

THE GREAT EXCHANGE SYLLABUS

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WHAT IS THE EMERGENT CHURCH

DEFINITION

I can see on the horizon an enormous spiritual storm approaching of biblical proportions. A new generation of Christians has emerged, a generation with no reverence God's Word who are not afraid to speak their own mind. The result of years of neglecting God's Word and following a social gospel, the emergence of a Postmodern Church has arrived.

Put bluntly, the Emerging Church Movement is a complete redefinition of Christianity. It is unquestionably the new Liberalism. However, don't wait for Emergent teachers to use the term "Emergent." Learn how to spot it for yourself.

This class will include short list of authors, teachers and areas of concern that may indicate that a particular group is being influenced to varying extents by Emergent Church philosophy. In order to spot the Emerging Church, here are some helpful questions:

- Have biblical doctrines such as salvation by grace, repentance and the reality of a literal Hell been marginalized or abandoned?
- Is there a constant insistence that the Church must abandon history and orthodox teaching and methods in order to reach the postmodern world?
- Is Contemplative Prayer/Spirituality being introduced and practiced? Is there talk of "Spiritual Formation," centering prayer and something called "lectio divina" which, in a nutshell, is leading believers to occult-based practices?
- Have you heard the term "labyrinth"?
- Have buzzword phrases like "Missional Christianity," "Incarnational Christianity," "Conversational Christianity" and "Relational Christianity" been attached to the identity of your church?
- Have the teachings of Open Source, Open Theism or Process Theology been embraced? (Open Theism teaches that God knows the past and lives in the present but has no idea of what the future holds. Obviously, this destroys every prophetic passage in the Bible – including the blessed hope of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.)
- Is there a new, uncanny identification with saving planet Earth? Has environmentalism become common pulpit rhetoric? (Brian McLaren contends that it is Earth – and not unregenerate humans – that Christ came to save.)
- Perhaps the most important question to ask is about the authority of the Scriptures. In your church, is the Bible held in utmost regard by those in leadership? Is the inerrancy of the Bible preached faithfully? Is there a complete and unapologetic dependence on God's Word by those in leadership?

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 7:15

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

The classes this semester are going to focus on truth. There is a great exchange that is taking place in the church, the schools, and even the seminaries: the truth of God is being exchanged for a lie. In an effort to make Christianity more appealing to a populace that is increasingly ignorant of God's values, doctrine is being compromised, even erased, for the sake of presentation and appeal. The diversity and tolerance movements have compromised sound teaching. The church of Jesus Christ, charged with being the pillar and foundation of truth, is embracing lies in the name of Jesus.

In the past, I never understood how Matthew 7:22-23 could possibly be true:

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'
And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

But, in front of our very eyes, the emerging church movement is making this scripture suddenly quite understandable. This isn't something that should be unexpected. Scripture has clearly told us that it would happen.

Read 2 Peter 2:1 and journal what you learn here: _____

Jesus clearly warned of the times that we live in. Read His words in these verses and write your thoughts; be specific.

Matthew 7:15 _____

Matthew 24:11 _____

Matthew 24:24 "For false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

It is important to notice that the work of these false teachers is not restricted to false teaching alone. It is also accompanied by false miracles—miracles not empowered by God. This is such an important point that two gospel writers indicated its truth. Read Mark 13:22 for the other citation: _____

The idea that even the elect could be deceived by them speaks to their empowerment. Do a word study on "elect" and write what you learn here:

But, people will argue of false teachers, "this person has become wealthy. Or this person has a large following. Or this person has written a lot of books. He's on TV! People like him!" When these arguments come, remember the words of Jesus:

Luke 6:26 "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way."

God is all powerful: Satan has a lot of power (but not all!)
God is truthful at all times: Satan can be truthful when it suits his purposes
God's truth never changes: Satan is great at morphing/skewing truth
God's miracles bring Him glory: Satan's make people feel good about themselves
God brings people into the light: Satan tows them into the darkness of sin

Many so-called Christian leaders are introducing innovative teachings based on new Bible translations and paraphrases that alter the timeless truths of Holy Scripture. A more progressive spirituality, with roots in eastern mysticism, is replacing faith in God's Word. This "New Christian Spirituality" poses as a more relevant "New Gospel" for today's Postmodern culture that prefers subjective and emotional feelings, rather than absolute truths.

Biblical truth is the foundation for knowing God, His promises and His prophecies. At Pentecost, the Church was given the Holy Spirit of Truth to guide the church into all truth. Jesus Christ, who is truth incarnate, taught that after

His death, resurrection and ascension to Heaven, He would bring His Church to His Father's house before returning to govern the world for a 1000 year Kingdom period. Biblical faith trusts God's promise to fulfil these prophecies.

However many within the Emerging, Seeker-friendly, neo-Evangelical, churches deny teachings and do not see prophecies in God's Word as literal truth.

Many promote the false gospel of transforming the world for the common good, encouraging a "working together," and social justice as a way for humans to bring about God's kingdom on planet earth.

The Bible says that a man made world-system will usher in the reign of Antichrist and his kingdom, preceding the coming of the true Jesus Christ and the true Kingdom of God on earth.

Its slick reinvention of "new truth" shows itself off today as a new "Emerging" Christianity, a "Vintage for the Future" movement that is supposedly taking us back to our "Christian" origins in the Desert Fathers of 300 years after Christ. Sadly, that "taking back" does not go back far enough. Missing is a return to the Early Church's foundation, birthed in Jerusalem, at Pentecost, 40 days after the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, who at that time, filled His believers with His Holy Spirit and instructions to go out, preach the Gospel and make disciples.

Through modern marketing techniques and business management skills, a global agenda of faith, commerce and government is being orchestrated for churches to partner with other faiths for world peace and unity.

Today's "emergent" brand of Christianity has a different gospel and is targeting thousands of the younger generation with a so-called hip, cool, experiential spirituality, much of which is embracing mysticism and ecumenical philosophy to unite people from all faiths to work together and bring about a new world order of peace and harmony on this planet now.

In **A Generous Orthodoxy**, Brian McLaren, an emergent church leader said this:

"Then I must add, though, that I don't believe making disciples must equal making adherence 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. This will be hard, you say, and I agree. But frankly, it's not at all easy to be a follower of Jesus in many "Christian" religious context, either."

This notion dovetails with the heart of New Age thinking and the utopian ideals of many world religions which believe their unity can bring in world peace.

The dangerous result of this new spirituality in the church is the rise of today's "Christianized" occultism. It's stretching its tentacles around the souls of unsuspecting youth, setting them up for the lie that subjective emotions of "power" and "experience" are "feelings" to be held higher than an objective walk in the Christian Faith, based in truth found in the pure Word of God. The Holy Bible is presented as unattainable truth: "stuffy", "dry" and "religious."

The Bible warns of great heresy and apostasy in the church of the last days. It foretells false teachers, prophets, doctrines of lying spirits, and their signs and wonders. For 2000 years, since the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Bible has been attacked. Alongside the church, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles, counterfeit Christian heretics, apostate denominations and false movements have proliferated. Ecclesiastes truthfully says, "There's no new thing under the sun." (1:9)

In this class, we will learn what Scripture teaches about the times we live in, the ways in which people, even Christians, are being seduced away from biblical truth, and the methods used by the New Spirituality to usher in the counterfeit Kingdom of God on earth. We will look at leaders of the "emerging" church and their teachings. Then we will bring the light of God's Word to bear on those teachings so that we can stand in the truth.

In John 18:36, Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world," and "Narrow is the Way which leads to life and few are those who find it." (Matthew 7:14)

HERESY #1: NO ORIGINAL SIN

HERESY #1: BY TONY JONES : Tony Jones is theologian-in-residence at Solomon’s Porch in Minneapolis and an adjunct professor at Fuller Theological Seminary and at Andover Newton Theological School. Tony serves as a senior acquisitions editor at sparkhouse. He’s developed an iPhone app called Ordain Thyself.

“When I was growing up in a moderate, centrist church — somewhere between mainline Christianity and evangelicalism — Original Sin was a given. I first learned about it in youth group, and we regularly talked about it. Actually, it’s more accurate to say that we talked about a life with Christ, and the notion of Original Sin was in the background. It was assumed. And I cannot remember that it was ever debated. In other words, I assumed that the doctrine of Original Sin was a biblical notion, and that all Christians accepted it as gospel truth. Of course, neither is true. In college, Original Sin was also assumed by the Campus Crusaders and Navigators who ministered to me, as well as in the little bible church that I attended. But, while in college, I also took at class on the theology of Augustine from an eccentric professor, Charles Stinson, and therein I learned that the great father of Western theology was the author of the doctrine of Original Sin. Of course, Augustine was not making it up ex novo, but was taking as his inspiration the account of creation in Genesis 3 and certain Pauline texts. In seminary, I learned from John Thompson that John Calvin and his theological heirs reified the notion of Original Sin and that it hadn’t played much of a role in medieval and Scholastic theology. And sometime later, I discovered that whole branches of the Christian family tree — most notably, the Orthodox Church — has never embraced Original Sin. I have come to reject the notion of Original Sin. I consider it neither biblically, philosophically, nor scientifically tenable.”

