

The Emerging Church: A Social Gospel?

*by Scott Diekmann,
SoundWitness.org*

N. T. Wright has proclaimed a “New Perspective on Paul” which has impacted Emergent thinking. The New Perspective on Paul has redefined the Gospel so that it only vaguely resembles the orthodox Gospel, which is based on justification by grace through faith. The “New Perspective on Paul,” while using much of the same terminology, has assigned new meanings to many of those same terms. They have turned the Gospel into a “different gospel,” one that reads like a “Social Gospel,” the topic in this part of our discussion.

The Social Gospel in the Emerging Church

The Emerging Church places great emphasis on being missional, one description of which is:

...to embrace a holistic gospel - it is for the whole person (heart, soul, mind, and strength), for the whole society (politics, economy, culture, environment), and for the whole world. ...the mission is the Kingdom of God as taught by Jesus, ...to let others see the gospel in action.¹ The gospel is to be performed as well as proclaimed.^{2, 3}

The following quote attributed to St. Francis of Assisi has been mentioned by several Emerging authors: “Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words.” Part of their missional emphasis in sharing the good news is in avoiding a phony sounding “canned sales pitch” form of the Gospel, which is commendable, but the solution is frequently to “live” the Gospel while downplaying or omitting its proclamation:

We want to help people consider Jesus as an option through the beauty of how we live our lives. Living in the way of Jesus is not a belief system but a reality. We believe in an “inhabited apologetic,” and through our lives “we bear witness to the reality of God.”⁴

For Scandrette [an Emerging Church leader], there are no mission projects or outreaches. Their daily lives point to the reality of the

kingdom. Through their activities in the community, members preach good news.⁵

...we now have a bunch of new friends whom we see out and about and hang out with. They know we are Christians, and they see how we live. For us, that is evangelism.^{6, 7}

Part of this lack of emphasis on speaking the Gospel may be intertwined with the erroneous belief that living in “the way of Jesus” will somehow change beliefs and create Christians, here illustrated by Emerging Church leader Doug Pagitt:

Pagitt believes that the old view perpetuated the idea that changed ideas (conversion) lead to changed behavior. Pagitt believes, however, that a changed life (conversion) leads to changed beliefs. “We are much more involved in inviting them to live differently than to believe differently.”^{8, 9}

Gibbs and Bolger mention:

Emerging churches focus on changed lives rather than changed beliefs. People do not want to be converted, but experiencing the life of the kingdom may be welcomed by many. The focus is to create cultures of the kingdom and to allow God to do the work.¹⁰

If this is your sole method of witnessing, it is contrary to the method laid out by Scripture for two reasons. First, it is only through the means of grace, Word and Sacrament, that people come to faith in Jesus as their Savior.

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
Romans 10:17

Second, before a person becomes a Christian no amount of “changed life” will ever lead to conversion:

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
1 Corinthians 2:14

When there *is* a verbal message given, it is often couched in Christian-sounding phrases, but it *usually* confuses Law and Gospel. The condemnatory function of the Law (the second use of the Law, as a mirror) and repentance are omitted, and are replaced by what appears to be a Gospel presentation emphasizing love, but is actually Law in “works” form (the third use of the Law, as a guide). It becomes a “Social Gospel”:

...the purpose of the church—at least, of the post-Protestant church in our way of thinking—is to spiritually form people to love God and others and themselves so that they can live life to the full in God’s kingdom, in the way of Jesus. We want to change the world, but that requires people who learn to be the revolution they want to see in the world.¹¹

At first glance, the quote of Brian McLaren above appears to be orthodox, but following its line of thinking will lead to spiritual death. The purpose of the Church is to continually and unceasingly proclaim both Gospel *and* Law. The Law comes first. Through the preaching of the Law, the Holy Spirit causes us to despair of the righteous demands of God – demands we can never fulfill. We are caused to see the hopelessness of our condition. Through the preaching of the Gospel, in faith we realize those demands are met for us by Jesus Christ. It would initially appear in the above quote that Brian McLaren has completely skipped the Law, and he *has* failed to *point out* the accusatory aspect of the Law, but that omission is only part of the problem. The “Gospel” he presents above is actually Law, the same Law that condemns us.

