

A Subtle and Dangerous Shift

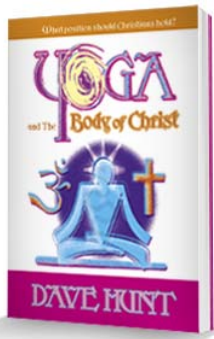
A Subtle and Dangerous Shift in Christianity [Excerpts]

By Marsha West

It seems everyone's practicing yoga meditation these days. Physicians recommend it to their patients which means it's beneficial...right? Meditation is said to relieve stress, anxiety, hypertension, acne and post-nasal drip, so go for it! Just tighten those abdominal muscles, inhale deeply and chant Maaaaaaaaa all in one breath and your concerns will drift away like a feather floating on the wind...

But what if you're a Christian? Should you practice the same sorts of things as Buddhist, Hindu's and New Agers?

Listen to what the Bible says: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8).



Firstly, meditating day and night does not mean to stay awake for 24 hours a day. Secondly, Christian meditation is very different from Eastern meditation. Followers of Jesus Christ are not to sit in the lotus pose in an altered state of consciousness seeking the "God within" like pagans do. The Bible teaches that when Christians meditate our minds are to be fully engaged. We are never to go into a trance-state.

What does meditation involve? "The word 'meditation' in Hebrew means basically to speak or to mutter. When this is done in the heart it is called musing or meditation. So meditating on the Word of God day and night means to speak to yourself the Word of God day and night and to speak to yourself about it."

Sometimes you need to read a passage over and over...reflect on it...analyze it...and listen while the Holy Spirit speaks truth to you. A word of warning: Listening to God does not require that you "empty" your mind. This meditative practice, called Lectio divina a.k.a. spiritual formation...the silence...best known as contemplative (centering) prayer (CP) is a growing trend in evangelical churches despite the fact that this sort of prayer ritual comes from teaching associated with Catholic mystics such as Meister Eckhart, Ignatius of Loyola, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa of Avila. CP was reintroduced by Thomas Merton, Thomas Keating, Henri Nouwen, William Meninger, Basil Pennington and other mystics.

Many in the Emergent Church movement (ECM) are advancing Roman Catholic mysticism as well. Yet they insist on being seen as mainline evangelicals. ECM has not only introduced aberrant teaching into our churches, it undermines the authority of Scripture....Few have bothered to deny the Bible itself, they just misquote it, abuse its meaning, force their opinion on it, and if necessary mistranslate it to give the appearance that the Scriptures are backing their claims.

<http://www.newswithviews.com/West/marsha198.htm>

[TBC: "Meditation" as Arthur W. Pink once wrote, "stands to reading as mastication does to eating." As a diligent "chewing" breaks up food so that the body may utilize all of its nutritive value, so meditation in the Word of God enables us to gain the maximum benefit.]