

Origin of the Emergent Church & the Church Growth Movement

Fighting for The Faith radio program – Chris Rosebrough

An Interview with Emergent leader – Doug Pagette

Outline by Dick Pence

Introduction: The Emergent church is not an organized group waiting with a game plan to take over the church. On the other hand, Postmodernism is not dead nor is the Emerging Church. Doug Pagitte is clearly one of the initial leaders of this movement. He is a credible source for us understanding why this movement is the problem it is. We want to discover the key assumption in this movement that drives them in the direction they are going. This will help us also understand the greater seeker driven, Purpose driven movements as well.

- I. Time Travel – how the Emergent movement got started. Leadership Network and Bob Buford.
 - A. Buford is the funder and originator of Leadership Network (LN), a **pyre** learning network for innovative and creative church leaders. To learn business practices and best practices of non-profit organizations.
 1. Bob and Peter Drucker were personal friends. Drucker is a management expert who encouraged Bob to invest his wealth in supporting churches
 2. The concern was that the most group with the most potential that was underfunded were the Mega Churches in suburban areas.
 - B. These men were instrumental in helping develop – not the churches – but the Willow Creek Association and the Purpose Driven Association.
 1. They were not supposed to be interested in theological issues but in best practices says Doug.
 2. They were not interested in being the dispensers of practices – the teachers – but those who pointed towards those who are leaders. To point towards those who were emerging towards new practices. Be the advanced scouts.
 - C. Innovative leaders respond to those they see as innovators also, not to the crowd. So, connecting these people was part of LN's purpose.
 - D. In the early 90's people began to recognize sociographic, generational distinctions – the wars, latch key, raise of divorce – all these things matter.
 - E. Religious practitioners began to say this is going to make a difference in what kinds of spirituality connects with these people.
 1. Campus evangelism groups noticed that kids on campus were different than earlier generations.
 2. Philosophers defined them as the first Postmodern generation.
 - F. LN responded by asking how they could bring together the best innovators in Postmodern, Gen X ministry. The underlying assumption is that the culture your speaking to matters when you design evangelism. **“You have to use a language set, the values, tools, and the esthetics that connect with that culture.”**

- G. Christ then asks what is Christian theology going to look like in this culture?
1. Doug was a part of a group of innovative youth ministry people, they used to meet at Glen Eyrie conference center.
- H. In 1996, there was a shift and they did not just do invitations but opened up to anyone interested. **Hundreds came and this was the explosion. These rejected the idea that it was just adolescent conditions, or what theology says it better, this is generational.** This started a sense of community.
1. Out of this meeting came a staff hired to create this network. Doug was hired to create what was referred to internally as **The Young Leaders Network**. This was just the youngest of several networks under the umbrella of LN.
 2. Doug began to look for those young innovators by moving around and looking not by advertizing but sort of in a closed system. Moved to Dallas and just met people.
 3. He hand picked those that became the leaders of the Emerging Church and the Seeker Driven Movement. Tony Jones, Dan Kimball, Mark Driscall, Rob Bell, Andy Stanley - getting them so they could collaborate together.
 4. As he moved, being a part of LN was a point of recognition for many. People knew that Willow, Saddleback, Buford, and Drucker were behind him and recognized as people to listen to.
 5. This became a learning network that was respected.
- I. 1997 Gen X 2.0 at Mount Herman Center- follow-up conference and after this the network began to jell.
1. After this, the generational stuff is important but it does not say enough.
 2. Jimmy Long of Intervarsity – you see the wave, the cultural thing but the real power is the cultural force.
 3. This turned the conversation from Generational Demographics to Postmodern Psycho Graphic. This brought the conversation from private to public about Post modernity.
- J. 1998, Gloryetta Conference Center in Santa Fee, NM - **National Reevaluation Forum**. This was the real jelling of practitioners.
1. Brian McLaren was brought in as a key thought leader and speaker at this forum - was attracted by Brian’s book about re-inventing your church. Lenard Sweet, Stan Grens,
 2. A rule was that if you were born before a given date of about 1968-70, then you had to come with someone who was born after that to be your translator. **[This says volumes about who they thought had the wisdom to make future decisions]**
 3. All kinds of churches were being formed and churches within churches or alternative worship services.
 4. This was to produce new expressions of churches. Church Planting became the crown jewel of this movement as the Mega

Church was of earlier generations. Great preference was given to church planters in Young Network.

5. LN was not interested in micro managing these networks, they wanted to help them get started and launch out on their own.
6. 1999-2000 structured around regional events.

K. Friends for Ever – Agreed to speak well of each other and not be writing books about this until the time was right. **[There is an un-intentional elitism involved here without a doubt] There was also a secretness to this.**

1. There was not agreement on weather just structure was to change and also content.
2. Money started to float around, publishers wanted to host conferences etc.
3. **They thought they could figure out what kind of information could thrive inside of the Postmodern environment.**

L. Started Solemn's veranda to become a practitioner.

1. During this time LN helped Young Leaders become their own network outside of LN funding etc.

M. The bridge between Young Leaders and what became Emergent Village like a growing new thing, this is not a place. The name Terra Nova was a temporary name. This was to be a thought leader network.

N. They see this like an emerging plant that grows up with the existing institutions without being in competition. [This ignores the negative language used about the Church]

O. [They deny power and intent to dominate but that completely ignores the Purpose Driven Druckerites and New World Order agendas of many of their fellows.]