Being Church:

A Wesleyan Perspective from Central Europe on "Emerging Church"

Achim Härtner

> The theology behind the emerging church movement, as well as its practices, radically calls into question many assumptions of the established church. We may not choose to grant the young movement's analyses and assessments on all points, but we will do well to look closely and learn from them.

The Phenomenon of "Emerging Church"

The 20th century's progress-oriented rationalism has given way to a new openness to religion and spirituality; in the central European context, one speaks of the "return of religions" or of a "post-secular society."[1] It is primarily newer religious groups (rather than established churches) that are profiting from the development. One of these—a far-reaching international discussion that has been developing among Christians of different traditions—has been given the catch-all title,

Achim Härtner is E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at the Reutlingen School of Theology, in Reutlingen (Germany).

"Emerging Church." Given its diversity of approach, some representatives prefer to speak of an "Emerging Conversation" or of "Emerging Churches" rather than of one Emerging Movement. Part of the movement has networked and organized internationally under the name "Emergent (Church)," though other parts of the movement have seen this as capitulation.[2]

Even though it is decentralized and heterogeneous, we may legitimately speak of a movement because of its large number of publications as well as its resonance in the wider church world. The theology behind it, as well as its practices, radically calls into question many assumptions of the established church. Solutions are suggested that make Christians in established evangelical churches listen up, not least because these solutions often re-present confidently and dynamically reshaped elements of their own tradition.[3] We may not choose to grant the young movement's analyses and assessments on all points, but we will do well to look closely and learn from them. Just as Paul saw himself in his time as "debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians" (Rom 1:14), we as contemporary Christians are "debtors both to the modern and postmodern generation," and are called to proclaim the gospel in our time (Rom 1:15).

A New Way of Being Church

What are we talking about when we say "Emerging Church"? A typical example may be found in Michael Frost's *Exiles*:

> For example, I remember meeting Shaun Tunstall, from the city of Brisbane on the east coast of Australia, who, in his mid-twenties and living with dyslexia and ADD, finally decided he would stop attending church. He couldn't sit still during church services, and he wasn't wired to take in information from half-hour sermons. He wasn't getting anything out of the meetings, even though he had been attending church weekly since he was

born. Now, flushed with frustration and early adult rebellious energy, he decided to stop going to church. Instead, Shaun decided that he would take his powerboat out on Brisbane's Pine River and go waterskiing on Sunday mornings. He gathered a group of friends, some Christian, some not, and headed off to the river for a relaxing day of waterskiing. But after reversing the trailer down the boat ramp and edging the craft into the water, he became wracked by guilt. It was a beautiful Sunday morning, and every week of his life he had been in church. Now here he was about to go waterskiing. He expected one of God's vengeful lightning bolts to burst from the clear, blue sky and sink his boat at any minute. So, in an attempt to salve his conscience, he grabbed a pocket Bible from his car and announced to his friends that he would like to mark the day by reading a short passage of Scripture. You can imagine his friends' surprise. After reading the shortest psalm he could find, he reflected briefly about the beauty of God's grace and then asked the guys if there was anything he'd like them to pray about. Stunned by these proceedings, his friends, especially the non-Christian ones, eventually offered up needs they had that Shaun could pray about. Then they went waterskiing all day. Next week, twice as many people turned up. Shaun read a brief passage, shared a few thoughts about it, and asked for prayer points. He did this for weeks. The numbers kept increasing, and soon he had a community of over fifty people who would meet by the river, share a short devotion, pray together, and enjoy God's creation. Soon, people started becoming Christians. After a while, they started breaking for lunch at some picnic tables by the Pine River, where they would break bread and drink wine and remember Jesus' sacrificial love. They shared a meal together and took up a collection each week and gave the money to the poor. They took it upon themselves to become the

"chaplains" to the general river community. Now they are known as the people who tow broken-down boats back to the boat ramp. They provide free parts and repairs for other boats that have given up the ghost. They eat together, they serve the poor, they share Jesus with others, they celebrate the Lord's Supper, they serve their general community. And all along Shaun's parents and church friends are hoping that he'll come to his senses and start attending church again!"[4]

Emergence Theory and Emergent Church

The Emerging Church movement builds on emergence theory. The term "emergence"[5] refers, in the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities, to a phenomenon in which the qualities of the whole cannot be explained in terms of its component parts and their qualities. Because the whole is more than the sum of its parts (Aristotle), unexpected and qualitatively new aspects emerge. Emergence phenomena are observable, for example, in chemical reactions. The qualities (aggregate state, molecular weight, stability, etc.) of a newly produced chemical substance can diverge sharply from those of the initial materials, sometimes producing materials with entirely unpredictable consistencies. Animate nature displays emergence phenomena to an even higher degree. Cell clusters join together to produce higher forms of life suited to their various living conditions. In the human brain, millions upon millions of nerve cells are networked together, and therefore capable of accomplishing highly complex functions (such as the coordination of movements and creative thought). The Australian philosopher Samuel Alexander (1856-1938) and the British psychologist Conway Lloyd Morgan (1852-1936) used human consciousness as an example for a jointly developed emergence theory, interpreting this to be a phenomenon that surfaces suddenly in the development of species and cannot be predicted in advance based on our knowledge of the structure of organic material.

German sociologist Niklas Luhmann's (1927-1998) work has served as a foundation for the incorporation of emergence theory into the social sciences. His thought interweaves societal theory, communication theory, and evolutionary theory. According to Luhmann, a system depends upon its boundary to the outside world, which is tenuous: Combining elements from their complex environments into a previously nonexistent identity, complex self-organized (autopoietic) systems form unpredictably and independently in the interplay of their elements.[6] Their flat hierarchy enables quick changes in community formation, which aim to adapt them optimally to their respective conditions. According to Luhmann, the quality of communication between the parties involved is decisive for the success of self-organizing systems.[7]

In both the theories named, one finds resonances of the literature on "Emerging Church." The term was coined in 1970 by Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne,[8] and since the 1990s it has become a kind of standard bearer of longing for new forms in which to express Christian existence.[9] Emerging Church means "Church breaking in" or "Church surfacing," and witnesses to the lasting call to the church of Jesus Christ to develop anew in ever-changing contexts. The emergent community is viewed as a living organism, and the dynamism of growth and change is given precedence over the development of structure. The Emerging Church movement is still in an identity-seeking phase. Interested people from all parts of the world and the church contribute to an interdisciplinary discourse in an open process of innovative self-organization.[10] Fabian Vogt describes it thus: "Its distinguishing characteristic is thousands of Christian men and women who simultaneously contribute their knowledge, experience, longings and ideas to this new process."[11]

The Emerging Church movement began in the English-speaking world (the UK, Australia, USA, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand) as a reaction to societal changes in the western world—changes that are often subsumed under the heading "postmodernism."[12] In this context, postmodernism is usually understood as an ongoing, historic spiritual and cultural epoch that will increasingly overlay and ultimately replace the modern era.[13] The postmodern generation is described as being defined by individualization and pluralization, which are connected with a lived focus on the here and now. Further markers are a willingness to look beyond the rational as well as a radical skepticism regarding overarching models that explain the world (metanarratives).[14] One of the movement's leading thinkers, Brian McLaren, observes, "...if you have a new world, you need a new church. You have a new world."[15]

