



SANGHA OF THE SPIRIT ~DECEMBER 2009
ZEN-CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP



MERRY CHRISTMAS



ILLUSION AND DELUSION

By Roshi Thomas Faulkenbury



*We were talking - about the space
between us all
And the people - who hide themselves
behind a wall of illusion
Never glimpse the truth - then it's far too
late - when they pass away.*

*We were talking - about the love we all
could share - when we find it
To try our best to hold it there - with our*

love

*With our love - we could save the world
- if they only knew.*

*Try to realize it's all within yourself
No-one else can make you change
And to see you're really only very small,
And life flows on within you and without
you.*

*We were talking - about the love that's
gone so cold and the people,
Who gain the world and lose their soul -
They don't know - they can't see - are
you one of them?*

*When you've seen beyond yourself -
Then you may find peace of mind, is
waiting there -
And the time will come when you see
we're all one,
And life flows on within you and without
you. ~ George Harrison*

When I was in the U.S. Navy I was stationed in South Texas. While standing watch we were warned that rattlesnakes often made their way onto the concrete and curled up against the tires of the aircraft for warmth at night. Naturally, every rope became an illusory rattlesnake.

Liberation from illusion is a major goal of Zen, Buddhism, and Hinduism for illusion gives us a false sense of the phenomenal world, destroys right mindfulness, and leads to delusion.

Illusion deceives the senses or mind, e.g. by appearing to exist when it does not or appearing to be one thing when it is in fact another. It is a deception producing a false or mistaken belief or idea about reality.

In Sanskrit the word is *maya*, referring to the extraordinary power of an incomprehensible, marvelous, or supernatural sort which enables God to produce forms in the realm of phenomena. It is also the phenomenal reality produced in this way which is generally misperceived by human beings.

The Hebrew word for deception is *mahathallah* (literally, “deceit”) and appears once in the Old Testament: “For the idols speak delusion; The diviners envision lies.” [Zechariah 10:2]

The Greek word is *apate* (deceit, delusion, and fraudulence). It refers to straying from orthodoxy or what Zen calls right mindfulness. It appears once in the New Testament: “And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they may be condemned who did not believe the truth and had pleasure in unrighteousness.” [2nd Thessalonians 2:11-12]

Illusion results in delusion. Our misperception of reality leads us to the lie of dualism – we perceive ourselves as separate from God and unconnected to each other. This lie results in intolerance, prejudice, and bigotry among other delusions.

In this time of the birth of the Prince of Peace it is imperative that we seek to go beyond our illusion and delusion.

*From a distance the world looks blue
and green
And the snow-capped mountains white
From a distance the ocean meets the
stream*

And the eagle takes to flight

*From a distance there is harmony
And it echoes through the land
It's the voice of hope, it's the voice of
peace
It's the voice of every man*

*From a distance we all have enough
And no one is in need
There are no guns, no bombs, no
diseases
No hungry mouths to feed*

*From a distance we are instruments
Marching in a common band
Playing songs of home, playing songs of
peace
They're the songs of every man
God is watching us, God is watching us
God is watching us from a distance*

*From a distance you look like my friend
Even though we are at war
From a distance I can't comprehend
What all this war is for*

*From a distance there is harmony
And it echoes through the land
It's the hope of hopes, it's the love of
loves
It's the heart of every man*

*It's the hope of hopes, It's the love of
loves
It's the song of every man ~ Julie Gold*



RECOMMENDED

READINGS

Sadhana: A Way to God; Christian Exercises in Eastern Form, Anthony De Mello, 1984, Image Books, New York, ISBN 0-385-19614-8

Living Zen, Loving God, Ruben L.F. Habito, 2004, Wisdom Publications, Boston, ISBN 0-86171-383-4

👍 EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m., *Zazen/Centering Prayer, White River Dharma Center, 250 Lilly, Batesville, Arkansas*

World Community of Christian Meditation group, Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Wednesdays 12:15-1:00 pm and Thursdays 5:30-6:15 pm, **3201 Windsor Road (corner of Windsor Rd and Exposition Blvd), Austin, TX 78703, contact Rev. Kelly Koonce, (512) 476-3523, [Good Shepherd](#).**

Contemplative Outreach Centering Prayer Weekend Retreat, **Bethany Spirituality Center, Highland Mills, NY**

Centering Prayer New Year's Retreat with Fr. Bill Sheehan, **Bethany Spirituality Center, Highland Mills, NY**; Time: Begins Tuesday, December 29th with 5:30 pm supper
Contact: Cathy McCarthy 845-534-5180

Email - cmccarthy001@hvc.rr.com

Website:

<http://www.centeringpravernys.org/>

Start Date: Tuesday, December 29, 2009

End Date: Friday, January 1, 2010



The following are actual church bulletin board bloopers found in churches across the United States.

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.

Evening massage - 6 p.m.

The Pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.

The audience is asked to remain seated until the end of the recession.

Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30 p.m. Please use the back door.

Ushers will eat latecomers.

The third verse of Blessed Assurance will be sung without musical accomplishment.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

The Rev. Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.

The pastor will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing, "Break Forth Into Joy."

During the absence of our pastor, we enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing a good sermon when J.F. Stubbs supplied our pulpit.

Next Sunday Mrs. Vinson will be soloist for the morning service. The pastor will then speak on "It's a Terrible Experience."

Due to the Rector's illness, Wednesday's healing services will be discontinued until further notice.

Stewardship Offertory: "Jesus Paid It All"

The music for today's service was all composed by George Friedrich Handel in celebration of the 300th anniversary of his birth.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the church basement on Friday at 7 p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

The concert held in Fellowship Hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who labored the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.

Twenty-two members were present at the church meeting held at the home of Mrs. Marsha Crutchfield last evening. Mrs. Crutchfield and Mrs. Rankin sang a duet, The Lord Knows Why.

A song fest was held at the Methodist church Wednesday.

Today's Sermon: HOW MUCH CAN A MAN DRINK? with hymns from a full choir.

Hymn 43: "Great God, what do I see here?" Preacher: The Rev. Horace Blodgett

Hymn 47: "Hark! An awful voice is sounding"

On a church bulletin during the minister's illness: GOD IS GOOD Dr. Hargreaves is better.

Potluck supper: Prayer and medication to follow.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the church help.

The 1997 Spring Council Retreat will be held May 10 and 11.

Pastor is on vacation. Messages can be given to church secretary.

✉ Articles, news, letters to the editor, or comments may be sent to: tfaulkenbury@earthlink.net.

Please visit our website at www.sanghaofthespirit.org