



As part of the leadership in *Healing Hearts Ministries* I am in agreement with the following:

☐ **Our Mission:** *Healing Hearts* is a Gospel-centered, grace-driven ministry that offers hope and healing in Jesus Christ through God's Word to people who have been broken by sin. *Healing hearts, healing families. . . one heart at a time.*

☐ **Our Vision:** Our vision is to equip lay leaders in every church to use the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bring hope and healing to those who are hurting by walking them through God's Word.

☐ **Our Purpose:** We are committed to...

- o **Upholding the sufficiency of Scripture** — no other source of knowledge thoroughly equips us to counsel in ways that transform the human heart. (Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3)
- o **Coming alongside the local church** — training those who have received healing through our Bible Studies so they can minister to those who are broken and hurting in their home churches. We also offer lay leaders ongoing training, resources and support. (2 Cor. 1:3-4; 2 Cor. 4:2)
- o **Offering biblical discipleship/counseling materials** — *Healing Hearts* resources bring aid to the Body of Christ by providing a platform of discipleship/biblical counseling in which lay leaders in the local church can minister to individuals who have been broken by sin. (Eph. 4:12)
- o **Confronting the hard issues** — all *Healing Hearts* materials are designed to minister to, disciple and equip the body of Christ and are effective to counsel the more stigmatizing issues such as abortion, sexual sin, sexual abuse, divorce and catastrophic loss. (Heb. 4:12)

☐ **Our Values:**

- o We aspire to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in all we say and do.
- o We will provide counsel based solely on the Bible, the inspired Word of God.
- o We will provide relational one-on-one or group discipleship so that those who have been healed may be trained to bind up the brokenhearted.
- o We will provide counsel women to women and men to men.
- o We are committed to ethical financial and fundraising practices.

☐ **Our Statement of Faith:**

1. We believe in one God, eternally existent in three Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. We believe the Holy Bible to be the inspired, eternal, authoritative, and infallible Word of God.
3. We believe in the deity of Jesus, the only Son of God, and that He is the express image of God. We believe in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, and in His bodily resurrection from the dead to win victory over death. We believe in His ascension to Heaven where He sits at the right hand of God.
4. We believe that Jesus is the Lamb of God offered up as a sacrifice to take away the sins of the world. We believe that no one can be saved by any other name than Jesus Christ.
5. We believe that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.
6. We believe every Believer has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of the body of Christ. We believe we are called to be God's army, clothed in His armor, shielded by faith, and armed with His Word, marching against the powers and principalities of Satan.

I also hereby affirm my commitment to the sufficiency of the Scriptures in counseling as follows:

- ☐ **Biblical Counseling** — Biblical counselors affirm the value and usefulness of the entirety of God's revelation, including general and special revelation. General revelation is a display of the goodness and power of God in the things he has made. *The divine self-disclosure¹ in general revelation leads to condemnation, rather than salvation (Rom 1:18-32). Special revelation² is recorded exclusively and completely in the Scriptures. It is an inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient rule for all of life and faith. Because counseling concerns matters of life and faith before God, Scripture is an inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient rule for the presuppositions, principles, and practices of counseling (2 Pet 1:3-21).
- ☐ **Psychology** — I deny that the findings of secular psychology make any essential contribution to biblical counseling. God's goodness allows that secular psychology may provide accurate research and make observations that are helpful in understanding counseling issues. Because unbelievers suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness the efforts of secular psychology at interpreting these observations lead to misunderstanding. Because their observations are distorted by a secular apprehension of life their efforts at counseling ministry will be in competition with biblical counseling. They cannot be integrated with the faith once for all delivered to the saints.
- ☐ **Healing Techniques** — I believe that sin can be dealt with only at the Cross of Christ. We believe that restoration comes through repentance through Jesus Christ. In practicing the ministry of restoration, we advocate only those principles found in the Bible such as prayer, confession, repentance and forgiveness, etc. We do not use or advocate techniques or methods such as hypnosis, visualization, psychic New Age and inner healing methods, which are not demonstrated in the Bible.

