

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS OF RELEVANCE to the Discussion of Emergence Christianity

Interpretive Background (Historical)

**The Reformation - A History*, Diarmaid MacCulloch (Viking, 2004) is a highly readable and detailed account of the events leading to and occurring within the Great Reformation. History buffs will thoroughly enjoy the style and scholarship. It is a classic on its subject.

**The Great Transformation - The Beginnings of Our Religious Traditions*, Karen Armstrong (Knopf, 2006) This one is a beautifully written, highly accessible overview of the Axial Age-- that is, of the great social/cultural/political/economic/religious shifting that transpired in the five plus centuries prior to the coming of Christ and that attended the rise of most of the world's great religions. A bestseller from its first day of publication, this too is a classic.

***Paradise Misland: How We Lost Heaven...And How We Can Regain It*, Jeffrey Burton Russell (Oxford University Press, 2006) In this brief, but tight and exquisitely researched, book, Russell manages to overview credibly and interpret brilliantly the progress of Western...i.e. Christian... thought from the Great Reformation to the current Great Emergence in which we find ourselves.

The Roads to Modernity - The British, French, and American Enlightenments, Gertrude Himmelfarb (Knopf, 2004) Not for the faint of heart, but very much for the truly curious, this book is probably the best essay popularly available on its subject. Part of the reason for that is undoubtedly that it is written by one of America's most respected moral and cultural historians.

Kepler's Witch-An Astronomer's Discovery of Cosmic Order Amid Religious War, Political Intrigue, and the Heresy Trial of His Mother, James A. Connor (HarperSanFrancisco, 2004) As jazzy and off-beat as its title, this one comes as near as any book I know of to putting a very human (and immediate) face on what it meant both to be a scientist in the years of the Great Reformation and to endure the repercussions of the total upheaval that were the decades after it.

Descriptive Background of The Great Emergence as Secular Phenomenon

Emergence – The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software, Steven Johnson (Simon and Schuster, 2001) Although it has been in circulation for several years now, this best-seller is still probably the most accessible and encompassing of popular or lay books available on emergence theory. It would not be a stretch to say that no one should try to grasp the changes of Emergence Christianity without first trying to comprehend the reasons behind its being called "Emergence" in the first place.

The Great Turning – From Empire to Earth Community, David C. Korten (Berrett-Koehler, 2006) Increasingly cited in discussions of the Great Emergence, this bestseller offers one of the most complete overviews of, and explanations for, the current paradigmatic shift. Korten argues that more than a five-hundred year cycling is happening in the 21st century, that indeed we are witness to a complete shift in humanness and all prior forms of human structuring and governance, and that so pivotal a thing must be labeled as what it is: The Great Turning. Korten is persuasive in many of his historical interpretations, though less so in some of his applications and projections. For that reason, readers may find the first four parts of the volume to be of far more pertinence than is the fifth and closing one.

The Age of the Unthinkable – Why the New World Disorder Constantly Surprises Us and What We Can Do About It, Joshua Cooper Ramo (Little, Brown, 2009) In many ways, the sub-title of this one says it all...or at least lays out the parameters of the discussion. Ramo is not only a careful thinker and gifted writer, but he is also a keen and highly insightful explicator of what is happening to us in the Great Emergence, why it is, and what we can and should do about it. In addition, he is a thinker who is filled with a considerable amount of informed hope and good will.

The Starfish and the Spider – The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations, Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom (Portfolio, 2006) While hardly the most weighty of studies, this one deserves attention if, for no other reason, than its own fame. On the best seller list for months, it was *Starfish* that became the general public's first real introduction to what emergence theory and leaderless, non-hierarchical, self-organizing entities looked like up close and personal. It is, in other words, a rude, but good-natured introduction to the realization that we have long since slipped into an emergence *modus operandi*, whether we wanted to or not.

The World Is Flat - A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century, Thomas Friedman (Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2002) Probably no book on this list needs less introduction than does this one. A bestseller almost before it was off the presses, it is far and away the most talked-about explication of the economic upheaval which is to our current era of transition as the growth of the middle class and capitalism was to the Great Reformation. A good read, it is written for the popular audience.

