

PRISCILLA SHIRER PROMOTING CONTEMPLATIVE/CENTERING PRAYER

By Rev. Ken Silva, Southern Baptist pastor-teacher, Aug 28, 2010



...they are full of things from the east... ([Isaiah 2:6](#))

Going Beyond Scripture Like Roman Catholics Mystics

In [Priscilla Shirer And Contemplative/Centering Prayer](#), which serves as the first part of this follow up article, [Apprising Ministries](#) reminded you that both Shirer and her good friend [Beth Moore](#) were part of the [Be Still...And Know That I Am God](#) DVD. I explained further that this *Be Still* project was openly advocating a form of meditation in an altered state of consciousness known as [Contemplative/Centering Prayer](#) (CCP).

And this is easily corroborated, for example, from a pro-contemplative prayer article entitled [“Be Still” Invites Viewers to Discover Contemplative Prayer](#), which was carried by the mainstream evangelical website [Crosswalk.com](#). You also saw that Shirer’s ministry, [Going Beyond Ministries](#) (GBM), arose from what Shirer called her “inner revival,” which involved the Lord “speaking” to her:

In her case, God was speaking to her about going to “the place of abundant living—an experiential relationship with God.” “He said: ‘Priscilla, you’ve been at this mountain long enough. There is a new place that I want to take

you to,’” Shirer says. In light of God’s challenge, Shirer naturally desired to “go beyond” personally. ([Online source](#))

Like I’ve said before, as soon as you hear someone claiming to teach in the Name of Jesus Christ use the term “go beyond” your discernment radar needs to kick in. The key question to ask is: Go beyond, what? As I’ve pointed out previously, invariably where we’re headed is going beyond Scripture. Again, here’s the bottom line: In the Bible we know we hear God’s Voice; but as soon as we go beyond into “inner,” i.e highly subjective, experiences we then open a door that is leading so many today into such spiritual deception.

I’ve already told you that this CCP—a transcendental meditation-lite lightly sprayed with Christian terminology—the very crown jewel of [Contemplative Spirituality/Mysticism](#) (CSM), which itself is actually a romanticized version of the Counter Reformation [hello!] spirituality of apostate (at best) Roman Catholic mystics. It’s become the current fad now under the guise of so-called [Spiritual Formation](#) e.g. that taught by [Living Spiritual Teacher](#) and [Quaker](#) mystic [Richard Foster](#), along with his trusty spiritual twin [Dallas Willard](#).

Against this backdrop I now point you to the GBM blog and a July 23 entry “Submitted by Priscilla” called [Wisbits](#), seen below via screen shot in case it suddenly vanishes:

Going Beyond

MINISTRIES

HOME JEWELRY BOX OUR MINISTRY PRISCILLA NEWS PHOTOS EVENTS

Wisbits

Submitted by Priscilla on July 23, 2010 - 12:27am

Glad you're back today 'cause now that we've made each other's [acquaintance](#) I'm anxious to connect you with some folks who I think you'll be so blessed by.

Years ago, I got a chance to meet [Jan Johnson](#) albeit only by phone - and yet in the short time we spent talking, I was encouraged and redirected in so many ways. As a young woman trying to navigate the ins and outs of my relationship with the Lord, Ms. Jan spoke wisdom into my life that was extremely pivotal in my life - personally and in ministry.

While I've not had the chance to meet her in person (I'm hoping to attend one of her conferences one day) I'm continually blessed by the word the Lord places on her heart every month through her "Wisbits" - articles she writes for anyone to subscribe to.

I'm so glad that you guys are encouraged by [The Jewelry Box](#) articles on our site so I thought I'd share with you a bit of what encourages me regularly.

You'll want to [subscribe](#) as soon as you can. You'll be the better for it.

Here's July's wisbit

Be blessed.

Priscilla

Wisbit - July 2010

Pushing the River

In what situations do you try too hard to make something work?

Several years ago, I worked at not trying too hard when I was speaking on a platform – I stopped trying to be clever or funny or deep. I stopped trying to keep people awake. I was inspired by the example of Jesus, which is one of sheer genuineness and being present to people. I didn't have to "sell" Jesus. In fact, it worked better if I stayed "bitten with Christ in God." But there's still one venue where I try too hard. I can feel it in the days afterward. It's because I particularly love this group, and I love the person who heads it up. I want to do well for that person. Yet I notice this person often doesn't look at me when I'm presenting. Am I distracting because I'm trying too hard?

