



Explaining Reiki to Christians

by Marcia Backos on www.christianreiki.org

Three recent conversations have convinced me that many Christians are drawn to Reiki but are unsure that Reiki should become part of their lives. One of my students spent several months deciding whether to enter a Reiki workshop. I was not aware of the how intense her struggles had been until she observed in class, "If my parents knew I am here, they would cheerfully burn me at the stake." She was respectful of her parents' version of Christianity, but she was totally convinced that she was called by God to become a healer. Her parents' denomination offered no healer training. She had finally decided that she must accept God's calling and the spiritual gift of healing and believes that Reiki offers the way.

During another conversation with one of the pastors of my church, I asked his opinion of Reiki. He casually observed that he had heard about a Reiki Master who had somehow abused his students, so he didn't think much of the practice. I mentioned the tragic experiences in the Catholic Church with priests sexually abusing children which had not caused people to change their opinion of Christianity nor to stop going to church. Apparently he rethought his opinion. Later the same day, he asked me to speak to a man recently diagnosed with brain cancers about arranging some Reiki treatments.

Another friend had slipped and fallen on the ice after leaving a store. He came to a meeting at church and told the group about his experience. He was obviously in pain as he sat through the meeting. Afterwards, one of my students and I offered to give him Reiki which he accepted, though he didn't think it would do much good. He had fallen a couple of times previously, landing on the base of his spine, and he was aware from experience of the pain and soreness that he could expect the next day. Later in the week he emailed me to say that he had felt just fine the next day and decided there was something to Reiki and wanted to explore it further. He attended a healing service at the church and participated in the laying on of hands after communion. While he seemed affected by the service, he has not come again nor asked for any more Reiki treatments. This week, he told me why. He is a thoughtful introspective seeker, but after some thought he decided that he might not have felt any pain anyway after his fall. Further he wasn't interested in the community that forms as people work together to heal others.

Each of these individuals approached Reiki from different perspectives. One felt a spiritual calling and responded despite opposition. One did not have a good understanding of Reiki and had not thought of it fairly, and one had other explanations and interests. Of these, the first two are the reason for this article.

As the practice of Reiki has spread round the world in a 30-year period and is rapidly entering public awareness, Christians have approached its use in a variety of ways. More and more Christians view Reiki as a practice that provides an opportunity to follow more closely the teachings and examples of Jesus healing the sick. Others are concerned that Reiki has an Eastern origin and are searching for more information and experiences before deciding how to respond. Thoughtful, committed Christians seek accurate information and pray for guidance as part of deciding whether to adopt the practice of Reiki into their lives.

Each new idea or change in our world challenges us to adjust to the new knowledge and experience. Sometimes new knowledge has bearing on our religious values and beliefs. Those who take their spiritual lives seriously will often take time to gather information on the new subject, think about it and pray for guidance. After this process, a decision can be made about if or how those new thoughts or practices might be incorporated into their daily lives. This is a spiritually mature way to deal with things of this nature. During the time of research, people will benefit by making sure they make use of information that is accurate and gives an honest and fair description of the subject they are exploring. By reading, seeking those who have given or experienced Reiki, and praying for insight and guidance, Christians can make



decisions about how Reiki might play a role in their lives. It's important to keep in mind that while many Christians have found Reiki to be a spiritually fulfilling practice, it is not necessarily for everyone.

Christian churches have a long tradition of adopting practices that enhance the spiritual life of its members based on examples of Jesus' actions described in the Bible. Some churches use music and liturgy; others use silence and inspired prayer; some worship on Saturday (7th Day Adventists) and others on Sunday; some use dance and others sit throughout much of the service; some baptize by emersion and others by sprinkling water on the head; some honor saints and seek their help while others seek angelic experiences. In Christian worship, the cross is used as a focus of worship complemented by candles, music, prayer beads, bells, incense, and other ritual items. These many and varied practices indicate the range of methods that different Christian groups incorporate to follow the teachings of the Bible and to come closer to God. While they are different, they all fall within the definition of Christianity. As Christians seek ways to increase and strengthen their spiritual moments, many have adopted practices to develop the "Gifts of the Spirit." In I Corinthians 12:4-12, Paul speaks of the gifts to including speaking wisdom and knowledge and the power to heal. Also Paul describes people within the church having roles as apostles, prophets, teachers, those who perform miracles, those who heal, those who direct others and those who speak in strange tongues (I Corinthians 12:28-31).

Because one of the spiritual gifts is healing, devoted Christians who take direction from the above scripture have looked into the laying on of hands and more recently, the practice of Reiki. In addition, many Christian seekers have found John 14:12 an important source of guidance as well as reassurance that becoming healers it is not only possible, but also something we as Christians should develop if we feel spiritually guided to do so: "I am telling you the truth: whoever believes in me will do what I do-yes, he will do even greater things because I am going to the Father." (TEV)

Within that quotation is both instruction and challenge. As Christians search for ways to follow more fully Jesus' teachings and examples in order to draw closer to God, it is important to be aware of the examples Jesus set for us. Many of these focused on healing others (Matt: 14:14, Mark 3:10, Luke 4:38-39). And much of his healing was done by laying on hands. Here are a few examples: In Matthew 8:14-15, Jesus uses touch to heal Peter's mother-in-law of a fever. In Mark 1:40-42 Jesus uses his hands to heal a man with leprosy. This is also mentioned in Luke 5:12-13. Matthew 20:29-34 describes how Jesus healed two blind men by touching their eyes and in Mark 8:22-25 Jesus uses his hands to heal another blind man. In Mark 7:32-35 he uses touch to heal a man who is deaf and can't speak. In Luke 7:12-15, Jesus raises a dead man by touching his coffin and in Luke 8:49-55 Jesus uses touch to return a dead girl to life.

Scripture clearly indicates that healing is something appropriate for Christians to be involved with. Christians who have a solid foundation in their faith know that God will always protect and guide them. Those Christians who practice Reiki do so within the guidance and protection of God secure in the belief that they have been guided to follow Jesus' example to be a healer.

Have you been called by the Holy Spirit to practice the gift of healing? If the answer is yes, is Reiki right for you? After careful investigation and gaining a clear understanding of what Reiki is, the best way for you to decide if you should take up the practice of Reiki can be best answered through prayer.