INNOVATIVE ECCLESIOLOGICAL PRACTICES:

EMERGING CHURCHES IN DIALOGUE WITH DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

BY

ANDREW D. ROWELL

JANUARY 31, 2007

CONTENTS

PRÉCIS

This paper uses a practical theology framework to compare Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of ecclesiological innovation with that of emerging church movement leaders. It argues that the emerging church movement is characterized by its experimentation with Christian practices. This experimentation flows from emerging church leaders' interest in adapting church forms to postmodern culture as well as typical young adult behavior. Bonhoeffer is shown to pursue ecclesiological innovation for two reasons: the shaping of church ethical integrity and facilitating fellowship. He rejects the pursuit of conversion and cultural relevance as valid reasons for ecclesiological innovation. Emerging church leaders reflect Bonhoeffer's zeal for church ethical integrity as evidenced in their justice and missional efforts. They also understand the importance of facilitating fellowship as exhibited by the high value they place on living in community and networking with one another. But Bonhoeffer can serve as a catalyst to greater theological reflection by emerging church leaders in the areas of cultural engagement, ethics, focus, preaching, evangelism, and relevance.

I. INTRODUCTION

In early 2006 the Emergent Village, a loosely affiliated group of predominantly young American church leaders, announced that they would be holding two days of "Theological Conversation" with Miroslav Volf, the Yale University theologian. Registration was limited to 100 people in order to keep a relatively intimate atmosphere. Within six hours, the conference was sold out. Eventually, this conference was opened to 300 people and it again sold out. As we will see, these participants in the emerging church movement are drawn together by their interest in new forms of church.

Some seventy-five years earlier, a young theologian in Germany discussed theology with fellow colleagues and older mentors at the University of Berlin. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was frustrated at the gap between theology and practice. All around him he saw empty churches. One friend wrote him that the situation was hopeless. Bonhoeffer's reply to the letter has been lost but it easy to discern from his friend's response that he disagreed.[1]

Bonhoeffer's pioneering work in the Confessing Church outside of the traditional German Christian church appeals to the people of the emerging church. But people are sometimes surprised to learn that Bonhoeffer rejected the work of admirers from the Oxford Movement, a group seeking renewal in the Anglican church, when they visited him at Finkenwalde. Bonhoeffer did not approve of innovation simply because it was attempting to reform the church. His innovative practices had a more narrow scope. In some ways, Bonhoeffer's twin emphases on church ethical integrity and facilitating fellowship cohere well with the emphases of the emerging church movement. But Bonhoeffer's example can also serve to challenge the emerging church movement to move beyond its current fledgling state. Before

---

[1] Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography* (rev. ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 93-94.

we can compare Bonhoeffer and the emerging church, we need to briefly articulate our method and understand more fully the emerging church movement.

II. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY FRAMEWORK

In this paper, I use a practical theology framework to compare the innovative practices of the emerging church movement with the innovative practices of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Richard Osmer gives this definition of practical theology. "Practical theology is that branch of Christian theology that seeks to construct action-guiding theories of Christian praxis in particular social contexts."[2] In this case, the particular social context being investigated is the emerging church movement. In looking historically at the discipline of practical theology, Osmer believes that four tasks have emerged as central to the field. These four tasks are the *descriptive-empirical* task which explores "What is going on?"; the *interpretive* task which explores "Why is this going on?"; the *normative* task which explores "What forms ought Christian praxis take in this particular social context?"; and the *pragmatic* task which explores "How might this area of praxis be shaped to embody more fully the normative commitments of the Christian tradition in a particular context of experience?"[3] Osmer makes clear that these tasks are interdependent and need not flow in any particular order.[4] The organization of this

---

[2] Richard Robert Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), xiv.

[3] Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*, xv-xvi. Osmer recognizes that practical theologians bring a host of different methods and presuppositions to these tasks which bring about a plurality of outcomes. Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*, 303-317.

[4] I regret that this paper oversimplifies Osmer's framework by portraying the four tasks as sequential when they are meant to be interdependent. For example, the interpretive question needs to be asked after the normative question as well as before it. Still, Osmer's tasks and my use of them sequentially demonstrate the necessity of interdisciplinary work in practical theology and what practical theology intends to accomplish. Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*, xv. Osmer has used this framework to describe the diversity of work by James Fowler. See Richard R. Osmer and Friedrich L. Schweitzer, eds., *Developing a Public Faith: New Directions in Practical Theology – Essays in Honor of James W. Fowler* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2003), 1-5.

paper is based on Osmer's four tasks of practical theological reflection.[5] Let's begin by looking

at the first task – "what is going on?"

