



Christian Meditation with Children

OUR JOURNEY : FROM WORDS . . . TO SILENCE . . . TO ACTION.

In this issue of the WCCM newsletter I would like to continue with the last two topics in the series of six topics which started in the July issue last year. Each topic considers different aspects by which we, as a community, can help each other in the work of Christian Meditation with Children; whether we are teachers, clergy, chaplains, governors, grandparents, parents, children or just interested in education in some other way.

5. COMMUNICATING THE BENEFITS:

One definition of benefit is “something that promotes well-being” and it is in this context that I would like to explore the way in which we can communicate the benefits of Christian Meditation with Children. If we neglect to learn about “the world within our hearts” it will lead to stress, anger, violence, anxiety, depression and antisocial behaviour. If on the other hand we help each other to lead a balanced existence, then we help not only ourselves but those with whom we come into contact.

Children seem to know this intuitively and we have seen the way in which children quickly create community by sitting together in silence. After a few sessions of meditation in the classroom it is very noticeable that they have an increased awareness of those around them and it's very touching to see the way in which they not only benefit themselves from “living in the present moment” during meditation, but also to register the fact that they communicate this benefit to those around them.

Children are naturally joyful. Joy, however, is not something one can define or analyse. One enters into joy as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. We don't encourage the teachers, or the children in their charge, to meditate with the objective of being joyful; in fact we teach them that there is no measurement, no grading, no expectation, no real way in which they can define their progress. Christian Meditation is not a “technique” which we learn with the sole objective of getting a result. It is a “daily practice” which we offer as part of our faith. The joy – if joy comes – is pure gift.

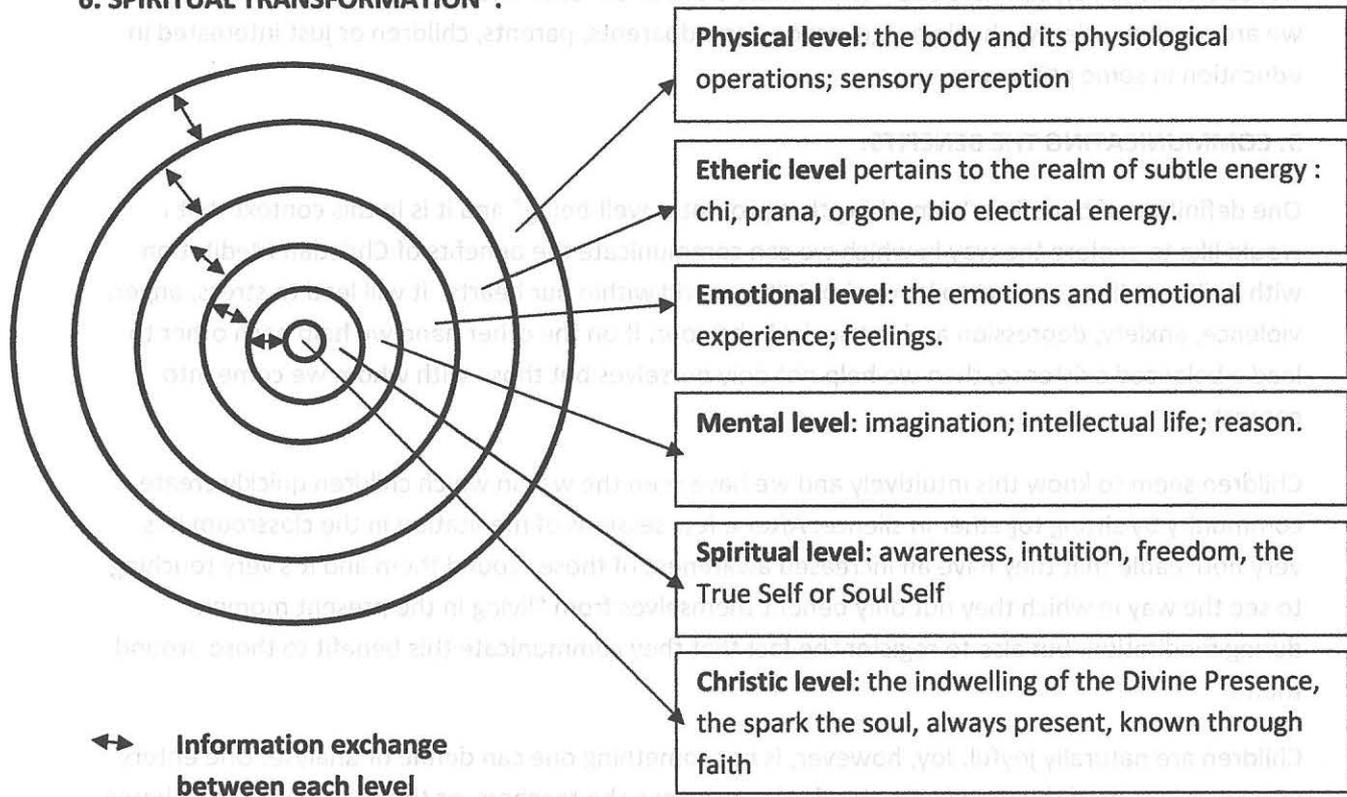
Communicating the benefits is something that happens very naturally. The children do become more attentive, they do find it easier to concentrate, they do notice if one of the other children is sad or in trouble of some kind, they do get to know themselves better, they do become friends with Jesus and they genuinely enjoy the regular times of Christian Meditation and their self-esteem is certainly increased. So much so, that they want to tell other people about it. This often results in them meditating at home and teaching other members of their family how to meditate - and this is the norm, not the exception. At least half the children want to meditate at home and this often rekindles the way in which families pray together.

