

# **‘THE EMERGING CHURCH’: What was/is it?**

Back in 2008 I delivered a talk in the Iron Hall in Belfast (using also **Powerpoint** slides) on the subject of ‘**The Emerging Church**’. By going to this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6agrCueq3Q> you can listen to this talk Whilst the talk is now 6 years old it is still relevant today as many of those mentioned during the talk are still ‘in ministry’ (albeit perhaps now in different locations) and God’s people need to be alerted to what were/are their ‘emerging heresies’.

As you listen to the talk you can also follow along with the **Powerpoint** slides that I used that night as they are reproduced below.

Cecil Andrews – ‘Take Heed’ Ministries – 21 July 2014

**CORRECTION** - After about 26/27 minutes into the audio I quote how Steve Chalke denies ‘Penal Substitution’ and I mention how John MacArthur stated that anyone who thought like that couldn’t be a Christian – in response I inadvertently said “I would find it very difficult to **AGREE** with John MacArthur” – I meant of course to say “I would find it very difficult to **DISAGREE** with John MacArthur”

## **Reading for ‘The Emerging Church’: Luke 18: 1–8**

‘And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; (2) Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: (3) And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. (4) And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; (5) Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. (6) And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. (7) And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? (8) I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.

**Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?’**

**Pastor John MacArthur:**

**This suggests that when He *[Jesus]* returns, the true faith will be comparatively rare**

**Matthew Henry**

**The question implies a strong negation. No, He *[Jesus]* will not *(find faith)*; He Himself foresees it**

**Charles Ryrie – Professor of Systematic Theology – Dallas Theological Seminary**

**This does not augur for improved spiritual conditions in the world before Christ’s return**

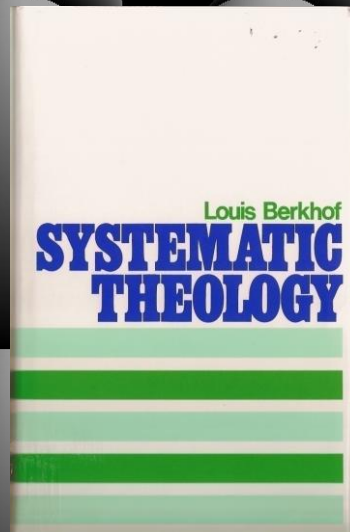
## The 'EMERGING' Church

- ▶ **Question:** Does God tell us what type of Church will 'EMERGE' in the last days?
- ▶ **Answer [1]:** (1 Timothy 4:1) "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from **the faith**"
- ▶ **Answer [2]:** (2 Timothy 4:3-4) "the time will come when they will not endure **sound doctrine** but...shall heap to themselves **teachers**, having itching ears and...shall turn away their ears from **the truth**"
- ▶ **Summary:** '**the faith**' will be abandoned, '**sound doctrine**' will be abhorred, '**ear-tickling teachers**' will be accepted, '**the truth**' will be avoided

## "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17)

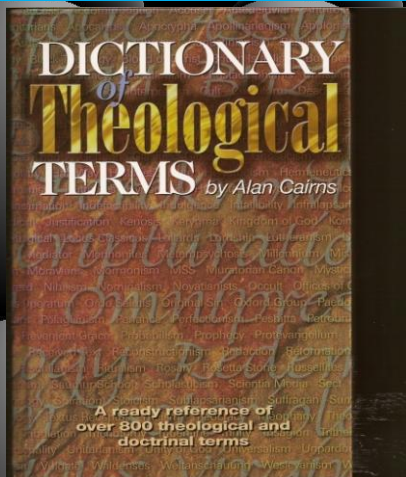
- ▶ There is a 'right way' to study and then to teach God's Word [which contains the faith, sound doctrine, and the truth]
- ▶ **2 Timothy 2:15** "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman...**rightly dividing** the word of truth"
- ▶ VINES Dictionary - "**rightly dividing**" - 'What is intended here is not "dividing" Scripture from Scripture but teaching Scripture accurately'
- ▶ [NASB] "**accurately handling**" - John MacArthur - 'Literally "**cutting it straight**" - a reference to the exactness demanded by such trades as carpentry and masonry...Precision and accuracy are required in biblical interpretation'

