



THE WHOLE TRUTH *The Spiritual Legacy of Paul Twitchell* by Doug Marman

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EXCERPTS

Before you can give Truth to others, Truth must be known as the absolute need in your life. We must see Truth and know Truth and think Truth always.

Refuse to see Truth, pretend that it is impossible to know what is true and what is not, distort Truth, seek to mix it with Untruth, attempt to deceive both ourselves and others, give Truth in an unattractive manner, then chaos will reign in our lives...

This is the time for Truth “the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth.” This is no time for half-Truths, for bewilderment and lack of understanding. These constitute the soil in which grief grows. In Truth alone there is comfort, understanding and courage.

Paul Twitchell, *The Flute of God*

EXCERPT FROM PREFACE

Separating Opinions from Truth

In 1965, Paul Twitchell began lecturing, writing and offering mail-order courses about a teaching he called ECKANKAR, The Ancient Science of Soul Travel. Within a few years, he had published a series of books, expanded his list of monthly discourses, and began holding regional and world-wide seminars that attracted thousands of people.

David Lane wrote in his book, *The Making of a Spiritual Movement*:

The single greatest factor to Eckankar’s astounding growth, outside of its spiritual message and Twitchell’s personality, was the time in which Eckankar blossomed. The late 1960’s were a time of considerable discontent in American society. Eckankar was born in the very midst of a growing disenchantment within secular society for “orthodox” religions. The rebellious youth were turning toward the East; mysticism, yoga, and Zen were the “in” thing. Eckankar, however, was different. It was unique in that it took from the East teachings regarding karma, shabd yoga, and reincarnation while essentially remaining a Western-based movement...Eckankar offered one such new exploration – an exploration into higher consciousness.

Although not widely known at the time, Eckankar became one of the most popular emerging spiritual movements of the 1960’s and 70’s. It gained more followers than the confrontational new religions of the day, such as the Hare Krishnas, the Moonies (Unification Church), and Divine Light Mission. These groups created a host of antagonistic reactions and public controversy.

On the other hand, Eckankar generated little press. The reason was simple: Paul Twitchell never tried to convert people, and his teachings were experience-based rather than faith-based.

He encouraged his students to live full lives integrated with the world around them, while the other groups isolated themselves from society. Eckankar also focused on attaining inner states of consciousness through individual exploration rather than group practices. In fact, during the first years, his courses were only available through the mail for individuals to study on their own. It was only later that ECKists (students of Eckankar) would form study groups to learn from each other and share insights. Individuality and spiritual freedom were the hallmarks of Paul Twitchell's teaching, punctuated by his rebellious attitudes towards orthodox and dogmatic doctrines.

By the late 1970's, the whole subject of new religious movements had reached a fevered pitch. Public criticism against cults had become common, and open dialogue was polarized and difficult. At the same time, Woodward and Bernstein, breaking their story of the Watergate scandal, made critical journalism popular and inspired a generation of writers in search of the next big cover-up.

It was during this time that a university professor of Religion would encourage his students to dig for the hidden and untold story behind new religious movements. One of those students was David Christopher Lane.

For more than 25 years David carried his torch of investigative research, revealing every sordid fact he could find about new religious movements, until recently. He wrote numerous books on the subject, engaged in non-stop discussions for decades, and has been quoted as an expert by the anti-cult movement. However, in the last few years, David Lane has given up his crusade. His barbed pen still shows its face once in a while, but he has turned away from creating stories that disillusion others, as he puts it. He no longer pursues criticism. He has now turned his focus towards the things he supports and wants to encourage.

Five years ago, I began publishing a book through Internet newsgroups. It was a point-by-point response to David's book on Eckankar and its founder, Paul Twitchell. A public dialogue developed that involved hundreds of interested people, critics, supporters and passers-by from all sides of the debate. The open foray lasted three years. What role this whole exchange played in David's change of focus is hard to say, but the following book lays out a summary of the surprising turn of events that occurred, as new facts uncovered cast David's own research in a whole new light.

The original manuscript I published via the Internet was called *Dialogue in the Age of Criticism*. The book you are now reading updates the public discussions and lessons learned, and adds a great deal of new information that has been discovered recently. It also explores the challenges of searching for truth and the controversies that surround spiritual leaders.

