

Speaker 1: 0:00

Do you think Jesus did yoga? Maybe he led some classes. Um,

Speaker 2: 0:07

I wonder what his favorite shakra was,

Speaker 1: 0:09

Right? I'm sure he had one. Well, he had seven chakras, but I'm sure he

Speaker 2: 0:15

Dear Jesus of all the seven chakras ,

Speaker 1: 0:18

I honestly, I mean, I wonder yoga has been around since before Jesus's time somebody was doing yoga probably in the Holy land and the year zero. Right. I wonder if he did yoga .

Speaker 2: 0:31

Well, I wish we didn't get into this day, but I mean, Jesus has an basically he was an Eastern spiritual master,

Speaker 1: 0:39

Right. Visited by three Kings from,

Speaker 2: 0:42

And we've institutionalized Jesus so much that we're losing out on the kind of spiritual wisdom figure that he truly was and in the Eastern vein . And , um, you know, it reminds me of the, there's a book called Jesus before Christianity, by Albert Nolan. It says, Jesus, didn't come to found a church. Jesus came to start a movement. And I think that is also part of what the , um, the rediscovery or the reclamation project that is yoga and Christianity that's going on, that season's involved in. And , um, I, I think that's a message that church in America certainly needs to hear and , and internalize and embody today. I'm David [inaudible] and I am Andrew Dardy on today's podcast. We're talking with the Reverend Susan Springer and Episcopal priest here in Boulder, Colorado about yoga and Christianity at a time when we're trying to find ways to integrate our full human lives into what it means to be a spiritual person in the world today, Susan is the rector of st. John's Episcopal right down the street here from the pine street church podcast studio. And she and I , um , have struck up a friendship that really kind of developed around the pandemic. I actually called her to talk about what their plans were for a physical reopening , uh, post COVID-19. And we have been , uh, on a journey of discovery, I would say , um, with our congregations around , uh, issues of race. And we've launched an education and action initiative between st. John's Episcopal and pine street, church of Boulder , uh, to figure out , uh, you know, to examine our own white privilege, our own , um, experiences of breathing the air of whiteness and America. And so we're on that path , um , together as congregations to figure out how to be , um, anti-racist congregations and to do good work in the world. So that ,

uh , led us to , um, bring Susan on hyphenated life and also to talk about her new book, yoga and Christianity coming out next year.

Speaker 1: 2:56

I think I remember, I think I was there first time you met her, it was about three years ago at the good Friday day long marathon of sermons. Everyone got the seven last words of Christ. Everyone got one word or something, and you're like, where's s t. John's. I was like, I'll show you when we w alked down there, i t was a little icy out and we were walking fast, got there out of breath. A nd I was running late. She, well, yeah, she was standing outside and Andrew you're on. It's like, and that was a very exciting, and I was like, boy, I'm glad I d on't have to speak in front of people right now. C ause we were, we were hustling down there. So it was a little winded, I think. U m, I think that was, I think that was the first time you met her.

Speaker 2: 3:45

That's right? Yeah, it was good Friday of , um, that was probably 2017 or 2018. Something like that. Yeah . Christianity is an incarnational religion at the heart of Christianity is what does it mean to be a human being in the world who follows God in the way of Jesus for those on the Christian path? I think it's really important to reclaim the incarnational heart of what Christianity started about , uh, which is the scandal, the scandal of God becoming a human being. And somewhere along the way we've located, as we talked about today, we've located the gospel , uh, in the brain or between the ears and have made it a head trip. And I think what's really important about what Susan Springer is bringing to the Christian community in the Christian conversation is the importance of reclaiming the box .

Speaker 3: 4:57

[inaudible]

Speaker 1: 4:57

Welcome to hyphenated life. We invite you to join us on this journey to explore the connection of the sacred and the secular that inspires us to become more fully alive

Speaker 3: 5:20

[inaudible]

Speaker 2: 5:20

Today. We're so delighted to have the Reverend Susan Springer, who is an Episcopal priest. She is in her ninth year as rector of st. John's in Boulder, Colorado. Susan came to the priesthood from a life as an Alaskan oil filled worker, a trail builder, a local politician and author and small business owner. She is presently under contract writing a book that explores the intersection of yoga philosophy with progressive mystical Christian theology, and which makes the case for churches to bring yoga into their worship spaces. So is what we're going to be talking about with Reverend Susan Springer today, Susan, welcome to hyphenated life and thank you for joining .

