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My Initiation

I encountered Reiki by accident, literally. I had no idea that a freak accident would so alter my destiny, but it did. On the surface, the accident seemed to be a case of classic whiplash precipitated by being hit from behind. One day later, I found myself in the office of Dr. Virgil Hartman (all names used are pseudonyms). I knew him for about a decade but only at a distance. My visits to him were infrequent, usually two to three times a year for routine checkups and annual bouts with upper respiratory infections. There was always pleasant conversation followed by a “keep up the good work, dear.” I liked him. Dr. Hartman was a bright and capable physician who normally had the ability to put me at ease. His gentleness reminded me of the bedside manner of the television physician from the seventies, Marcus Welby, M.D.

During this particular visit, his normally bright green eyes were pensive and concerned. As he examined me, he expressed concern about an area in my neck and shoulders that seemed to indicate a level of damage and extreme tension. He suggested that I take a week off just to rest. He knew that I had a very demanding job, and he was aware of the fact that I was a workaholic and would normally return to work even if I were in pain. This time I heeded his advice; I

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intended to rest. However, my rest was short-lived. By the middle of that week off, I found myself in a lot of pain. It was strange because the pain was both physical and emotional. While my head throbbed with nauseating headaches, I found myself crying profusely. This was unusual for me. I was so alarmed that I called Dr. Hartman. He told me to come in immediately.

“How are you feeling?”

“I’m not feeling quite myself.”

“Tell me, what’s been going on with you?”

“I’ve been feeling weepy and emotional; the thought of going back to work terrifies me.” I had been under a tremendous amount of stress at work for about a year, but I internalized my stress and simply continued to work. However, the accident forced me to acknowledge how deeply affected I had become by it. His next comment floored me. It was a discussion I had with myself, but I never had talked to Dr. Hartman about it.

“You need to go. Don’t you get it? This accident is divine. You’ve got to get your joy back. You’ve been robbed of your joy. You’ve lost your mission, and you need to take time to rediscover your mission and heal. I will help you.”

Yes, the accident was a divine appointment. I had been in a stressful situation for such a long time that my system was reacting both physically and emotionally. Dr. Hartman had observed me over time, and he was familiar with the organization and the work I had done there. He discerned what I had not been able to discern initially. My mission at this particular job was over. I knew that internally, but letting go seemed like I was abandoning my post.

However, I grew to realize that after a ten-year journey at one place, I was now in need of healing, both physical and emotional. If I did not get the necessary rest, the tension that had somehow become lodged in my neck and shoulders and caused mild concussive symptoms would continue. I reasoned that I could take medication for the headaches, but there was no pill to extinguish the emotional overload. I took a three-month medical leave and resigned. The

generous severance package given by my company allowed me to rest for about a year.

For weeks, Dr. Hartman asked me the same questions, “How is your spirit? How’s your soul?” He seemed deeply interested in my healing. He talked a lot about treating the whole person and not just symptoms or maladies. While initially I felt that he was simply extending a professional courtesy, in time I grew to recognize that his interactions with me were much more than professional niceties.

In about six months, I had fully recuperated. God had used Dr. Hartman to facilitate healing in my own life. The healing that came about was both physical and emotional. When I was no longer under Dr. Hartman’s care, we became friends. I later found out that he had observed and admired my professional commitment to helping others and my relationship with God. While I could not recall any in-depth conversations about God, he saw God reflected in my lifestyle. That relationship drew him towards me. As I became better acquainted with him, I recognized that he too was in need of healing—emotional, physical, and spiritual.

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We made plans to meet at a Borders Book Store on Resurrection Sunday after we both had attended our respective churches. His eyes glistened as he shared with me his premise about sickness and disease. “Although I am a doctor and I treat a lot of ailments, I believe that many of man’s problems are spiritual.” He concluded that when a person’s life was out of balance, sickness and disease resulted. I was surprised at his insight. He was a physician; I initially expected him to be more Cartesian than spiritual. He was an interesting blend of both. As we talked, he shared openly about his life, his failures, and his aspirations. He talked so much about healing and spirituality that I wondered where he actually stood in his relationship with God.

“Virgil, what faith are you?” A wry smile crossed his face. It was an innocent question.

“I guess you might say that I’m Christian. I’m also a Methodist; however, I am starting to believe that reincarnation might be true.” I remembered thinking how odd it was that he could believe in reincarnation since he talked about being a Christian. I pressed him.