The Emerging Church often presents the Gospel as a sort of “walking” Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Jesus did indeed say to love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:34-40) – but His teaching here is *Law, not Gospel*. It is a summary of the two tables of the Law.^{12, 13} When Brian speaks of love, instead of preaching the Gospel, he unwittingly demands that you keep the Law, but without offering a means of doing so. Those unbelievers who chose his path have no hope of salvation. This point is so important that it’s going to be reiterated a couple more times.

When Brian McLaren tells people “to love God and others and themselves so that they can live life to the full in God’s kingdom,” he’s telling you what you should *do*. *That is the function of the Law*. Romans 13:10 says “love is the fulfilling of the law.” The Gospel, on the other hand, tells you not

what *you* should do, but what *Christ* has done *for you*. It is what Christ does for you that offers salvation. In choosing the Law, rather than the Gospel, you are attempting to save yourself based on works, a fatal decision:

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."
Galatians 3:10

This curse is just as sure as the promise offered in John 3:16. It is no joking matter. It cannot be taken lightly.

Once more:

You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.
Galatians 5:4

The love of God and our neighbor comes *only* through faith in the life-giving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
Galatians 2:20

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
1 John 4:10

Our entire life as Christians is wrapped up not in our love for God, but in His love for us, and in what He has done and continues to do for us. He comes to us daily in Word and Sacrament, forgiving our sin for Christ's sake, and renewing our hearts. And He works through us. It is in God's work in and through us that we are enabled to love our neighbor and serve our fellow man. The Law shows us what we should do, but it is the Gospel which enables us to do so (though never perfectly, since we are still sinners). What a blessing and a mystery that God chooses to work through us, being simultaneously sinner and saint. As Christians, our lives are entirely in Christ, so much so that Paul was able to say "to live is Christ"

(Philippians 1:21).

For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

2 Corinthians 4:5-7

Recognizing the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is absolutely essential. The “good news” which Brian McLaren proclaims is very enticing to the unbeliever. The sinful human nature knows and recognizes the Law – it knows nothing of the Gospel. Brian’s overture to live life “in the way of Jesus” is as attractive to an unrepentant sinner as the light of an electric bug zapper is to an insect. The soft glow of the bug zapper seems very inviting in the night air, but its results are deadly. The Law without the indwelling of the Gospel has the same deadly result. Its justice is swift and final. Our salvation, daily renewal, and good works are dependent not on what we do, but on what Jesus Christ has done and continues to do as He offers forgiveness, life, and salvation through His means of grace.

Other Characteristics of the Social Gospel

While the Emerging Church attempts to “incarnate” the kingdom of God, some are actually turning the kingdom of God into the world:

Sanctuary [an Emerging Church] adopted the Jesus of popular culture, not the church, as they felt the church’s view ignored the life of Jesus.¹⁴

We invite you to join with us in pursuing the dreams and love of God for the world in the way of Jesus.¹⁵

The Social Gospel, refusing to acknowledge the depravity of our sinful nature, invariably sees people as inherently good:

By encouraging the creative spark that is implanted in each person by virtue of the fact that all are made in the image of God, emerging churches hope to reconnect people with their true

selves.¹⁶

...the clarion call of the emerging church is Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it" (NIV). For emerging churches, there are no longer any bad places, bad people, or bad times. All can be made holy. All can be given to God in worship. All modern dualisms can be overcome.¹⁷

God makes us in his image. We reflect the beauty and creativity and wonder of the God who made us. And Jesus calls us to return to our true selves. The pure, whole people God originally intended us to be, before we veered off course.