Wikinomics – How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything, Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams (Portfolio, 2008) Like several of the other books in this section, *Wikinomics* is a bestseller in the popular or general market and employs an accessible and breezy style rather than an academic one. It is, however, a very graphic presentation of the shift from modern or Industrial Age configurations in the secular market place to the non-hierarchical and self-organizing ones of Emergence, of why they have happened, of what they look like, and of why there is no going back. Most of its insights and case studies, in other words, are easily transposed to matters of ecclesiology and institutional religion.

blink - The Power of Thinking Without Thinking, Malcolm Gladwell (Little, Brown, 2005) Like Friedman's work above, *blink* hardly needs introduction. It is pertinent here only in that it exposes in very popular fashion the whole uneasiness we have about the concept of "thinking" as a proper definition of, and index for, ourselves and our beingness.

The End of Faith-Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason, Sam Harris (Norton, 2004) Harris, because of his work in Neuroscience, is perhaps the most articulate and accessible of the activists within the Secular Humanist movement or sensibility. While devout believers of any organized faith will find his arguments inflammatory at worst and distressing at least, his line of reasoning needs to be read and dissected by those who wish to understand with any kind of completeness the nature of our current cultural and social discussions as well as our rising secularization.

Interpretive Commentary on Current Christianity -- International

The New Faces of Christianity - Believing the Bible in the Global South and/or *The Next Christianity - The Coming of Global Christianity*, Philip Jenkins (Oxford University Press, 2002 and 2006 respectively) Jenkins, Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at Penn State, is perhaps our most trusted and most quoted authority on the subject of globalizing Christianity. Readers will find his take on globalization's impact on first world Christianity's present situation, as well as on our immediate future, to be immensely helpful and immensely unsettling. Jenkins has another work forthcoming in Sept. which promises to be even more revelatory of patterns, esp. for communions that have international reach and concerns.

Those who do not have time to read the above volumes themselves, will find Jenkins's work readily accessible in precis on the web from sources like [The Atlantic Monthly](#). Even a passing familiarity with what he is telling us about our world will be of benefit.

Rising from the Ashes – Rethinking Church, Becky Garrison (Seabury Books, 2007) Garrison is an editor with [The Wittenburg Door](#) and by profession a religion satirist. She is also more knowledgeable about emergent and emerging Christianity than almost any other reporter covering the scene. In *Rising* she has managed to present with great clarity most of the major voices that are shaping North American Christianity in the 21st century, just as she has also managed in her blogs and columns, to cover more of the European Emergence scene than has almost any other reporter. Googing Garrison will unearth a veritable wealth of material on this subject.

The Next Evangelicalism – Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity, Soong-Chan Rah (InterVarsity Press, 2009) Soong-Chan Rah is Milton B. Engebretson Assistant Professor of Church Growth and Evangelism at

North Park University as well as first-generation American. He speaks with brilliance as well as from a strong base of both academic and personal knowledge about the interplay between Latinized and non-Latinized Christianity as Emergence Christianity is forming. Like Jenkins, who enthusiastically endorses his work, Soong-Chan sees a global Christianity that is stripped of its Latinized heritage and re-shaped into something very different from previous expressions of the faith.

Community of the Transfiguration – The Journey of a New Monastic Community, Paul R. Dekar (Cascade Books, 2008) This highly personal and affectionate history of the Community of the Transfiguration in Breakwater, Victoria, is an engaging, as well as informing, introduction both to what neo-monasticism in Emergence Christianity looks like in general and to what it looks like in Australia in particular. As Dekar demonstrates, Transfiguration is firmly based in the Baptist Church while at the same time being Emergence in nature and disposition; or as we might say in this country, Dekar shows us a fine example of a hyphenated Christian community down under.

The Rise and Fall of the Nine O’Clock Service – A Cult within the Church?, Roland Howard (Mowbray, 1996) This is everybody’s idea of the perfect cautionary tale. As such, it is also one of the saddest reads in the growing literature about Emergence Christianity; for the Nine O’Clock devolved into scandal instead of evolving into a fresh expression of church. Its story needs to be known, however, by anyone seriously interested in being part of shaping an Emergence community.

Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church – How Are They Authentically Church and Anglican ?, Ian J. Mobsby (Moot Community Publishing, 2007) The tendency among North American Christians often is to see emergent and emerging Christianity as an American experience of American origin. In actuality, emergence was far more discernible in the UK in the last decades of the 20th century than it was in the United States. Mobsby’s slim volume, while not always easy reading for Americans, is none the less a classic in its overview of emergence in England and in its singular accommodations with Anglicanism, making this is useful study for all who are interested in the new Christianity both in terms of the established branches of Protestantism and in terms of international patterns.