Speaker 4: 6:05

Oh , thank you for having me, Andrew. It is a delight

Speaker 2: 6:09

Thought that we could start off today by talking a little bit about how your book came to be. Um, I know that it's still being written and will be coming out at some point, but how, how did you kind of , uh , come about writing a book about yoga and Christianity?

Speaker 4: 6:27

Well, I was in a couple of car accidents and , um, I was no longer able to road bike , um, without pain or back country ski or do some of the things that I had really enjoyed doing. And I had always poo-pooed yoga as too slow. Um, and uh, I thought I had pretty good flexibility, pretty good strength, pretty good balance. Finally, I took a yoga class in a bike shop no less on a Monday night. And , um, within the first 10 minutes I had self-corrected on all three of those assumptions. I was neither flexible nor strong, nor did I have good balance. And , um, you know, that realization kind of hooked me. I would say about a year after I began practicing maybe a little bit longer than that. Um, during the closing portion of our Monday night yoga class during Shavasana or the corpse or resting pose, I had the most profound experimental experience of my life. And , um, you know, I hadn't signed up for that, right. I had just signed up to keep, keep my body in shape as my , um, car accident, injury healed. And , uh , I just saw yoga as maybe an interim measure. So I was really blown away from that point. I began to see , um, parallels or intersections or meeting places between yoga philosophy and what I call progressive mystical Christian theology.

Speaker 2: 8:07

Wow. So this is deeply personal to you obviously. And when you talk about , um , mystical, progressive Christianity, could you say a little bit more about what that means to you and put it in a wider context and in , in this sort of conversation?

Speaker 4: 8:24

Sure. I'll start with the Episcopal church, but I think what I, what I have to say about the way we regard scripture will probably , um , ring true for many of your listeners. So in the 15th century, 16th century, Richard i n the church of England, u m, really captured the way Episcopalians regard. U m, Holy scripture, he said everything necessary for salvation is contained in Holy scripture, but everything in Holy scripture is necessary for salvation. Much of the Bible is historically conditioned. Not every sentence of scripture carries equal weight. And so a Pisco paleon i s bring to the reading and study of scripture. U m, reason human reason. We have what you might call a high anthropology or a high regard for our own intellects. And, u m, you know, we believe in kind of mid rushing things out, hashing things out, especially the difficult s ayings of Jesus rather than saying, well, this particular text obviously means this or that. Um, so we give some latitudes. So in that regard we would be called I think progressive, certainly socially. Um, I'm just going to go out on a limb and guess that a majority of the Pisco paleon are somewhat socially progressive that said we are not a homogenous denomination. There are very conservative Episcopalians , socially and politically, and very liberal and everybody in

between. So I certainly wouldn't want to cast us as a one size fits all, but we are progressive in that. We welcome all those voices to the table. U m, gosh, there's a lot more I can say about progressive theology. It is, I guess if you've read any Richard Rohr, it is what I would call a humble stance, right? Like, like the church of my, I was born into the Episcopal church. U m, the church of my childhood was like many mainline denominations, a church that just assumed we had it all. And why wouldn't you want to be like us because we have it all and the church because of its dwindling membership. And now I'm speaking about the church

Speaker 2: 10:53

In general, the Christian Church,

Speaker 4: 10:55

You know, we've been obliged to become a little bit more humble and that's a good thing to recognize that we are not the exclusive holders of the truth that God reveals the divine, self-taught all different denominations, all different human beings in all different ways. So that's another element of what I would call progressive theology. Mr . Cole simply put is the premise that any human being has the ability, the power, the birthright to have a first hand direct experience of God