Somewhere in you is the you whom you were made to be.

We need you to be you.

We don't need a second anybody. We need the first you.¹⁸

When Nicodemus came to Jesus with searching questions, Jesus didn't tell him to reconnect with his "true self," or to look inward for "the you whom you were made to be." In fact, *He told him the exact opposite*. He told him he needed to be *reborn* (John 3:1-21).

Rob Bell, in his book Velvet Elvis mentions an unbeliever who attended their gatherings. He ventures that "God loves her exactly as she is."¹⁹ Until we are reborn through the Gospel, until our sins are forgiven through Jesus' death on the cross, God doesn't love us exactly as we are. Before our rebirth, we are enemies of God and objects of God's wrath:

among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Ephesians 2:3

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Romans 5:9-10

A little cosmetic surgery to amend our habits will not redeem our sinful nature. The "true self" whom many in the Emerging Church attempt to

revive should not be resuscitated. This is one corpse whose medical ID bracelet needs to be labeled *DNR – Do Not Resuscitate*. Only through the death of our “former selves” are we alive in Christ, a distinction which some in the Emerging Church fail to make – turning the Gospel into a Social Gospel.

The Christian Cyclopedia defines the Social Gospel as:

Teaching of a social salvation whose objective is rebirth of society through change of the social order by mass or group action. Tries to persuade individuals to practice the social ethics of Jesus. Makes little or no reference to reconciliation with God through Christ and to the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit. For many it is essentially a this-worldly gospel of works, not a Gospel of grace for this life and heaven... Critics of the Social Gospel see in it an idealistic, purely humanitarian, falsely optimistic, utopian and pacifistic, social reformist movement not essentially Christian (since it bypasses essential elements of Christian doctrine and life).²⁰

The “gospel of works” portion of this definition can be clearly seen from the previous quotes. “Living in the way of Jesus” is not about saving faith - it’s about works. Changed life without changed beliefs is a gospel of works. Living differently is about works. Seeking salvation by rediscovering “the first you” rejects the rebirth offered through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus’ crucifixion on the cross - again a gospel of works, and a gospel of death.²¹

The entire sense of the above definition is illustrated in this quote of Brian McLaren:

Even if only a few would practice this new way, many would benefit. Oppressed people would be free. Poor people would be liberated from poverty. Minorities would be treated with respect. Sinners would be loved, not resented. Industrialists would realize that God cares for sparrows and wildflowers—so their industries should respect, not rape, the environment....The kingdom of God would come....^{22, 23}

The following quotes illustrate the “this-worldly gospel of works” portion of the Social Gospel definition:

But now I wonder if this gospel about how to get your soul into Heaven after death is really only a ghost of the real gospel that Jesus talked about, which seemed to have something to do with God's will being done on earth now, not just in Heaven later.²⁴

Instead, the gospel is about being increasingly alive to God in the world. It is concerned with bringing heaven to earth. This really throws people off.²⁵

True spirituality then is not about escaping this world to some other place where we will be forever. A Christian is not someone who expects to spend forever in heaven there. A Christian is someone who anticipates spending forever here, in a new heaven that comes to earth.

The goal isn't escaping this world but making this world the kind of place God can come to. And God is remaking us into the kind of people who can do this kind of work.²⁶

Along with bringing heaven to earth, the Social Gospel redefines hell, again muting the Law's condemning nature. Brian McLaren has been working hard to redefine hell as something that better fits the Social Gospel message, as the following three quotes show:

...the conventional doctrine of hell has too often engendered a view of a deity who suffers from borderline personality disorder or some worse sociopathic diagnosis. *God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, and if you don't love God back and cooperate with God's plans in exactly the prescribed way, God will torture you with unimaginable abuse, forever—that sort of thing.*²⁷

We need to go back and take another look at Jesus' teachings about hell. For so many people, the conventional teaching about hell makes God seem vicious. That's not something we should let stand.²⁸

This book, in a sense, attempts to deconstruct our conventional concepts of hell in the sincere hope that a better vision of the gospel of Jesus Christ will appear.²⁹

Rob Bell's solution is to reduce hell to little more than a nuisance and relocate it to here on earth:

When people use the word hell, what do they mean? They mean a place, an event, a situation absent of how God desires things to be. Famine, debt, oppression, loneliness, despair, death, slaughter - they are all hell on earth.³⁰

When hell and the condemnatory aspect of the Law are missing, the import of the Gospel is lost.