In an age when the Western world has come to expect disillusionment from every public figure and organization, and unseemly behavior has become the daily spotlight of investigative journalism, this book tells a different story. It shows how open and respectful dialogue acts as an antidote to the deluge of public criticism. It tells a story where belief based on personal experience can be relied upon, and where exposés, if we are not careful, can lead us far from the truth they claim to portray.

If everyone has their own chance to examine and investigate what lies behind the facts, we end up discovering a far different story from the one that is painted by the one-way monologues of the media. We also end up with a deeper understanding of the rich and colorful complexities that exposés often present as black and white images.

This book also tells another story: The life of an American spiritual leader. It takes us through the early years when Paul Twitchell first started writing about a path of personal spiritual

experience that leads to knowing who we are and why we are here in this world. His initial focus was based upon spiritual practices an individual could use to prove for themselves what lies beyond death. However, his teachings changed significantly as the movement of Eckankar grew, and these changes add depth to our understanding of the making of a spiritual teaching.

This book is more than anything a study about the search for truth and the many ways that we can easily be misled. It shows that we can discover truth if we are careful and clear about what we know and what we don't know. Almost anything can seem true if someone spends enough effort trying to tell one side of a story. This brings us back to exactly the point that Paul was always making to his readers: Ultimately we must decide for ourselves. We can't follow only what is popular if we want to know truth.

EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER ONE

The Danger of Occam's Razor

Historical Records Uncovered

As chance would have it (again), just before I was ready to go to press with this book, I discovered a trove of new information about Paul's early life. My lead came from an article that Melodie Chrislock sent to me from the McCracken County Public Library. A newspaper clipping, not dated, titled "Local Writer is Attaining Wide Fame for Work" said,

According to word received here, Paul Twitchell 1625 N. 12th is rated one of the highest in the history of freelancing, in selling and publishing during the first year of any writer.

Twitchell who took to the task of freelancing in 1940 has sold and published more than 100 articles, stories and poems. Approximately 75,000 words in the form of news items, syndicated stories, magazine fiction, article and features reached this new all-time record, to appear over Twitchell's name. His works have been received by such institutions as Harvard, Yale, University of Michigan, Dartmouth and many others, while the Kentucky library at Western State College of Bowling Green, Kentucky, collects every word he writes for their files. He has been exploiting legends, stories and news of the lower river country of Western Kentucky in a style which has caught the public eye so well that the Literary Florida Magazine is reputed in saying that he is to become a great Kentuckian.

On the off-hand chance that Western Kentucky University might have kept a few of the files, I wrote to the Archives Librarian there. Pat Hodges, Coordinator of the Manuscripts and Folklife Archives wrote back, describing about 1,000 pages of articles, letters and photographs they had saved on Paul. Dating mostly from the late 1930's to the mid 1940's, we find a glimpse into Paul's early life far more amazing than anything we could have guessed.

David Lane scoffed at Paul's early writing career based on the limited information available. He felt that articles like above were probably more an indication of Paul's ability to promote himself than it was based on truth. He also found it hard to believe that Paul actually held a position of recreation director in his early twenties, as the 1936 *Who's Who in Kentucky* article described. This clearly inspired David to dig further. "Here we have a wonderful test," he wrote. Was Paul really on the staff at Murray State and Western Kentucky University while he attended school there? Was he really Recreation Director for the City of Paducah? It seemed far

fetched from the image he had of Paul. Once I started sharing information from the McCracken County Public Library supporting these claims, however, David seemed to lose interest.

It wasn't just David who had doubts about these articles. Even Harold Klemp, the current leader of Eckankar, wondered if the Who's Who article was just a sign of Paul's ability to promote himself, since what could he really have accomplished by his early twenties? Many of us wondered the same thing. However, the newspaper clippings from the McCracken County Public Library revealed more than sixty news stories about Paul, showing the recreation activities he organized and promoted. Titles like: "Plan For Formation Of Basketball League in Graves County: Twitchell Calls for Meeting Tuesday Night Here"; "Paul Twitchell Promotes Water Sport in Egypt [Kentucky]"; "McMahon Presents Each Winner With A Handsome Medal - Twitchell Says Next Program To Be Held March 27"; "Twitchell Pairs Boxers For Next Show At College"; "Twitchell Says Amateurs Will Mix January 31"; "10 Playgrounds To Open May 1, Twitchell Says." The news clips went on and on.