III. DESCRIPTIVE TASK: WHAT IS GOING ON? EMERGING CHURCHES ARE DISTINGUISHED BY THEIR INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

The emerging church movement has come to prominence in the last ten years because many

mainline and conservative Protestants under the age of forty believed that a rethinking of

Christian practices needed to take place in light of a variety of cultural changes in the Western

world. A flood of books have been published in the last ten years on the subject of Christian

practices by both mainline and conservative Protestant authors.[6] These books arose out of

frustration with "mere ideas" and disembodied theology. There was a deepening sense that

traditional forms of church needed to be revitalized in order to pass on the faith better to the next

generation. Though few emerging church thinkers have been involved in this academic

discussion of Christian practices, the emerging church movement is simultaneously responding

---

[5] For different models of practical theology, see Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 10-11. See also Ray S. Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 29-31. Osmer's basic framework reflects the models of Browning and Anderson. Both Browning and Anderson begin with the experience or social context. At this point, the person asks "What then shall we do? and How then should we live?" For Anderson and Browning, the practical theology process is intended to help answer these questions by investigating: "experimental probes, interpretive paradigms, historical consciousness, and communities of memory." Unfortunately, some have come to see practical theology as the dominion of the social sciences. Osmer and Anderson explicitly repudiate this tendency in their own work which is rigorously theological. Others have criticized practical theology for being insufficiently "missional." Again, Osmer and Anderson work against this in their practical theology methodology. For example, Anderson writes, "Practical theology is a task belonging to the mission of the church and a function of those who are involved in that mission . . . . Practical theology, while emerging from the inner life of the church in its mission to the world, has its praxis in the interaction of God's mission to the world." Anderson, *Shape,* 31.

[6] Not associated with the emerging church movement but coming to parallel conclusions, Dorothy Bass has advocated for the rediscovery of Christian practices. She defines Christian practices as "things Christian people do together over time to address fundamental human needs in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world." Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, eds., *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 18. See Appendix 2. See Kenda Creasy Dean, *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 152 note 19. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God* (San Francico: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).

to these same concerns. Like those discussing Christian practices, emerging church proponents

lament program-oriented and preacher-centered approaches to church ministry. Both seek to

emphasize: the kingdom of God, ministry to the poor, the revival of artistic expression, and lay

participation.

The emerging church is notoriously difficult to define.[7] Among the leaders of the

movement, it is acknowledged that the most comprehensive treatment thus far of the emerging

church movement is the book *Emerging Churches* by Fuller Seminary researchers Eddie Gibbs

and Ryan Bolger.[8] Gibbs and Bolger conducted interviews over four years with those whom

they determined to be the most influential fifty emerging church leaders in the UK and the

United States.[9]

It is important to note that Gibbs and Bolger do not primarily define emerging churches

in terms of beliefs but rather in terms of practices. Some within the movement and some critics

of the movement want to describe the emerging church in terms of its epistemology or its

evolving theology.[10] But there are far more innovative practices in common among emerging

churches than epistemological innovations. Gibbs and Bolger list nine practices that are

common to emerging churches.

> Emerging churches (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and
> (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these three activities, they (4) welcome the

---

[7] It is probably best to talk about emerging churches as opposed to emergent churches. People get the name "emergent" from Emergent Village which is the leading U.S. organization of emerging church leaders. It is probably best not to talk about "emergent churches." See the Wikipedia article for daily changes to the definition of emerging churches! "Emerging Church Movement," *Wikipedia*. n.p. [cited 25 November 2006]. Online: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerging_church_movement See also Appendix 1. Many people are beginning to embrace "missional" as the appellation of choice.

[8] Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

[9] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 43.

[10] See Appendix 1 for more information about the definition of the emerging church movement.

stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate as producers, (7) create as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities.[11]

It is important to note that emerging churches look like other churches in many ways. I have compiled recent lists of Christian practices from Mainline, postliberal, evangelical, and Anabaptist writers.[12] Gibbs and Bolger describe emerging churches that encourage all of these standard practices. There are no "new" Christian practices being discovered.[13] Rather, classic, "ancient," orthodox practices are simply being recommissioned for duty in a new cultural context.[14] We have now looked at "what is going on?" let us move to the interpretive task.

IV. INTERPRETIVE TASK: WHY IS THIS GOING ON? EMERGING CHURCHES ARE FORMED BY THOSE RESPONDING TO THEIR CULTURE AND EXERCISING THEIR NEED TO EXPERIMENT

There are two main reasons why young people have felt the need to form emerging churches. First, a sociological reason: the church is often forced to adapt church forms to changes in the surrounding culture. Second, a psychological reason: young people need to feel the freedom to

---

[11] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 45. Gibbs and Bolger specifically identify emerging churches by their practices. They do not identify a source for their "practices" terminology and thus may have been unaware of the explicit discussion of Christian practices by other Protestant writers.

[12] See Appendix 2.

[13] Emerging church proponents agree that there is nothing new under the sun despite the infamous title of Brian McLaren's influential book *A New Kind of Christian*, which popularized the movement. McLaren admits that the "new" in the title was simply intended to evoke hope for those frustrated with their current Christian journey. McLaren does not promote separation from historic orthodox Christianity but rather deeper solidarity with it. He does support critical appraisal of 1950's-1980's American Christianity. Brian McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001).

[14] Robert Webber, a former theology professor at Wheaton College, noted students yearning for practices that transcended their 1980's evangelical upbringings. See *Ancient-Future Faith*. Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999). He then chronicled early emerging church movement practices throughout the United States in his book *The Younger Evangelicals*. Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002).

experiment with church forms in order to feel ownership of those forms.[15] Let us look briefly at

these two issues.