“the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17)



- ▶ ‘The work seemed particularly important to me in view of the widespread doctrinal indifference of the present day... and confusion in the minds of many professing Christians... of the insidious errors that are propagated even from the pulpits... If ever there was a time when the Church ought to guard... the deposit of the truth... that time is now’. Louis Berkhof [Circa 1934]

“the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17)



### SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

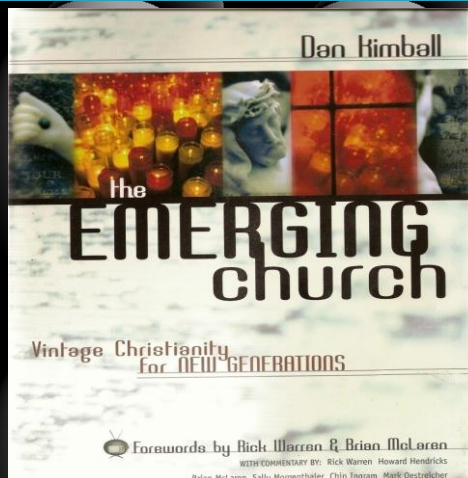
*‘is the systematic statement of doctrinal propositions formulated from the data afforded by God Himself in His own inspired word’.*

Later we’ll see how ‘unsystematic’ the emerging church leaders are in their handling of God’s Word

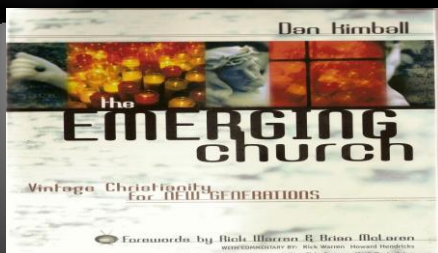
# The 'EMERGING' Church and its origins

Where did the term  
'Emerging Church'  
come from?

I first came across it  
as the title of this  
book



## Quotes from the names that 'emerge'



### [First] Foreword:

'My prayer is that God will use this book to  
raise up a new crop of churches'  
RICK WARREN [p8]

### Acknowledgments:

Dan Kimball wrote under a heading of  
Leadership Network:

'I have been... influenced in my rethinking of  
church and ministry through... thinkers such  
as

BRIAN McLAREN, DOUG PAGITT' [p11]

### [Second] Foreword:

'This book will offer you stimulating  
new ideas and practical  
suggestions to engage our  
emerging culture with the gospel.  
**Our understandings of the gospel  
constantly change** ...no doubt as  
we move into the postmodern  
world we will look back and see  
ways in which **our modern  
understandings of the gospel were  
limited or flawed** and no doubt **we  
must be humble** and careful  
because we can *[and will]* make the  
same mistakes in our new context'

BRIAN McLAREN [pp 9-10]

**Uncertainty about 'the gospel' has  
just been elevated to 'a virtue' by  
BRIAN McLAREN**

[7]



