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**C0917 – April 29, 2009 – Justification By Faith & Emerging  
Church Movement - Part 1**

**Fbg Bible Church Purpose**

A chief purpose of Fredericksburg Bible Church is to counteract the irrationalism of the age and to expose the errors of the teachers of the church. Our emphasis—on the Bible as the sole source of knowledge, on the primacy of truth, on the supreme importance of correct doctrine, and on the necessity for systematic and logical thinking—is rare. To the extent that the church survives—and she will survive and flourish—it will be because of her increasing acceptance of these basic ideas and their logical implications.

Jeremy Thomas September 2008

Jeremy Thomas, in September 2008, made a declaration of purpose for this church:

“A chief purpose of Fredericksburg Bible Church is to counteract the irrationalism of the age and to expose the errors of the teachers of the church. Our emphasis—on the Bible as the sole source of knowledge, on the primacy of truth, on the supreme importance of correct doctrine, and on the necessity for systematic and logical thinking—is rare. To the extent that the church survives—and she will survive and flourish—it will be because of her increasing acceptance of these basic ideas and their logical implications.”

So, it is with this purpose that I bring what is called the “emerging church movement” before you. Much of what I have learned about the emerging church comes from a book by Roger Oakland called *Faith Undone*. He has done a rather thorough study of this group and I am indebted to him for his work. Although I don’t agree with all of Mr. Oakland’s theological positions, I do think he has exposed this apostasy quite thoroughly.

God has been most gracious to me in these last few years of my life to study and learn more Biblical theology and Biblical doctrine than I have in the entirety of my life previous to coming to this church body in 2001. However, in studying, learning, and teaching, I have become painfully aware that the majority of so called “Christians” have been misled by false teaching, lulled to sleep by men or women who prefix their names with the title “Reverend”. With that title, they are given tacit permission to teach, preach and lead large flocks of sheep down strange and dangerous spiritual paths, and the sheep follow faithfully. These men and women have much to answer for before the judgment seat of Christ – if they are truly saved.

Since the beginning of the Church we’ve had Christians drawn away from God’s truth to false teachers, so the Emerging Church movement is just another manifestation of the autonomous mind of man misinterpreting and/or misusing the Word of God. It seems that autonomous man is always trying to get God to do what he (man) wants, and man is always trying to do what is right is in own eyes.

In the introduction of Dr. John Hannah’s book, The Foundations of the Faith, in the introduction section, he recalls an article about an assignment given at a seminary. The instructor told his students that they would work together on one major project that semester. They would move systematically through the New Testament to categorize every area of truth and determine how many times each area is addressed. Their goal was to find the one truth emphasized more than any other in the New Testament.

### Warning against False Doctrine

A seminary study showed that the:

Warning against False Doctrine

was found to be

the most emphasized warning

in the New Testament.

When they completed the project, they were amazed to see that *warning against false doctrine* is emphasized more than any other issue – even more than love, unity, and experience.

## The Problem of Non Knowledge

“The Christian at the beginning of the twenty-first century is confronted with an overwhelming cultural consensus—sometimes stated explicitly but most often implicitly: Man does not and cannot know anything truly.”

(from *Slavery & Christianity* by John W. Robbins)

In *The Crisis of our Time* from the *Messenger* of July 2008, Jeremy quotes from *Slavery & Christianity* by John W. Robbins :

“The Christian at the beginning of the twenty-first century is confronted with an overwhelming cultural consensus—sometimes stated explicitly but most often implicitly: Man does not and cannot know anything truly.”

Jeremy Thomas comments: “What is at stake at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not simply a single doctrine, such as the virgin birth, or the existence of Hell, as important as those doctrines may be, but the whole of Christianity itself. If knowledge is not possible to man, it is worse than silly to argue points of doctrine—it is insane. ....There is no greater threat facing the true church of Christ at this moment than the irrationalism that now controls our entire culture.”

