

The Emergent Church and Last Days Ecumenism

By Dr. Andy Woods



Adapted from Roger Oakland, *Faith Undone* and *Moody Handbook of Theology* pps. 689-99

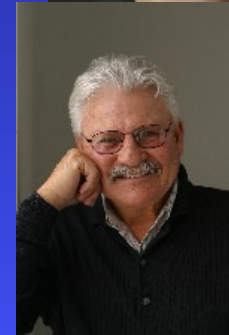
Apostasy is a Sign of the Last Days

- 2 Tim 3:1-”But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.”
- 2 Tim 3:13-“But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (Italics mine).



Some Emerging Church Leaders

- Brian McLaren
- Dan Kimball
- Leonard Sweet
- Doug Pagitt
- Chuck Smith, Jr.
- Robert Webber
- Rob Bell



The Present Generation

- Unique
- Postmodern
- Post Christian
- Disillusioned
- Multi-sensory
- Hungry for a spiritual experience



Paradigm Shift: Emerging Church

“New generations are arising all around us without any Christian influence. So we must rethink virtually everything we are doing in our ministries.” Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 13-14.



RELEVANCE

Tell Me What I Want to Hear
Or Else Shut Up and Go Away

EMERGENT-SEE
PO-MOTIVATORS
FOR EMERGING CHRISTIANS

Paradigm Shift: Emerging Church

“It's is time for a Post Modern Reformation... Reinvent yourself for the 21st century or die.”
Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 17, 75. (Italics added).



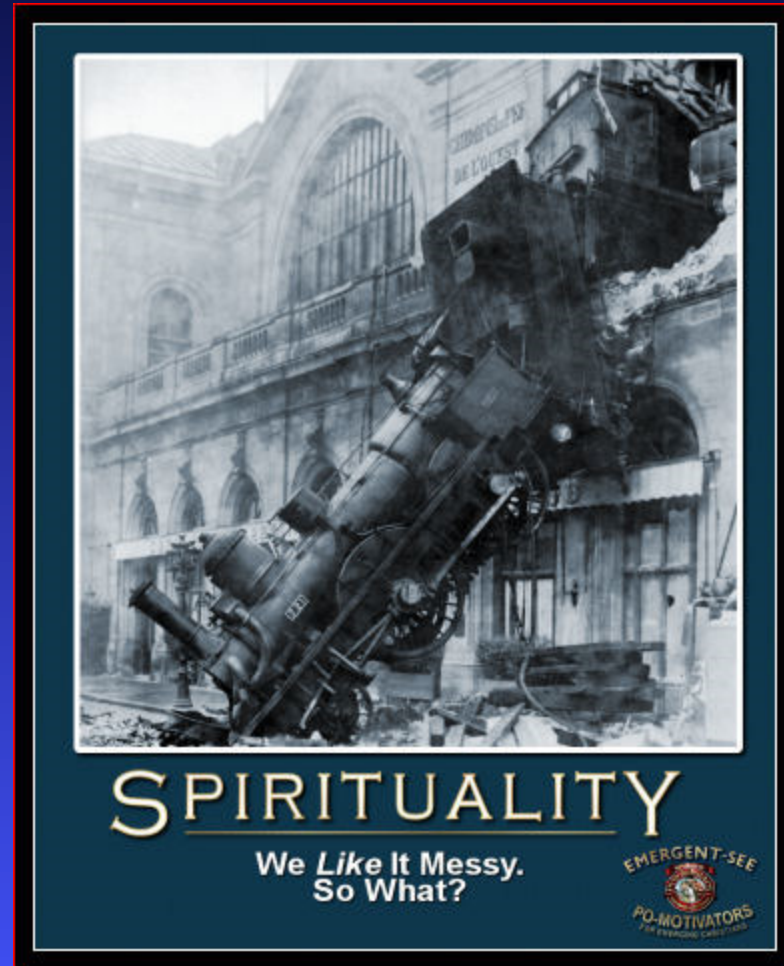
POSTMODERN

It's Our Word. Don't Use It. Don't Try to Define It.
Above All, Don't Label Us With It.
Even If We Apply It to Ourselves.