## Excerpts from radio interview between Todd Friel & Doug Pagitt

- ▶ **Todd:** do you think there's an eternal damnation for people who are not Christians?
- ▶ **Doug:** Yeah, well, I think that there's.. I think there's all kinds of ... I mean that, that, damnation would sort of be that.. that there's parts of the uh, life in Creation that seem to be counter to what God is doing and those are the things that are eliminated and removed and done away with. And so I think that's what damnation is, and so there's people who want to live out that kind of uhm, wanna have that good judgment - the judgment of God in their life. I mean you know Judge... Judgment in a biblical fashion meaning that God remakes... that God remakes the world.
- ▶ **Todd:** OK, Doug, hold on Doug.. Doug hold on a second. I have no idea what you just said. Here's what I think Hell is: eternal damnation, God sends lawbreakers to a place where there's weeping, there's gnashing of teeth, a lake of sulphur, the worm never dies, eternal conscious torment. Agree or disagree?
- ▶ **Doug:** Disagree...I have NO idea what you mean uh, with those.. uh. Those sound like .. Those sound much more like metaphors than they do like actuality. But I don't know...
- ▶ **Todd:** Well those are the words that Jesus used to describe Hell.
- ▶ **Doug:** Yes, I know but Jesus [chuckle] ...but Jesus didn't use them in a string like that. So you just pulled a bunch of words from Jesus and strung them together in your own way and then made a....
- ▶ **Todd:** It's called systematic theology, Doug
- ▶ **Doug:** No, it's not called systematic theology. It's called you restating it. [8]

## What are the consequences of 'uncertainty' about 'the gospel' and 'rejection' of 'systematic theology'?

1. **'The faith'** will be abandoned
2. **'Sound doctrine'** will be abhorred
3. **'The truth'** will be avoided
4. And **'Ear-tickling teachers'** will have done this'

### QUESTION

Which **'ear-tickling emergent leaders'** have been to, reside in or have influence in the UK and how have they undermined **'The Faith', 'Sound Doctrine'** and **'The Truth'**?

## ROB BELL – Pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church, Michigan, USA



### Calling all peace makers

Type of event: conference

When: **Tuesday, 12 June 2007** from 20:00 until 22:00

Cost: £8.00

Organised by: **SM** and Zondervan

Venue: **Spire**

Town/City: **Belfast**

Region: **Northern Ireland**

### Description:

**Rob Bell**, presenter of the ground-breaking and award-winning NOOMA films, and author of *Velvet Elvis* and the newly released *Sex God*, **will be touring the UK and Ireland in June and July 2007** with a show called **Calling All Peacemakers**.

**What we need now more than ever is the teachings of Jesus, who pioneered a brilliant way of loving non-violence that truly would make the world a better place, if we have the guts to listen...**

<http://www.ignite.cd/index.cfm?section=home&midsection=26&subsection=&page=event&id=973>

## Quotes by ROB BELL on God's supposed 'plan' and on 'hell'

1. "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." Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), p. 150, see p. 147. [11:1]
2. "**Hell is a way of life** out of sync with how God created us to live" Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), p.147. [11:2]

BRIAN McLAREN – Itinerant lecturer – Former Pastor of  
Cedar Ridge Community Church, Spencerville,  
Maryland, USA



<http://russellmark.blogspot.com/2007/07/summer-madness.html>

Mark Russell's reflections

Mark Russell is the youngest ever *Chief Executive of Church Army*, a leading home mission agency linked to the *Anglican Church*.

Mark Russell. 03 July 2007

Summer Madness

It has been so awesome being over in Northern Ireland for *Summer Madness*. 4000 young people gathered at the Kings Hall in Belfast...I was given the chance to speak on the main stage of Summer Madness. *Brian McLaren was supposed to be the speaker, but he was unable to make it to Belfast*

## Quotes by BRIAN McLAREN on 'hell': Interview with Leif Hansen

McLaren: 'anybody who would sit for five minutes and ponder the reality of hell as it's commonly understood would ... lose their minds... a lot of people who have this – *the fundamentalists are right in their understanding of hell* – as a result they hate God, or they become an atheist. They just say it's better to not believe in God than to have to believe in that kind of God. Or they become a raving fundamentalist who'd be grabbing people on the street and shaking them and saying you better repent...

