

Dear Partner in the Gospel,

As the Emergent Church movement continues to affect many people across the world, it is truly the time to expose its pernicious teachings. In our first article, we showed how the Emergent Church markets Catholicism. Our second article showed how Brian McLaren, one of their leaders, sets aside the Gospel and the authority of the Bible while clearing a path into mysticism. This paper shows how Eastern mysticism, flowing through accepted channels of Catholic mysticism, is being taught to youth ministers and our youth by Tony Jones, a leader of the Emergent Church movement. I request that you forward this article to others, and if possible, that you post it on your Webpage.

Yours in the grace of the precious Savior,
Richard Bennett

Part III

Emerging Church Indoctrinates with Catholic Style Eastern Mysticism

By Richard Bennett

“Americans are looking for personal, ecstatic experiences of God”, declared the “Spirituality in America” feature article in the Aug. 29 - Sept. 5, 2005 issue of *Newsweek*.¹ The article highlights the fact that America and much of the Western world are becoming more open to mysticism. A major factor in this is Rome’s official policy, which in 1965 formally endorsed Hinduism and Buddhism. The Vatican officially states,

“In Hinduism, men...seek release from the trials of the present life by ascetical practices, profound meditation and recourse to God in confidence and love. Buddhism...proposes a way of life by which man can, with confidence and trust, attain a state of perfect liberation and reach supreme illumination either through their own efforts or by the aid of divine help.... The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions.”²

Purpose and Essence of Catholic Mysticism

Two months after the Vatican’s monumental acceptance of pagan mysticism, another well-known papal document revealed the heart of Roman Catholic policy.

“It [Vatican Council II] longs to set forth the way it understands the presence and function of the [Roman Catholic] Church in the world of today. Therefore, the world which the Council has in mind is the whole human family seen in the context of everything which envelops it... This is the reason why this sacred Synod, in proclaiming the noble destiny of man and **affirming an element of the divine in him,**

¹ <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9024914/site/newsweek/1/5/06>

² No.56, *Nostra Aetate*, “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions”, Oct 28, 1965, in *Documents of Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, Ed., New Revised Ed.(Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1975, 1984) Para. 2.

offers to co-operate unreservedly with mankind in fostering a sense of brotherhood to correspond to this destiny of theirs.”³

In order to promote the Roman Catholic Church’s understanding of her role in the world, her talking point for dialogue with the Hindus and Buddhists is to affirm their ideas, specifically “an element of the divine” within mankind. If in man there were “an element of the divine”, mankind would be of the same order of being as God. Such teaching attempts to do away with the utter transcendence of God and the total depravity of man in his natural or unregenerate state. In a word, it is pantheism. The very first verse of the Bible proclaims, “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*”⁴ This is the epitome of the absolute distinction of God from all created things. The Lord God is revealed as unique and separate from His creation. The Creator and the creation are not the same. Were it not for the fact that this papal declaration of pantheism is now accepted and marketed by some modern Evangelicals, we might think that the Vatican statement was simply a seductive trapping of ecumenism packaged for Eastern paganism.

The True Basis for Fellowship with God

The doctrine of the Trinity and the Gospel are the basis of fellowship with God. Fellowship with God involves the whole of the grace and faith relationship with God on which the Gospel is based. Christians enjoy fellowship with God, which God Himself initiates, and at each stage, the Lord God is in control. The doctrine of the Trinity is the underpinning to both Christian faith and Christian experience. The glorious life of the Godhead is foundational to the Christian life. The Father, in the pages of Scripture, is revealed as the One who initiates the whole message of salvation. He is the one who has chosen a people, and He is the one who selected His Son to redeem and save them by means of His perfect life and sacrifice. The Gospel and Christian living depends wholly and completely on the nature of the Father when revealed as the God of love. The Christian experience depends entirely on Christ Jesus being full of grace and truth. The work of the Holy Spirit in Christian experience consists in communicating and making known to the believer the love of the Father and the grace of the Son. The Holy Spirit is the principal and fountain of all genuine Christian living. In this life, He is the controller and source of the communion we have with God. Fellowship with God is the excellent privilege of the Gospel. It is based on the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Due to a sinful nature, no man has any communion with God, “... *they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*”⁵ The Lord God is light; we are darkness. Light has no communion with darkness. He is Life, we are dead in trespasses and sins; there can be no accord between us. In the first place, the giving of grace is the only way into fellowship with God. God does not entrust grace to any technique or strategy of man but to Christ Jesus alone. Herein lies the root problem with the modern seeker-sensitive ap-

³ Vatican II Document No. 64, *Gaudium et Spes*, 7 Dec. 1965 in Flannery, Vol. I, Sec. 2, 3 pp. 904-5. Bolding in any quotation is added in this presentation.