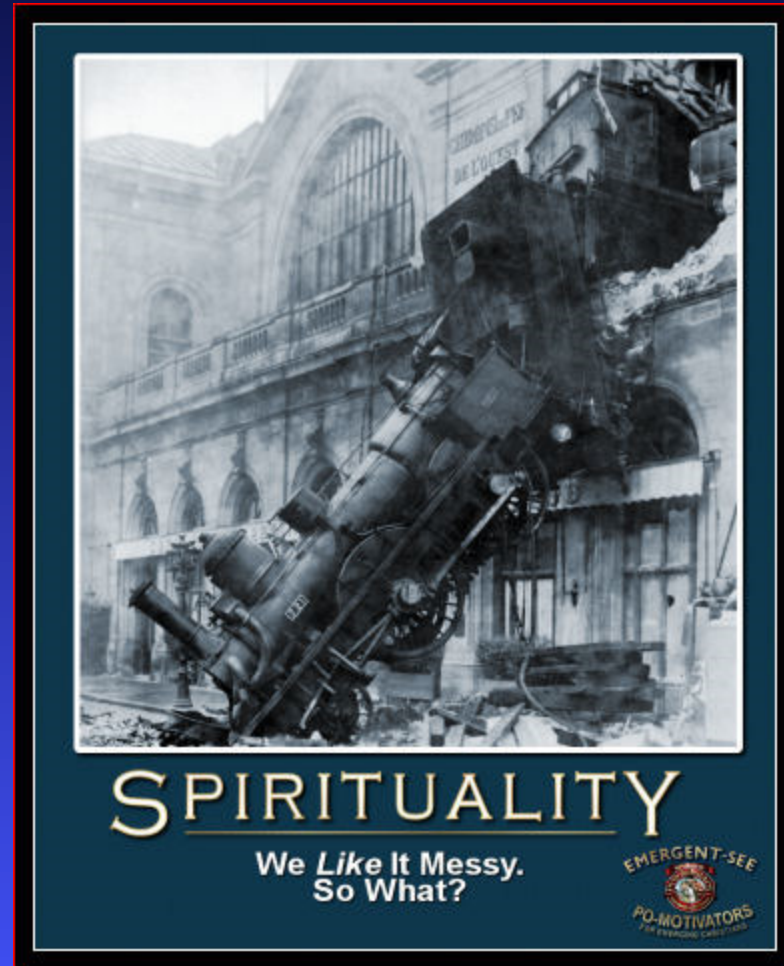
Eight Areas of Redefinition

- Missiology
- Epistemology
- Bibliology
- Ecclesiology
- Soteriology
- Christology
- Eschatology
- Worldview



Eight Areas of Redefinition

- Missions
- Knowledge
- Scripture
- Church
- Salvation
- Christ
- Prophecy
- Worldview



Apostasy is Internal

Acts 20:29-“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears” (Italics added).



Apostasy is Internal

Jude 4- “For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Italics added).



emerging pastor
magazine
Vol. 1, Issue 2

This month... We ask Brian McLaren what kind of hair care products he uses... **the answers will shock you!** Read the exclusive interview that is igniting firestorms across the country only HERE!

PLUS!
Picking incense...
everything you need to know
and...

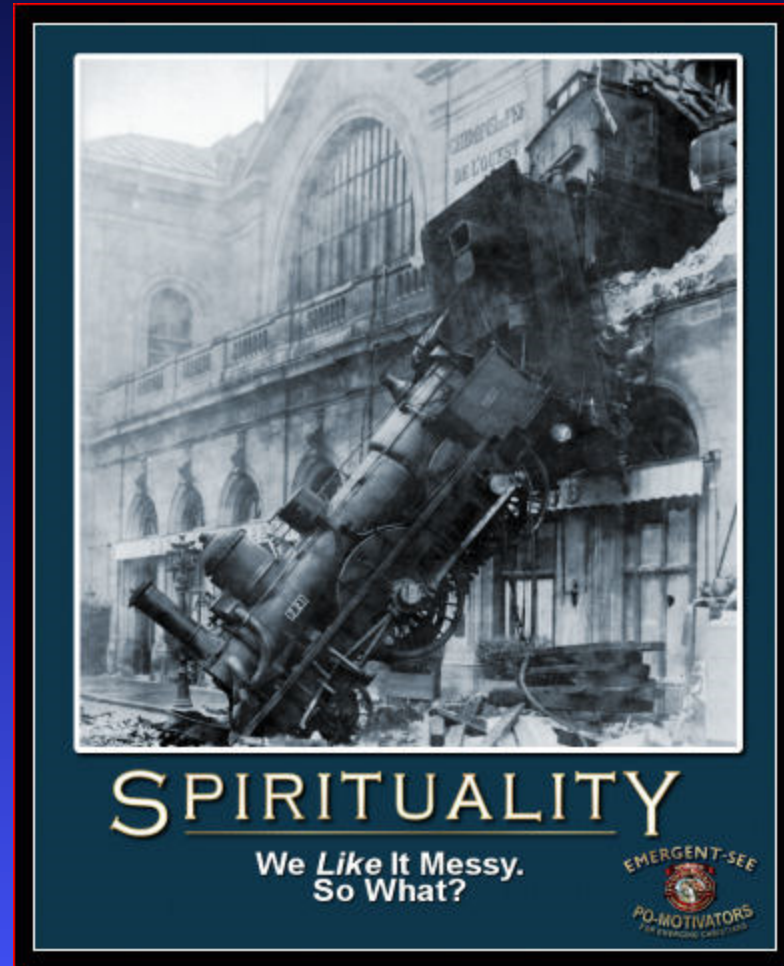
church discipline
how to unleash your inner Driscoll!

7 more great ways to get candle wax out of carpet...

AND: finding the right tattoo...
the latest hip church name trends...
Take our quiz: How Emergent are YOU?

