

## *Real Life Stories* *From New Age Deception to Christ*



Doreen Virtue's story touched my heart. It's fair to say that her life has gone from adoring fans to one of scorn and ridicule. Doreen no longer jets around the world in First Class comfort. Gone are the days of limousines picking her up at international airports and sponsors attending to her every need, showering her with every perk imaginable when hosting a celebrity. She had written 30 New Age books that were published in 38 languages.

“As recently as five years ago, I was the world's top-selling New Age author. At the time, I enjoyed a phenomenally lucrative lifestyle. I lived on a 50-acre ranch in Hawaii. My publisher treated me like a rock star, flying me and my husband first class to give sold-out workshops across the globe. We would stay in penthouse suites at swanky hotels and rub elbows with celebrities.”

At the peak of her *New Age* success, she hung out in backstage green rooms with the likes of Marianne Williamson, Wayne Dyer, Deepak Chopra, Louise Hay, James Redfield, and Neale Donald Walsh.

### ***Childhood Religion***

Upon reflection, Doreen Virtue traces her evolving *New Age* and angelology beliefs to her childhood roots. She didn't become a convert of *New Age* philosophy; it was an outgrowth of her upbringing in the Christian Science religion – started by Mary Baker Eddy. Baker Eddy claimed she had received a personal revelation of the ‘true’ meaning of the Bible. But Doreen says *Christian Science* is neither Christian nor scientific.

Perhaps you have seen in your travels a *Christian Science Reading Room*. There are 2000 quiet, library-like reading rooms around the world. The *Christian Science* Church operates these rooms as a public service. Or, maybe you have flipped through the *Christian Science Monitor* – an international news service dating back to 1908 when Baker Eddy, the founder of the *Church of Christ, Scientist*, started her newspaper.

As a little girl, Doreen was taught that Jesus was merely a man who just demonstrated the potential that all could reach. Her mother told her that the primary mission of Jesus was to teach people how to have good physical health. Despite being taught that there was no crucifixion, no devil, no sin and no hell, she was told she was a Christian like all the other *Christian Science* followers.

Yes, *Christian Science* followers use the Bible – at least parts of it. They quote their favourite verses out of context often and cherry-pick the parts of the Bible that seem to fit with Mary Baker Eddy's take on the Bible. They say they are Christians but deny the core doctrines of the Bible.

Doreen and her brother Ken were taught that Genesis 3 and the Bible teaching on Original Sin and the Fall was nothing more than a metaphorical myth. She believed that she was “perfect, whole, and complete,” and when she felt bad about herself, she just needed to repeat and affirm that phrase.

Reading selected parts of the Bible, praying to God and revering Jesus in no way makes anyone a Christian. But Doreen didn't know that. She grew up thinking she was a Christian – but just a different brand. Later, at the height of her career, when she weaved something good about Jesus into her *New Age* lecture, just like she would say something about the Buddha, Doreen believed she was serving that which was good and doing what God had called her to do. She sometimes called herself “God's secretary.”

## *Real Life Stories* *From New Age Deception to Christ*

### ***Family Profile***

Doreen was not accustomed to wealth. Her father had quit his navy aerospace engineering job on an aircraft carrier to pursue a niche home-based enterprise. He started selling model airplane plans to hobby enthusiasts and wrote books about his love for balsa wood, elastic-band powered model planes, etc. She craved her father's attention, but he seemed very focused on model planes and pictures of exotic cars. In her autobiography, Doreen attributes, in part, her multiple broken relationships to her childhood when she craved her father's attention, approval and affection.

They lived in very expensive Southern California, but they quickly became a lower-middle-class family after her father's self-employment decision. Yes, her dad ensured the bills were paid, and they were fed, but shopping for young Doreen was thrift stores where they found second-hand clothing or out-of-style discounted clothes.

At school, she felt alone and on the outside of the in-group. She wasn't fashionable in a fashion-conscious part of the world. When she tried to communicate with her friends, she used strange religious jargon from *Christian Science* like 'manifestation,' which helped isolate her from her peers at school.

"We didn't have enough money to pay for doctor's appointments. Mom would pray over our cuts, bruises and illnesses, and it seemed as if we healed quickly. Each Wednesday night, we'd go to the church's testimonial meetings and hear people discuss their healings."

