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# DISCERNMENT NEWSLETTER

“...how is it that ye do not discern this time?” Luke 12:56

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## Early Thanksgiving for Blessings!

The International Fellowship of Christian Believers (IFCB) is a fellowship in Southern California that calls together those in ministry and believers who feel the need of fellowship and love hearing the Word of God and rejoicing together. Recently IFCB sponsored a conference which many of us attended. The meetings were held at Sun Valley Community Church pastored by Anton Bosch (in photo below).



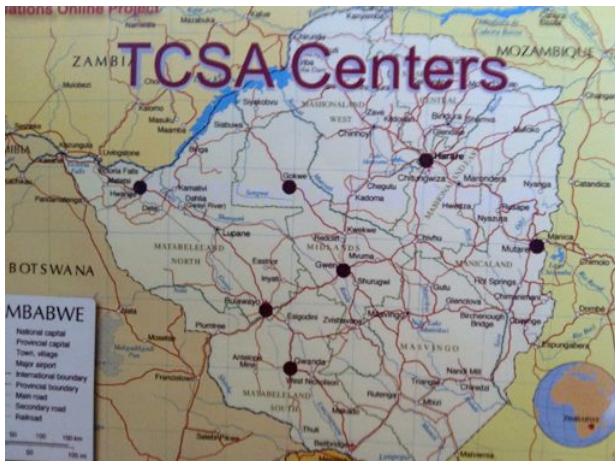
We all enjoyed this time of fellowship and received encouragement upon hearing the Word expounded by the different ministries present. Sarah Leslie spoke on the “Latest Trends in Heresy.” Pastor Gary Osborne delivered edifying messages that greatly encouraged us in the faith.



Jerry Pryde sang beautiful worship songs for us, and we all joined in with him in praising God.



We were also blessed to have our South African representative, Malcolm Harris, speak via Skype on the “Centrality of Christ.” The workshops included a discussion of “Discernment in the Local Church.” These sessions and others will soon be available on CD.



Pastor Anton is the also the president of IFCB and is heading up the Theological College of Southern Africa (TCSB) project in Zimbabwe. The Bible School has six centers (shown on the map above).

We were thrilled to hear a report from Ken Myers in regard to the Bibles, Sunday School materials and study books that been shipped to Zimbabwe. Some of these centers are merely an office room, a small church (which can just be outdoors with a roof), or even under a tree.

These are places for students who are desirous of furthering their studies and appreciate having the opportunity. Initially Ken, who travelled to Zimbabwe in 2012 with Anton Bosch, saw the greatest need for Bibles and concordances for the centers. He came back to the U.S.A. and started to raise funds and collect books in order to send a pallet of books. The Lord had a great and mighty hand in all of this. That small pallet quickly became a whole container of 780 boxes of books.



**Pastor Ken and his wife Nancy—with books!**

Needless to say, there are always great challenges in Africa, but we serve a faithful God. He is always seeking and saving the lost. We know that when we lift up Christ, He will draw the hungry souls to Himself (John 12:32).

We praise God for the privilege of working in missionary evangelism in these last days.



**An IFCB conference discussion session**

## **Altered States: A Different Gate** **The sober Christian in a** **spiritually inebriated age**

By Sarah Leslie and Pastor Larry DeBruyn

***[Ed Note:*** This article below was originally published on Herescope. We frequently hear from our readers that this is an important issue they are facing, especially as new (old) meditative prayer methods with altered states of consciousness, physical motions and verbal repetitions are being brought into the churches.