“So, Virgil, where *are* you spiritually?” He paused for a moment.

“I guess I’m on my path. You know that there are many paths, but they all lead to God.”

I shook my head. “Yes, there are many paths, but I don’t think that they all lead to God.”

His smile told me that this conversation was a familiar one for him. The pregnant silence indicated that for now, we both wisely decided to agree to disagree. Through sips of coffee and cappuccino, we talked about what our passions were. I shared with him that my deep passion was getting people connected to God. I smiled when he articulated that he shared a similar desire. He felt quite strongly that his life assignment was to get people connected spiritually.

To that end, he invited me to an event that he was hosting at his home. It was an open house featuring the “healing work of eighteen practitioners.” The practitioners included body workers who specialized in Massage and Polarity Therapy, Shiatsu, Alexander Technique, Acupressure, Acupuncture, Chiropractic, and Therapeutic Touch. It was in this context that I first heard about Reiki. Many of the practitioners talked about “balancing energy” and doing “energy work.” Some touted the benefits of Chinese herbs and homeopathy. The gathering was attended by hundreds of individuals interested in healing. For all intents and purposes, it was a success.

However, I was very perplexed. I kept hearing about healing, but I never heard anything about God or Jesus. I left this setting curious, but I was also now concerned for Virgil. He was genuinely interested in the healing of others; I had seen that demonstrated in my own life. However, the healing modalities that I observed seemed incongruent with what I knew about Christian healing. An opportunity would soon present itself for me to find out more.

III

At Virgil's insistence, I traveled to Israel. He thought that the trip would help me further recuperate and hear clearly from God about my next assignment. Frequently in our previous conversations, he queried me about my next step. I told him that I honestly did not know. He assured me that God would speak to me in Israel. What amazed me was that although his spiritual path seemed riddled with ambiguity and contradictions, he still possessed some spiritual insight as it related to the lives of others.

I recalled walking along a dusty road on the outskirts of Israel. The area looked like a desert place. I remembered my pastor referencing I Kings (17:3) and alluding to the fact that this location was where the prophet Elijah was sent and fed by a raven. What was so strange was that, as my pastor shared this insight, a raven actually appeared in the sky. It was a powerful metaphor highlighting God's provision in the wilderness. Stranger still was that, although the area appeared barren, we suddenly came across a small patch of bright reddish orange flowers. From a distance, they actually appeared to be on fire, almost like a burning bush. I was so deeply moved by the incident that I took a picture.

IV

As I stood at the Wailing Wall among thousands of pilgrims, many rocking back and forth wailing and many bowing prostrate in silent prayer, I stuck a piece of paper in the crevice of the massive brick wall. It was a note to God asking not only for my own clarity and direction but also for clarity about what role I was to play in Virgil's life. I was exposed to the open house for a reason. I was privy to seeing the demonstration of various healing arts, but I was unclear about what I was to do with the information. I clearly felt that Virgil was a deeply spiritual man, but I also felt that something was amiss in the healing modalities I had witnessed. By the end of my stay in Israel, God gave me the clarity and direction I sought.

V

“So, did God speak to you in Israel?” Virgil inquired. His green eyes twinkled, and his arms were folded across his chest. A knowing smile surfaced on his face. Although we sat in a crowded sun-lit café, the din of the room seemed far away and the space felt very private, almost sacred. In response, I nodded. The question seemed rhetorical, as he did not wait for additional information. “You know, you were in the land of antiquity. I hope that you learned something about patience. Some things take time to develop.”

“Am I impatient?”

He laughed at my question. “Is a school bus yellow?”

Actually, I was. Even as I sought God for direction, I wanted Him to give me a complete road map. I had not shared that with Virgil, but somehow he knew. At that point, however, I did not tell him what I thought God said concerning my direction. However, I gave him the picture I took in the desert. The color momentarily emptied from his face.

“Where did you get this from?” I explained that it was from Israel. “What day and time was this taken?” I mentally searched for the exact date and time and finally turned the picture over which highlighted the date. He shook his head and whispered, “It’s the burning bush.” I sat in my seat, stirred and awe-struck at the same time; I reflected on God’s call to Moses. If there were more words spoken, I could not recall them.