Various expressions of the Emerging Church share a growing dissatisfaction with the basic assumptions and lived reality of churches in the western world, which are seen as being one-sidedly influenced by Enlightenment modernity. So far, analyses and assessments of this type are made with great confidence, and the established churches are being told that they are stuck in a deep crisis of relevance and credibility. Their conventional offerings, they are told, speak to a tiny fraction of the population; younger generations in particular lack any sense of resonance with their offerings. Even extravagantly arranged alternative "seeker services" for those who are distant from the church are judged to be incapable of reaching the postmodern generation. Churches are losing ground internally as well, because younger Christians particularly are described as feeling caught in a growing chasm between the postmodern culture around them and an outmoded church culture. In *The Shaping of Things to Come*, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch arrive at a sobering, even devastating, assessment of traditional churches and their potential: "We must admit that Christendom, particularly its ecclesiological and its

missiological manifestations, amounts to something of a failed experiment.... The answer to the problem of mission in the West requires something far more than reworking a dated and untenable model. It will require that we adopt something that looks far more like the early church in terms of its self-identity (ecclesiology) and its core task in the world (missiology)."[16]

Against the backdrop of radically deconstructing existing forms of church, many representatives of the Emerging Conversation see themselves as trailblazers for a church of the future. A common impetus is the desire to rediscover Christian faith under the conditions of postmodernism, and to live it authentically. This involves translating the missionary zeal of first-century Christians authentically into the twenty-first century, as well as finding new, appropriate expressions of communally lived faith. The movement's leading thinkers emphasize tirelessly that the success of this enterprise hinges on finding a way to engage constructively and innovatively with postmodern everyday life, as well as with oft-reviled cultural changes.[17] The individualization and pluralization of lived worlds and the competition between claims to truth and meaning in the globalized world must not be seen only as a threat, but must deliberately be seized as opportunities.[18] Frost and Hirsch describe the decisive change in consciousness this way: "What is needed ... is the recognition that people today are searching for relational communities that offer belonging, empowerment, and redemption."[19]

Their words reveal an experience-based orientation toward religious needs, concerned with the pragmatics of ordinary life. In responding to the religious search of the postmodern generation, they claim that it is essential to dissolve strict demarcations between "holy" and "profane," in order to win back the culture-shaping power of the Christian faith in the postmodern world. This requires nothing less than a radical paradigm shift: "Taken as a sociopolitical reality, Christendom has been in decline for the last 250 years, so much so that contemporary

Western culture has been called by many historians (secular and Christian) the *post-Christendom* culture. Society, at least in its overtly non-Christian manifestation, is "over" Christendom.... While in reality we are in a post-Christendom context, the Western church still operates for the most part in a Christendom mode."[20]

In the literature and in Internet forums, it is frequently stressed that the necessary paradigm shift is not a shift to *one* unilateral model for community or church. Instead, the Emerging Conversation seeks to spark earnest questions about God's purposes in each community, each specific context. What is needed is a fundamentally new spiritual orientation, not a ready-made blueprint for the church of the future. Dan Kimball observes: "Instead of one emerging-church model, there are hundreds and thousands of models of emerging church.... There's no one-size-fits-all way of doing things, because you can't box-in the emerging church. It will be made up of large churches, small churches, and home churches, multiracial and intercultural churches, inner-city, rural, and suburban churches.... The emerging church is more of a mindset than a model."[21] Several important characteristics and values of this mindset are important to keep in view.

Theological Foundations and Characteristics of the Emerging Church Movement

A New Radicalism in Devotion to Jesus

Emergent communities strive to live according to Jesus' example. According to Bolger and Gibbs,

> Emerging churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures. This definition encompasses nine practices. Emerging churches (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these three activities, they (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate as

producers, (7) live creatively as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities.[22]

The participation in the kingdom of God, oriented by biblical promise and proclaimed and represented by Jesus, is the movement's theological pivot. God's reconciling and redeeming work is to be present in church communities and their surroundings in a way that can be directly experienced. It is essential to become sensitive to the things God is already doing in the world, and to join actively in this work.[23]

Most emergent churches are theologically evangelical, assuming a literal understanding of Scripture as well as God's shaping of every area of life. These doctrinal convictions are, in practice, highly consequential and binding. Many representatives of the movement demand a new radicalism in Christ-following, an unbridled faith that expresses itself in a life oriented toward mission and founded on an unqualified trust in God. This radical life is presented in the work of "Jesus Freaks"[24] in Europe's metropolitan areas, which is concerned especially with stranded youth, or in different parts of the world in upcoming spiritual communities as the New Monastics.[25] Frost and Hirsch describe this new radicality in paradoxical terms: "While we admit to being unashamedly radical (in the true sense of that word) in our reexamination of *everything* in relation to standard church practice, we are nonetheless quite deeply committed to the historic, orthodox Christian faith."[26]

Thus being postmodern and being bound to tradition, as well as being deconstructive and reconstructive, do not have to be seen as contradictions. Emergent communities search for ways of rediscovering the wide stream of Christian tradition and making it fruitful in fresh new ways. A high level of radical commitment is inseparably bound up in this. In *Radical Outreach*, George Hunter describes what this can look like. The book contains many examples of communities that, in their devotion to Christ and to the people entrusted to them, have been willing to risk everything in order to turn toward the oppressed and live with them as

the Body of Christ.[27] The demand for Christianity and church work to be culturally relevant is continually restated. Evangelism should not be reduced to the offering of personal salvation, but must include the proclamation of God's claim to Lordship over the world. One of the formative personalities in the North American Emerging Church movement, Erwin McManus (MOSAIC/Los Angeles), emphasizes two significant markers of the church of Jesus Christ in *An Unstoppable Force*: its decisiveness and its willingness to change.[28] Early Christians had to respond to diverse cultural challenges. Many New Testament passages make it clear that from the very beginning Christianity had to confront cultural questions (the apostles' council on the question of mission to the Gentiles: the question of handling meat offered to idols, the ordering of worship services, etc.). McManus states:

> Whether a church decides to relocate to an environment in which it can thrive or to adapt to the environment that is emerging around them, change is inevitable. It must not be seen as a necessary evil but a God-given tool. For the first-century church, difficult and challenging environments caused her to thrive. The first-century church erupted out of a context of persecution. The church is designed to thrive on the edge of change and in the center of history. The church was designed to thrive in our radically changing environments.[29]