Speaker 2: 11:37

Well-put yeah, I certainly connect in my own American Baptist churches. USA tradition have been more influenced by Catholic monks probably than any Baptist theologian in my , in my life. So when you're talking about progressive Christian theology, there's so many connecting points even between our two denominational traditions. U m, one of the things that is bubbling up, and of course we are in a , what many people call the Boulder bubble, right? The people's Republic of Boulder, Colorado. So when we're talking about some of this in the realm of mystical and Christian theology, I'm sort of curious, because I know the sort of terminology of, of Christian yoga has kind of bubbled up over the last many years. Um , I 'm kind of curious about your experience of, you know, where you find, u m , t hose connecting points between, u h , C hristian scripture, as you said, and yoga philosophy. I get a little cheeky sometimes, and we'll say, you know, we take the Bible seriously, but not literally. So Jesus said, I am the gate. It doesn't mean he was one, you know, so when you talk, when you talk about that progressive aspect of Christian theology, where do you find, especially as an Episcopal priest, u m , yo u know, in your own voc ation, t hose connecting points between Christian scripture and yoga philosophy, u m , in a way that says, you know, what are some examples in which they say the same thing?

Speaker 4: 13:09

Well, I, before I answer that, I want to go back to Christian yoga , um, because there's, there's a couple of different ways to define that. And I, and I think it's important to distinguish , um, what we do at st John's and what I'm writing about and what I'm not writing about. And I'm , you know, I'm just in the process of discovery, but, but what I've learned so far is that there are Christians who appreciate the exercise, if you will, the physical and mental , um , fitness that yoga can offer, but who are really uncomfortable with the fact that yoga is not inherently a

Christian thing, yoga, in fact, predates religion, per se. It has certainly been associated with Hinduism and Buddhism far, far longer than it ever has been with Judaism or Christianity. Um, but it is, it is simply a philosophical and spiritual practice with eight limbs. And do not ask me to recite what they are, um, what they are. Thank you. We'll take a commercial break right now. Um, I totally lost my train of thought. Oh, so anyway, um, we, I, I don't seek, we don't seek to kind of sanitize or Christianize yoga, and that's a really important distinction. Um, we endeavor to have tremendous respect for the standalone integrity of yoga philosophy. Um, I have no interest in collapsing, the two great traditions of yoga and Christianity or yoga and anything into each other, right. Both have their own standalone integrity. And I think they, they will sail into the future just fine that way they don't w w they can complete and compliment one another, but they don't need each other in order to stand upright. So that's a really important distinction, and there are some people I could, could call out in a good way. Um, I, my friend, my command of French is shameful, but it's, um, father dish Shanae, D E C H a N E T, who wrote in the 1950s in France and wrote in the book called Christian yoga. What's curious, and I know this is an aside, but I'll, I'll get to your question. What's curious is that, you know, we fussed today that yoga has become so westernized and so such a product of white affluent Americans. And, um, essentially in 1956, they Shanae was saying exactly the same thing you was like, wow, Europeans just treat treated as an exercise program. So, so I guess from the time yoga has become westernized, um, practitioners and leaders have struggled to make sure the two traditions retain their independent integrity. U m, what else do I want to say? Beat Griffiths, who was a Roman Catholic priest in India, u m, had a Benedictine Hindu monastery. Um, so he was another Wayfinder. If you will, someone who showed the rest of us the way there are some ignitions who are some Jesuits who follow, um, the spiritual exercises of Ignatius who also marry yoga philosophy. And finally, there's a group called Christians practicing yoga. They have a website, all of those that I named, um, and it's certainly not limited to those I named, but all of them, I named seemed to really respect, um, the independence of the two traditions that said there are other groups who I will not name, u m, who have endeavored to sanitize yoga, u h, replacing the s ansript posture names, the Sanskrit, Austin, and names with, u m, Christian ones. U m, in order to, as I read it, make nervous practitioners feel bit better, u m, and feel less naughty. So, y ou k now, I don't think that's necessary when we practice yoga in the church. We're not worshiping Hindu gods. We might talk about a Hindu God, but it certainly isn't with the aim of getting a Pisca paleon, you know, to turn to Ganash or Shiva or somebody else. So, anyway, um, what are the points of, what are the parallels? I don't know where to begin. Um, let me talk a little bit, and I'm going to talk only in a general way, because that is the upcoming chapter in my book. I am just about done with chapter two and about ready to launch into chapter three, which specifically addresses the places in Christian scripture and the places in, u h, Baton Julie's, yoga sutras, or the Bhagavad Gita, or the Upanishads where yoga philosophy and Christian scripture and theology are saying the same thing. So in a general way, once you develop the eyes to read the Bhagavad Gita or the upon a shots or other, u m, texts, other yoga, philosophical texts with those eyes, it's like, you see the parallels everywhere, right? It's like y ou're mushroom hunting in the forest. And once you learn what an edible mushroom looks like, they're jumping out of the forest floor at you.

