

#102 “Errors In the Emerging Church”
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Problem #1:

Culture (i.e. postmodernism) is allowed to dictate church practice (i.e. methodology).

This is seen in the fact that the emerging church relies upon incense, art, images, and experiences to draw near to God and to worship Him. God says to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), but the emerging church finds ways other than what is described in the Bible to worship God. Worship consists of praising God through words and phrases that form coherent thoughts and propositions. It is not an emptying of the mind or any kind of mysticism. Yet the emerging church is a breeding ground of contemplative spirituality. Some use labyrinths to draw near to God. Others marvel at pictures that they paint. Others pray breath prayers which are vain repetitions which seek to empty the mind and literally hear a word from God. These are postmodern methods to "worship" the God of the Bible. The problem is that they are actually old Roman Catholic mystic methods, from which the Protestant church distanced itself. In an effort to be cutting edge, new, and conforming to culture, the emerging church is going backwards in time, repeating mistakes of history. This is why the Bible must dictate worship and not culture. If the church allows the surrounding culture to dictate its practice and means of worship, it will likely be assimilated into that culture, thereby losing its identity, power, and worth.

Problem #2:

Theology is said to be in a state of flux, changing as experiences, personal preferences, and needs change.

Simple words and phrases such as "Jesus is God" and "by faith alone and grace alone" have sent people to their death as martyrs. They are the difference between saving faith and an eternity in hell. These beliefs separate cults from the true church of Jesus Christ. Yet for the emerging church, theology is not something that we can be dogmatic about. They say that "good" people have come to different conclusions over the years, so why bother to make conclusive statements about theology at all? Thus, from their perspective, theology is not something concrete, absolute, and authoritative. In the past, people believed one way or another. Somebody was right, and somebody was wrong. Now nobody seems to know who is right and who is wrong, and, stranger still, that doesn't seem to bother anybody. This is the spirit of antichrist, tolerating anything and everything and standing upon nothing. The church is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), and truth is a body of doctrine as laid forth in the Bible through the Person of Jesus Christ. Without a confession of theology, there is no church. Thus, the emerging church is, in many ways, just an appeal to postmodernists who like to shape their religion and their "God" based upon how they feel on a given day.

Problem #3:

Preaching is said to be outdated because this generation does not like someone speaking to them authoritatively, especially if they dare to tell them that they are in the wrong.

This belief flows out of the previous two. If methods can be changed, why do we still need to preach? Some churches get rid of the pulpit because it is intimidating and authoritative. The emerging church gets rid of preaching altogether. Somebody might sit amongst a circle of peers and share what they think God is all about for them that particular day or week. They might reference a Scripture which relates to their journey, but their experience and feelings are front and center and not the Word of God. If somebody actually shares by standing up and opening up the Bible, they do not exhort or call to change and action. They narrate a story or read a passage of Scripture and stop. There is no need to exhort, rebuke, or call to action. It is not about conforming to an authoritative statement of Scripture but rather using Scripture to fortify fleshly desires of a journey that we take on our terms. The emerging church disdains preaching because preaching asserts that there is a right and wrong and makes it sound as if the preacher actually knows the truth, implying that those who disagree are wrong. Such a reality is intolerable to the emerging church. The irony is that they can call preaching "wrong" or "bad", but preachers are not allowed the same freedom in making a judgment based upon the Bible. This is the problem with postmodern philosophies: they cannot be argued if one is to be consistent.

The emerging church is a contradiction and an ethereal entity. It is always unsure of itself, keeping up a continual "conversation" (one of their favorite words) but never coming to any real conclusions. It is not a biblical movement, because it denies the authority of the Word of God and elevates man to an improper place, one which is higher than God. The emerging church has opened the door to outright heresy, namely universalist thinking and contemplative spirituality (that all faiths lead to the same God through mystical experience). The church of Jesus Christ does not need some "new" idea or philosophy, particularly one that bends to the culture and the sinful desires of unsaved men and women; rather, the church must stand firm for the faith that was once for all handed down to the saints (Jude 1:3). It is time for the faithful to stand for the truth.