⁴ Genesis 1:1

⁵ Romans 8:8

proach to the Christian faith. One must be in Christ before he can "... *have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him [Christ Jesus].*"⁶ For sinners to have fellowship with the infinitely all Holy God, there is the need for the direct work of Christ Jesus. This communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the very heart of the New Testament message. In the words of the Apostle, "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.*"⁷ Thus, life of the Godhead and the Gospel of grace are foundational to the whole of Christian life. This vital message is not simply missing from the present day advocates of the Emerging Church movement; rather it is contradicted, inverted, and reversed at times in utterly blasphemous ways.

Mystic Syncretism Popularized for Youth

Tony Jones is the U.S. National Coordinator of Emergent-US and minister to youth at Colonial Church of Edina in Minnesota. He is a regular speaker at Youth Specialties National Youth Workers Conventions. Jones was also respected enough in his field to be one of the featured seminar presenters for the Zondervan National Pastors Conference in February 2006. The back cover of his 2003 book, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality And Contemplative Practices In Youth Ministry*, states that this book "is hands down the most comprehensive primer on the study and use of spiritual and contemplative practices for the benefit of your teenagers—and especially your own soul."⁸ The book specifically targets youth ministers and pastors. Even Jones's recommendation of Meister Eckhardt's *Collected Works* as "a mystical treatise...with **an emphasis on God's indwelling of humanity**"⁹ is enough to forewarn a true Christian of the latent pantheism.

No testimony of salvation in Christ Jesus

In neither of his two books, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality And Contemplative Practices In Youth Ministry* (2003) and *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life* (2005), does Jones present the Gospel. Like so many leaders in the Emergent Church, his personal testimony is not of being a convicted sinner without hope before the all Holy God and in that conviction coming to Christ as the only Savior. Rather, in Chapter 1, "The Quest for God", Jones' testimony shows that in 2005 he is still fumbling in the darkness of unbelief.

"[Some of us] have this nagging feeling that God is following us around, nudging us to live justly, and expecting us to talk to him every once in a while...Every time I leave God's side, as it were, it's not too long until I feel God tagging right along beside me, I can't seem to shake him. Yet having this sense of God's company doesn't necessarily translate to a meaningful spiritual life. I know this because despite my awareness of God's presence, I have spent most of my life trying to figure out what to do about it."¹⁰

⁶ Ephesians 3:12

⁷ II Corinthians 13:14

⁸ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality And Contemplative Practices In Youth Ministry* (Zondervan, 2003)

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 252

¹⁰ Tony Jones, *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) p. 15

This sad testimony is of a man who is not “*in Christ*”, and yet he is one of the leading lights of the Emergent Church movement in making and disseminating materials for youth pastors and youth groups.

Of his growing up in a Protestant church, he says, “I’d say there was one word that summed up my religious life: obligation.”¹¹ Predictably, he fell away from his pattern of obligatory prayer, Bible reading, and “quiet time”, but felt guilt ridden about it. His solution:

“Something occurred to me: People have been trying to follow God for thousands of years...Maybe somewhere along the line some of them had come up with **ways of connecting with God** that could help people like me...I could think of no better way to spend it [his three month sabbatical] than to travel and read about different ancient ways of prayer and devotion.”¹²

His travels took him to round the clock prayer vigils and to Dublin, Ireland, to Catholic priest Alan McGuickian and the staff at the Jesuit Communication Centre. He “voraciously read” Roman Catholic mystics and spoke with individuals who were Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox. Nowhere does he mention any in-depth study of the Bible nor of searching after the great truths of Scripture. In this way, his searching is reminiscent of Ignatius of Loyola¹³ and it is noteworthy that he recommends the disciplines of the founder of the Jesuits to youth pastors and youths to learn and practice. What is clear from his statements is that “obligation” remains major in his understanding of what it means to be a Christian—but what becomes equally clear is that he has no dependable knowledge of God from God. That is, he has no knowledge of God through the Bible as revelation by His Spirit. Because Jones does not hold to the Bible alone as giving truthful knowledge of God, God Himself remains **a truth** undefined. Thus Jones is free to define his own god and to fulfill his obligation to this god of his own making.

