

Ten Reasons NOT To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings

A Response to the tract written by Tricia Tillin Titled “Ten Reasons To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings”

Introduction

Tricia Tillin provides a concise critique of the Faith Movement that appears to have been influenced by expert anti-word-faith proponents such as Hendrik Hanegraaff (Christianity in Crisis) and Daniel R. McConnell (A Different Gospel).¹ Though her critique is concise and easy to follow, this response will demonstrate that it is filled with errors and inaccuracies. There is no doubt that Ms. Tillin's research on this subject was prejudiced by previously available anti-word-faith literature.

Furthermore, this response will expose Ms Tillin's own doctrinal errors and theological bias. In the introduction to the tract under dispute, Ms. Tillin readily admits that the "positive confession" teaching (as she labels it) brought transformation to dead churches, victory into the lives of Christians and increased their faith in the truths of the Scriptures when it came to the United Kingdom. In spite of this positive fruit, she still insists on labeling the teaching as "cultic."

This raises several questions: Is God the author of "cultic practices?" If not then that means Satan is credited with bringing the faith movement to the UK. If this is true then when did Satan, who is only known for wielding *death and destruction* rather than *life* (John 10:10; Heb. 2:14), bring *life* to those dead churches? Satan, whose agenda is to bring *defeat* into our lives, (Eph. 6:10-12; 1 Pet. 5:9, 10; Rev. 12:9-11) is now bringing *victorious living*? Satan, whose intent is to *keep people from* knowledge of God's Word (Hos. 4:6; Mark 4:15) is now *increasing God's people's faith in Scripture*? Perhaps Tillin has forgotten the words of the Lord Jesus Christ who told us that a kingdom divided against itself shall not stand (see Matt. 12:22-29).

It is unfortunate that Tillin and those like her are demonstrating the same characteristics we see in the Pharisees of Jesus' day. In Matthew 12:22-29 Jesus brought healing and deliverance to one that was demon possessed. The Pharisees of Jesus' day recognized that a true deliverance had taken place but credited this to Satan's power. Another example is found in John 9:10-24. Jesus healed a man born blind from birth. The Pharisees acknowledged the miracle as genuine and even encouraged the man to praise God for it, but continued their attacks upon Jesus. Concerning Jesus, they said that "this man is not of God" (v. 16) and "this man is a sinner" (v. 24).

One should easily detect the parallel between Tillin's introductory critique and that of the Pharisees' critique of Jesus. She admits that the Faith movement brought life to dead churches, a new life of victory, a deeper faith in the Scriptures, but then she questions the genuineness of the conversions and healings that came as a result of the "positive confession" teaching. Some of the Pharisees in Jesus day questioned whether

¹ In her online article titled, "My Word of Faith Testimony," Tillin says, "I learned as I studied the origins of the Movement, about a teaching called 'New Thought' that led to Christian Science, and then fed into the Faith Movement through E.W. Kenyon." She then claims, "I checked out the Kenyon books and confirmed for myself what others had pointed out ..." Statements like this enables one to detect the source of her influence. Where else could she have received this "insight" from since it was McConnell and Hanegraaff who popularized the false claims that Kenyon's theology was influenced by New Thought metaphysics?

the man that the Lord healed of blindness had actually ever been blind in the first place (vv. 17-24). Therefore, Tillin is repeating the skepticism and tactics of the Pharisees that were responsible for the persecution, suffering, and death of the Lord Himself.

Tillin's pharisaic tactics are evidenced in her introduction. Like so many other critics, she accuses the movement of incorporating Christian Science and New Thought teachings into its theology. This is due to the so-called "Kenyon Link" that has been made popular by D.R. McConnell (*A Different Gospel*). Bruce Barron, a sympathetic critic of the Faith Movement wrote, "Kenyon received his education in New England, causing some researchers to suspect *though no direct connection has been proved*, that he was influenced by the mind-science teachings that flourished there in the late nineteenth century"²(Italics are mine).

A perusal of Kenyon's own writings will demonstrate no sympathy with metaphysical cults like Christian Science or New Thought. On the contrary, the unbiased researcher without an agenda to destroy the reputation of Kenyon will find that he was strongly, if not violently, opposed to them.