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1. **Divine Disclosure** means that creation testifies that there is a Creator we are accountable to. In our sinful state we are condemned. Just knowing there is a Creator doesn't save you, but it shows us that we will have to answer to Him, therefore, we are condemned in our sinful state.
2. **Special Revelation** means that God doesn't reveal anything absolutely authoritative outside of the Word of God. Even though the Spirit does show things to us and leads us, we cannot wholeheartedly depend on the accuracy of what we think outside of the knowledge of God through the Bible. This helps us understand why we can't gravitate to "name it and claim it," visions, dreams, etc., as being equally authoritative to Scripture since our thinking can be flawed.

I also agree with and will abide by the following:

- ☐ I understand that as a leader in this ministry I must live my life above and beyond reproach for the glory of God. I understand that when I compromise Godly standards it not only reflects negatively on the ministry but does not set a good example for those who follow me.
- ☐ I affirm that I have denounced cultic and occult practices that are listed in the *Healing Hearts* Bible studies which includes; contemplative prayer, use of labyrinths and the practice of Yoga. *Please read Appendix regarding Contemplative Prayer, Labyrinths, and Yoga before signing this agreement.
- ☐ I will comply with *Healing Hearts* policy of a 24 hour mandatory response to all emails that come to my *Healing Hearts* email address and to phone call messages that I receive from *Healing Hearts* leadership and clients. That means that I will check my ministry emails daily and respond accordingly. If I have a situation where I'm not able to respond I will notify the leadership above me and I will activate my vacation responder in my Gmail account settings.
- ☐ When taking a client through the *Healing Hearts* Bible study I will keep them focused on the study and will not use any other reading resources or handouts that have not been approved and posted on the *Healing Hearts* leadership portal or in the *Healing Hearts* Leaders Guide.
- ☐ I understand that advance learning credits will be offered every year at the National Conference to help me learn and grow as a Biblical counselor and I will make every effort to attend.

Appendix - Leadership Covenant

Question: What is 'Contemplative Prayer?'

Answer: It is important to first define "contemplative prayer." Contemplative prayer is not just "contemplating while you pray." The Bible instructs us to pray with our minds (1 Corinthians 14:15), so, clearly, prayer does involve contemplation. However, praying with your mind is not what "contemplative prayer" has come to mean. Contemplative prayer has slowly increased in practice and popularity along with the rise of the emerging church movement – a movement which embraces many unscriptural ideas and practices. Contemplative prayer is one such practice.

Contemplative prayer begins with "centering prayer," a meditative practice where the practitioner focuses on a word and repeats that word over and over for the duration of the exercise. The purpose is to clear one's mind of outside concerns so that God's voice may be more easily heard. After the centering prayer, the practitioner is to sit still, listen for direct guidance from God, and feel His presence.

Although this might sound like an innocent exercise, this type of prayer has no scriptural support whatsoever. In fact, it is just the opposite of how prayer is defined in the Bible. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Philippians 4:6). "In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete" (John 16:23-24). These verses and others clearly portray prayer as being comprehensible communication with God, not an esoteric, mystical meditation.

Contemplative prayer, by design, focuses on having a mystical experience with God. Mysticism, however, is purely subjective, and does not rely upon truth or fact. Yet the Word of God has been given to us for the very purpose of basing our faith, and our lives, on Truth (2 Timothy 3:16-17). What we know about God is based on fact; trusting in experiential knowledge over the biblical record takes a person outside of the standard that is the Bible.

Contemplative prayer is no different than the meditative exercises used in Eastern religions and New Age cults. Its most vocal supporters embrace an open spirituality among adherents from all religions, promoting the idea that salvation is gained by many paths, even though Christ Himself stated that salvation comes only through Him (John 14:6). Contemplative prayer, as practiced in the modern prayer movement, is in opposition to biblical Christianity and should definitely be avoided.

Question: What is 'Contemplative Spirituality?'

Answer: Contemplative spirituality is an extremely dangerous practice for any person who desires to live a biblical, God-centered life. It is most commonly associated with the emerging church movement, which is riddled with false teachings. It is also used by many different groups that have little, if any, connection with Christianity.

In practice, contemplative spirituality is primarily centered on meditation, although not meditation with a biblical perspective. Passages such as Joshua 1:8 actually exhort us to meditate: "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Notice what the focus of meditation should be – the Word of God. Contemplative spirituality-driven meditation focuses on nothing, literally. A practitioner is exhorted to completely empty his/her mind, to just "be." Supposedly, this helps one to open up to a greater spiritual experience. However, we are exhorted in Scripture to transform our minds to that of Christ's, to have His mind. Emptying our minds is contrary to such active, conscious transformation.