Thus by making Roman Catholic and Greek tradition his current standard, he is able to fulfill what he sees as his obligation in a supposedly time-honored and acceptable way through these old, mostly Roman Catholic mystical exercises. Yet clearly before the All Holy God, he is still an alien and a stranger to saving grace in Christ Jesus.

Jones’s definition of “Christian” needs careful attention. In *The Sacred Way*, he states,

“For years I’d been told that to be a Christian meant I had to do three things: (1) read the Bible, (2) pray, and (3) go to church. But I had come to the realization that there must be something *more*. And indeed there is. There is a long tradition of searching among the followers of Jesus—it’s a quest, really, **for ways to connect with God**...The quest is to know Jesus better, to follow him more closely, to become—in some mysterious way—wrapped into his presence. And I thank God that some of these brilliant and spiritual persons wrote down what they learned.” (pp. 16-17)

¹¹ *The Sacred Way*, p. 15

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 16

¹³ Ignatius’s search began by reading stories of the Catholic saints, and attending to images, all of which fed his wild imagination with mystical fervor. None of these things brought salvation, Ignatius died unsaved.

What is missing in Jones's definition of following Jesus more closely is any conviction of sin and therefore any need for a Savior. Without the conviction of sin one does not have life in Christ Jesus. The Lord declared that the Holy Spirit "*will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*"¹⁴ Conviction is the Spirit's work; He does it effectually, and none but He can open the mind and heart of a sinner to saving faith. Jones appears to be totally unaware of this, for he says nothing about the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, or about the Holy Spirit's role of conviction. Jones is not a "follower of Jesus" in any biblical sense since his god is not the All Holy God of the Bible. His "Jesus", therefore, is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible.

"A zeal of God, but not according to knowledge"

Jones does state, however, that he feels "that the road to inner peace and connection with our Creator is through Jesus."¹⁵ But at the same time he also says, "the point of these practices is to draw me into a deeper relationship with the Christian God." While recommending these mystical practices, he clearly states that he really cannot say why he has found them so helpful and does not know why they work, but that they do work. Then he states,

"I think they work because of Jesus. I'm afraid you're not going to get much more explanation from me than that. Still, I think that something about Jesus...inspired the people who developed these disciplines centuries ago. He led them on this quest, which really is unique to Christianity. For only in Christianity is there the belief that the one, true God came to earth as a human being, and that, to this day, we can know him in as personal a way as the disciples who shared lunch with him 2,000 years ago. **That is, Christians engage in these spiritual practices not out of duty or obligation but because there is a promise attached: God will personally meet us in the midst of these disciplines.**

"It's really pretty crazy when you think about it—... some of the saints who favored these disciplines were driven to extremes that their contemporaries considered mad. (St. Francis preached to the birds in the forest—in the nude)...traditional Christian practice [of the mystical disciplines] is...about a way of life and faith that has been honed by the centuries. It is a way—the way—to live in the sacredness of God."¹⁶

For Jones, as with Catholic and Greek mystics, conviction by the Holy Spirit through the written Word has become irrelevant because they do not believe that God has revealed true propositional knowledge about Himself through the Scripture alone. They have neglected His call, "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow...*"¹⁷. Rather than engaging their minds over the issue of their sin and need for perfect righteousness before the All Holy God, **they seek a subjective meeting with God through spiritual exercises**—practices that do not engage the mind according to biblical truth as presented in the

¹⁴ John 16:8

¹⁵ *The Sacred Way*, p. 17

¹⁶ *The Sacred Way*, pp. 18-19

¹⁷ Isaiah 1:18

written Word. When this so-called union is purportedly experienced, a sense of spiritual fulfillment is felt. This subjective experience (called “enlightenment”) is an attempt to replace Christ Jesus the Lord as the only way to communicate with God. Thus Jones’s above statement is a formal denial of the Lord. Fallen man cannot communicate with God other than through Christ Jesus, who is the only Mediator, the only way. Christ Jesus’ own declaration puts to death all subjective mystical experiences as means of reaching the Father, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”¹⁸ The Lord Jesus Christ is the All Holy God’s loving, and **only**, answer to every man’s sin and need of perfect righteousness.