One of the main leaders of the Emergent Movement is Brian McLaren, who also endorses this heresy. Doug Pagitt is also a leader/adherent to this philosophy. We will look more at these men in later sections.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT ORIGINAL SIN?

The Bible defines sin for us very clearly. Read James 4:17 and record the definition of sin here: _____

Now, we must move to the first pages of the scripture. Read Genesis 3:1-7 and indicate whether you think that Adam or Eve sinned here: _____

Continue your reading in 1 Timothy 2:14. Remember that it is knowing that you are doing something wrong that makes it sin! If Eve was deceived, did she know it was wrong? Or did she believe the lie? Does scripture say that Adam was deceived? If Adam wasn't deceived, then he was intentionally sinning.

It is important to look at what happened after Adam sinned. Continue your reading in Genesis 5:3 and record whose image Adam's procreation reflected.

Adam, who had been created in the image of God, suffered a change in image after sin. And Adam procreated in his own image which had become skewed by sin. We know this is true because scripture repeatedly speaks of our need to have our image fixed!

Romans 1:23 _____

Romans 8:29 _____

2 Corinthians 3:18 _____

2 Corinthians 4:14 _____

Colossians 3:10 _____

The Bible reveals the way to fix the image: we need to be redeemed! And scripture calls out a method of redemption. We need a blood relative, a kinsman redeemer, who is able and willing to make the redemption.

What is the problem then? Ability presupposes that the one doing the redeeming doesn't need redeeming himself. And all people, being descendants of Adam, need redeeming.

So, in reality, we need a blood relative not born of the seed of man to make the redemption. Jesus came to be that kinsman redeemer. Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Hebrews 2:14 _____

Galatians 4:5 _____

Titus 2:14 _____

People who dismiss original sin, also dismiss the need for Jesus to come. If this doctrine is new to you, work through the model on the next page. We know it as "The Kinsman Redeemer Model."

WHY ONE NEEDS A REDEEMER

1. Had become enslaved – kinsman redeemer paid the price to redeem the enslaved relative
2. Had lost control of land – kinsman redeemer paid the price to redeem the land
3. Family murder – kinsman redeemer served as the judicial executioner of the murderer
4. Had produced no heirs – kinsman redeemer married the one without heirs/produced heirs

WHO COULD SERVE AS A GA'AL? (3rd party kinsman redeemer)

The nearest blood relative who: (Leviticus 25:48)

1. Was willing to pay the price (would use his own resources to pay the price)
2. Was able to pay the price (was qualified i.e. sufficient resources and not himself a slave: Ruth 4:6)

MANKIND (ADAM) NEEDED A REDEEMER

1. After the fall, mankind was enslaved to sin (John 8:34: Jesus answered them, "truly, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.")
2. Mankind had lost dominion of the earth (John 12:31 "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out")
3. Mankind had been murdered (John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning...")
4. Because of sin, there were no heirs for the kingdom (Romans 4:14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified.)

HOW JESUS REDEEMED US

1. We had no eligible kinsman to redeem mankind because no one was able (i.e. not himself enslaved to sin) Sin entered through being a descendant from Adam's seed)
2. Jesus became eligible for us by meeting the requirements:
 - a. He became a blood relative (Hebrews 2:14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same)
 - b. He was able because he wasn't born of Adam's seed and therefore was not born enslaved to sin
 - c. He was willing

JESUS' ACTIONS FOR US

1. Redeemed any of enslaved mankind who choose His redemption
2. Will redeem the land over which Satan took control (Earth)
3. Will include the judicial execution of our murderer (Rev. 20:10, 14)
4. Will include marriage to those who had produced no heirs, making them His bride (the church)

EXAMPLES OF REDEMPTION

Ruth and Boaz (he redeemed the land and married her) Ruth 4:1-13

Jeremiah 32:10-14 (he redeemed the land and put the deed in a jar of clay)

Articles redeemed were "sealed" as a mark of ownership and authenticity. Only the rightful purchaser could break the seal, which was both placed and broken before witnesses.

REDEMPTION TERMINOLOGY

1. 2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels (saved spirits /fleshly bodies)
2. Ephesians 1:13 In Him, you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise
3. Revelation 19:9 And he said to me, "write, 'blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And He said to me, "these are true words of God."

HERESY #2: THERE WAS NO VIRGIN BIRTH

HERESY #2: BY ROB BELL Robert "Rob" Bell Jr. (born August 23, 1970 in Ingham County, Michigan) is an American author and pastor. He is the founder of Mars Hill Bible Church located in Grandville, Michigan and is also the featured speaker in a series of spiritual short films called NOOMA. In 2011 Time Magazine named Bell to its list of the 100 Most Influential People in the World. He is the author of the New York Times bestsellers **Love Wins** and **Velvet Elvis**. Under his leadership Mars Hill Bible Church was one of the fastest-growing churches in America. He is currently working on a television series, reportedly for ABC. Bell attended Wheaton College. With friends Dave Houk, Brian Erickson, Steve Huber and Chris Fall, he formed the indie rock band, "_ton bundle", which was reminiscent of bands such as R.E.M. and Talking Heads. This is when _ton bundle wrote the song "Velvet Elvis", based upon the same Velvet Elvis painting that he used in his first book **Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith**. Wheaton College was also where Bell met his wife, Kristen. Bell received his bachelor's degree in 1992 from Wheaton. He moved to Pasadena, California to pursue a calling for teaching and received a M.Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary. Listen to his style:

"What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archeologists find Larry's tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was really just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births?"

But what if, as you study the origin of the word "virgin" you discover that the word "virgin" in the gospel of Matthew actually comes from the book of Isaiah, and then you find out that in the Hebrew language at that time, the word "virgin" could mean several things. And what if you discover that in the first century being "born of a virgin" also referred to a child whose mother became pregnant the first time she had intercourse? Could you still be a Christian? Is the way of Jesus still the best possible way to live? Or does the whole thing fall apart?" (Velvet Elvis, p. 26)

Rob Bell contemplates "trampolianity" where believers are bouncing on a trampoline and all of the springs are various doctrines of the church. He asks, how many springs have to fail or be proven false before Christianity totally falls apart? If the virgin birth spring fails, has Christianity failed?

BY MARCUS BORG: Marcus Borg is president of the Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars; he has appeared on panels with Brian McLaren. **Seminary also introduced me to the historical study of Jesus and Christian origins. I learned from my professors and the readings they assigned that Jesus almost certainly was not born of a virgin, did not think of himself as the Son of God, and did**

not see his purpose as dying for the sins of the world ... I also found the claim that Jesus and Christianity were the only way of salvation to be troublesome. Marcus Borg, "The God We Never Knew."

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Let's begin by looking at the biblical account of the virgin birth. Consider....

Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

Do a word study on "virgin" from this passage and journal what you learn here:

Continue your reading in Matthew 1:18 _____

Scripture is here very specific that Mary's child was fathered by the Holy Spirit (and just for the record, the Bible no where calls the Spirit "Larry!")

In order for Joseph, Mary's fiance, to believe what was happening, read what happened in his life: Matthew 1:20 _____

It quickly becomes clear that to believe that there was no virgin birth requires not believing that scripture is inspired by God and totally true! But emergent leaders believe exactly that, and we will discuss that in the next chapter.

In order for us to understand the necessity of the virgin birth, we need only go back to our Kinsman Redeemer model. Redemption under God's Law required that the redeemer be a blood relative who was willing and able to make the redemption.

Paraphrase what you learned about the following topics we discussed in the previous chapter:

Jesus becoming a blood relative: _____

Jesus' ability to make the redemption: _____

Since we know that Adam procreated in an image that resulted from sin, we know that none of Adam's offspring (all of us) have the perfect image of God apart from the redemptive work of Christ.

So, what mankind really needed in order to be redeemed was a blood relative who was not born of the seed of man and who was willing to sacrifice whatever it cost in order to redeem us.

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The emerging church goes terribly wrong when they take only portions of scripture out of their context. Context Rules!

Scripture is very clear that Jesus made a way for the redemption of all people on earth. BUT scripture is also clear that you must make a conscious decision to accept that redemption. That decision is two-fold:

Romans 10:9 ... that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

There are two important things here:

1. Confession with your mouth. Do a word study on "confess" and record what you learn here:

2. Belief in your heart concerning Jesus' resurrection. Do a word study on "believe" and write the results here: _____

In other words, you must believe that Jesus substitutionary sacrifice, death, and subsequent resurrection is sufficient for salvation AND you must actively believe the same thing God believes about it and say so.

