

from the Emergent Church?

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-By **Don Boys, Ph.D.**

The Emergent Church heavily promotes many pagan and heretical practices although its adherents profess to be “evangelical.” They may possess a desire to move the world but they are moving it in the wrong direction. Too many of them are willing to tinker with orthodox theology, thereby satisfying unbelievers, to accomplish that task. We do not need church leaders that move with the world but leaders who move the world by preaching an inerrant Word.

Some followers use the term “Emergent Church” rather than “Emerging Church.” They prefer to call their interaction “conversation.” I suggest that the Emerging Church is the overall movement, direction, or philosophy while the Emergent Church is the result. I believe the Emergent Church is an outgrowth or response to the megachurch movement that has begun to lose steam. Even the prissy princes of the press have started to critique megachurches and shine the spotlight on the dark and unscriptural side of that movement.

Whether Emerging Church or Emergent Church, what has emerged is a far greater threat than modernism, neo-orthodoxy, new evangelicalism, megachurch philosophy, etc. EC waters are poisonous and mainly young, uninformed adults, who drink deep and long from the noxious waters, frequent the waterhole. Frankly, the Emergent Church is the old modernism with a young face and tattooed body.

The glitz, glamour, and gaudiness of the megachurches have repulsed modern youth. They have guilt about the slick, mass marketing by the megapastors, the huge buildings, emphasis on money, numerous programs, etc., and they are turning to Emergent Churches that emphasize relativism, tolerance, simplicity, individuals, mysticism, experiences, feelings, dialogue, etc. It is my assessment that most EC devotees are the casualties of the megachurch philosophy.

There is some overlapping of the megachurches and Emergent Churches. People like Robert Schuller, Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, etc., are identified with both groups. These men, along with many other EC leaders, have a philosophy like the elastic in an old woman’s drawers. It will fit any shape—except that of fundamentalism!

I seldom question the motives of people since it is impossible to know what prompts them to do what they do; however, it is not unreasonable to hold Christian leaders to account for what they preach and write. Many members of emerging churches are genuine Christians and want to serve Christ but some, not all, of their leaders, are leading them into a dark valley of doubt and confusion. Those leaders who tinker with God’s simple plan of salvation or denigrate, denounce, and deny the doctrines surrounding Christ are my enemies for whom I have no respect and will not “bid them God speed.”

In my review of books written by EC leaders, the authors have very few good things to say about the church that Christ established and faithful Christians have paid with their lives to keep pure in precept and practice. If EC leaders write anything that honors Christ, promotes the Church, or encourages Christians it has to be a typo. They often speak of a Jesus who ate with unacceptable people, was seen with prostitutes, and hung around with various lowlifes. They imply that He accepted people as they were without any demands put upon them. That is not true. Christ told the sinful woman to sin no more. He told Nicodemus he needed to be born from above. He told the rich young ruler to sell what he had and give to the poor. When people met Christ there was a change expected, even demanded. EC people demand nothing.

All their leaders I have heard or read after are quick to quote every socialist, compromiser, liberal, feminist, Roman Catholic mystic, oddball, and religious charlatan who burns incense or lights a candle or shuffles into a “conversation” in their flip-flops. They are quick to quote these weirdoes (and each other) without disclaimers or warnings to young, impressionable “conversationalists.” They do warn their followers of dangerous Christian Fundamentalists but not heretics! Their sympathy for doctrinal error is mind-boggling. They have no time for rules, requirements, restrictions, or regulations.

EC leaders are more concerned about saving the earth than saving souls. Their books and conferences make it clear that they are more interested in building the Kingdom of God than building character in people who have experienced the New Birth and fulfilling the Great Commission. Brian McLaren, generally considered the major leader of the EC, revealed in his book *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that could change everything*, the “secret” is to establish the Kingdom of God on earth here and now—right now!

Time magazine identified McLaren as one of the nation’s 25 most influential evangelicals so he will be in my bull’s eye in this article. I think he is President of the League of the Willfully Blind, and if he is not, he should be. I think it is obvious that McLaren is not an evangelical, and proof comes from his own pen. In these pages I will spend much time with his writings. First, there is no “secret” message of Jesus and it is arrogant for anyone to suggest that he has unlocked the alleged secret—a “secret” kept from the world for 2,000 years! Many times Christ spoke to His disciples about knowing and understanding. In Matt. 13:11 Christ said, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” He came to reveal the mysteries, and the Book of Revelation is “the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

However, EC leaders’ other positions—Bible truth is unimportant, universalism, pagan practices, social gospel, extreme environmentalism, and ecumenism are much more egregious. All these are emerging from the Emergent Church.

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