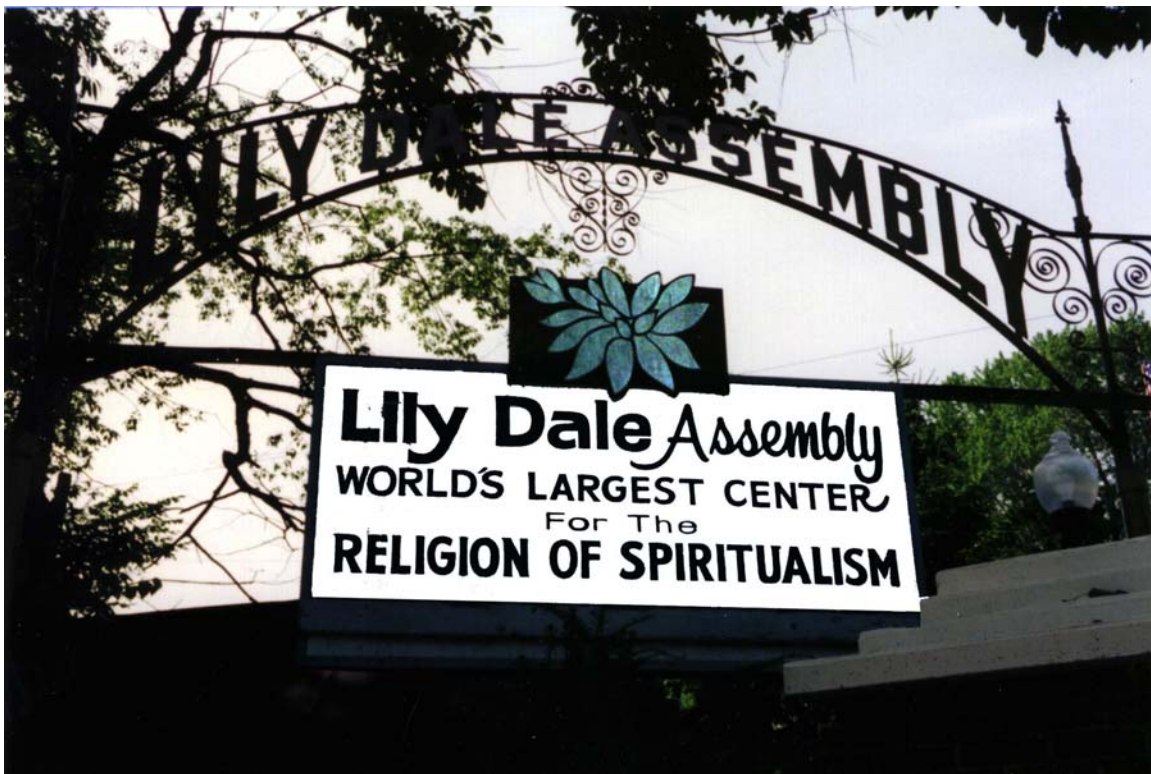


Carl Takes Us to Lily Dale



The sun shone brightly one July morning in 1978, as Bonnie and I drove to Carl's church. This time we weren't going to a psychic development class. At Carl's we would board a bus for an eleven-hour ride to Lily Dale, a small village in upstate New York where many psychics had summer homes. Carl had arranged this trip for our class as well as several other people. We were enthusiastic about what we were learning in Carl's classes. The more knowledge we acquired about psychic phenomena, the more we realized there was so much more to learn. This is a vast subject, with hundreds of facets. With our insatiable appetite for more knowledge, and more psychic experiences, we eagerly boarded the bus.

We had a fantastic time on the bus ride. We joked and sang songs. The hours seemed to fly by. At last we arrived at Lily Dale. As our bus approached the arched gate, we read the boldly lettered sign: **LILY DALE, THE LARGEST SPIRITUALISTS CAMP IN THE WORLD.** Spiritualism is a religion with two main tenets: the soul survives after death, and communication is possible with departed souls through mediumship.



