



Christian Zen

- Without the Zen -

Page 2: Pluralism nor Relativism

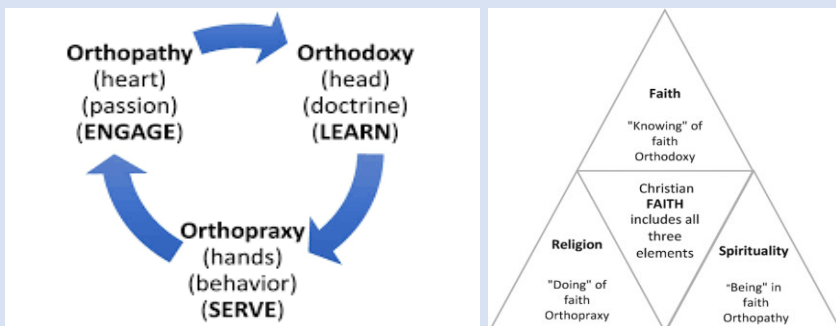
Page 3: Christian – East vs West

Page 4-5: Zen – West vs East

Page 6-7: Warrior or Monk?

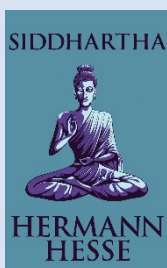
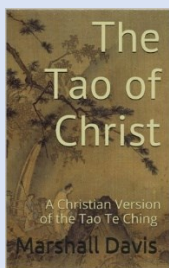
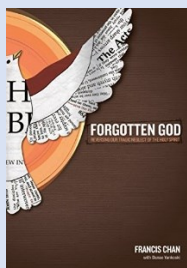
Page 8: What's Next?

Not Pluralism; Not Relativism –



For far too long it seems Western Christianity with whom I am a part, has focused 99% on Orthodoxy and maybe 0.9% on Orthopraxy and 0.1% on Orthopathy. These are just fancy words that simply represent complete (biblical) Christianity. But it begs the question why we neglect some at the expense of others? This short booklet attempts to look more towards the Orthopathy side of Christianity.

To state the obvious up front, I am as orthodox as they come (if that means *biblical*). I have written several books and spoken on the objective truths of Christ, fully endorse the Chicago Statement of Inerrancy and have written against pluralism (that all roads/religions lead to God) and relativism (that truth is ultimately relative). So, I wanted to clarify that right from the start. On the other hand, it is without question that Christianity in the West is often without passion, spirit, or right practice. A *dry* orthodoxy is no orthodoxy at all and if Christianity is objectively true, then it should permeate everything in a Christians' life; and this is my goal with the concepts described in this short booklet. Maybe in a year or two I will write a longer follow-up.

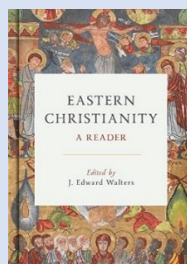
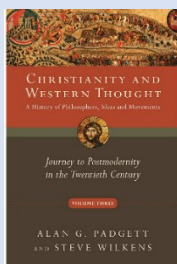


"Wisdom cannot be imparted. Wisdom that a wise man attempts to impart always sounds like foolishness to someone else ... Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom. One can find it, live it, do wonders through it, but one cannot communicate and teach it."

Hermann Hesse, Siddhartha

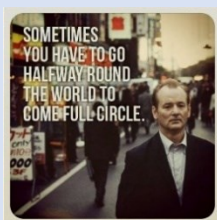
Francis Schaeffer's concept of *L'Abri* (that we are somewhat modeling) was based on prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit; a concept 100% biblical but rarely endorsed by our church's "preplanning committees" that look more like the corporate world that I have spent over 20 years in, than it does the *Book of Acts*. Whether it is interpreting the concept of the *Dao* (or Tao) as the Holy Spirit or Hermann Hesse's famous novella *Siddhartha* through the lens of Christ (and our own life stages); we should be able to more clearly see Christ at every corner.

Christian: East vs West?



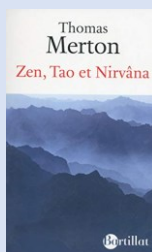
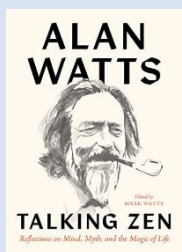
Christ died for all and lives for all. Moreover, I do not think it was a coincidence that Israel is somewhat Asian/African/European/Middle Eastern and thus Christ speaks clearly to all. We are one in Christ.

The Great Schism of 1054 was when the East and West church became (more or less) two entities instead of one. There is no way to go into these differences here but when we hear of the *Desert Fathers* going into the desert to meditate on Christ in the early centuries of the Church – this is a very *Eastern* concept that the Eastern Orthodox Church is well aware of but the West much less so. Though I dislike classifications, I would be considered a *Protestant*, so while I disagree with many practices of Eastern Orthodoxy, they do have much to teach in the areas of Orthopathy if we take more time to listen and less to talk.



