



AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE EMERGING CHURCH

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- I. **The Origin of the Term “Emerging Church” – Leadership Network 1997**
- II. **From “Baby Buster” to “Gen X” to “Postmodern” to “Emerging”**
 - A. Term was quickly misunderstood and misused and simply equated with a “style” or worship
 - B. Soon moved past a generational focus to more of a cultural focus
 - C. The primary focus of the term during the early years was to describe a *ministry methodology*
- III. **Dan Kimball’s Book: *The Emerging Church***
 - A. Shifting Values in Approach to Worship Services (Chart)
 - B. Shifting Values in Approach to Preaching (Chart)
 - C. Shifting Values in Approach to Evangelism (Chart)
 - D. Shifting Values in Approach to Leadership (Chart)
- IV. **Emerging Churches Have a “Missional” Focus on “Being the Church” in a Postmodern Culture**
 - A. Churches focus switched from an emphasis on “the heavenly” to “expanding the kingdom of God” in the present world
 - B. The focus was on “being the church” instead of “going to church”
 - C. Original focus was mainly on reaching out to the younger generations who seemed to have been neglected or marginalized by traditional or modern churches
- V. **The Church Has Always Been “Emerging”**
 - A. Read through the book of Acts – Jerusalem and basically a Jewish Church emerging into a Gentile church spread out all over the world.
 - B. Many things that people hold dear in our traditional churches are often equated with the “gospel” as if it has always been that way—but it hasn’t, i.e. organs, hymnals, etc.
 - C. Restoration Movement “emerged” out of Presbyterianism and Baptist Associations
 - D. If you don’t think that the churches have “emerged” do you still practice the “holy kiss”?



- E. The church started as a missionary movement in Jerusalem.
It moved to Rome and became an institution.
It traveled to Europe and became a culture.
It crossed the Atlantic to America and became a big business.

VI. Understanding the Difference Between “Emerging” and “Emergent”

- A. The Emergent theological “think tank” consisting of Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, Doug Pagitt, Chris Seay, Mark Driscoll, Leonard Sweet and others came about because of the demise of the original Leadership Network. Eventually Mark Driscoll and Leonard Sweet would remove themselves from any affiliation with the Emergent Movement because of the liberal theological path it was taking.
- B. Youth Specialties and Zondervan very quickly got on board with Emergent and started a convention by the same name and began publishing a whole new line of books by various key authors.
- C. A confusion arose about this time between the terms “emerging” and “emergent”. Some people were using them interchangeably but that was not correct.
- D. There is some crossover and shared values between emerging churches and emergent but when it comes to the approach to truth, the gospel and other key doctrines there is a wide divide.

VII. Structure and Commonality of The Emerging Church

- A. Authenticity.
- B. Missional living.
- C. Narrative theology.
- D. Christ-centeredness.
- E. Highly creative approaches to worship and spiritual reflection, as compared to many American churches in recent years.
- F. A minimalist and decentralized organizational structure.
- G. A flexible approach to theology whereby individual differences in belief and morality are accepted within reason.
- H. A holistic view of the role of the church in society..
- I. A desire to reanalyze the Bible against the context with the goal of revealing a multiplicity of valid perspectives rather than a single valid interpretation
- J. A continual re-examination of theology.
- K. A high value placed on creating communities built out of the creativity of those who are a part of each local body.
- L. A belief in the journey of faith, both as individual and community.
- M. Closely related to the House Church movement.



VIII. Three Broad Categories of Emerging Churches Proposed by Dr. Ed Stetzer

- A. The Emerging church is a broad category that encompasses a wide variety of churches and Christians who are seeking to be effective missionaries wherever they live. This includes Europeans and Australians who are having the same conversation as their American counterparts.

- B. *Relevants* - are theologically conservative evangelicals who are not as interested in reshaping theology as much as updating such things as worship styles, preaching styles, and church leadership structures.
- C. *Reconstructionists* are generally theologically evangelical and dissatisfied with the current forms of church (e.g. seeker, purpose, contemporary). They bolster their critique by noting that our nation is becoming less Christian and that those who profess faith are not living lives markedly different than non-Christians; thereby, proving that current church forms have failed to create life transformation
- D. *Revisionists* are theologically liberal and question key evangelical doctrines, critiquing their appropriateness for the emerging postmodern world.

IX. Nine Common Practices of Emerging Churches According to Gibbs and Bolger



- A. Identifying with the life of Jesus
- B. Transforming secular space
- C. Living highly communal lives
- D. Welcoming the stranger
- E. Serving with generosity
- F. Participating as producers
- G. Create as created beings
- H. Lead as a body
- I. Take part in spiritual activities.

X. What Characterizes the Lives of the First Leaders in the Emerging/Emergent Church Movement?

- A. A discontent and protest against the current situation in the evangelical church - Spencer Burke and Doug Pagitt
- B. Pushing for authenticity.
- C. Recognizing our own social location.
- D. Evangelizing outsiders.



XI. Weakness of the Emergent Church

- A. The emergent church's understanding and critique of modernism seems too reductionistic and wooden.
- B. The almost universal condemnation of confessional Christianity.
- C. A condemnation that is often theologically shallow and intellectually incoherent.
- D. While it has been relentless in its criticism and condemnation of "modernism" it has not been as vigilant and intellectually honest with the shortcomings of postmodernism, but has whole-heartedly embraced it without considering some of the flaws inherent in that worldview.

XII. The Calvary Chapel Statement on the Emergent Church

- A. That Jesus is not the only way by which one might be saved.
- B. The soft peddling of hell as the destiny for those who reject the salvation offered through Jesus Christ.
- C. We have difficulty in their touchy-feely relating to God. Where the experience of certain feelings become the criteria for truth rather than the word of God.

- D. We have great problems with the use of icons to give them a sense of God or the presence of God.
- E. We do not believe that we should seek to make sinners feel safe and comfortable in church.
- F. Should we seek to condone what God has condemned, such as the homosexual lifestyle?
- G. Should we look to Eastern religions with their practices of meditation through Yoga and special breathing techniques or repeating a mantra to hear God speak to us?
- H. The great confusion that exists in the divergent positions of the Emergent Church results from their challenging the final authority of the Scriptures. When you no longer have a final authority, then everyone's ideas become as valid as the next person's, and it cannot help but end in total confusion and contradictions.