A. Sociological reason: Emerging churches adapt to postmodern cultures

People disagree about what to call the cultural changes in Western societies that have spurred the

growth of the emerging church movement. Descriptions such as post-colonialism, post-

Christendom, postmodernism and postmodernity are often cited. People disagree about whether

these changes are threats or opportunities for the future of Christianity. They also disagree about

how widespread these changes are currently being felt and how quickly they will spread in the

future. But there is some consensus that Western culture is changing. In some places such as

urban centers it is changing more quickly than in others. Emerging churches are adapting some

church forms in response to these changes.[16]

B. Psychological reason: Young people feel the need to experiment and to develop an ideologically compatible social group

Psychologists point out that people in their teens and young adult years are in the process of

solidifying their identity. Harvard developmental psychologist Erik Erikson theorized that the

chief developmental task of adolescence is identity formation which often continues into young

---

[15] "Anecdotally, these churches do have a different demographic than American Christianity at large (and I assume that some of these observations will be corroborated by my census survey later this spring). They are, assuredly, younger than the average church. While every church has exceptions, these churches are made up primarily of persons under 40." Tony Jones, "Emerging Practices in the Emerging Church" (paper presented at the Faithful Practices Research Conference, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, 27 March 2006): 6. Cited 27 November 2006. Online: http://www.faithfulpractices.org/Documents/Jones.pdf

[16] For more on this subject, see Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 15-26.; Darrell Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) and Brian McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000). McLaren originally published this book as *Reinventing Church* in 1998 when the postmodern discussion was in vogue. Earl Creps gives a current overview of the discussion in his book *Off-Road Disciplines: Spiritual Adventures of Missional Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 15-40.

adulthood.[17] Often adolescents attempt to establish their identity by differentiating themselves from their parents and other older authority figures, in essence saying, "I'm not sure who I am but I know for sure that I am not like them." Sharon Parks, of Harvard Divinity School, describes the distinctive stage of "young adulthood" as having achieved individuation from family but not as yet over-against society. She writes, "The young adult is 'over-against' the world-as-it-is, but in a mode that is more discerning and dialectical than 'pushing away from the dock.'"[18] Critics and supporters agree that the emerging church leaders have often had an "over-against" attitude towards traditional and megachurch forms.[19]

Steven Garber, author of *Fabric of Faithfulness,* points out that this struggle for identity is "not new to the 1990's" (or the 2000's). "Rather, in some sense deep-seated worries about existential choices and their eternal consequences are endemic to that unique period of time

---

[17] This stage may continue into young adulthood more often today because of what Erikson called "psychosocial moratorium" – the delay of identity formation because the teen is sheltered into young adulthood. Erik Erikson, "The Eight Stages of Man," *Childhood and Society* (2d ed.; New York: Norton, 1963), chap. 7. Sharon Parks says that the significance of this theory is its "enormous intuitive power." Sharon Parks, *The Critical Years: The Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 16.

[18] Parks, *Critical,* 79, 91.

[19] Critics of the emerging church movement – such as D. A. Carson, New Testament professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and author of *Becoming Conversant with the Emergent Church* – say emerging churches were founded as a protest. Cf. D.A. Carson, *Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005). Sympathizers of the emerging church movement – like Scot McKnight, New Testament professor at North Park University – agree that emerging churches were founded in protest but argue that these churches were founded for valid reasons – to protest the fact that unreached young people were not being reached. Cf. McKnight, "What is the Emerging Church." This type of "protest mentality" is typical of young adults differentiating themselves from older people and establishing their own identity.

Because the whole point of their existence is to apply practices freshly, emerging church leaders often do not want to be formally associated with the wider movement by being called "emerging churches." Rob Bell, the film-making, innovative, Grand Rapids pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church, is one example. Many do not even want to be associated with the already extremely non-restrictive "Emergent Village" – which is the most visible network of emerging church leaders in the United States. It is worth pointing out that the vast majority of (all perhaps?) emerging church leaders acknowledge being part of the orthodox Church universal – often signifying this by citing their endorsement of the Apostle's Creed. Many others are accountable to a denomination that permits them to innovate with church practice as long as they hold sufficiently to denominational underpinnings.

between adolescence and adulthood."[20] Garber suggests Augustine as an example of a young

adult who struggled with identity. I would add that Augustine struggled with the nature of the

church in his youth – being alternately impressed and disgusted by his young adult church

experiences. The thesis of Garber's book is that "The years between adolescence and adulthood

are a crucible in which moral meaning is being formed, and central to that formation is a vision

of integrity which coherently connects belief to behavior personally as well as publicly."[21]

Though Garber is not specifically discussing church leaders, his words apply well to emerging

church leaders. During their 20's and 30's, they are searching for forms of church that cohere

with their vision of how to follow Christ.

The struggle for identity is particularly visible in the history of the emerging church

movement in the United States.[22] Emerging churches were initially established as worship

services to Gen-Xers.[23] Young adult pastors started worship services, and later independent

churches, that would appeal to young adults. These churches were founded on the principle that

churches led by older adults "weren't working" and therefore innovative practices were needed.

In general, emerging church leaders are "trying things" in very small congregations.[24] These tiny

---

[20] Steven Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 18.

[21] Garber, *Fabric,* 20.