If the human man Jesus was fathered by a human male, then Jesus would be ineligible to make any redemption. This means that Jesus was **UNIQUELY QUALIFIED** to be our redeemer.

So, now we answer Rob Bell's question: Does Christianity fall apart if there is no virgin birth? The answer is a resounding "YES!"

HERESY #3: THE BIBLE ISN'T GOD'S INSPIRED WORD

Heresy #3: By Brian McLaren McLaren was the founding pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in Spencerville, Maryland (Washington DC area), which he left in 2006 to pursue writing and speaking full-time. He is an author, activist and speaker and leading figure in the emerging church movement. He is a leading editor of "The Justice Project." He has endorsed the work of Rob Bell and Tony Jones.

In describing the work of Brian McLaren, Jason Moore says this: "For lack of a better word to describe his audacious hermeneutics, his arrogance is astounding." It becomes clear from reading McLaren's work, that he believes the Bible contains some good things and some that must just be thrown away. Consider some of his writing. Concerning the global flood found in Genesis 6-9, McLaren writes:

"In this light, a god who mandates an intentional supernatural disaster leading to unparalleled genocide is hardly worthy of belief, much less worship. How can you ask your children--or nonchurch colleagues and neighbors--to honor a deity so uncreative, overreactive, and utterly capricious regarding life? To make matters worse, the global holocaust strategy didn't even work. Soon the "good guy" Noah gets drunk, and soon after that his sons are up to no good, and soon after that we're right back to the antediluvian violence and crime levels. Genocide, it turns out, doesn't really solve anything in Genesis, even if a character named "God" does it. (Could that be a more worthy lesson to draw from the text?)" (A New Kind of Christianity, page 109)

McLaren clearly changes what he does not like about God and makes Him into a God more to his own tastes. When he cannot understand what is happening in a particular text (or chooses not to believe it), then he simply attributes the text to cultural mores of pagan religions. Concerning the Genesis account:

"In previous chapters, we saw God as the good creator in Genesis, as the compassionate liberator in Exodus, and as the reconciling king, lover, and father of all people in the prophets. But as a serious reader of the Bible, I'm still a little uneasy, because I know about some of the other images of God that are also found in the bible-- violent images, cruel images, un-Christlike images." (A New Kind of Christianity, p. 98)

Did he just call God "un-Christlike?" Why, yes he did. He simply does not like the images credited to God in the Hebrew Scriptures; and he will either try to explain them away, or he will try to credit the "un-Christlike" images to a Greco-Roman Platonic view of God instead of his purported Aristotelian view. Consider the following from A New Kind of Christianity, page 42:

"Now the god of this Greco-Roman version of the biblical story bears a strange similarity in many ways to Zeus (Jupiter for the Romans), but we will name him Theos. The Greco-Roman god Theos, I suggest, is a far different deity from the Jewish Elohim of Genesis 1, or Lord (referring to the unspeakable name of the Creator) of Genesis 2 and 12, not to mention the Abba to whom Jesus prayed. As a good-no, make that perfect-Platonic god, Theos loves spirit, state, and being and hates matter, story, and becoming, since, once again, the latter involve change, and the only way to change or move from perfection is downward into decay. In fact, as soon as something drops out of the state of perfection, Theos is possessed by a pure and irresistible urge to destroy it (or make it suffer).

Either you believe that the Bible is true, or you don't. McLaren doesn't. Neither does Rob Bell. Consider Bell's quote from an Interview in Christianity Today: "The Emergent Mystique:" **"The Bible is a human product, rather than the product of divine fiat."**

WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE?

Scripture has a number of things to say about itself. This has led to the following well-known confession concerning the Bible:

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

Read the following verses and record what you learn:

2 Timothy 3:16 _____

What scripture would Paul have been speaking of? _____

What does this tell you about people who want to dismiss the Old Testament because we are "New Testament People?" _____

Now, do a word study from the verse above on the following words:

Teaching: _____

Reproof: _____

Correction: _____

Training in righteousness: _____

Continue your reading in 2 Peter 1:20,21 _____

Do a word study on "own interpretation:" _____

Continue your study with Jesus' words in Mark 13:31 _____

Clearly, Jesus took the words of scripture to be true. Consider the following:

John 7:38 _____

John 13:18 _____

John 19:37 _____

Luke 4:21 _____

In addition to this, there is more manuscript evidence for the Bible than any other book ever written, including the works of the Greek philosophers. The Bible is wholly unique among texts that are considered sacred. The Bible displays a unity and harmony throughout that is distinct. It contains hundreds of specific prophecies that have been fulfilled with complete accuracy—something no other religious book can boast. It is historically verified and supported by archeology. No scientific inaccuracy has ever been found. From a literary perspective, the Bible's richness, depth, and beauty are unequalled.

When you question a document's historicity, you question the document's authenticity, and ultimately, its authority.

There is much more evidence for the New Testament than for any other ancient writings of comparable date. There are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, all of which bear earlier dates than any other ancient works. F. F. Bruce, considered to be one of the greatest of New Testament scholars, said: "The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning."

Scholar Sir Frederic Kenyon sums it up: "The interval then between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."

Among the New Testament writings, at least ten percent is Old Testament material, composed of some 295 quotations, 1600 citations, and numerous allusions.

We say that the Bible is "inerrant." Inerrancy has to do with truth. It means the Bible is truthful and does not err.

Theologian Paul D. Feinberg proposes the following definition of inerrancy: "Inerrancy means that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in

everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences.”

This definition helps to clarify what is and is not implied in the doctrine of inerrancy. Inerrancy applies to the original writings (autographs), not the copies. The Bible teaches that the scriptures were inspired, not the scribes or copyists who duplicated the original. Thus, inasmuch as the copies reflect the originals, they are considered inerrant. Any errors in copying, transmission, or preservation do not negate original inerrancy. No human interpretation is infallible, so proper hermeneutics is necessary.

Inerrancy denotes that the Bible is true in all it affirms. For instance, the Bible contains historical record of many evil acts, but it does not condone or teach those evil acts. Finally, inerrancy is not a denial that difficult passages exist within the Bible. But these difficult passages should not be assumed to be errors, contradictions, or discrepancies simply because they have not yet been understood or harmonized. We should be encouraged by the fact that for over 2000 years the Bible has stood the test of time.

HERESY #4: NO SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT

Heresy #4: By Spencer Burke: Spencer Burke, a speaker, creator of theooze.com, and author of "A Heretic's Guide to Eternity" rejects major doctrines such as exclusivism, Hell, and the substitutionary death of Christ.

"Of all the elements of Christianity, the most repugnant is the notion of the Christ who took our sins upon himself and sacrificed his body in agony to save our souls. Did we ask him to? A better approach is to see Jesus as 'the model of sinless living, the ultimate example' to which all humanity should aspire." Spencer Burke and Barry Taylor, "A Heretic's Guide to Eternity."

Regarding the cross of Christ, Brian McLaren writes:

"That just sounds like one more injustice in the cosmic equation. It sounds like divine child abuse. You know" "The Story We Find Ourselves In," page102.

Alan W. Jones, dean of Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco, writes:

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. Why? Because of the cult of suffering and the vindictive God behind it. Alan Jones, Reimagining Christianity, page 132.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT?

The Scriptures teach the doctrine of the substitutionary death of Christ.

Read 1 Peter 2:21-24 _____

Isaiah 53, one of the most enduring chapters in all scripture, also predicts the penal substitutionary death of Christ. Read that chapter and record your thoughts: _____

And we cannot leave out the redemptive power of the cross. How could an Old Testament person understand the idea of Christ dying for our sins (our transgressions and iniquities)—actually bearing the punishment that we deserved? The sacrifices suggested this idea, but it is one thing to kill a lamb,

and something quite different to think of God's chosen servant as that Lamb. But God was pulling aside the curtain of time to let the people of Isaiah's day look ahead to the suffering of the future Messiah and the resulting forgiveness made available to all mankind.

Paul in Romans 8:3 teaches the penal atonement: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

Read 1 John 4:10 and journal your thoughts here: _____

Apparently saints in Heaven have a different perspective on the penal substitutionary atonement when they fall at the feet of Christ and worship Him in Revelation 5:9 as the "who has redeemed us to God by your blood."

For those leaders of the emerging church movement, we would offer up the words of Paul here:

1 Corinthians 1:17-25 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**For it is written,
"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."**

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the

foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Inherent in the biblical concept of atonement is the exchange of one thing for another. As we complete our study for this chapter, study the following verses and record what you learn about substitutionary atonement in the spaces that follow.

Romans 5:6-8 _____

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

2 Corinthians 5:21 _____

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"—

Titus 2:14 _____

1 Peter 2:24 ...and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

1 Peter 3:18 _____

It becomes clear that the only way you can doubt the vicarious atoning sacrifice of Jesus is to doubt the veracity of the scripture.