What we have in the movement of the emerging church is a sense of this irrationalism brought on by an emphasis on mysticism. There is also an underlying presupposition of universalism, brought on by the mystical view – that we are all saved by Christ’s death – Christ died for all, therefore, all are saved - Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, the whole world. Now we are all children of God and as brothers and sisters we actually rise above all the various world religions and form a collective “Christ consciousness” or a “Cosmic Christ” as one leader put it – and armed with a social gospel, we come together to conquer poverty, starvation, ignorance, and raise up the oppressed.

What we are faced with today is paradox and antinomies (contradiction between two laws or principles that are reasonable in themselves). For example, universalism seems to be a reasonable principle – that Christ

died for all, therefore all are saved. But it is a half truth stripped from the Bible, a half sentence or verse that fits the presupposition you have in mind. Again, once you misuse or diminish the Word of God, or try to make it fit the system you are trying to build, you will be left only with your autonomous mind as the ultimate authority and you end up in apostasy.

Apostasy only happens to believers. Non-believers cannot be apostate. They are under the wrath of God, because they are unbelievers. Which make me wonder if these emerging church members are truly believers.

The emerging church is “searching” for truth. Instead of a pastor teaching from the Bible, a facilitator asks questions, which are followed by more questions by himself or the members of the congregation, some of whom will offer possible solutions to these questions. The salvation message of the emerging church is not found in doctrine but in dialogue, not in truth but in discussion. In this sense, always “searching but never finding” is a trademark of the emerging church, because in the endless dialogue or “conversations”, as they like to call it, the truth is never found.

### **Muddy the Waters**

(continue to confuse)

If it sounds good and you repeat it often enough, people will begin to believe it as true.  
This happens in the area of politics as well as the area of religion.

Satan's strategy: Confuse the issues so that people do not hear the Word of God clearly, especially the Gospel message!  
Don't be exclusive, but inclusive so that there are diverse opinions and views. No one has a corner on truth, so let's "dialogue" and come up with areas that we can agree on. "Go along to get along"!

Currently, the desire for unity overrides the desire for truth!  
Not since the Tower of Babel has man so desired oneness.  
(Autonomous Man is alive and well)

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Not since the Tower of Babel has man so desired oneness. This tells me that Autonomous Man is alive and well.

As we start to look at the emerging church movement, we find one thing different right away. There are no church buildings as such. There are “conversations” taking place in student union buildings, coffee shops, warehouses, or auditoriums. Again, the “given” is that no one has all the answers and those that think they do are arrogant. So, instead of a teacher, there is a “facilitator” who asks questions, suggesting several options for answers, and then joins the conversation.

Here’s a critique from *Israel My Glory* magazine (March/April edition) entitled *Will the Emergent Church submerge Yours?* by Jan Markell. She writes, “It is mystical...Emergents are not interested in doctrine; rather they want things you can feel, touch, and smell, such as incense and icons”. She continues, “To the postmodern (under-age-30) a solid gospel message is too dogmatic and arrogant. Emergents would say that a more moderate gospel had to be invented to be accepted by the masses within this younger generation.”

So God’s Words and propositions must be word-smith’d, if you will, to make it palatable for this new generation of humanity. Where did we lose the Creator-creature distinction truth?



Matthew 7:15  
"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

**Peter F. Drucker**

Born 11/19/1909 in Vienna, Austria; Died 11/11/2005. If you've taken any business management classes, you will have come across this name. He is the guru of business management. He has become an inspiration for many with his management and organization far sightedness.

Here's the thinking of Peter Drucker in 1968:

"The most probable assumption is that every single one of the old demarcations, disciplines and faculties is going to become obsolete and a barrier to learning as well as to understanding. The fact that we are shifting from a Cartesian view of the universe, in which the accent has been on parts and elements, to a configuration view, with the emphasis on wholes and patterns, challenges every single dividing line between areas of study and knowledge." The man had a big picture view.

Drucker admired and studied the teachings of theologian and philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. Two of Kierkegaard's popular ideas are "subjectivity", and the notion popularly referred to as "leap of faith". Drucker was so enamored with Kierkegaard that he took time to learn Danish in order to read Kierkegaard's yet-untranslated works.