Interpretive Commentary on Current Christianity – General & Emergence

Who’s Afraid of Post-Modernism - Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church, James K. A. Smith (Baker Academic, 2006) For those who want to get a concise, albeit evangelical and radical, distillation of what post-modernism is and what it means to at least some large part of the American Church, this book is a god-send. It is short, authoritatively presented, and accessible.

The Next Reformation - Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Postmodernity, Carl Raschke (Baker Academic, 2004) Like Smith’s *Who’s Afraid*, this book comes from an evangelical perspective, but it is a superb analysis of what is happening to us currently, just as it is a useful engagement of the emerging new body of Christianity.

The Great Worship Awakening - Singing A New Song in the Post-Modern Church, Robb Redman (Jossey-Bass, 2002) Redman, a Presbyterian pastor in San Antonio, is a vice-president of Maranatha! Music and, as a result, intimately involved in the changing landscape of American worship—its whys and wherefores, its implications, and its influence on the emerging church movement. A gentle read, this book is also an informative one for seeing the world outside of ECUSA and for understanding why the community church that blends Anglican liturgy with post-modern worship is not a hodge-podge or an offense, but rather an almost inevitable next step for many Christians in this culture.

****An Emerging Theology for Emerging Churches**, Ray S. Anderson (InterVarsity Press, 2006) Anderson’s development of the idea that the relationship between Jerusalem [or “inherited” church] and Antioch [or “Fresh Expression” of church] was almost identical to the current unease and distress between established denominations and emergence Christianity is brilliant. It is also quite clear in the obligation it lays on both sides of the aisle to understand the implications and responsibility of being Christian—together but different—within the confines of one time period. Last of all, it is remarkably liberating for many readers to discover that the Church has been here before and quite probably will be here again.

* *Spirit and Flesh - Life in a Fundamental Baptist Church*, James M. Ault, Jr. (Knopf, 2004) Ault has produced one of the most poignant but clear-eyed studies to date of the “fundamental fundamentalist” community. Humane and human in its approach and appeal, this record of time among people whom he came to hold in affection as well as despair, should be required reading for every liberal Christian who thinks one side of the current conversation is admirable and the other totally without redemptive virtue.

***The Practicing Congregation - Imagining a New Old Church* and/or *From Nomads to Pilgrims - Stories from Practicing Congregations*, Diana Butler Bass (The Alban Institute, 2004 and 2006 respectively with Joseph Stewart-Sicking as co-author on the second) Bass is the recognized Anglican authority on the current evolution of re-traditioning main-line churches. Her work is being used all over the country as a diagnostic tool for parishes and dioceses. To approach the response to emergent Church by main-line Protestantism without her insights would be not only foolhardy, but almost impossible.

An Introduction to the Theology of Religions - Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives, Veli-Matti Karkkainen (IVPress, 2003) The theology of religion—i.e., of how we can live with integrity as faithful adherents to one faith in a world of many faiths—is one of the two most compelling issues facing the next quarter to half century of Christian thinking; and Professor Karkkainen is one of our leading thinkers and commentators on the subject. This book, while it is probably most appropriately addressed now by those with considerable interest in the subject, is still worthy of mention here; for awareness of Karkkainen’s work will be requisite very soon for any serious discussion of the issues involved.

A New Spiritual Home - Progressive Christianity at the Grass Roots, Hal Taussig (Polebridge Press, 2006) A Methodist pastor and Visiting Professor at Union Theological, Taussig has also been associated with the Westar Institute and the fellows of the Jesus Seminar. He brings to this overview of contemporary American Christendom a liberal, but still very pastoral and professorial interpretation of where Christian theology really is in the minds of many pew-dwellers and former pew-dwellers.

****The Phoenix Affirmations*, Eric Elnes (Jossey-Bass, 2006) This volume is a kind of “Here I Stand” declaration for that part of main-line Christianity that is hesitating between re-traditioning or re-configuring into the new Protestantism and/or becoming fully emergent. Elnes, a UCC pastor in Arizona, is a brilliant observer of the intersection between culture and faith [See www.crosswalkamerica.org to understand the full implications of what he is daring.] and a clear-eyed student of the theological shifts involved in our current and heated ecclesial discussions.

Core Texts from and about Emergence Christianity

****emerging churches - creating christian community in postmodern cultures*, Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger (Baker Academic, 2005) I keep this one on my desk top for ready reference. Those who want a field guide to the emergent movement will find it invaluable. Its lists of the churches now within this movement, its precise presentation of how main-line churches are church-planting within the emergent movement, and its brief bios of the major players make this one worth a long look.