About a month before that event, I read this quote by Franciscan Richard Rohr:

- Faith does not need to push the river because faith is able to trust that there is a river. It is flowing. We are in it.

He continues in his book *Everything Belongs* to talk about how the river is the Spirit. So I meditated on these words Jesus cried out: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; (John 7:37-38).

I sensed Jesus inviting me: If you are thirsty, Jan, come to me. If you trust me, drink. Don't push the river – let rivers of living water (my Spirit) flow out of you. I will do this. Don't try too hard. Relax in me.

So for several weeks before that venue where I still try too hard, I kept meditating on this idea and when the day came, I was able to rest in God. In worldly terms, the first presentation and exercise were a "hit"; the second was not. They didn't engage as they did in the first one and they told me afterward they felt as if they disappointed me. But I gently and naturally replied that none of this was about me. The Spirit would work in ways none of us understood. We needed to trust that. And, the person in charge didn't look away this time while I was teaching. I left sensing that God had ministered to people and that I had learned a great deal.

As I've pondered this idea of pushing the river, I've thought about other situations in which I'm tempted to go "over the top" trying to win over a new colleague; interrupting instead of listening when I get excited; trying to make sure my extended family loves and welcomes our new kids-in-law. I did this a lot as a parent when my kids were young. I tried to do all the right things when my children really just needed my genuine presence and delight in them. When I was first married, I tried too hard to be a good wife, reading a lot of marriage books until it dawned on me that what I needed to do was say to God, "What would it look like to love my husband today?" and then do it.

Each case has become another session of "soul school" in which I learn to trust the Spirit to work - to float in the river/Spirit, instead of trying to push the river. May you find great joy and peace today floating in the Spirit of God.

Grace and Peace,
Jan Johnson

www.janjohnson.org

([Online source](#))

Shirer begins by telling us that she's "anxious to connect you with some folks who I think you'll be so blessed by." And then she continues:

Years ago, I got a chance to meet [Jan Johnson](#) albeit only by phone – and yet in the short time we spent talking, I was encouraged and redirected in so many ways. As a young woman trying to navigate the ins and outs of my relationship with the Lord, Ms. Jan spoke wisdom into my life that was extremely pivotal in my life – personally and in ministry.

While I've not had the chance to meet her in person (I'm hoping to attend one of her conferences one day) I'm continually blessed by the word the Lord places on her heart every month through her "Wisbits" – articles she

writes for anyone to subscribe to.
([Online source](#))

Hence the title of Shirer's post. Before we go on, in [Beth Moore And Lifeway \(SBC\) Head Deeper Still Into Deception](#) I told you about the [Deeper Still](#) conferences of [LifeWay](#), which is the publishing arm of the [Southern Baptist Convention](#) (SBC). Now consider the following from an article that originally appeared in [Charisma Magazine](#), which is a leading voice within the charismatic movement, where we're told by SBC Bible teacher [Beth Moore](#):

"[Priscilla] is quite possibly the most gifted communicator I have ever witnessed," says consummate Bible teacher Beth Moore, who has ministered alongside Shirer and Kay Arthur at Deeper Still events for the last three years and has been on a ministry circuit for more than 15... ([Online source](#))

So we should take notice when this "most gifted communicator" Priscilla Shirer tells us above that "in the short time" she spent talking with Jan Johnson she was "redirected in so many ways"; and not only that, Shirer also shares how she's "continually blessed by the word the Lord places on her heart." Mighty impressive praise Shirer lavishes upon Johnson, whom she's so "anxious to connect" with the women who follow her. But the question we need to ask is: Exactly who is this Jan Johnson that's supposedly speaking such "wisdom into" Shirer's life?

Entering The Spiritual Twilight Zone In The Silence Of "Christian" Meditation

As I originally showed you two years ago in [Learn Contemplative Spirituality/Mysticism \(CSM\) The SBC Way With Baptist State Convention Of North Carolina And Spiritual Director Jan Johnson](#) "spiritual director"/guru [Jan Johnson](#) tells us that she is, "a writer, speaker and spiritual director in southern California." [1] And interestingly enough under "Teaching" at Johnson's website we read:

Teaching: *lectio divina* instructor for Dallas Willard's Fuller Seminary class: Spirituality and Ministry; Senior Teaching Fellow, Renovaré Institute;... **Education:** BA, Christian education, Ozark Christian College {[occ.edu](#)}; journalism courses, UCLA; spirituality courses, Azusa Pacific University; graduate, Academy for Spiritual Formation