Contemplative spirituality also encourages the pursuit of a mystical experience with God. Mysticism is the belief that knowledge of God, spiritual truth, and ultimate reality can be gained through subjective experience. This emphasis on experiential knowledge erodes the authority of Scripture. We know God according to His Word. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God's Word is complete. There is no reason to believe that God adds additional teachings or truths to His Word through mystical experiences. Instead, our faith and what we know about God is based on fact.

The website for the Center for Contemplative Spirituality sums it up well: "We come from a variety of secular and religious backgrounds and we each seek to enrich our journey through spiritual practice and study of the world's great spiritual traditions. We desire to draw closer to the loving Spirit which pervades all creation and which inspires our compassion for all beings." There is absolutely nothing biblical about such goals. Studying the world's "spiritual traditions" is an exercise in

futility because any spiritual tradition other than that which exalts Christ is falsehood. The only way to draw closer to God is through the path He has ordained — Jesus Christ and the Word.

Question: What is a 'Prayer Labyrinth'? Are prayer labyrinths biblical?

Answer: A labyrinth is a path which leads, via a circuitous route, to the center of an intricate design and back out again. A labyrinth's route is unicursal; that is, it has only a single path. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth is designed for ease of navigation, and it is impossible to get lost within one.

A prayer labyrinth is a labyrinth used to facilitate prayer, meditation, spiritual transformation, and/or global unity. The most famous prayer labyrinths today include an ancient one in the cathedral of Chartres, France, another in the cathedral of Duomo di Siena, Tuscany; and two maintained by Grace Cathedral, an Episcopal church in San Francisco. While prayer labyrinths have been used in Catholic cathedrals for centuries, the past decade has seen resurgence in their popularity, especially within the Emergent Church and among New Age groups and neo-pagans.

Labyrinths have been used by a wide variety of cultures for at least 3,500 years. Evidence of ancient labyrinths exists in Crete, Egypt, Italy, Scandinavia, and North America. Ancient labyrinths had what is usually called the "classical" design of seven rings, or circuits. They were decidedly pagan in function: many labyrinths were dedicated to a goddess and used in ritualistic dances. The Hopi Indians saw the labyrinth as a symbol of Mother Earth, and the hundreds of stone labyrinths along the Scandinavian shoreline were used as magic traps for trolls and evil winds to ensure safe fishing.

In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church adapted the labyrinth for its own purposes within its cathedrals. The classical form gave way to a more intricate design of 11 circuits in 4 quadrants, usually called the "medieval" design. Within Catholicism, the labyrinth could symbolize several things: the hard and winding road to God, a mystical ascension to salvation and enlightenment, or even a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for those who could not make the actual journey.

The modern "rediscovery" of the labyrinth and its use in church settings is celebrated by groups such as The Labyrinth Society and Veriditas, The World-Wide Labyrinth Project. According to these groups, the labyrinth is a "divine imprint," a "mystical tradition," a "sacred path," and a "sacred gateway." The stated purpose of Veriditas is "to transform the Human Spirit," using "the Labyrinth Experience as a personal practice for healing and growth, a tool for community building, an agent for global peace and a metaphor for the blossoming of the Spirit in our lives" (from the official Veriditas website).

According to Veriditas, walking a prayer labyrinth involves 3 stages: purgation (releasing), illumination (receiving), and union (returning). Purgation occurs as one moves toward the center of the labyrinth. During this stage, one sheds the cares and distractions of life and opens his heart and mind. Illumination occurs at the center of the labyrinth; this is the time to "receive what is there for you" through prayer and meditation. Union occurs as one exits the labyrinth and involves "joining God, your Higher Power, or the healing forces at work in the world."

Proponents of prayer labyrinths speak of using the labyrinth to become enlightened, realigned with the universe, and increasingly empowered to know one's Self and to accomplish the work of the soul. Some, such as Dr. Lauren Artress, president of Veriditas, also speak of the "many levels of consciousness" which touch the worshiper in a labyrinth, including the consciousness that he is "one of those pilgrims walking in the early times. It feels like it's from another time; it doesn't feel like it's in this life" (from an interview with Dr. Lauren Artress on the official Veriditas website).