The current faith teachers also dispute the mind-science accusations. Dr. Frederick K.C. Price answered these accusations by explaining the difference between faith in God's Word and the preposterous ideas of the metaphysical cults:

"Well! That sounds like Science of mind, or *Mind Science*." No, it is not. It may sound like it, but it is not the same. In *mind science*, and metaphysical cults, there are some similarities. They look pretty close to being the same thing, but they are not, because what we are talking about is based on God's Word, and what they are talking about is based on what you have in your head.³ (Italics are his)

Unfortunately, not much weight has been given to the Faith Teachers' distinction of their theology and that of the cults that they are being falsely compared to. Therefore, we are grateful that some critics of the faith movement such as Robert Bowman acknowledge that the accusation is inaccurate. Bowman feels that this Kenyon-Connection is fallacious. He writes:

Thus, however strongly we may disagree with Kenyon's theology, it is simply not right to classify it with the metaphysical theologies of New Thought, Christian Science, or other similar cults. This does not mean that one cannot conclude that Kenyon's theology was seriously defective or even heretical. It does mean that Kenyon's theology cannot be understood wholly or even principally in terms of New Thought.⁴

Bowman is certainly no fan of the Faith Movement. His book was written to provide his own personal "expose" of areas he believes are aberrant. While I disagree with most of Bowman's conclusions, I appreciate the fact that a critic of the movement is opposed to the belief that it is completely rooted in metaphysical cult theology.

Thankfully, more thorough research has been done to refute this *guilt by association* tactic. We highly recommend reading the book, [E. W. Kenyon and His](#)

² Barron, Bruce **The Health and Wealth Gospel** (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1987), p. 61

³ Price, Frederick K.C. **Faith, Foolishness, or Presumption** (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 1979), p. 16

⁴ Bowman, Robert M. **The Word-Faith Controversy** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), pp. 54, 55

[Message of Faith: The True Story](#) by Joe McIntyre and [E. W. Kenyon: Cult Founder or Evangelical Minister](#) by Geir Lie. In these books you will find a thorough refutation of the "New Thought" accusation.

Tillin is not satisfied to merely accuse the faith teachers of borrowing from well-known cults. In her introduction she also accuses them of being tools of Satan to trap Christians into the "New Age" movement and ushering in the kingdom of the Antichrist. The similarities between Tillin's accusation against the Faith Movement and the Pharisees' accusations against Jesus are striking (Matt. 12:22-29; John 9:10-24). Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, it seems that Word-Faith critics are constantly looking for something by which they can bring an accusation (Matt. 12:10; Mark 3:2; Luke 11:54; John 8:6).

Charismatic Bible teachers Mark and Patti Virkler have written a book titled "*Am I being Deceived?*" Their book marks the distinctions between New Agers, Christians, and modern day Pharisees. They write, "Pharisees do not seek ongoing, direct contact with the Living God, and call those who do seek and experience such, either New Agers or demonized."⁵

The Virkler's note that Pharisees appear to base their "ministries" on *negativity*. They seem to have more fear of the "Antichrist" than faith in God's power and promises:

Pharisees are extremely negative, because they are using all the principles of faith in reverse. They believe in satan's power rather than God's power in this present age. They speak of the works of the antichrist, rather than the works of the risen Christ. They set their eyes on the antichrist, rather than fixing their eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:2).⁶

This appears to be an accurate description of Tillin's anti-word-faith tract. She is using "fear tactics" to dissuade her readers from embracing Word-Faith teachings by falsely insinuating that they could possibly assist in setting up the antichrist's kingdom. Such inflammatory language goes beyond the bounds of mere doctrinal disagreement. It also appears to demonstrate more faith in the ability of the devil than in God's ability to protect His people.

Bob and Gretchen Passantino warns against this false association that so many discernment ministries make between New Age cults and other groups that they disagree with. While they do not excuse ministries for careless statements, they do believe that an application of what they call "witch hunt techniques" can enable anyone to declare another as a "New Age" heretic.⁷

Tillin's tract is full of such tactics. These papers (part one and two) will present ten reasons to accept Word-of-Faith teachings. Our "reasons" will be used as counter-points to Ms. Tillin's reasons to reject said teachings. These counter-points will expose the fallacies of Tillin's own reasons.

⁵ Virkler, Mark & Patti **Am I Being Deceived?** (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos Publisher, 2001), p. 45

⁶ Ibid, p. 39

⁷ Passantino, Bob and Gretchen **Witch Hunt** (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers). I highly recommend reading pages 128 to 136. The Passantinos do an excellent job demonstrating the absurdities of labeling groups and individuals "New Age" simply because of some similarities. They show that a person can even attack the Bible itself if such a tactic is taken too far. It is ironic that the Passantinos are close friends with Hendrik Hanegraaff who has used the exact same tactics against faith teachers that they dispute in their book.