

Exploring the Emergent church

Books in the [November 30, 2004](#) issue

Books

A New Kind of Christian, by Brian McLaren (Jossey-Bass)

McLaren is pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church near Washington, D.C., and one of the leading thinkers in the emerging-church conversation. This book is a reflection in the form of a story, focusing on a dialogue between a struggling pastor and his daughter's high school science teacher. It is the first installment of a trilogy, continued in *The Story We Find Ourselves In* and a volume slated for 2005.

More Ready Than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix, by Brian McLaren (Zondervan)

A helpful rethinking of evangelism that takes Christian witness seriously while refusing to turn people into projects; suggests we may need to trade in the term "evangelism" (now compromised by triumphalism and manipulation) for the more descriptive term "disciple-making."

Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism, by Nancy Murphy (Trinity Press International)

In this often-referenced book in the emergent conversation, Murphy, professor at Fuller Seminary, lays the philosophical groundwork for a theological shift beyond the modern dualism of liberal and conservative.

The Younger Evangelicals, by Robert Webber (Baker Books)

Webber, a longtime professor at Wheaton College, now at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary outside Chicago, is especially helpful in exploring the differences between emerging "younger evangelicals" (2000-present), "pragmatic evangelicals" (1975-2000) and "traditional evangelicals" (1950-1975).

Ancient-Future Faith, by Robert Webber (Baker Books)

The first in a series of "Ancient-Future" books by Webber, this one attempts to rethink evangelicalism for the postmodern world by recovering "classical" Christianity, especially patristic theology and practice.

Making Sense of Church, by Spencer Burke (Zondervan)

Burke is the creator of the Web site theooze.org. This book is a collection of conversations from that site's message boards about the church and postmodern culture. Burke adds his own introductions and commentary to the excerpted Web conversations.

The Emerging Church, by Dan Kimball (Zondervan)

Kimball is the creator of the Web site vintagefaith.org and founding pastor of Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz, California. While protesting that "emergent" is more a mind-set than a model, Kimball provides the closest thing to a "how-to" book on the emerging church. Though the book lacks the theological depth of Webber or McLaren, it is strong on pastoral insight and creative vision.

Reimagining Spiritual Formation: A Week in the Life of an Experimental Church, by Doug Pagitt (Zondervan)

Through multiple voices this book describes the spiritual life of Solomon's Porch, an emerging church in Minneapolis that eschews the thin gruel of "church growth" talk in favor of thick reflection on spiritual practices.

Mission-Shaped Church, by the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council (Church House Publishing)

This report from an Anglican working group looks evenhandedly at "fresh expressions of church" in the United Kingdom and makes suggestions for renewal and evangelism that would be relevant to mainline denominations in the U.S.

Web sites

www.emergentvillage.com: the closest thing to an "official" site of the emergent conversation in the U.S.; includes information about conferences and other gatherings.

www.emergingchurch.info: excellent UK site with thoughtful articles, stories and discussions.

www.emergingchurch.org: Karen Ward's helpful introduction to the emergent conversation with extensive links to other sites and blogs.

www.theooze.org: a site to help church leaders converse, collaborate and share resources for the emerging church; includes articles, a blog and live chat.

www.vintagefaith.org: a site created by Dan Kimball and Josh Fox, pastors of Vintage Faith Church (vintagechurch.org), an extension of Kimball's work in *The Emerging Church* and *Emerging Worship*.

www.alternativeworship.org: UK site arising out of the alternative worship movement; good combination of theory and practice.

www.resonate.ca: part of the emerging church conversation in Canada, with articles, links and discussions, complete with virtual lounge parties and a virtual prayer room.

Churches

Church of the Apostles, Seattle: www.apostleschurch.org

A joint Lutheran/Episcopal church plant pastored by Karen Ward, a member of the Emergent Coordinating Group.

The Church at Matthews House, Oceanside, California: www.matthewshouse.com

A growing community of house churches in Southern California.

Cedar Ridge Community Church, Spencerville, Maryland: www.crcc.org

A nondenominational church near Washington, D.C., where Brian McLaren is pastor.

House of Mercy, St. Paul: www.houseofmercy.org

An American Baptist church that reflects the ancient-future eclecticism of the emergent conversation, though not consciously founded as an "emerging church."

Solomon's Porch, Minneapolis: <http://solomonsporch.com>

An experimental church pastored by Doug Pagitt, described in *Reimagining Spiritual Formation*.

Mosaic, Austin, Texas: www.mosaicaustin.org

Mosaic meets in a Baptist church, embraces the progressive culture of Austin, and creates its liturgy out of homegrown art, music and storytelling.

Theo-blogs

Karen Ward: <http://submerge.typepad.com>

The pastor of Church of the Apostles in Seattle.

Jonny Baker: <http://jonnybaker.blogs.com>

The national youth coordinator for the Church Mission Society of the Church of

England and a leader in the alternative worship movement in the UK.

Bob Carlton: <http://thecorner.typepad.com>

An Episcopal seminarian at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific reflects on church, culture and politics.

Andrew Jones: <http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com>

A church planter and a leader in the emerging-church conversation in Europe.

Maggi Dawn: <http://maggidawn.typepad.com/maggidawn/>

The chaplain of Robinson College, Cambridge University, reflects on the emerging church, worship, language and culture.

Steve Taylor: www.emergentkiwi.org.nz

The pastor of Opawa Baptist Church in New Zealand and author of *The Out-of-Bounds Church?* forthcoming from Zondervan.