Edification: “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.” So goes the hopelessly confused subtitle of emergent
guru Brian McLaren’s book “A Generous Orthodoxy”. Pastor Miranda recently referred to the
movement known as The Emergent (Emerging) Church. McLaren coined the term and has
shaped the movement. In a very real sense this movement is the incarnation of all that
Francis Schaeffer warned us about. As the subtitle tediously reveals Humanity is the center
of all things. Whatever Humanity wants to believe - even a direct contradiction
(liberal/conservative?) that’s OK. Do away with absolutes, accept that we can’t really know
anything for sure (although we’re pretty sure that we can’t know anything for sure) and
plunge yourself into mysticism – mostly medieval, and you’re Emergent. The unintended
consequence is (will be) to plummet below what Schaeffer called “The Line of Despair”. If
there are no absolutes, if truth is unknowable or non-existent, if there is no ultimate
meaning what’s left? The apostle Paul summed-up this same dilemma 2,000 years ago; “For
if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not raised. And if Christ is not raised, your faith is futile;
you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have
perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”
If there is no absolute knowable truth all is futility and despair. So how could this “emergent”
mush appeal to anyone? See below, in the “Encourage” portion.

Events/Information: We’re meeting every other Wednesday at 7:30p.m. at Jan Jones house
for bible study. Our next fellowship meal will be 06/27/10.

Encourage: The Emergent Church’s greatest appeal is to young adults, typically from
conservative Christian homes. As they leave home to establish their own lives these young
adults don’t want to leave their religion completely behind. In many cases they do want to
leave behind the “dogmatism” and “absolutism” many feel marked their parent’s faith. Many
also want to “engage” culture not denounce and disown it, again as some feel their parent’s
did. Into the void steps the Emergent Church with its “curvy, ambiguous orthodoxy” – to
quote McLaren. Doctrine and truth claims are almost entirely absent. The focus is what they
call being “missional” and “communal”. They’re enamored with monasticism redefined and
reapplied; “Monastic values of hospitality and community appeal to young people today who
are weary of the culture’s values of consumerism and individualism” (emergent pastor). Yet
the grave danger is abandoning known revealed truth as historically taught in the creeds and
confessions. We must press upon our youth the simple fact that truth is knowable – “true
truth” as Schaeffer called it; that we believe what we believe because it is true – it is reality.
We need to help them understand that a life with no reference to absolute truth is futility and
despair. One emergent pastor was asked by what standard the movement was operating he
quipped; “We’re building the airplane as we fly it.” I’m no aerospace engineer, but that won’t
work. It’ll crash eventually into the mountain of revealed truth. We don’t want our kids on
that plane!