

Is DALLAS WILLARD to be trusted when he writes about “HEARING GOD”?

In a recent article I wrote called

Can ‘BROTHER LAWRENCE’ be viewed as a true ‘BROTHER IN CHRIST’?

and which is located on

<http://www.takeheed.info/pdf/February-2014/Brother-Lawrence.pdf>

I directed folks to the excellent (second edition) book by **Ray Yungen** which is called ‘**A Time of departing**’. In that book Mr. Yungen also made reference to **Dallas Willard**.

On page 156 **Ray Yungen** wrote –

‘In the back of *The Emerging Church* (a book by Dan Kimball) under the recommended resources section, Kimball lists several books written by contemplatives. Some of these include *Sacred Pathways* by Gary Thomas, *Renovation of the Heart* by **Dallas Willard**, *Messy Spirituality* by Mike Yaconelli, *In the Name of Jesus* by Henri Nouwen, *Boof of Uncommon Prayer* by Steve Case and *Four Views of the Church in Postmodern Culture* by Leonard Sweet. **All of these authors share one thing in common – the belief that we need the *silence* to draw close to God and that *silence* is reached through contemplative prayer’**

Perhaps I could just make some relevant points concerning what Mr. Yungen wrote

Firstly, in relation to **Dan Kimball**, in my **December 2007 ‘News From The Front’** located on <http://www.takeheed.info/news-from-the-front-december-2007/> I highlighted under a section headed **Willow Creek connection to the foul-mouthed ‘Jersey Boys’** the fact that the **Willow Creek Church of Bill Hybels** had been shocked to find that, through the results of a survey they carried out, “**what they have been doing for these many years and what they have taught millions of others to do is not producing solid disciples of Jesus Christ. Numbers yes, but not disciples. It gets worse. Hybels laments: “Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into, thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn’t helping people that much...”**

I then went on to write –

“Having identified their failure in this respect are **Willow Creek** taking the right steps to redress this failing – not by the evidence of an upcoming [April 2008] conference that they are advertising for **SHIFT 2008**. Herewith are some extracts from their website –

• **Shift – April 9-11, 2008: Willow Creek Campus**

As the world of student ministry continues to shift and change, so do the needs of those who serve students. Recognising this, our team has designed an event that is unlike any other Student Ministries Conference we’ve ever hosted. **SHIFT 2008** is about innovation: Rather than highlighting one specific model of ministry, we’ve invited some of the most innovative thinkers and leaders we could find and asked them to shape our experiences and discussions.

- **Wed. April 9**
 - **Main session: 9.00 -10.30am Brian McLaren**
 - **Fri: April 11**
- **Main session 11.15am-12.45pm Dan Kimball**

Willow Creek’s answer to their problem of failed ‘discipleship’ of young believers is to expose them at **SHIFT 2008** to two of the leading proponents of what has been called ‘**The Emerging Church**’. Far from shielding them from ‘**grievous wolves**’ and ‘**every wind of [false] doctrine**’ **Willow Creek** is willingly opening their doors to such men and their ‘**cunning craftiness**’. On other articles on our website I have highlighted the gospel-destroying views of **Brian McLaren** who rejects as ‘**divine child abuse**’ the glorious truth at the heart of the Christian gospel – the truth of ‘**penal substitution**’ by Christ on the Cross of Calvary.

As for Dan Kimball, **Roger Oakland** in his book exposing ‘the emerging church’ called ‘**Faith Undone**’ writes on pages 45-46 ‘**If you listen to the emergent conversations long enough, you will hear a recurring theme: Christians are wrong to confront unbelievers head on with the Word of God...They often use Jesus as an example, saying, He did not confront people but always accepted them for who they were...Kimball refers to the story where Jesus is sitting near a well by Himself...and he talks to a Samaritan woman. Kimball alters the story by saying “He [Jesus] stopped and asked questions of the Samaritan woman and didn’t just jump in and say ‘Samaritans are all wrong’”. But Kimball is wrong, Jesus did the exact opposite! He didn’t ask her ANY questions and he confronted her straight on...The fact is Jesus did confront people with the truth**’.