Hansen: They [fundamentalists] want to know that there's going to be some kind of, so to speak, hell to pay. Some sort of judgment...the problem that you and I both react to is that an infinite amount of punishment for a finite being and a finite amount of sin...*that seems to question God's just and loving nature.*

McLaren: Yeah..that creates a rational problem... Does it make sense for a *good* being to create creatures who will experience infinite torture...It really raises some questions about the *goodness* of God... *John said in 1st John 1:5, God is light and in God there is no darkness at all...* very few of us actually believe that. We all have the suspicion that there is a dark side to God. And that God isn't truly, truly *good*... this is, in large part, why, what is so wonderful and magnetic about Jesus, is that Jesus, I think, reveals to us a God who is all light and there is no darkness at all there. [13]

## Quotes by BRIAN McLAREN on 'homosexuality' and 'original sin'

1. The couple approached me immediately after the service... they had one question... where our church stood on homosexuality...I hesitate in answering "the homosexual question"...*I am a pastor, and pastors have learned from Jesus that there is more to answering a question than being right or even honest: we must also be ... pastoral* [14:1]...Most of the emerging leaders I know share my agony over this question. .. Frankly, many of us don't know what we should think about homosexuality. We've heard all sides, but no position has yet won our confidence... *Perhaps we need a five-year moratorium on making pronouncements.* ...Maybe this moratorium would help us resist the "winds of doctrine" blowing furiously from the left and right, so we can patiently wait for the wind of the Spirit to set our course. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/leaders/newsletter/2006/cln60123.html>
2. "The church latched on to that old doctrine of **original sin** like a dog to a stick, and before you knew it, the whole gospel got twisted around it. Instead of being God's big message of saving love for the whole world, the gospel became a little bit of secret information on how to solve **the pesky legal problem of original sin.**" [14:2] -Brian McLaren, *The Last Word and the Word After That*, ( San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), p.134.

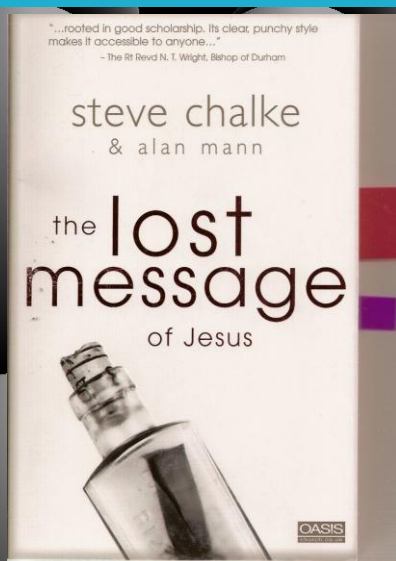
## Quote by BRIAN McLAREN on 'penal substitution'

<http://adrianwarnock.com/2007/07/brian-mclaren-supports-steve-chalke.html> -

'Brian McLaren addresses the cross in his book, *The Story We Find Ourselves In*. His fictional character **Kerry**, who happens to be a seeker, asks how Jesus fits in to God's story. **Carol**, a Christian, answers with a summary of substitutionary atonement... **Kerry** responds: *"For starters, if God wants to forgive us, why doesn't he just do it? How does punishing an innocent person make things better? That just sounds like one more injustice in the cosmic equation. It sounds like divine child abuse."*...As the narrative continues, the legitimacy of the analogy is never refuted, let alone examined or questioned...Taken alone, this is worrisome. Coupled with McLaren's endorsement of Steve Chalke's book, *The Lost Message of Jesus*, this is cause for concern. [*The Jesus introduced by Steve sounds like someone who can truly save us from our trouble*]



## STEVE CHALKE agrees with Brian McLaren on 'penal substitution' & 'original sin': Chalke rewrites 'salvation'



"How then have we come to believe that at the cross this God of love suddenly decides to vent his anger and wrath on his own son? The fact is that **the cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse — a vengeful father punishing his son for an offence he has not even committed**. Understandably, both people inside and outside of the church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith." [p 182] [16:1]

'To see **humanity as inherently evil** and steeped in *original sin* instead of inherently made in God's image and so bathed in *original goodness*, however hidden it may have become, **is a serious mistake**' [p 67] [16:2]

