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/TreasuryofDavid/tod.cgi?book=ps&chapter=046&verse=010>.

<sup>15</sup> Foster, 156-157.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Ferrini, *Love Without Conditions: Reflections of the Christ Mind*, (Heartways Press, 1995).

<sup>17</sup> Keating, 44, 57, 74, 90, 91.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>19</sup> M. Basil Pennington, *Centered Living: The Way of Centering Prayer* (NY: Image, Doubleday, 1988), 51, 92-93, 192.

<sup>20</sup> Catholic mystics known as the "desert fathers."

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 53, 77.

- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 95.
- <sup>23</sup> Mike Perschon, "Desert Youth Worker," <http://youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/spirituality/desert.php>
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Matt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38; Lk. 23:45; Heb. 10:19-20.
- <sup>26</sup> Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, 7.
- <sup>27</sup> Keating, 74.
- <sup>28</sup> Happold, 52.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 54.
- <sup>30</sup> Keating, 127.
- <sup>31</sup> Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer* (The Merton Legacy Trust, 1969; Garden City, NY: Image Books Edition, Division of Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971), 70.
- <sup>32</sup> Happold, 44.
- <sup>33</sup> Joseph Goldstein, "Exercise/Eating" in Jean Smith, ed., *Breath Sweeps Mind: A First Guide to Meditation Practice* (NY: Riverhead Books, 1998), 184.
- <sup>34</sup> Watts, 20.
- <sup>35</sup> Shunryu Suzuki, "The Swinging Door" in *Breath Sweeps Mind: A First Guide to Meditation Practice*, 158.
- <sup>36</sup> Merton, *Seeds of New Contemplation*,
- <sup>37</sup> Pennington, *Centered Living*, 199.
- <sup>38</sup> "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."
- <sup>39</sup> Pennington, *An Invitation to Centered Prayer*, 50.
- <sup>40</sup> Keating, 51.
- <sup>41</sup> "A Lesson in Self-Hypnosis," <http://www.barbaraford-hammond.com/selfhyp.htm>; "How Can I Learn Self-Hypnosis?" [http://www.ingenious.com/ingenious\\_page\\_24\\_self\\_hypnosis.htm](http://www.ingenious.com/ingenious_page_24_self_hypnosis.htm); "Live More of Your Life with Self-Hypnosis," <http://www.maxpages.com/autohypnosis>
- <sup>42</sup> See *Breath Sweeps Mind* and Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976).
- <sup>43</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (NY: HarperCollins, HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 23, 35, 37.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., 41-44.
- <sup>45</sup> Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, xi.
- <sup>46</sup> The meditator is conscious, but there are alterations in the brain patterns.
- <sup>47</sup> Keating, 7, 8, 74.
- <sup>48</sup> Happold, 34.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 39.
- <sup>50</sup> Pennington, *Centered Living*, 7.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid., 7, 191.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., 191. Sufism is a mystical offshoot of Islam that started in Persia.
- <sup>53</sup> Dreher. Note: Transcendental Meditation involves an initiation honoring dead gurus, and the mantras are usually the names of Hindu deities.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., 192.
- <sup>55</sup> Merton, *The Asian Journals* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1975), 125, 166, 179.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., 30. Note: Trungpa was the leader of the particular school of Tibetan Buddhism I studied in the late 1970's. Trungpa established several centers in the U.S.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., 30, 31.
- <sup>58</sup> In fact, it is from these very teachings (Tibetan Buddhism and others) that I was delivered in late 1990!
- <sup>59</sup> NET Bible, <http://netbible.bible.org/>
- <sup>60</sup> Greg Brown, "The Dangers of Hypnosis," <http://logosresourcepages.org/Occult/hypnosis.html>
- <sup>61</sup> "Heart=Mind: A Biblical Perspective," <http://www.biblestudymanuals.net/heart.htm> [W. E. Vine, ed. F. F. Bruce, *Vines Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell Co., 1981) 206-207].
- <sup>62</sup> Greg Herrick, "The Seat of Sin, The Heart," [http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=858](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=858)
- <sup>63</sup> Foster, *Prayer: The Heart's True Home*, 136 (this theme is found throughout the book).
- <sup>64</sup> Dreher.
- <sup>65</sup> Foster, *Prayer: The Heart's True Home*, 159 (this view is also found in Keating and Pennington).

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