Gibbs and Bolger report on how Emerging Churches came to emphasize the gospel of the kingdom: "With a growing conviction that something was seriously wrong with the church, these emerging leaders felt they needed a fresh understanding of the gospel to proceed any further."³¹ The fresh understanding they came up with was a culturally defined Jesus.

Adopting the Jesus of popular culture results in a popular message, the Social Gospel. Those who promulgate a Social Gospel in the Emerging Church have a serious problem with their message. Emerging Church pastor Karen Ward says "The cultural view 'gets' that Jesus was for the marginalized and the oppressed."³² What the culture does not "get" and can not "get" is that **Jesus came for sinners**. Jesus came primarily to atone for our sin:

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

1 Timothy 1:15

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

1 Peter 3:18

We need more than a role model, someone to come along and show us a better way to live. We need someone who can forgive sins, someone who can mediate between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. A watered down "Gospel" that ignores sin, repentance, and the basic tenets of

Christianity results in a hell-bound unforgiven sinner. Those who truly become Christians while being fed the milk of a Social Gospel will do so in spite of what they are taught, not because of it. Sadly, many people who are “living in the way of Jesus” believe they are Christians but are not.

Joel McClure, one of the pastors at Water’s Edge, an Emerging church, says: “The gospel is that God wants you to help solve that problem [what’s wrong with the world], to participate with God through redeeming acts.”³³ The world’s problem is *sin*. The redemptive act that we most need to participate in is the one that was accomplished on the cross, in which Jesus bore God’s wrath in His body.

God is both a wrathful God and a loving God. He rages against sin, yet at the same time He became incarnate as a man to be sin for us. God’s wrath is not a terrible thing that we need to redefine - through it we are made aware of our sin and our need for a Savior. He graciously sets aside His rightful wrath through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, for Jesus’ sake. It is through our faith in Jesus and *His work* on the cross that we are led to a “better life.” We are led to a life of forgiveness under the cross. We are led to daily nourishment through Word and Sacrament. Christ Jesus comes to us each day by His Spirit through the Word to offer His forgiveness. Christ Jesus comes to us through bread and wine to offer His body and blood for our forgiveness. We are forgiven each day as we remember our Baptism and repent. We hold on to the promises offered us in the Gospel. As we rise each morning, our minds are renewed. The peace of God, which transcends all human understanding, guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. We go into the world able to serve our fellow man and joyfully proclaim the Gospel through Word and deed with one singular focus, to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2).

A prayer is offered up for those in the Emerging Church, both leaders and followers, that they would hallow the orthodox Gospel of justification by grace through faith, hold fast to the objective, external knowledge of God found only in the Word, and maintain a proper distinction between Law and Gospel. Do not be enticed to adopt the Jesus of popular culture. Remember the words of St. Paul:

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone

is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
Galatians 1:8-12

I'd like to close this part by quoting a hymn whose text was written by Paul Speratus. It's one of my favorites because it does such a great job of teaching Law and Gospel.

1 Salvation unto us has come
By God's free grace and favor;
Good works cannot avert our doom,
They help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,
Who did for all the world atone;
He is our one Redeemer.

2 What God did in His Law
demand
And none to Him could render
Caused wrath and woe on ev'ry
hand
For man, the vile offender.
Our flesh has not those pure desires
The spirit of the Law requires,
And lost is our condition.

