

# Church History: “Spiritual Deception”

(Part 7)

## What is the “emerging / emergent church movement?”

“The emerging, or emergent, church movement takes its name from the idea that as culture changes, a new church should emerge in response. In this case, it is a response by various church leaders to the current era of post-modernism. Post-modernism can be thought of as a dissolution of “cold, hard fact” in favor of “warm, fuzzy subjectivity.” The emerging / emergent church movement falls into line with basic post-modernist thinking – **it is about experience over reason, subjectivity over objectivity, spirituality over religion, images over words, outward over inward, feelings over truth.** These are reactions to modernism and are thought to be necessary in order to actively engage contemporary culture. . .Some groups go only a little way in order to impact their community for Christ, and remain biblically sound. Most groups, however, embrace post-modernist thinking, which eventually leads to a very liberal, loose translation of the Bible. This, in turn, lends to liberal doctrine and theology.

“Because experience is valued more highly than reason, truth becomes relative. Relativism opens up all kinds of problems, as it destroys the standard that the Bible contains absolute truth, negating the belief that biblical truth can be absolute. If the Bible is not our source for absolute truth, and personal experience is allowed to define and interpret what truth actually is, a saving faith in Jesus Christ is rendered meaningless.

“Another area where the emerging / emergent church movement has become anti-biblical is its focus on ecumenism. Unity among people coming from different religious backgrounds and diversity in expression of corporate worship are strong focuses of the emergent church movement. Being ecumenical means that compromise is taking place, and this results in a watering down of Scripture in favor of not offending an apostate.

“While seeking new ways to witness to a changing culture is admirable, utilizing ways which compromise the Truth of the Gospel in any way is nothing more than promoting false doctrine and leading others away from Christ instead of to Him.”

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## What’s so dangerous about the Emerging Church?

“The Emerging Church Movement is an amorphous sort of loose-knit association of churches that have decided that there is value, there is even virtue in uncertainty about Scripture. The bottom line in the movement is they believe that we aren’t even supposed to understand precisely what the Bible means. And to me, that’s the big issue. It is an attack on the clarity of Scripture and they elevate themselves as if this is some noble reality. They have finally risen to say we’re honest enough to say, “We don’t know what the Bible really means. We can’t be certain. We are. . .we’re the truly

spiritual ones. It has overtones of spiritual pride, a false kind of spiritual pride which they call humility.

Grace To You) John MacArthur (broadcast 2006)

## Who are leaders in this movement?

**Leonard Sweet:** “The new focus is on unity – a world-wide oneness reflected in the growing union between the East and West. Leonard Sweet’s online book, ‘Quantum Spirituality’, sheds some revealing light of the envisioned global ‘church’ for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In his view the offense of the cross has been replaced with a passion for interfaith peace and possibility thinking. To illustrate this point, Dr. Sweet points to Thomas Merton, the popular Catholic author who popularized mysticism and died in Asia searching the depths of Tibetan Buddhism.”

“The Emerging Global Church by Berit Kjos”

**Tony Campolo:** According to Tony Campolo, in his book *Speaking My Mind*, he has several suggestions for Christians – the bottom line is he believes we need to “redefine ourselves,” “recast our opinions,” and “entertain the possibility that we might be in error” about particular issues. What are those issues he speaks of? They are everything from mysticism to homosexuality and an array of other changes we need to make in our attitudes, behaviors and ideas. With regard to mysticism (contemplative prayer) he believes, “mysticism provides some hope for common ground between Christianity and Islam.” He asks and then later answers the question, “Could they (Islamic Sufis) have encountered the same God we do in our Christian mysticism? His answer – of course!”

