

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY REMINDER

Volume XV

November 17, 2019

Number 44

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Volunteer Needed!
Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed!
6:30 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Volunteer Needed!
Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed!
Wed. Evening Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Shirley White
Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed!

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of November 10, 2019

Sunday School ----- 14
Sunday Morning Service ----- 37
Sunday Evening Service ----- 19
Wed. Evening Service, 11/20/19 ----- 9

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of November 10, 2019 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,142.00
Auditorium Air Conditioning Repair Fund ----- \$ 40.00
Total Received for Week of 11/10/19: \$ 1,162.00

- Week of November 3, 2019 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 928.80
Total Received for Week of 11/03/19: \$ 749.04

- Week of October 27, 2019 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 150.25
Total Received for Week of 10/27/19: \$ 150.25

- Week of October 20, 2019 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 709.04
Auditorium Air Conditioning Repair Fund ----- \$ 40.00
Total Received for Week of 10/20/19: \$ 749.04

- Week of October 13, 2019 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,133.13
Auditorium Air Conditioning Repair Fund ----- \$ 117.09
Total Received for Week of 10/13/19: \$ 1,250.22

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed to operate the church EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00



AUDITORIUM AIR CONDITIONER REPAIR FUND

Total Repair Cost, unit repaired 05/17/19 ----- \$ 4,800.00
Amount received thusfar ----- \$ 1,340.47
TOTAL AMOUNT STILL NEEDED TO PAY OFF: \$ 3,459.53

Thank You For Your Generous Help With This Need!

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. *Admit that you are a sinner.*
2. *Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.*
3. *Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.*
4. *You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).*
5. *By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.*



Please Remember To Be Faithful To Give!

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today - OK?** Thank you.

AND THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH -

By Baptism, 11/10/19:

Makayla Nina Byars	Oliviya Nina Byars
Merrick Michael White	Kaitlyn Olivia White
Brenda Lorene White	Harrison James White

"Buried with Christ in baptism, raised to walk in newness of life."



Contemplative Spirituality: Dancing with Demons

by Evangelist David Cloud
(continued from last week)

Brennan Manning calls centering prayer a "**GREAT DARKNESS**" (The Signature of Jesus, p. 145) and an entire chapter of his book is devoted to "*Celebrate the Darkness.*" He claims that the darkness of centering prayer is caused by the human ego being broken and spiritual healing being achieved, but since the practice is not supported by Scripture that is presumption and not faith. The sixth century Syrian monk called Dionysius the Areopagite said that asceticism and mystical practices can penetrate the mystery of God's "**DARK NO-THINGNESS.**" This man has had a major influence on Catholic mysticism.

The *Cloud of Unknowing* uses the terms "**BLIND**" and "**DARKNESS**" and "**NOTHING**" repeatedly.

Jesuit priest **Anthony de Mello** calls centering prayer "**DARK CONTEMPLATION**" and descending "into **THE DARKNESS**" (Sadhana: A Way to God, pp. 32, 33). He says those who practice centering prayer "expose themselves, in **BLIND FAITH**, to **THE EMPTINESS**, the **DARKNESS**, the idleness, **THE NOTHINGNESS**" (p. 31).

Catholic monk **William Johnston** says that meditation is the art of passing from one layer to the next in an inner or downward journey to the core of the personality where dwells the great mystery called God ... **WHO DWELLS IN THICK DARKNESS**" (The Inner Eye of Love: Mysticism and Religion, 1981, p. 127).

God did hide Himself in thick darkness in the Old Testament era because of man's sin and the fact that Christ's atonement had not yet been made (Exodus 20:21), but in reality God is light and not darkness. "**This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all!**" (1 John 1:5). It is sin that separates the sinner from God and His glorious light. The people in Moses' day had to stand away from Mt. Sinai when God gave the Law and God wrapped Himself in darkness, because the Law of Moses can only reveal sin and cannot justify the sinner (Romans 3:19-20). The Old Testament temple signified this separation. God dwelt in the holy of holies, and no man could enter therein except the high priest and that only one time a year, on the Day of Atonement. There was a thick veil that barred the way into the holy of holies.

But when Jesus Christ came and died on the cross and shed His blood to make the perfect atonement for man's sin, the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom, signifying that man now has free entrance into God's very presence if he comes through faith in Christ (Matt. 27:50-51).

If a contemplative encounters darkness in his mystical journey, that darkness is **not** God; it is sin and the devil. The darkness of this world is the devil's domain, but God has turned the believer "**from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God**" (Acts 26:18). He has "**delivered us from the power of darkness**" (Colossians 1:13) and called us "**out of darkness into his marvellous light**" (1 Peter 2:9). Now we are "**children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness**" (1 Thessalonians 5:5).

Pierre Teilhard described his practice of meditation as "going down into my innermost self, to **THE DEEP ABYSS**" (The Divine Milieu, p. 76). He said: "**At each step of the descent a new person was disclosed within me of whose name I was no longer sure, and who no longer obeyed me.**" At the end of the journey he found "**a bottomless abyss at my feet.**"

This is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear. Though the mystic believes that he is touching light and truth through contemplative practices, in reality he is fellowshipping with darkness and lies and demons. Who were these "persons" who were distinct from Teilhard himself and who did not obey him? From a biblical perspective, we have to conclude that the man was

(continued inside)

communicating with demons. This is why he taught such demonic doctrines as evolution and a “cosmic” christ that is something different than the person of Jesus.

