

Why are we not emergent? Why do we sing Hymns instead of choruses? Why do we read Psalms and recite the great Creeds and Confessions of the Church instead of having a music band entertain us? Why do we have Biblical exposition and teaching sermons? Why not engage in dialogue, conversations and exploration? When Emergent is all the rage why are we going against the tide and developing more traditional, historic Reformed worship? We are not emergent because we believe in the total depravity of man, the Sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life. Scripture alone is our ultimate authority. Salvation is by the Grace of God alone, received by Faith alone. Christ alone is the Head of the Church. Everything must be done to the Glory of God alone.

Fashions and fads come and go, but the Word of God will endure forever. Some things may be contemporary and popular for a season but there are certain time tested standards that endure for generations and centuries. Classic music like that of Bach & Handel, classic worship such as Thomas Cranmers Book of Common Prayer, the Psalms of David, the sermons of Charles Spurgeon, the theology of John Calvin and Martin Luther's great Hymn of the Reformation: *A Mighty Fortress is our God* these are timeless classics which will endure.

The Scriptures warn us *Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.* James 3:1

It is one thing for a high school student to be in process with his theology. It is quite another thing for prominent leaders, pastors and authors to conduct conferences, write books and tour the world about their doubts, musings and misgivings.

In the 32 years since my conversion to Christ and call to missions, I have seen numerous fads sweep the church including: Fantasmagora, Y-ONE, the WOW team, the Jesus People hippie movement, the Alpha Course, the Prayer of Jabez, Willow Creek, the Purpose Driven Life, the Shepherding movement, the House Church movement, the unchurch movement, and now the Emergent Church.

All kinds of choruses have come and gone including: *I wish we'd all been ready*, *It only takes a spark* and *Let me tell you of a dream*.

Numerous books have created a sensation but then have passed their sell by date, including: *Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth*, *There's a New World Coming*, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, *Eighty Eight Reasons Why Jesus is Coming Back in 1988*, *Eighty Nine Reasons Why Jesus is Coming Back in 1989*, *1994?*, *The Coming Y2K Crash*, *2000?* and more recently *The Shack*.

Even in the missions community we have regularly been swept by sensational trends, which have always delivered far less than initially promised. I remember, *The Hidden Peoples movement*, *The Unreached Peoples Movement*, *The Student Volunteer Movement* the *10-40 Window*, *Friendship Evangelism*, *GCOWE* and *Bless the Nations*.

I have seen the introduction of Children's Church, then Teen Church, choruses replacing hymns and a stage replacing the pulpit. Clothing styles worn on Sunday mornings have deteriorated from ladies wearing hats, dresses and gloves, and men wearing suits and ties, to congregations, which look like they're off to the beach. Or in some cases, just back from the beach! Unshaven men with several days' facial growth, uncombed hair, wrinkled unironed clothes and even unwashed bodies are no longer that uncommon in many mega churches. I said to one unshaven, scruffy slob attending a service I was leading: *You look like you slept in your clothes?* *Yes*, he answered. *We were at the beach last night and fell asleep there!*

When the Apostle Paul wrote: *There is no fear of God before their eyes* Rom 3:18, he was writing

about the pagans. Now that verse applies to most churchgoers as well.

What's good about Emergents? They want to be relevant, contextual, relational and connected. They deplore shallow and fake churches. (So do we.)

What's wrong with Emergents? They're searching for truth while declaring that they're not sure it can be found. The destination seems secondary while the journey is the main focus. [(Peter Rollins argues that: instead of thinking in terms of destination (we become Christians, join a church, are saved), we should think in terms of journey (we are becoming Christians, becoming church, becoming saved). Hence, we need to be evangelised as much, if not more than, those around us.]

The post modern way is experience, more wandering than direction, more ambiguous than defined, more relationship than belief. The post modern obsession with introspection has been criticised as self absorption and narcissism. The mantras of the post modernist are self expression and being true to ourselves.

Donald Miller says: Who knows anything anyway! Rob Bell teaches: God is too big to understand and the truth is too mysterious to understand. The Bible is open ended. Questions are the new answers. Maybe is the new Yes!

Joel Osteen, pastor of America's largest church, was asked by CNN's Larry King, What if you're a Jewish or Muslim, you don't accept Christ at all? Joel replied, You know, I'm very careful about saying who would and wouldn't go to heaven. I don't know. I spent a lot of time in India with my father. I don't know all about their religion. But I know they love God. And I don't know. I've seen their sincerity. So I don't know. I know for me, and what the Bible teaches, I want to have a relationship with Jesus.