{upperroom.org/academy/}; Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola 30-day Retreat, 2006; D.Min. Graduate Theological Foundation (Ignatian Spirituality & Spiritual Direction), 2006. ([Online source](#))

The leading online apologetics and discernment ministry [Lighthouse Trails Research](#) informs us that the “Upper Room is a religious organization that promotes Eastern style meditation and is the creator of the popular, meditation tool Walk to Emmaus”;^[2] and you may recall that [Ignatius of Loyola](#) was the apostate (at best) founder of the militantly anti-Reformation pro-Roman Catholic Church spiritual Gestapo Unit known as the *Jesuits*. So quite obviously Johnson is well-trained in “Ignatian style meditation” in an altered state of consciousness; in other words, the [Contemplative/Centering Prayer](#) (CCP) I mentioned before, which forms the centerpiece of that spurious CSM perpetrated by the dubious duo of Foster and Willard. In reality however, it’s but a romanticized version of the putrid Pietism that first festered within the anti-biblical monastic traditions of the Roman Catholic Church.

So, considering Johnson is “Senior Teaching Fellow” at Foster’s spiritual blackhole of *Renovare*, we’re not at all surprised that among her writings she lists [Dallas Willard’s Study Guide to the Divine Conspiracy](#). And Johnson also recommends that:

For more in-depth information and exercises, take a look at my book *Savoring God’s Word*, which explains both *lectio divina* and Ignatian style meditation in detail.^[3]

In my prior post concerning guru Johnson I told that in the [November 2007 SLN](#) of her [SpiritLines Newsletters](#), then “Spiritual Formation Coach” for the [Baptist State Convention of North Carolina](#) (SBC) Dr. Wendy Edwards, teaches us about this so-called “Christian Meditation.” Under “Christian Meditation Helps” we find guru Edwards recommending Johnson’s book [When The Soul Listens: Finding Rest And Direction In Contemplative Prayer](#) (WtSL). Welcome to the whacked Wonderland of postmodern [Humpty Dumpty language](#); click on that link and it’ll take you to the SBC publishing outlet [Lifeway Christian Stores](#) where members of the [Southern Baptist Convention](#)—ostensibly the largest Protestant denomination in the United States—may purchase this book teaching the main practice of the Counter Reformation spirituality of apostate [Roman Catholicism](#):

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When the Soul Listens: Finding Rest and Direction in Contemplative Prayer



Introduction by : [David Hazard](#)
Author : [Jan Johnson](#)
Introduction by : [Dallas Willard](#)

Jan Johnson encourages readers to get away from the formulas and ten-step plans to discover true contemplative prayer. Readers will discover that listening to God and learning to interact with Him through prayer is the real answer to a deeper relationship with Him. Jan leads readers to transform their outward behavior in order to cultivate their inner life. For those who are disillusioned, searching for something that makes sense, or experiencing spiritual dryness, 'When The Soul Listens' offers a clear path to a fulfilling connection with God. Jan uses simple directions and real life examples. This book is the newest in the 'Spiritual Formation Line' from NavPress.

Publisher:	NavPress Publishing Group
Pub. Date:	October 1999
Type:	Paperback
ISBN:	1576831132
Product No.:	00079429
Price:	\$12.99

This product usually ships from our warehouse in 3-5 days. Not available for expedited shipping.

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[When The Soul Listens: Finding Rest And Direction In Contemplative Prayer](#) (WtSL) by [Jan Johnson](#) happens to be part of the [Spiritual Formation Line](#) [read: contemplative spirituality] series of [NavPress](#) of [The Navigators](#) so it carries a *General Introduction* by—surprise—Southern Baptist minister [Dallas Willard](#). In WtSL guru Johnson gives us the following instruction about the transcendental meditation-lite of CCP:

The two primary tools of the contemplative way are the spiritual disciplines of *silence* and *solitude*... Madame Jeanne Guyon, a sought-after counselor and author of the seventeenth-century classic *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*, wrote that two kinds of people keep silent:

The first is one who has nothing to say, and the other is one who has too much to say. In the case of the deeper encounter with the Lord, the latter is true. Silence is produced from [abundant life in God], not from lack. This silence is rich, full and alive!