VI

He was between patients but wanted to grab a quick bite. He apologized for the setting but promised that the food was good. It was in a tavern that was situated in an upscale area; nevertheless, it was still a tavern. He slowly sipped his beer. “So, what did God say to you in Israel?” He picked up where our last conversation had ended. He seemed anxious; I was nervous. I did not know that today was the day to reveal to him what I had heard in Israel.

“Actually, I heard two things. The first was that I was to pray for you, I mean intense prayer; it’s called intercessory prayer.” He smiled.

“I could certainly use lots of prayer.

“The second was that I was to volunteer some time to assist you.” He nodded in agreement as if he had already read the script. He cleared his throat and gazed directly at me.

“My sense is that I am to serve as a catalyst in your life. You’ve got some good skills in the area of administration and you are spiritual. I could use your help as a volunteer administrator as I seek to pull this group of healers together. I need to be able to let them know that healing is done by the Spirit. That’s what I’ve been called to do.” Thus began my assignment with Dr. Virgil Hartman. He was a man of many paradoxes. Spiritually, he appeared to be on a wilderness journey in terms of his relationship with a personal God; yet in that desert, there were signs of spiritual vitality and hunger. Yes, I would have to trust God on this new journey, for I could not trace him.

VII

Virgil introduced me to the group as a volunteer administrator and his spiritual advisor. While some members of this Healing Circle were warm and accepting, one member eyed me suspiciously. Her name was Shalimar. I overheard her as she pulled Virgil aside, “Why is she here?” Once again, he repeated what he had publicly stated. The disgruntled look on her face indicated that she perceived me as a threat. Instinctively, I felt uncomfortable around her. In time, I recognized that while Virgil was the formal head of the group, she actually was the informal leader. She was usually flanked by one or two women who were Reiki-masters. At that point, I still did not know what a Reiki-master was. What I did know is that she ran workshops where Reiki was performed. Aside from occasional greetings, she kept her distance with me.

For months, I attended several meetings and gave Virgil feedback after the meetings. I rarely said anything during the meetings; I just

observed. The purpose of the meetings seemed to be to familiarize each member of the group with what the others did. Afterward, a demonstration followed with someone volunteering from the group. The goal of the group was also to network, which would allow members to receive new referrals. The meetings always ended with a meal. Initially, I attempted to be open-minded. I knew that I needed to learn about what these healers were doing. However, over time, I grew increasingly uncomfortable as I heard more about mystical energies, balancing the chakras, and the interconnectedness of all things. I remember feeling sick one day as one of the group members excitedly talked about building a sweat lodge on her property. What disturbed me was her claim that the information was channeled to her from an Egyptian king who had been dead for several millennia. I literally felt my skin crawl. I confronted Virgil after the meal.

“Virgil, Laura said that she got plans for a sweat lodge from channeling.” A winsome smile crossed his face.

“I guess God works in mysterious ways,” he retorted. I was not amused.

“That’s not how God works,” I chided. Still, he dismissed the whole incident. I knew that channeling was forbidden by God as an occult practice. I began to sense that my time of observation was ending. After this incident, Virgil called me in anticipation of the next meeting. I knew I needed to let him know how uncomfortable I felt.

“Virgil, I’ve got some real concerns about the direction of the group. Where is it going?” He thought about it for a moment.

“Actually, I’m not really sure. You know the group is still forming.”

“Yes, but the purpose of the group is very ambiguous.”

“Well, the role of the group is to build a network of healers that support one another and provide healing.” I knew I now needed to be direct.

“Virgil, we both have talked about sharing a Christian faith. How is it that in all of these meetings we have never mentioned God or Jesus? I mean, how can we talk about healing without talking about

Jesus? I keep hearing people talk about being spiritual, but God is not a part of those meetings.” Virgil grew very quiet and reflective. He agreed that the focus would have to become more spiritual, but he did not tell me how that would take place. I was soon to discover that “spiritual” did not necessarily mean “Christian.” A few days before the meeting, Virgil and I were to set a meeting agenda. However, after expressing his frustration about the lack of spiritual focus in the meeting to Shalimar, she suddenly came up with an agenda for the next meeting. She sent the meeting agenda to select members of the group that she could influence. Some of the more vocal group members were not informed that there would be a meeting. I received an agenda, and the focus of the meeting was now very spiritual.

The agenda of the meeting set a time for the healers to talk about the spiritual aspects of healing in their own practices. Afterwards, there was to be a series of attunements. These attunements would be followed by silence to await the arrival of “spirit.” When I read the agenda in its entirety, I again had a nauseous feeling in my stomach. My skin started to crawl as it had when one of the healers talked about channeling. For whatever reason, I felt a sense of great danger. I shared my concerns with a minister friend. She immediately became alarmed and warned me about leaving the group immediately.