Drucker also had a strong bond to the panentheist / mystic Martin Buber (Boo'-ba) - 1878-1965, who embraced the teachings of Hasidism (Ha-si'dism) - Jewish mysticism. Buber believed that "a divine spark" exists within every human and within everything in creation.

In 1990, Drucker established the Leader to Leader Institute, an inter-spiritual *thought forum*, which to this day includes Buddhist sympathizers, globalists, evangelicals, and New Age sympathizers. Drucker believed that "people's needs" supercede "doctrine" or "institutional structure".

Through his foundation and writings, Drucker has made available to the knowledge-worker a body of work that teaches about charities, hospitals, churches, etc., regarding both their management and leadership. These management and leadership teachings are influenced by the mystic notions he believed in.

### **Bob Buford**

Another influence of the Emerging Church is the successful businessman, Bob Burford, a Texan who turned a family owned business (Buford Television, Inc.) with a single ABC affiliate in Tyler, Texas, into a network of cable systems across the country. He sold the business in July 1999.

Mr. Buford founded Leadership Network in 1984 as a resource broker that supplies information to and connects leaders of innovative churches.

The Leadership Training Network (LTN) was created in 1995, with the goal of identifying, training, and providing an ongoing peer-coaching network for leaders of lay mobilization in local congregations.

### **Rick Warren** **Emerging Church Enthusiast**

While Leadership Training Network was the catalyst that initially launched the emerging church, many other ministries and organizations have helped to fuel it. One of the major helpers is Rick Warren. Warren's support for Buford and Leadership Network goes back many years, with an endorsement for Buford's 1994 book *Halftime*, and more importantly his shared admiration with Buford, of Peter Drucker, whom he calls his mentor.

Rick Warren was born January 28, 1954.

He is the founder and senior pastor of Saddleback Church, an evangelical megachurch located in Lake Forest, California, currently the eighth-largest church in the United States (this ranking includes multi-site churches). He is also a bestselling author of many Christian books, including his guide to church ministry and evangelism, The Purpose Driven Church, which has spawned a series of conferences on Christian ministry and evangelism.

He is perhaps best known for the subsequent devotional, The Purpose Driven Life. In recent studies by both Gallup and Barna, show that about 59 million people, or 19% of the U.S. population, have read this book.

He has recently joined with Reader's Digest Association to produce a quarterly magazine called "Purpose Driven Connection" which is intended to reach people who aren't connected to churches.

### **Rob Bell** **Emerging Church Leader**

#### **The Risen Cosmic Christ**

Robert Holmes Bell Jr. (born August 23, 1970) is a best-selling author, Christian speaker, and the founding pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church located in Grandville, Michigan, just outside of Grand Rapids.

Graduated from Wheaton College in 1992, and received a M.Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary.

In the introduction to an interview with Rob Bell, *Beliefnet* reporter, David Kuo, wrote:

Chances are you haven't heard of Rob Bell. You will. In 1999, he, his wife Kristen, and a group of friends started Mars Hill Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan because they wanted to create a community where God could be

experienced in a non-traditional way. They didn't know how to do it or what would happen. They just knew that they wanted to be part of a community where people loved coming, questions were welcomed and love abounded. The church grew from zero to 10,000 in less than two years and Rob Bell has become a phenomenon. Touted as the next Billy Graham, Rob Bell, is a force of influence in this movement.”

His first book was entitled, *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith*. The title is inspired by the actual black velvet painting of Elvis he has tucked away in his basement. Whoever "painted" that picture was creating a work of art for a time and a place. That time and place have now passed.

Christianity, Bell says, is a lot like that painting. It is not static and artists paint it afresh for each new generation.

In an interview with *Beliefnet*, Rob Bell explains what he thinks God is doing. “... it is a giant thing that God is doing here and not just the forgiveness of individuals. It is the reconciliation of all things. It is the putting back together of the whole universe how God originally intended it to be. One way to look at it is that the message is an invitation into God's giant, global universal purposes that ‘I’ actually get to be a part of.