Rediscovering Jesus Christ's Great Commission

The different expressions of the Emerging Church movement share a common emphasis on moving today's practice of Christ's Great Commission to the center of the holistic orientation for both the individual and the community. Mission is the norm, not the exception, of Christian existence.[30] Emergent communities understand themselves as "missional," which is to say, shaped at the heart of their being, by God's mission. His turning toward us lovingly in Jesus Christ is to be made

known and present to all people. Missional communities invest completely in the work of calling people into discipleship to Christ, integrating them into committed Christian community, and equipping them to serve their neighbors. This is less a question of "missionary" strategies and one-time events, and more a question of continued effort to understand mission and evangelism incarnationally. What a community is and does, not simply what it says, is seen as decisive for the communication of the gospel; and Christ's incarnation is understood as the model. Because God became flesh in Jesus, the missional church must in turn incarnate Christ's love. It deconstructs itself so that it can flow into the broken and abandoned dimensions of society, representing Christ among those who do not yet know him. This incarnational ecclesiology leads to decentralized, minimally hierarchical structures. Home churches and cell groups form the heart of emergent congregations, and the concern for mission is shared among all. Kimball asks: "How do you measure success? Real success is whether or not our worship gatherings and church as a whole are producing disciples— disciples who are loving God more, and loving people more (Matthew 22:37-39).[31] The "body language of the body of Christ" in everyday life carries great weight for the credible proclamation of the gospel.[32] Thus people are to be led to Jesus through friendship and encounter and through direct assistance in life and community, rather than through programmatic emphases like seeker services that are aimed at particular target groups.

Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois (well-known even in the German-speaking world) works on a megachurch, target-group model. At the time of its founding in the 1970s, "Un-churched Harry and Mary" were identified as a typical un-churched man and woman waiting to be won to faith in Christ.[33] To this end, one did surveys and analyses, and adjusted the church's offerings continually on the basis of their results—right up to today. The realm of the

Emerging Church movement works much differently, largely rejecting need-based target group models. Doug Pagitt, leader of Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis, states the motto of his congregation: "No guns, please – this is a target-free zone."[34] Such a formulation remains to some extent an ideal, however, since every congregation implicitly or explicitly attracts certain groups of people, while others still feel unwelcome. The local church that is actually "open for all" remains illusory.

In emergent churches, the primary concern is not winning people for membership in the congregation or church, but integrating them into the larger mission of Jesus Christ. In order to achieve this, the following is unavoidable: the gospel must be contextualized in order to reach postmodern people. McManus emphasizes that a congregation that wants to do evangelism in its cultural surroundings must not only understand and affirm that culture, but must at the same time be actively involved in shaping it. The church must take on the function of an "architect of culture."[35]

McManus has in mind a culture of unfolding life determined by faith, love, and hope wherein the divine potential latent in every person is able to find the fullest possible expression.[36] The Emerging Church does not see itself as primarily required per se to meet the expressed wishes of individuals, religious or otherwise. McManus reminds us that "the phenomenon of church shoppers has profoundly shaped the contemporary church. The entire conversation is not about relevance but convenience. The focus is not on serving the world; the church itself became the focal point.... This move has made pastors the only minister, while making the member the only recipients of ministry. What is lost in this process is an army of healers touching the planet."[37]

Thus, the church must become, in the famous words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a "church for others." As McManus reminds us: "We are the church, here to serve a lost and broken world."[38] Pro-active Christian witness in church and society is intended to change not only individuals

but their surroundings as well. This leads us to the next characteristic: the emphasis on holistic sanctification.

Holistic Sanctification[39]

While traditional congregations revolve largely around *belonging* (membership, ministry, committees, etc.), emergent churches focus on *changed lives* (recognizable Christianity in day-to-day life, a missional presence in society).[40] Methodist theologian Elaine Heath therefore characterizes the Emerging Church movement as a "new holiness movement," and speaks of a new, "mystic–way of evangelism."[41] The conviction that God claims and works in all dimensions of life (body, mind, soul) and in all arenas of life (family, work, recreation, use of property and resources, etc.) is theologically decisive. No separation between "spiritual" and "worldly" expressions of life can be allowed; authenticity and integrity are central values for emergent communities. They are concerned with "a place where we focus on the holistic formation of people in harmony with God in all arenas of life, people who seek to live in the way of Jesus in every relationship, every situation, every moment."[42] Here too society plays an important role: the sanctification of lives has a social as well as an individual dimension. McLaren forcibly makes this point in *The Secret Message of Jesus*,[43] emphasizing the revolutionary side of Jesus of Nazareth and his proclamation of the in-breaking reign of God. In *Everything Must Change*,[44] he goes a step further, taking the world's great challenges into view, and focusing on four main problem areas: the prosperity crisis, the equity crisis, the security crisis and the spirituality crisis.[45] He reflects on these four crises in light of the proclamation of the in-breaking kingdom of heaven, and develops from this angle a kind of new "theology of hope."[46] He rejects individualistic ideas of salvation, as well as the health-and-wealth gospel, as well as a darkly resigned, end-times eschatology. He exposes the dominant Western societal system with its fixation on immediate individual satisfaction as a "suicide machine" (Leonard Sweet),

driven by a "destructive framing story." McLaren demands a radical turning, an "alternative narrative" (N.T. Wright), one that is committed to Jesus' promises about the in-breaking reign of God that brings with it a "revolution of hope." McLaren sees the local church (the beloved community) as the place of paradigmatic life, where others can observe and concretely experience justice, peace, equality, and compassion. This brings us to another feature of the Emerging Church movement – its social location, especially the small group. There is an implicit ecclesiology to be explored behind this understanding.

Christian Life in Networks – "We Are the Church!"

Representatives of the Emerging Church emphasize that while modernism placed the autonomous reason of the individual at the center of attention, the postmodern generation has a new interest in interpersonal relationships and life-giving community.[47] Shaun Thunstall's work in Brisbane makes clear what an essential role interpersonal relationships and the leader's personality played in the young emergent community. In *Planting Missional Churches*, Stetzer advises the church to be "unashamedly spiritual" and to underscore the role of community for spiritual formation and growth: "Community will be a central value in all organizations of the future, whether secular or sacred. This is good news for the church because community is central to its mission. Also, spiritual growth best takes place in community. . . . In spiritual things people long to belong and are hungry for a we-centered approach to growing spiritually rather than a me-centered approach."[48] Karen Ward goes even further, and says, "As we live together in the way of Jesus within community, we see ourselves participating in the very life of God. As God is the source of all relationality, the relationships that are guided by the Spirit in community are reflective of the inner relationship that happens in God, even if reflected 'in a mirror dimly.'"[49]

In Emerging Communities, faith-sharing does not happen in strategically planned evangelistic events, but in day-to-day life together,

between believers and non-believers, in families as well as in neighborhoods and other communal forms of living. This reality is an expression of the basic conviction that what is central to the communication of the gospel today is not the passing on of objective knowledge and teaching, but rather life-changing experience and viable community.[50] The faith spreads like a "contagious health"—as in the saying, "The Christian faith is more caught than taught."