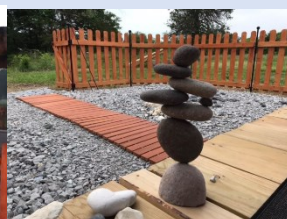
“
TECHNOLOGY HAS MADE
IT EASY FOR THE BOUNDARIES
BETWEEN WORK AND HOME
TO BLUR OR EVEN DISAPPEAR.
”

If you have seen either the series *Mad Men* (ending with Don Draper finding peace only when he allowed his mind to be free) or *Lost in Translation* where we see both an old Bill Murray and young Scarlett Johansson having an existential crisis; we are seeing a glimpse of what all of us can relate to whether we admit it or not. Namely that something is missing. If you want a *western* defense of why this missing element is Christ, then I will reference you to my other works. For now, I am going to simply give an overview why both Christian and non-Christian can see Christ (and their existential hole) more clearly through a type of meditation/clear-thinking practice often referred to as *Zen*.

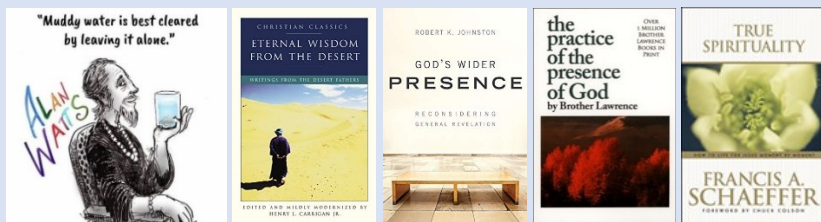


Zen?

Again, I am no pluralist, and the concept of “Zen Buddhism” is false in my estimation hence the title of the booklet “Christian Zen: without the zen”. Someone could state: “Well... that would just be Christian?!” And they would be correct. I am teaching nothing here that is not straight from the Bible. There have been many popularizers in the 20th century trying to combine East and West such as Alan Watts and Thomas Merton. While we are indebted to them for shedding light on many Eastern ways of thinking, they (especially Watts) are mostly outdated in their criticisms of Christianity. Nonetheless their writings still speak to people today which is my point exactly; namely that Christ speaks to the soul and conscious just as much, if not more, than to the intellect.

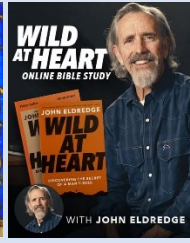


Many have asked about my *Off-Grid* project, leaving the corporate life, etc. (which I wrote a similar 8-page booklet about) and one of the things that I am often asked about is why I built a zen-garden on the property. In a nutshell, I needed to get out of my own mind; a very *zen* concept but also a very Christian one. I could give you verse after verse from both Old and New Testaments that the Western Church has become numb towards; but instead, I will just encourage you to research for yourselves. Suffice it to say, the biggest challenge I have when I have people come out here is to get them to quit asking: “*what’s next?*” as if everything must be for entertainment? Once I ask them to try and sit down and think of *nothing* (or count their breaths), feel the blood going thru their bodies or listen until they can hear their heartbeat; you can see a lightbulb go off when it *clicks*, and the fog starts to lift (*satori*). Raking sand, cutting wood, stacking stones, staring into the fire, and so on allows the mind to clear (*mushin*). Once cleared you can see Christ much more clearly and your prayers/meditation will be so much more linked to God in a way that most cannot believe compared to hurrying thru a church service when you’re thinking about various distractions.



A wonderful example can be found in the Eucharist (Communion) and the Japanese tea ceremony. The tea ceremony encapsulates history, tradition, spirituality, and a slowed-down etiquette. I have found that doing this directly before Eucharist allows for a more focused appreciation of this Communion with God. Most don’t really comprehend how important Eucharist is as a Christian and how its roots connect Passover & Spirit; but suffice it to say, the tea ceremony serves as a perfect example of how a clear/slowed down mind can help clear the way for a *true* appreciation of what Eucharist encapsulates. Moreover, it should help both Western Christian and zen practitioner alike, to see that Christ is the true center-point of meditation (*zanshin*).

Warrior or Saint?



Why does Jordan Peterson resonate with so many men today? Why was *Wild at Heart* by John Eldredge a bestseller? Perhaps because it spoke directly to the spirit, body, and mind?