3 It was a false, misleading
dream
That God His Law had given
That sinners could themselves
redeem
And by their works gain heaven.
The Law is but a mirror bright
To bring the inbred sin to light

That lurks within our nature.

4 From sin our flesh could not
abstain,
Sin held its sway unceasing;
The task was useless and in vain,
Our guilt was e'er increasing.
None can remove sin's poisoned
dart
Or purify our guileful heart—
So deep is our corruption.

5 Yet as the Law must be
fulfilled
Or we must die despairing,
Christ came and has God's anger
stilled,
Our human nature sharing.
He has for us the Law obeyed
And thus the Father's vengeance
stayed
Which over us impended.

6 Since Christ has full atonement
made

And brought to us salvation,
Each Christian therefore may be
glad
And build on this foundation.
Your grace alone, dear Lord, I
plead,
Your death is now my life indeed,
For You have paid my ransom.

7 Let me not doubt, but truly
see
Your Word cannot be broken;
Your call rings out, "Come unto Me!"
No falsehood have You spoken.
Baptized into Your precious name,
My faith cannot be put to shame,
And I shall never perish.

8 The Law reveals the guilt of
sin
And makes us conscience-stricken;
But then the Gospel enters in
The sinful soul to quicken.

Come to the cross, trust Christ, and
live;
The Law no peace can ever give,
No comfort and no blessing.

9 Faith clings to Jesus' cross
alone
And rests in Him unceasing;
And by its fruits true faith is known,
With love and hope increasing.
For faith alone can justify;
Works serve our neighbor and
supply
The proof that faith is living.

10 All blessing, honor, thanks, and
praise
To Father, Son, and Spirit,
The God who saved us by His
grace;
All glory to His merit.
O triune God in heav'n above,
You have revealed Your saving
love;
Your blessèd name we hallow.³⁴

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Endnotes

1. The Emerging Church's definition of the kingdom of God generally follows Doug Pagitt's definition: "You are going to be the people who

are the inhabitants of the kingdom of God. The ways of God, the life of God, the activity of God. You are going to be those people. And when you take on this life of God in the world, then you're living as the people of God. Later in the New Testament I think the phrase is you become the body of Christ. That you are the people who are living out the hopes and dreams and aspirations of God in this world because God is active in it and you are joining with God." Emergents often refer to themselves as *incarnating* the kingdom of God.

Doug Pagitt, "The Emergent Church and Postmodern Spirituality Debate," CD-ROM, Session Two, Minneapolis, Twin City Fellowship, Jan 2006.

2. Scot McKnight, Jesus Creed, 3 Nov 2005, 27 Feb 2007 <<http://www.jesuscreed.org/?m=200511&paged=5>>.
3. Part of the Emerging Church protest includes the mainline church's propensity to "bog down" under a plethora of intra-church events and committee meetings, to the exclusion of any mission emphasis, which is at times an accurate assessment. Their emphasis on serving the poor and homeless is great, but at the same time it tends towards pietism when it lacks a sacramental theology. It is not just the downtrodden that we are to serve. God works through us using ordinary means as we bless our fellow man through our various vocations. As we willingly fulfill our obligations as fathers, spouses, sisters, employers, employees, God is working through us, and we serve Him in these areas just as much as when we volunteer to serve at the local soup kitchen.
4. Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, Emerging Churches (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005) 58; quoting Mark Scandrette of ReIMAGINE! in San Francisco.
5. Gibbs and Bolger, 59; quoting Anna Dodridge.
6. Gibbs and Bolger, 80.
7. Emerging Church leader Rob Bell takes this type of thought to the next level: "Oftentimes the Christian community has sent the message that we love people and build relationships in order to convert them to the Christian faith. So there is an agenda. And when there is an agenda, it isn't really love, is it?"
Rob Bell, Velvet Elvis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005) 167.
8. Gibbs and Bolger, 129.
9. I am not discounting the witness we present to unbelievers through our behavior as Christians. To quote Dr. Robert Kolb: "Christian witness can happen in any situation. The Holy Spirit can use a hit-and-run speaking of his Word to good effect. But normally the Gospel is most

easily heard, humanly speaking, when believers have created a climate of trust in a relationship with the unbeliever. Although they will not (as the song states) ‘know we are Christians by our love’—for unbelievers often love very effectively—our love builds a foundation on which speaking the Gospel can be built.”