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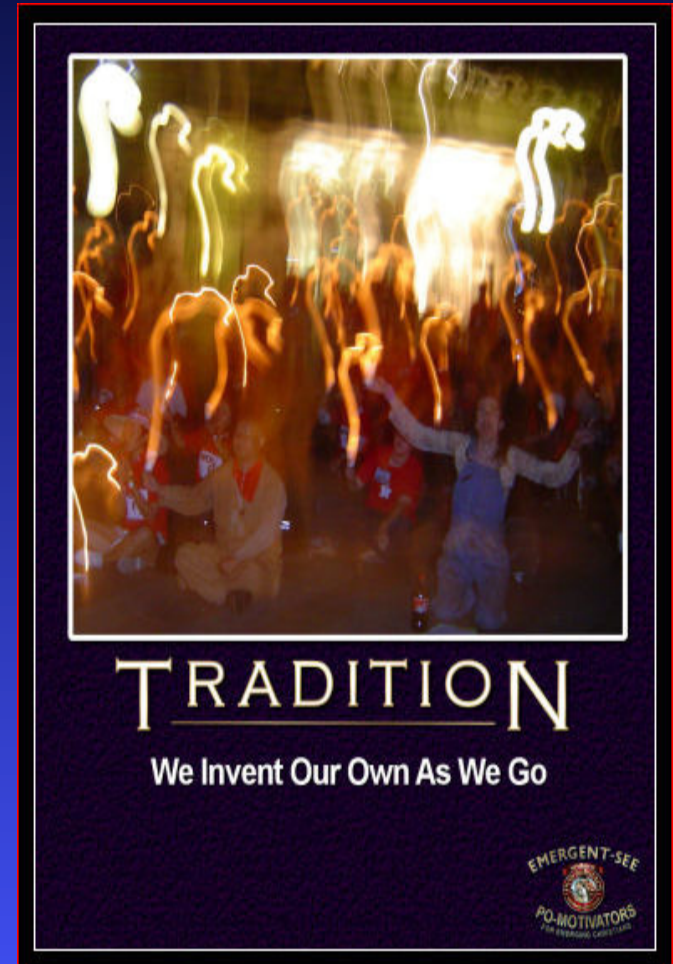


Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 121

“Modern thinkers want things very orderly and systematic because they learn in a logical and progressive manner. They prefer, generally, to sit and listen. Emerging post-Christian generations, on the other hand, long to *experience* a transcendent God during a worship gathering *rather than simply learn about him.*” (Italics added)

Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 121

“They want fluidity and freedom rather than a neatly flowing set program. They want to see the arts and a sense of mystery brought into the worship service, rather than focusing on professionalism and excellence. *This will shape how a worship gathering is designed*” (Italics added).



Biblical Missions: The Present Generation



- John 12:32
- The Gospel's power to penetrate the pagan mind and culture: Isa 55:10-11; 1 Thess 1:5; Rom 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Tim 3:15

Emergent Missions: Alternative Religions



“I don’t believe making disciples must equal adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many (not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish contexts” (Italics added).

Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 260.



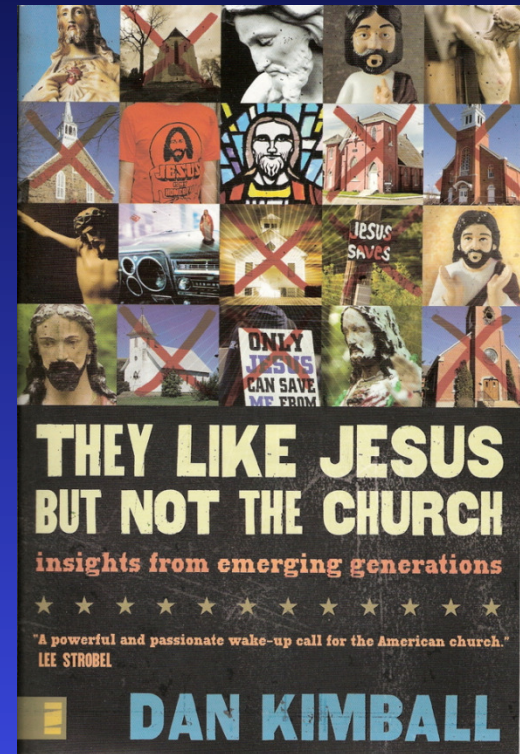
Emergent Missions: Alternative Religions

“Evangelism or missions for me is no longer persuading people to believe what I believe, no matter how edgy or creative I get. Its more about shared experiences and encounters. Its about walking the journey of life and faith together, each distinct to his or her own tradition and culture but with the possibility of encountering God and truth from one another” (Italics added).

Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 131.

Emergent Missions: Non Confrontational Evangelism

“He (Jesus) stopped and asked questions of the Samaritan woman (John 4) and didn't just jump in and say, ‘Samaritans are wrong.’”