HERESY #5: THERE IS NO LITERAL HELL

Heresy #5 by Rob Bell: "Heaven and hell are choices we make and live with right now. God gives us what we want, including the freedom to live apart from God (hell) or turn God's way (heaven)."

"At the center of the Christian tradition since the first church has been the insistence that history is not tragic, hell is not forever, and love, in the end, wins."

Bell doesn't believe that death cuts off the ability to repent. In his Bible, Bell sees no **"infinite, eternal torment for things people did in their few finite years of life."**

Bell believes Jesus makes salvation possible even for people who never know his name. **"We have to allow for mystery, for people who 'drink from the rock' of faith without knowing who or what it was."** Further, he charges that churches that don't allow for this are "misguided and toxic."

Brian McLaren not only defends Bell, but he goes on to say:

...the Kingdom of God doesn't come like the kingdoms of this world by inflicting violence and coercing people. But that the kingdom of God comes thru suffering and willing voluntary sacrifice right? But in an ironic way the doctrine of hell basically says no, that's not really true. At the end God gets his way through coercion and violence and intimidation and uh domination just like every other kingdom does. The Cross isn't the center then, the Cross is almost a distraction and false advertising for God." From "The Last Word and the Word After That."

Doug Pagitt, founder on Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis, a church (he calls it a "gathering") he founded in 2000, defines hell like this:

"Hell is disconnection and disintegration with God." His website goes on to say, "You will not find statements of what our community believes on this site. Belief is a dynamic lived reality and doesn't lend itself to website statements."

Although his community may not make statements of its beliefs, the Bible clearly does!

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT HELL?

Let's begin by looking at what scripture says about Hell. Hell is alternatively translated as Sheol (Hebrew) and Hades (Greek). It is also called gehenna in the New Testament, and in some translations "tartarus."

Do a word study on each of the above words, recording what you learn here:

Sheol _____

Hell _____

Hades _____

Gehenna _____

Tartarus (you may have to look in KJV) _____

The Bible doctrine of hell is by no means confined to the terms above mentioned and to the passages in which they appear. There are many phrases in which the overshadowing idea is presented with great distinctness, such as "unquenchable fire," "black darkness," "furnace of fire," "fire and brimstone," "the smoke of their torment," "the lake of fire which burns with brimstone," "where their worm does not die," "the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels."

There is no doubt that Scripture requires us to believe in a properly so-called *place* of punishment, in whatever part of God's boundless creation it may be. Further, the purpose of hell is not rehabilitation in any way. Rather, it reflects on the justice of God.

Matthew 25:46 _____

To answer the question of how God could send someone to hell, read Romans 1:18-20 _____

To understand the eternal nature of separation from God, read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 _____

Jude 1:7 _____

Revelation 1:17-18 _____

Revelation 20:14 _____

Leaders of the emerging church movement appeal to a law of "fairness" or "justice" that is higher and more absolute than God. This law of fairness is binding, even on God. Therefore, God must act in response to that law in order to be fair. People then appeal to the law of fairness.

Scripture teaches, on the other hand, that God Himself is the standard of justice. He uses His power according to His moral perfection. Whatever He does is fair, or just, even if we don't understand it. Our response is to appeal to God directly.

God's justice is seen in the perfection of his nature where He is infinitely righteous in Himself and in all He does. He is righteousness in His divine nature as exercised in his moral government. At first God imposes righteous laws on His creatures and executes them righteously. Justice is not an optional product of His will, but an unchangeable principle of His very nature.

God's legislative justice is His requiring His rational creatures to conform in all respects to the moral law.

His distributive justice is his dealing with his accountable creatures according to the requirements of the law in rewarding or punishing them.

In remunerative justice he distributes rewards.

James 1:12 _____

2 Timothy 4:8 _____

In punitive justice he inflicts punishment on account of transgression.

He cannot, since Hew is infinitely righteous, do otherwise than regard and hate sin as intrinsically wrong and deserving of punishment. "He cannot deny himself."

2 Timothy 2:13 _____

His essential and eternal righteousness immutably determines him to visit every sin as such with merited punishment.

HERESY #6: UNIVERSALISM

Heresy #6: By Doug Pagitt: Pagitt was born July 5, 1966 and is an author associated with the emerging church movement and head pastor of Solomon's Porch in South Minneapolis. Pagitt is also a Senior Fellow with Emergent Village: a generative friendship of missional church leaders around the world and a leading architect of the emergent church discussion. Consider this interview from a Sunday, October 26, 2008 radio show:

Question - How is God going to judge the good Muslim?

Pagitt: **God's going to judge the life and repair and restore and heal the life of everybody in the same way. There's gonna be no difference between what God...**

Question - So the Muslim is ultimately not going to be... go to a bad place. He's ultimately going to be restored with God when he dies?

Pagitt: **No, there's going to be no difference between the way God going to interact with you when you die and the way God's going to interact with a Muslim when a Muslim dies.** Radio interview, Sunday, October 26th, 2008

We should probably begin this section with some definitions.

1. Pluralism: All the world religions lead to God and can save.
2. Exclusivism: Only those who came to God during the Old Testament era, such as Abraham, and all Christians since the time of Christ can be saved. Those who were believers before the coming of Christ are included in the efficacy of His sacrifice; there is salvation in no other name but that of Christ. Outside of these groups, there is no salvation. All those who live and die without accepting Christ will go to Hell whether or not they ever had the opportunity to hear about Him.
3. Inclusivism: There is salvation in no other name but that of Christ and those finally saved will only be saved through Him, but they don't have to have known/accepted Him while living on earth
4. Christian Universalism seems to combine #1 and #3.

At the Aspen Institute in July of 2005, Rick Warren stated: **"I happen to know people who are followers of Christ in other religions."** This has caused many to wonder if he is beginning to follow into the emergent thought train on this issue.

Rob Bell: "Salvation is the entire universe being brought back into harmony with its maker."

Doug Pagitt: "I do think this is the story that ought to be told is that the story of Christianity is not the narrow way and I know people are going to go, "But Jesus said it's the narrow way." That wasn't what he was getting at. He was getting at something else and we can get into that some other time, 'cause we need another show..."

"The image I have sketched views Jesus differently: rather than being the exclusive revelation of God, he is one of many mediators of the sacred." **Marcus Borg, Meeting Jesus again for the First Time, page 37.**

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION

The first thing we have to acknowledge about God is that He is very consistent. He established Law, methodology, and festivals in the Old Testament that are all pointing to Christ. Paul appropriately acknowledged, "an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth." (Ephesians 1:10) We can interpret scripture in part on our observation of God's consistency in everything He has done in the past.

Therefore, any appropriate view of salvation must first embrace the Kinsman Redeemer Model that God established. This model was used to refute Heresy #1: No Original Sin. Any view that violates that God-established truth, must be discarded as erroneous.

Second, any appropriate view of salvation must embrace the methodology established by God. God's methodology involved two parts:

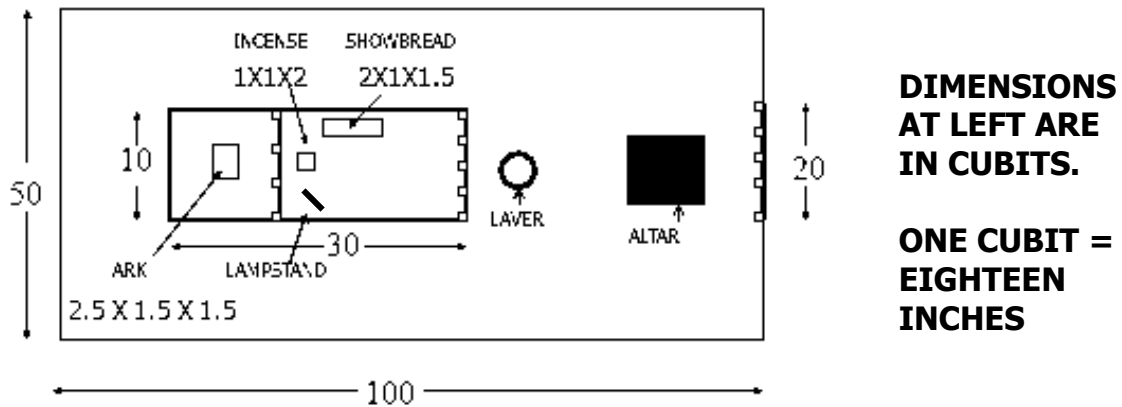
1. A worship system (the tabernacle) which was combined with
2. A sacrificial system (the sacrifices offered at the tabernacle)

Begin by reading Acts 4:12, doing a word study on "no other" and "name" _____

Continue your reading in John 14:6 recording Jesus' words here: _____

Clearly, Jesus claimed that the only way to get to the Father, who is in heaven, is through Him. The problem arises when people began to identify with any part of the inclusive doctrine. This is a “have your cake and eat it too” position. It says that people are saved by Jesus even if they never knew it! This is NOT what scripture says.

