

Discernment or Criticism?

Commentary by Roger Oakland

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Taking a stand from a biblical perspective with regard to purpose-driven-emerging Christianity is not very popular these days. Those working towards establishing the kingdom and “getting closer to Jesus” through contemplative practices rooted in eastern mysticism are very outspoken. If you are not in favor of what they are promoting, you are labeled a hater and against everything.

One pastor wrote me a letter and asked the following question: “Before you went public with your book *Faith Undone* did you contact everyone you wrote about in the book personally and discuss the issues? If not, shame on you and don’t write me back.”

Of course, I was shamed into writing him back. I recognize that I should always be open for correction. But “shame” is a pretty harsh term coming from one of the “brethren.” Incidentally, this man was insinuating that I was violating Matthew 18 by writing about public figures in my book. But Matthew 18 is not about challenging leaders who are deceiving millions of people.

One pastor I tried to contact sent his bulldog after me who attacked me personally with slander. He didn’t even address the facts. Should I be ashamed of myself for quoting someone who said what he said in a public forum? Does this really make me a “counter-cult-kook” as he said?

The problem seems to lie in the area of perspective. When a watchman warns about teachings that are popular, the watchman is unpopular. However, popularity is not what determines truth. For example, the popular position on origins is evolution. Does that mean evolution is true? What about the facts?

Ezekiel and Jeremiah were called to be watchmen. When they warned the Israelites that they had abandoned God and were seeking after the gods, the people thought they had lost their minds. They were interested in hearing about peace not judgment. They devised harsh things to say about the prophets. Jeremiah got quite discouraged and wanted to quit his job. It is hard to have someone say you are an idiot when you are telling people the truth. He was only doing what God told him to do. He was trying to warn them that judgment was ahead.

I know a fellowship of pastors who responded the same way when facts about the purpose-driven-emerging church were presented. When they were told the truth, they didn’t want to hear the truth. They said that telling the truth was being critical or having a critical spirit.

Saying that one has a critical spirit means that one has been influenced by Satan. Instead of being discerning and warning about deception, you are considered a divisive person. At least, that is what I have been told.

Another pastor wrote to admonish me by saying “the Bible teaches that we are to mark those who cause division.” I guess this is why he said I should be ashamed for telling people the truth. Of course, he had forgotten the rest of the verse – Paul said the ones who cause division are the ones who teach contrary to the doctrine.

However, we know according to 2 Timothy chapter four that in the last days so-called Christians will not want to stand for sound doctrine. They will say discernment and warning about false teaching is “just being critical.”

I am Roger Oakland. This has been a biblical perspective to help understand the times.