The Emerging Church Movement seeks to find new and fresh meaning in the New Testament image of the church as the "body of Christ."[51] Rick Warren, leader of the Saddleback Valley Community Church in California, writes: "For twenty-five years I've taught pastors that the church is a Body, not a business. It is an organism, not an organization! It is a family to be loved, not a machine to be engineered, and not a company to be managed."[52] The church understood as the body of Christ—moving, breathing, needing rest—is made up of different people, who are dependent on one another at different levels.[53] An organism reacts to its environment and is called healthy when it grows and is capable of adapting to changing conditions. For the Emerging Church, it is not church buildings or events, such as worship services that define church. According to Kimball, the church is those who follow Jesus: "The church is the people of God who gather together with a sense of mission (Act 14:27)."[54] The church community is understood organically, made up of responsible human beings who want to live in relationship to God and to one another. In this organism, all the members are involved in the development of the whole body, with differing functions to be sure, but always with vital significance. In the Emerging Church movement, therefore, existing hierarchies in church leadership are regarded skeptically or rejected, and the demand for a "community from below" is heard.

The necessity of communal leadership is accepted, but a wholesale re-thinking of this leadership is required: "The power of

changing something does not rest with an elected or self-appointed governing body, but only with the body as a whole. Through functional and accepted feedback structures, everyone shares equal rights and involvement. If there were a narrowly defined leadership structure, most of the qualitative markers of emerging church would be lost."[55] The key word "organism," furthermore, points out the way in which church work is oriented toward spiritual gifts. God has entrusted Christians with gifts, which are to be responsibly used. Christians are to serve one another with the gifts God has given them. Emergent communities seek and create opportunities to discover each person's spiritual gifts and to develop them in service toward others. Fabian Vogt describes this vision of church as a community of difference: "Churches of the future will not be narrowly stratified insider clubs, but will grasp the diversity of humans as a gift of God. They will not be primarily marked by the sympathy of common interests, but by real community, which also includes those who stand at the margins. Knowledge, power and expertise will not be attached to single individuals, but will be newly discovered as the strength of all participants."[56]

Darrel Guder points out what the Emerging Church movement sees as the established church's decisive ecclesiological misunderstanding and writes, "Popular grammar captures it well: you 'go to church' much the same way you might go to a store. You 'attend' a church, the way you attend a school or theater. You 'belong to a church,' as you would a service club with its programs and activities."[57] Guder connects this point with Reformation history:

> The churches shaped by the Reformation were left with a view of the church that was not directly intended by the Reformers, but nevertheless resulted from the way that they spoke about the church. Those churches came to conceive themselves as "a place where certain things happen." The Reformers emphasized the "marks of the true

church" at that place where the gospel is rightly preached, the sacraments rightly administered, and (they sometimes added) church discipline exercised.[58]

By contrast, the Emerging Church movement does not see church as an "attractive" location in which religious wares and services are offered and consumed. Instead, the movement emphasizes that the Christian community consists of people whose lives are centered around Jesus Christ, and whose self-understanding is secure—"We are the church!"[59]—as they are sent out into the world. Kimball asserts programmatically that, "A foundational and critical challenge for the emerging church will be teaching people that *they* are the church and that that don't simply attend or go to one."[60]

An essential feature of ecclesiology within the Emerging Conversation is its "catholicity," i.e., faith in the "one holy, universal, and apostolic church." In their own descriptions of themselves, emergent communities in English-speaking areas use words like post-evangelical, post-liberal, post-protestant, post-denominational, and post-confessional.[61] In other words, many Christians today are satisfied to belong to Jesus and to be in a community, without wearing the label of a brand-name church. Doctrinal differences that lead to the splintering of the "body of Christ" in confessions and denominations recede into the background, while life in discipleship to Christ is emphasized as central. It is only in the cooperation of different, newer and older Christian traditions that emergent churches can unfold in fruitful, life-bringing ways.[62] McLaren points the way toward this understanding in *A Generous Orthodoxy.*[63] In terms of its expressions, the church of the future must not fear contact with the wide and varied stream of theological tradition, but must draw creatively from it.[64] He is frequently quoted as saying that "to be a Christian in a generously orthodox way is not to claim to have the truth captured, stuffed, and mounted on the wall. It is rather to be in a loving (ethical) community of people who are seeking the truth (doctrine)

on the road of mission...and who have been launched on the quest by Jesus, who, with us, guides us still."[65] This theological breadth has earned McLaren both affirmation and criticism, which, relative to biblical truth, lead some to accuse him variously of relativism, eclecticism, and treason.

In the Emerging Church, the word "community" is used in place of "congregation."[66] Some authors go a step further and draw on anthropologist Victor Turner, speaking of *communitas* (community transcending boundaries), in order to emphasize that the social embodiment of the Christian faith is essentially unfinished and in need of completion. In emergent communities, small groups are the heart of church life. They form highly committed spiritual and social networks among participants. This principle is most highly developed in what has been called the New Monasticism, which is attracting primarily young people.[67] In England they are called "Boiler Rooms," in Canada "Urban Monasteries," in Sweden "Re:Aktor." German-speaking examples are the Jesus Freaks, ICF/Zürich and KUBIK/Karlsruhe.[68] The "24/7 Prayer" movement centers on prayer with and for one another. It has adopted a Moravian model, and follows the motto: "Pray as though everything depends on God, and live as though everything depends on us."[69] There are new attempts at communal life in the Roman Catholic realm as well.[70] There are decidedly ecumenical communities, such as the Laurentius Convent in Wethen, Germany and the "Ecumenical Forum BRIDGE" in Hamburg, Germany, supported by more than fifteen different congregations.[71]

In many communities, the role played by small groups is greater than that of the joint worship service. In light of calendar conflicts caused by career, family, and diverse interests, small groups are not restricted to meeting in a physical space. Especially in metropolitan areas, there are also virtual meetings by way of electronic media. The World Wide Web's interactive ways of thinking and communicating (Web 2.0) serve as a model for the realization of committed community within

postmodern culture, especially when it is not possible for people to meet in person. The various networks of small groups serve as a hub for people, giving them contact and connection with one another (e.g., worship services and devotionals by audio/video podcast, virtual prayer groups in chat rooms, Internet forums and blogs not constrained by space and time, and contact over e-mail or by text message). MOSAIC in Los Angeles provides an impressive example in its open poetry platform "urbanpoets," where spiritual experiences are shared in poetic form.[72]

The church as a "community of difference" expresses itself in the life of small groups as well as in the worship service, which is often understood as a kind of "marketplace," in which the various small groups meet and orient themselves newly toward God.[73] A final feature of the Emerging Church movement is its understanding of spirituality and worship service, to which we now turn.

Vintage Faith and the Worship Service

The expression "a generous orthodoxy" refers to a reorientation not only of content but also of form. It presents an image of enormous diversity and vitality. What immediately stands out is a re-sacralizing of "post-seeker-sensitive" (Dan Kimball)[74] worship services and community events, which contrast sharply with Willow Creek-style seeker services. This begins with the choice and design of the meeting space. Instead of desacralizing church space in order to give those who are distanced from the church as few thresholds to cross as possible, worship space is consciously a *heteros topos* in the French philosopher Michel Foucault's sense.[75] He speaks of "special, separate" spaces in public life (memorials, cemeteries, museums, churches), which are specifically different from everyday spaces and environments (the working world, domestic world, consumer world).[76]

Locations reserved for communal celebration and prayer are darkened and lit quietly by candles, not unlike the Roman catacombs.[77] Modern sound and light technologies may not be used at all, and if they

are, only in order to enhance concentration and contemplation. In conscious contrast to fast-moving everyday life, external stimuli are reduced. The aim is to slow down participants' sense of time: this is a place in which to take time for God, time for ourselves, time for the community. It is a time to be truly "spiritual," experiencing long-lasting change by the gospel's message. Large, venerable cathedrals take on a new attraction, as do city churches in which "time has accumulated."[78] This sets these spaces apart from other spaces (*heteroi topoi*).