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Lily Dale was 88 years old. Most of the buildings wore their age without pride. There was a whisper of days of grandeur—days long gone. We were staying at the Maplewood Hotel, located in the northwest corner of the grounds. I felt I was travelling back to the turn of the century. The bright summer sun had made the rooms quite stuffy, and there were no fans to help escape the heat. Once we had settled in, we met Carl in the lobby for a tour of the grounds.

Although most of us were just beginning to develop our psychic abilities, it was apparent to all of us that Lily Dale had a unique vibration. It was puzzling. I scanned the grounds. It looked like an ordinary small village, with little streets branching out in all directions. It resembled thousands of other small towns that dot the countryside. What made Lily Dale feel so different?

The medium's cottages gave Lily Dale its special flavor. Like a multi-colored patch-work quilt, some were painted in bright, cheerful colors, while others were faded. What caught our attention were the signs on the doorways of each medium's house. The medium's name and his or her special psychic gift, such as trance or healing, was prominently displayed on the sign.

As we continued our tour of Lily Dale, we began to notice the many specialized buildings on the grounds. They varied in size, shape, and purpose. The largest building was the auditorium, which held about 700 people. The stateliest building in Lily Dale was the library, with its majestic columns adorning the entry doors. When I had a chance to explore it, I discovered most of the books were about psychic phenomena and the history of Spiritualism. The archives had books dating back to the 1850's.

During the summer, an intensive schedule of lectures, psychic demonstrations, and classes kept visitors to Lily Dale very busy. When a medium was not busy with a scheduled assignment, he or she conducted private readings.

On our first night, our whole group attended a service. This service followed the same format as Carl's church services. It began with a lecture. As the lecturer began speaking, Carl nudged me and whispered, "You know he's in trance?"

"He is?" I said, "But he's standing up and his eyes are open. How can he be in trance?"

"A medium can be standing and still be in a trance state. The average person couldn't tell."

Later Carl explained to me that many Biblical prophets were in a trance when they prophesied. The Bible describes the trance-state as follows:

And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.¹

This clearly shows that the prophet's Spirit had left his body, so the Spirit of the Lord could speak through it. This is why the Bible used the phrase, *and shalt be turned into another man*. Often the Spirit would have another accent, or use different grammatical

¹ 1 Samuel 10:6 [KJV].

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syntax, or different enunciation than the prophet used in his natural state of consciousness. As these *men of God* prophesied in public, many people might have thought the words the prophet spoke were coming from his own consciousness instead of from the Spirit that had taken over his body.

The second part of the service at Lily Dale was a message service in which the medium would act as bridge between a Spirit and a person in the congregation. It is essential for the person receiving the Spirit message to respond to the medium. The person should say, "Good morning," or "You are welcome," even if the person does not recognize the Spirit. If the person remains silent, the Spirit will not communicate. Spirit Messages are similar to telephone calls. If a person answers the phone and remains silent, the caller will hang-up, terminating the communication.

Message work can be very emotional, especially the first time a person contacts a deceased loved one. This is a sample of the type of communication that may occur during a message service:

Medium: I would like to come to the lady wearing the pink blouse. I need to hear your voice.
Woman: Good evening.
Medium: Yes, thank you. As I am picking up on your vibration, I see the word "Roy" around you. Did you know a man named Roy, who would be on the Spirit side of life?
Woman: Yes, he was my husband.
Medium: He is handing you a vase with four beautiful red roses in it.
Woman: Tell him he can keep his damn roses. He was an alcoholic, and he drank Four Roses whiskey. He drank himself to death. If he wasn't a drunk, he'd still be alive, here with me.

The first lesson a medium receives from Spirit is about symbolism. It is an ancient language that Spirit uses, since, like sign language, it transcends all languages and cultures. Sometimes a Spirit can only speak a language that is foreign to the medium. By using symbolic pictures, the Spirit can communicate to the medium, who can then pass on the information to the person. In this message, the medium saw the symbol of four roses, which symbolized the husband's favorite brand of whiskey. It was a perfect symbol for his identification.