Robert Kolb, The Christian Faith: A Lutheran Exposition (St. Louis: Concordia, 1993) 213.

10. Gibbs and Bolger, 128-129.

11. Brian McLaren’s fictional character Dr. Ruth Mitchell. Brian D. McLaren, The Last Word and the Word After That: A Tale of Faith, Doubt, and a New Kind of Christianity (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005) 141.

12. The Ten Commandments are divided into two parts, or tables. The first table, consisting of the first three commandments, summarizes our duty to God. The second table, consisting of the last seven commandments, summarizes our duty to our fellow man.

13. It should come as no surprise that unbelievers would gravitate to the Law. To quote Lutheran theologian Francis Pieper: “Since the heathen know nothing of the Gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 2:6-10: ‘neither have entered into the heart of man’), but have some knowledge of the Law (Rom. 1:32: ‘knowing the judgment of God’; Rom. 2:15: ‘work of the Law written in their hearts’), their entire religious thinking moves in the sphere of the Law. Religion to the heathen means man’s endeavor to placate the deity through his own efforts and works, through worship, sacrifices, moral exercises, ascetic discipline, and the like. The religion of the heathen is therefore a religion of the Law.” Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, Vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950) 8.

14. Gibbs and Bolger, 48.

15. Solomon’s Porch homepage, 27 Feb 2007
<<http://www.solomonsporch.com/>>.

16. Gibbs and Bolger, 237.

17. Gibbs and Bolger, 67.

18. Rob Bell, Velvet Elvis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005) 150.

19. Bell, 90.

20. “Social Gospel,” Christian Cyclopedia, Erwin L. Leuker, et. al., eds, Concordia Publishing House, 2000, 27 Feb 2007
<<http://www.lcms.org/ca/www/cyclopedia/02/display.asp?t1=S&word=SOCIALGOSPEL>>.

21. I am not arguing that we should not do good works, or downplaying that aspect of a Christian’s life. Works are necessary - they flow naturally from the life of a Christian, and are evidence of our faith. God works

through us to benefit our fellow man by our good works. Before God, however, our standing is based solely on faith, completely apart from works.

22. Bob DeWaay, "Emergent Delusion: A Critique of *A Generous Orthodoxy* by Brian McLaren," Critical Issues Commentary, Twin City Fellowship, Mar/Apr 2005, No. 87, p. 5, quoting McLaren from *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004) 121-122, 27 Feb 2007 <<http://cicministry.org/commentary/issue87.pdf>>.
23. Pastor Bob DeWaay calls this type of thinking a version of "liberation theology" (DeWaay, 5). I think it's safe to say that Pastor Ken Silva would call it "the old Social Gospel of what Dr. Walter Martin referred to as 'the Cult of Liberal Theology.'"* The Christian Cyclopedia states: "Liberal theology held that the function of the church was to establish the kingdom of God as an ethical and moral community. Since such a kingdom could not be established until the social ideals of Jesus had permeated all human society, liberal theology invented the social gospel."**
*Ken Silva, "Emerging With the Social Gospel," Apprising Ministries, 13 Dec 2005, 27 Feb 2007 <http://www.apprising.org/archives/2005/12/emerging_with_t.html>.
**"modernism," Christian Cyclopedia, Erwin L. Leuker, et. al., eds, Concordia Publishing House, 2000, 27 Feb 2007 <<http://www.lcms.org/ca/www/cyclopedia/02/display.asp?t1=m&word=MODERNISM>>.
24. Andy Crouch, Brian D. McLaren, Erwin Raphael McManus, Michael Horton, Frederica Matthewes-Green, The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives, Leonard Sweet, gen. ed. (El Cajon, CA: emergentYS Books, 2003) 213. Quoting Brian McLaren.
25. Gibbs and Bolger, 55; quoting Dieter Zander of Quest in Novato, CA.
26. Bell, 150.
27. McLaren, Last Word, xii.
28. Ken Silva, "Brian McLaren and Hell," Apprising Ministries, 28 Dec 2005, quoting from an interview of Brian McLaren with Sherry Huang of *Beliefnet*, 27 Feb 2007 <http://www.apprising.org/archives/2005/12/brian_mclaren_a.html>.
29. McLaren, Last Word, xvii.
30. Bell, 148.
31. Gibbs and Bolger, 48.
32. Gibbs and Bolger, 48.
33. Gibbs and Bolger, 56.
34. Quoted from the Lutheran Service Book (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2006)