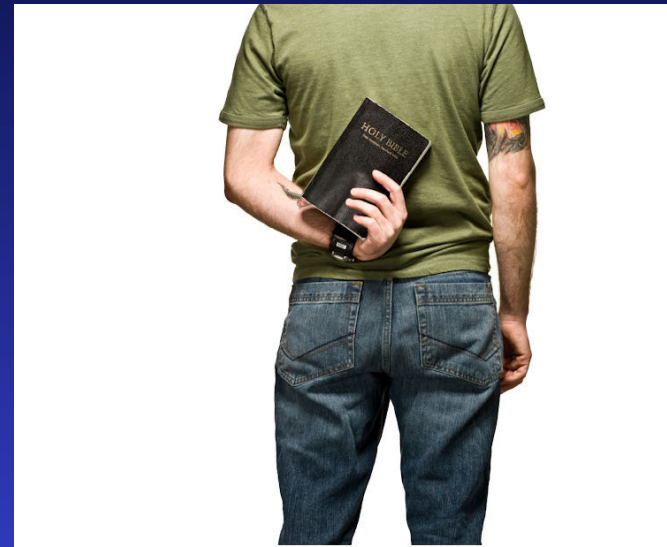


Dan Kimball, cited in Oakland, 46.

Biblical Missions: Confrontational Evangelism

- John 4:21-26

- Unkind to unbelievers?

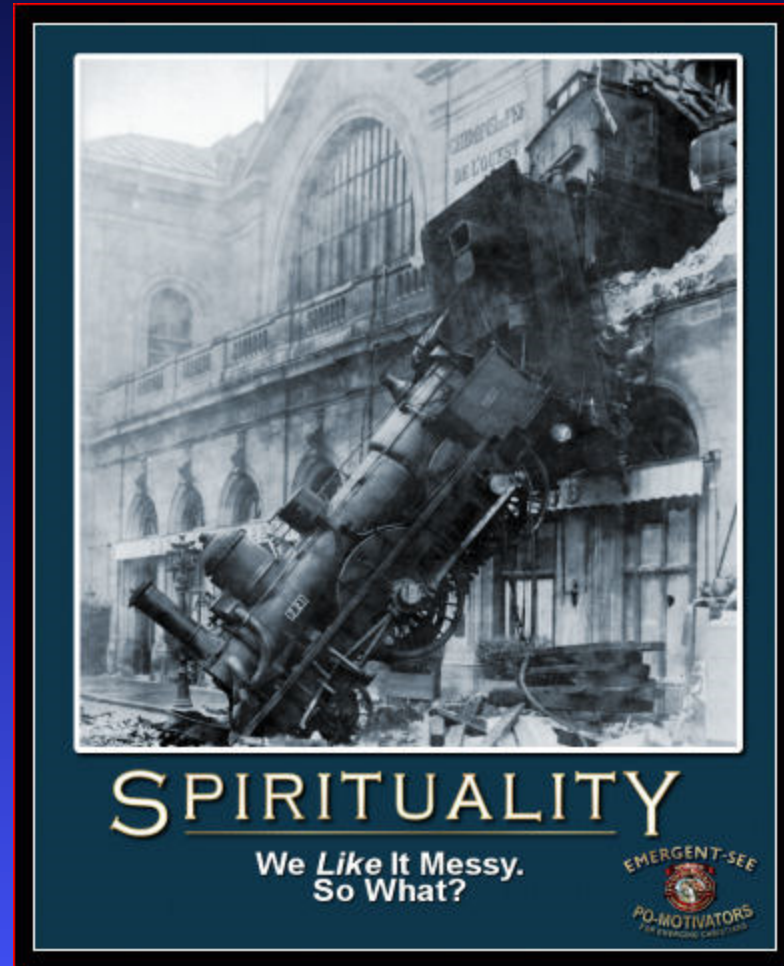


SENSITIVITY

The Bible intimidates people.
Besides, my tats and T-shirt
are clear enough.

Eight Areas of Redefinition

- Missions
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- Worldview



Emergent Epistemology

“Isn’t truth often best understood in a conversation, a dialectic (or trialectic), or a dynamic tension? Isn’t it subverted by a tendency to “solarize”?”

Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 198



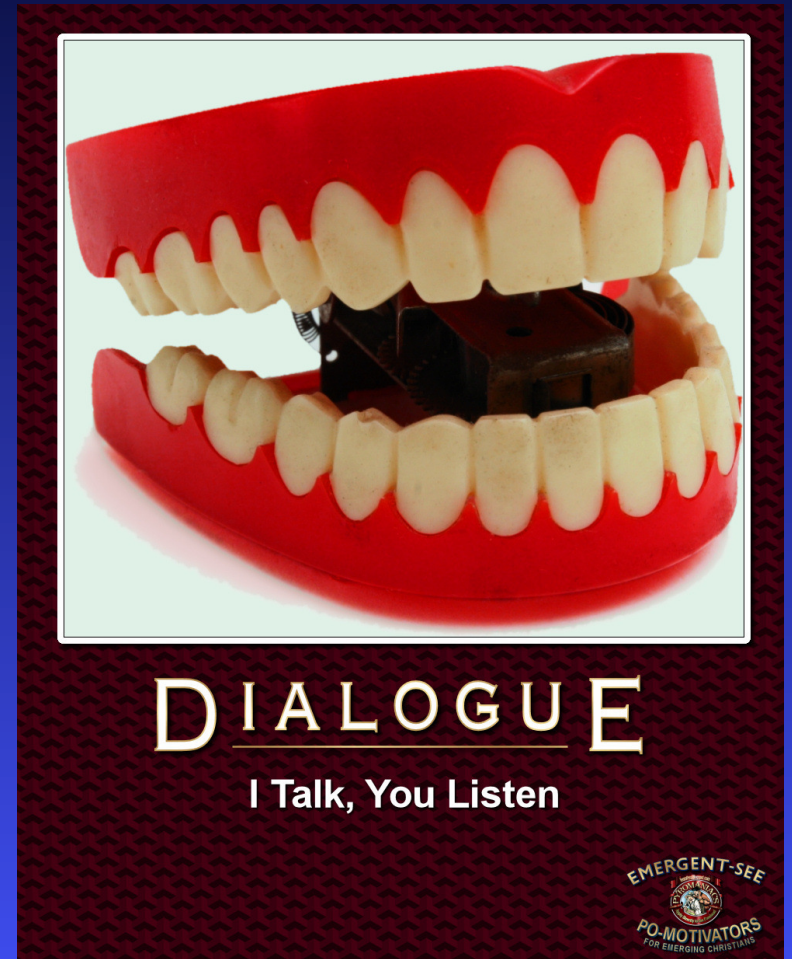
CHASTENED EPISTEMOLOGY

I'm Probably Wrong about a Lot of Things,
But I'm *Sure* You Are Wrong about Everything.
And Your Confidence Is Driving Me Crazy!



Emergent Epistemology

- Endless dialogue
- Middle ground mania
- Uncertainty



Emergent Epistemology



DIALOGUE

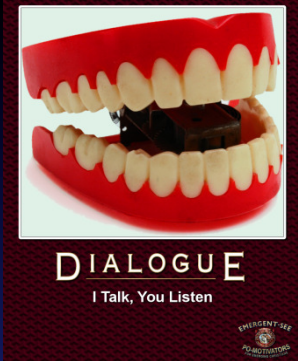
I Talk, You Listen

EMERGENT-SEE
PO-MOTIVATORS
THE HUMAN CONNECTION

“The key to navigating postmodernity's choppy, crazy waters is...to ride the waves and bridge the opposites, especially where they converge in reconciliation and illumination” (Italics added).

Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 163

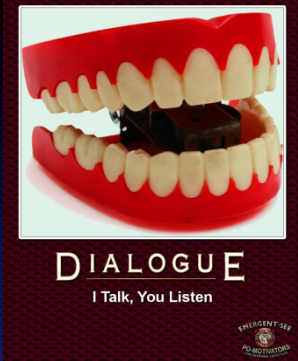
Emergent Epistemology



“A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I am a missional, evangelical, post/Protestant, liberal/conservative, mystical/poetic, biblical, charismatic/contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, incarnational, depressed-yet hopeful, emergent, unfinished Christian.”

Full Title of Brian McLaren’s *A Generous Orthodoxy*

Emergent Epistemology

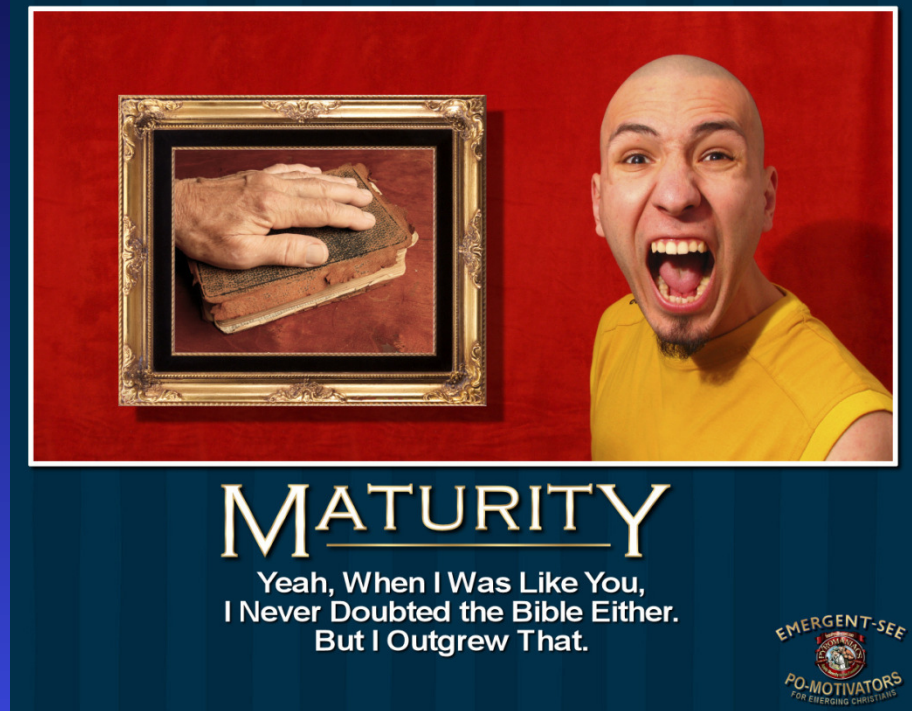


- “...ask me if Christianity (my version of it, yours, the Pope’s, whoever’s) is *orthodox*, meaning *true*, and here’s my honest answer: *a little, but not yet*...To be a Christian in a generously orthodox way is not to claim to have the truth captured, stuffed, and mounted on the wall...But we keep seeking.”

Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 293

Emergent Epistemology

“I grew up thinking that we’ve figured out the Bible...that we know what it means. Now I have no idea what most of it means.”



Kristen Bell; quoted in *Christianity Today*, 11/1/04

Emergent Epistemology



“How do you know that the records we have of Jesus are really what happened?...I would have to say that I cannot know this with absolute, undoubtable, unquestionable certainty.”

Brian McLaren, *The Church in the Emerging Culture*, 201

Emergent Epistemology



“Most of the emerging leaders I know share my agony over this question (on homosexuality)... Frankly, many of us don’t know what we should think about homosexuality. We’ve heard all sides but no position has yet won our confidence so that we can say ‘it seems good to the Holy Spirit and us’ ...Perhaps a five-year moratorium on making announcements.”

Brian McLaren, cited in Oakland, 212.

Biblical Epistemology



- Perspicuity (2 Pet 3:16?)
- Certainty (2 Tim 2:15; Luke 1:4; 1 John 5:13; Gen 3:1)
- Unbelief masquerading as uncertainty
- Insufficiency of ecumenical dialogue to reach truth due to Christendom's apostasy (2 Tim 3:1-9)

Apostasy is A Massive NT Subject

- **Gospels** (Matt 13)
- **Early church** (Acts 20:29-31)
- **Pauline letters** (Rom 16:17-18; Gal 1:6-9; 2 Cor 11:1-15; Philip 3:2, 18-19; Col 2:8; 1 Tim 4; 2 Tim 3-4; Titus 1:10)
- **General letters** (Heb 2:1-4; 2 Pet 2-3; Jude; 1 John 4:1-6)
- **Revelation** (2-3)



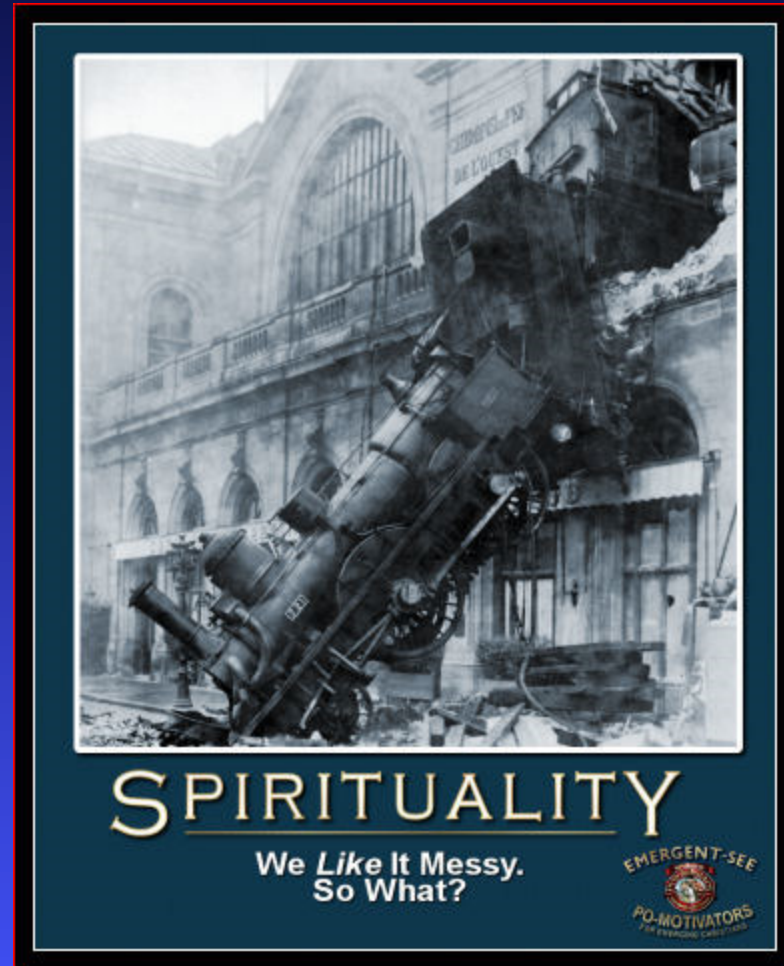
Biblical Clarity: Homosexuality

- Gen 1:27
- Lev 18:22; 20:13
- Matt 19:3-6
- Rom 1:26-27
- 1 Cor 6:9-11
- Jude 7



Eight Areas of Redefinition

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Emergent Bibliology: Authority



- “Anglicans have demonstrated this both/and beautifully in relation to Scripture. Scripture is always a factor in Anglican thinking. In Anglicans’ best moments, it is their primary factor, but it is never...the only factor. Rather Scripture is always in dialogue with tradition, reason, and experience. None of them sola can be the ultimate source of authority...” (Italics added).

Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 210.

Biblical Bibliology: Authority

- Inspiration (2 Tim 3:16)

- *Sola scriptura*



Biblical Bibliology: Authority

- Tradition? (Mark 7:13; Col 2:8)
- Reason? (Prov 3:5; 14:12; Isa 55:8-9)
- Experience? (2 Thess 2:9)



Satanic/Demonic Miracles

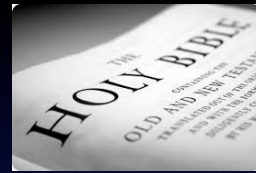
- Exod 7–8
- Deut 13:1-3
- Matt 7:21-23; 24:24
- Acts 8:9; 16:16
- Gal 1:6-9
- 2 Thess 2:9
- Rev 13:3, 13; 16:13-14



Biblical Bibliology: Authority

- Where in Scripture are we told to dialogue with all four?
- Magisterial vs. ministerial





Emergent Bibliology: Sufficiency

“If, as a Christian, I am to love my neighbor as myself and to treat my neighbor as I would be treated, then without question one of my duties in regard to my neighbor of another religion is to value everything that is good that he offers me in neighborliness-including the opportunity to learn all I can from his religion... This is not a compromise of my faith or his; this is a required practice of it.”

Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 254.

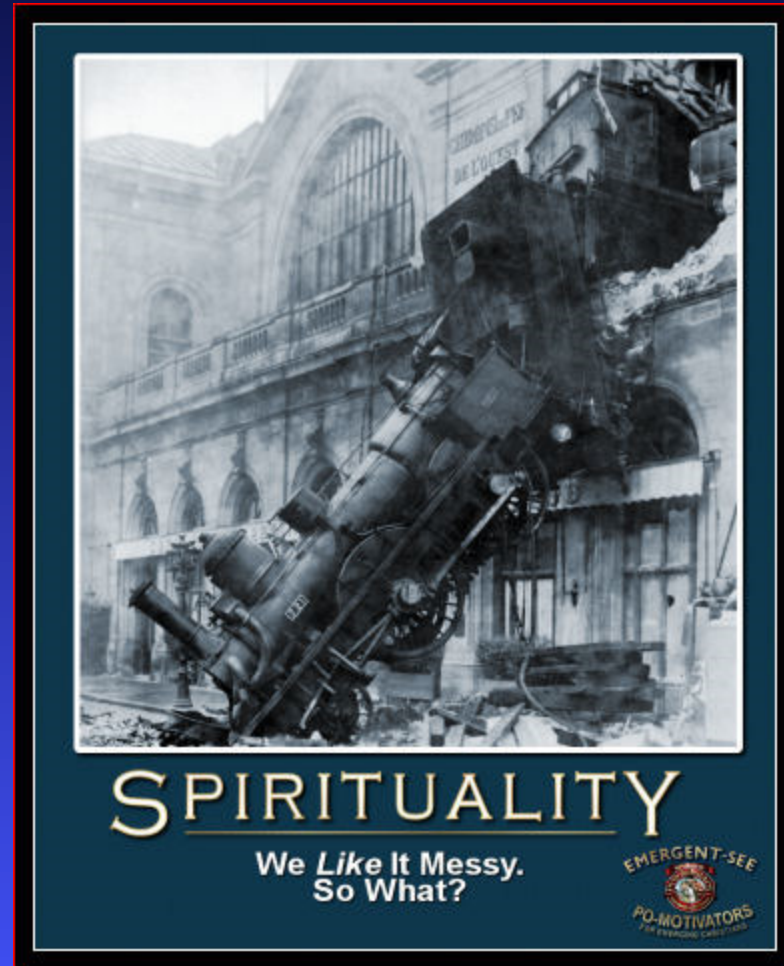
Biblical Bibliology: Sufficiency

- 2 Tim 3:17; 2 Pet 1:3-4
- Where in Scripture are we told that it is essential to learn from other religions?
- Awareness vs. essential



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IV. Church

A. Worship gathering

B. Nature of the Church



IV. Church

A. Worship gathering

B. Nature of the Church



Emergent: Worship



“Post-moderns prefer to encounter Christ by using all their senses. That’s part of the appeal of classical liturgical or contemplative worship: the incense and candles, making the sign of the cross, the taste and smell of the bread and wine, touching icons and being anointed with oil.”

Julie B. Sevig, *The Lutheran*, 9/2001.

Emergent: Worship



- “multisensory and interactive ... Through various experimental elements as well as through the space itself, we can actually preach. Art preaches. Scripture preaches. Music preaches. Even silence preaches.”

Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 186

Emergent Ecclesiology: Worship

“If Charismatics gave me my high school diploma in the ways of the Spirit, it was from *Catholic contemplatives* that I entered an undergraduate degree in the liberal arts of the Spirit.”