Speaker 1: 19:17

Yeah. I, I, I'm curious, uh, this, this idea of, of yoga and Christianity and yoga being an Eastern concept rather than a Christian concept, or, uh, you know, coming from a different religion. One of the reasons we started this podcast hyphenated life was to try and break down some of those barriers that limit, uh, experiencing life to the fullest. And we're about to embark on a, well, we actually have just begun embarking on a fall series here at pine street church, exploring different elements of wellness, um, and working towards the idea that wellness is a balanced act between heart, soul, mind, and body. And I find, um, I wonder historically, I think you could easily say that Christianity has done a great job of not just ignoring the body, but, um, saying that it's, it's off limits kind of thing. And so, to me, it makes great sense. He takes something that, that predates religions, you know, they figured something out. Um, but once you start incorporating the idea of physical wellness, you realize it's connected to, you know, the wellness of the mind, body and spirit. And, um, I'm wondering in lieu of not having any other real, um, option, is there a way that we can just say this is needed here in the Christian experience and in America? Absolutely.

Speaker 4: 20:48

So, so as I work on this book, I kind of feel like she's a lover and I visit her, you know, I sneak away and visit her whenever I can. And this morning, really, really early, I was working on the ending of chapter two. And the last section, um, in that chapter that I just started mapping out a bit is, um, our unease with the human body, right. We talk about, um, you know, Jesus says, this is my body in the Eucharist, uh, uh, given for you, but we would never think of saying, well, Jesus, here's my body given for you. I mean, isn't this, uh, don't we wish reciprocity, isn't this a relationship in any other relationship? Isn't there reciprocity, but we get all nervous. Oh, you couldn't possibly want my body. Um, and you know, we talk about being made in the image of God, the image and likeness. We talk about the body of Christ, the church, we talk about embodied incarnational theology and on and on and on and on. And we just get very squeamish, right? We can't, we made Mary a Virgin, even though the Greek text says she was a young woman. Um, you know, and on the one hand you could argue that we wanted to kind of hash out Jesus's DNA, his paternal DNA. But I think it's because we can't fathom God mucking about under the covers. I mean, not to be disrespectful, but it's, you know, we were given these, these as one. Oh, golly, let me think. Oh, it was, it was daisies, I think, you know, these radiant luminous bodies, just like God gave God's son and, and we have spent millennia apologizing for them. I mean, I think it goes back to, um, Neoplatonism and, and the scandal that, that God, the divine self would deign the muck about in human flesh, right? It's sweaty and messy and imperfect, and it makes funny noises. And, and so we divorce and Episcopalians have, have been famous for this. We divorced the body from the rest of our religious experience. I mean, we have the, we, we laugh at ourselves, you know, the frozen chosen rats, that's the nickname for a Pisco Balian's you can explain it that we are an intellectual denomination. I mean, it's why scientists find a welcome home. I don't think there's anything wrong with that, but I think what yoga offers is a way as you said, to bring mind and body and heart, and that's what it means to have a relationship of reciprocity with Jesus Christ.

Speaker 2: 24:04

I love what you're saying about the, the incarnational aspect of Christianity. And you mentioned Richard Rohr a little bit earlier, and he, several years ago, you said, if you think about the human body and you wonder about where the gospel resides in the human body, uh, typically it's between the ears. You know, it's a, it's a, it's a head trip. And so kind of what you're bringing together with yoga philosophy and Christianity. I mean, I think it's so powerful because, uh, you know, even with if therapy these days, right, we do cognitive therapy, but, um, I've been really curious lately about, uh, body energy management. I've been reading about the, I think, seven energy centers of the body, right. With the chakras. So when, when you, when you began to combine yoga philosophy and Christianity, what is your, uh, sort of angle of vision, I guess, about how to, how to reclaim or reengage, uh, the body, um, with our Christian practice, um, when we are so, as Richard Rohr says again, located between the ears.