'The lost and revolutionary heart of Jesus' message is... **God accepts us as we are** without judgment or condemnation...In other words, **acceptance precedes repentance — not the other way round**' [p 99] [16:3]

## BRIAN McLAREN commends PETE ROLLINS – leader of local 'emergent group' known as IKON

### Extract from interview with Leif Hansen

I'll tell you another great book... It's by a young Irish theologian... this book is... "**How Not to Speak of God**" ... I was asked to write a foreword for the book... **Pete Rollins** is the author. He is part of a community in Belfast called **IKON** ...it correctly identifies so much of the problem as the way we speak of God...**It gives us permission to doubt the way we speak about God** ...the real God would have to be better than the way we speak about God.

**Sins Of The Father**  
[by Peter Rollins]

On judgement day a summons went forth... the angels gathered up all humanity and brought them to the great white throne of God...a great angel opened the books. **The first to be judged** stood up and approached the text. As **the accused** looked at the charges all humanity spoke as one, **'When we were hungry you gave us nothing to eat. When we were thirsty you gave us nothing to drink. We were strangers and you did not invite us in. We needed clothes and you did not clothe us. We were sick and in prison and you did not look after us'. Silence descended upon all of creation as the people pronounced their judgement on God.**

## ERWIN McMANUS – Pastor of 'MOSAIC' Community in Pasadena



### About Mosaic

We are a community of **followers of Jesus Christ**... The name of our community comes from the diversity of our members and from the symbolism of a broken and fragmented humanity... We welcome people from all walks of life, regardless of where they are in their spiritual journey. Come to Mosaic, and discover how all the pieces can fit together!

## ERWIN McMANUS – Pastor of 'MOSAIC' Community, Pasadena [19:1]

### Mandate 2007

### Guest Speaker:

**Erwin McManus**

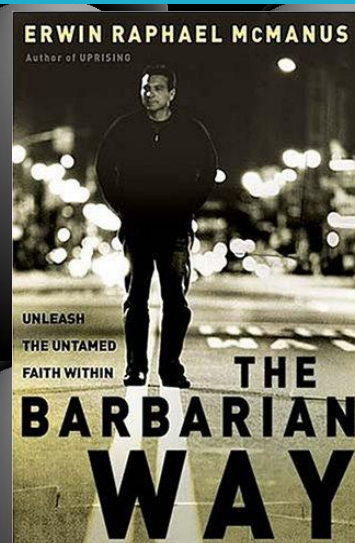
**Worship Leader:**

**Robin Mark**

**Saturday 17th  
November 2007**


**Odyssey Arena,  
Belfast**

**Cost £30 [19:2]**



## Extracts from Gary Gilley's review of 'The Barbarian Way'

'In reality there is not much to analyse here. The book is long on inspiration and virtually non-existent on substance. **It is in essence a 140 page pep rally** ...He is highly critical of any who do not accept his "**barbarian way**" calling them domesticated, civilized Christians (p. 12)... **McManus does not share his views on the gospel, Scripture or any doctrine of importance** ... We are simply to follow Christ (*whatever that might mean*) and live as **savages**... **Rhinos**, he informs us, can run at thirty miles an hour ...a number of rhinos running at full speed is appropriately called **a crash** ...They do not create, they annihilate...Speaking of the mannerisms of rhinos McManus writes, "**That's what happens when we become barbarians** and shake free of domestication and civility. **The church becomes a crash**" (p. 138)'. [21]




**"My goal is to destroy Christianity as a world religion and be a recatalyst for the Movement of Jesus Christ – some people are upset with me because it sounds like I'm anti-Christian. I think they may be right."**

In another review of 'The Barbarian Way' Kevin Reeves wrote –

'McManus tells of being invited to a Christian retreat ... Prior to a tug of war... McManus mentioned that **the ancient Celts fought in the nude**... What he meant, he says, was for the men to cast off all doubts and uncertainties, but **one of the opposite team took him seriously**...by showing up for the competition without his clothing...