Historically, the spiritual practices of which Jones writes came from and flourished under the monastic system. These mystical practices went hand in hand with the ascetical practices that prevailed in Egypt and over the East. The fundamental principle behind them was the philosophy that the flesh was the seat of evil, and, consequently to meet God one must first mortify the body and at the same time engage in spiritual rituals whereby man can find God.

Past apostasy comes alive in the present

In *Soul Shaper*, Tony Jones advocates sixteen “ancient-future” spiritual tools or disciplines such as “The Jesus Prayer, Lectio Divina, Silence and Solitude, Stations of the Cross, Centering Prayer, The Ignatian Examen, and the Labyrinth”. Assuming that the Roman Catholic-Evangelical split over the Gospel is a thing of the past, Jones begins defining his “postmodern” approach to youth ministry by combining aspects of what he sees as common spirituality in Evangelicalism, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions along with Eastern religious practices gleaned from Buddhism and Hinduism. Tony Jones’s involvement with youth ministry and leaders of youth ministry is particularly dangerous. This is because of his use of obscure heretical practices from Papal Rome, which he then passes off on the unsuspecting as if he has rediscovered a long hidden spiritual treasure for a “postmodern” Christianity. His major goal is to make his very Roman Catholic view of the “past come alive in the present”¹⁹—something Bible believers should consider carefully, especially regarding his very young audience.

What is so hazardous is that most youth ministers are not familiar enough with the history of the Christian Church to recognize that Jones is selling them a bill of spiritually bankrupt goods. Moreover, pastors within the mainstream of the Evangelical church are also being taught these practices at such places as Zondervan National Pastors Conference 2006. Regrettably, Tony Jones misleads pastors and youth when he writes of “the saints of the Christian church who have over the past two millennia labored at practicing and perfecting these disciplines.”²⁰ He also states, “One of the things you may have to leave at the front cover is denominational bigotry. A lot of the practices herein will seem very ‘Catholic’ or very ‘Eastern Orthodox,’ and if you aren’t from one of those traditions, remember this: before 1054 we were all Catholic/Orthodox! That’s right—for the first half of Christian history, there was one church,

¹⁸ John 14:6

¹⁹ *Soul Shaper*, back cover

²⁰ *The Sacred Way*, p. 21

and most of the practices in this book are from that time.”²¹ Jones is not drawing from genuine Christian history before 1054. Clearly, he has taken his history from the apostate Roman Catholic Church, conveniently forgetting the Vaudois, the Waldenses, the Paulicians, the Albigenses, the Spanish believers, and many others who in the first eleven centuries never followed the mystic practices the papacy has consistently promoted since the Dark Ages.

The Catholic mystic, Thomas à Kempis (1380—1471) has had a primary influence upon Tony Jones. Each chapter in *Soul Shaper* opens with a quote from Kempis. In fact Jones writes, “Thomas à Kempis has guided us throughout our exploration of ancient spiritual practices” (p. 254). In commenting on his book, Jones says, “This book is long on history and theology” (p. 19). The history and theology he presents, however, have a distinct and singular Roman Catholic bias. His section of recommended reading is a virtual all-star roster of mystics of mostly Roman Catholic vintage. Among those he encourages youth ministers to read are “Ignatius of Loyola, Catherine of Siena, Henri Nouwen, John of the Cross, Thomas Merton, Theresa of Lisieux and George Fox.” (pp. 252, 253)

More developed and lethal mystic syncretism

The Gospel message is open, plain and straightforward. Tony Jones’s message, however, in his 2005 book *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life* is even more artful and disguised than his *Soul Shaper* book. In *The Sacred Way*, Jones advocates the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola and such mystical and Roman Catholic practices as the Labyrinth, Centering Prayer, the Stations of the Cross and the Jesus Prayer. The dishonest substitution of Roman Catholic mystical methods for the straightforward proclamation of the Gospel of grace and fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the spiritual black hole into which Tony Jones is leading his readers.

