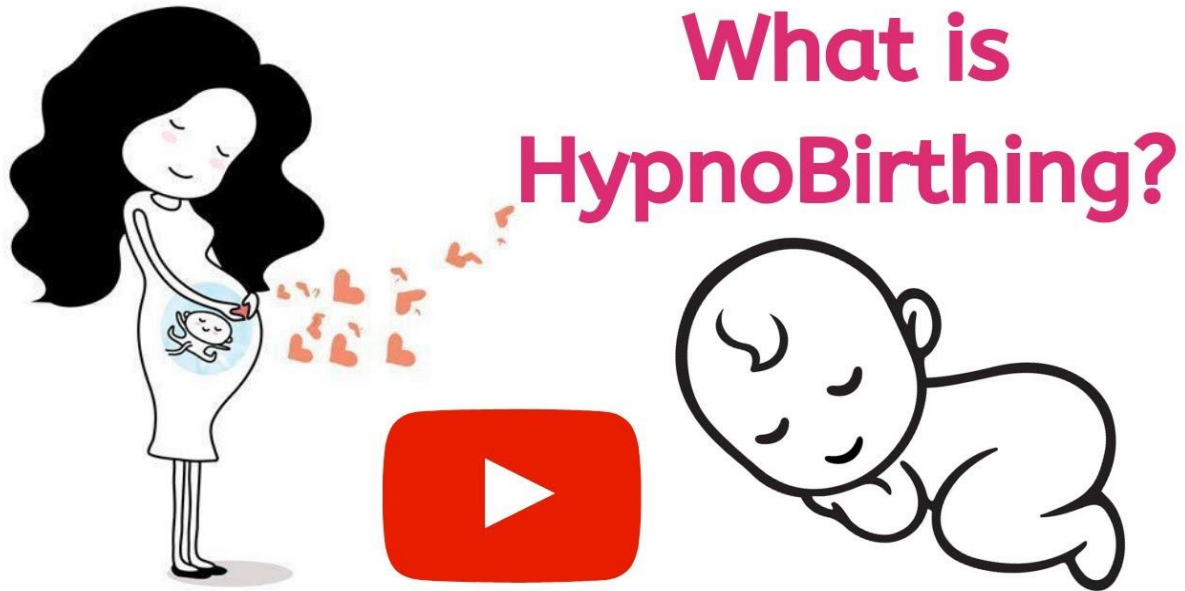


# HYPNOBIRTHING: Is it for Christians?



## What is HypnoBirthing?

My attention was recently drawn to an article on the subject of **HYPNOBIRTHING**, written by a professing Christian midwife called **Chloe Edmonds**. The article can be accessed on this link –

<https://www.womanalive.co.uk/opinion/im-a-christian-midwife-and-this-is-what-i-think-of-hypnobirthing/15258.article>

As I read through this article I have to admit that a number of alarm bells were ringing in my ears. The author of the article was fully persuaded that the technique posed no dangers, whether physical or spiritual, to those who adopt the practice. Laying aside the physical aspect of the practice, I am fully convinced that it does pose serious spiritual dangers to any and all who may engage in it.

The first alarm bell for me was right at the outset in the preamble where we read –

**‘Midwife Chloe Edmonds explains why she would encourage her mothers to explore their mystical connection with Christ when giving birth.’**

This is immediately followed by –

**‘As a midwife I could talk for hours about the unleashing of female strength through empowered birth, and how to approach birth as a sacred encounter with your own imago-dei (the unique image of God within you) and with God.’**

I was alarmed by the reference to a **'mystical connection with Christ'** and talk of **'birth as a sacred encounter with your own imago-dei.'** This is very much seeking to take people, professing Christians included, into the realms of full-blown **'mysticism.'** Is that spiritually dangerous? Well, in my **'Dictionary of Theological Terms'** by the late, **Alan Cairns**, this is how **'mysticism'** is defined –

**'The search for a higher initiation into spiritual mysteries, or a higher consecration to spiritual realities, or a union with deity, by a withdrawal from the external world and by means of contemplation. In this way, mystics profess to apprehend truths which are beyond the understanding. While some have sought to conjoin mysticism and Christianity, the two are mutually exclusive. Christianity is first and foremost an objective divine revelation through which the Holy Spirit communicates a subjective revelation in the souls of God's elect. "Higher consecration" can be experienced only through a progressive sanctification or conformity to Christ, which is a work of God's spirit, not the product of a course of contemplation.'**