However, this turns out to be only a glimpse of what we found at Western Kentucky University...

JUST A RIVER ROVER

—By Lanning



This illustration by Frank Lanning ran alongside a Rhode Island newspaper article by Jack Martin, in 1943. Printed with permission from Manuscripts, Kentucky Building, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

David Lane insists that we should look at the stark facts. Paul lied, or so he thought. No real spiritual master would lie, he claimed.

What becomes clear as we proceed through this book is that hidden behind this way of seeing things is a message that the “real” world is hard, and people fool themselves unless they look at the cold evidence. In other words, it is the age-old teaching that science exposes the myths of religion.

But the story hasn’t gone the way David thought. The hard facts have proven him wrong. He told us that Paul made up yarns about himself to make himself look more interesting than he was. Why else would he have embellished? Listening to his sources, he concluded that Paul never accomplished anything of significance before starting Eckankar. If he had, he certainly wouldn’t have kept it quiet, would he...?

On the contrary, Paul’s early careers earned him far more recognition than anyone could have imagined. The hundreds of news stories and feature articles both about Paul and by him, if anything, show how much Paul downplayed his early achievements. He said nothing about all these accomplishments throughout his teachings of Eckankar, and even while talking to editors and reporters in the 1940’s, he makes fun of all the mistakes he made on his way to learning his craft. He received numerous awards, was invited to speak at conferences and on the radio, and made a respectable living from his freelance work, while holding a full time position in the Navy.

Why didn’t Paul mention any of this, years later? Because such stories tell us nothing about Paul’s spiritual discoveries, and that was what he wanted to write about. If anything, it seems that Paul got tired of attracting so much attention by the mid-1940’s...

David wants to look at it all in black and white. Why else would Paul exaggerate, except that he felt inadequate? However, the files show us how far from a true picture this is. Paul was colorful, if anything. Black and white could never capture him. He loved being different. He takes us by surprise so often because he liked creating who he was, and these were the same kinds of characters he wrote about: Quirky riverboat captains, the soldier who disobeys orders and ends up saving the battle, the man who joins both the Navy and the Army at the same time. He loves rich personalities. He encourages others to be the same way, and lived that way himself.

We don’t see the fearful image of someone hiding his failures, as David tries to suggest. Exactly the opposite, we see someone so incredibly prolific that it is hard to imagine him spending anytime at all worrying about whether he was doing it the way he was supposed to. He didn’t mind making mistakes. That was the way he learned, and he relished the idea of doing it differently than anyone else. That made it fun for him.

He was in all manners, unconventional. He seemed to have no problem navigating his way through large institutions like the numerous university, city and Navy positions he held. But he obviously preferred the role of freelancer. He enjoyed the fact that he held staff positions at schools where “he could not make a passing grade,” and the Navy would bend rules because he was a correspondent for so many publications. We see in these early years his full faith and belief in individuality, in all of its color and richness...

What was most surprising for me as I read through the archives, though, was how often the rumors about him were wrong. Some claimed Paul never shipped out to sea while he was in the Navy, but it is clear that he did, with his last tour alone lasting 6 months. Some felt he was exaggerating when he said he was a boxing promoter, but there are a dozen articles showing the boxing matches he organized. Some found it hard to believe that he searched for gold in New Guinea or dove for pearls in South America, but the article he wrote on the Seabees, who he trained and traveled with, talks about their base in New Guinea and how the Seabees were skilled in deep sea diving and underwater construction. He did hold staff positions at the universities he attended. Walter Winchell did mention Paul in his nationwide column in 1942 as “one of the most prolific writers known to the writing world.” He did spend time in professional baseball, and he was indeed given a commendation in *Life* magazine, plus much more.

EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER THREE

The Cliff Hanger Years

It is no wonder that Brad Steiger started off his biography about Paul saying this:

Paul Twitchell is an enigma.

With this simple statement, Brad showed that he knew Paul. You cannot pin him down through logic alone. Just when you think you've got Paul cornered, he pops off in another direction. It is almost as if Paul enjoys creating new viewpoints and making fun of literal ideas, because he doesn't want to compromise the real meaning of Truth. He avoids getting trapped in the forms that people so often try putting into cement. Life is much too fluid to be bottled up. We must catch the living breath of Spirit through the subtle senses of direct perception...

