

Weathering The Storm

:: introduction ::

*"A spiritual tsunami has hit postmodern culture. This 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 or know **about** religion than to know God. People want to experience the 'beyond' in the 'within.'"*
Leonard Sweet¹

"We should be returning to a no-holds barred approach to worship and teaching so that when we gather there is no doubt we are in the presence of a Holy God. I believe that both believers and unbelievers in this emerging culture are hungry for this. It isn't about clever apologetics or careful exegetical and expository preaching or great worship bands...emerging generations are hungering to experience God in worship."
Dan Kimball²

"Perhaps we as Christians today are not only to consider what it means to be a 21st century church, but also and perhaps more importantly, what it means to have a 21st century faith."
Doug Pagitt³

"A goal for evangelicals in the postmodern world is to accept diversity as a historical reality, but to seek unity in the midst of it. This perspective will allow us to see Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches as various forms of the one true church – all based on apostolic teaching and authority, finding common ground in the faith expressed by classical Christianity."
Robert Webber⁴

"A rallying cry of the Protestant Reformation was 'sola scriptura', or Scripture alone. And while this doctrine may have arisen as a necessary corrective to abuses of church leadership in the Reformation period, it is in full effect today. Preachers speak of the Bible as an instruction book or as the only data necessary for spiritual living. But this diminishes some critical elements of theological knowledge...'Sola scriptura' also tends to downplay the role of God's Spirit in shaping the direction of the Church."
Will Sampson⁵

"As we enter the third millennium, Catholicism, Evangelicalism and Orthodoxy will continue to converge...old cultural, nation and doctrinal controversies will become increasingly irrelevant."
Dwight Longenecker⁶

"If you want Jesus to come back sooner focus on fulfilling your mission, not figuring out prophecy."
Rick Warren⁷

¹Faith Undone pg. 54

²Faith Undone pg. 58

³Faith Undone pg. 39

⁴Faith Undone pg. 65

⁵Faith Undone pg. 48

⁶Faith Undone pg. 129

⁷Faith Undone pg. 156

"For me, the beginning of sharing my faith with people began by throwing out Christianity and embracing Christian spirituality, a nonpolitical mysterious system that can be experienced but not explained.

Donald Miller⁸

*"If Revelation were a blueprint of the distant future, it would have been unintelligible for its original readers, as well as the readers of all succeeding generations, and would only become truly and fully relevant for one generation – the one who happened to live in one period of time it is prognosticating about. But if Revelation is **an example** of the literature of the oppressed, full of ever-relevant warnings and promises, it presents each generation with needed inspiration and wisdom and encouragement. In this light, Revelation becomes a powerful book about the kingdom of God here and now, available to all."*

Brian McLaren⁹

[Speaking of evangelism] "It will lead not to an indigenous Christianity but to a Christianized Hinduism. Perhaps more accurately we should say a Christ-ized Hinduism. I would suggest that really both are the same, and therefore we should not worry about it. We do not want to change the culture or the religious genius of India. We simply want to bring Christ and His gospel into the center of it."

Herbert Hoefler¹⁰

"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 (not all) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu or Jewish contexts."

Brian McLaren¹¹

[Speaking of Jesus' message] "The cross isn't the center...the cross is almost a distraction and false advertising for God."

Brian McLaren¹²

"God does not say: 'this way leads to me and that does not,' but He says, 'whatever you do may be a way to me.'"

Martin Buber¹³

"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."

Brian McLaren¹⁴

"To think that the central meaning of Easter depends upon something spectacular happening to Jesus' corpse misses the point of the Easter message and risks trivializing the story."

Marcus Borg¹⁵

⁸Faith Undone pg. 174

⁹Faith Undone pg. 158

¹⁰Faith Undone pg. 176

¹¹Faith Undone pg. 173

¹²Faith Undone pg. 192

¹³Faith Undone pg. 102

¹⁴Faith Undone pg. 193

¹⁵Faith Undone pg. 197

"Today I personally believe that while Jesus came to open the door to God's house, all human beings can walk through that door, whether they know about Jesus or not. Today I see it as my call to help every person claim his or her own way to God."

Henri Nouwen¹⁶

"My goal is to destroy Christianity as a world religion and be a recatalyst for the movement of Jesus Christ."

Erwin McManus¹⁷

[Speaking of fundamental Christians] *"People who are always saying negative things about the world are anti-gay, take the whole Bible literally, are card-carrying Republicans, are pro-Israel, read end-times novels, and endorse snake handling and fire-and-brimstone preaching. They think of King James, finger-pointing, teetotaling, vengeful people who credit God for using natural disasters to punish people for sin and who use Christian jargon and are arrogant and unloving toward anyone but themselves."*

Dan Kimball¹⁸

These are not the words of atheists or secularists. On the contrary these are the words of church pastors, celebrated authors, ministry leaders, conference speakers and church planters who are propelling forward a movement called The Emergent Church. These are the words of men and women who influence hundreds of thousands of Christians, especially at the high school and college level. Some of these men and women you know, some you have probably never heard of.

I would guess that most people in this room do not know much about The Emergent Church Movement and that is why tonight we are starting a short series called Weathering The Storm.

The Emergent or Emerging Church Movement is not a fad, not a flash in the pan. It is a 20 year old shift away from Biblical Christianity that is prevailing in many churches today.

The quotes I read are from the leaders, the pioneers, the most powerful players in the Movement. And these quotes are only the beginning of the shocking plans and teachings of the Emergent Church.

The Emerging Church Movement **promises** to be a new reformation, a radical shift away from traditional evangelical Christianity. The men and women at the forefront of this new reformation are making good on their promise and have infiltrated thousands of churches, Christian universities and para-church organizations.

For example, my last year at Fresno Pacific, 2005, featured a ministry forum with literally hundreds of youth ministry workers and pastors from the Fresno area coming to listen to Brian McLaren, heralded by many as the foremost leader of the Emergent Church Movement.

Is the Emerging Church a new reformation like Martin Luther started centuries ago? Or, is it the beginning of the great Apostasy, the great falling away that the Bible warned us of in the books of Jude, 2 Timothy, 2 Corinthians, 2 Thessalonians and Matthew? Over the coming weeks we will see what exactly the Emerging Church is, what they are doing in the name of Jesus across our nation and around the world and how we should respond.

¹⁶Faith Undone pg. 89

¹⁷Faith Undone pg. 166

¹⁸Faith Undone pg. 172-173

For now, you need to know this...that the Emerging Church Movement is not on its way, **it is here**. It is not being planted, **it is already bearing fruit**. It is not just gaining strength, **it is already strong**, especially in the hearts of the younger generation. The teachings and doctrines of these men are not part of a fringe movement, but are taught as texts in universities, seminaries and churches.

We have a few resources for you to educate yourself about the Emerging Church Movement. The first is a short pamphlet titled "From Which Well Are You Drinking?" It is available in our bookstore. The second is also in the Chapel Store and is this book, titled Faith Undone: The Emerging Church...A New Reformation Or An End-Time Deception.

This movement is growing and is influencing the face of the American church. We need to educate ourselves about who these people are and what they believe.

Our foundation is in Jesus Christ and His Word. If we remain grounded on the Rock we will be able to weather any storm.