John Michael Talbot, the popular Roman Catholic CCM musician and contemplative promoter, recommends the use of eastern religious practices such as yoga but, as we have seen, he admits that such experiences “**can be most destructive if used unwisely.**” He even says: “**SOME MAY FIND THEMSELVES SPIRITUALLY LOST. IT HAS HAPPENED TO MANY**” (Talbot, “Many Religions, One God,” Oct. 22, 1999, <http://www.johnmichaeltalbot.com/Reflections/index.asp?id=135>).

ANYTHING WITH THAT TYPE OF POWER FOR EVIL AND SPIRITUAL DESTRUCTION SHOULD BE AVOIDED LIKE THE PLAGUE!

Philip St. Romain, the Catholic lay minister who wrote *Kundalini Energy and Christian Spirituality* (1990), has experienced many strange things while practicing centering prayer. After “centering down” into silence, gold lights would appear and swirl in his mind, forming themselves into captivating patterns. He felt prickly sensations that would continue for days. “Wise sayings” popped into his mind as if he were “receiving messages from another.” After studying eastern religions he came to the conclusion that he was dealing with kundalini energy, and we have no doubt that he was, because mindless centering prayer brings one into the same dark realm as Hinduism’s yoga. The “inner adviser” that one encounters through centering prayer is demonic.

Even the heathen practitioners of kundalini warn about its dangers. The Ayurveda Encyclopedia says, “Those who awaken their kundalini without a guru can lose their direction in life ... they can become confused or mentally imbalanced ... more harm than good can arise” (p. 336). The book *Aghora II: Kundalini* warns many times that “indiscriminate awakening of the Kundalini is very dangerous” (p. 61). It says, “Once aroused and unboxed Kundalini is not ‘derousable’; the genie will not fit back into the bottle. ‘After the awakening the devotee lives always at the mercy of Kundalini’” (p. 20). In fact, the book says that “some die of shock when Kundalini is awakened, and others become severely ill” (p. 61).

St. Romain is communing with demons and he got there, not through Hindu yoga, but through Catholic contemplative mysticism, the same kind of mysticism promoted by the **Quaker Richard Foster** and **Southern Baptist Rick Warren**.

St. Romain has come to depend on the voice that he hears in contemplative prayer:

“I cannot make any decisions for myself without the approbation of THE INNER ADVISER, whose voice speaks so clearly in times of need” (Kundalini Energy, p. 39).

The *Ayurveda Encyclopedia* explains that one can encounter internal voices through yogic mediation, and the practitioner is instructed to listen to the voices and follow their counsel:

“Just as with all spiritual experiences that are out of the norm of supposed societal acceptance, **THE HEARING OF INNER SOUNDS OR VOICES** (nada) has generally been associated with mental illness. Spiritual counseling reassures a person that their experiences and feelings are spiritual - not abnormal. Understanding nada helps persons feel comfortable when hearing any inner sounds. ... If a sound is heard, listen to it. If many sounds exist, listen to those in the right ear. The first sound heard is to be followed. Then, the next sound heard is also to be followed” (p. 343).

I have never read a more effective formula for demon possession and spiritual delusion, and “contemplative” practices such as centering prayer and visualization and guided imagery are no different in character than Hindu yoga. In fact, many contemplative practitioners admit this.

John Michael Talbot says:

“*For myself, after the moving meditations of Hinduism and Taoism, and the breath, bone-marrow, and organ-cleansing of Taoism, I move into a Buddhist seated meditation, including the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. I do all of this from my own Christian perspective...*” (*Come to the Quiet*, p. 237).

Meditation practitioner W.E. Butler, in *Lords of Light*, says that mystical contemplation “brings with it a curious kind of knowing that there is somebody else there with you; you are not alone” (p. 164).

Indeed, but that “somebody else” that the unsaved meditation practitioner encounters is certainly not Almighty God!

Tony Jones admits that the practice of silence often results in spiritual oppression. He mentions “the dark night of the soul” which comes through meditation and says, “It seems one cannot pursue true silence without rather quickly coming to a place of deep, dark doubt” (*The Sacred Way*, pp. 41, 82). He quotes Thomas Merton as follows: “The hermit, all day and all night, beats his head against a wall of doubt. That is his contemplation” (p. 41).

We are reminded of **Mother Teresa**, who was called a living saint by Catholics and Protestants alike during her lifetime and is on a fast track for canonization in the Catholic Church. She practiced a very serious level of contemplative spirituality all her life, but she found only darkness. This is documented in the shocking book *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light, the Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta* (2007), which contains statements made by the nun to her Catholic confessors and superiors over a period of more than 65 years.

In March 1953, she wrote to her confessor: “... **THERE IS SUCH TERRIBLE DARKNESS WITHIN ME**, as if everything was dead. It has been like this more or less from the time I started ‘the work.’”