Churches that meet in school buildings, factories, or gyms furnish their rooms in order to achieve a "mute sacralization" (Michel Foucault), which intuitively and deeply speaks to people. Kimball describes the change in approach as follows: "Many of the very things that we removed from our churches because they were stumbling blocks to seekers in previous generations are now the very things that are attractive to emerging generations."[79] It is no longer the band or a glass pulpit that forms the visual center of the postmodern worship service. Instead, it is the cross. Seating arrangements are not modeled after the anonymity of movie theaters, but rather of living rooms, with comfortable seats arranged to invite conversation. All this is motivated by the conviction that people attending worship services should not feel themselves as visitors or audience, but rather as participants. The key word for Emerging Worship is "vintage faith."[80] This means that symbols, pictures, and ordered time are newly prized, and thus traditional spiritual forms such as readings from the Psalms, sustained silence, communal prayer, and frequent celebration of the Eucharist are all experiencing a renaissance.[81]

Postmodern forms of worship have sparked extensive literature. What is often described as the most promising model is referred to as "sensory worship."[82] This is distinguished by open forms of expression, which encourage communication and interaction among all participants by following a nonlinear structure.[83] Kimball consciously avoids speaking

of a "worship service," preferring the term "worship gatherings." He notes, somewhat sarcastically,

> Most people view the weekend worship service as a place where we go to get service done to us by 'getting our tanks filled up' at the service station. In automobile terms, you could say it is our weekly fill-up. . . . [But] it is not about God's service to us. It is purely our offering of service and worship to God, offering our lives, offering our prayers, offering our praise, offering our confessions, offering our finances, offering our service to others in the church body.[84]

Kimball opposes a "flat, two-dimensional" service with sermon and song to a "multidimensional" service with an abundance of expressions, both traditional and new (multimedia, art, storytelling, new liturgical forms, etc.).[85] His contrast is somewhat reductionistic, but the basic difference between the modern and postmodern person is that the former wants to order and systematize things, because he or she processes everything in a logical and linear manner. Therefore, a worship service directed at moderns is indebted to a linear way of thinking: praise, announcements, drama/video clip, sermon, prayer, concluding song, blessing. The whole service is centered around the sermon as a focal point. Kimball's criticism of seeker services in American megachurches is impossible to miss when he describes postmodern people as "...want[ing] to see fluidity and freedom rather than a neatly flowing set program. They want to see the arts and a sense of mystery brought into the worship service, rather than focusing on professionalism and excellence. This will shape how a worship gathering is designed."[86]

According to Kimball, a service directed at postmodern people must "move from a more consumer-oriented, 'sit and watch' event to a more vintage, community oriented participatory gathering which points us toward experiencing God in a transcending way."[87] An "organic"

service design, centered on a scriptural passage that is illuminated from multiple perspectives (through adoration, action, proclamation, film, etc.), is intended to bring this transcendent experience about. Kimball argues that, "God has communicated in a multisensory way and should be worshipped in multisensory ways. In the emerging church, we must revisit a holistic multisensory approach to worship, an approach that is biblical."[88] This also names the goal of the service: "The emerging church must be one hundred percent about worshipping God.... We must worship or we cheat God and those who come to our gatherings."[89] Worship of God is to be continued in everyday life through a life made holy by God, lived in commitment to others (cf. Rom 12:1).

In *Postmodern Pilgrims*,[90] the influential American theologian Leonard Sweet establishes relationships between postmodern everyday culture and the culture of church communities. In *The Gospel According to Starbucks*,[91] he travels a similar path by analyzing culturally relevant aspects of the well-known coffeehouse chain, and reflects upon them with respect to the design of postmodern worship services. In both books, he uses the acronym EPIC, which stands for "E – experiential, P – participatory, I – image-driven and C – connected." Sweet begins by making observations about the consumer world under the rubric, "E – Experiential." Frequently, products are not purchased for their own sake (i.e., usefulness, quality, durability), but rather because they promise experiential value (e.g., improved image, belonging).[92] There are many people today who are no longer interested in consuming "second-hand experiences," but rather want authentic experiences of their own. This is equally true in terms of faith. In order to respond to this need, the service design for people shaped by postmodernism must emphasize experiential reality. This may occur in communal readings of the Psalms, in meditations on passages, in spiritual exercises and rituals. Worship services are not primarily about finding out more about God; they are about having a life-changing encounter with God.

In *Postmodern Pilgrims*, under "P – Participatory," Sweet uses the image of "karaoke culture:" Stop letting the stars sing (representative), and start singing the current hits live to playback music yourself (participatory). In terms of worship services, this requires an important change in roles. People are no longer simply attendees at church services, but rather participants. Someone who is participating in the worship service must be able to finish the sentences of faith, hold the microphone, and make something new. Further possibilities for active involvement are candle-lighting, new Eucharistic forms, the sharing of experiences at table groups, writing out prayers, practicing a liturgical dance, painting a picture, and much more.

We also encounter "I – image-driven." The postmodern generation has, according to Sweet, grown accustomed to absorbing information primarily through pictures and images, which represent certain contents. Thus, for example, in instruction manuals for electronic equipment, there is less and less written language; all the essentials are communicated through images. This is why visual elements like computer presentations, paintings and sculptures play an important role in the worship services of Emerging Churches, as does the overall design of the space. Sweet demands a visual language in liturgy and proclamation that touches people's hearts, along with powerfully expressive images of faith (icons of identity), which represent the big picture of Christian faith in visual form and point beyond themselves to God.