[22] My focus in this paper is the emerging church in the United States. Influential emerging church blogger, Andrew Jones, regularly reminds his readers that discussions of the emerging church in the United States do not necessarily reflect the global emerging church movement. Jones indicates that the global emerging church is even more oriented than the US emerging church toward planting churches in urban, secular settings which have been influenced by post-modernity. Club culture is one example of this setting in the UK. Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 24-25, 81-87. Cf. Andrew Jones, "Weblog: Tall Skinny Kiwi," n.p. [cited 26 November 2006]. Online: http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/

[23] People born from 1963-1978 are sometimes called Generation X – coined by Douglas Coupland in his book of the same title. Douglas Coupland, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1991).

[24] Gibbs and Bolger tend to place most of their emphasis on small emerging churches under 100 people though implementation of emerging church values is occurring in churches that are larger as well. See Appendix 1 for more about this subject.

churches can quickly test new ideas. They frequently use the word "experiment." [25] Some will fail.[26] Some will succeed. Some will only succeed in their specific context. And some will impact the wider Church.

In addition to a personal need to experiment, young adults also highly value what Sharon Parks calls "an ideologically compatible social group."[27] She writes, "There is a profound receptiveness to any network of belonging that promises a place of nurture for the potential self."[28] Young adults find enormous satisfaction from being connected to other like-minded experimenters. This phenomenon explains the why these church leaders have networked together to form a "movement."[29]

We have now looked at why the emerging church movement typically appeals to young adults. Now let us look at the normative task.

---

[25] It is entirely appropriate to view these churches as what Brian McLaren calls the R&D (research and development) departments of the wider Church. They are experimenting with practices as a kind of laboratory. Brian McLaren, "The Church Emerging & Mainline Theological Education," Lecture at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, (19 October 2005). Audio. n.p. [cited 27 November 2006]. Online: http://cleave.blogs.com/pomomusings/2005/11/emerging_church.html. Emerging church leader Barry Taylor of Sanctuary (Santa Monica, CA) admits, "Our church was always an experiment." Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 180. Emerging church leader Doug Pagitt writes, "I am increasingly convinced that what matters in our efforts is our willingness to experiment and try – to develop expressions of faith that are fully of our day and time, recognizing that our efforts will be adapted and changed in years to come" Doug Pagitt, *Church Re-Imagined: The Spiritual Formation of People in Communities of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 216.

[26] Richard R. Niebuhr calls faith crises "shipwrecks." His list of examples includes "the collapse of a career venture" and "the defeat of a cause" – both which resemble the "failure" of a church plant. Cited in Parks, *Critical Years,* 24.

[27] Parks, *Critical,* 89.

[28] Parks, *Critical,* 89.

[29] There are some who believe the emerging church movement is technically a "movement" by sociological standards. Others disagree. Cf. Jones, "Emerging," 2.

V. NORMATIVE TASK: WHAT FORMS OUGHT CHRISTIAN PRAXIS TAKE IN THIS PARTICULAR SOCIAL CONTEXT? BONHOEFFER BELIEVES INNOVATION SHOULD FURTHER CHURCH ETHICAL INTEGRITY AND FACILITATE FELLOWSHIP

A. Bonhoeffer as popular dialogue partner about church forms and practices

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who was executed by direct order of Hitler, is a particularly appropriate dialogue partner in the area of Christian practices.[30] Bonhoeffer has been influential across typical Protestant denominational boundaries in his writing about practices.[31] Bonhoeffer's pastoral training program as outlined in *Life Together* is heavily oriented toward Christian practices over against traditional theological classroom instruction. His theological instruction is embedded in concrete practices (corporate Scripture reading, hymn singing, mealtime fellowship, meditation, solitude, listening, work, confrontation, confession, and the Lord's Supper). Bonhoeffer believed that ancient Christian practices had to be innovatively appropriated to a new cultural milieu.[32] He sometimes sounded like a radical. From prison he wrote that the church should "give up all its property to those in need."[33] Later, Bonhoeffer's biographer and friend Eberhard Bethge wrote, "Having discovered the Church, Bonhoeffer took her more seriously than she was accustomed to being taken, and never ceased to

---

[30] Bonhoeffer can in some ways be called a "practical theologian" though his official titles were theologian, professor, and pastor. Andrew Root, "Practical Theology as Social Ethical Action in Christian Ministry," *IJPT* 10 (2006): 67. Andrew Root, "Seeing his theology as interdisciplinary, practice-oriented, ministry-focused, and interpretively-directed, it seems befitting to claim him as a practical theologian." "Bonhoeffer presented his first attempt at a lecture using the topic of his own starting point: the church . . . His listeners were captivated because with each chapter the systematic thinker came so surprisingly close to practical theology." Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 213.

[31] He is the only person to be quoted in all of the mainline, evangelical and Anabaptist books on Christian practices mentioned in Appendix 2.

[32] "The offices [or 'church order'] exist to serve the Church, and their spiritual rights only originate from this service. That is why the Church has to adapt its offices to the varying needs of time and place. The offices in the Church at Jerusalem had to be different from those in St Paul's missionary Churches . . . everything is done for the well-being of the Church." Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 252.