... Both silence and solitude require discipline at first, but then they become enjoyable and refreshing... Thomas Kelly assures us. It is not an arduous task, but “nothing more than turning our heart toward God and receiving in turn His love.” [4]

Next guru Johnson goes on to speculate, “In solitary silence, we encounter the love of God,” but then she quotes deceased universalist Roman Catholic mystic [Henri Nouwen](#) to caution us that if we really want God to touch us, “It requires a lot of inner solitude and silence”[5], i.e. this CCP form of so-called “Christian” meditation. She also wants us to know in WtSL that, “Silence and solitude are the outward, physical manifestations of the inward surrender of the heart.” Johnson explains that in CCP aka transcendental meditation-lite:

We relinquish talking, analyzing, and enjoying the company of others in order to attend only to God. This relinquishment is crucial. “We have all heard this holy Whisper at times,” wrote Thomas Kelly, a Quaker college professor... “[But w]e have not surrendered *all else*, to attend to it alone.”[6]

Leaving the burden of the Law just placed upon us as I close this out, for now, to fill you in further concerning the Roman Catholic messed-up mystic Madame Jeanne Guyon mentioned favorably above by guru Jan Johnson I will refer you to [The Mindless Mysticism of Madame Guyon](#) by the fine apologetics and discernment ministry [Personal Freedom Outreach](#). Let me also briefly enlighten you concerning [Thomas R. Kelly](#), yet another spiritually corrupt Quaker mystic. Johnson’s quotes of Kelly come from his book [A Testament of Devotion](#) (AToD). On page 3 of my copy of AToD, which even contains an *Introduction* from guru Richard Foster, the mystic Kelly shares about the [Inner Light](#), which is the classic heretical Quaker doctrine that God is already dwells within all mankind. But what you may not know is this teaching itself is actually a mythical musing of classic mysticism often referred to as “the divine spark” or “a spark of the divine.”[7]

In fact Kelly himself begins by quoting the heretical Roman Catholic mystic Meister Eckhart, who’s a veritable superstar of this mind-numbing mysticism, who was sharing the demonic delusion of “the Light” supposedly “[d]eep within us all”:

Meister Eckhart wrote: “As thou art in church or cell, that same frame of mind carry into the world, into its turmoil and its fitfulness” Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctu [sic] of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice,...the Light within,... It is the Shekinah of the soul, the Presence in the midst. Here is the slumbering Christ, stirring to be awakened to become the soul we clothe in earthly form and action. And He is within us all. [8]

But casting these mythical mystic musings back to Hell where they belong, I now proclaim to you, no; “He” is not “within us all,” as it is written:

*Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, **if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.** ([Romans 8:8-9](#))*

And following is the final fruit produced by Roman Catholic mystic Henri Nouwen, a leading teacher of this anti-biblical [Contemplative Spirituality/Mysticism](#); below is the “revelation” which came to him through an entire lifetime devoted to this “Ignatian style meditation” in an altered state of consciousness aka [Contemplative/Centering Prayer](#):

One of the discoveries we make in [contemplative/centering] prayer is that the closer we come to God, the closer we come to all our brothers and sisters in the human family. God is not a private God. The God who dwells in our inner sanctuary is also the **God who dwells in the inner sanctuary of each human being.** [9]

Today I personally believe that Jesus came to open the door to God’s house, **all human beings** can walk through that door, **whether they know about Jesus or not.** Today I see it as my call to help every person **claim his or her way to God.** [10]

The following questions now come emerging: Why would you want to practice this [Contemplative/Centering Prayer](#) when it made one of its most noted, and knowledgeable, practitioners into a universalist? And, why is Priscilla Shirer so anxious to expose the thousands of women who follow her to gurus like Jan Johnson who are foisting this foolishness upon Christ’s church? So, you tell me.

Endnotes:

[1] <http://tiny.cc/85znv>, this is the Google cache because Johnson's website was not working at the time of this writing 8/28/10.

[2] <http://tiny.cc/njwb7>.

[3] Unfortunately Johnson's website was still not functioning properly but the original link was here: <http://www.janjohnson.org/meditations.html>, accessed 8/26/08.

[4] Jan Johnson, *When The Soul Listens: Finding Rest And Direction In Contemplative Prayer* [Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1999], 79, 80, 81.

[5] Ibid., 82.

[6] Ibid., 83.

[7] I refute this mystic fantasy Biblically in [Understanding The New Spirituality: God Indwells Mankind](#).

[8] Thomas R. Kelly, *A Testament Of Devotion* [New York: HarperCollins, 1992], 3.

[9] Henri Nouwen, *Here And Now* [New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994], 24, 25, emphasis mine.

[10] Henri Nouwen, *Sabbatical Journey* [New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1998], 51, emphasis mine.