The Cliff Hanger

We now flash back to the few short years before October 1965, the official date when Paul established Eckankar. We get a chance to look at some of Paul's early writings that few have seen. Although David offered short excerpts from some of Paul's old articles to prove his points, I've included a lot more, since it shows something that has never been studied closely before: How Paul's teaching evolved during this time. It fills in gaps and offers us an insight into how Eckankar emerged and why it struck a chord for so many people.

With a clear exploration of this subject, I think it is easier to see how wrong David is in so many of his conjectures about the teachings of Eckankar. With more complete information we find a more accurate picture.

David begins Chapter Three mentioning an article by Jack Jarvis, printed in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 9, 1963, called "Paul Twitchell, Man of Parts." Let's take a look at what Jarvis wrote:

A puzzled visitor to the Seattle Public Library picked a slip of paper out of a book she'd taken from a shelf. Rubber-stamped on the paper was a caricature of a smiling man wearing a cap. The thumb and forefinger of his right hand formed a circle, a sign denoting approval.

And circling the caricature were the words: "Recommended by Paul Twitchell."

The visitor showed the slip of paper to a librarian and asked the question that has been heard often in the library:

"Who is Paul Twitchell?"

This column is the answer to that question.

Paul Twitchell is a mild-mannered guy just turned 40, who decided that if magazines can put seals of approval on kitchen gadgets and noted diners-out can recommend restaurants, then he, Paul Twitchell, can recommend things too.

The "Recommended By" slips go into the books he reads, though occasionally one gets his "Sour Grapes Award..."

The "recommended by" award and the "Sour Grapes Award..." go with letters to the great, the near-great and the would-be great. Boxes full of letters attest to the pleasant reaction of those who get the "Recommended by Paul Twitchell" accolade.



He has been, though not necessarily in this order, newspaperman, author, advertising salesman, public relations counsel, professional boxer, Navy officer, college instructor, cabin boy on a Mississippi riverboat. He's dived for pearls in South America, hunted for gold in New Guinea and studied voodooism in the West Indies. He nearly died in an attempt to scale an Alaska mountain in mid-winter.

He spent nearly a year in a monastery in India and five years with an Indian religious cult in Maryland. He still writes occasionally for a magazine published in Japan by an Indian religious group...

During his three years in Seattle, he's had one book and five short stories published and has sold one television script.

By his own admission he's an "authentic nondescript individualist" who is against, among many things, "our supermarket culture" which places so much emphasis on the so-called aids to better living...and grubbing for money.

He calls himself The Cliff Hanger – "hanging on the edge of a cliff, safe from the crowds; more outside that the Outsider, happier than the Angry Young Men and at the opposite pole from the existentialist who claims man has no hope in life."

He is against "the flapdoodle of these modern times," i.e. togetherness, credit cards, insurance and ranch-type houses in the city.

He shuns routine...is a loner and a rebel.

Editing two small newspapers, one a monthly, the other a weekly, brings in enough money to pay the rent on a small house on the water...

He never smokes. If he can't drink champagne he won't drink at all. He's a vegetarian. He writes several hours each day, skip-reads several thousand books a year. He took a speed-reading course, wound up doing public relations for the company which conducted the course. He shuns the "safe existence on the assembly line of our modern soap opera world" and smilingly views the rest of the world with a sort of sardonic tolerance.

And that's the answer to the library visitor's question:

"Who is Paul Twitchell?"



Photo of Paul that ran with Jack Jarvis's article, *Paul Twitchell, Man of Parts.*

EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER EIGHT

Authenticity and Legitimacy

Examples of Legitimacy

So, the question of this chapter is: How do the teachings of Eckankar stack up? Since David first addresses the issue of Legitimacy, let's take a look at a few examples of how the ECK teachings deal with this matter. Following is an excerpt from a talk that Paul gave at the Fourth World Wide Seminar, in Las Vegas, in October 1970:

We find many people these days are leaving the cities. They are moving into communes to live, which they believe will meet their own desires. We are also finding people who are moving into the wilderness, because they feel that they don't have enough space in the cities.

I agree with them one hundred percent, and I certainly would like to move into the wilderness myself, but there is a certain amount of instinct in man, which is a herd instinct, that he must have friends, he must have families, and he must have neighbors in order to maintain a certain amount of communication to live with this world. Unless he does that, he can go overboard. He becomes unbalanced in the wrong direction.