[33] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 382

appeal for more appropriate forms of life and witness to replace perverted ones."[34] This

innovative use of practices has made Bonhoeffer particularly attractive to seminarians frustrated

with traditional seminaries. In 1967, Jaroslav Pelikan wrote that

> college students who insist that they are not very religious stay away from Chapel and
> read Bonhoeffer; [while] theological students who are bored by traditional dogmatics
> have formed little Bonhoeffer coteries at various seminaries.[35]

It is not surprising William Hamilton pointed out in 1964 that Bonhoeffer was very much alive

"where men are struggling with new forms of the congregation."[36]

Furthermore, people want to claim Bonhoeffer as their own because of the exemplary

nature of his life. Many have called him a "martyr" and a "saint." He famously wrote "when

Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."[37] Costly ethics are evident in Bonhoeffer's

personal life as he chose to return to Germany to participate with his country under Nazism

despite opportunities to remain personally secure by remaining outside the country. The choice

to plot against Hitler ultimately led to his death. Because of the charismatic nature of his story,

many people want to claim him as a supporter of their cause.

Because of this popularity, it is important to be warned by two methodological

considerations.

---

[34] Ebehard Bethge, *Bonhoeffer: Exile and Martyr* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 61.

[35] David H. Hopper, *A Dissent on Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 20. Cited in Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 8.

[36] William Hamilton, "Bonhoeffer: Christology and Ethic United" in *Christianity and Crisis* 23 (October 19, 1964): 195. Cited in Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 24. Cf. Roland Martinson, "Spiritual but Not Religious: Reaching an Invisible Generation," *CITAM* 29 (2002): 326-340. Martinson suggests Bonhoeffer as a helpful dialogue partner for young adults in Generation X but does not explore this in detail.

[37] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 89. Bonhoeffer scholars refer to this work as "*Discipleship*" after its original German title *Nachfolge.*

B. **Methodological considerations for studying Bonhoeffer**

1. The problem of simplistic identification with Bonhoeffer against Nazism

First, it is important to exercise caution in applying Bonhoeffer's insights to other settings.

Stephen Haynes, in his book *The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint,* points

out that Bonhoeffer's legacy has been appropriated by a wildly divergent mix of people: radicals,

secularists, liberation theologians, pacifists, abortion protesters, conservatives, and Viet Nam

veterans.[38] His life and writings appeal in different ways to different groups.

> His spirituality may be cast in traditional categories familiar to orthodox Christians (e.g.,
> commitment to prayer, Bible reading, preaching), in more progressive terms that appeal
> to mainline liberals (e.g., discipleship that emphasizes peace and justice), or in quasi-
> secular terms suited to a pluralistic, post-Christian culture (integrity between his
> convictions and behavior, advocacy for human rights).[39]

Sometimes these differences are simply differences of emphasis. But unfortunately, inadequate

understandings of Bonhoeffer's life and work have often been used to justify behavior far

removed from his circumstances. For example, Paul Hill, who murdered a physician who

performed abortions, cited Bonhoeffer as an inspiration for his actions.[40] At the heart of these

dubious conclusions, Haynes concludes, is the tendency to "establish parallels between Nazism

and contemporary movements or programs we find distasteful."[41] If people associate their

oppressor with Hitler, they may take unwarranted actions "based on Bonhoeffer." There are

certainly situations that are analogous to Bonhoeffer's plight. But warranted references to

Bonhoeffer's moral authority rest on their degree of similarity to his circumstances. Bonhoeffer

---

[38] Stephen R. Haynes, *The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004).

[39] Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 105.

[40] Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 171.

[41] Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 174.

scholar John de Gruchy does not shy away from the issue of moral authority. He writes this about Bonhoeffer scholarship, "The whole point of these efforts . . . is to show the significance for contemporary issues facing the church and society 'in our backyard' . . . If approached rightly, critically as well as constructively, Bonhoeffer's legacy still speaks to us in remarkable ways."[42] De Gruchy, in his book *Bonhoeffer and South Africa: Theology in Dialogue,* serves as a good example of this careful approach by cautioning the reader that "the Holocaust and apartheid cannot be equated."[43] Whereas Bonhoeffer's actions may have been morally acceptable, differences between Bonhoeffer's circumstances and the present situation must be considered in determining the moral defensibility of an action.

2. The problem of studying both Bonhoeffer's life and writings

Second, it is important to acknowledge that students of Bonhoeffer necessarily study both his writings and his life.

> Bonhoeffer's unique place in the history of modern religious though must rest on assessments of his life as well as his thought. For most interpreters have found it impossible to ignore the nexus of belief and behavior revealed in Bonhoeffer's life.[44]

Because of the unfinished and occasional nature of his writings, both modern and postmodern scholars try to clarify his writings by his actions. Often the contours of his life are allowed to overshadow his writings. For example, Hill, the man who murdered an abortionist was inspired by Bonhoeffer's participation in the plots to kill Hitler which Bonhoeffer wrote nothing directly

---

[42] John W. De Gruchy, "A Concrete Ethic of the Cross: Interpreting Bonhoeffer's Ethics in North America's Backyard," *USQR* 58 (2004): 44.

[43] John W. de Gruchy, *Bonhoeffer and South Africa: Theology in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 42. Cited in Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 50.