"C – connected:" According to Sweet, we live in a "culture of bad connections."[93] On the one hand, the phrase points out that defining interpersonal social structures like families, neighborhoods, and groups of colleagues is no longer dependable because these institutions themselves are in a state of flux. Even in these locations many people experience themselves as isolated—from God, from themselves, from others, from creation. On the other hand, the phrase emphasizes that we are exposed on a daily basis to negative influences that damage spiritual growth and

moral integrity. Worship services therefore serve to build up a "culture of good connections," again in this double sense. On the interpersonal level, worship services should awaken the sense of a spiritual home that connects individuals: "This speaks to me. I feel understood and accepted here. I want to belong here." The phrase, "belonging comes before believing," will be true for many people in the postmodern generation. Sweet emphasizes that Christian community (*koinonia*) cannot be reduced to bonding between like-minded people, but must aim to build bridges among people who are different.[94] When it comes to spiritual content, the word "nurture" is especially important to Sweet. People are to be given something that strengthens and builds them up, that heals wounds and awakens hope for themselves and for others. They are not only to be connected among themselves, but also with God, who says in Christ, "No longer do I call you servants . . . but I have called you friends" (Jn 15:15).[95]

Concluding Acknowledgements and Perspectives: "Test everything; hold fast what is good" (1 Thess 5:21)

In light of the multiplicity of new books and articles on the topic, it is easy to overestimate the influence of the emerging church movement. Some critics even refer to the Emerging Church movement as the most overestimated movement in church history. Those who speak to people from emergent communities and inform themselves through books and electronic media about the movement's concerns will be critically challenged; but more than that, they will also be encouraged. Against the backdrop of widespread pessimism about current developments in church and society, the Emerging Conversation's optimism, excitement and "shamelessness" in thought and deed are refreshing and stimulating. Since the young movement is in the process of discovering and differentiating itself, it is hardly surprising that its criticism of existing realities is often harsh, while solutions are proposed with great confidence.[96] In most cases, the things that define newly formed, emergent churches cannot be directly transferred to traditional

congregations, whose founding is a century or more in the past. And much of the theological statements and lived practices will cause legitimate concerns among professional theologians. At the same time, we must keep theology's original role in view—to critically accompany the work of the church in the present, and to renew it constructively for the future.

For most of us who make our Christian home in established Protestant churches, we encounter much in the Emerging Church movement that ought to be heartily welcomed and (in a teachable spirit) developed further, taking the generous grace of God which precedes all human effort as a point of departure and emphasizing spiritual community and the lived "priesthood of all believers." We ought similarly to welcome the understanding of the worship service as the location of true worship and adoration of God, as well as of interpersonal relationship. We ought to welcome the incorporation of the arts in light of a predominant Protestant "fixation on the Word." And we ought to welcome the flexibility and openness to change displayed in invitational church structures.[97]

Two other points deserve further exploration: First of all, the Emerging Conversation unmistakably reminds us how central it is that Christ sent the church into the world.[98] Emergent communities take this sending seriously, putting it into action creatively and experimentally, and willingly learning from mistakes. A key question is in order here: What is the "inner mindset" (Dan Kimball) in our traditional churches when it comes to winning people (out of deepest conviction) for discipleship to Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God? And secondly, Emerging communities consistently orient themselves toward a holistic life of sanctification. This is reminiscent of the historic holiness movement and the denominations that grew out of it.[99] The aim of increasing holiness in life (1 Pet. 3:15) is at the very center, modeled after Jesus as the true "image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:5). And the holiness of personal lives is

indissolubly bound up with the social holiness of life in both church and society as a whole.[100] Wesleyan Christians will hear echoes of the original concerns voiced by the founders of their movement and contemporary church: "To reform the nation, especially the church, and to spread scriptural holiness across the lands."[101] But they will also think critically about John Wesley's optimism of grace, perhaps especially his overestimating the potential for Christian perfection in this life.[102]

Nonetheless, we must remember that it is both legitimate and encouraging that people (inside and outside the church) are connecting concrete expectations for their lives with God and the earthly body of human believers. Anyone who seeks help in life and consolation in death from the God of the Bible ought not, in our churches and communities, to have come to the wrong address. Nonetheless, a heaven on earth is something we cannot and indeed must not proffer in our churches.[103]

The claim that theology and proclamation must be applicable to lived reality is an indisputable part of both our biblical, evangelical legacy. Particularly young congregations in established denominations remind us of the truth that the Christian faith seeks to function in individual lives as a concretely freeing, gladdening message. Furthermore, it seeks to work its way into society, shaping and building up, being, in Doug Pagitt's words, a "useful faith."[104] But to prevent a functionalist misunderstanding when we talk about a useful faith, we must continually refer to the central eschatological focus: the kingdom of God, begun in biblical times, still growing today, and waiting for completion. And even an analysis of the Emerging Church movement that is open and willing to learn leaves urgent theological questions unanswered.

Two representative points merit consideration. First, the foundational significance of religious experience was mentioned above in connection with worship services. But what is the role of theology as methodical, disciplined thinking about faith (particularly exegesis and systematic theology)? Emergent churches will doubtless reach people

who are responsive to experiential, affective approaches. But will this always be enough for them, and what about more cognitively oriented people, who, in Karl-Josef Kuschel's words, have "an appetite for knowledge"[105]—people who, in light of the religious pluralism of our times, are seeking objective truth?

And second, the term "leading as a body" is a central one for the Emerging Conversation where teaching and church leadership are concerned.[106] But what is to prevent this from becoming a kind of "consensus theology" that is defined by the lowest common denominator and is, therefore, of questionable truth value? The one-sided emphasis on "the way of Jesus" (Brian McLaren) leaves open the questions of soteriology and Christology, which are central for evangelical theology and ministry. As far as ecclesiology is concerned, the established church will find significant theological and practical difficulties with the young movement. Here it is important to distinguish between "fresh expressions" within existing churches and radically new emergent communities.[107] While the former attempt to stay "compatible" with the church of origin as they develop new forms of expression, Emerging Churches intentionally strike out in new directions. Seen as a whole, one has the impression that each community needs and ought to find its own style. But where are the overarching criteria for Christian existence, i.e., lasting measures that outlast constant change? Does the diversification in community forms brought about by the constant establishment of new expressions of church not lead to an unconscionable fragmentation of the body of Christ? How can historic Christianity remain accountable as a conversation partner and recognizable as a unity in societal discourse? These and other questions form the backdrop for growing criticism of the Emerging Church movement (particularly the network called "Emergent"). These critical questions are crucial from the perspective of the institutional church, and they may not be easily discounted.[108]

When the Protestant theologian Jürgen Moltmann was writing around the turn of the millennium, he can hardly have had in mind a debate with the Emerging Church movement. But what he says helps point the direction which church work, regardless of tradition, will need to take on in the 21st century:

> Both in the State Church and the Free Church, we will find an independent church, and the building of the church from below. In order to succeed at this, however, churches will have to know and formulate and plan what it is they actually want. Worship services and church events planned in ignorance of what people want are a thing of the past. Each church must commit to lead as many people as possible to a living faith in Jesus Christ, must pray for this and do everything with this goal in mind. Self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction are no longer part of the church. Each congregation collects and shapes human communities in home groups and action groups. The church of Christ, made up of many different communities, advertises not itself but the Kingdom of God and his justice, and already experiences in its expectancy "the powers of the coming age" (Heb 5:6), the energies of the Spirit."[109]

Moltmann reminds us that being the church is ultimately about being a part of the Kingdom of God, which Jesus Christ announced with eschatological authority. In the Great Commission he assigns the disciples of all times and nations to join God's eternal mission, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is this missional God who has a church in the world, commissioned to bear witness to his transforming love throughout the whole creation. This given mission should shape[110] the church's spirituality and identity, its practice and outreach—whether it is a traditional or emerging community of faith. Expectantly seeking to keep track of God's dynamic and multiform missional work is and will be decisive for faithfully and fruitfully being church in a rapidly changing culture.[111]

[1] Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Glauben und Wissen* [Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels, 2001] (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2002); Friedrich Schweitzer, "Evangelische Bildungsverantwortung in postsäkularer Zeit" in Holger Eschmann and Achim Härtner, eds., *Glaube bildet. Bildung als Thema von Theologie und Kirche* (Göttingen: Ruprecht, 2010), 34ff.