It has been a gradual realization that at the center of the Christian church for thousands of years has been this risen Christ who invites people to trust him; trust him with life, trust him with death, trust him with sin, trust him with future, trust him with hope, trust him with every day. And that this risen Christ transcends dogma and theological systems and denominations and world views. If you are desperate to meet this risen Christ, you meet him in a way that destroys any previous categories you had. I keep finding that this Christ, whatever things I've built, destroys them and shows himself to be bigger and wider and deeper and more loving. Ultimately you enter into a very real mysticism where you realize that there is this risen Christ who changes people's lives and the stuff that emerges around him and attaches itself to him, the institutions and whatever, they aren't it. They don't give life. So over the years I've found that everything but the risen Christ fails. It doesn't deliver.”

When asked what his favorite mantra was, he replied, “My favorite and most oft-repeated mantra is probably, ‘God, what are you telling me now?’ When I'm studying or running or just trying to make it through a difficult day of work through criticism or work through praise, whatever it is, ‘What are you saying to me through this? What is the deeper stream? What are you pointing out?’”

Here we see a number of things.

There is no mention of the Biblical gospel – what Christ has done.

God is putting everything back as God first intended it and we get to join in.

This “risen Christ” who changes lives will figure in a little later as the “Cosmic Christ” who is in everyone.

**Brian D. McLaren**



## **Emerging Church Leader**

Brian D. McLaren is an author, speaker, pastor, and networker among innovative Christian leaders, thinkers, and activists. He is the author of the controversial and award winning book, *A New Kind of Christian* (2001). The book expressly argues that the Bible should not be regarded as infallible or authoritative. McLaren seeks unity between Catholics and Evangelicals and applauds Chuck Colson for leading this unbiblical movement.

Here's what he says we have a need for:

*The Church On The Other Side* (1998) was one of the first emerging church books to come on the scene. In it McLaren explains the object of the movement:

“We are ‘exploring off the map’ – looking into mysterious territory beyond our familiar world on this side of the river, this side of the ocean, this side of the boundary between modern and postmodern worlds. We are looking into an exciting, unmapped world on the other side of all we know so far.”

On Missiology, he says: “I must add, though, that I don't believe making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many (but not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish contexts.”

McLaren rejects the message of Christ's atonement through His blood. He says that God asks of us something that God is incapable of Himself. God asks us to forgive people. But God is incapable of forgiving. God can't forgive unless He punishes somebody in place of the person He was going to forgive.

## **Doug Pagitt**

### **Emerging Church Leader**

Doug Pagitt is head pastor of Solomon's Porch in South Minneapolis

Here's how he uses the Bible in his church. He states:

“At Solomon's Porch, sermons are not primarily about my extracting truth from the Bible to apply to people's lives. In many ways the sermon is less a lecture or motivational speech than it is an act of poetry – of putting words around people's experiences to allow them to find deeper connection in their lives...So our sermons are not lessons that precisely define belief as they are stories that welcome our hopes and ideas and participation.”

What Pagitt is describing is a contextual theology, that is, don't use the Bible as a means of theology or measuring rod of truth and standards by which to live; and rather than have the Bible mold the Christian's

life, let the Christian's life mold the Bible. So, in this way, instead of just one person preaching truth or teaching Biblical doctrine, everyone can have a say and thus come to a consensus of what the Bible *might* be saying.

Just a further word on Contextual Theology:

Contextual theology is a prominent message from the emerging church. In his book, *Models of Contextual Theology* (1992), Stephen B. Bevans defines contextual theology as:

"...a way of doing theology in which one takes into account: the spirit and message of the gospel; the tradition of the Christian people; the culture in which one is theologizing; and social change in that culture, whether brought about by western technological process or the grass roots struggle for equality, justice and liberation."

In other words, the Bible in, and of itself, is not free standing – other factors (culture, ethnicity, history) must be taken into consideration, and with those factors, the message of the Bible must be adjusted to fit. As one writer puts it, "Contextual theology aims at the humanization of theology."

Another influence of the emerging church is Leonard Sweet.

