

# DO AMERICA'S PASTORS REALLY NEED YOGA?

By Chris Lawson

The [2008 National Pastors Convention](#), an event which is being offered to better equip and strengthen Church leaders from across America, is once again offering yoga classes at next years convention. Shelly Pagitt, wife of Pastor Doug Pagitt of *Solomon's Porch*, is the yoga instructor that will be leading classes at the Convention.

Currently Shelly Pagitt offers yoga classes at their own church. In fact, it appears that Doug and Shelly Pagitt both seem to have no problem at all with the practice, endorsement, and promotion of yoga. This is made clear in the following observations:

Doug Pagitt defended the practice of Yoga and, in a September 13, 2007 reply on Pulpit Magazine's blog, Pagitt stated: "I thought I was certain and clear. I find nothing troubling about yoga. Seems pretty clear to me"

(<http://www.sf pulpit.com/2007/09/13/john-macarthur-doug-pagitt-and-yoga/>).

Pagitt's church, Solomon's Porch, offers a weekly "Women's Yoga and Prayer" class, led by Pagitt's wife, Shelley ( <http://tinyurl.com/25flu0> ). Additional references to Pagitt's promotion of Yoga include:

"Shelley led yoga each morning and as a prayer response to a video about aids in Africa" ("the dougpagittBlog: A Personal Weblog from Doug Pagitt," [http://pagitt.typepad.com/pagittblog/2004/03/emergent\\_conven.html](http://pagitt.typepad.com/pagittblog/2004/03/emergent_conven.html), March 15, 2004).

For more information about the Pagitt's promotion of yoga see the online article at Christian Research Service (<http://www.christianresearchservice.com/JohnMacArthurYoga2.htm> ). To familiarize yourself with the line-up of [Speakers and Hosts](#) which will be a part of the 2008 National Pastors Convention, please see the last page of this article or click [here](#) to be directed to the full list at the 2008 National Pastors Convention website.

## YOGA FOR PASTORS: A TIME OF PRAYER, STRETCHING & MEDITATIVE REFLECTION?

As far as the 2008 National Pastors Convention is concerned, the goal of having yoga at the convention is to have "[a time of prayer, stretching, and meditative reflection as you begin your day at the NPC.](#)" The event description is listed [here](#): It is the third event from the bottom of the page.

When visitors go to this website they are welcomed with the following greeting:

**Welcome to the NPC Events home page! We are committed to doing all we can to come alongside of you in the work you have been called to do. That is why we are honored to be able to continue to bring you the [National Pastors Convention](#) with the addition of the new [National Pastors Retreats](#) and [Emergence 2007](#).**

This yoga promoting convention is being [Brought to you by](#): Zondervan and InterVarsity Press and the conventions [Presenting Sponsors](#) are *Vida*, *World Vision* and *Christianbook.com*.

Stated clearly on the 2008 National Pastors Convention website banners are the words:

[nourish your soul. engage your mind. connect in meaningful conversation](#)

## **KUNDALINI: THE OCCULT SERPENT POWER AND THE ULTIMATE AIM OF ALL YOGA**

Do pastors know what inspires, fuels and drives yoga and meditation practitioners? In order to clearly define once and for all what world yoga authorities and the the most authoritative yoga literature says about yoga, the following definitions are in order. For the record, *Kundalini energy* is the power behind yoga - Buddhist, Hindu, "Christian" yoga, etc. We quote from the back cover of the internationally recognized occult book entitled *Serpent Power: The Secrets of Tantric and Shaktic Yoga* by Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe). Avalon writes:

**Who is Kundalini, the Serpent Power? Mythologically, she is an aspect of shakti (power or energy) and consort of Shiva. Philosophically she is the creative energy that forms mind and matter, and comes to rest in the lowest form of matter. She is consciousness: the power of matter to know itself. In terms of Tantric practice, she is the mysterious power that resides in the human body and can be awakened by suitable techniques: special meditations and yogic practices of a particularly powerful nature. She is The Goddess: the ultimate heart of many areas of Eastern religion, not only of Hinduism.**

[Arthur Avalon [Sir John Woodroffe], *The Serpent Power: The Secrets of Tantric and Shaktic Yoga*, New York: Dover, 1974, Back cover]

On page one of this book, Avalon writes:

**These names refer to the Kundalini-Sakti, or Supreme Power in the human body by the arousing of which the Yoga is achieved....by the agency of the Kundalini-Sakti, which, in order to give it an English name, I have here called Serpent Power. Kundala means coiled. The power is the Goddess (Devi) Kundalini, or that which is coiled; for Her form is that of a coiled and sleeping serpent in the lowest bodily centre, at the base of the spinal column, until by the means described She is aroused in that Yoga which is named after Her. [Ibid., page 1]**

So that no pastors will be confused about the ultimate aim of ALL yoga, we note the following. *Kundalini* is a term which in Sanskrit means "coiled". This "yogic life force" supposedly moves through *chakra's* (energy channels) in the human body in order to bring one into a state of occult enlightenment. According to occult philosophy, *Kundalini* is a non-physical field of energy that yogi's say not only surrounds the physical body, but can infuse the body. For those who would cast doubt and simply draw the conclusion that not all yoga has the capacity to arouse *kundalini energy*, perhaps one ought to think again. Hans Ulrich Rieker, an author of numerous books and a well known authority on yoga and meditation, states clearly what a vast number of yogi's believe and teach:

**"Kundalini [is] the mainstay of all yoga practices."**

[Hans Ulrich Rieker, *The Yoga of Light: Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, New York: Seabury Press, 1971, p. 101, emphasis added.]