[44] Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 9.

about. Hill did not indicate that he was familiar with Bonhoeffer's passionate advocacy of peacemaking in his writings.[45]

His quotable style can also lead to misinterpretation. Robert Huldschiner comments,

It is the unhappy genius of Dietrich Bonhoeffer to have coined a few easily translatable terms (religionless Christianity, man for others, world come of age) that could be cheerfully misunderstood by all those around the globe in search of respectable support for their rejection of a religious dimension of life.[46]

Biographical and written evidence can provide a fuller version of Bonhoeffer's thoughts than isolated quotes. This paper attempts to sketch the motivation behind Bonhoeffer's ecclesiological innovations and the parameters he set for those innovations. This will necessarily include looking at his writings and his life.

3. The problem of assuming Bonhoeffer would have approved of all innovations

Despite his popularity with the young and those who like to innovate, he did not advocate innovation simply because it was new. For example, members of the Oxford Movement, an Anglo-Catholic renewal movement, thought that Bonhoeffer would support their innovative efforts so they visited him at Finkenwalde. Instead, Bonhoeffer was concerned that they "lacked the strength of the preaching of the cross and he criticized their indifference to the 'Confession' and their 'unsteadiness' that paralyzed them with regard to church politics."[47] This incident should cause innovators to pause before assuming Bonhoeffer would endorse their innovations. His comments point to two of his convictions. Bonhoeffer instituted ecclesiological innovation

---

[45] Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 171.

[46] Robert E. Huldschiner, "A Review Article – The Quest for the Historical Bonhoeffer," *Lutheran Forum* 3 (September 1969): 12-13. Cited in Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 30.

[47] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1986-1999) 14: 516-517. Cited in Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 470.

for two reasons. First, ecclesiological innovation was needed in order to preserve church ethical integrity.[48] Second, ecclesiological innovation was needed in order to facilitate fellowship among believers.[49]

C. Valid reasons for innovating according to Bonhoeffer

1. Church ethical integrity

Bonhoeffer believed in pursuing church ethical integrity. Because Nazi party sympathizers were appointed to head the Lutheran church in Germany and later the church was governed directly by the Reich, Bonhoeffer saw the church lose its freedom to speak prophetically about ethical behavior. He and other Confessional leaders tried to persuade pastors to resist Nazi influence. Some prayed publicly for those imprisoned by the state and spoke out against measures that marginalized Jews.

Bonhoeffer and his colleagues tried every possible avenue in order to remain within the government church. They wrote letters to the government, met with government officials, and tried to raise international pressure in order to reduce the force of the government restrictions.[50] They were able to persuade six thousand pastors to sign a protest denouncing the law that only

[48] Or "church discipline." For many today, the phrase "church discipline" conjures up visions of witch trials and excommunication that are far from Bonhoeffer's meaning. This might also be called "church discipleship" but "discipleship and evangelism are frequently linked in evangelical discourse, one reason mainline Christians shy from the term [discipleship]." Haynes, *Phenomenon,* 39. Ethics is crucial to his meaning here.

[49] Betge, *Bonhoeffer,* 208. About 1932, Bethage writes, "It was the first time that they had spoken about things like forming *fellowship*, committing themselves to organized spiritual life and the possibilities of serving in social settlement work" [Italics mine].

[50] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 490. By 1935, "Bonhoeffer was convinced that its [the Confessing church's] legitimacy could not be safeguarded by constitution and law, but only through its witness on behalf of those who were voiceless." Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 444. "Externally, all the church could do was confess and suffer." Later from prison Bonhoeffer asked, "What do a church, a community, a sermon, a liturgy, a Christian life mean in a religionless world?" He answered, "the church is the church only when it exists for others . . . It must tell people of every calling what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others." Bonhoeffer, *Letters,* 282.

Aryans could be preachers in October 1933.[51] After the Barmen declaration, the resisting pastors understood themselves as the true "Confessing Church."[52] Eventually they were forced to concentrate their efforts in isolated regions of the church where the government was exercising less force.

It was in these areas where they started the preachers' seminaries like the one led by Bonhoeffer at Finkenwalde. Professors who had resisted Nazi efforts had been forced out of the universities where pastors were typically trained. Bonhoeffer wrote in a letter to a friend at this time,

> I no longer believe in the university, and never have really believed in it – to your irritation. The entire education of the younger generation of theologians belongs today in church cloister-like schools, in which pure doctrine, the Sermon on the Mount and worship are taken seriously – as they never are (and in present circumstances couldn't be) at the university. It is also high time we broke with our theologically based restraint towards the state's actions – which is, after all, only fear. "Speak out for those who cannot speak" – who in the church today realizes that this is the very least that the Bible requires of us?[53]

Bonhoeffer believed innovative theological education was necessary because of the need for ethical integrity – to speak out for those who cannot speak.

Ecclesiological innovation was crucial because of the apostasy of the German Christian church. Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* flows from this concern that grace (which was emphasized in the Lutheran church) be manifested in discipleship (ethical action in the political realm). According to Bonhoeffer, "renewal could only occur through correct baptismal discipline."[54] – confirming one's infant baptism with action.