Initially, I was unsure what I should do. I sensed danger, but I did not know what to say to Virgil. I prayed for guidance. That evening, I visited the same Borders where Virgil and I had first talked. Instinctively, I went over to a section on Alternative Medicine. I had already begun to read a lot of the literature because my interest had been piqued from meeting with the practitioners in the Healing Circle. I now knew that much of what was practiced had ties to Eastern Mysticism and the occult. However, I wanted to suspend judgment until I had gathered enough information. That evening, I happened upon an entire collection of books on Reiki. I had never read anything on Reiki. As I perused an introductory book, I was horrified as the book talked about an initiation ceremony that was

comprised of a series of attunements. The goal of the attunements was to open the individual to divine healing energy. Once initiated, the individual would become a Reiki channel. Concerning this energy, one of the books stated that an attunement opens the student's crown to receive the healing energy of Source. Once the crown was opened, the practitioner would serve as a channel, and the Source energy would flow to wherever it was needed. Other books highlighted the initiation ceremony and talked about side effects from attunement.

I wanted to run as far as I could from this Healing Circle. I did not know a lot about Reiki, but it was the antithesis of any healing I had ever heard or read about in Christian circles. Although my flight instinct was strong, I was also concerned about Virgil. How could I warn him and have him really listen? I now recognized that Virgil was a risk-taker. He did not avoid things because of biblical prohibitions; he felt that an experience would always win over an argument. In addition, it seemed that if something were spiritual and related to healing, he felt that it had to be of God. I disagreed. I prayed that God would give me wisdom in talking to Virgil.

On the day of the meeting, I decided that I would simply go to his home early and explain to him why I could not come. Because he had relationships with these healers, I tried to express myself in a way that would not offend or demonize those involved. He led me to the kitchen table and had me sit down. He could read the concern in my eyes.

"Virgil, I don't know what it is, but there is something not right about these attunements. This is not how God heals. Furthermore, the agenda talked about waiting in silence for a spirit to come. What spirit is that?" He shook his head indicating that he did not know. "Well, Virgil, whatever it is, I think it's evil." He grabbed my hands.

"I'm not involved with any evil spirits." His eyes were plaintive.

"I did not say you were, but there is something that just doesn't feel right about any of this."

"Fine, Shalimar's agenda will not be used. I will make a new one, and we will meet down here instead of the office she uses." I nod-

ded with approval. “What people need to know is that healing is by God’s Spirit. Right now, some of them are not comfortable with the concept of God. They’ve got the right idea but the wrong spirit. That will take time to change.” I knew that the meeting would move in a different direction; God had heard my prayer.

VIII

Shalimar was one of the first to arrive. A Reiki-master was with her. Virgil explained how the agenda and the location of the meeting had been changed. Shalimar stared like a sullen child and insisted that the meeting still be held upstairs in her office. He conceded. As group members came, Shalimar directed them to her office. I could feel tension mounting, but I prayed silently under my breath.

Virgil and I were the last ones to arrive at the meeting. When we arrived, more than half of the group of ten members was sitting on overstuffed pillows on the floor. Although it was daylight, a candle and incense were burning. Many of the members sat quietly and stared at the flame in a trance-like fashion. Initially, it seemed that they had not even recognized that anyone had entered the room. Virgil opened the meeting with a brief prayer and began to share his concerns about the focus of the group. One by one, he had each member talk about the role they felt that the Spirit played in their healing work. He never said Holy Spirit, and some of the responses were ambiguous and mystical. Once everyone had shared, Virgil spoke with conviction and clarity.

“I apologize for the lack of clarity and direction that has been in the group. Things have not been clear because the vision is still evolving for me. However, the revelation that I have received is that true healing is from God and is done by his Spirit. Healing does not come from us; it comes through us. We are just vessels.” It was obvious that some in the group were uncomfortable with the direction the meeting was taking. He was very aware of this. “I am not at all sure where this journey will lead me. Perhaps, I may be marching to the beat of a different drummer. If you are at a different place, that

is okay.” Having said that, several members of the group told Virgil that they had different needs in their healing work. They voluntarily chose to leave the group. A handful of members remained. In the months that followed, the group lost momentum.