Read Romans 10:9 _____



Today we are going to consider the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was always pitched facing East. It was entered through a 30’ wide opening in the fabric fence that was called “the way.” It was also called the Narrow Gate because it was the only entrance of the three in the tabernacle that was narrower than the wall that it was in.

Read the following verse and record your thoughts: John 10:9 _____

Matthew 7:13 _____

The early church called itself “the Way.” Read the following verses:

Acts 9:2: _____

Also Acts 19:9, Acts 19:23, Acts 24:14, Acts 24:22 _____

The Way opened into the outer court. This court was enclosed by a fabric fence that was seven and a half feet tall but was open to the sky.

The outer court symbolized salvation

The first thing inside the outer court was the sacrificial altar. This symbolized the sacrifice of Christ. The only other thing in the outer court was the laver for ceremonial cleansing of the priests prior to entering the other parts of the tabernacle. The Tabernacle is telling us God's plan:

- ◆◆ Only enter by the Way...the Narrow Gate...Jesus
- ◆◆ Having accepted the sacrifice of Christ (altar)
- ◆◆ Having been ceremonially cleansed (laver)

When we are baptized, this symbolizes our ceremonial cleansing from sin and our identification with the sacrifice of Christ, His death, and resurrection.

Ephesians 5:25-26 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word...

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

The Tabernacle model is telling us that we must enter by the Way, the Narrow Gate. Salvation is only through the sacrifice of Christ. Our cleansing comes only

after accepting that sacrifice. We cannot go on to do additional ministry before God until we have understood and accepted this as God's unique plan.

It is important to note that only priests could enter the second court, called the Holy Place, and only the High Priest could enter the third court, called the Holy of Holies.

Read 1 Peter 2:9 and record the importance of that verse here: _____

The priests were to be experts in God's Word and they also presented the sacrifices to God.

Read Romans 12:1 _____

If we are a priesthood of believers, how should we approach the Word of God?

Read Ezra 6:20 for the information on purification of priests: _____

Read Romans 12:1-2 for more information. Do a word study on "prove" from this passage: _____

Continue your reading in Philippians 4:8 _____

As a priesthood of believers, we are eligible, because of Christ, to symbolically enter into the second area called the Holy Place. This represents discipleship. There is a difference between a convert and a disciple. A disciple has accepted Jesus sacrifice and is "saved." A disciple has a heart desire to grow and become all that God wants him/her to be.

Read John 8:20-32 and write what you learn about disciples here: _____

The Holy Place is entered through the door of truth. There are three items inside the Holy Place.

On the north side is the table of showbread, with the bread of the presence.

Read Romans 8:28 and do a word study on "purpose" and record the results here: _____

Consider the use of the word *prothesis* in the following verses:

- ❖ **Ephesians 1:11**...also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will...
- ❖ **Ephesians 3:11** This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord...
- ❖ **2 Timothy 1:9** ...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity...

The showbread represents coming into God's presence in such a real and personal way that your very being is summed up in becoming all that God wants you to be and doing all that He wants you to do.

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

On the south side of the Holy Place is the lampstand. Because there were no windows in the Holy Place, the lampstand was literally a light in a dark place. It was carefully tended by the priests so that its light would not go out. It was made of gold...beaten into shape. Each of its seven lamps had to be individually tended. Consider the following verses:

- ❖ **Psalms 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
- ❖ **Proverbs 6:23** For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light;

❖ **Luke 8:16** "Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light."

❖ **John 5:35** "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light."

Now read Matthew 5:14-16 regarding believers: _____

Continue reading in Leviticus 24:2 and make the personal application: _____

The final object in the Holy Place is the altar of incense. It was on the west side of the Holy Place, directly in front of the entrance into the third area of the Tabernacle, called the Holy of Holies.

From the book of Revelation, we realize that this altar represents prayer.

❖ **Revelation 5:8** When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

❖ **Revelation 8:3-4** Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

It is important to know that this altar was always to be fired from the sacrificial altar. This tells us that Christians can pray in Jesus' name because of the sacrifice that He made on our behalf. Read Leviticus 10: 1,2 and record what you learn about the sons of Aaron: _____

God intended that the privilege of praying in Jesus' name would be preserved in purity through the methodology of the tabernacle services. To pray in any other

name, or to approach God other than through the sacrifice of Jesus, results in death just as surely as it did for Nadab and Abihu.

So we see that discipleship is represented in living purposefully before God, understanding His Word, taking that Word to the world, and prayer.

The entrance into the last area of the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, is through the veil of Life. At this point, we should observe that the three entrances are the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

The veil of Life represents Jesus body. Read Hebrews 10:19-21 and record your results here: _____

Now read what happened to the veil at Jesus' death. Matthew 27:51 _____

Inside the Holy of Holies was the ark of the covenant. Do a word study on ark (translated from the Hebrew in the OT) _____

Read Deuteronomy 10:2 and note what was inside the ark here: _____

Now, read Exodus 25:21 and note what the lid to the ark was: _____

Cross reference to Hebrews 9:5. Do a word study on mercy seat in this verse:

The mercy seat literally means "the place of propitiation." Read 1 John 2:2 and find the cross reference: _____

**MERCY: WHEN YOU
DO NOT GET
SOMETHING BAD
THAT YOU DO
DESERVE**

**GRACE: WHEN YOU
GET SOMETHING
GOOD THAT YOU
DO NOT DESERVE**

Now, read James 2:13, and journal your thoughts about how mercy triumphs over judgment: _____

The ark is the perfect example of God's mercy covering the punishment due under the Law.

Reviewing what we have learned under this section, God's revelation in His Word, answer the following questions:

1. Can you be Jesus' disciple and be in another religion? Why not? _____

2. If you must make a choice to enter by the Way, can you get to God without making that choice? _____

Can you remain outside the Narrow Gate and still get to God? _____

HERESY #7: THE ANCIENT-FUTURE POSITION ALSO CALLED VINTAGE FAITH

Heresy #7 by Dan Kimball: Aesthetics is not an end in itself. But in our culture, which is becoming more multi-sensory and less respectful of God, we have a responsibility to pay attention to the design of the space where we assemble regularly. In the emerging culture, darkness represents spirituality. We see this in Buddhist temples, as well as Catholic and Orthodox churches. Darkness communicates that something serious is happening.

Brian McLaren adds to this position: **In the tradition of Julian of Norwich and St. Teresa of Avila and all the other mystics, we can learn to render ourselves vulnerable to the "favors of God"—those indescribable experiences that mock our dualisms and so saturate our imagination with abundance that they transcend our ability to convey joy and wonder. In the tradition of St. John of the Cross, we can learn to survive and derive benefits from the soul's dark night.**

My wife and I spent an hour in the labyrinth and found ourselves calmed and refreshed, our perspective uniquely restored. We made our own prayer path after the convention — we knew we couldn't keep this experience to ourselves. A few months later we featured a labyrinth as part of Graceland's annual art event at Santa Cruz Bible Church. Graceland artists recreated the labyrinth with a kit we purchased (The Prayer Path, Group Publishing), transforming one of the church's multipurpose rooms into a medieval prayer sanctuary. The team hung art on the walls, draped fabric, and lit candles all around the room to create a visual sense of sacred space.

Tony Jones also joins in: **As a Christian practice {meditation is} inextricably bound up with...silence, the Jesus Prayer, and Centering Prayer,... Further, it's linked with the recent popularity in the West of Eastern religions, resulting in books with such titles as Christian Zen and Christian Yoga. While this makes some Christians nervous, others revel in the fact that God is revealed in all truth, no matter the religion of origin. The Sacred Way, page 79**

THE DANGERS OF THE VINTAGE FAITH POSITION

The concept of vintage faith has much to commend it. Certainly, Christianity has become removed from its roots. Some of my fondest memories of my family involve singing old hymns together and giving testimonies of God's goodness to prior generations of our family.

However, many in the Vintage Faith movement within the emerging church place much focus on meditation and practices associated with eastern religions, the New Age, and the occult. I am struck by their emphasis on darkness. Jesus said

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil." John 3:19

Begin your reading for this section in Romans 13:12 _____

Elements of Eastern faiths and New Age thinking have been widely adopted by 65% of U.S. adults, including many who call themselves Protestants and Catholics, according to a survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Many in the vintage movement have reported finding “energy” in trees, mountains, streams, etc. When it comes to being in touch with God, those who practice these things are open to any avenue. And using the ancient mystics as an example introduces avenues into the New Age and occult.

What do you say when a good friend who loves God, reads her Bible, and talks and walks her faith becomes a devotee of “Christian yoga”?