Speaker 4: 25:16

Yeah. You know, it's, it's, I don't, I don't have a ready answer for that. Andrew. I don't have a formulaic answer. Um, the first thing that comes to mind is that people need to have a personal heart experience of Jesus Christ for themselves. Otherwise I can, I can make compelling arguments. You can make compelling arguments, we can use tremendous fabulous examples. Um, but, and this is back to Richard Rory, you know, he said something like, um, we can tell people what it is they are to do and how it is they are to live, but until they have had that personal mystical experience of Christ, it's all going to reside between the ears. Uh, it doesn't translate. So I guess my hope and my prayer is that people practicing yoga in the church, in the worship space begin to have such a personal heart or mystical experience.

Speaker 2: 26:40

Yeah. I, I, I'm fascinated by Christian.

Speaker 1: 26:44

Um, it feels like, uh, like the, the last, the last portion of a once, you know, much broader concept of what Christianity is. Um, and we've, we've tried to embrace that here at pine street church the past few years, very much so with Celtic Christianity and, and re rediscovering the humanness, you know, um, heaven on earth, the, the idea that this does count, this is, you know, this life that we're living, we should live it to the fullest. And you've mentioned that mystical experience. I like the idea, the term, the transcendent experience, um, that I think it's, again, going back to why we started this podcast is, uh, it felt like so many opportunities for transcendent experience were defined outside the boundaries of what was allowed to be sacred. And, um, so I don't know if you could talk about that a little bit. You kind of have been talking about it, but this idea that any transcendent experience is sacred, no matter the, the root of it, no matter the origin of it and that it is, it is valid and worthwhile. And I think, and, and, and maybe in speaking to the mystical, mystical traditions, how they may, um, if we, if we re circle and refocus on some of those, they may enable us to be open to, um, transcendent experience no matter where it comes from to being, um, worthwhile and certainly as sacred as any

Speaker 4: 28:16

Well , you know, the news flash is that God works in the world and not just, you know, in the, in the pews surrounded by stain glass. Right. And I think that many of us have a particular age. I mean, I can't speak for someone who's 30. I can only speak for someone who's 60 ish And beyond. Um, but we were raised that the church building was Holy unconsecrated space, and that's where you went to meet Jesus. And I don't recall ever being taught that I couldn't meet Jesus anywhere else. I mean, I remember as a kid in my rowboat on the Harbor of Rockport, Maine meeting Jesus quite readily , um, I didn't recognize it at the time because nobody gave me the language and nobody gave me permission. And I wonder how my life would have been more tethered to Christ from start to finish. If somebody had given me the language of mystical experience as a child, I knew what I was experiencing, but I didn't have a label for it. And to the extent that the Christian Church I'll move beyond the Episcopal church here to the expense, to the extent that the Christian Church has not done that we have failed our members. Um, and we have ill-equipped them to dissolve the bounds between sacred and secular. We have ill-equipped them to make all of life, all of experience every week, day, every hour sacred. And, you know, Jesus saying, take off your shoes here , the bushes on fire, you know, you're standing on Holy ground. That's not just an interesting story. It's an important theological statement about what God thinks of God's creation. So yoga can assist with changing that and culturated unhelpful worldview, but it isn't the only thing. Um, w what's interesting, there's a, there's an Episcopal priest and, and , uh, I don't know what you'd call them . I guess, scholar of congregational development, whose name I'm in a butcher Dwight Sheil . It's like Z S C H E I L E. And in his book, the people of the way rediscovering or discovering Episcopal identity, you know, he, he , he says very clearly at the beginning, got God's working out there, folks in the community beyond the doors, beyond the double red doors, beyond the stained glass, u m, it's up to you to go out into the community and see what God is doing and to join God there, that's the invitation. And I feel like churches who bring yoga into the worship space are in essence doing that, right. We're looking at the meteoric rise of the popularity of yoga in the United States and saying, huh, I wonder if God's in that. I wonder if God could be up to something. I wonder if we should take notice, maybe the answer is now, but at least it bears our exploration, at least at bears, our attention. Did that address your question at all?