<http://herescope.blogspot.com/2011/04/alterd-states-different-gate.html>

*“For who hath known the mind of the Lord,  
that he may instruct him?”*

***But we have the mind of Christ.”***

Emphasis added, 1 Corinthians 2:16, KJV

**O**n the heels of the hippie era of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the New Age Movement (NAM) rose in prominence during the late 1970s, and remains popular today. One component of NAM spirituality was meditation associated with “Transcendental Meditation” (TM), a Hindu religious practice that was popularized and introduced to the Western culture by the Beatles and their personal guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1914-2008).[1] The Maharishi is credited with introducing Hindu mysticism to western culture

along with that religion's spiritual disciplines such as Yoga. A savvy marketer, he seized every opportunity to repackage Hindu spirituality to sell to American culture, one part of which consisted of meditative techniques that promised practitioners "increased creativity and flexibility, increased productivity, improved job satisfaction, improved relations with supervisors and co-workers," and so on.[2] At that time TM was marketed so as not to appear as a religion, but propagandized to be a way to realize "better health, stress relief and spiritual enlightenment." [3]

One of the most enticing claims of TM was that it could, via "mass meditation sessions," create a corporate and convergent inner peace that would in an ultimate way reduce violence and war in the world.[4] Give peace a chance, sang the Beatles. In other words, achieving inner peace through meditation would affect world peace, as long as sufficient numbers of the world's population engaged the practice (i.e., attaining critical mass). This appealed to the Viet Nam War generation which stridently, sometimes violently, opposed that war. In an incarnating, even Messianic way, personal peace achieved by meditation would produce international peace. Thus, many began practicing meditation with the desire of producing global effects. They would repetitively chant a "*mantra*"—a sacred Sanskrit word that if repetitively repeated possessed magical power, it is believed, to invoke the presence of a deity.[5] If engaged in over a prolonged period of time, the repetition of the mantra would cause the meditators to abandon their rational mind so as to experience a soulful oneness and peace with themselves and the world.

Engaging in meditative chanting promised that its practitioners would feel themselves become detached from reality and in that state experience serenity, joy, attunement to God, spiritual power and a vibrant connection with the universe. The goal was emptying the mind, leaving reality and getting "high" within. Meditation (sometimes facilitated by, in a Woodstock way, listening to rock music, experimenting with sex, and smoking pot or popping hallucinatory drugs—you know, a little help from "my friends") often induced what can be called "altered state[s] of consciousness." [6] The following quotes show how meditation connects to mysticism:

- "Meditation in the eastern faith was a path to *nirvana* [i.e., an ideal condition of perfect harmony and peace] or perfection." [7]
- "The mystical realm of meditation can be quite exhilarating at first. It produces feelings and experiences of heightened awareness, euphoria and even ecstasy. The act of meditation in this sense can be an addiction since the seeker will want more of this sensation. In fact, meditation can quickly be discarded as an inefficient method of attaining this 'high' if other methods work better. Meditative paths to exhilaration lead to feeling that one is connecting with the 'divine.'" [8]
- "Ecstasy can be deliberately induced using religious or creative activities, meditation, music, dancing, breathing exercises, physical exercise, sex or consumption of psychotropic drugs." [9]

Another pathway to realize the perfection of "true enlightenment" is to engage the martial arts, a discipline that, according to Gaylene Goodroad in her book *My Life in 'THE WAY'*, includes "emptying heart and mind of all earthly desire and vanity." [10] In that context, voiding the mind would result in realizing one's "divinity" or "godhood." These mind-body-spirit "paths" or "ways" (sometimes called "spiritual" disciplines) promise higher enlightenment, self-realization, understanding, gentleness, harmony, unity, self-awakening, self-perfection.[11] As one makes progress through stages or up the spiritual ladder, attaining unto higher states produces a sense of wholeness within one's soul.

Yet another pathway to mystical meditation is visualization. This is what Carl Jung called "active imagination," which was a way to "have a direct experience of God as a star or sun within." [12] Occultists define visualization as not just a method of meditation, but also a psychic way to invoke spiritual presences:

**VISUALIZATION** A loose term for numerous practices in which mental pictures are called up and used for different purposes: to contact someone telepathically, heal from a distance, achieve a desired state (happiness, peace, courage), attain a desired goal or possession (fame, money, sexual charm). Encompasses

many popular practices now in use, though the discipline itself is very ancient and seems to have been developed in almost every culture of the past. May be divided into two classes: CREATIVE VISUALIZATION for the purpose of producing external effects and the use of visual imagery for inner exploration of the processes of the unconscious, as in the Jungian work....[13]

