



The Emerging Church Trap: Avoid the Bait

By Steve Wohlberg

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Yet again, author Steve Wohlberg artfully tackles a huge subject in just a handful of words. He brings into focus the seemingly nebulous topic of the emerging church movement by joining Scripture with history. Jesus Himself firmly noted to His disciples: “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:4&8211;5). The author makes Christ’s solemn warning personal in that “you” not only meant the disciples, but Christ was speaking directly to you, the reader.

Emerging church proponents maintain that a change is needed in the church today; otherwise, many will be lost. They believe that changes need to be made in churches today to appeal to the electronically minded and to keep up with the times. Yet the God of the heavens exclaims, “I am the Lord, I do not change” (Malachi 3:6).

The changes that emerging church advocates, such as Leonard Sweet, Brian McLaren, Richard Foster, and others, endorse are not really new. In fact, they are steeped in the Eastern mystic philosophies of Hinduism, Buddhism, and especially that of medieval Rome. “Eastern meditation is an attempt to empty the mind,” Richard Foster wrote in his book *Celebration of Discipline*.

Those partisan to the emerging church doctrine look to Ignatius Loyola, who established the Society of Jesus or the Jesuits, as their founding father. “Inside a cave in Manresa, Spain, Ignatius emptied his mind. The otherworldly impressions did come from a ghostly entity claiming to be the Virgin Mary. That ghost gave directions. ‘Fine,’ Loyola decided. ‘I will obey’” (The Emerging Church Trap, page 24).

Christ spoke directly to the danger of emptying our minds in the book of Matthew:

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.” (Matthew 12:43-45)

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Richelle Johnson:

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John Tamaro:

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