The second alarm bell rang when I read –

**There can be caution in Christian circles about utilising therapies that access the subconscious mind. Birth hypnotherapy does that – it is using mechanical tools to relax the body and mind to a state of deep relaxation. This state will enable the movement of neuro-pathways in the brain through phrases or concepts repeated multiple times to the user, while in this hyper relaxed state ... Another hesitation around methods used in forms of therapy such as visualisation, mantras and cultivating a meditative state, likely comes from misinformation within Christian culture and a well-natured apprehension in engaging with practices that have roots in religious backgrounds that are not Christianity.**

Earlier I wrote of entering the world of **'mysticism'** and now I believe we are entering the world of **'shamanism.'** I wrote an article on this subject back in 2014 - see -

<https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/January-2014/Shamanism-Northern-Ireland.pdf>

I believe this portion from page 3 of the article has great application to this topic –

**'Under 'Shamanism in Contemporary Medicine' we read (pp 537- 538)  
(From the 'Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs')**

**'The influence of shamanism in New Age medicine is significant... The burgeoning field of holistic medicine shows a tremendous amount of experimentation involving the reinvention of many techniques long practiced in shamanism such as visualisation, altered states of consciousness, aspects of psychoanalysis hypnotherapy, meditation... Not surprisingly then shamanistic techniques are now increasingly used at modern medical health centres... Introducing shamanism into modern medicine is ironic because of its essentially antiscientific nature such as its occultism and irrationalism.'**

The use of **phrases or concepts repeated multiple times to the user** basically induces another phrase that is used, namely **altered states of consciousness** and that is a state that no person, professing Christians included, should seek to enter into as it opens the door to spirit-possession or oppression.

Returning to the **'Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs'** that I just quoted from, here are some extracts from the section on **'Altered States of Consciousness'** (p 17-18, 25) –

**'Altered states of consciousness (ASCs) in a New Age context** (Cecil – I would believe there could be people involved in New Age practices but they would most likely often be oblivious to this reality) **comprise unusual conditions of perception achieved by the deliberate cultivation of often abnormal mental states, states not normally experienced apart from specific religious techniques** (Cecil – like a sacred encounter with your own imago-dei?) and/or occult programmes ...

**New Age ASCs are prohibited on the basis of their occult alliances ... We grant that the cultivation or experience of altered states is not always occult ... But in many cases it is difficult to determine where the line can be drawn ... It's simply better to stay away from the entire field ... The growing acceptance of ASCs by millions of people, their use in psychotherapy, medicine, education and many other fields is a reflection of the growing influence of paganism in our society.'**

The third alarm bell that rang VERY loudly for me was when I read –

**'This leads us to recognising the role of meditation, visualisation and the use of mantra within Christian practice. It has been well used within contemplative Christian circles in history. Some examples of visualisation are the imagination prayers of Jesuit practice, Teresa of Avila's image-based interactions with God, and more recently Richard Forster's description of visual meditation in *The Celebration of Discipline* ... None of these saints have felt that these practices are out of place within a Christian life; in fact they have felt they are essential to engage the consciousness with God and develop a greater awareness of God's presence in all of life.**

**The fear that practices such as these may be opening one up to alternative spiritualities or spirits is, in my opinion unfounded in the biblical understanding of Christianity. When Jesus is Lord of our lives and the Holy Spirit lives within us, we do not need to be afraid of anything, in fact we have victory over every other spirit in Jesus.'**

In seeking to allay any spiritual fears about the technique of **HYPNOBIRTHING**, **Chloe Edmonds** appeals to **imagination prayers of Jesuit practice, Teresa of Avila's image-based interactions with God, and more recently Richard Forster's description of visual meditation in *The Celebration of Discipline*** and then goes on to refer to these sources as being (Christian) **saints**.

Without a moments hesitation I say forthrightly that these sources are not Christian and indeed are enemies of the Cross of Christ. In relation to **Jesuits** I would direct readers to my article located on this link –

<https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/November-2014/The-Jesuits.pdf>

There is also, in that article, an interesting reference to **Teresa of Avila** at the foot of page 3. Then, as for **Richard Foster** and his book ***The Celebration of Discipline***, the following link will take you to an excellent review of the book by my good friend, **Pastor Gary Gilley** –

<https://tottministries.org/celebration-of-discipline-by-richard-foster/>

This is the closing paragraph from Gary's review –

**'Overall Foster's book is an encyclopaedia of unbiblical teaching, which leads the unsuspecting reader away from Christ and into mysticism or worse. It is a telltale sign of the state of the church to find how accepted Foster's teachings are.'**

Despite claims made within the article that **HYPNOBIRTHING** can **'improve pain perception, shorten length of labour, reduce trauma, and empower birthing people to feel more centered in their choices around birth'** I am personally persuaded that the spiritual dangers that I have highlighted outweigh any claimed temporal benefits – benefits that are, as a rule, often dealt with efficiently through normal medical supervision.

**Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024**