If all of this mystical meditation sounds a bit self-centered and self-preoccupied, it is because it is. Dr. Martin Erdmann, in his key article "[The Spiritualization of Science, Technology, and Education in a One-World Society](#)," explains how achieving altered consciousness was an agenda of the Human Potential Movement. Briefly outlined, he states his thesis:

Inspired in part by Aldous Huxley's publications and his advocacy of psychedelic drugs, intellectuals such as Willis W. Harman emphasized irrational meditative/mind emptying exercises, or the use of hallucinogens as a more congenial basis for scientific and technological progress. Calling for a new metaphysic of science/technology, the proponents of the Human Potential Movement perceive the religious heritage of the West—based on Christian premises—as the greatest impediment of an evolving "cosmic conscience." In gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the spiritual and material processes of the universe, a mystically inclined elite of technically enhanced human mutants would be able to usher in a homogeneous world socialist society, perhaps not altogether different from the one envisioned in *Brave New World*.<sup>[14]</sup>

Dr. Erdmann details how Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) hoped for a "brainwashing" and/or "a pharmacological method of making people love their servitude" to a dictatorship, and began experimenting with mystical experiences and hallucinogens.<sup>[15]</sup> The mind-expanding potential of these experiences were seen as connected with a latent, untapped spiritual potential resident in the mind of man. [Willis Harman](#) began researching altering human consciousness as means to facilitate political change, especially through the shifting of values, including "bringing something like 'person-changing technology' into the educational system

(e.g., meditation, hypnosis, sensitivity training, psychodrama, yoga, etc.)"<sup>[16]</sup>

Indeed, this history may help explain why at this time meditation is rising in popularity. The activity has become a useful tool, a natural means, for attaining unto and entering into a new consciousness for the **purpose** of changing beliefs, attitudes, values, morals and worldviews. Meditative techniques (spiritual disciplines) assist persons to see the world in "a new light," to look at the world in a new perspective, to believe in a different way. In the hippie era, meditation was a useful tool for deconstructing the tired old ways of viewing and doing things. Many of the Hippie youth turned to reject their nominal Christian background. This occurred because mystic activities gave them a seductive peek into the eastern evolutionary belief system. Through meditation, and as they experienced their consciousness changing, the youthful rebels began in a corporate way to feel themselves becoming larger than life. Their reality expanded. The universe seemed reachable. Immortality seemed attainable. Unreality became reality.<sup>[17]</sup>

But attaining unto this altered state of consciousness portends spiritual danger—that in such a state of mind, spiritual entities or demons can suggest to or possess the mind. A passive or empty mind will not remain an empty slate. Something, or someone, will fill it. Voided minds are permeable, suggestible, impressionable and malleable. Insatiably, they desire filling by something . . . anything. Hence, meditation serves as an open doorway into the world of the occult, a world of supernatural phenomena and forces. In a synthetic way, hallucinogenic drugs also assisted users to experience the new consciousness.<sup>[18]</sup> One author explains how like meditation, mind-altering drugs can become "dangerous doorways of demonic deception . . . can open up... the human soul":

During Hindu meditation, an adept yogi will usually experience many of the same visions, wild bright lights, strange etheric sounds, and encounters with spirit-beings that many people have described after ingesting LSD . . . An ex-Hindu Brahmin priest explains: "'Often while in deep meditation the gods became visible and talked with me. At times I seemed to be transported by astral projection to distant

planets or to worlds in other dimensions. It would be years before I would learn that such experiences were being duplicated in laboratories under watchful eyes of parapsychologists through the use of hypnosis and LSD'.<sup>[19]</sup>

Another doorway to the altered state of consciousness is music:

There is a certain music that enhances and in many cases instigates the same type of spiritual transformation as that experienced by the adepts of Hinduism. It is called New Age music. Strictly, by definition, New Age music is any music designed to produce in the mind and spirit of the listener either the altered state, the altered world view, or both.<sup>[20]</sup>

Self-induced, mind-emptying and mind-altering disciplines/devices desensitize the Christian's sensitivity to biblical reality as the mind abandons its defenses and letting go of restraints, no longer can discern truth from error. Mind-emptying meditation, like that promoted in sensitivity training groups related to the Human Potential Movement, has as its philosophical foundation the mantra of, "accept anything as valid."<sup>[21]</sup> So there is to be no questioning (there are no wrong answers), challenging or negativity expressed against the new sensitivities. To this end, entering an altered state of consciousness serves to anesthetize persons against discernment as they are overcome by a lax, apathetic and permissive state of mind. This happens in spite of the biblical call to be sober minded.