**all the other members decided to strip as well**, having chosen "the barbarian way"... **the early Christians avoided athletic spectator sports because wrestling and the like were done in the nude**... In attempting to justify the incident, **McManus quotes from 2nd Samuel 6**, where David danced before the LORD with all his might.

While David certainly took off his fine outer clothing, the Bible says that **as he danced he was wearing a linen ephod**, a garment associated with worship. **What David did can in no way be compared to the disrobing debacle at McManus' retreat setting.**



## 'Emerging Churches' don't have 'Christians' but 'Christ followers'

### MOSAIC

'We are a community of  
**followers of Jesus Christ**'

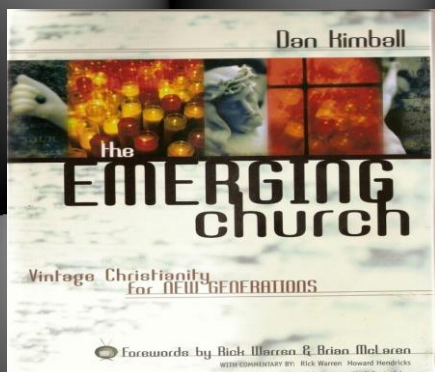
### BRIAN McLAREN

'I don't believe making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many (not all) circumstances to help people become **followers of Jesus** and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu or Jewish contexts'

*[Brian McLaren: 'A Generous Orthodoxy' p260] [22]*

'Men with great zeal and little knowledge are inventing ingenious methods for catching men, but for my part I believe in nothing but letting down the gospel net' [C H Spurgeon]

What are 'Emerging Churches' offering in place of "sound doctrine"? - '**Vintage**' Christianity



- ▶ 'Since emerging generations really want to EXPERIENCE the spiritual shouldn't our worship gatherings provide that for which they crave?...
- ▶ A few years ago...we began our Sunday-night worship gatherings with a vintage-faith approach...
- ▶ A major criticism of the church today is that it is modern...what do emerging generations value? The ancient - the mystery of religious faiths of old...
- ▶ In the emerging church we need to bring back the ancient'

[Dan Kimball: 'The Emerging Church': pp 144-149]



“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers” [Acts 2:42] [24-1]

- ▶ ‘Emerging churches’ supplement these practices with mediaeval/mystical/eastern religious disciplines such as
  - ▶ LABYRINTH prayer walks with ‘prayer stations’ along the way using candles, icons, rocks & running water
  - ▶ DRUMMING circles
  - ▶ STAINED GLASS on screens
  - ▶ CROSSES on walls
- ▶ DARKNESS to induce spirituality
  - ▶ CONTEMPLATIVE silence
  - ▶ MYSTICISM/ LECTIO DIVINA

- ▶ ‘Stimulating images that provide spiritual experiences are an essential element of the emerging church... The early mystics added ideas to Christianity that cannot be found in the Bible...When doctrines of men replace the doctrine of scripture many are led astray *Mark Driscoll explains “All five senses must be engaged to experience God”*’ [24-2] [Roger Oakland: ‘Faith Undone’ pp 65-80]

“For we walk by faith, not by sight”  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:7

**“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”  
[Hebrews 11:1]  
Genuine Christian ‘faith’ does not seek or stand on multi-sensory confirmation**

- ▶ John MacArthur wrote – ‘True faith is not based on empirical [experience-based] evidence but on divine assurance and is a gift of God’ [Ephesians 2:8] [27]

When warning of “false prophets” the Lord said  
“Ye shall know them by their fruits”

[Matthew 7:15-16] [28-1]