### ***Finding Her Way***

As a young girl, with questions about mortality and the afterlife, Doreen went into a *Christian Science* Reading Room to find some answers. But the 12-year-old girl couldn't find any books about death and eternity. However, her mother was a volunteer there, so who better to ask?

*"When I couldn't find anything, I asked Mom for this material. She promptly told me that I was too young to worry about such matters."*

In her quest for meaning, acceptance and love, Doreen quickly learned that people liked to have someone to listen to their problems. It was no surprise that she developed an academic interest in psychology and counselling early on. But her motivation was more than that. Like many who go into psychotherapy, Doreen had a longing to understand herself. After the birth of her two sons, Charles and Grant, she continued her academic pursuits part-time. She was 30 when she graduated from Chapman University with an MA and BA in counselling psychology.

### ***Moving Towards New Age***

Unsatisfied with the unanswered questions she had about *Christian Science*, Doreen was searching for something deeper – perhaps some inner well of secret wisdom. This quest for special insights and her desire to help others moved her forward into areas that would haunt her later in life.

Doreen delved deeper into the spirit world, and visions and messages from angels were no longer isolated events. She began to rely on supernatural messages, which became a part of her brand in the *New Age* realm – not knowing what the Bible said about such practices.

"I scoured used bookstores and attended classes on Eastern Mysticism, metaphysics, spiritual healing, psychic development, Egyptology, Hermetics and other "forbidden" teachings. I rationalized that I was acquiring knowledge for the purpose of helping people. I avoided material that seemed dark and frightening, such as witchcraft, Wicca, or sorcery. Technically, though, I was crossing over into these areas with my studies, especially when I began taking mediumship classes. Somehow, I rationalized that I was safe as long as I didn't get into witchcraft."

## *Real Life Stories* *From New Age Deception to Christ*

She started her career with small workshops at religious centers and Mind-Body-Spirit conventions. Often losing money in her efforts, she was driven by her mission. She believed her mission was to help ‘save the world,’ and she encouraged her students to do the same.

### *New Age Takes Off for Her*

In the 1990s, an organization called “Whole Life Expo” asked Doreen if she would like to join their travelling team of speakers at all events and conventions. This was her breakthrough to success. Finally, she would get paid for her speeches, and her travelling expenses would be covered. So it was not a losing proposition.

In large convention halls, vendors would display their natural health products, and their practices to optimize health in its fullness. The places would be crammed with people sampling products and testing the latest techniques in pursuit of healthy wholeness.

“As I walked along the convention hall with all the booths, the smell of incense permeated the air. Massage tables were filled with people receiving treatments, and women wearing long gowns gave tarot card readings on velvet-covered tables. Women holding brass fingers, cymbals and tie-dyed chiffon scarves danced in circles. Well-sculpted people demonstrated yoga poses. Stacks of *New Age* books and card decks for sale sat next to deity statues. It all seemed so exotic and exciting! Plus, the *New Age* people seemed friendlier and more open-minded than anyone I had previously met. They’d hug me, say I was a goddess and exude a contagious enthusiasm.”

For two decades, she honed her skills in *New Age* leadership by incorporating ideas and practices from multiple religions of every kind, along with her own version of visions and angel communications and spiritual messaging. She put on workshops worldwide and gave keynote addresses to crowds ranging from five hundred to four thousand.

“During my 20 years as a *New Age* teacher, I toured with other best-selling authors. We would promote techniques like “vision boards” and “positive affirmations,” believing and teaching that “your words create your reality.” Many of us twisted Jesus’ words to suggest that God would give you whatever you asked for. And all the while, we held up our wealth and fame as evidence that our principles were true and effective.”

*“I convinced myself I was actually a Christian, albeit an “open-minded” Christian who was superior to all those narrow-minded followers who only believed in Jesus. For me, Jesus functioned as a “spirit guide” who, like a magic genie, helped me make my wishes come true. I was a student of world religions, and I even had a necklace with symbols of all the major faiths. I believed all paths led to heaven, and all religions were worshipping the same God.”*

*Jesus said: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6*

### *Beneath Glamorous Veneer – Darkness*

Doreen quickly learned that this wonderful, transcendent *New Age* life had a very dark underbelly. In the evenings of these large weekend events, the presenters, organizers, and speakers would meet in hotel rooms. “I noticed a lot of heavy drinking and people bringing different romantic partners each time. I decided I’d never be like that ...”