Messages may come through involving people's health, lost objects, and from loved ones who have passed on. Sometimes they're serious and sometimes very funny.

Medium: The light is moving to a young gentleman in the back of the room. You are wearing a green and white striped shirt.
Man: Yes, you are welcome.
Medium: As I move into your vibration, I am aware of a gentleman coming to you. He was heavysset, and quite tall. He has jet black hair and is wearing an army uniform.
Man: Yes, my father was in the army. He died in the Korean War.
Medium: As he comes around you, sir, he places his arms around you. He is now showing me the image of a toy train.
Man: Just before he left for the war, he bought me a train set. I still have it.
Medium: Yes, he is smiling because you still remember that. He is concerned

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- about a health condition. He is telling me that you need to be careful. Have you had a physical lately?
- Man: No, I haven't.
- Medium: Your father is saying that unless you see a doctor within the next 10 days, and start taking blood pressure medicine, you will be joining him in the Spirit World. He is quite concerned, since it is not your time to cross over.
- Man: Well, I will have it checked out.
- Medium: Thank you. I am now leaving your vibration, and I would like to come to the gray haired woman sitting in the second row.
- Woman: Good evening.
- Medium: There is a man here who is laughing. All he's showing me is a jar of peanut butter, and a jar of cold cream. Does that mean anything to you?
- Woman: Yes, as a matter of fact, it does.
- Medium: Now I see the man emptying the jar of cold cream and filling it with peanut butter.
- Woman: That's exactly what he did. We were on vacation and he put peanut butter in my cold cream jar. When I went to put the cream on my face in the dark I put the peanut butter on instead. It was really funny, and we had a good laugh. I was so embarrassed that I never told a living soul about it.

At Lily Dale, it seemed the medium came to people who were new to the meeting. Most of the people in our group received messages. Finally, Spirit came to me. The message I received spoke of a time when I would become an instrument of Spirit. This excited me greatly, as I had developed a great deal of respect for mediumship.

One of Spiritualism's main doctrines was becoming clear to me. After death, our Spirit continues to live. Death is not the end. It is actually a birth into a new world. Heaven, or the Spirit World, is not detached from us, above or below us. The Spirit World (heaven) is not above us. It exists on a higher frequency than our senses can detect.

It was comforting to know that loved ones who had passed on could communicate with us. This new philosophy removed the mystery and fear surrounding death. Death was merely a transition, the severing of the silver cord that connects the physical body and soul. The New Testament also explains that we have two bodies—one for each world.

It is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.²

I tell you this; my brothers: an earthly body made of flesh and blood cannot get into God's kingdom. These bodies are not the right kind to live forever.³

² 1 Corinthians 15:44 [RSV].

³ 1 Corinthians 15:50 [LIV].

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When the soul leaves the body, it enters the Spirit World. Then it has access to *all* its memories, not only of the last life, but all of previous lives.

Being around so many mediums and hearing these messages was inspiring and educational. It was evident, being submersed in a community where the Gifts of the Spirit were practiced on a daily basis, that we were witnessing a principle Carl had taught us. Often during our psychic development classes, he stressed that the laws of psychic science have not changed, what is true today was true in Biblical times. At Lily Dale we could see this for ourselves.

Although the terminology has changed over the centuries, the process of receiving spiritual guidance from a *prophet*, or *medium*, existed in Biblical times. One of the most famous “readings” that occurs in the Bible is when Jesus read for a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well.⁴ Jesus had come to Jacob’s well, and was tired and thirsty. At the same time a Samaritan woman approached the well. Jesus asked her for a drink. We discover in verse 11:

“Sir,” the woman said, “you have no bucket and this well is deep.”⁵

Jesus did not have a bucket. The woman drew Jesus water from the well with her water jar and handed it to him. As he held the jar, he saw images of her life. This is exactly what happened when Carl had us practice *psychometry*. All objects record the vibration of their owner. Because Jesus was a medium, he was sensitive to the vibrations of the water jar. Jesus began telling the woman about her life and gave her spiritual advice. This is exactly what a psychic reading is. It is receiving spiritual advice from a medium.