By this time, I had done a great deal of research. I was convinced that many of the practices, especially Reiki, were spiritually dangerous. I knew that Virgil was not totally convinced. With much of the group cohesion gone, he initially sought to reinvigorate the group by having another open house. I was against this and challenged him to allow me to do a force field analysis where I would analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of revitalizing the group. After completing the analysis, we had a lengthy discussion. I tried to highlight the healing modalities that were either safe or at least spiritually neutral. However, I warned that practices that involved channeling energy were dangerous because they involved connecting with a spiritual realm that God forbade. His question to me spoke volumes, “Can’t we integrate?” I shook my head to indicate “no.” The group disbanded, but some of the healers continued to rent space to practice their healing art. Shalimar came periodically and worked with a Reiki practitioner. I constantly prayed; and, for a season, Reiki appeared to be a non-issue. I began to think that my assignment in the field was complete. However, in time, through another set of divinely ordered circumstances, I actually came to work for Virgil as Personnel Consultant and, finally, as Office Manager. While my first assignment with Virgil as a voluntary administrator gave me a general understanding of the dangers of Reiki, my three-year journey in Virgil’s office was truly informative. Watching his transformation, especially in terms of his relationship to God, helped me to understand the undisclosed side effects of following the Reiki path that manifested over time. The office became the incubator for my research on Reiki.

Reiki’s Debut

Throughout antiquity, many have assumed the appellation “healer.” Generally, these individuals have been deeply mystical or spiritual

people who claimed power from God, nature, or some other force designated to bring about healing or a relief of symptoms to the troubled person. My task is not to cite all groups of people who now designate themselves as “healers” but to deal with one group in particular—Reiki practitioners. They speak freely and candidly about their ability to shrink tumors, send cancers into remission, eradicate addictions, and reconnect dying patients to their spiritual selves.

Additionally, they have attempted to validate these claims by purporting that the method utilized, hands on healing or laying-on of hands, was the *same* method used by Jesus. Hence, schools and individuals skilled in the healing art of Reiki have materialized to initiate the thousands who had the desire to heal themselves and others. The masses included nuns, priests, housewives, nurses, shamans, psychics, and New Age channelers.

While some had very clear ties to organized religion, others reported no religious affiliations; and many boldly proclaimed allegiances to groups with strong occult and metaphysical underpinnings. I began to ponder how was it possible that a shaman (medicine man or woman) could allege to have the same power displayed by Jesus? How was it plausible that a Wiccan (witch), who deified nature, yet failed to recognize the patriarchal God of the Old Testament or the Lordship of the New Testament Christ, claim access to the *same* healing power of biblical Jesus? Finally, how could a housewife who asserted no religious affiliations but talked of being “spiritual,” provide hands on healing for people and still not have a relationship with either God or Jesus?

Obviously, someone has been presenting a major falsehood or a grand delusion. However, in defiance of some very apparent contradictions, the numbers of those giving or receiving Reiki have continued to explode. Miles and True (2003) in the article, “Reiki—Review of a Biofield Therapy History, Theory, Practice, and Research” reflected:

Although Reiki was first used in lay practice, it is increasingly used in a variety of medical settings including hospice care set-

tings, emergency rooms, psychiatric settings, operating rooms, nursing homes, pediatric, rehabilitation, and family practice centers, obstetrics, gynecology, and neonatal care units, HIV/AIDS, and organ transplantation care units, and for a variety of medical conditions such as cancer, pain, autism/special needs, infertility, neurodegenerative disorders, and fatigue syndromes. Reiki's popularity among lay population is evidenced by its mention in a wide variety of publications from the *New York Times*, and *Time*, to *Esquire* and *Town & Country*. (Miles and True, 65)

Despite Reiki's growing acceptance, the body of Christ for the most part has remained silent or ignorant about Reiki. The fact that many have suggested that they could heal as Jesus did should arouse the concern of the body of Christ, especially those Christians (cessationists) who maintain that faith healing is not for today. Ankerberg and Weldon (1991, 4) asserted, "Although awareness has grown, discernment among Christians has remained marginal in the area of healthcare practices which are at one level hostile to biblical teaching." However, for those who have traveled the Reiki Path, their spiritual experiences and entrée into Reiki have been as varied as their individual backgrounds.