So what about the situation where there are children of different faiths in the same school? Many schools experience the situation where children of different faiths come together in the same class

and I have to say that we were somewhat apprehensive about how this would work out. In fact it really hasn't been a problem. The children are very adult about these things. First and foremost, we make it clear to the children, the teachers and the parents that we will be introducing Christian Meditation into the school. We also encourage all the children to take part in this silent prayer, but we do make it clear that if they are uncomfortable with the prayer word "Maranatha", they do have the option of using their own special holy prayer word as a "mantra" – in line with their own faith.

So communicating the benefits is, like meditation, really simple. However, unlike meditation, communicating the benefits is always easy.

6. SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION¹:



(Each level directly influences those adjacent to it: e.g. emotional stimulation affects the Etheric and Mental levels directly, and the other levels indirectly.)

We are all conscious that changes take place in our lives as a result of the experiences we undergo, the influences from other people, the books we read, the films we see and the practices that we adopt. What we don't always realise is the subtle way in which these changes take place.

Human nature becomes transformed through implicit faith (love, moral living) or explicit faith. Both are accompanied by the "shalom," or serenity of the Spirit. Through explicit faith and deepening prayer, the energies of the divine become more active in the soul and one's identity becomes more grounded in the True Self and Christic levels.

Take the example of Christian Meditation where those who have adopted the practice over many years would openly admit that it has influenced their lives and yet would have extreme difficulty in

quantifying the effect that it has had. Certainly, there is still much to be understood about the way in which Christian Meditation transmits messages between these different levels and “builds bridges” between the left brain and the right brain functions. I would certainly not attempt to explain how this happens or turn this brief article into a fully scientific explanation, but at a pragmatic level we can all see the fruits of Christian Meditation in others.

In the context of Christian Meditation with Children it is interesting to see the extent to which the children quickly become aware of the Divine Presence and the way in which the Holy Spirit – the Divine therapist! - can help them to overcome their problems and have a positive influence on their school day. So it doesn't seem too optimistic to surmise that they will benefit by carrying this influence through to the rest of their lives.

What has surprised and delighted us in talking to a very broad cross-section of children across schools in the UK is that they are quick to identify the spiritual advantages of Christian Meditation, before they ever mention the more mundane benefits related to the calming effect that it has and the way that it is instrumental in increasing their concentration. They not only recognise this, but are happy to talk about this and the way that Christian Meditation has given them a more direct relationship with Jesus.

At a deeper level it is possible to recognise how this Divine energy becomes more active against one's attachments, our defences are stripped away and inner wounds are healed. Some writers – such as St John of the Cross - have likened this feeling to walking through the valley of darkness in the Dark Night of the Soul. The journey through the Dark Night is not all misery and trepidation. There is the serenity of the Spirit, and also growth in the spiritual level of one's being (intuitive intelligence, awareness, inner freedom). Drastic changes in lifestyle may be called for as all of the levels of one's being become transformed to manifest the life of the Spirit.

So, in summary, the journey from words ---- to silence ----- to action is a complex one, for us and for all the people involved in the process of introducing Christian Meditation to children in schools. But I do hope these articles have at least suggested some of the important issues at stake and that some of you will be encouraged to take an increasing role in this important work.

With over 20,000 children meditating daily in our UK schools and a strong programme of “in-service” training days, twilight sessions, and head teacher conferences during the coming months we are in the process of creating regional teams to support those schools that are adopting Christian Meditation at a local level. Please contact me if you would like to offer your help in any way.

If you would like to find out more about any aspect of our Christian Meditation with Children program please do not hesitate to contact Charles Posnett Tel: 01525 873536 or by Email: charles@posnett.entadsl.com

¹With thanks to Philip St. Romain for his shareware on Spiritual Transformation,