Just like the mediums of Lily Dale, Jesus told the woman information that he had no way of knowing except through his psychic ability.

Jesus replied, “Go home, call your husband and come back.” She answered, “I have no husband.” “You are right, said Jesus, ‘in saying that you have no husband, for, although you have had five husbands, the man with whom you are now living is not your husband; you told me the truth there.”⁶

We know this information was accurate by the woman’s response.

“Sir,” replied the woman, “I can see you are a prophet.”⁷

This is clearly a psychic reading. Again, we find evidence towards the end of this episode.

⁴ John 4:6-30.

⁵ John 4:11 [NEB].

⁶ John 4:16-18 [NEB].

⁷ John 4:19 [NEB].



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The woman put down her water-jar and went away to the town, where she said to the people, "Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"⁸

The King James Bible does not use the word *Messiah* in this verse. It says:

Is not this the Christ?⁹

The fact that the woman left her water jar further implies that she had given it to Jesus to drink from. She was obviously excited by her "reading," since the information that came through Jesus was accurate. Besides, it was not every day that a woman from her social class had a reading with a prophet. Usually only royalty or the wealthier classes could afford such a luxury.

There are two more salient points that occur in this particular Bible story. The first is that Jesus reveals a great truth in this conversation. He simply states:

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.¹⁰

This statement is a great truth. God is Spirit, because God is the spiritual energy that resides within us, as the soul. Many people think Jesus is God. They believe that when they die, Jesus will sit in judgment of their lives, and decide if their souls will live in heaven or hell. This is far from the truth, as this Bible story demonstrates.

Because Jesus held the woman's water jar, he sensed that the woman was living with a man without the benefit of being married. To put it in modern day terms, she was living in sin. Jesus did not judge this woman. He didn't say to her, "Listen lady, you are a terrible sinner for living with a man without being married. You must do penitence and say the Act of Contrition." Nor did Jesus say, "You must ask for forgiveness." Jesus made no comment about this woman's behavior. Careful analysis reveals that Jesus didn't judge her at all!

If an obvious sinner (according to the custom of that era) received no condemnation from Jesus, then there is strong evidence that Jesus did not believe in judging people. After all, wasn't it Jesus who said:

Pass no judgment, and you will not be judged. For as you judge others, so you will yourselves be judged, and whatever measure you deal out to others will be dealt back to you.¹¹

That was his philosophy. The notion that Jesus stands in judgement was created by priests to intimidate and control their followers. Very simply stated, the priests became ventriloquists, using their God as a wooden puppet, projecting their falsehoods through their God's mouth.

⁸ John 4:28-29 [NEB].

⁹ John 4:29 [KJV].

¹⁰ John 4:24 [NEB].

¹¹ Matthew 7:1-2 [NEB].

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The reading I had while at Lily Dale was as emotionally charged as the one the woman received at the well. I am sure I will never forget it for as long as I live. The medium I went to was flamboyant and charismatic. His house was a deep burgundy red. His readings lasted fifteen minutes. He was a very popular medium, and I was lucky to get an appointment with him. I was his last client for the day. Mediums have different styles, just as teachers do. Some can be quite funny as they deliver their message, while others can be quite blunt. This medium was confrontational. He made me look at issues in my life that I had been afraid to examine. It was a harrowing experience. I felt as though I were on the witness stand, being cross-examined. When I left, I was so shaken that the medium had to remind me to give him his fee. The reading had lasted 45 minutes.

Bonnie had an upsetting reading too. The medium had told her things that distressed her. We decided to talk to Carl about it. He explained that there are different types of mediums. Some are fantastic, others not. He told Bonnie to forget about her reading, since he wouldn't recommend that medium. He told me the medium I had seen was probably correct in what he saw, but that he could have been a bit more tactful in his presentation.

