

# Emerging or Submerging?

*This is the conclusion of a 5-part series exposing the Emergent Movement's false doctrines.*

BY PASTOR BRIAN BRODERSEN



In the past five issues, we have looked at some of the beliefs of the Emergent movement. We learned its leaders, while not denying completely certain foundational truths of Christianity, do not hold fast to the biblical teachings regarding the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, salvation in Christ alone, and the inerrancy of the Word of God. Instead, Emergents say that Christianity must be redefined. In other words, they reject Christianity as it is defined in the Bible and seek to create their own, false version. To conclude this series, I want to make a few final points and observations.

Though they claim to be Christians with a fresh enlightenment, Emergents are nothing less than liberals masquerading as Evangelicals, espousing and promoting ideas that were refuted on the scholarly and academic level decades ago. A close look at their doctrine reveals that they reject the Bible's authority and the doctrine of salvation through Christ. This movement is not a new theological understanding, but rather a new manifestation of old heresies that must be resisted and opposed. We need to be aware of these aberrant views so we can avoid being sucked into embracing a false view of the Christian faith and end up shipwrecked.

If there was ever any doubt as to where this Emergent theology is leading, Brian McLaren's book, *A New Kind of Christian*, makes it clear. In the introduction he writes, "I realize, as I read and reread the Bible, that many passages don't fit any of the theological systems I have inherited or adapted. ... Doesn't the religious community see that the world is changing? Doesn't it have anything fresh and incisive to say? ... the old show is over, the modern jig is up, and it's time for something radically new."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the historic Christian faith, as revealed in the pages of the New Testament and understood by the saints from the first century onward, is to be reinterpreted to fit with the politically correct worldview of the 21st century.

Rob Bell, in his book *Velvet Elvis*, and other Emergent leaders call for a reinvention of Christianity because, they claim, the traditional view has failed to bring about the Gospel's intended results. This quote from McLaren's book, *Everything Must Change*, says it all: "More and more Christian leaders are beginning to realize that, for the millions of young adults who have recently dropped out of church, Christianity is a failed religion. Why? Because it has specialized in dealing with 'spiritual needs' to the exclusion of physical and social needs. It has focused on 'me' and 'my eternal destiny,' but it has failed to address the dominant societal and global realities of their lifetime: systemic injustice, poverty, and dysfunction."<sup>2</sup> Not only does he oversimplify the Gospel, but he forgets that many Christians do serve the poor, the prisoners, and the hurting in the name of Christ.

Moreover, we know that Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Seeking God comes first; the rest of our needs will follow. The Emergents say that Christians need to "address the dominant societal and global realities ... systemic injustice, poverty, and dysfunction." What they fail to recognize is that when a poor person gets saved, they become a child of God and God starts taking care of them. When a person who's afflicted gets saved, God gives them a comfort that no human being ever could. When people on drugs meet Christ, they are delivered. Jesus does all of this for people; that's why our chief aim is to lead others to Christ.

This is why we need to hold fast to the "faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3b) and keep boldly proclaiming the Gospel, "for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16b) and the only hope for this world.

I believe time will tell that this new movement will turn out to be nothing more than a passing fancy of a few disenchanted men. The doctrines of men will come and go, but God's Word will stand. As Jesus said, "**Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away**" (Matthew 24:35).

*I believe time will tell that this new movement will turn out to be nothing more than a passing fancy of a few disenchanted men. The doctrines of men will come and go, but God's Word will stand.*

I believe that these heady philosophical ideas will sink like a lead balloon. People are looking for something that quenches the thirst in their souls, that lifts the burden of guilt from their shoulders, that gives them hope that there really is a better world to come, something no man could dream up. That something is the Gospel of Christ: God became a Man, took our guilt upon Himself, died in our place, and rose again, conquering our greatest enemy—death. He then ascended to heaven and is at the right hand of the Father, who sent the Holy Spirit to fill us with His power that we might serve Him until He comes again in glory to establish His eternal kingdom. And there we shall reign with Him forever and ever, amen! ☞

1. *A New Kind of Christian*, Brian D. McLaren, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008).
2. *Everything Must Change*, Brian D. McLaren, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007).