

Praying in Colour

The latest New Age mystical nonsense introduced into the church

Introduction

Every few years a new fad is introduced to the church, especially via the Charismatic churches. The reason for this is twofold.

In the human sphere the reason is because all the fads are errors that always wear out and fail in the end; sometimes quickly (e.g. gold fillings), sometimes after some years (e.g. Toronto Blessing mysticism). As the power of the error dies away, people get bored and move on; so a new fad has to eventually replace it to create the next batch of excitement.

In the satanic sphere the reason is that it is part of a strategy to invade the church with wave after wave of demonic heresies and aberrations to destabilise and eventually destroy the church. This is just like a military commander planning wave after wave of bombardments to weaken the enemy, followed up by wave after wave of advancing troops until the enemy is thoroughly defeated.

The latest fad is '*Praying in Colour: a new way to pray*'. In fact this is not a new way to pray but a way to *not* pray. It seeks to take the reality and power out of prayer, replacing it with an instrument of mystical passivity. Essentially it undermines the very fundamentals of what praying is.

What is prayer?

We could spend a long time analysing prayer in all its constituents,¹ but the basic fundamental of prayer is that it is communication with God.

In essence, prayer is talking to God for a variety of reasons. Because we are weak, most often the reason is a petition - to ask God for help with something. The basis of prayer is, therefore, communication; an exchange of ideas and thoughts; passing on actual information.

Faith underlies prayer because we cannot see God, the person we are talking to. So, with faith, we communicate with God in prayer and this cements our relationship with our Father and develops communion – spiritual fellowship with the Divine.

Now this matter of faith is important. Prayer is rooted in faith and this facilitates our ability to talk to God as if he was right next to us in person. We ask him for help and genuinely believe that he will aid us. We offer him worship and trust that this glorifies God. We give God praise and accept that this is a testimony in heaven. We pray for divine assistance in spiritual warfare trusting that the enemy will be repulsed.

¹ For example: petition, intercession, worship, praise, communion etc.

Thus faith is the grease in the cogs that facilitates the movement of prayer from earth to heaven. It accomplishes communion with God.

Thus prayer is spiritual communication, using words (either verbally or mentally), facilitated by faith.

Mysticism

Now the essence of mysticism is very different from this. Mysticism is based in releasing the god within you, through a variety of methods to diminish the rational, volitional and intellectual parts of the person, while elevating the emotional. One Hindu / Buddhist method was drawing mandalas, complex circular geometric patterns full of colour.

Historically, mysticism was centred in self-abandonment, dying to the self, eradicating mental acuity, increasing passivity (non-thought) and trusting in the inner feelings that arose. It was believed that by avoiding intellectual and rational capacities, or by practising certain disciplines, the life of the soul (which was presumed by all mystics to be joined to God – whether Christian or not) and the depths of the soul would gradually emerge bringing perceived union with the divine. Thus mysticism is the opposite of rationality.

Many of the fads introduced by the Charismatic Movement have served to prosper the cause of mysticism and increase passivity in the church. At the same time, there has been an increasing development of mysticism in the world, especially in the light of postmodernistic reduction of trust in rational ways. As New Age mysticism has flourished in the world, so variants of mysticism have prospered in the church;² the most extreme variety of this was the Toronto Blessing with its mantra of, '*Don't think; drink*'. Anything that tells you to stop thinking, to abandon rationality, is a mystical heresy.

Thus, while prayer is rational and intellectual (it involves the mind and the will, and to some extent the emotions),³ mysticism denigrates the intellect, destroys the will and makes it passive while heightening emotions. Thus anything that takes away the basis of prayer (thoughts turned into words for communication) is leading towards mysticism.⁴

Praying in colour

What is it?

It was developed by Sybil MacBeth, a maths teacher and wife of a US Episcopal priest, who was, '*exhausted by the words of her prayers and stymied by a lack of focus*'. So she stopped praying in words and started doodling instead; in fact she herself says this was, '*a session of mindless doodling*'.

² Thus slaying in the Spirit is an ancient response to demonic possession, usually transmitted by the touch of an adept to a novice; Hindu gurus excel in this. The exotic phenomena associated with the Toronto Blessing are exactly the same as the physical expressions of Kundalini yoga.

³ There is a spiritual depth in some prayers that bypass words where groans represent the heartfelt situation, but this is rare (Rm 8:26). It usually follows a series of spoken petitions where a person has come to the end of their tether in intercession.

⁴ Thus Charismatic praying in tongues that are mere gibberish is mystical and nonsensical. Biblical tongues were praising God in unlearned human languages and had purpose.

This is just a failure to press on in the battle for prayer; a battle that everybody goes through. Instead of persevering in faith, she gave up and then issued that as a model for everyone else.

As well as a website dedicated to this nonsense, she has a book available on Amazon: *'Praying in Color (sic): Drawing a New Path to God'*. Reviews state that people find this an excellent different way to pray or a means to *'jump-start'* one's prayer life.

How is it done?

Advocates of this highlight this fourfold sequence.

First: you write your name for God on some paper and then draw a shape around it, *'the drawing becomes a small prayer closet'*.

Second: You add marks and shapes asking God to be a part of this 'prayer time' that may have words but is often silent.

Third: If you pray for someone, you add their name on the page in a circle. You then add colour and continue doodling, thinking of the person.

Fourth: You add other people to the drawing, *'thinking of each stroke of your pen as a prayer for them'*. Then say, *'Amen'*.

Is this prayer?

Certainly not. There has been no communication; no communion with God; no exchange of ideas and no impartation of information.

What is it really?

It is a preamble to mysticism. It involves no intellectual capacity (other than moving a pen) and believes that saying nothing is speaking to God. It is the opposite of prayer, advocating that less is more. It is a sort of Zen approach to prayer.