The operating principle of Tony Jones’s mystical philosophy is his endorsement of the humanistic message and technique of Ignatius of Loyola. Here Jones emphasizes the Jesuit founder’s use of visualization and human choice in order to overcome evil and to be the person one wants to be. Thus in Chapter 8 of *Soul Shaper*, “The Ignatian Examen”, Jones declares,

“From the first day, meditating on the Incarnation and nativity of Jesus, through the final meditation focused on the week leading up to Palm Sunday, the retreatant imagines Lucifer arrayed with all of his forces in one plain, ready to do battle, and Jesus and his forces lined up against him. By the end of this week, Ignatius says the retreatant will be ready to make Election—that is, to choose which army she wants to be a part of, to choose what kind of a person she wants to be.” (p. 92)

This is openly and unmistakably to place oneself in what the Lord classified as, “*that which is born of the flesh is flesh*” in contrast to, “*that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*.”²² Man’s own election, or his choice of his own destiny, is manifestly presented as the starting point of what is alleged to be Christian salvation. This is in stark opposition to the Apostle Paul’s statement that salvation is by “*the election of grace*”. “*And if*

²¹ *Soul Shaper*, Introduction, p. 20

²² John 3:6

by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace."²³ Salvation and fellowship with God is by His gracious or merciful choosing, that is, election; and not by any maneuver of man.

Jones also teaches gross idolatry. He promotes images that are forbidden by the Lord, implying that God's holy presence is to be seen in the icon. Like Brian McLaren, he makes his position known by quoting others who hold the same position without ever presenting the biblical position. In *The Sacred Way*, he quotes an Eastern Orthodox woman who says,

"The sober **presence of the Lord in an icon** makes us uncomfortable because it makes us realize how far short we fall from the ineffable beauty and power of God.... The steady, unsettling **gaze of the Lord in an icon** is like the gaze of a surgeon as he looks at a patient's wounded, broken body. The surgeon understands the woundedness better than the patient does, and he knows exactly what it will take to heal it. Our Lord sees brokenness and failures in us that we can't, that we simply won't, that we could not bear to see. And he invites us to open ourselves to his healing, a healing that will progress very gently, very gradually, as we are able to bear it." (pp. 98-99)

Rather than exposing this sentimental notion of an icon as a substitute for conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, leading to repentance and salvation in Christ alone, Jones uses this "castle-in-the-air" to soften his audience to the use of icons. He then builds his case for idolatry citing Catholic legends and modern Catholics as his authority because although he does not say so, he has found it necessary to bring in his own mediator, the form of which is an icon. He states,

"The Catholic belief [is] that Christians can pray *through* saints, especially the Blessed Virgin Mary, and their prayers will be delivered to the throne of God...The bottom line is that we use icons to pray, but we pray *through* them, not *to* them....Since we believe that those who have died in faith are currently living in eternity with God, praying through an icon of a saint is simply asking one of these friends to pray for me.

This is exactly the issue in Exodus 32 when Aaron made a golden calf for the worship of Holy God. They surmised that they were not worshipping the calf; rather they were using it to worship Holy God. Their worship was supposedly going through the image to God. Exodus 20:4-5 specifically forbids the making of these images, a reminder that is much needed today. Because he claims that we are in the postmodern age, which *de facto* means post-Gospel, and has rationalized by legend and Catholic tradition that icons are acceptable, he counsels,

"In order to incorporate praying with icons into your personal devotional life, the first item of business is to get an icon.... Shadows are never seen in an icon, and no source of light illuminates the subject's face. The icon itself is a source of light...an icon is not meant to be a depiction of a normal human being but of Jesus or Mary or a saint in their resurrected state."²⁴

²³ Romans 11:5-6

²⁴ *The Sacred Way*, p. 103 Antidote: *Christ Can't Be Pictured* by Virgil Dunbar available on www.bereanbeacon.org

Thus Tony Jones, turning his back on conviction of sin through the preaching of the Word of God, endorses forbidden images as being **good** for a person's spiritual life; but the Lord God says those who use such images hate him, and He will visit their iniquity upon them to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 20:4-6).