**Brian McLaren:** Named recently by Time magazine as one of 25 most influential evangelicals, he is considered the statesman and leader for the fast growing emerging church movement, which is just a disguised Trojan horse for contemplative prayer. . .deception is lurking around the corner and many are heading right into trouble and into a belief system that shouts **All Paths Lead to the Same God.**

In his book: *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that Could Change Everything*, McLaren writes: Sadly, for centuries at a time in too many places to count, the Christian religion has downplayed, misconstrued, or forgotten the secret message of Jesus entirely. Instead of being about the Kingdom of God coming to earth, the Christian religion has too often been preoccupied with abandoning or escaping the earth and going to heaven. . .We have betrayed the message that the kingdom of God is available for all, beginning with the least and last and the lost – and have instead believed and taught that the kingdom of God is available for the elite, beginning with the correct and clean and the powerful. pp.78,79

In McLaren’s 2016 book titled *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World’s Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to be Christian*, He states: This kind of collaboration leads to a fresh understanding of what it means to evangelize. I was taught that meant converting people to the one

true religion, namely, my own (Christianity). Now I believe evangelism means inviting people into heart-to-heart communion and collaboration with God and neighbors in the great work of healing the earth, of building the beloved community, of seeking first the kingdom of God and God's justice for all. Members of each tradition bring their unique gifts to the table, ready to share and receive. Learn and teach, give and take, in a spirit of generosity and vulnerability. Neither my neighbors nor I am obligated or expected to convert. . .As we work together for the common good, we are all transformed. Those who haven't experienced this kind of transforming collaboration simply don't know what they're missing. . .Through multifaith collaborations, I have come to see how the language Paul used about one body and many members (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12:4-5) applies not only to differing gifts among individual Christians but also to differing gifts among religions.

"Lighthouse Trails Research Project

**Rick Warren:** "The first Reformation was about belief; this one's going to be about behavior. . .The first one was about creeds; this one's going to be about our deeds." "With our P.E.A.C.E. plan. . .P is for plant a church or partner with an existing one in every village. We'll work with everyone who wants to help. I'll work with an atheist who wants to stop AIDS. E – equip local leaders. A - assist the poor. C – care for the sick. And E – educate the next generation." Purpose-driven churches and their strategic leadership programs require training in mind-changing processes and assessment technologies that support the UN vision for human resource development around the world.

"The Emerging Global Church" Berit Kjos

### What are the goals of the emergent church?

"It is the idea that before Christ can return, the world must be brought together in unity and perfection, and this world will be done by the Christian church. Rick Warren's Purpose Driven P.E.A.C.E. Plan, Jim Wallis' social gospel agenda, and Tony Campolo or Brian McLaren's emergent church are a few of the avenues through which this is being propagated. The goal is to basically eradicate all the world's ills (e.g., disease, poverty, terrorism, and pollution) and thus, we will have created a 'Heaven on Earth' Utopia."

### How are they accomplishing their goals?

"The movement has swept the planet, and those who refuse to join hands are considered 'colonial,' militant fundamentalists,' and 'narrow-minded crackpots' who are not willing to catch the 'new wave' and get on board with the mighty revival that is moving the world toward unity and peace. Many of the leaders in this movement have no problem whatsoever joining with the pope in Rome and the Kingdom of Earth plans he has for joining together with other religions, including Islam. While some discerning Christians can see how this trend plays a role in light of Bible prophecy, there is a huge portion of Christianity that does not. These are those who are

reading books by authors who promote emerging church (or Progressive Christianity") ideas for the postmodern generation that reject the teaching of the Bible and embrace establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth right now. They are willing to join hands with other religions by reinventing Christianity into a 'broad way' spirituality where all are saved and part of God's Kingdom. No longer do they believe in the "narrow road' to eternity. The kingdom of God is for all religions, they say (and even for those who believe in nothing). Unity, peace, connectedness, and oneness is all that matters, while biblical doctrine is being set aside as irrelevant to the 'new reformation' at hand. Obviously, such a view leaves little room for the Cross and the biblical Gospel . "Kingdom-Now Evangeicals" Lighthouse Trails Research April 2017

### What did Jesus say about the Kingdom? Matthew 24: 9-14

To whom was He speaking? \_\_\_\_\_

What will happen to them? \_\_\_\_\_

What will abound? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will be saved? \_\_\_\_\_

When does the end come? \_\_\_\_\_

### What does Jesus say about Salvation?

Matthew 7:13,14 \_\_\_\_\_

John 3:16-18 \_\_\_\_\_

John 5:24 \_\_\_\_\_

John 6:60-67 \_\_\_\_\_

### What did the apostles preach about Jesus?

Acts 4:12 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 13:38,39 \_\_\_\_\_