Speaker 1: 32:29

Yeah, absolutely. Um, and you hit on this concept that I also also find intriguing is sort of reverse course of the whole I ifelong of Christianity, which, you know, there, t here's an element of b ringing it out into the world, right. Making disciples of Christ, et cetera, but it feels like this day and age, u m, we need to, we need to reverse that course and bring the world back into the church because it feels like something got left behind. Um , y ou know, and I think, you know, a w onder these days that we 're i n right now have made these things even more apparent as the churches are closed down, literally don't have that four walls and a roof and stained glass and red doors to go into, to have our sacred experiences. And now more than ever, I think we can recognize how critical it is to, you know, open our, open our eyes, minds and hearts and bodies to everything that the world has to offer. You know, and I, I, I love that you're writing this book. I love that this is a passion of yours. I feel like we're kindred spirits here an d i n many ways, for sure.

Speaker 2: 33:38

Yeah. I, you know, and Susan, that's really great that you brought that up again, David. I mean, Susan, when you talked earlier about, this is my body and in talking about the incarnational nature of Christianity, it's the, it's the heart of, of, uh, what we're about and who, you know, Jesus showed us the way to be. Um, and when you talk about this is my body, I know that, you know, for your, uh, denominational tradition, it's been, uh, sort of difficult, right. To in this kind of quarantine time, uh, where the Eucharist is. So front and center for the Episcopalian tradition. Uh, could you talk a little bit about, this is my body, uh, in terms of how that has, um, you know, been part of how you've navigated things as an Episcopal priest with offering Eucharist online or not being able to offer Eucharist online?

Speaker 4: 34:32

Well, I tried to offer you Krista online, but, um, my Eucharistic theology was a bit unorthodox for, um, management, our diocese and Fisher. And, um, yeah, so that didn't happen. Um, but it was very Richard Rohr ish. Um, it was, it was the Christ on down, right? If we, if we read scripture that said, Jesus can walk through walls where his disciples are cowering in fear on a locked room, I'm guessing that there isn't Christ can transmit divine power, energy, blessing, and grace over the internet. I mean, I'm not much of a tech person, but I'm just all gamble that, and, you know, as diverse a denomination as we are theologically, there are traditions. There is, uh, we are a religious institution and, um, we do have to conform to the, uh, prevailing theology. So that didn't happen. Um, so we did a work around, uh, that feels actually by comparison, very logistically complicated, but given the, the constraints imposed upon us by our denomination and given the constraints imposed upon us and everybody else by the pandemic, we are not going to gather for communion to share communion in the church. Uh, before the pandemic, we, we had enough people worshiping so that it would take like six church services a weekend in order to accommodate everybody. Right. Um, and even if everybody felt, not everybody feels comfortable coming into a building. So right out of the gate, you're not being inclusive. And inclusivity is, is one of my congregation's core values. So it just doesn't work. So what we've come up with is a way to take the body out into the world. Um, we've established eight satellite congregations that stretch from North Denver and Broomfield in the South to Longmont and Lyons in the North to Erie and Lewisville, Lafayette, little bit to the East. And we have 40 volunteers who have stepped forward to be, um, who've been trained as Eucharistic ministers. They will carry this sacrament out into communities and people will gather in parks and parking lots on porches. I'm trying to think if there are other creative places that folks have found, I think it's mostly parks open spaces, one front porch, and they will share communion in smaller groups. Uh, and as I was this Sunday, the 4th of October is the first time we will do that. So it's a great adventure, a great experiment. And I wrote to my congregation in great detail about it. And I said, if it feels strange to you that that's such a Holy sacrament, isn't happening in the church, try to remember that the first meal or one of the first meals that Jesus shared with people was on the grass of a hillside or whatever dinner table he happened to be there, there was no consecrated space. You know, nobody came unconsecrated the space and stuck a sign in the ground. It was the presence and the intent, you know, David back to the heart, right? It was the heart of people together with heart of Jesus that made it consecrated space that made it Holy ground.