## Sober to the End

*"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober"* the Apostle Peter wrote to the early church (1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). The opposite of being sober is, in a Bacchic sense, being drunk with wine (Bacchus was the ancient "party" god of drunkenness and revelry.). Obviously, sober-mindedness deters one from being influenced by the devil or demons (1 Peter 5:8), as also does the filling with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). The Lord is on record as being against using devices and/or spiritual disciplines to alter consciousness. As the Apostle Paul identified with the Corinthian readers of his letter, *"we have the mind of Christ"* (1 Corinthians

2:16). Believers are not to entertain practices that will distract them from thinking about the Lord Jesus Christ. To this end, the Holy Spirit directs our minds toward Christ. In this light, Paul wrote to the Colossians, *"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth"* (Colossians 3:2). If a believer's consciousness needs to be altered, the Lord will do it through His Word as the Holy Spirit centers our consciousness upon Him (John 15:26). In a self-induced way, altering one's consciousness, or emptying one's mind, distracts one from the mind of Christ, the mind that objectively is focused and centered upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Consciousness altering is a human work, and while it may induce seeing paranormal visions, hearing paranormal voices or experiencing paranormal visitations, such altering will corrupt the believers mind *"from the simplicity that is in Christ"* (2 Corinthians 11:3).

Therefore, Scripture prohibits engaging in all mind-altering activity; especially that induced via drugs. The English New Testament variously translates the Greek word *pharmakeia*, from which we get our English word pharmacy, by the nouns **"witchcraft"** (Galatians 5:20) or **"sorceries"** (Revelation 9:21; 18:23; 21:8).<sup>[22]</sup> These references associate drugs with **"idolatry."** From these references, we ascertain that pagans commonly employed drugs to enhance their spiritual experiences. In order to access the occult world, an emptying of the mind through meditation (delusion), or altering the mind through hallucinogens (drugs), can induce a experiential alchemy of death-defying enlightenment. Attaining unto such a state, meditators and/or druggies embrace the primeval Satanic lie, *"you shall not surely die"* (Genesis 3:4), an experience that becomes extremely deceptive, alluring, seductive, and addictive. Scripture condemns activities that induce The Lie (Deuteronomy 18:9-12). Scripture also pictures druggies as being separated from the City of God, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:14-15). It's just that serious.

The opposite of attaining unto a state of altered consciousness by engaging in so-called spiritual disciplines is being *"sober minded."* In a paranormal state, if achieved, one's soul goes out of control, thus evidencing that it is not a fruit of the Holy Spirit; for one of the fruits He produces in the believer is *"self-*



*control*" (Galatians 5:23, NASB).

Sober-mindedness is listed as a qualification of church leadership (1 Timothy 3:1-2, Titus 1:8, 2:2). Young men are also exhorted to be "*sober-minded*" (Titus 2:6), and likewise young women (1 Peter 2:4). To be "*sober*" is enjoined upon all believers, for as Peter instructs, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Peter 5:8). After Jesus healed the demoniac, Mark records that he came about to be "*in his right mind*" (Mark 5:15; See also Luke 8:35.). To resist the devil and demonic influences requires a sober mind (James 4:7). If we do not retain a right mind, the devil will not flee from us, but rather will find an entry point through which he will attempt to influence, if not control, our lives.