If this be the case, that "*Kundalini is the mainstay of all yoga practices*", then should any Christian, pastor or church leader who professes to love Jesus get involved with yoga at any level?

The answer should be obvious. Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ are to “abstain from every appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). This would include then the re-labeling of pure occultism as “Christian Yoga”; or whatever creative name compromised Christians can think up.

### **SOME VERY SERIOUS THINGS FOR CHRISTIAN PASTORS TO CONSIDER**

The following question ought to be asked by all Christians who love the Lord Jesus Christ and hold the Word of God in high esteem:

***Why, in the name of Jesus Christ our LORD, are these Church leaders, Pastors and so-called Christian companies allowing “yoga” to be offered at a Christian Pastors Convention?***

As a committed believer in Jesus Christ, a former pastor myself, and one who sincerely cares for Christian leaders and lay-people alike, it makes no sense at all that these people are offering yoga (and other unbiblical practices) to “America’s Pastors”. People all over Asia and the Indian sub-continent are fleeing from evil powers of darkness associated with idolatry, mysticism, yoga, the occult, etc., and coming to Christ...and then here on American soil we have so-called Christian church leaders offering Christianized Eastern mysticism (contemplative centering prayer), yoga, and an occult initiation method (labyrinths) to pastors and their wives?

### **EXHORTATION TO BIBLICAL UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST**

According to Scripture, we are to obey the Word of God and do what it says when false teaching is foisted upon the church. It is false teachers and false teaching that creates division, not sound doctrine. Biblical Christian “unity” is based on the foundation and truths of Scripture. In the words of Paul the Apostle:

**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.**

**For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. (Romans 16:17-18, KJV)**

Another rendering of this same verse from the Amplified Bible says:

**I appeal to you, brethren, to be on your guard concerning those who create dissensions and difficulties and cause divisions, in opposition to the doctrine (the teaching) which you have been taught. [I warn you to turn aside from them, to] avoid them.**

**For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites and base desires, and by ingratiating and flattering speech, they beguile the hearts of the unsuspecting and simpleminded [people]. (Romans 16:17-18, Amplified Bible)**

### **PASTORS BRING YOUR SPOUSE AND BEGING THE DAY WITH YOGA!**

On the National Pastors Convention [Extra Activities](#) page, pastors and their spouses are encouraged to participate in a number of different events as “Spiritual growth options”.

**Bring Your Spouse! Need to get away and spend some quality time with your spouse? NPC is your answer. The General Sessions apply to everyone, plus your spouse will enjoy the following programs: ...**

The Yoga class description for pastors / church leaders is as follows:

**Christian Yoga**

**Join Shelly Pagitt for a time of prayer, stretching, and meditative reflection as you begin your day at the NPC. If possible, please bring a mat with you for the stretching time.**

Pagitt's morning [Christian Yoga](#) course will be offered alongside of other:

**Spiritual growth options including the [Labyrinth](#) prayer walk and the early morning Bible studies**

**CHRISTIAN YOGA (YOGA): THE OUTWORKING OF OCCULT PHILOSOPHY**

One wonders why Christian leaders would allow yoga to be offered at America's National Pastors Convention. Regardless of labeling it "Christian Yoga", it is still yoga. All yoga employs postures, stretching and breathing techniques that are *based on the occult philosophy of yoga*. Leading occultists and countless pages of occult literature are rife with explanations and statements of the goal of yoga - to arouse *kundalini-Sakti*, the Serpent Power. That's right - the ultimate aim of all yoga is to arouse *kundalini*, the deadly, baleful, ancient Serpent Power. No matter what one calls it, "Christian Yoga", "The Yoga of Jesus" (which some occult authors call it), "Yahweh Yoga", "Holy Yoga", "Yoga for Christians", etc., it is still all yoga.