When it comes to making ‘sound disciples of Jesus Christ’ I’m afraid for **Willow Creek** it’s a case of **out of the ‘seeker-sensitive frying pan’ and into ‘the emerging church fire’.**”

Secondly, in relation to **Henri Nouwen**, I refer extensively to the doctrinal and practical problems associated with him in my **September 2006 ‘News From The Front’** located on <http://www.takeheed.info/news-from-the-front-september-2006/> and in the section headed **The ‘leaven’ in ‘Our Daily Bread’.**

Then thirdly **Ray Yungen** identified each of the authors he mentioned as being '**contemplatives**' associated with '**contemplative prayer**'. On page 203 of his book, in the '**Glossary of Terms**' under a heading of '**Contemplative Prayer**' we find this definition – '**Going beyond thought by use of repeated words or phrases**'.

This is in essence a dangerous occultic practice that can induce an '**altered state of consciousness**'. There are numerous helpful articles warning of the dangers and proponents of this practice on the web site of **Lighthouse Trails Research Project**' that can be accessed on <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/>

Moving on, **Ray Yungen** really illustrates the major problems with **Dallas Willard** on pages 168-169 of '**A Time of Departing**' and you can read what he wrote by going to <http://www.lighthouse trails.com/atodch8.pdf#search=> and scrolling through to the pages mentioned. Let me just quote excerpts from what **Ray Yungen** wrote

'What I am saying is that Rick Warren is part of the effort to bring **contemplative prayer** into mainstream Christianity. Remember, Warren makes favourable reference to **Dallas Willard** and Richard Foster in *The Purpose Driven Church*. He sees **Willard** as being on the same level as Foster in the spiritual formation movement (i.e. contemplative prayer movement). In **Willard's** book *The Spirit of Discipline* **Willard**... extols the practice of the silence... Like Foster, **Willard** sees this **spiritual discipline** as the most powerful way to commune with God... on the back cover of *The Spirit of Discipline* there is a glowing endorsement which states "A profound call to discipleship based on spiritual disciplines (that) awaken us to a forgotten truth, that the transformation to Christ-likeness is realized through taking on the 'easy yoke' of the disciplines... the person who wrote this endorsement... is Sue Monk Kidd... she echoes the very essence of Thomas Merton... "I am speaking of recognizing the hidden truth that **we are one with all people**. We are part of them and they are part of us... When we encounter another person... **we should walk as if we were upon holy ground. We should respond as if God dwells there**".

Whatever that lady meant by her endorsement on the back of *The Spirit of Discipline* by **Dallas Willard** it certainly did not reflect orthodox, biblical, Christian thinking but is more akin to 'New Age' thinking..

I would encourage you to go to the link and read in full what **Ray Yungen** wrote and if you would like to obtain a copy of his book you can do so by going to

http://www.lighthouse trails.com/mm5/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=LTP&Product_Code=ATOD&Category_Code=RY

Returning now to the actual title of this article just a reminder of what it is –

Is DALLAS WILLARD to be trusted when he writes about "HEARING GOD"?

I recently posted a comment on my Facebook site and it read as follows –

In a not too dissimilar vein to my post earlier today about 'BROTHER LAWRENCE' perhaps I could point people to a book review written by Pastor Gary Gilley in which he critiques a book that I have seen promoted in some surprising circles.

The book in question is '**HEARING GOD**' and the author is **DALLAS WILLARD**.

Pastor Gilley's review can be viewed on

<http://www.svchapel.org/resources/book-reviews/4-christian-living/773-hearing-god-developing-a-conversational-relationship-with-god>

and his closing comments are well worth noting. Pastor Gilley wrote –

"The danger of Willard's imaginative teachings on hearing from God through an inner voice can hardly be exaggerated. Rather than turning people to the inspired authoritative Scriptures for God's word today, Willard turns us toward the subjective, unreliable self. The result is a people who believe they have heard from God even as they turn from the Word of God itself."

When you read, in full, Gary Gilley's excellent review of this book by **Dallas Willard** I think the answer to the question posed in the title of this article will be self-evident.

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 10 February 2014