Similar to what has been broadly outlined concerning zen – it is imbalanced when Christians have a solid theology but have no spiritual disciplines or practices of *worshipping in the Spirit* (John 4:24). In that same vein it makes no sense why the Christian today would not also pay attention to the physical as well as the mental. Too many Christians today picture the path of non-violence being celebrated as one of utter weak and feebleness, but they will not get this from any Scripture. Jordan Peterson does a wonderful job in properly translating the biblical concept of “meek” to that of being very dangerous but having that dangerousness under control. No one should celebrate being a Christian-pansy (an oxymoron) while at the same time being made in God’s image (Exodus 15:3), but because of an often-weak *church*, we see many young men following more toxic forms of masculinity (think of Andrew Tate for example). With that in mind, the zen concept embedded in what has traditionally been called the **martial arts** (not fighting *per se*), actually fits quite well within a Christian framework and could introduce real Christianity to those who have avoided it because of a misconception of it being for the weak or undisciplined.

The mind/spirit/body all belong to the Lordship of Christ. Having a strong mind, can help tune the body, which together can better focus the spirit. This can all be done in a very holistic yet non-violent manner (think of *Kwai Chang Cain* from the 1970s TV series *Kung-Fu*). I taught self-defense for several years (men and women) and can attest it helped

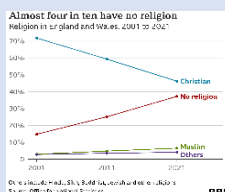
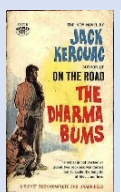
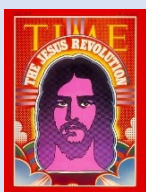
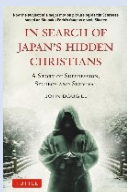
many in the same way a Christian sense of zen can help one better attune to God's presence. Likewise, we might look at Bernard of Clairvaux (co-founder of the Knights Templar) and Francis of Assisi (TSSF) as somewhat opposites; but once we take a step back, and look again, we find that they are one in the same in many ways: two-sides of the same coin though their approaches to the spiritual differed.



An ashram, the hippy influenced Druid Heights, and a zen monastery.

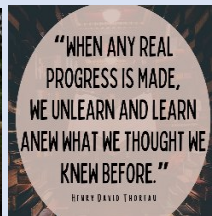
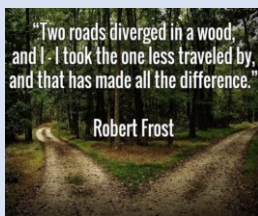
Similarly, we see *spiritual centers* of various kinds across all countries, cultures and throughout time; people looking for answers deeper than a materialistic life can provide. Whether we're talking about the *Jesus Revolution* of the 70s, that saw millions of "hippies" coming to Christ (once Christ was introduced to them in a language they understood); or to the medieval knight combining *warrior with monk*. In a similar vein we see Christianity taking root in China and South Korea but not Japan or Mongolia: why? In a nutshell, Japan was reached through a foreign culture while China was reached through a non-foreign one.

Miraculous numbers
Christians in China, m



The same thing could be said for Christianity & Zen. Orthopathy has been neglected for far too long and because of this Western Christians really believe Christianity is just something you **do** instead of who you **are**. Moreover, most I talk to equate meditation as non-Christian (or *too eastern*) and prayer as just something you say before dinner (zen could help with this shortcoming). Perhaps the 21st century is as good of a time as any to get back a holistic form of Christianity; call it **zen** or just call it **Christianity**? Either way it has been neglected for long enough.

What's Next?



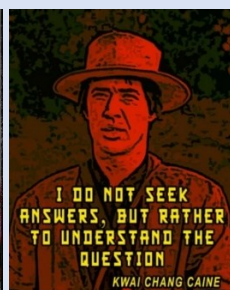
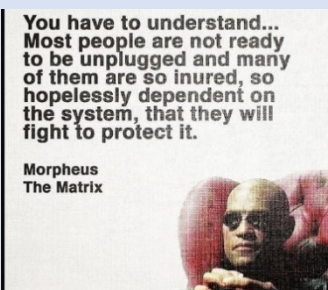
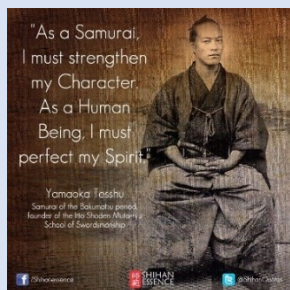
I normally want everything planned out, as we Americans have been taught to do, but my first step is to say (with joy): ***"I have no idea?"*** Leaving a 6-figure job for total uncertainty, burning my university degrees and honors; unlearning so much baggage is hopefully the first-step to detox, towards something *real*, so we shall see? When roughly 95% look at you in dismay for you following the *path less taken*, just realize it is not their fault; society (*the American Dream*) has given them a false bill of sale that they believe will bring them happiness and a sense of meaning, only to realize too late that it was all a hoax. I am just now starting to realize this after 45 years, so time will tell.

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https://youtube.com/channel/UCECIrEaKriz5J_MfmdFnBQQ

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"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." - John 4:24