[2] Cf. www.emergentvillage.com and www.emergent-deutschland.de. In English usage, "emergent" refers to an organized association of emergent communities, while "emerging" refers to the full breadth of the movement.

[3] Cf. http://www.nph.com/nphweb/html/pmol/emerging.htm.for Henry Knight III's instructive essay, "John Wesley and the Emerging Church."

[4] Michael Frost, *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture* (Sydney: Hendrickson, 2007), 131ff.

[5] Latin: *emergere* – emerge, appear, issue.

[6] Cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme. Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp), 1984.

[7] "A social system forms when a network of autopoietic communication defines itself against its environment by restricting the suitable means of communication. Thus, social systems consist neither of people nor of actions, but rather of communications." Niklas Luhmann, *Ökologische Kommunikation: Kann die moderne Gesellschaft sich auf ökologische Gefährdungen einstellen?* 5th edn.(Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 2008), 269. 1st. Edn., 1986.

[8] Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne, *The Emerging Church* (London: Word Books 1970).

[9] In Great Britain one speaks of "fresh expressions of church," and varied offerings within a congregation that are not in competition are termed "mixed economy of church."

[10] Cf. Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2008).

[11] Fabian Vogt, *Das 1x1 der Emerging Church* (Glashütten: C&P 2006), 1.2. [Vogt's pagination is by chapter and page, since each chapter begins renumbering. So, the references are to chapter.page: chapter1, page 2.]

[12] Cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *Das postmoderne Wissen. Ein Bericht*, 3rd. Edn. (Wien: Passagen Verlag), 1994; Wolfgang Welsch, *Unsere postmoderne Moderne*. 7th edn. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008), 1-43.

[13] Cf. Fabian Vogt, *Das 1x1 der Emerging Church*, 2.1f.

[14] According to Jean-François Lyotard, modernism is characterized by the "rule of metanarratives, ... each providing a guiding principle that gathers all the efforts at knowing and the life practices of a given time, and directs tem toward a common goal." Welsch, *Unsere postmoderne Moderne*, 12. Postmodern, by contrast, stands for the end of metanarratives.

[15] Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 11. Also, McLaren's blog at http:// www.brianmclaren.net/.

[16] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things To Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century* (Hendrickson: Peabody, MA, 2003), 15.

[17] Cf. Leonard Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the Twenty-first Century World* (Nashville: Broadman, 2000); and *Aqua Church 2.0. Piloting Today's Church in Today's Fluid Culture* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2008).

[18] Cf. Achim Härtner, "Megatrends that Challenge an Evangelizing Church" in W. Stephen Gunter and Elaine Robinson, eds., *Considering the Great Commission. Evangelism and Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 71-93.

[19] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, p. 28.

[20] Ibid., 9.

[21] Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity For New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2003), 14.

[22] This programmatic definition stems from Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger in *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2005), 44-45.

[23] Cf. Leonard Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening to the God Who's Already There* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook 2010).

[24] Cf. Klaus Farin, Conny Agel and Anna Busch: *Freaks für Jesus. Die etwas anderen Christen*, (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen), 2005. Also see http://jesusfreaks.com/content/about-jesus-freaks-eng, accessed February 17th 2011.

[25] Cf. John R. Wilson: *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World: From Macintyre's After Virtue to a New Monasticism* (Eugene/OR: Wipf&Stock, 2010); and John Michael Talbot: *The Universal Monk: The Way of the New Monastics*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011).

[26] Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, p. ix.

[27] George W. Hunter III: *Radical outreach: The Recovery of Apostolic Ministry and Mission* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003).

[28] Erwin R. McManus, *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind* (Loveland: Group Publishing, 2001).

[29] Ibid., 17.

[30] Cf. Achim Härtner, "Which Shape Should Evangelism and Mission Take in Our Multicultural and Pluralistic World?" in *Quarterly Review* (Fall 2002), 411-417.

[31] Dan Kimball, *Emerging Worship. Creating Worship Gatherings for a New Generation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 60-61.

[32] William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).

[33] Cf. Paul Braoudakis, ed., *Das Willow-Creek-Handbuch* (Asslar: C&P, 1998).

[34] Doug Pagitt, *Church Re-imagined. The Spiritual Formation of People in Communities of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 42ff; and www.dougpagitt.com.

[35] Erwin R. McManus, *An Unstoppable Force,* 112ff. and 132ff.

[36] Cf. http://erwinmcmanus.com/bio.

[37] Erwin R. McManus, *An Unstoppable Force,* 29-30.

[38] Ibid., 30.

[39] Cf. John Riches, "Heiligung" in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1985), 14:718-737.

[40] Cf. Thomas G. Bandy, *Moving Off the Map. A Field Guide to Changing the Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 96ff.

[41] Cf. Elaine Heath, "The Emerging Holiness Movement" in *Quarterly Review* (Summer 2005): 117-125, (http://www.quarterlyreview.org/pdfs/VOL25NO2SUMMER2005.pdf); and her monograph *The Mystic Way of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

[42] Doug Pagitt, *Church Re-Imagined,* 19-21. Also see: http://www.solomonsporch.com/.

[43] Brian McLaren, *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth That Could Change Everything* (Nashville: Nelson/Word Publishing, 2007).

[44] Brian McLaren, *Everything Must Change: When the World's Biggest Problems and Jesus' Good News Collide* (Nashville: Nelson/Word Publishing, 2009).

[45] Ibid., 5ff.

[46] Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (New York: HarperCollins), 1967.

[47] Cf. Fabian Vogt, *Das 1x1 der Emerging Church* (Glashütten: C&P, 2006), ch.4, p.6.

[48] Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 141-142.

[49] Karen Ward, "The Emerging Church and Communal Theology", in Robert Webber et al., eds. *Listening To the Beliefs of Emerging Churches—Five Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2007), 175.

[50] Cf. Doug Pagitt, *Re-Imagining Spiritual Formation: A Week in the Life of an Experimental Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 26f.

[51] Rom. 12 and 1 Cor. 12.

[52] Erwin R. McManus, *An Unstoppable Force,* 6-7.

[53] Fabian Vogt, *Das 1x1 der Emerging Church,* ch. 2, p. 3.

54 Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, loc. cit., 91.

55 Fabian Vogt, *Das 1x1 der Emerging Church*, ch. 3, p. 5.

56 Ibid., ch. 3, p. 4. MOSAIC in Los Angeles serves as an illustration: "We are a community of followers of Jesus Christ, committed to live by faith, to be known by love, and to be a voice of hope. The name of our community comes from the diversity of our members and from the symbolism of a broken and fragmented humanity which can become a work of beauty under the artful hands of God. 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!" Cf. www.mosaic.org.