Darryl

Plagued by problems in adolescence, challenges in school with peers and teachers, and views of the "church" that seemed distinct from his own, nursing student Darryl Harris (1998) admitted that he had lost his sense of self by his mid-twenties. He chronicled his journey into Reiki in an honors thesis for his nursing program. He recalled:

When I first inquired about Reiki, I was in a relationship that was undergoing considerable strain. I had been struggling with issues of sexuality, past abuse, and a recent traumatic work experience. From the little I had learned of Reiki, from magazines and pamphlets, I thought it would be a solution to the compounding

stress in my life that had been manifesting as sleeplessness, headaches, muscle tension, and mood fluctuations. (6)

His search led him to a clinical nurse specialist who seemed more interested in his care than financial gain. She invited him to experience Reiki. He maintained that what followed was the “most amazing thing . . . that has ever happened in my life” (3). He described in vivid detail the sensations that took place when hands were laid on his body. When the experience was over, he recalled, “It was as if I had entered some sort of four dimensional continuum. Then I became aware of a strange, yet familiar, presence. Words cannot describe accurately what I felt then, but it was a sense of closeness to something Holy, spiritual in essence, a connection or oneness with all creation” (6). That evening, he felt relaxed and slept better than he had slept in the last ten years. Convinced of Reiki’s curative power, he became initiated into first degree Reiki.

Several traumatic events took place in his life pursuant to Reiki, which left him feeling “emotionally and spiritually damaged . . .” (4). However, Darryl had experienced a metamorphosis. “I now had the strength and courage to face what I had previously feared. . . . It was as if through Reiki, I had found the way to strip away the pretenses and emerge a new person. . . . Through my practice and study of Reiki I have come to a point where I can continue to examine and transform my life” (6).

Jeri

In her book, *Tapestry of Healing*, Jeri Mills (2001), a physician and Reiki-Master Teacher recounted how relocating to Arizona facilitated a personal journey of discovering herself. “I looked toward the etheric and the spiritual. The mountains and the desert embraced me in their magic spell. The ancient spirits of the sahuaros [large cactus] seemed to whisper my name as they welcomed me into their land” (26). Learning meditation opened a gateway to various forms of alternative healing which included shamanic journeys in which she was able to “...retrieve lost parts of herself to become whole”

(26). It also led her into Native American spirituality and an interest in channeling healing energy. Her experience of being able to channel “healing” energy to a pregnant teen in labor and bring relief initiated the process of using “energy work” on other distressed patients in labor. It also made her ripe for learning Reiki and gradually integrating the practice into other aspects of western medicine. Mills recounted how she intervened with Reiki when a man was thrown from his horse. “...His left arm was cradled in his right hand...it was obvious that he was hurting. My hands heated up and I had an overwhelming urge to offer assistance....I simply presumed he would be closed to any alternative healing methods. I suspected he might even think I was crazy if I offered to lay on hands to remove his pain” (72). However, with his consent, she administered a Reiki treatment. “...The pain in his arm was relieved while I ran energy through it but returned as soon as I removed my hands.” (73). Given Mills’ training as a veterinarian, she eventually used Reiki on horses and other animals. In seeking permission from horse owners, she explained, “...I could not guarantee miracle cures, but I could assure them that Reiki would cause no harm” (83).

Edward

Edward by his own admission was a marginal born-again Christian when he became involved with Reiki. However, his involvement did not result from him going to get initiated; he may not have gone that route. His came as a result of a massage.

In reflecting on his journey into Reiki, he shared about reconnecting with a woman he had been attracted to prior to his marriage. She was from Germany and visited his parents while in the states. Edward and Susie went golfing together. Because of the outing, he developed lower back pain and asked his friend to give him a massage. He recalled:

There was still this lust that I've carried from my youth and I [got] this chance to be alone with her and to have her work on my back and that's the open door. That was the open door that when

she was massaging my back, she came to that point on my back, toward my lower back, and she spread her thumbs, that spirit of Reiki filled me. And I mean filled me in such a way that I could feel it flow from where her fingers touched me all the way down to my toes, to my finger tips to the top of my head, I was filled with this energy, an overwhelming energy. It just blew me away. That's what set me on the point of 'I wanted more, I had to have more, I had to find out what causes—I had to find out where it came from. I had to have this.' And I walked around for probably a month feeling like I had all this excess energy from somewhere, and I had to find out more about it.

[I commented that it sounded like being high.]