Attaining unto altered states of consciousness is the essence of paganism, the fountainhead of which was the religion of Babylon, that religious system which through the ages has been the mother lode of mysticism, and in the last days will allure and seduce "*inhabitants of the earth [to become] drunk with the wine of her fornication*" (Revelation 17:2). This spirituality the Apostle John named the great infidelity, "*the great whore*" (Revelation 17:1). Becoming drunk with wine suggests a religion which thrives upon attaining altered states of consciousness—states which are achieved by drinking alcohol, doing drugs, listening to music or cultivating the silence of the contemplative mind. All of this and more may be contrasted to Paul's word to the Ephesians (the church located in the center of the locale where the many-breasted fertility goddess Diana was worshipped) when he wrote, "*be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*" (Ephesians 5:18).

The exact opposite of mind-numbing meditating is the rehearsing of God's Word on one's mind for edification, encouragement and strength. Scriptural meditation involves going over and over Scripture in one's consciousness.[23] In this activity, in one's "*right mind*," the Holy Spirit seals the eternal truths of God in the soil of the regenerate human soul thereby bringing the life of the Word of God to the inner man (2 Corinthians 2:16).

In contrast to the meditation that can numb the soul against perceptions of the present reality, Scripture instructs believers to, "*not sleep, as do others; but [to] watch and be sober*" (2

Thessalonians 5:6) [Emphasis added]. As the Ten Virgins, we are to not sleep, but to watch and be alert in these last days before Christ comes again (Matthew 25:1-13).

"*False christs*" are here, and they anesthetize us from embracing Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Luke 21:8). Among other aspects attendant of true spirituality, entering into altered states can produce in people a pseudo-reality (visions, voices and visitations) that desensitizes them to, even anesthetizes them against, a conscious awareness that Jesus is coming again. In the light of His Second Coming, Christians are to live soberly in this present age as they look forward to that blessed hope of the glorious appearing Jesus Christ (Titus 2:12-13; Compare Proverbs 23:30-33.). To this end, we are to look upward, not inward.

If the weight of some of its gurus and their publications and publicists provide any indication, the pan-evangelical movement is becoming inebriated through engaging in mind altering activities that include meditation with the intent of emptying the mind.[24] Attaining altered consciousness opposes Scripture's call for Christians to be sober-minded. Thus, one can only wonder what the results might be if the Lord administered a spiritual breathalyzer test to pan-evangelicals.[25] Would they puff a BrAC of 0.08 (that's legally drunk)? By way of contrast, might truly regenerate Christians, those who have been regenerated, sealed, baptized and indwelt by the Spirit of the Living God, and who by faith apply the other activities of the Holy Spirit to their lives, blow a BrAC of 0.00?

So dear readers, it's better to remain sober-minded as Scripture urges than to engage consciousness-altering activities that inebriate the soul against the true work of the Spirit in us.

***"But the end of all things is at hand:  
be ye therefore sober,  
and watch unto prayer."***

(1 Peter 4:7)

#### **Endnotes:**

1. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharishi\\_Mahesh\\_Yogi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharishi_Mahesh_Yogi).
2. Ibid., footnote 105: Don McPherson, "Maharishi Claims Meditation Push Can Help Canada," *Montreal Gazette*, March 24, 1975.
3. Ibid, footnotes 88 & 142: "Indian guru Maharishi Yogi dies," BBC News, February 6, 2008. Retrieved August 26,

2010. Regush, Nicholas (July 30, 1977). "No bargains on road to enlightenment," *Montreal Gazette*. "Caption under photo reads: 'Maharishi Mahesh Yogi sells mantras for \$150'."

4. Ibid, footnote 77: van den Berg, Stephanie (February 5, 2008). "Beatles Guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Dies". *The Sydney Morning Herald*. AFP. Archived from the original on August 30, 2010.

5. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantra>.

6. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altered\\_state\\_of\\_consciousness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altered_state_of_consciousness).

7. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nirvana>.

8. The author, Sarah Leslie, is writing from firsthand experience with this type of meditation. See "Confessions of an Ex-Mystic," Harrisburg, PA conference talk, available:<http://home.etcable.net/hestervanboven/products.htm>.

9. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecstasy\\_\(emotion\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecstasy_(emotion)).