A caller asked Joel to clarify his previous statement. She quoted John 14:6 and told him that such verses were the truth. Osteen agreed with her, then King said, So then a Jew is not going to heaven? Joel replied, No. Here's my thing, Larry, is I can't judge somebody's heart. You know? Only God can look at somebody's heart, and so I don't know. To me, it's not my business to say, you know, this one is or this one isn't. I just say, here's what the Bible teaches and I'm going to put my faith in Christ. And I just I think it's wrong when you go around saying, you're saying you're not going, you're not going, you're not going, because it's not exactly my way. I'm just.

Then Larry tossed Joel a softball: How about a God-defying atheist? Osteen said, You know what, I'm going to let someone I'm going to let God be the judge of who goes to heaven and hell. I just again, I present the truth, and I say it every week. You know, I believe it's a relationship with Jesus. But you know what? I'm not going to go around telling everybody else if they don't want to believe that that's going to be their choice. God's got to look at your own heart. God's got to look at your heart, and only God knows that. Joel also told Fox News that Mormons believe in Christ and are Christians!

Brian McLaren writes: I hesitate in answering the homosexual question not because I'm a cowardly flip flopper who wants to tickle ears but because I'm a pastor. We aren't sure if, or where, lines are to be drawn, not do we know how to enforce with fairness whatever lines are drawn! Actually such indecision is not pastorally helpful. These Emergents may not want to hurt anyone, but their refusal to take a stance (and in many cases to take an unBiblical stance) actually hurt more people. It hurts those who otherwise may have resisted the temptations and avoided the traps. It hurts those struggling to overcome sexual temptations. Immorality and perversion damage lives, destroy families and damn external souls. God's Word is clear on these issues. Why must we be ambivalent?

Our silence on key issues can speak volumes. We are either for Christ or against Him. Not to decide is to decide not to. We cannot choose neutrality in this World War of Worldviews.

Most Emergents seem to have established doubt as the essence of faith.

◆Doubt◆ also can be celebrated as a vital part of faith◆ - Peter Rollins.</p> <p>Dave Tomlinson in ◆The Post Evangelical◆ writes, ◆Doubt is a potential friend ◆ a vital means by which Christians mature.◆ Doubt is the good friend of faith.</p> <p>But the Bible teaches us to take up the Shield of Faith (Eph 6: 16). Jesus rebuked those who doubted and chastised those who had little faith!</p> <p>Matthew 6:30 ◆O you of little Faith!◆ </p> <p>Matthew 14:31 ◆O you of little faith, why did you doubt?◆ </p> <p>Matthew 21:21 ◆If you have faith and do not doubt◆ you can move mountains.◆</p> <p>John 20:27 ◆Stop doubting and believe!◆ </p> <p>Also see James 1:6 ◆He who doubts ◆ is a double minded man, unstable in all his ways.◆ </p> <p>Hebrew 11:1 ◆Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.◆ </p> <p>Hebrews 1:6 ◆Without faith it is impossible to please God.◆</p> <p>The Heidelberg Catechism (Q21) defines faith as ◆not only a knowledge and conviction ◆ a deep rooted assurance.◆</p> <p>In sharp contrast to modern Emergents the Calvinist Bible expositor Martyn Lloyd Jones declared: ◆Come to the Word of God. Stop asking questions. Start with the promises in the right order. Say, ◆I want the truth whatever it costs me!◆ Bind yourself to it, submit yourself to it, come in utter submission as a little child and plead with Him to give you a clear sign, perfect vision, and to make you whole ◆ We are not meant to be left in a state of doubt and misgiving, of uncertainty and unhappiness.◆ (Spiritual Depression)</p> <p>Emergents offer us: Questions as the new answers.
 Maybe as the new yes.
 Doubt as the new faith.
 Indecision as the new plan.
 A journey as the new destination.
 We as Bible believing Christians know that the Bible has the answers.
 Our Yes should be YES! And our no should be NO!</p> <p>We reject the path of doubt and unbelief and eagerly embrace and contend for the Faith once delivered unto the saints. We have decided to follow Jesus! No turning back! Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Him.</p> <p>We need to proclaim the Gospel not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (1 Thess1:5).</p>