******A Generous Orthodoxy*, Brian McLaren (Zondervan, 2004) While this title has a sub-title, even a casual glance at its cover will tell you why I have not included it here. McLaren is the acknowledged leader of Emergence Christianity, the Martin Luther of our current reformation. Any reader over twenty (and some who are younger) will find much to deplore here and much to applaud. Either way, one should think of this volume as being a kind of contemporary edition of the Ninety-Five Theses tacked to the door of the church in Wittenberg five centuries ago.

Everything Must Change – Jesus, Global Crises, and A Revolution of Hope, Brian McLaren (Nelson, 2007) While hardly light reading, this fairly recent statement from McLaren is none the less the clearest and most energized exposition to date of the radical world vision of the emergent movement in this country.

***An Emergent Manifesto of Hope*, Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones, eds (Baker, 2007) This is a candid, thorough, and dynamic collection of essays by some two dozen leaders of the Great Emergence. Anyone even mildly curious about what emergent and the next Christianity are, will be well served by three or four hours with these men and women...not to mention being deeply assured and affirmed by the passion of their faith and vocation even as they give to the Church a new face and a new way of doing its business.

**** *A Christianity Worth Believing*, Doug Pagitt (Jossey-Bass, pbk 2009) This very lively, candid, and accessible book gives voice and body to the basic theology of the Great Emergence in a way that most previous essays have failed to do. It also enjoys a sub-title that's worth looking up just for the joy of reading it.....and the book is even better.

**** *The New Christians – Dispatches from the Emergent Frontier*, Tony Jones (Jossey-Bass, 2008) Jones, who has been intimately involved in emergent Christianity and in emergent village from its inception, is a brilliant apologist for emergent theology and sensibilities. He is also an accessible and brilliant explicator of all these things. Every student of emergent thought should read this one carefully.

Signs of Emergence – A Vision for Church That Is Organic / Networked / Decentralized / Bottom-up / Communal / Flexible {Always Evolving} Kester Brewin (Baker Books, 2007) Unfortunately, the complete impact of Brewin's sub-title can not be conveyed without more visual design than is feasible here, though the above is an attempt at suggesting some of the possibilities explored there. Brewin, a Londoner, is one of the founding leaders of Vaux, an alternative worship group in the city. He is also a fine story teller and recorder of what Emergence is in real life among real people. This book has been very influential in both this country and the UK.

Free for All – Rediscovering the Bible in Community, Tim Conder and Daniel Rhodes (Baker Books, 2009) Conder is founding pastor and Rhodes is co-pastor of Emmaus Way in Durham, North Carolina, one of the US's better-known missional or emergence bodies. Among the questions pressing upon emergence theologians and Christians currently is that of the authority of Scripture and of how best to understand and define it. In this very clear and careful volume, Conder and Brooks offer an approach that is consonant with emergence thought while also being respectful of the fact that a theology of scripture is still a work in process for most post-Reformation Christians.

******mission-shaped church – church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context*, The Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council (Church House Publishing, 2004) Despite its having been in print for some half-dozen years or so, and despite the fact that it speaks in terms of the Church of England's engagement with emergence Christianity, this is still the most useful, informing, and practical text presently available both for understanding what fresh expressions of Church are and of how to go about the business of enabling them. Available in hardcopy from the usual sources, it is also available for download and itself includes a considerable number of web sites of great pertinence to the matter at hand.

Lesslie Newbigin – Missionary Theologian – A Reader, Compiled and Introduced by Paul Weston (Eerdmans, 2006) While a good dozen or so of the 20th century's theologians and thinkers have had lasting and powerful impacts on Emergence Christianity, none has left quite so signatory a heritage as has Newbigin. A large part of Emergence Christianity—indeed, many would argue the larger part world-wide—defines and names itself as “missional” Christianity or “missional Church.” Those who do so, find their roots and basic tenets in Newbigin. For that reason, any serious student of Emergence Christianity needs to be at least passingly familiar with Newbigin's work; and Weston has done a superb job of distilling his work into an accessible and surprisingly thorough précis for us.

Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition, Steven Croft and Ian Mobsby, Eds. (Canterbury Press, 2009) The first volume in the “Ancient Faith, Future Mission” Series, this collection of essays by sixteen leaders and students of Emergence Christianity on both sides of the pond is a hearty and muscular introduction to how it's done, why it's done, and by whom it's done, “it” being Emergence worship in many, if not most, of its presenting forms and configurations. This one is a delightful read, as well as an informing one.