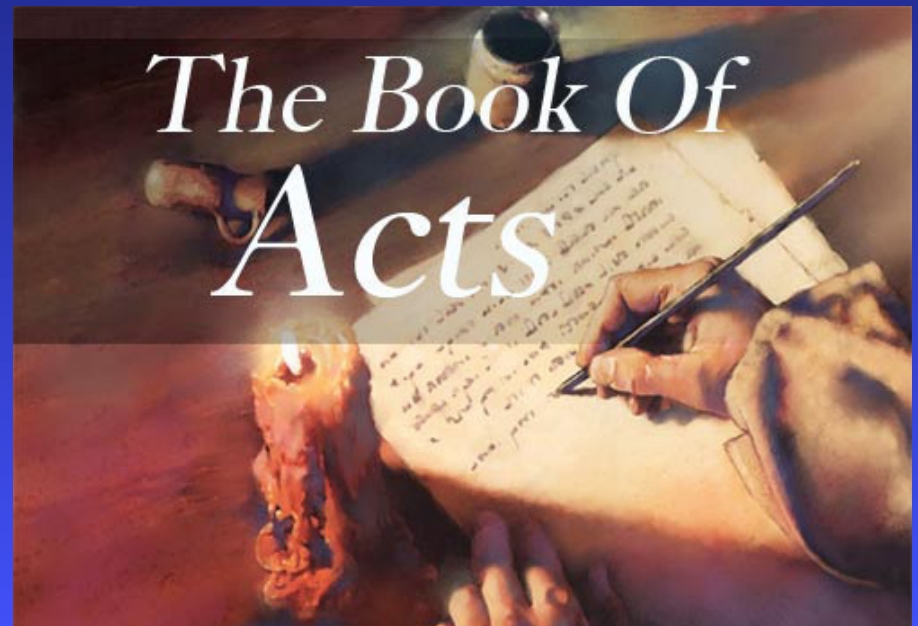
Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 175.

Francis Beckwith



The Beginning?

- Acts 20:29-“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.” (Italics added).



Biblical: Worship

- Why not go back to the very beginning?
- Where in Scripture are we told that it is essential to embrace ancient liturgical and contemplative practices?
- Matt 6:7



Emergent: Preaching



“At Solomon’s porch, sermons are not primarily about my extracting truth from the Bible to apply to people’s lives... So our sermons are not lessons that precisely define belief so much as they are stories that welcome our hopes and ideas and participation” (Italics added).

Doug Pagitt, cited in Oakland, 41-42.

Emergent: Preaching



“It *isn't* about clever apologetics or careful *exegetical or expository preaching*...Emerging generations are hungering to experience God in worship” (Italics added).

Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 116

Emergent: Preaching



“A spiritual Tsunami has hit postmodern culture. The wave will build without breaking for decades to come. The wave is this: People want to *know* God. They want *less to know about God* ...they want new experiences, especially new experiences of the divine” (Italics added).

Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 420.

Emergent: Doctrine



“...something beyond a belief system or doctrinal array or even a practice. I mean an attitude—an attitude toward God and our neighbor and our mission that is *passionate*.”

Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 117-18.

“Don’t give me doctrine, just give me Jesus.”



“What really matters is Christ not creed.”

“Devotion is important and not doctrine.”

“What counts is our behavior, and not our beliefs.”

Most of these slogans were originally accumulated in Henry Holloman, “Prolegomena, Bibliology, and Theology (Part 1)” (unpublished class notes in TTH511 Theology I, Talbot Theological Seminary, Spring 1998), 9.

Rick Warren



- “God won’t ask you about your religious background or doctrinal views.”
- “Jesus said our *love for each other* - not our doctrinal beliefs - is our greatest witness to the world.”
- “Today many assume that spiritual maturity is measured by the amount of biblical information and doctrine you know.”

Purpose Driven Life 34, 124, 183

Rick Warren



- “The Bible is far *more than a doctrinal guidebook.*”
- “The *last thing* many believers need today is to go to another *Bible study.* They already know far more than they are putting into practice.”
- “My pastor has been in Daniel’s seventy weeks longer than Daniel was!”

Purpose Driven Life 186, 231; *Purpose Driven Church* 300

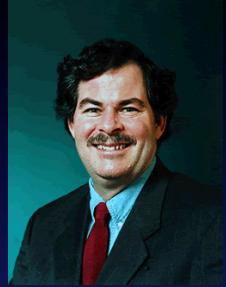
Biblical: Preaching

- Biblical priority of preaching-Acts 2:42; 2 Tim 3:15–4:2; Matt 4:4; Neh 8; 2 Kgs 22

- New dark ages?



Emphasis of 2 Timothy



- “By my count, there are twenty-seven explicit commands given in the body of this letter. In 27 words Paul tells pastors what to focus on. You have to be blind to miss the thrust of Paul's instructions here, because *eighteen* of those commands--fully *two-thirds*--have to do with the ministry of the *Word*..”

Daniel Wallace, “Crisis of the Word: A Message to Pastors or Would-be Pastors,” *Conservative Theological Journal* 1, no. 2 (August 1997): 108.