Many times, when a person goes out into these worlds of space and wilderness, he loses himself. He loses all perspective of his own life, his sense with the world and everything else. There are some people who can do that, but I find of myself, my personal self, I must be away from people for some time and then I have to come back and I have to communicate. I have to outlet, like these talks, in order to relieve the pressure that is within.

Now these pressures both inner and outer are terribly strong. The inner pressure that wants all of the message to get out cares very little about the body, cares very little about the body health. And it will use the body any way that it possibly can if the owner of the body will allow it. And if he doesn't, then he usually has physical problems. It will work out some way through physical problems, it can be almost anything. He can have physical diseases. He can have mental derangement. He can have many of these problems, because he will not let the inner come and flow outwardly.

This is just one example of the numerous ways that Paul taught about the inner and outer forces in our lives, and the importance of integrating these power flows. Paul described this further in *The Flute of God*, on page 36:

The outflow is the creative energy. It enables Soul to be cause, to make Its own creations. This is why the mystics proclaim the love of God as the greatest of all principles: To love God so wholeheartedly that the consciousness is taken off the self and centered on Him. The outflow of creative energy is so great that there is no room for struggle here, no space for the feeling of injustice. There is only the giving of good feeling, smoothly and uninterruptedly.

Paul often said that we cannot always be the cause of events in our lives. Sometimes we must be the effect, but it is a crime against Soul to be unknowing effect. Therefore, we should carefully look at and become conscious of the subtle forces that carry us along on their path. Gaining an

insight into the changes and forces at play in our world help us work with them more consciously. This was often a subject of Paul's.

In one of Paul's last talks, for example, he discussed daydreams. He explained how the dreams we have as children will often influence the choices we make in our lives. Paul was a believer in exploring and understanding these inner forces. He was also aware how often people become cut off from their own nature in order to fall in line with expected behavior. This is especially true in religion where people for the best of intentions feel compelled to follow outer forms of morality because they think it will help them spiritually.

Paul wrote in *The Flute of God*, pages 24-25:

Instead of having the "power flow" pour toward you, it can be reversed whenever you desire and you can have it flow outward toward the original cause point.

This may be done by prototype. These prototypes, visualizations or mental pictures must be of the time of the event. If you read a book, your visualizations must be of the events created by the author. You must see him writing that particular scene; see the words being put upon the paper in his typewriter.

If you actually understand this action, you realize that you can use the same technique in any of the arts – music, sculpture, modeling, stage plays, painting, business negotiations, or anything that life presents to you as a situation, circumstance or problem in which you regard yourself as effect.

Can you visualize Mozart composing one of his great masterpieces, while you are listening to a recording of his works; or Dickens, working on his immortal book, *David Copperfield*? Do this with anything you desire, and after awhile it will become a part of you.

This is when you begin to cleanse the tablets of the mind of any errata so that you can receive Truths of absolute transcendence. The accumulation of falseness must be taken from the Atman, the Soul, to enable it to shine forth in its own resplendence.

Of course, we are dealing with energy in space. That is all there is to this phenomenon. Nothing more. We must work toward the end of keeping effect, the negativeness, from depositing accumulations of falseness as unnatural additions to the body. If we do not do this, we will become bound and inhibited by this material, which produces reactive patterns that are bothersome to us.

These words of Paul may sound somewhat cryptic when first reading them, but if you study what Paul is talking about here, you will see that he is describing how to turn the thousands of images, pressures and forces that flow in on us everyday into a two-way dialogue. We can send those energies back to their source with our own inner reflection. We can become the mirror and add our own creative energies. This is what dialogue means, and I believe if we look closely at this matter we will discover that dialogue is the central element at the heart of what Wilber means by Legitimacy.

A religious teaching begins to lose its own Legitimacy when it stops encouraging dialogue with the world; when it no longer encourages creativity and leadership but wants only followers who are obedient; when it begins to preach harmony without equally pressing for honesty, or visa versa; and when it becomes more a religious dogma than a spiritual practice. All of these things – inflow and outflow, leading and following, harmony and honesty – these are all elements of spiritual dialogue with life. It is like the breathing in of the world and breathing out the inner scripture of our heart. We must listen and speak, even if that listening is with our intuition, and that speaking is with our actions. This living path of interchange and integration with life is what brings Legitimacy to a spiritual teaching and can make it a positive force in our lives.