57 Darell Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1998), 79-80.

58 Ibid.

59 Dan Kimball: *The Emerging Church*, loc. cit., 91.

60 Ibid., 94.

61 Cf. Doug Pagitt, *Church Re-imagined*, 45.

62 Cf. Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006). Hirsch identifies ten different traditions that he sees as supporting his understanding of Emerging Church, esp. 269-70.

63 The expression "generous orthodoxy" was coined by Hans Frei in "Response to 'Narrative Theology': An Evangelical Appraisal." Cf. *Trinity Journal* 8 (Spring 1987): 21-24.

64 McLaren takes his own instruction to heart in the title: *A Generous Orthodoxy – Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-Yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished CHRISTIAN* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

65 Ibid., 293.

66 See the glossary in Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 277.

67 Graham Cray, Ian Mobsby and Aaron Kennendy, *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: New Monasticism as Fresh Expressions of Church* (Norfolk/U.K.: Canterbury Press, 2010); and Elaine Heath, Scott T. Kisker and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove: *Longing For Spring: An New Vision for Wesleyan Community* (Eugene, OR: Wipf&Stock, 2010).

68 Cf. David Schäfer, ed., *Die jungen Wilden. Storys über Jugendkirchen, Emerging Churches und Gemeindegründer* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 2006), 49-97; also, Hans Hobelsberger et al., eds., *Experiment Jugendkirche. Event und Spiritualität.* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 2003).

69 Pete Greig and Dave Roberts, *Red Moon Rising. How 24-7-Prayer is Awakening a Generation.* (Lake Mary, FL: Relevant Media, 2003). Cf. www.24-7prayer.us/

70 Cf. *Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz (Ed.): Leidenschaft für Christus – Leidenschaft für die Menschen. Ordensleben am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn: DBK, 2006).

71 http://www.oekumenisches-forum-hafencity.de.

72 See http://urbanpoets.org/. Here too there are corresponding small groups, called "poetry teams."

73 See the example of the Zürich community "X-Stream" with their worship service, called "Sunday-Plaza." A Podcast by Sandra Bils illustrates the approach: http://emergent-deutschland.de/2008/10/14/hoeren-23-gottesdienst-als-marktplatz-sandra-bils/.

74 Cf. Mark Liederbach and Alvin L. Reid: *The Convergent Church: Missional Worshippers in an Emerging Culture*, (Grand Rapids: Kregels Publications, 2009), 243.

75 Greek: *heteros topos* = other space. Cf. Michel Foucault, *"Andere Räume"* in: Martin Wentz (Ed.), *Stadt-Räume* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), 65-72.

76 Ibid.

77 Cf. Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, chapter 13.

78 Inken Mädler: *Räume im Raum. Einsichten in private Heterotopien*, in: Pastoraltheologie (2006), 10: 403.

79 Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 26. [Page reference is to German edition.]

80 Cf. www.vintagefaith.com.

81 Brian McLaren, *Finding Our Way Again. The Return of the Ancient Practices* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008); Dan Kimball, *Emerging Church*, 95ff.

82 William Easum and Thomas G. Bandy, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods* (Nashville: Abingdon 1997). Cf. page 73, for a table comparing "Traditional," "Praise" and "Sensory."

83 Cf. Dan Kimball, *Emerging Church*, chapter 11.

84 Dan Kimball, *Emerging Worship*, 2-3.

85 Dan Kimball, *Emerging Church*, chapter 11. [Specific page references that follow are from the German edition.]

86 Ibid., 121.

87 Ibid., 123.

88 Ibid., 129.

89 Ibid., 147.

90 Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims.*

91 Leonard Sweet, *The Gospel According to Starbucks. Living with a Grande Passion*, (Colorado Springs, CO), 2007.

92 Cf. Gerhard Schulze, *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft. Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart.* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus 1992/2005), pp. 33-54.

93 Leonard Sweet, *The Gospel According to Starbucks*, 144.

94 Ibid., 153. The distinction between "groups that are bonding" and "groups that are bridging" originates with Ross Gittell and Avis Vidal, and was popularized through the sociological work of Robert Putnam.

95 Ibid., 149.

96 It almost sounds like self-immunization against criticism when Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger say, "This is a fragile movement that can be marginalized by denominational leaders and killed with criticism by theological power brokers." Cf. *Emerging Churches*, 29.

97 Cf. Achim Härtner and Holger Eschmann, "Aspekte und Perspektiven des Gemeindeaufbaus aus freikirchlicher Perspektive" in Holger Eschmann, Jürgen Moltmann und Ulrike Schuler. *Freikirche – Landeskirche. Historische Alternative – Gemeinsame Zukunft?*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2008), 81–97.

98 One of the best explanations on this issue is provided by Alan J. Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church. What It Is, Why It Matters, How To Become One.* (Grand Rapids: Baker 2009).

99 Cf. *Quarterly Review* (Summer 2005) on "Holiness." Cf. http://www.quarterlyreview.org/pdfs/VOL25NO2SUMMER2005.pdf.

100 Cf. Lothar Elsner and Ulrich Jahreiß, eds., *Das Soziale Bekenntnis der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche. Geschichte – aktuelle Bedeutung – Impulse für die Gemeinde.* (Göttingen: Ruprecht, 2008), 17ff. and 62ff.

101 John Wesley, "Minutes of Several Conversations" Q.3, *in The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson (Grand
Rapids: Baker, 1978), 8: 299.

102 Regarding Christian perfection see John Wesley's sermons, Nr. 40 ("Christian Perfection") and Nr. 76 ("On Perfection"). In general see Michel Weyer, *Heiligungsbewegung und Methodismus im deutschen Sprachraum.* (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1991), and Elaine Heath, "The Emerging Holiness Movement" in *Quarterly* Review (Summer, 2005): 1ff.

103 Cf. Reiner Knieling, *Plädoyer für unvollkommene Gemeinden. Heilsame Impulse.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2008), 6f., 35ff., and 69ff.

104 Doug Pagitt, *Church Re-Imagined*, 55.

105 Cf. Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Lust an der Erkenntnis. Die Theologie des 20. Jahrhunderts. Ein Lesebuch* (München: Piper 1994).

106 Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, 293; note 65.

107 The movement's homeland, Great Britain, serves to illustrate both varieties.

[108] Cf. Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck, *Why We're Not Emergent (By Two Guys Who Should Be)* (Chicago: Moody Publishers 2008); and Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck, *"Why We Love the Church: In Praise of Institutions and Organized Religion* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009).

[109] Quoted from the joint European issue of the German-language church magazines of the Protestant Methodist Church, "unterwegs", "kirche+welt" and "methodist" (Vol. 1/1999): 7.

[110] Cf. The Archbishop's Council, *Mission Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context,* (London: Church House Publishing, 2nd Ed. 2009). John Hull: *Mission Shaped Church: A Theological Response,* (London: SCM Press, 2006).

[111] Cf. Achim Härtner, *"Gottes Wirken auf der Spur bleiben. Perspektiven für Mission und Evangelisation im deutschsprachigen Methodismus,"* in *Theologie für die Praxis* (2010), 36:92-114.