---

[51] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 311.

[52] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 371.

[53] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 411.

[54] *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke* 16: 582. Cited in Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 708.

Bonhoeffer wanted Christians to participate beyond the church in the political realm. This differed from traditional Lutheran theology which was slow to critique the state.

> Like Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer had always believed that "today Luther would say the opposite of what he said then" in order to state the same essential message. Once, faith had meant leaving the cloister. Now, faith might mean a reopening of the cloister; and faith could also mean entering the world of politics.[55]

In all of these actions, Bonhoeffer was urging the church to move beyond its cloistered ways to act Christianly in the world. According to Bonhoeffer, the church is not simply an example to the world but must remember its "mission towards the world."[56] In *Ethics,* Bonhoeffer wrote, "The more exclusively we acknowledge and confess Christ as our Lord, the more fully the wide range of his dominion will be disclosed to us."[57] Bonhoeffer wanted to see Christians develop spiritual depth and centrifugal momentum. For Bonhoeffer, fresh church practices needed to be designed to help Christians more fully live out the Sermon on the Mount.

2. Facilitating fellowship

The second reason Bonhoeffer pursued ecclesiological innovation was that faithful believers need the support and fellowship of other faithful believers.

When the first class was ready to graduate from Finkenwalde, Bonhoeffer received permission to invite six of them to stay and demonstrate community life to the next group. But for Bonhoeffer, "Christian community is not some vague feeling of togetherness," rather it is rooted in Christology.[58] As Bonhoeffer writes in *Ethics*, "The church is nothing but the part of

---

[55] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 455.

[56] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 710.

[57] See *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke* 8:237 cited in Bethage, *Bonhoeffer,* 718.

[58] Clifford Green, "Human sociality and Christian community," in *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (ed. John W. de Gruchy; Cambridge: Cambridge, 1999), 124.

humanity in which Christ has really taken form."[59] Bonhoeffer believed that engaging in community allows one to experience Christ in the other. This understanding of community which is articulated in *Sanctorum Communio* manifested itself in the practices of the theological college described in *Life Together*. At Finkenwalde and the other locations where they were able to meet, Bonhoeffer created a structure where the seminarians worked, ate, prayed, and played together "in Christ."

Less well-known are Bonhoeffer's extensive ecumenical travels. Bonhoeffer was young, single, and belonged to a well-connected, affluent family. This allowed him the freedom to travel and attend gatherings with other Christian leaders. He began as a young theologian delegate to international conferences. Later, he lobbied the international Christian community to reject German Christian (Nazi-supported) delegates and accept only Confessional church delegates from Germany. On the whole, his efforts were formally unsuccessful in this regard. Still, during these trips he established relationships with Christian leaders, especially Bishop George Bell, who would provide emotional and organizational support during the war.[60] During the height of the war, he used his contacts in Switzerland and England to urge the Allies to negotiate with German generals if Hitler were overthrown. Again, his efforts were largely ignored. Behind all of these efforts, however, is the idea of fellowship. As the men found joy and strength in one another at Finkenwalde, so the Confessing church sought support from their international brothers and sisters in their struggle. Bonhoeffer went to great lengths – traveling and writing messages in code – to communicate with both his Finkenwalde pastors and his international friends.

---

[59] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 83.

[60] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 356.

Because Bonhoeffer understood the importance of fellowship, he supported the people
who founded the monthly periodical *Evangelische Theologie* and the organization The Society of
Protestant Theology. He saw these as potential vehicles for fellowship development among
Confessing theologians.[61] Bonhoeffer believed that cooperation with others resulted in greater
stability and strength. "He believed that the confessionally based opposition could be saved
from sterility by the Sermon on the Mount, while that segment of the opposition with its roots in
the Sermon could be rescued from mere enthusiasm by the confession."[62] Again, we see
Bonhoeffer's emphasis on church ethical transformation (e.g. Sermon on the Mount) and
fellowship (e.g. a formal unifying confession such as the Barmen Declaration).[63]

D. Invalid reasons for innovating according to Bonhoeffer

In order to compare Bonhoeffer's views with that of emerging church leaders, it is important to
investigate two areas in which Bonhoeffer explicitly disagreed with innovators. First,
Bonhoeffer did not pursue innovation for the sake of conversion. Second, his practices were not
focused on making Christian practices more culturally relevant. Let us look at these points in
sequence.

1. Conversion

Unlike others today, Bonhoeffer did not pursue ecclesiological innovation for the sake of
evangelism. Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer's friend and biographer, reports that Bonhoeffer

---

[61] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 711.

[62] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 372.

[63] Green, "Human sociality," 123. Green notices these two aspects of Bonhoeffer's life as well.
"Bonhoeffer's theological and ethical work after Hitler's ascent in 1933 had two foci: first, the struggle for the
church to be faithful, the *Kirchenkampf;* secondly, beginning in the 1930s, working for peace and Germany's future
in the resistance movement."