Add the end of the day this is just more self-centredness (which underlies all Charismatic aberrations). The person feels good about their drawing and goes away thinking that something good has happened when nothing has happened. It centres on personal therapy instead of warring in prayer, striving in prayer (prayer is a struggle because the devil opposes genuine prayer).

Other matters

It panders to the flesh

Advocates of Praying in Colour argue that when praying is hard, when words escape you, when sitting still is a challenge, when you don't know how to *'hang out with God'*, when listening to God seems impossible, when your mind wanders - then Praying in Colour is the way forward.

Modern heretics are constantly trying to take the difficult, the suffering and the striving out of religion. They seek to make the Christian life an instant success in every area, something that has no difficulties and no hard work. This is the opposite of what Jesus taught.

Due to the difficulties, suffering and warfare of the normal Christian life,⁵ Jesus even warned seekers to consider the whole thing carefully before signing up.⁶

Praying is warfare; it is a battle and the battle is for the mind. Taking the mind out of prayer is not winning the battle but capitulation to the enemy.

‘Write your name for God’

The Praying in Colour website advises to begin drawing by writing, ‘*your name for God on a piece of paper*’.

This is New Ageism in full throttle. It is the new Age that has multiple names for God based upon the multiple religious traditions that it absorbs and repackages.

Whether Sybil MacBeth has a basis in ecumenism that leads to this statement is unknown, but it is certainly damaging (being an American Episcopalian, ecumenism is certainly possible).

God declares to us his own name; it is ‘Yahweh’, the self-existent one.⁷ Self-existence (having life in himself) is one of the supreme attributes of God. Everything else in the universe has derived life from God; only God is self-existent. [For more information, see my paper, ‘*The Names of God*’.]

Apart from this personal name, God reveals to us many divine titles, which can be appropriate for prayer. These include: God, Lord, Lord God, Lord of Hosts, Sovereign Lord, God Most High, Almighty God, Everlasting God, and Father. Our precedent should be the names and titles used by saints in Scripture to pray to God.

On top of this, Jesus advised us to pray to ‘Our Father’ in our daily prayer time, as he did.

We have no right to invent our own term for God in prayer.

The drawing (‘doodle’) becomes a praying space

I think we have already covered this. Doodling is not praying since it involves no communication with God but is merely personal therapy.

Focus

The claim of Praying in Colour is that it helps people focus upon prayer when they are distracted, worn out, and unable to form the right words due to a lack of focus (i.e. concentration).

⁵ E.g. Matt 10:17, 24:9; Lk 21:16; Jn 15:19-20, 16:33.

⁶ Lk 14:27-33. ‘*And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it - lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, “This man began to build and was not able to finish”. Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*’

⁷ ‘Jehovah’ is not a Biblical word. This is formed from a transliteration of the word in the Hebrew text, thus YaHoWaH. This is an arbitrary construction, since it was not known then that the vowel points were an instruction to read *Adonai* (as Jews would not say ‘Yahweh’). This word was introduced, despite much opposition, in 1518 by the Pope’s Jesuit confessor, Franciscan theologian and Hebrew scholar Petrus Galatinus, who used the Latin transcription *Iehoua* as a combination, in English, of YHVH with the vowels of *Adonai*.

I have already explained that this is common in prayer because prayer is a battle and those who win are those who persevere in faith. ‘Striving’ is an unpopular word these days, amongst Christians heavily influenced by mystical ideas, but it is entirely normal that we should strive in prayer.

The greatest praying saints were those who won the battle of prayer. Elijah is said to have ‘prayed in his prayers’; this is a valid expanded translation of the phrase, ‘**prayed earnestly**’ (Jm 5:17).⁸ It was Elijah’s striving in prayer that enabled him to stop the rain and later restart it. Moses’ striving in prayer required two men to help him raise his hands (Exod 17:11-12). Jesus would spend whole nights striving in prayer; his prayer marathon in Gethsemane made him sweat blood and wore the disciples out.

Prayer is tough; attempting to take the difficulties out of prayer is a serious mistake. It results in non-prayer.

In any case, the question of focus must not be upon ourselves, our difficulties and fatigue, the focus of prayer must always be God. We don’t concentrate on problems, distractions, or tiredness of body – we set our mind upon God. Praying in Colour does the opposite; it puts attention on us and our weakness; it also distracts the mind by being preoccupied with drawing.

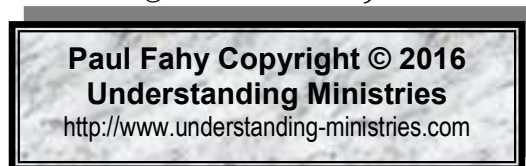
Thus the stance of prayer is one which looks to God not things on earth (like drawing). In Biblical times it was often the case that men looked up with raised hands; especially when outdoors.⁹ They looked away from the earth and all its cares to centre upon God. Usually today people close their eyes to pray which is doing the same thing – shutting out the world with all its distractions so that the mind can set itself upon God alone.

All these things are completely opposed to the principles of Praying in Colour.

Conclusion

This is merely a passing fad in a long history of aberrational fashions that plague the modern superficial church. In ten years it will be forgotten like so many others. However, in that time it could do serious damage to weak saints who think that this really is a means of prayer.

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version
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⁸ In technical terms: ‘*He prayed fervently. First aorist middle indicative of proseukomai and the instrumental case (cognate substantive), after idiom for intensity in classical Greek ... to flee with all speed, but particularly frequent in the LXX (Ge 2:17; 31:30) in imitation of the Hebrew infinitive absolute. So Lu 22:15; Joh 3:29; Ac 4:17.*’ Robertson’s Word Pictures.

⁹ Matt 14:19; Mk 6:41, 7:34; Jn 11:41.