The Lily Dale community is near a wooded area. Several meeting places are in the woods, because trees help to increase psychic energy. The largest natural meeting area was called the *Forest Cathedral*. The day after we arrived at Lily Dale, another group arrived. Surprisingly, the medium for that group was Emily Hewitt, from Paterson, New Jersey. Emily Hewitt and Carl Hewitt weren't related to each other. Emily was a very feisty, elderly lady. When we had the opportunity to hear her give messages, we discovered she didn't pull any punches. She spoke her mind, and the minds of her Spirit guides, with no regard to the receiver's feelings. Carl and Emily decided to hold a joint meeting for both our groups, at midnight in the *Forest Cathedral*.

I'll never forget our march into the woods that dark, starry night. Carl had wrapped himself in an Indian blanket. He resembled what I'd imagined his control, Chief Lone Eagle, looked like. When we arrived, the other group was already there. Emily Hewitt's Spirit control was also Native American. These two Native Spirits decided to have some fun. They treated us to a pow-wow. Each Native American took over his respective medium. Each wanted to out-do the other. We had a spectacular demonstration of deep trance mediumship. The lectures that both these Spirits delivered through their mediums were superb. It was interesting that everyone could hear both voices. There was no amplification system out in the woods, but the voices of both mediums boomed through the air. The next day Carl explained that the Spirits had made an adjustment, so the sound carried.

The trip to Lily Dale lasted three days. It was an inspirational experience for me. I learned so much. I witnessed many Spirit Messages, and discovered the great variations between mediums—some being better than others. I had also encountered a philosophic difference between the mediums. Many mediums at Lily Dale focused on proving the continuation of life. The readings and messages they gave from Spirit were geared toward proving an afterlife. Carl's readings were different, because he didn't share that focus. He brought in many Spirits connected to the sitter during a reading, but he went far beyond that. He focused on spiritual advice and guidance. Being forewarned of an upcoming event sometimes means that one is better prepared for a situation. I can say this was true in my case.

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During this trip, I had a religious reawakening. Spiritual feelings overwhelmed me, and I felt a need to pray. I went to the library and asked if they had a Jewish prayer book. Unfortunately they didn't. So I walked toward the *Forest Cathedral*. As I walked, the interplay of light and shadow drew my eyes. I studied the light filtering through the trees. I imagined myself as an early settler walking through the virgin woods of a seemingly uninhabited continent.

Deeper into the woods, I came to the *Forest Cathedral*. There were many long, white, wooden benches. I sat down on one and basked in the peaceful light. The beauty of nature surrounded me. I began to drift off, to go within. It's easy to meditate, to communicate with the God within in such a tranquil setting. As I sat I realized the architect of this great cathedral was not a man, but Mother Nature. As I looked up into the crystal blue sky, there was nothing to hinder my view.

The hustle and bustle of urban life had drained me. I felt depleted because I had lost my connection with God. The warmth of the sun, the clean smell of the air, and the chirping of the birds all held me in their embrace. I felt my soul being recharged.

A man-made cathedral is a holy site for one particular group of people. The *Forest Cathedral* had no sign labeling its denomination. All could worship at this holy site.

I found myself praying. I had found my way back to God. I could now see a pattern in the universe. I found the answers to all those questions that troubled me during my college years. Reincarnation gave new meaning to life. The thought of life after death removed my fear of death. The experience of spiritual mediumship brought me a great sense of purpose and peace.

As I continued sitting in that magnificent cathedral, I realized what made Lily Dale such a special place was its history. The hallowed grounds were full of ghostly imprints left by people who had come to communicate with God, for almost one hundred years. The grounds held the memory of the thousands of people, endowed with the Gifts of the Spirit, who had reached through the veil to retrieve timeless knowledge. The grounds had absorbed the joy of the many people who had had the opportunity to speak to their departed loved ones. Their heart-felt relief in learning that life continued after death permeated the grounds of Lily Dale, charging the atmosphere with holy reverence and joy.