Simply Christian - Why Christianity Makes Sense, (HarperSanFrancisco, 2006) and *****Surprised By Hope*, (HarperOne, 2008) both by N. T. Wright, the Bishop of Durham. These two books will, I suspect, stand for decades as classics in Christian apology. Together, they certainly constitute the best in the theology of emerging Christianity.

Some parts of Wright's theology will offend American Christians; hopefully, most of it will not. Rather, they will find here a reasoned and pastoral voice offering a blessed place of thoughtful and faithful quiet in the midst of an otherwise disturbing storm system. Well worth the read by folk on all sides of our current debates, the first is the

kind of “lest we forget” book that’s good for all of us now and again; and the second is a clarion call to a re-considered Christian theology.

****Sin – A History*, Gary A. Anderson (Yale, 2009) While this bibliography is not designed to present any in-depth review of the theologians who are presently wrestling with the major issues arising out of our shifting times, it is impossible not to mention at least one or two who are so pertinent as almost to defy exclusion. Atonement and a defensible doctrine about it, or understanding of it, are central to Emergence work. In full knowledge of that fact and of the impenetrable forest of words and theories that have encrusted the atonement since the days of Second Temple Judaism, Anderson here offers up a startling interpretation of the evolution of Judeo-Christian conceptualizations of sin and, by extension, of atonement.

**After Our Likeness-The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, Miroslav Volf (Eeernman’s, 1998) Few theologians working today have had a more pervasive and sustained influence on Emergence theology and ecclesiology than has Volf. Likewise, probably none of his very influential and insightful books has had any greater impact than has this one, particularly in the area of ecclesiology. Many Emergence leaders openly claim it as a “must read” for any Emergence theologian or theorist.

Repenting of Religion – Turning from Judgment to the Love of God, Gregory A. Boyd (Baker, 2004) Boyd is a master of both applied and pastoral theology. In this tightly argued volume, he takes on the Scylla and Charybdis of religious judgment and judgmentalism, of sustained interpretation and relativism. The result is as finely honed and cogent a presentation of Emergence Christian concepts at work in religious formation as any one could ever desire to see.

The New Conspirators – Creating the Future One Mustard Seed at a Time, Tom Sine (InterVarsity Press, 2008) Sine, a founder along with his wife Christine, of the Mustard Seed Community, is an expert on neo-monasticism and its placement within Emergence Christianity. His overview here will be invaluable to those trying to understand what this renewed and radical ancient sensibility is about in today’s world.

**** *The Fidelity of Betrayal – Towards a Church Beyond Belief*, Peter Rollins (Paraclete, 2008) and *How [Not] To Talk about God* (also Paraclete, 2008) Rollins, the founder of Ikon in Ireland, is a leader internationally in the emergence movement. He also holds a PhD in philosophy. The two together make him singularly well-equipped to be one of the outstanding thinkers and theologians of the 21st century. He is especially brilliant and accessible in these two volumes.

Informing Texts about Virtual Church and Emergence Christianity

**The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture-How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church*, Shane Hipps (Zondervan, 2005) This deceptively easy-going book deftly weaves Marshall McLuhan and Co. into an at-times brilliantly insightful critique of current “church.” It’s well worth the time it takes to read it and more than worth the time it takes to ponder it.

****SimChurch – Being the Church in the Virtual World*, Douglas Estes (Zondervan, 2009) Estes, who is Adjunct Professor of New Testament at Western Seminary in San Jose as well as Lead Pastor at Berryessa Valley Church in San Jose, offers the most even-handed, informed, and insightful overview to date of what virtual world ecclesia means not only within its own confines, but also to ecclesia in the physical world. At the risk of over-stating the case, it is increasingly incumbent upon clergy and lay leaders alike to familiarize themselves now...right now...with the information Estes renders so clearly.

The Becoming of G-d – What the Trinitarian Nature of God Has To Do with Church and A Deep Spirituality for the Twenty-First Century, Ian Mobsby (YTC Press, 2008) Mobsby, who is pastor at Moot and a priest in the Church of England, is one of the most widely-recognized leaders in Emergence both in the UK and internationally. In this small volume, however, he shines as a practical theologian. Emergence Christianity is profoundly Trinitarian, and Mobsby does a superb job of explicating exactly what that means and what it translates to on the ground.

This list has been compiled and annotated by Phyllis Tickle. Comments, questions, and suggestions should be directed to her at tickrel@gmail.com.