“Christian yoga” is coming to a church near you if it hasn’t already arrived.

For those who understand yoga’s Hindu roots and to all former New Agers, it will never be compatible with Evangelical Christianity.

The May 20, 2005 edition of “Christianity Today” on-line featured an interview with a woman who says she is an Evangelical and proud of it, however, she is a devotee of yoga. She says she breathes in Christ and breathes out stress. Holy Spirit in, fear out. God the Father in, carbon dioxide out. She is so thankful someone pried open her Evangelical mind to the wonders of yoga. She states, “Give me five minutes of yoga and my mind immediately goes to the metaphor of God’s Spirit being omnipresent and as necessary as air.” She insists the Hindu gods will never make it to her yoga mat. She would be in the chorus singing that yoga doesn’t belong to Hinduism but to “world spirituality.” Frankly, that doesn’t sound any better.

A popular video called, “Outstretched in Worship” has fueled the yoga popularity among Christians, be they Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, or Catholics. “Just don’t throw the baby out with the bath water,” say proponents who insist there are so many “benefits” of yoga. So, having “sanctified” a Hindu practice, they have called it “Christian yoga.”

Daniel Akin, dean of the school of theology at

The subtlety of eastern religion is that it enters like an odorless poison gas, seeping under the door, through the keyhole, in through the open window, so that the man in the room is overcome without his ever realizing that there was any danger at all. “The Dust of Death” Os Guinness

the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said Christians who are drawn to the physical benefits of yoga should avoid its spiritual and psychological underpinnings. "Yoga is rooted in Eastern mysticism and it is incompatible with Christianity," he says.

Laurette Willis, a yoga veteran of 22 years and an Evangelical Christian, said the experience left her vulnerable to "psychic influences" she believes were demonic. "It opened the door to twenty years of involvement in the New Age movement." Willis says that many yoga postures are based on ancient Hindu worship of the sun and moon as deities, and rejects the notion that they can be redeemed by putting a Christian spin on them. Willis concludes that yoga's emphasis on cultivating divine energy within oneself conflicts with Christianity's goal of finding salvation in Christ. Yoga means joining together. It's the joining of the individual spirit with the universal spirit. Christians should be seeing red flags rather than exploring a trendy new "experience."

Many who have been fans of the Purpose Driven books by Rick Warren were upset recently when Warren partnered with Dr. Mehmet Oz to kick off The Daniel Plan diet. Joining them were two other Eastern indoctrinated, mystical doctors. This plan was presented to Warren's entire congregation of 22,000 people as a new health and wellness plan. Dr. Mark Hyman, an expert in metabolism and Dr. Daniel Amen, a clinical professor of psychiatry at UC Irvine, helped Warren kick off this program. These three doctors between themselves have an Eastern worldview even though one is a Muslim, one is a Jew, and one is a Christian mystic. They come from a background which teaches that within ourselves is the potential to heal ourselves.

Dr. Oz is a well-known TV personality who discussed his Muslim faith and his particular resonance with Sufism (Islamic mysticism) and the influence of Emanuel Swedenborg in a PBS interview. Dr. Oz has endorsed Reiki, a type of "energy healing" that is based on the New Age chakra system and puts those practicing it into contact with the realm of familiar spirits.

During the Reiki attunement process, the avenue that is opened within the body to allow Reiki to flow through also opens up the psychic communication centers. This is why many Reiki practitioners report having verbalized channeled communications with the spirit world. (cited in A Time of Departing, page 97)

Dr. Amen has teamed up with T. J. Bartel, a Tantra educator. Tantra is the name of the ancient Hindu sacred texts that contain certain rituals and secrets. Some deal with taking the energies brought forth in meditation through the chakras and combining them with love-making to enhance sexual experiences, which include not only with the human partner but also with ishvara (your personal god.)

Dr. Hyman is a strong advocate for mystical meditation. In his book, "The Ultramind Solution," Hyman emphasizes meditation, saying that it doesn't matter what religion one has to benefit from it (page 322). Dr. Hyman suggests that "Mindful meditation is a powerful well-researched tool, developed by Buddhists" (page 384).

Self healing is an idea that derives from Eastern Mysticism, that within us we can connect to divinity. We can heal ourselves. It's all mind over matter. It is self-hypnosis. Unfortunately, the emerging church is bringing in "new" ideas that are not new ideas; they are old ideas from religions that never honored God.

Read the following verses and journal what you learn:

1 John 4:2 _____

Hebrews 13:8-9 _____

While much can be said of the practice of withdrawing to a quiet place to pray and seek God, methodology that invites demonic participation is to be avoided. This means that discernment is extremely important.

Read Hebrews 5:12-14 and record your thoughts here: _____

Do a word study on "discern" in this passage and write the results: _____

According to this passage, our ability to know right from wrong or good from evil, is directly proportional to our knowledge of God's Word. And if you don't believe that the Bible is God's Word, where does this leave you in determining right and wrong?

One of the most fundamentally wrong parts of the emerging church movement is minimizing of the importance of studying God's Word.

One of the practices that has passed into Christianity via the Vintage Faith, Ancient-Future movement, is the labyrinth. Many within the movement have claimed that it is a form previously used by Christians. In fact, it predates Christianity by at least thirteen hundred years and is expressly related to the Asian mystic religions. It is found in Native American art and Buddhist temples. But in the past it has never been found in association with Christian art. Wiccans use the labyrinth walk in many of their ceremonies.

Jesus already instructed us how to be open to his leading and his answers so why do we need to use this other religious device? Religious syncretism is probably the most dangerous act we can involve ourselves in because we can put a label on something and call it something it essentially is not.

April 12-15, 2012 there was a "Co-Creation Conference" featuring Brian McLaren as a keynote speaker. The conference was billed as "Servant Leadership and the Great Emergence: The Spirit's Call to Evolve." Part of this conference featured instructions on Labyrinth walking.

Dick Rauscher, founder of the Stonyhill Institute, said this about the co-creation movement and labyrinth prayer:

"All prayer is driven by our thought process and the beliefs of our own egos. We co-create with God through positive prayer and negative prayer. This is true whether our behaviors and choices are conscious or unconscious."

Jesus told us very clearly:

John 4:23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."

HERESY #8: CHRISTIAN EQUALS GREEN

Heresy #8 by Rob Bell: Salvation is the entire universe being brought back into harmony with its maker. This has huge implications for how people present the message of Jesus. Yes, Jesus can come into our hearts. But we can join a movement that is as wide and as big as the universe itself. Rocks and trees and birds and swamps and ecosystems. God's desire is to restore all of it.

For Jesus, the question wasn't how do I get into Heaven? but how do I bring heaven here?... The goal isn't escaping this world but making this world the kind of place God can come to. And God is remaking us into the kind of people who can do this kind of work.

Doug Pagitt adds, "God is constantly creating anew. And God also, invites us to be re-created and join the work of God as co-creators. . . . Imagine the Kingdom of God as the creative process of God reengaging in all that we know and experience. . . When we employ creativity to make this world better, we participate with God in the recreation of the world."

The emerging church is strongly committed to the revelation of God's kingdom here and now, before the second coming of Christ. The main objective of this kingdom is to promote conditions that will ensure happy and contented societies in which people can live together without oppression, exploitation, poverty, disease, conflicts, revolutions, warfare and other negative experiences. They believe in preservation of the earth that goes beyond biblical stewardship.

What if he (Jesus) didn't come to start a new religion, but rather came to start a political, social, religious, artistic, economic, intellectual and spiritual revolution that would give birth to a new world? Brian McLaren, The Secret Message of Jesus, page 4

People who embrace the green agenda generally believe in a theology that says Christ will not return until the earth has been made suitable for His coming.

Rick Warren has endorsed books by emergents such as Dan Kimball's "The Emerging Church" and often speaks highly of emergent leaders including a front cover endorsement of Leonard Sweet's book, Soul Tsunami: "Soul Tsunami shows us why these are the greatest days for evangelism since the first century." We will look at Sweet in a future chapter. Although not officially part of the emergent church, nevertheless, those who have long admired Warren wonder why he would give its leaders so much validity and encouragement.

Brian McLaren wrote that a Christian's goal is not simply to reach people for Christ but to save the planet from destruction. (A New Kind of Christian, p. 83).

Tony Campolo adds this drivel, "God saved us in order that he might rescue all of creation. The earth is groaning and waiting for the sons and daughters of God to be redeemed and filled with the Spirit. Why? So that they can invade the planet and

rescue it from the demonic destruction that has played havoc with the atmosphere, the ecology balance, all the things we see around us. Our call is to be God's agents, to rescue not only the human race but the whole of creation."