### **Leonard Sweet** **Emerging Church Leader**

Currently the E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at Drew Theological School (Madison, NJ), Leonard Sweet is the author of more than one hundred articles, 600 published sermons and thirty books, most recently *The Gospel According to Starbucks* (2007).

In 1995, Rick Warren joined emerging leader Leonard Sweet to do an audio series titled *Tides of Change*. In this series, Sweet and Warren talked about "a new spirituality" that was looming on the horizon. They both emulated Drucker, talking about "new frontiers," "new waves," "changing times," and letting go of traditions and the old way of doing things. In a way, this audio series sent up an emerging church trial balloon. Sweet had already predicted what the next wave would be in 1991 when he wrote *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic*. Leonard Sweet's views on Emergent Missiology: "...One can be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ without denying the flickers of the sacred in followers of Yahweh, or Kali, or Krishna."

Leonard Sweet challenges youth leaders to move away from what is familiar in order to reach a new generation of kids. Sweet writes about the concept in his book, "Postmodern Pilgrims." He believes churches

can be effective at reaching and discipling teenagers in a postmodern culture by becoming E.P.I.C. churches. The concept of E.P.I.C. includes:

-- Experiential. "If churches are to effectively disciple postmodern teens they have to help them experience God.' ... In M-Fuge camps, the youth go out and serve the community through volunteer efforts.

-- Participatory. "Postmoderns are not going to simply transmit the tradition or culture they've been taught. They want to transform and customize it.' An example, he said, is the popularity of praise music, which has dramatically affected worship. 'They want to be a part of the process, not detached from it.'"

-- Image-driven. "Think about how many churches today have logos. The best tool religious leaders can give postmoderns is a metaphor on an image."

-- Connected. "The paradox is this. The pursuit of individualism has led us to this place of hunger for connectedness to communities, not of blood or nation, but of choice."

In the Preface of his book, Sweet remarks that "the church may now be on the edge of another awaking".....and that "the New Light movement (as he calls it), is characterized by bizarre, sometimes anxious alliances of a ragbag assortment of preachers, theologians, pastors, professors, artists, scientists, business leaders, and scholars. What ties their creative piracy together is a radical faith commitment that is willing to dance to a new rhythm."

In his book *Quantum Spirituality*, Sweet lays the groundwork for the *emerging manifesto* by declaring:

"Mysticism, once cast to the sidelines of the Christian tradition, is now situated in postmodernist culture near the center....Too many people are nothing, as our empty pews are shouting to us, because we give them neither an energy-fire experience of Christ nor the Christ of an energy-fire experience. We may help them apprehend reality through the rudiments of mystical speculations, but not the rapture of flow experiences...Mysticism

(which Einstein called "cosmic religiosity") is metaphysics arrived at through mindbody experiences. Mysticism begins in experience; it ends in theology."

**Matthew Fox**  
**New Age & Mystic Advocate**

Formerly a Dominican priest, now an Episcopal priest, and author of 28 books.

A new age spiritualist who also believes in the divine in man. He writes, "Divinity is not outside us. We are in God and God in us" (*The Cosmic Christ*, p.50) "We are all called, like the Cosmic Christ, to radiate the divine presence to/with/from one another" (ibid. p.137) "Christ in the universe and the Cosmic Christ in other religions. Yet the Divine One is present in them all..." (ibid. p.229) He teaches that Jesus was not *the* Christ but had this *Christ-consciousness*, and he was just one of many who did – like Gandhi, Moses, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Buddha.

Regarding homosexuality he says: "Homosexuality brings more spirituality to the community. It's like a miracle. Gay love has survived all of these centuries obviously because nature wants sexual diversity. Gays bring something very important to culture and the survival of the species."

### **Richard Foster**

#### **Contemplative Prayer<sup>1</sup> & Mystic Enthusiast**

Best known for his 1978 book, *Celebration of Discipline* in which he supports

Contemplative prayer (associated with mysticism). He also believes that we are becoming like Christ. He says, "...the daring goal of the Christian life could be summarized as our being formed, conformed, and transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. And the wonder in all this is that Jesus Christ has come among his people as our everliving Savior, Teacher, Lord, and Friend. He who is the Way shows us the way to live so that we increasingly come to share his love, hope, feelings, and habits. He agrees to be yoked to us, as we are yoked to him, and to train us in how to live our lives as he would live them if he were in our place."