In the Epilogue to his two books, in the sections called "Developing a Rule of Life", Jones urges his readers to place their faith in the religious exercises, "Following some experience with the ancient practices outlined in this book, you may decide to incorporate some of them into your personal Rule of Life. An example of a rule could look something like this: Pray through two centuries of the Jesus Prayer in the morning and evening every day. Keep the Sabbath from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday every week. Walk a labyrinth once a month. Take a two-day silent retreat once a year. Fast and walk the Stations of the Cross every Friday during Lent. Take a 28-day Ignatian retreat every decade...."²⁵

His final platitude is simply on the level of feeling,

"We have lots of options in our ministries, but developing a disciplined spiritual life isn't one of them. That is, it isn't optional. It's mandatory...Slow down. Listen to God. Be silent. Meditate. Make the Stations. Stare at the icon. And there, do you feel it? The divine light of the Risen Christ flickering within you, slowly building to a roaring fire...."²⁶

To all this, the Lord thunders through His Word, "*Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*"²⁷ One would have to say that the Mad Hatter's tea party in *Alice in Wonderland* has more to offer. The notions that Jones advances are merely the inventions of men and are certainly not by divine revelation of the Bible. They are but proud conceits from the Roman Catholic tradition "*intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*"²⁸ These traditional Catholic practices that Jones so warmly promotes may have an appearance of spirituality but they have been found throughout history, and even again in our own day, simply to deceive by leading into pride and sin. In effect, Jones disclaims Christ as the only Mediator between God and man. One of the greatest denigrations of Christ Jesus is to attempt to interject some other mediator between God and His creation; and Jones has done this unashamedly. Yet as Jones has already shown in his own case, when men let go of the knowledge of Christ Jesus as the only Mediator, they become entrapped within the traditions of men and the bankruptcy of worldly spirituality. Jones makes mystical exercises seem so worthy that by endorsing Catholic mysticism, idolatry and fleshly devotions, he can easily bewitch those who read or try to implement his teaching. The relic-artifacts of Catholicism, presented by Jones as appropriate to the postmodern period, are absolutely opposed to biblical truth. The Lord God's command is that believers are to be "*casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*"²⁹

²⁵ *Sole Shaper*, p. 233

²⁶ *The Sacred Way*, pp. 198-199; *Soul Shaper*, p. 233-234

²⁷ Job 38:2

²⁸ Colossians 2:18

²⁹ II Corinthians 10:5

Conclusion

Communion with God is a participation in eternal life by grace through faith. Such communion is not achieved by imagination, visualizations, solitude, or mystical formulas. False teachers such as Tony Jones and Brian McLaren have attempted to supplant the Gospel by seducing multitudes with doctrines that can damn their souls for all eternity. Christ Jesus the Lord warned that, “*many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*”³⁰ The present day Emerging Church movement is full of deceitful “contemplative practices”. Only by taking heed to the counsel of the Lord can His followers escape ruin. The danger of the Emerging Church’s type of spirituality is that it replaces the certainty of the written Word with subjective experiences. Jones and other leaders of the movement teach that “spiritual practices” can bring an awareness of God **wherein morality and keeping the commandments of God are not mentioned**. True coming to God is by trusting on the perfect life and sacrifice of Christ that includes repentance and forsaking of sin. If Evangelicals follow the teachings of Jones, it will inevitably lead to asceticism and immorality, a fact of prior church history, by those who practiced such things. Christ Jesus proclaims in His Word “*If any man have ears to hear, let him hear... take heed what ye hear.*”³¹ Not only are we to hold to the Gospel, but also the Lord commands us to give due regard to what we hear. To be true to the Lord, we must be perceptive to what is happening and diligent to “*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*”³² ♦

Richard Bennett of “Berean Beacon” WebPage: <http://www.bereanbeacon.org>

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³⁰ Matthew 24:11

³¹ Mark 4:23,24

³² Philippians 1:27