Dr. David Cloud quoted Jeffrey Whittaker's experience at Brian McLaren's "Everything Must Change" tour at Goshen College in Indiana, in May of 2008. "The very first session was titled 'Focusing on the Wounds of Our Planet.' They sang a song based on Francis of Assisi's poem 'Brother Sun, Sister Moon' and watched a DVD by the Sierra Club 'exposing the immoral mining techniques used by energy companies in West Virginia.' Then they were treated to a song that cried out against 'our rape of Mother Earth.' The second day's session began with another environmentalist song that said mining is a 'scar cut across the face of Mother Earth.' They were constantly reminded that 'catastrophic consequences due to global warming are upon us.' Another session opened with the 'Hymn of Remorse,' which bewailed the supposed desecration of the earth. 'We repent for covering your colorful earth with gray cement...for cutting down trees...for scarring your earth...Lord, have mercy, can we be restored? What of the lands of tribes and nations who lived here first...the noise of traffic is drowning out the songbird's song....'" ("A Pastor Reports on McLaren's 'Everything Must Change Tour,' "June 2, 2008.)

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE EARTH?

We will begin our reading with 2 Peter 3:10. Read about the fate of the earth and record it here: _____

Continue your reading in Revelation 21:5 _____

As we begin our thinking concerning Earth, we must start in Genesis, where God's role for mankind was stated:

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

From our discussion of the Kinsman Redeemer model, we know that Satan is now the ruler of the world because Adam chose to obey Satan rather than God. However, scripture nowhere says that mankind is supposed to rescue the earth.

In fact, we aren't even supposed to rescue people. God does the rescuing. Our job is the presentation, the evangelism, and the discipling.

Chapters one and two of the book of Job clearly declares that Satan patrols the earth and has power on the earth but Satan answers to God and God sets Satan's limits.

To say that we don't have a duty to "rescue" earth in no way undermines our responsibility for stewardship. In fact, Genesis is clear about the fact that God's creation on earth was for the use of man. The environmental part of the emerging church's agenda is not just to keep the air clean and the streams pure; it goes far beyond that to a position that is akin to earth worship.

For emergents, part of bringing about a healthy earth involves a redistribution of wealth, to make the earth more equitable and fair prior to Jesus' second coming. Brian McLaren said this, "**I think our future will require us to join humbly and charitably with people of other faiths – Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and secularists in pursuit of peace, environmental stewardship and justice for all people, things that matter greatly to the heart of God.**"

McLaren is on the Sojourners board of directors. Sojourners is headed by Jim Wallis, the religious advisor to President Obama. Lynne Hybels, wife of Willow Creek's lead pastor, is a regular contributor to the Sojourners magazine. Willow Creek recently used Wallis' book on social justice called "The Great Awakening" in one of its education classes. Sojourners receives substantial funding from The Open Society Institute, one of George Soros' organizations.

The green agenda is also popping up in paraphrased Bibles. Eugene Peterson, the editor of The Message Bible paraphrase has endorsed "Love Wins" by Rob Bell. He is a proponent of the green agenda of the emerging church, and this bias is reflected in his paraphrase. Do you see why I always say that we should study from a good translation?

- Read Romans 15:13 in a Bible translation:

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the same verse from The Message:

Oh! May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!

- Also 1 Corinthians 6:9 from a translation:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

And the same verse from The Message:

Don't you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don't qualify as citizens in God's kingdom.

Notice the biases from The Message. The Word is concerned with people who are not in right standing with God and their future inheritance of the coming kingdom. The Message paraphrase is concerned about people and their use of the earth and its resources qualifying as members of a Kingdom Now. The Word makes no mention whatsoever of the Earth in these verses. The Message makes the Earth a major thrust.

There are other equally egregious sections of the Message, particularly those that minimize homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and 1 Timothy 1:8-11.

Christian stewardship of the earth respects the purpose for which things were made. God expected that Adam and Eve would use earth's resources for the advancement of humans, and to meet their needs. That stewardship continues in a respect for what God created and its appropriate use for the kingdom. The creation itself is not to be worshiped, but the One who created it.

It is clear that there will be a restoration of the earth. Read Isaiah 66:22 and record what you learn about who is in charge of making the new earth: _____

Although Revelation 21 speaks of new heavens and a new earth, it nowhere says that people are the ones who are responsible for making it.

HERESY #9: TRUTH IS EVOLVING

Heresy #9 by Tony Jones: Emergent doesn't have a position on absolute truth, or on anything for that matter. Do you show up at a dinner party with your neighbors and ask, "what's this dinner party's position on absolute truth?" No, you don't, because it's a non-sensical question. 2005 National Youth Workers Convention

Ask me if Christianity (my version of it, yours, the Pope's, whoever's) is orthodox, meaning true, and here's my honest answer: a little, but not yet. Assuming by Christianity you mean the Christian understanding of the world and God, Christian opinions on soul, text, and culture I'd have to say that we probably have a couple of things right, but a lot of things wrong, and even more spreads before us unseen and unimagined. But at least our eyes are open! To be a Christian in a generously orthodox way is not to claim to have the truth captured, stuffed, and mounted on the wall. Brian McLaren, A Generous Orthodoxy, page 293.

Additional information comes from emergent Leonard I. Sweet, an author, preacher, scholar, and ordained United Methodist clergyman currently serving as the E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at Drew Theological School, in Madison, New Jersey, and a Visiting "Distinguished" Professor at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. In 2006 and 2007, Len was voted by his peers "One of the 50 Most Influential Christians in America" by Church Report Magazine. Sweet is endorsed by Rick Warren, Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, and others.

"A major New Light undertaking is the designing of newstream communities that can be 'in connection' and 'in-formation' with the spirit of Christ. Christ will be embodied for the postmodern church in information." Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality, page 121.

"The following are five gross premises of embodiment... that build anew the body of Christ for the postmodern era -- being "in connection" and "in-formation" with: (1) other Christians, (2) all creation, (3) one's ancestors and ancestral memories, (4) other faiths, (5) technology. Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality....

"To be "in connection" and "in-formation" is to be related to other Christians and the shared culture of all Christians and to grow a set of organic relationships and coalitions around a common love for God. Communities have souls, not just individuals. The modern era downplayed a biblical doctrine of salvation that had this communal dimension. In contrast, the New Light movement is concerned about the salvation of ensouled communities as well as individual souls, and the salvation of community souls relating synergistically to one another. ... The power of community is the energy of between: The synergizing of synergies in which "one [shall] chase a thousand, and two [shall] put ten thousand to flight" (Deuteronomy 32:30).... Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality, p. 122.

My personal salvation depends on our collective salvation. President Barack Obama

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRUTH

It is very apparent from the work of the emergent leadership that, when you dismiss the Bible as God's authoritative word, you lose a grip on reality. The ridiculous positions espoused by these leaders would be comical if it weren't embraced by many people who believe that they are saved.

When believers see the direction that the emerging church is taking, they cry out with David,

Psalm 25:4-5
Make me know Your ways, O Lord;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You are the God of my salvation;
For You I wait all the day.

Scripture teaches us truth on many levels.

1. GOD'S WORD IS THE WORD OF TRUTH

Read Psalm 119:160 _____

John 17:17 _____

2. JESUS IS THE PERSON OF TRUTH

John 14:6 _____

Notice that Jesus didn't say that He "knows" the truth; He said He "is" truth.

John 1:17 _____

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

John 14:16-17 _____

1 John 5:6 _____

4. THE CHURCH IS THE PILLAR AND FOUNDATION OF TRUTH

1 Timothy 3:15 _____

In this chapter, our study will center on one of the most tragic sections of scripture. Read through John 8:28-47 and then answer the following questions:

Who was Jesus addressing in these verses? _____

What had these people believed? _____

Write a definition of "disciple" from John 8:31 here _____

Do a word study on "continue" in this verse: _____

Observe that the truth itself doesn't free anyone. Truth is truth whether people know or believe it. It is when you come to KNOW truth that you are freed.

A three-part discussion is found in this section.

First, the people are claiming that they are Abraham's descendants and have never been enslaved. (apparently they are forgetting Egypt, Babylon, etc...but maybe they mean themselves and not their ancestors). Do a word study on "descendants" and record the result here: _____

Jesus' response is that they are truly Abraham's biological descendants, but they don't have the belief structure that Abraham had. Read Romans 4:3-6 and record what you learn about Abraham _____

Second, since Jesus has refuted their argument concerning being children of Abraham, they try another apologetic. They claim that they are God's children, and that God is their Father. Jesus response is basic Christianity:

John 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

Jesus' argument is that God isn't their father; if they recognized God as their father, then they would know who Jesus is.

Third, Jesus points out that there are only two teams: God's and the Devil's. Since they aren't playing on God's team, they are on the Devil's team by default. Tragically, because they haven't understood the truth of who the Father is, they don't recognize the Son either.