It was very much like being—like being high, but clear-minded. It was definitely the energy of this demonic spirit. It entered me at that point...my spirit was opened up and that demon entered. My focus was really on that energy, on the source of that energy. That particular demon was the focus of my desires at that point...I begged her for where this was, what this was because after that—after that initial experience, I was able to work on my wife's back and just by running my thumbs down it, align her spine. She would hear the pop; she could feel it. Now I was practicing Reiki...[The] part that didn't make sense to most people in Reiki was [Susie] was not a Reiki Master that did it. Typically, it has to be a Reiki Master and the Reiki Master has to do it at a level one ceremony. There was no ceremony. But I was so open and she was so full of this spirit that she was able to just give it to me. My attunement came then. My changes came then. Typically, I don't know how they've told you about a Reiki one experience...But one of the first things they told us when you go to your Reiki one attunement is that you will have physical changes. Body fluids will change. Some people feel like they're sick. Their body chemistry changes after their initial receiving of this demon. That happened for me at that incident. At that massage when I received the energy of that demon every-

thing—everything changed. The smell of my sweat, the excrements, both kinds, uh, even sexual excrement—everything changed. I mean jelled, changed color, changed smell, everything changed in me....It changed my body chemistry so radically, as I say every excrement became foul. It was scary. But I hadn't gone to a Reiki one meeting in which they would tell you that things could change. It just changed. And it blew me away. I suddenly had the power of that demon and I went through the physical changes.... I found a Reiki Master [and two schools]....One school really treated it as a science, tried to make it into like a scientific-like practice. [It's] the same thing that happens at Transcendental Meditation; they try to take it out of the spirit realm and—make it a pseudo-science. The other [school] was the Reiki Alliance. Well, the Reiki Alliance went into the softness, the kindness, the spirit side of it, the—and I knew this is what I had. What I had wasn't a cold science. What I had had a spiritual dimension to it....” In becoming officially initiated, he remembered, “It made no change in me whatsoever to go through the ceremony because I had already received the spirit of Reiki... [I was] able to use its powers, falling under its spell.” [I asked Edward if he still considered himself a Christian at this point.] “I was a deceived Christian....When that lust for power came in, that had me surrendered..., [I] was ready to give up everything and anything....I think the biggest thing was that to have more of that energy, I was willing to compromise anything.” When he asked Reiki Masters about his bodily changes, “the Reiki Masters explain away by the fact that, ‘Oh, it's cleansing.’ [But actually]...your body is adjusting to that presence.”

Reiki Defined

Having now read some brief initial experiences by Reiki practitioners, the question for many may remain, “Exactly what is Reiki?” Reiki is a Japanese word that combines two syllables: “rei” which is defined as “universal” and “ki” which means “life force.” William Rand, Reiki Master and Director of the International Center for Reiki Training asserted:

The word “rei” as it is used in Reiki is more accurately interpreted to mean supernatural knowledge or spiritual consciousness. This wisdom comes from God or the Higher Self. This is the God Consciousness that is all-knowing. It understands each person completely...

Ki means the same as “Chi” in Chinese, “Prana” in Sanskrit and “Ti” in Hawaiian...Ki is used by martial artists in their physical training and mental development. It is used in meditative breathing exercises called Pranyamas and by the shamans in all cultures for divination, psychic awareness, manifestation and healing. Ki is the non-physical energy used by all healers. Ki is present all around and can be accumulated by the mind...

...It is the God-consciousness called “Rei” that guides the life force called “Ki” in the practice we call Reiki. Therefore, Reiki can be defined as spiritually guided life force energy. ...Reiki guides itself with its own wisdom and being unresponsive to the direction of the practitioner. (1999, n.p.)

What is so disturbing about this “healing power” is that it is the same force behind occult practices that God prohibits, and yet supporters have had no difficulty ascribing that same power to Jesus. The Bible is replete with God’s prohibitions against trafficking in the spirit realm. In Deuteronomy 18:9-12, God was very clear when he warned the Israelites about occult practices. He admonished them not to be involved with divination, mediums, charmers, or wizards because they were an abomination to him. However, in the practice of Reiki that involved medium-ship, the warnings of the Bible were ignored. One major reason for ignoring biblical prohibitions was that many practitioners embraced worldviews that were distinct from a biblical worldview. Moreover, a part of Reiki’s acceptance was tied to the repackaging of this occult practice for western audiences. In its presentation at retreat centers, seminars, and even churches, Reiki appeared innocuous.