**<sup>1</sup> Related to Contemplative Spirituality:** A belief system that uses ancient mystical practices to induce altered states of consciousness (the silence) and is rooted in mysticism and the occult but often wrapped in Christian terminology. The premise of contemplative spirituality is pantheistic (God is all) and panentheistic (God is in all). Common terms used for this movement are "spiritual formation," "the silence," "the stillness," "ancient-wisdom," "spiritual disciplines," and many others.

**Dan Kimball**  
**Emerging Church Leader**

Author of *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (2003)

and *They Like Jesus but Not the Church* (2007)

In the *Emerging Church* he backs up McLaren's idea that the world we live in now is much different from ever before and now includes many different religions. He writes, "in a post-Christian world, pluralism is the norm. Buddhism, Wicca, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or an eclectic blend – it's all part of the soil."

Kimball explains that "the basis for learning has shifted from logic and rational" to "the realm of experience" and the "mystical".

He believes today's people desire "authenticity". They want multi-sensory spiritual experience and to be reminded that Christianity is an ancient faith. The church of the future must be more multi-sensory (sensual) and based on experience.

Kimball believes "emerging generations are hungering to experience God in worship."

"Vintage Christianity" is what the emergent leaders are calling for.

Dan Kimball in his book *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* encourages his reader to type "emerging Church" into their favorite search engine. What they will find are web sites stating that worship should be a holistic and mystical experience through the use of candles, images, music, stained glass windows, incense, and even darkness to promote spirituality. This spirituality that Dan wants us to engage in is that which Leonard Sweet has come up with his acrostic EPIC: E=experiential; P=participatory; I=image-rich; C=connective.

Emphasis is placed on mystical and sensual worship experiences that foster unity, as opposed to doctrinal truth that divides.

The accepted practice within the Emerging Church is an image-driven message instead of a Word-driven message.

Rick Warren writes in the forward to Dan Kimball's book, *The Emerging Church*,

"Today seekers are hungry for symbols and metaphors and experiences and stories that reveal the greatness of God. Because seekers are constantly changing, we must be sensitive to them like Jesus was; we must be willing to meet them on their own turf and speak to them in ways they understand."

And, you'll find this interesting....Kimball believes that Christians need to be accepted by non-Christians and we need to convince the non-believers that we are not abnormal or strange....that we must be careful not to do things or say things that may identify us as Christian, because he thinks that "those who are rejecting faith in Jesus" do so because of their views of Christians and the church. However, these views are no the fault of the non-believer but are the fault of Christians - but not all Christians, just those who take the Bible literally. Kimball condemns Christians who are pro-Israel, take the Bible literally, study end-time Bible prophecy, and talk about hell – he likens them to negative, arrogant, unloving, and vengeful people.

### **Tony Campolo**

#### **Liberal Evangelical & Mystic Advocate**

Campolo is a graduate of Eastern University and earned a Ph.D. from Temple University. He previously served for ten years on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. He is now professor emeritus of Sociology at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pennsylvania.

Some of his views are: He holds to "Kingdom Now" theology, believes in the cosmic Christ of New Age Spirituality, and the divine in mankind. From his book, *Partly Right*, he writes "Isn't God's message to sinful humanity that He sees in each of us a divine nature of such worth that He sacrificed His own Son so that our divine potentialities might be realized?". In the New Age deception Christ mystically indwells every human being, the idea that Christ lives in all human beings, whether or not they are Christians. Campolo agrees with this position and clearly has been influenced by it. He writes, "*We want to convince the whole human race that there is a God who established the infinite value of every person, who mystically dwells in each person....*" (Tony Campolo, *A Reasonable Faith responding to secularism*, p.59). Regarding homosexuality, he claims in his book, *20 Hot Potatoes*, that homosexual behavior is *not* contrary to the will of God (p. 115), and that homosexual orientation is *not* a matter of choice, but is inborn (pp. 112-113).