Jesus concludes with this horrible affirmation:

John 8:43-44 "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

This section of scripture is one of the most tragic in the Bible because it is speaking to people who believe that they know God and walk in the truth. But what they believe about Jesus shows what they truly believe about God. If you don't believe the truth about Jesus, then you don't know the Father.

1 John 2:22-23 _____

Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Mark 9:40 _____

Galatians 1:6,7 _____

With Pilate, the emerging church asks the fateful question: "What is truth?"

Paul gives a stern warning to his disciple, Timothy, regarding the truth of God's word.

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Diligence, translating "spoudason" from the root "spoudazo" means to do something well and with a sense of urgency. As we live in these troubled times, we should diligently guard the truth. 2 Timothy continues:

2 Timothy 2:16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness...

Because I have always loved a vigorous debate (aka argument), years ago I adopted this verse as a check on my personality:

1 Timothy 6:20-21 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"— which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.

There will always be worldly (godless) people who bring up arguments that are the antithesis of correct doctrine. We must carefully guard the truth of the gospel message.

As we close this section, do a word study on "guard" from 1 Timothy 6:20 and write what you learn here: _____

We must never let error of any sort to permeate our belief structure.

1 John 4:1-6 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

We will discuss the spirit of the antichrist in the next lesson.

BABYLON RISING

Scripture speaks frequently of the spirit of antichrist as well as a person in the last days who is The Antichrist.

In addition to this, scripture clearly pictures "Babylon" riding into power. Let's begin our reading for this section in Revelation 17:1-6, and answer the following questions:

1. Where is the woman sitting – be sure to note two places: _____

2. What made her drunk? _____

3. Do a word study on "harlot" and note two specific ways that the word is used in scripture: _____

4. Describe in detail what the harlot was wearing: _____

If time permits, spend some time looking for anyone in literal Babylon in the past who was adorned in this way. Write what you learn here: _____

In addition to being a harlot, the woman is described as being a city. Read Revelation 18:10, 21 _____

Continue your reading in Revelation 16:19 _____

The harlot who had given all the nations a drink of her immoral passion is now given God's cup to drink. Read Revelation 14:8 _____

SUMMARY:

1. A HARLOT CITY (a city isn't a literal woman, so harlot must be used in the sense of a people who knew God but worshiped other gods/things)
2. THE HARLOT IS ATTIRED LIKE THE BABYLONIAN CULT GODDESS ISHTAR, INCLUDING THE GOLDEN CUP
3. THE HARLOT IS BEING PUNISHED FOR HER IMMORALITY
4. THE HARLOT IS 'RIDING' A BEAST – PROBABLY COMING INTO POWER ON A WORLD SYSTEM
5. THE WOMAN IS NOT ONLY A HARLOT BUT THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS

Now, let's review what the woman is riding. Read Revelation 17:3 and describe the beast in as much detail as possible: _____

Continue your reading in Revelation 17:7-13 and write everything else you learn about the beast here: _____

The beast has seven heads which have a two-fold representation: they are seven "oros" which can mean either hill or mountain. They also represent seven kings, five of whom had fallen when John received his revelation, one of whom was in power when John received his revelation, and one of whom was to receive a future kingdom.

Conquerors of Israel:

Egypt	}	These five kingdoms had fallen
Assyria		
Babylon		
Medo-Persia		
Greece		

Rome } This kingdom was in power when John received the revelation

Future kingdom: this kingdom was still future in John's time and is still future now insofar as we can tell

SUMMARY: A BEAST WITH SEVEN HEADS REPRESENTING

1. SEVEN HILLS ON WHICH THE HARLOT SITS AND
2. SEVEN KINGDOMS, ONE STILL FUTURE

Review Revelation 17:11-13 and describe everything you learn about the beast's past here: _____

It is apparent that a person can't be alive on earth, die, and come back – unless of course you are Jesus. So we can pretty much assume that this beast is something more than a person. What sort of being can be on earth, go to the abyss, and then get out and come back to earth? There is only one answer: a demon.

So now we see a beast that was one of the seven kingdoms above (I would say the spiritual empowerment of one of them), who was confined to the abyss, and who has been released from the abyss for this time—this demon forms kingdom together with ten nations as prophesied by Daniel.

Read Daniel 7:7-28 and write what you learn here: _____

Daniel 7:23-24 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.

From Daniel, we learn about the ten nations in league with this demonic being that arises and subdues three of the ten kings leaving seven, with himself being an eighth. We call this demonic "little horn" the antichrist.

Now it is time for serious hermeneutics. Put together everything you have discovered from the prophecies here: _____

We find out more about the antichrist in Revelation 13:1-10. This is generally believed to be a description of a demonically empowered man rising to power as part of a false trinity established by Satan at the end of the age.

Satan establishes himself as a false father

Beast from Revelation 13:1-10 is established by Satan as the antichrist

Beast from Revelation 13:11-18 is established by Satan as the false Holy Spirit

Note the parallel between the antichrist description and the beast that is ridden by the harlot. _____

As you conclude your study for this section, do a word study on "antichrist" and record what you learn here: _____

GOOD THINGS IN THE EMERGING MOVEMENT

As with all movements that have a heretical undertone, there can be lessons that we can learn from observing them at work. A good example might be the Mormon church. Even though their doctrine is clearly in error, I can take their commitment to family values and mission work as a useful learning tool. The emerging church offers us several lessons that, when separated from the wrong doctrines, might be useful.

1. They are networking pros who make the most of finding common ground
2. They look for opportunities to help the less fortunate
3. They are seeking a genuine spiritual experience (albeit often in the wrong ways)
4. They aren't afraid to say what they believe, even when they know people will call them heretics
5. They are extremely missional – they don't believe church consists of sitting in pews
6. They are actively recruiting others to various jobs within the movement

Why would I choose to include these sorts of "good" things about a movement that I obviously consider to be heretical? Because when we understand them, we begin to see how Rob Bell's church could grow from 0 to 10,000 in two years! People in our culture are clearly looking for something, and they are finding it in this movement. What is it that is so attractive?

Hebrews 10:24,25 gives us some valuable information; write it here: _____

Meeting together in small groups is very important because it is there that we get to know each other, pray for one another, and learn to use our gifts to accomplish the kingdom purposes.

Romans 12:14-17 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

Read Isaiah 58:4-12 and record what you learn about God's care for the poor:

Some of the programs being run by emerging churches are very effective at food, clothing, and other resource distribution. Although I would argue that their motive for doing so is wrong, nevertheless their tireless efforts are something that can challenge us all.

Now read Matthew 28: 18-20 and record where we are to do this: _____

In Matthew 5:11-12, Jesus said, "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The emerging church leaders perceive, wrongly, that they are being insulted and bad mouthed by people because of their stand for Jesus. They are willing to take their stand regardless of the consequences.

Many people teaching the truths of God's Word have capitulated under less pressure.

One of the most amazing things about the emerging church leaders is their ability to present their case in logical ways that are very convincing. Many could take a lesson from their ready apologetic.

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-2 _____

15 Warning Signs that the Emergent Church is Emerging into Your Church:

1. Scripture is no longer the ultimate authority as the basis for the Christian Faith.
2. The centrality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is being replaced by humanistic methods promoting Church Growth and a Social Gospel.
3. More and more emphasis is being placed on building the Kingdom of God now and less and less on the Warnings of Scripture about the imminent Return of Jesus Christ and a Coming Judgment in the Future.
4. The Teaching that Jesus Christ will rule and reign in a literal millennial period is considered unbiblical and heretical.
5. The Teaching that the church has taken the place of Israel and Israel has No Prophetic significance is often embraced.
6. The Teaching that the Book of Revelation does not refer to the Future, but instead has been already fulfilled in the past
7. An experiential Mystical form of Christianity begins to be promoted as a method to reach the Postmodern Generation.
8. Ideas are promoted teaching that Christianity needs to be reinvented in order to provide meaning for this generation.
9. The Pastor may implement an idea called "ancient-future" or "vintage Christianity" claiming that in order to take the church forward, we need to go back in church history and find out what experiences were effective to get people to embrace Christianity.
10. While the authority of the Word of God is undermined, images and sensual experiences are promoted as the key to experiencing and knowing God.
11. These experiences include icons, candles, incense, liturgy, labyrinths, prayer stations, contemplative prayer, experiencing the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of the Eucharist.
12. There seems to be a strong emphasis on ecumenism indicating that a bridge is being established that leads in the direction of unity with the Roman Catholic Church.
13. Some evangelical Protestant leaders are saying that the Reformation went too far. They are reexamining the claims of the "church fathers" saying that communion is more than a symbol and that Jesus actually becomes present in the wafer at communion.
14. There will be a growing trend towards an ecumenical unity for the cause of world peace claiming the validity of other religions and that there are many ways to God.
15. Members of Churches who Question or Resist the new changes that the Pastor is implementing are reprimanded and usually asked to leave.

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