Over the years she had many confessors, and she continually referred to her spiritual condition as “my darkness” and to Jesus as “the Absent One.”

In 1962 she wrote: “**IF I EVER BECOME A SAINT -- I**

WILL SURELY BE ONE OF ‘DARKNESS,’” and again, “How cold -- how empty -- how painful is my heart. -- Holy communion -- Holy Mass -- all the holy things of spiritual life -- of the life of Christ in me -- are all so empty -- so cold -- so un-wanted” (Mother Teresa: *Come Be My Light*, p. 232).

In 1979 she wrote: “**THE SILENCE AND THE EMPTINESS IS SO GREAT** -- that I look and do not see, -- Listen and do not hear.”

Her private statements about the spiritual darkness she encountered in contemplative prayer continued in this vein until her death, and they are the loudest possible warning about the danger of contemplative mysticism.

Contemplative practices are vehicles to bring the practitioners into contact with demons.

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

‘**BEWARE OF BETHEL CHURCH** - Bethel Church is a former Assemblies of God church in Redding, California, that withdrew in 2005 to become a “nondenominational” charismatic network of churches and ministries. Bethel’s senior pastors are the husband/wife team Bill and Beni Johnson. Bethel Music publishes popular contemporary worship songs, promotes CCM tours worldwide, and operates WorshipU, an influential educational program.

Bethel’s most famous musician is **Jeremy Riddle**, co-author of “**This Is Amazing Grace.**” The heretical emphasis is “encountering God” and “pursuing the presence of God” by means of releasing oneself to heavily sensual music. “*At every service, our worship teams usher in the presence of God.*”

Bethel’s series “Without Words” uses instrumental music “to push the creative boundaries of worship.” There are no lyrics. Bethel’s “dance and flag ministry” also “reveals God’s heart with no words.”

This is blind, emotional mysticism to feed the modern frenzy for “an experience.” It is open disobedience to the Bible’s command to “be sober, be vigilant” and is a perfect recipe for spiritual delusion. True spiritual edification requires a biblical message that is understood. This is the theme of 1st Corinthians 14, where “edify” is a synonym for “understanding.”

“... **except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. ... I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. ... Let all things be done unto edifying**” (*1 Corinthians 14:9, 15, 26*).

Bethel Church also founded **Jesus Culture**, a contemporary, charismatic, ecumenical, music-oriented youth ministry that has its own Jesus Culture Music. Jesus Culture’s conferences are attended by tens of thousands. Bethel’s *School of Supernatural Ministry* has graduated 10,000 since 1998. “Students learn how to read, understand, and ‘do’ the Bible, how to practice His presence, to witness, heal the sick, prophesy, preach, pray, cast out demons and much more.”

Bethel teaches and practices all sorts of charismatic heresies, such as the continuation of apostles and prophets, gibberish tongues, the promise of healing in the atonement, angelic and demon sightings, clairvoyance, grave soaking (lying on a grave to soak up the deceased’s “anointing”), and the appearance of “glory clouds,” gold dust, and angel “feathers.”

Beni Johnson teaches that there are a variety of angels: messenger angels, healing angels, fiery angels. She says that one of her students in the Supernatural School of Ministry was told by God to go to a chapel and shout “Wakey Wakey!” Suddenly, a huge angel stepped out and said, “I am the angel from the 1904 revival and you just woke me up.” When she asked, “Why have you been asleep?” the angel replied, “Because no one has been calling out for revival anymore.”

On Nov. 6, 2019, Bill Johnson tweeted, “To raise a generation of powerful people, we must build trust. We must have the core belief that people are good.”

In contrast, Jesus’ core belief is that “**there is none good but one, that is, God**” (*Mark 10:18*).

‘**FINNISH POLITICIAN ACCUSED OF “INCITEMENT OF HATRED” OVER BOOKLET “MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM”** - A lawmaker and pastor’s wife in Finland who was already being probed by police over a social media post in which she questioned the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland’s partnership with a Helsinki Pride event is now also facing a preliminary “incitement” investigation over a booklet that she wrote 15 years ago entitled “*Male and Female He Created Them.*” The Office of the Prosecutor General of Finland issued a press release on Monday noting that while Päivi Räsänen’s 2004 publication - which remains online - “takes a stand on ecclesiastical policy, social policy, sexuality and marriage in regard to the Bible and its interpretation,” Prosecutor Raija Toiviainen believes the text potentially constitutes a hate crime. ... “According to the prosecutor general, there is reason to believe that because of the defamation of homosexuals by the violation of their human dignity, Ms. Räsänen is guilty of incitement to hatred against a group,” it explains. “Therefore, there will be a preliminary investigation in this matter.”

As previously reported, Räsänen’s husband is a pastor with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, which is the largest denomination in the country, having an estimated three million members. ... Räsänen is known for defending life and marriage, standing against abortion, euthanasia and homosexuality. ... In June, Räsänen, a member of the Christian Democrat Party (which is different from the Democratic Party in the United States), also tweeted her views about the unscriptural advocacy.