Perhaps as a throwback to the old goddess worship, many prayer labyrinths contain feminine symbols in the center. Dr. Artress recognizes the symbolism and speaks freely of connecting with the "sacred feminine" in a labyrinth and of the need to view God as both a "he" and a "she."

Are prayer labyrinths biblical? No, they are not. Not only are labyrinths never mentioned in the Bible, but they also conflict with several biblical principles of worship and prayer.

1) God seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24; Philippians 3:3; Psalm 29:2). Proponents of prayer labyrinths speak of "body worship" and the goal to employ all five senses in worship. But body worship is not a biblical concept. We live by faith, not by sight, and worship is not a sensuous, physical activity; worship is a matter of the heart, expressed in praise and service to God. For the New Testament believer, worship has nothing to do with external trappings such as lighting candles, kneeling at an altar, or walking in circles.

2) Prayer is not to become ritualistic (Matthew 6:5-8). Dr. Artress says that "ritual feeds the soul" and recommends repeated, regular trips through the labyrinth. If ritual were truly food for the soul, then the Pharisees of Jesus' day should have been the

best-fed souls alive — after all, their religious system abounded in ritual and tradition. Yet Jesus rebuked them on more than one occasion for the deadness and hypocrisy of their religion (Matthew 15:3; Mark 7:6-13).

3) Every believer has the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Many who walk prayer labyrinths are seeking special insight, new revelation, or a discovery of "the God who's within." Such an emphasis on mysticism and esoteric knowledge comes dangerously close to Gnosticism and New Age thinking. The Christian has no need of mystical experience or extra-biblical revelation: "You have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth" (1 John 2:20).

4) God is near to all those who call upon Him in truth (Psalm 145:18; Acts 17:27). No ritual, including walking a labyrinth, can bring anyone any closer to God. Jesus is the way (John 14:6). Repentance and faith are what is required (Acts 20:21).

5) The Bible is sufficient to make the Christian holy, wise, and completely proficient for his work in this world (2 Timothy 3:15-17). To say that, in order to find real power, we must add mysticism or tradition to the Bible is to denigrate God's Word and the Spirit's work through it.

Historically, labyrinths were rooted in paganism and incorporated by Catholicism. Now they are promoted by the Emergent Church and others who seek an open spirituality apart from the Bible. Paul's warning to the church should suffice to keep us focused on Jesus and avoid empty ritual: "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

Question: What is the Christian view of Yoga?

Answer: For many Christians in the West who don't understand the history behind it, yoga is simply a means of physical exercise and strengthening and improving flexibility of the muscles. However, the philosophy behind yoga is much more than physically improving oneself. It is an ancient practice derived from India, believed to be the path to spiritual growth and enlightenment.

The word yoga means "union," and the goal is to unite one's transitory (temporary) self with the infinite Brahman, the Hindu concept of "God." This god is not a literal being, but is an impersonal spiritual substance that is one with nature and the cosmos. This view is called "pantheism," the belief that everything is God and that reality consists only of the universe and nature. Because everything is God, the yoga philosophy makes no distinction between man and God.

Hatha yoga is the aspect of yoga that focuses on the physical body through special postures, breathing exercises, and concentration or meditation. It is a means to prepare the body for the spiritual exercises, with fewer obstacles, in order to achieve enlightenment. The practice of yoga is based on the belief that man and God are one. It is little more than self-worship disguised as high-level spirituality.

The question becomes, is it possible for a Christian to isolate the physical aspects of yoga as simply a method of exercise, without incorporating the spirituality or philosophy behind it? Yoga originated with a blatantly anti-Christian philosophy, and that philosophy has not changed. It teaches one to focus on oneself instead of on the one true God. It encourages its participants to seek the answers to life's difficult questions within their own consciousness instead of in the Word of God. It also leaves one open to deception from God's enemy, who searches for victims whom he can turn away from God (1 Peter 5:8).

Whatever we do should be done for God's glory (1 Corinthians 10:31), and we would be wise to heed the words of the apostle Paul: "Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise" (Philippians 4:8, NLT).