‘Mystical and contemplative practices are being promoted by emergent leaders such as **Brian McLaren...Tony Campolo, Richard Foster**, and others. **Publishers like NavPress, InterVarsity, and Zondervan** are flooding the market with books promoting contemplative practices based on Eastern mysticism ...fostering...what is called “spiritual formation” suggesting there are various ways and means to get closer to God. Be they methods derived from Taoism, Hinduism, or Buddhism, any way is acceptable ...**the postmodern** spirituality embraced by many emergents is more syncretistic (merging of religions) than scriptural’ [28-2]

## Paul and ‘Interfaith dialogue’

[29-1]

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness: And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you”

When Paul came to pagan multi-faith Corinth his way of fulfilling the ‘love God and one another’ requirement was very simple

**“I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” [1 st Corinthians 2:2]**

Same approach adopted by Paul on Mars Hill in Athens: Acts 17

**"Now I beseech you brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them"** [Romans 16:17]

**Individuals**

Brian McLaren  
Steve Chalke  
Rob Bell  
Erwin McManus  
Dan Kimball  
Pete Rollins  
Doug Pagitt  
Rick Warren  
Bill Hybels  
Bishop Tom Wright  
Tony Campolo  
Henri Nouwen  
Richard Foster

**Organisations**

Summer Madness  
CIYD  
Evangelical Alliance  
Evangelical Ministries  
Christian Fellowship Church  
IKON  
'Christian' Bookshops  
Purpose-Driven Churches  
Willow Creek Association  
Youth Alive Ireland  
Emerge Leadership  
Spring Harvest  
Calvin Inst. Christian Worship

**"Now I beseech you brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them"** [Romans 16:17]



**Nicky Gumbel**

**CHICAGO CONVERGE**

June 23-24, 2008  
Wheaton College  
501 College Ave.  
Wheaton, IL 60187-5593



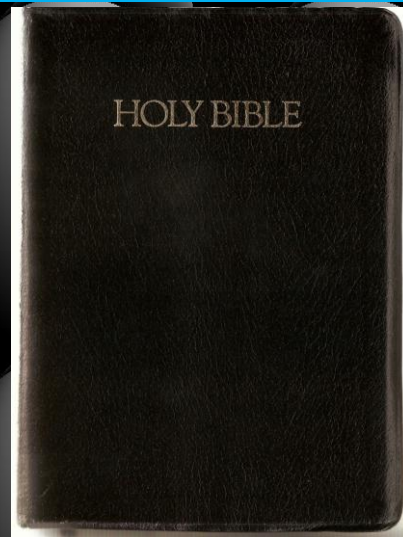
**Dan Kimball**

**Nicky Gumbel** ...joined Holy Trinity Brompton as curate to Sandy Millar in 1986. He took over the running of Holy Trinity Brompton's **Alpha course** in October 1990. The course grew rapidly and attracted wide interest. The first Alpha conference was held at Holy Trinity in May 1993 and in 1996 the Bishop of London appointed Nicky as an 'Alpha Chaplain'. Since that first conference, over 100,000 church leaders have been trained to run Alpha. More than 100,000 church leaders have been trained to run Alpha courses, which are now running in 132 countries.

**Dan Kimball** (MA Western Seminary) is the founding pastor of **Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz, CA**, designed for the emergent post-Christian culture. Dan serves on the emergentYS board and speaks extensively around the country.

An 'EMERGING' Church is pictured in scripture – Let's recap the features

1. 'The faith' will be abandoned
2. 'Sound doctrine' will be abhorred
3. 'The truth' will be avoided
4. 'Ear-tickling teachers' will do this'
5. How?
6. By mishandling and by misrepresenting
7. What?



In the light of what is 'emerging' what should be our inspiration for the future?

**The words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 16:18**

**"I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"**



# **APPENDIX**

**26 July 2014**

In the introduction to my own talk on '**The Emerging Church**' I made reference to a **Q & A session** that **Pastor John MacArthur** had recorded on this subject in the company of **Phil Johnson** who is one of his elders. For further study on this subject you can now listen to what they said by going to this link –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXexjQRIJ9k>