### **Harry Emerson Fosdick**

#### **Liberal Theologian & Pastor**

Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969). Liberal theologian and pastor whose ideologies have remained intact and have drifted right into the emerging church.

He believed that the doctrine of the Atonement, where "Jesus suffered as a substitute for us" because of our sins, is a "precivilized barbarity". In his book, *Dear M. Brown*, he stated:

“Too many theories of the atonement assume that by one single high priestly act of self-sacrifice Christ saved the world.” Fosdick ends that statement with a pronounced – “No!” He insists “That these legalistic theories of the atonement are in my judgment a theological disgrace.” He considered the idea that God would actually send His Son to die on a Cross to take our place to be the basis for a violent and bloody religion, and therefore rejected the biblical message of an atonement and substitutionary sacrifice.

The emerging church influential leader, Brian McLaren, agrees with Fosdick as does Alan Jones, an Episcopal priest, in his book *Reimagining Christianity* where he writes: “The Church’s fixation on the death of Jesus as the universal saving act must end, and the place of the cross must be reimagined in Christian faith. Why? Because the cult of suffering and the vindictive God behind it.....The other thread of just criticism addresses the suggestion implicit in the cross that Jesus’ sacrifice was to appease an angry God. Penal substitution (the cross) was the name of this vile doctrine.”

With obscure language, a seemingly noble cause, and evasive conversations, the emerging church is mesmerizing many people (including Christians), receiving the support of established Christian leaders, and leaving a trail of confusion and disarray in its path. The salvation message of the emerging church is not found in doctrine but in dialogue, not in truth but in discussion.

If the emerging church continues to grow at its present pace, mainstream evangelical Christianity will be restructured so that the Biblical Gospel of Jesus Christ will be considered too narrow and too restrictive.

Be careful of your reading material, especially devotionals. Discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between what is right and wrong; rather, it is the difference between right and almost right - *Charles Spurgeon*

As we see in the emerging church movement, a shift in emphasis is enough to take you in a different and unbiblical course.

If you are tempted to connect with the “Divine spark within you”, have a desire to encounter or experience God deep in your soul, to feel that God considers you worthy of His love and intimacy – be careful. You are being drawn away from the objectivity of Scripture and into the subjectivism of home grown spirituality. Let’s remember who we are. We still have a sinful nature, we have no righteousness of our own. All the gifts we have received at the moment of Justification by Faith have

been gifts of grace from outside us. How were we Justified? By FAITH. How are we to live as believers? By FAITH, not by sight. Sanctification, then, is the response of loyal obedience of the believer for the gifts of grace received undeservedly. It's a constant reflection of the gifts received at salvation and responding in gratitude to the commands of Scripture.

I now want to say something about **Objectivity vs. Subjective**. When we read 2 Tim 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;"... we are looking outside ourselves to an inspired standard for teaching truth, an inspired manual for training.

### From Objectivity to Subjectivity

- |                           |    |                            |
|---------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| • From Scripture          | => | • To the whims of man      |
| • From God's Words        | => | • To the man's imagination |
| • From a firm foundation  | => | • To the capricious        |
| • From Biblical Theology  | => | • To the philosophical     |
| • From objective truth    | => | • To subjective untruth    |
| • From the Written Word   | => | • To man's written word    |
| • From God telling man    | => | • To man telling God       |
| • From man in God's image | => | • To God in man's image    |
| • From the sure           | => | • To the unsure            |

But when we go from objectivity to subjectivity, we go from Scripture to the whims of man, from God's Words to the man's imagination, from a firm foundation to the capricious, from Biblical Theology to the philosophical, from objective truth to subjective untruth, from the Written Word to man's written word, from God telling man to man telling God, from man in God's image to God in man's image, and from the sure to the unsure.

Remember, there are only two worldviews:





Next week, we'll look at the emerging church ecumenism and their Eucharistic Evangelization.

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