

The Emerging Church: A Critique of the Movement and a Call to Respond

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EMERGING CHURCHES:

1. Not marked by any denominational ties
2. Marked by a distrust of past traditional models of church
3. Marked by an emphasis on personal relationships rather than programs
4. Characterized by heavy community and social interaction vs. doctrine
5. Boast in lack of certainty, pride in lack of answers

Leaders of Emerging Church Movement

1. Mark Driscoll, Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA

Author "Vintage Jesus"
2. Doug Pagitt, Solomon's Porch, Minneapolis, MN
3. Jay Bakker, Revolution, New York City
4. Rob Bell, Mars Hill Church, Grand Rapids, MI
5. Dan Kimball, Vintage Faith Church, Santa Cruz, CA
6. Brian McLaren, author "The Secret Message of Jesus" and "Everything Must Change"

What is their Theology?

1. Do not use the term "Church", rather "Missional Faith Communities"
2. Intentionally vague and paradoxical and ambiguous

THE EMERGING CHURCH IS...

1. A Reaction

-to the world "as is"

-to the church “as is”

2) An Attitude/Mindset (not a model or method)

-Discontent

-Dissatisfaction

3) An Attempt

-To find new relevant ways to be the church in the world today

- Pragmatic church, sees former models of churches, sees that it doesn't work, seeks new model....”missional”

4) A Philosophy of Thought (Toward Authority)

-Post- Modern

-Post-Foundational

-Love of narrative, small stories vs. big picture of Bible

-Bible is essential, but not foundational as truth. In reality, this is a rebirth of

Karl Barth's existentialism. The detrimental effects of this shift: the Emerging

Church sets New Testament stories as a new truth, a propositional truth....

with an emphasis on seeking truth not embracing truth.

5) A Desire

-To hear and incorporate the stories of the marginalized

CHARACTERIZED BY:

1. Intentional dissatisfaction and disassociation with church “as is”
2. Deconstruction of traditional theology and practice

3. Intense missional focus
4. Fluid theology and view of certainty

NEGATIVE ASPECTS-KEY DANGERS

1. Pride in Uncertainty

-only God knows totally, we are only beginner disciples and we have to learn and unlearn things. BUT we do have God's Word=TRUTH.

- 2) Rethinking Key Biblical Doctrines

-Desire to completely revise church

- 3) Misinterpretation of Scripture

-"Kingdom Focus"

-integrated holistic spiritual reality

- 4) Shift of Focus

-from spiritual to material

-make the world a better place, here and now

-social action

POSTIVE ASPECTS-WHAT CAN WE LEARN

1. Awareness of the problem of the world "as is" and the church "as is"

-church often is guilty of proof-texting, legalism, hypocrisy, traditions of men (see Mark 7)

2. A genuine desire to be of help

-have a redemptive role in society (They emphasize social needs vs. spiritual needs).

- 3) Recognition of the need for relational connection with unbelievers.

-creation of a new god in our image

OUR RESPONSE -TODAY

II Timothy 4:3-4

1. Be aware that we are in the midst of a spiritual, social, moral, and theological crisis from all sides: emerging church, current evangelical and fundamental churches, and an unbelieving world.

-This crisis led to hypocrisy, disillusionment, and disappointment

-We live in a post-Christian society that lacks the basics of Christianity and /or Christian terms. It will continue to change rapidly. Don't keep your heads in the sand. Be aware of the church changes.

- 2) Possess a proper view of Scripture and understand how to interpret it correctly.

-Know God's Word, study it. (I Tim. 3:16-17) The written Word is completely true. It is the discerner of the heart and mind. (Heb. 4) There is absolute, literal truth. (II Peter 1:12-21)

-We don't need social reform or cultural shifts. We need a proper understanding of sin and salvation.

-Hold to a proper view of Eschatology (study of end times). God will establish this in the future. Don't abuse the earth, but keep focus clear on things to come.

- 3) Truly understand WHY we believe WHAT we believe.

-be able to defend God's Word to critics

-not just because “so and so said so” type answers

4) Evangelize in a relational way.

-Get to know people first. Let the Holy Spirit convict hearts of unbelievers.

5) Understand the role of “certainty” in relation to truth.

6) Be humble and confident.

-be steadfast (I Cor. 2:12)

-“That you may know”... (I John 4:1)

7) Refuse to make the “traditions of men” the “commandments of God”.

FINAL CHALLENGE

Be authentic and true. Be grounded in the Word of God.

Humbly receive it. Humbly study it. Grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cling to the TRUTH, Jesus Christ.