10. *My Life In 'THE WAY'* is available online as an e-book at <http://mylifeintheway.blogspot.com> (link at the bottom of the page), p. 3. See

also:<http://herescope.blogspot.com/2010/03/my-life-in-way.html>.

11. Ibid, pp. 8, 9.

12. Richard Noll, *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* (Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 114. Noll explains: "The star or sun was depicted by the swirling sun of the swastika, the 'ancient Aryan sun wheel,'... a symbol of god that could be found in the ancient homelands of the Aryans... in the form of circular mandalas." The meditation of the labyrinth may be connected to this same idea.

See:[http://mennolite.wordpress.com/2011/02/24/"world-mennonites-actually-walk-the-labyrinthswastika"/](http://mennolite.wordpress.com/2011/02/24/)

13. *The Seekers Handbook: The Complete Guide To Spiritual Pathfinding* by John Lash (Harmony Books, 1990), p. 398. See

also: <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2005/10/popular-neoevangelical-terms-what-do.html>.

14. <http://www.discernment-ministries.org/Articles/The%20Spiritualization%20of%20Science,%20Technology%20and%20Education.pdf> See also: <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2009/05/spiritualization-of-science.html> and <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2011/03/technocracy-transhumanism.html>.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid, quoting from Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), *Alternative Educational Futures in the United States and in Europe: Methods, Issues and Policy Relevance* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1972). Dr. Erdmann writes in the footnote to this quote that "This report was prepared by the CERI as Volume 8, background report No. 12, of Proceedings from the Conference on Policies

for Educational Growth, organized by the OECD in Paris, France, June 3-5, 1970. Abstract: This book contains four papers by noted educational planning experts that, together, cover practically all the implications of undertaking 'futurological' studies in education.... Willis Harman focuses on alternative future states of American society that represent, in some sense, alternative dominant belief and value systems."

17. Again, this is part of the author's own personal experience.

18. During the hippie era, this author (Sarah) experienced these very things firsthand, including the quest to get spiritually "high" by whatever means would seem to work best at the moment.

19. Mark Spaulding, *The Heartbeat of the Dragon: The Occult Roots of Rock & Roll* (Light Warrior Press, 1992), p. 74, citing Rabi Maharaj, *Death of A Guru*, p. 75. (Harvest House 1984).

20. Ibid, 188.

21. The authors both have experienced sensitivity training, Sarah, who was trained in conducting sensitivity groups which was connected to the Human Potential Movement (HPM) and Humanistic Psychology, and Pastor Larry, who experienced sensitivity training while a public school teacher in the late 60s. That sensitivity training is connected to HPM is her personal observation. See also: <http://www.discernment-ministries.org/Articles/The%20Spiritualization%20of%20Science,%20Technology%20and%20Education.pdf>.

22. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *kesheph*, also translated "**sorceries**," appears to refer to mental states induced by ingesting intoxicants (Isaiah 47:9, 12).

Another Hebrew word used in a similar context is *cheber*, which is translated "**charmer**" (Deuteronomy 18:11) or "**enchancements**" (Isaiah 47:9, 12).

23. See Pastor Larry DeBruyn, "On Meditating," *Guarding His Flock Ministries*, <http://guardinghisflock.com/2011/04/27/on-meditating/#more-1741>.

24. Beware of semantic deception. Frank Viola, advocating an altered state of consciousness for Christians in his 2011 book *Revise us again* (David C. Cook), p. 72, openly admits that playing with semantics is the name of the game: "To describe fixing one's heart upon the Lord, some people use the phrase 'turning to the Lord.' Others use the word 'gazing.' Others say 'beholding' or 'looking into the face of God.' Still others say 'contemplating,' 'centering,' 'abiding,' or 'partaking.' Others describe it as 'meditating.' By and large, it's **semantics**." [Emphasis added.]

25. By way of contrast, in our use of the breathalyzer metaphor we are not suggesting we're against true manifestations of the Holy Spirit as were the scoffers at the first Pentecost who scorned the Spirit's work by accusing the recipients of being drunk (Acts 2:13, 15).