555. You can listen to the melody here: <<http://www.lutheran-hymnal.com/lbw/lbw07.htm>>.

Sola Scriptura • ***Sola Gratia*** • ***Sola Fide***

The Social Gospel was a significant influence in the formation of the People's Church in Brandon, Manitoba, in 1919. Started by Methodist minister A. E. Smith, the People's Church attempted to provide an alternative to the traditional church, which Smith viewed as unconcerned with social issues. Protestant political activism emerged principally in England, the Lowlands, and Scandinavia under the inspiration of both social gospel movements and neo-Calvinism. Catholic political activism emerged principally in Italy, France, and Spain under the inspiration of both Rerum Novarum and its early progeny and of neo-Thomism. Both formed political parties, which now fall under the generalegis of the Christian Democratic Party movement. The social gospel is being preached in many churches today and is based on the "whole-man" concept. This means that man is made up of body, soul, and spirit and thus must have physical, mental, social and spiritual training. While it is true that man needs education, we deny that the church is designed by the Lord to so operate. The Purpose of the Church. It reached its climax in the days just prior to World War I. America was emerging from a rural society and changing into an industrial country. It was moving so fast that little time was given to the social problems that were fast materializing. In the 1870's and 80's they realized they were faced with great social problems. The industrial revolution raised problems in business and political ethics. The social gospel's origins are often traced to the rise of late 19th-century urban industrialization, immediately following the Civil War. Largely, but not exclusively, rooted in Protestant churches, the social gospel emphasized how Jesus' ethical teachings could remedy the problems caused by "Gilded Age" capitalism. Movement leaders took Jesus' message "love thy neighbor" into pulpits, published books and lectured across the country. Rauschenbusch linked Christianity to emerging theories of democratic socialism which, he believed, would lead to equality and a just society. Rauschenbusch's writings had a major impact on the development of the religious left in the 20th century. To Emergent advocates missional means leading to a focus on temporal and social issues, in contrast with a perceived evangelical overemphasis on salvation. Christianity Today (CT), by editorials and interviews, writes very positively about the Emerging Church Movement within Evangelical Christianity. This is apparent among leaders in the Emerging Church Movement who also use Loyola's "Exercises." Although dead, Loyola and other Dark Age mystics continue to greatly influence today's Emerging Church Movement with their "ancient" monastic rituals. His first written work was a pamphlet against them. It was entitled Some Gospel Truths Opened. This pamphlet was against Quakers and their beliefs. The Social Gospel movement was a Protestant intellectual movement that was most prominent during the time period of 1880-1940 in the United States and Canada, during the Third Great Awakening. It applied Christian principles to social problems, especially poverty, inequality, liquor, crime, racial tensions, slums, bad hygiene, poor schools, and the danger of war. Theologically, the Social Gospel leaders were energized by the Third Great Awakening and were overwhelmingly "post-millennialist." That is...