

Brian McLaren:12 Step Groups May Help Us Escape Bible

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Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: This article comes from a blog spot where the author is not easily identified. Every time Brian McLaren writes another book, he makes it more obvious that he is a wolf in sheep's clothing. The New Testament warned us about them:

But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Jude 10-13 NKJV

In his book, *A New Kind of Christianity*, Emergent leader Brian McLaren attacks Biblical understanding, and tries to revise both God and the Bible. In his chapter on reinterpreting God's Word, he notes, "Even for those of us on this quest, breaking out of centuries-old habits won't be easy..."[1]

In the same paragraph, McLaren makes an interesting statement. "No wonder those of us who want and need to change our approach **may need to form twelve-step groups to deprogram our thinking.**"[2] (Bold Mine)

Wait a minute. 12 Steps groups to help people reject the Bible as the literal Word of God?

Is this shocking? Hardly. McLaren knows this has already happened—and is continuing to happen—through both Christian and cultural acceptance of 12 Step spirituality. Unlike numerous Bible-believing pastors who allow 12 Step groups to meet in their churches, the Emergent leaders are clearly aware of what AA and other 12 Step groups have brought about.

McLaren wrote the foreword to *A Heretic's Guide To Eternity*. In this book, Emergent authors Spencer Burke and Barry Taylor write, "As Phyllis Tickle [another Emergent leader] has noted, the development of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) probably did as much as other, more celebrated events to undermine our concept of religion. Emerging in the late 1930s, **AA made it acceptable to talk about a generic God—a 'higher power.'**"[3] (Bold mine)

Burke and Taylor further note what has resulted from this: "Consequently, a generation of people began speaking about God in new ways not previously sanctioned by the **consensual illusion**—and traditional religious perspectives began to change as a result."[4] (Bold mine)

Due to acceptance of the chameleon nature of AA's "higher power," our culture has been put at ease with custom-made gods and even with blended belief systems. Undeniably, Biblical Christianity has been greatly weakened. This has always been the objective of the spiritual forces that created AA.[5] (Ephesians 6:12)

Yes, but what about the people helped by Alcoholics Anonymous? We should be grateful for the estimated *five percent* of alcoholics who do gain sobriety through AA. Yet, in terms of alcoholism, this success is in public relations and publicity rather than treatment effectiveness. Herein lies a real tragedy, because most believe only

AA can help. Many who have quit drinking in another manner have been called “dry drunks” (not really sober) by AA members. This can be extremely hurtful.

AA’s teachings can also be terrifying. There are Christians in AA who fear to leave because they believe they will relapse unless AA and the 12 Steps are involved. And so, out of fear, they disobey Scripture, or rationalize reasons for remaining. (2 Corinthians 6:14-17, Galatians 1: 6-9, Amos 3:3) For others, AA has become an idol. For these people, it is more important to defend AA than to acknowledge what the Scriptures command.

In his book, *The Sober Alcoholic*, Irving Peter Gellman observes, “A member who suggests that AA is not as effective as maintained, and who implies that some improvement might be made, will be censured when broaching these ideas. **The AA program is deemed infallible, whereas other methods are deemed less than perfect.**”[6] (Bold mine.)

Like many in the Emergent and Contemplative movements, many—perhaps most— in AA who call Christ their “higher power” do not worship the Biblical Christ at all. This is not intended to offend those in 12 Step spirituality who *do* worship the God of the Bible, but true Christians desperately need to understand this. The 12 Steps are not our friend. Truly, Emergent, Contemplative and 12 Step spirituality are blending. Homospiritality grows daily as a religious force, and may ultimately merge with the other three systems.

As others have pointed out, wherever one finds the Emergent movement, there will also be found Contemplative Spirituality. Perhaps this will also be said of 12 Step spirituality in the near future. AA’s eleventh step states: “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out.”

Considering that AA’s Step Three allows the addict to make up, customize, or borrow any “god” that holds appeal, the act of opening oneself further through Step Eleven meditation can have very real spiritual consequences. The contemplative roots of AA can be traced back to Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group.[7] Today these roots are being watered by many meditative and contemplative advocates.[8]

Brian McLaren calls himself a “contemplative/reflexive.”[9] While we must continue to expose the apostasy of Emergents such as McLaren, Spencer Burke, and Phyllis Tickle, it is time we listen to their unintended warning about the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Endnotes:

1. Brian McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity*, pg.85-86
2. Ibid., pg. 86
3. Spencer Burke and Barry Taylor, *A Heretics Guide To Eternity*, pg. 34-35, foreword by Brian McClaren.
4. Ibid.
5. Seances, Spirits, and 12 Steps: <http://mywordlikefire.wordpress.com/2008/09/24/seances-spirits-and-12-steps/>
6. Irving Peter Gellman, *The Sober Alcoholic*
7. Alcoholics Anonymous and Contemplative Spirituality: <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=1196>
8. 12 Step Outreach: <http://cp12stepoutreach.org/> 11th Step Meditation Newsletter http://www.11thstepmeditation.org/11th_step_meetings/overview.htm
9. Brian McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity*, pg.226.