

Helpful Questions to Determine Presence of Spiritual Formation and Emergent or Convergent Church Ideology

1. **Is The Silence being introduced?** (You might also see other names for this like Centering Prayer, Contemplative Prayer, Listening Prayer, Soaking Prayer, or Silence /Silent in Jesus.)
2. **Are these practices being mentioned?** Lectio Divina, Breath Prayers, Walking the Labyrinth, Sacred Space?
3. Are they quoting Richard Foster, Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, Leonard Sweet, Thomas Keating, Thomas Merten, Thomas a' Kempis, Henri Nouwen, Brother Lawrence, Brennan Manning, Bill Hybels, Doug Pagitt, Tony Jones, Dallas Willard, other Emergent Church leaders, The Desert Fathers, Monks, or even from Eugene Peterson's *The Message Bible*?
4. Is the worship service environment darkened, with the presence of colored backlighting? Is the setting more like a stage or café than a church type setting?
5. Is the worship music repetitive contemporary praise music?
6. Do presenters teach the Everlasting Gospel and God's power to not only forgive and justify us, **but also** to sanctify us? (Maybe a better question is, "Does God save us in sin or from sin?")
7. **Which gospel are they teaching or emphasizing?** The Everlasting Gospel or a social gospel? (The social gospel is the new gospel for the emergent and convergent churches. It's a hallmark sign for them. They will talk about justification then transition into the social gospel, saying we are to go 'be Jesus' to those in need, rather than transitioning into the power of the gospel and its sanctifying effects. No character transformation is discussed, encouraged or required. It becomes an exterior gospel to change people's circumstances, not an internalized gospel that changes us or others to be more like Jesus and His character.)
8. **Is truth relative** in nature and defined by a changing culture rather than by the Word of God? "You have your truth, and I have mine."
9. Do they appropriately teach the loving character of Christ **and also** the rest of His character including righteousness by faith and sanctification as being necessary in preparing for the return of Jesus?

10. Do they teach that one can be a Buddhist, Atheist, Muslim, or New Ager, etc., and still be saved; or do they appropriately teach salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone? (Convergent ideology is based on pluralism. One can subscribe to some teachings of Jesus and yet be of another religion and still be saved. They say God can speak to all of us through other gods, not just through Jesus.)
11. **Are they teaching a literal heaven**, or do they say heaven and hell are here and now because of what we, or others, make life to be? (Convergent ideology teaches that we can create both heaven and hell depending on how we treat others.)
 - a. (Convergent ideology doesn't believe in a literal heaven as is taught in the Bible. Heaven is now and is what we make it. It's the same for hell. Hell can be here and now. If someone is not nice to me, they are bringing hell to me. It's all part of the kingdom being built on earth. Their definition of the kingdom is not based on the one in the Bible. They say the kingdom is now and we build up/expand the kingdom by accepting all religions. We no longer call people out of Babylon but leave them where they are. No change is necessary except to help heal the earth. When the earth is healed we can give it back to God the way it was originally given to us. Then we have become the kingdom of God.)
12. Are they teaching that Jesus had to die for me in order for me to be saved? (Convergent teaching is that we do not need the blood of Jesus to be saved and that the kingdom is here and now.)
13. Are they letting go of empty worship conventions and an overemphasis on doctrines as tools of division and exclusion? Are they embracing more diverse, creative, engaging approaches, often making strong use of **the arts**?
14. Are they letting go of the desire to impose their particular vision of faith on wider society? Are they embracing the notion that their purpose is to make themselves more faithful adherents of their vision of faith? (darkwoodbrew.org)
15. Are they letting go of notions of the afterlife that are dominated by judgment of "unbelievers?" Are they embracing an understanding that, as God's creations, God is eternally faithful to us, and that all people are loved far more than we can comprehend?
16. Are they letting go of the biblical leadership roles of pastors and elders? Are they embracing an understanding that all people have a mission and purpose in life in response to the call of the Holy Spirit and so there is no place for those invested with church authority? It's no longer about who wears the robes but who lives the life? (darkwoodbrew.org)