Speaker 2: 38:41

I was thinking a minute ago about the lines of , um, from Elizabeth Barrett, Browning, you know, who said, earth is crammed with heaven and every common Bush of fire with God, but only the one who takes off his or her shoes sees it, the rest sit around and p lay blackberries. T here's t his l ike, you know, just thinking about the communion, the communion n ess of our world that does go beyond those red doors. You mentioned to go a minute ago and, you know, in thinking about, and Susan you've, you've stated this here and there, but, you know, we're all especially a sort of, u h, professional Christians, so to speak who have been lamenting the, u h, you know, what some sociologists of religion called the hemorrhaging of church membership since the 1960s, when you kind of getting back to the y oga philosophy again, when you think about, u h, you know, folks going out the door of the church, and yet again, Americans l ove their y oga. And in this meteoric rise, you described a minute ago about, u h, u h, y oga practice. W hat, what might you say, u m, about that parallel, you know, o f folks leaving the church, so to speak since the sixties and this rise truly in, in y oga practice in the United States?

Speaker 4: 40:08

Well, there's something at the intersection and that's part of the aim of my research. There are crossing trajectories , uh, in my lifetime, the Episcopal church has shrunk by half. We are today, half the size we were when I was born in 1958. And not exactly that over that same period of time, but roughly right. It's kinda hard to say , um, okay. It was 1972 when y oga really began to catch on or 1981 or not, it's from the research I've done to date . It just isn't that precise. But by y oga now, I think there's 41 million practitioners and we're at 1.7 million in the Episcopal church. So somewhere those two trajectories cross, I, gosh, it would be so easy if there was, you know, if, if we looked, if, if we e xamine that crossing place and said, Oh, well, that's the problem. You know, we can fix that. Um, it's not that simple. It, you know, going back to , um, our , our ticklish nervous about the human body , um, our hypocrisy, all Christianity's hypocrisy, where we stamp all our welcome on our sign. And then if somebody shows up and they're not dressed the right way, or they're pierced, or they're tattooed, or they're having a bad mental health day or their clothes aren't clean, or they have body odor, or their skin is a different color, or they speak a different language or something, we send them the message in a hundred different ways, subtle and not so subtle that we'll all are welcome , but some are more welcomed than others. Exactly. There's, you know, there's the whole , in my book, I examine a little bit the rise of the SPNR, the spiritual, but not really. And that's a reaction to some degree , um, against what young people or young people's parents found to be hypocritical about religion, you know, and we're a human institution for goodness sakes, like any other human institution we're going to be in . Perfect . Um, but I , I think there , I think there are things at that intersection that the church can and should pay attention to. Uh, one is, you know, Richard Rohr, u h, saying, u h, clergy do a great job of telling people what to believe and a crappy job of teaching people, how to live. A nd when I, I was at a conference and h e's, he was our speaker and he said that, and I went, Oh God, that hurt. And, u m, he was right, absolutely. Right. Y eah. T hen, you know, I 'm n ot, I don't know, as there was a class in seminary entitled how t o teach people how to live. I mean, the best tools we were given was go, pray m ore, go give to the poor more, go, g ive more money t o the church. U h, go study scripture, more, take on this

spiritual practice, take on that. Those are all really valid and good answers, but they, I believe fall short of what people are looking for in terms of guidance. We have not been practical enough. We have not, uh, drawn a tight enough connection between the peace of God, which passes all understanding and how to get it. Susan Springer. You're a luminous being

Speaker 2: 44:33

As a leader. And just as simply as a human, thank you for joining us on hyphenated life today, we are deeply grateful and feel so lucky that you spent some time with us today. Thank you so very much. I love you too, brother, brother, we love you.

Speaker 3: 44:53

Good luck on this wonderful endeavor. Take care. Thank you. Thank you so much. Hyphenated. Life is a production of pine street church in Boulder, Colorado hosted by Andrew Doherty and David [inaudible]. The podcast is produced by Phil Norman and executive producer, Alexi Molden special. Thanks to our guests today and the Leal Hill trust of Boulder, Colorado. [inaudible] they got the Southern accent. Yeah, that's there's an app for that.

Speaker 2: 45:50

Welcome to, Oh, sorry. Take two.