*New Age* leaders promote and proselytize their religion by promising a discovery of personal purpose and achieving fulfillment, inner peace, finding a soulmate and discovering the secret to health and wealth.

As much as Doreen hoped to evolve into a person who had found her higher purpose, she couldn’t stop herself from devolving to the darker side of her evolving beliefs.

“I’ve attended hundreds of *New Age* industry parties, the alcohol and hedonism flowed. Toward the end of the party, most people were drunk and flirting with one another...Under this influence, I am so ashamed now to admit that I also struggled through a few years of heavy wine drinking and relationship problems...I had become exactly

## *Real Life Stories* *From New Age Deception to Christ*

like the Whole Life Expo speakers I didn't want to be like. I was a wretched sinner...the *New Age* teachings were eating away at my soul and wrecking my life."

"...despite this worldly success, we were unrepentant sinners with lives marred by divorces and addictions. Having sold-out workshops, standing ovations, adoring fans, and celebrity friends gave us swollen egos. I remember believing my every thought was a message or a sign from God or His angels."

Doreen had bought into the hedonistic of a *New Age* devotee. She described it as a non-stop adrenalin-filled adventure. For 22 years, she travelled the world, living a high-end life and spending money as fast as she earned it. It was a vicious cycle – she needed more workshops to pay more bills. Eventually, Doreen stopped drinking. The constant hangovers had become just too much for her.

By this time, her two sons had been fully immersed in their mother's beliefs and were travelling with her. Charles would appear onstage with her, and he himself would interact with so-called angels. Her younger son Grant would help her backstage with the technical side of her productions.

### *Ken Praying for Doreen*

What Doreen didn't appreciate at the time was her brother Ken was praying for her continually. He, himself had been freed from the shackles of *Christian Science* false teachings and trusted Christ as his Saviour twenty years earlier. Ken made a point of asking all the men in each of his men's Bible Study groups to pray for his sister.

### *Beneath the Glamorous Veneer – No Peace*

After multiple failed relationships, Doreen married a new husband in 2009. Michael came from a Methodist background. They moved to beautiful Hawaii in 2012. Their spacious home on a hill offered a beautiful view of the Pacific Ocean. From their backyard, they watched humpback whales spouting. Doreen was at the top of her game and was recognized worldwide as a leading *New Age* authority specializing in Angelology. But all was not well.

*"Looking back, I find it ironic that my New Age beliefs were all about seeking peace, and yet I was anything but peaceful."*

Doreen had been sucked into the world of conspiracy theories. She obsessed over things like "the new world order," "chemtrails," the Illuminati, genetically modified foods and politicians who didn't vote the way she voted. She convinced her husband to purchase survival supplies and invest in expensive water storage tanks. Not only was she lacking peace – she was fearful about the future.

### *Arrested while Driving in 2015*

No police were involved, and it wasn't a citizen arrest. Doreen prided herself in her open-mindedness to multiple belief systems and told her audiences that there were many paths to God. So, it was not uncommon for her to tune in to radio broadcasts while she was driving.

"As someone with an intense curiosity about world religions, I frequently listened to Christian radio, as well as stations specializing in Buddhism, Hinduism, shamanism, Celtic goddess worship, and several other types of spirituality. Hungry for answers, I searched far and wide.

It was January 14, 2015, while driving around Maui, that she tuned in to Alistair Begg's Bible Teaching program. He read this verse from the Bible:

*For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having **itching ears** they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 2 Timothy 4:3-4*

## *Real Life Stories* *From New Age Deception to Christ*

Doreen immediately identified with his message. It's no exaggeration to say she was arrested by the Word of God. As she listened to the preacher warning against "false hope," her wall of deception began to crack. "...I could tell he was describing people just like me...God used Begg's sermon to convict me for the first time in my life. His words pierced my stony heart, and I felt ashamed of my false teachings. When I got home, I told my husband, Michael, that I wanted to start attending a real Christian church. He readily agreed."