**DO AMERICA'S PASTORS REALLY NEED TO TURN EASTWARD FOR HELP?**

Do America's Pastors really need to turn to the East for help - to "Christian Yoga", "Contemplative Prayer", and "Walking the Labyrinth"? Is not the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God sufficient anymore? Does your pastor, and my pastor really need a convention where they can learn and do yoga to get going before the days activities? Do our pastors need to "connect with God" by walking labyrinths, experience "spiritual rhythms" and engaging in guided experiences? Does America need "America's Pastors" to get involved with deepening one's "understanding of leadership that flows from one's authentic self"? Are these the things that will help pastors be better equipped for the work of ministry? What ever happened to the the Word of God being more than enough to "nourish your soul, engage your mind" and "connect with meaningful conversation"? When tempted to rely on something other than the All sufficient Word of God did not Jesus, our All Holy God respond to the Devil with a sober rebuke:

**And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:3-4)**

If yoga is so good for us, why didn't Jesus tell us in His Word?

**BE YE SEPARATE SAITH THE LORD**

There is virtually an endless supply of authoritative statements that could be made about the occult roots of yoga and the hazardous spiritual fruit that can result from partaking in it. The Word of God alone should suffice for Christians. Sadly, many Christians will not listen to God's warnings anymore. Scripture clearly states that Christians are to avoid and separate them-

selves from all forms of paganism - this includes intermixing mystical and occult practices with Christian spirituality:

**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)**

### **WILL THE 2008 PASTORS CONVENTION SPEAKERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST YOGA?**

The Christian speakers and hosts listed on the 2008 National Pastors Convention website ought to rise up together and verbally expose and reject Christian Yoga for what it really is - a pagan occult practice wrapped in a thin veneer of Christian terminology and pawned off to the undiscerning masses as Christian spirituality. If these leaders do not do this, they will - by willful participation in the convention - further advance the ungodly, blatant lie that Christianity can somehow be integrated with yoga. Christian Yoga is a dangerous and defiling lie. No matter how hybridized and re-worked yoga becomes, it is still rooted in Eastern occultism. Yoga renamed is still yoga. Furthermore, yoga as an exercise and as a spiritual practice is condemned by the God of the Bible. Have pastors derailed so far from Biblical theological that they cannot discern that God Himself commands His Church to reject all forms of, *and associations with* - paganism, occultism, etc.? Was not Paul the Apostle clear enough when He reminded the Corinthian believers to separate themselves from all forms of pagan admixtures with Christianity:

**Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing... (2 Corinthians 6:17)**

### **IT IS TIME FOR LEADERS TO MAKE A DECISION**

The straight, hard facts about yoga are clear. Yoga is not Christian and it can never be integrated with Biblical Christianity. Yoga is occultism and vast amounts of occult literature prove this point clearly. It is more than a crying shame when America's Christian pastors will not avoid all appearances of evil. Rushing headlong into having conventions that endorse and invite Christians to partake in the ways of darkness will surely invite the anger of God. It is time for Christian leaders to make a decision. Choose this day whom you will serve!

**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:21)**

### **SCRIPTURAL ADMONITIONS, COMMANDS AND WARNINGS:**

Deuteronomy 18:20-22; Matthew chapter 24; Acts 19:19-20; Acts 20: 27-31;  
2 Corinthians 6:14-15; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4; Ephesians 5:11-12; Colossians 2:8;  
Romans 16:17-18; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:3-4;  
1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 John 4:1; Galatians 1:6-10; Galatians 2:4-5; Luke 9:23;  
Titus 1:9; Titus 2:1; Jude 1:3-4

List of [Speakers and Hosts](#) which will be a part of the 2008 National Pastors Convention.

[David Anderson](#), [Ruth Haley Barton](#), [Henry Cloud](#) , [Charles Colson](#) , [Andy Crouch](#),  
[Sarah Cunningham](#), [Bill Donahue](#), [Mateen Ellass](#), [Margaret Feinberg](#), [Dale and Jonalyn Fincher](#),  
[Rozanne Frazee](#), [Dante Gebel](#), [Dave Gibbons](#), [Athena Evelyn Gorospe](#) , [Kevin Harney](#),  
[Sherry Harney](#), [Hector Hermosillo](#), [Carolyn Custis James](#), [Tony Jones](#), [Dan Kimball](#),  
[Mark Labberton](#), [Jeff Lucas](#), [Scot McKnight](#), [Erwin McManus](#), [Brenda Salter McNeil](#),  
[Daniel Meyer](#), [Calvin Miller](#), [J.P. Moreland](#), [Stephen Newby](#), [Rev. Dr. D. Zac Niringiye](#),  
[Greg Ogden](#), [Roger Olson](#), [John Ortberg](#), [Ben Patterson](#), [Bob Rognlien](#), [Bishop John Rucyahana](#),  
[J Daniel Salinas](#), [Dario Silva-Silva](#) , [Jeanne Stevens](#), [Danielle Grubb Shroyer](#),  
[Efrem Smith](#), [Phyllis Tickle](#), [Krista Tippett](#); [John Townsend](#); [Richard Twiss](#); [N.T. Wright](#), [Mark Yaconelli](#)

Hosts: [Bob Stromberg](#), [Efrem Smith](#)

This list can be found [here](#) at the National Pastors Convention website.  
<http://www.zondervan.com/Cultures/en-US/NPC/NationalConvention/Speakers/>