

GUILT BY ASSOCIATION OR GUILTY ASSOCIATIONS

By Rev. Ken Silva, Southern Baptist Pastor

A very popular argument today against the type of discernment ministry I am many times involved with here at Apprising Ministries is “guilt by association.” However, it’s one thing to accuse someone like myself of GBA, but it’s a whole other thing to have to argue against the actual evidence presented. In his post *Slice Capades*, which directly concerns the website *Slice of Laodicea* where I am also contributor, Phil Johnson’s insightful comment applies here as well:

We’re commanded to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Is anyone seriously going to argue that *Slice* poses more of a threat to sound doctrine than the multitude of blogs on the post-evangelical fringe who deliberately blur or ambiguate every truth and who would like the church to conform to the world as much as possible?

You see as I acquire books for research on Contemplative Spirituality I find myself repeating my own little “mantra”: “It just gets deeper.” Let me show you what I mean. In *Celebration of Discipline Living Spiritual Teacher* Richard Foster recommends a book by his friend Dallas Willard called *The Spirit Of The Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* with following words:

If I were to list the single most important book of this decade in Spirituality, this would be the book. It sets forth a clear theology for the Spiritual Disciplines as the means by which we are transformed into the likeness of Christ (221).

After I got that book for my research I notice on the front cover that Foster is quoted as saying: “Essential guidance for spiritual growth.” Now, we flip it over and on the back cover we see the following endorsements:

Few books have challenged me like this one. I would urge every serious minded Christian to read it...at your own risk. Bill Hybels, author of *Honest to God*?

A profound call to discipleship based on spiritual disciplines [that] awakens us to a forgotten truth, that the transformation to Christlikeness is realized through taking on the “easy yoke” of the disciplines. Sue Monk Kidd, author of *God’s Joyful Surprise, When The Heart Waits*.

The name Sue Monk Kidd is quite familiar to those of us who follow the antichrist doctrine of contemplative spirituality so I got a copy of *When The Heart Waits*. This book by Kidd is endorsed by contemplative pastor and Emergent translator of *The Message* Eugene Peterson. Peterson also endorses *The Ragamuffin Gospel* by contemplative retreat leader Brennan Manning (TRG), where he is listed as the “author of *The Message*.” Peterson says TRG “is a zestful and accurate portrayal that tells us unmistakably that the gospel is good, dazzlingly good.”

And then on the back cover of Monk’s *When The Heart Waits* Peterson says:

As I read her book. Sue Monk Kidd became a companion to me. I love having her walk with me on my journey.

A joy to read... Honest and healing. Alan Jones, dean of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, and author of *Soul Making*.

You may also recall a book which was endorsed by Emergent Guru Brian McLaren called *Reimagining Christianity* that was also authored by Alan Jones. And speaking of Living Spiritual Teacher Alan Jones, he shows up endorsing another book called *Living In The Presence* by Tilden Edwards, who is Founder and Senior Fellow of The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. On the back cover we read the following endorsements:

Living in the Presence provides the beginning of an answer to those who are asking two fundamental questions, “What do I do?” and “How am I to be?” This book is a treasure-house of insight...both unnerving and

exhilarating because it challenges us to leave the world of mere speculation. Alan Jones, author of *Soul Making: The Desert Way of Spirituality*.

In a time when many are seeking a deeper initiation into the ways of the Spirit, a deeper experience with God in their lives, Tilden Edward's book, drawing on years of actual practice, offers pastors and parishioners alike much practical advice and deep fruitful insight. Father M. Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O., author of *Thomas Merton, Brother Monk*.

Though they are fully aware of God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them themselves but approve and applaud others who practice them. (Romans 1:32, Amplified)

And of the late Spiritual Master M. Basil Pennington, in his own book on these alleged "spiritual disciplines" *The Sacred Way*, which itself is recommended by his friend Guru McLaren, Emergent theologian Tony Jones says, "[he] is a leading authority on Centering Prayer" (215). Now the question I'd ask you is: Do you seriously think all of the above is some kind of coincidence? That somehow I have taken all of these things I have been quoting to you from these books out of context?

Men and women, this information is being presented as an admonition for you to wake up. These people are all bad seeds in the corrupt pod of Contemplative Spirituality who are devouring each others books and then teaching the same things within their own. Do you seriously think that these people don't know each other and then by some fluke of fate they just carelessly endorse books, which they have not read? And do you really think they wouldn't also be reading books endorsed by those other authors whose own books they themselves have endorsed previously?

O how blind are those that just will not see...