### ***Impressed that the Bible was the Word of God***

As God continued to work in Doreen's life, she will never forget the occasion when the Holy Spirit impressed upon her heart that the Bible is the authoritative and inerrant Word of God. With that impression on her soul, she started to read the Bible regularly. Her son Grant had given her *The One Year Bible* – and she was faithfully reading it each day.

One day she was reading in the Old Testament of the Bible in Deuteronomy chapter 18.

*There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD...*  
*Deuteronomy 18:10-12*

Doreen said: "I choked up and my knees buckled as I read this list of sinful activities for I had engaged in divination and fortune-telling for years. I had mistakenly believed that these activities were helping people and therefore helping God. ... I used to conduct, teach and write about mediumship. I thought that getting messages from departed loved ones was a helpful way for people to heal from grief... I finally got it through my thick, stubborn head that I am a sinner who needs a Saviour.

*When I got to Deuteronomy 18:10-12, I encountered a list of sinful activities that included several I was practicing, such as divination, interpreting signs and omens, and mediumship. This passage says that people using these methods are "detestable," an abomination to God.*

### ***Repentance and Faith in Christ***

God used the verses from Deuteronomy 18 to lead Doreen to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Until that time, she held onto the *Christian Science* doctrine that sin was an illusion. She grew up believing that she was a perfect, whole and complete child of God – made in His image and likeness. But repentance is a 180-degree change in one's thinking. Doreen said:

*"I understood that I couldn't be saved until I realized I was a sinner who needed to be saved while on my knees crying, apologizing, and pleading with God, my pride and deception were finally broken by God's Word. I prayed for Jesus to be my Lord and Saviour... On that very day, I gave my life to Jesus as Lord and Saviour."*

How shocking to an individual who believed in a false Jesus for almost sixty years and travelled the world propagating false beliefs! In Doreen's own words she said: "If I died during that time I would have certainly gone straight to hell for eternity."

*"After seeking but never finding peace in New Age, I have finally found it in Christ. Despite the storms in my life, my hope and trust in the Lord holds me steady."*

### ***A Gain that Offsets all Losses***

Doreen's decision to trust Christ as her personal Saviour and to publicly renounce her old beliefs brought many storms into her life. Her *New Age* publisher fired her. Her high-flying lifestyle with all its perks came to an abrupt end. They left their Hawaii home and returned to the west coast of the USA. Within the *New Age* movement, she was ridiculed and quickly became an object of scorn and daily hate mail.

In the closing pages of her book, Doreen apologizes to her two sons and their families for leading them into the darkness of *New Age* beliefs. She assures them of her love and prayers. She is also burdened for the salvation of her aging parents. If you are a Christian, Doreen welcomes your prayers for her family members. She apologizes



## *Real Life Stories* *From New Age Deception to Christ*

to all the people she led down the dark paths of deception over the decades of her false teaching. Sadly, she can do nothing to remove from the reach of seeking souls all the dark books she previously authored and videos she appeared in for her former publisher, but she actively warns against them. Doreen also thanks many Christians who have helped her and especially those who, over the years, prayed for her deliverance and salvation. But her words of apology and gratitude would not be complete had she just covered all the bases just mentioned.

*“Of course, all glory goes to our triune God, who through mercy and grace plucked me out of deception and opened my eyes to the Bible. I’m eternally grateful for this free gift, which I didn’t earn or deserve – thank you, Lord!”*

### ***Reflections***

Every true Christian can relate to Doreen’s appreciation for God’s mercy and His amazing grace. Every authentic Christian is awed by the fact that God ever loved them and that Christ died for their sins. Not based on their own works and without any personal merit, as lost guilty sinners, they looked to Christ by faith, and God saved them. They were brought into the family of God and became the possessors of eternal life.

In the introduction of her book, Doreen called herself a ‘wretched sinner’ and a ‘train wreck. She says in those opening pages, “Before Jesus saved me, I was heading straight to hell without realizing it.”

*For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:6-8*

Every Christian has a before and after in their life. Before Christ and since Christ became their Saviour. As you reflect on Doreen’s story, what about your own? Do you have a defining, memorable moment when you consciously repented of your sins and turned to Christ for salvation? Despite the storms in your own life, are you comforted and nourished by the constant presence of Christ in your life? Do you have peace?

*Gleaned From Heaven4Sure*