"reacted strongly against any interpretation of *Discipleship* or *Life Together* as teachings aimed at conversion."[64] In this regard, Bonhoeffer's surrounding culture must be understood. The German people considered themselves Christians but for many that "conversion" was simply an inner reality that did not affect the ethical sphere of life. His *Discipleship*, *Ethics,* and *Letters* represent a cry for his people to embrace the ethical life once again. He ridiculed the Oxford Movement for trying to convert Hitler. Bonhoeffer said, "The Oxford Movement has been naïve enough to try to convert Hitler – a ridiculous failure to understand what is going on."[65] The problem was not that Hitler had never become a Christian but that he did not take seriously the call to obedience to the Sermon on the Mount.[66] We will discuss below how emerging church leaders might think about Bonhoeffer's aversion to the language of conversion.

2. Cultural relevance

Second, Bonhoeffer did not advocate forming Christian communities that would seek to be relevant to their surrounding culture. Though he was interested in Bultmann's provocative work adjusting Christianity to modernity, Bonhoeffer did not focus on making the church more understandable to young people, or urban people, etc. It is true that Bonhoeffer created Sunday school lessons for children in Spain and visited churches outside his culture in Harlem. He had to adjust to country life when forced out of Berlin. But on the whole, Bonhoeffer did not focus on adjusting the medium of church practices for the sake of making the gospel relevant.

---

[64] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 470.

[65] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 470.

[66] "We are not Christ, but if we want to be Christians, we must have some share in Christ's large-heartedness by acting with responsibility and in freedom when the hour of danger comes, and by showing a real sympathy that springs, not from fear, but from the liberating and redeeming love of Christ for all who suffer. Mere waiting and looking on is not Christian behavior. The Christian is called to sympathy and action, not in the first place by one's own sufferings, but by the sufferings of one's brethren, for whose sake Christ suffered." *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke* 8:34. Cited in Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 721.

He specifically rejected the language of relevance arguing in his essay, "The Interpretation of the New Testament" that people sometimes use the search for relevance to ignore what the Bible actually teaches.

> But where the question of relevance becomes the *theme of theology*, we can be certain that the cause has already been betrayed and sold out . . . The question of *relevance* all too easily acquires a false emphasis and displaces the question of *fact.* What is the sense in talking about presentation when we cannot even feel completely sure about what we are presenting?[67]

Bonhoeffer is here arguing that the message of Christianity, what he calls "the fact of the Christian message," must be kept primary. It is the controlling consideration. The "presentation" of that gospel is secondary.

It is important to note that cultural particularity was used for menacing purposes in his day. Bonhoeffer sees this search for relevance in "German Christian theology" – those who were cooperating with the Nazis.[68] In *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer eloquently warns of the illusion of the ideal community. Bonhoeffer believed that there was a tendency for those who were trying to engineer an ideal community to destroy anyone who would blemish their ideal – the weak, the poor, and the foreigner. At worst, this idealistic thinking resembles Hitler's ideology. For Bonhoeffer the antidote to this utopianism consisted of the preaching of the cross, obeying the Sermon on the Mount, confession, thanksgiving and prayer. Discipleship is not perfection but rather suffering for others and in this, communing with Christ.[69] Below we will take up the implications of this idea for emerging church leaders.

---

[67] Geffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson, *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 158.

[68] Kelly and Nelson, *Testament,* 157.

[69] Even in ecumenical circles, Bonhoeffer did not believe that the ideal should be allowed to snuff out the different. "Bonhoeffer maintained that the church must leave room for bad theologies, and that the better ones must not be allowed to expel the worse." Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 456.

VI. PRAGMATIC TASK: HOW MIGHT THIS AREA OF PRAXIS BE SHAPED TO EMBODY MORE FULLY THE NORMATIVE COMMITMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION IN A PARTICULAR CONTEXT OF EXPERIENCE?

There are a number of ways that emerging church leaders pursue ecclesiological innovations in ways fitting with Bonhoeffer's legacy. But there are also ways that Bonhoeffer can serve as a catalyst for deeper reflection by emerging church leaders. Below we move through the same four points that we moved through in the normative task: two ways that Bonhoeffer pursued innovation (church ethical integrity and facilitating fellowship) and two ways that he rejected innovation (conversion and cultural relevance). In each case, we suggest ways that the emerging church resembles Bonhoeffer and ways that Bonhoeffer might challenge emerging church leaders to deeper reflection.

A. How emerging churches compare with Bonhoeffer's goal to see church ethical integrity

Bonhoeffer's first goal was to make the church more faithful to its ethical convictions. Even before Hitler rose to power, Bonhoeffer lamented the way urban workers were treated by the church. "Where is the real discussion among gospel, church-community, and the proletariat?"[70] Karen Ward echoes this concern in her parish in Seattle,

> They took a poll here in my area of Seattle and found that 95% of the nonchurched have a favorable view of Jesus, so Jesus is not the problem. It is the church they dislike, because they do not readily see the church living out his teachings.[71]

Emerging church leaders are distinguished by their interest in justice issues. For example, the Emergent Village is going to focus on justice issues during 2007. Brian McLaren and others

---

[70] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio* (vol. 1 of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works;* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 272.

[71] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 48.

have protested the Iraq war and tax cuts to the rich. Many of the churches are located in urban environments where poverty and crime are constant realities. Among the practices mentioned by Gibbs and Bolger, many have to do with Bonhoeffer's ethical behavior "for others": (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, (4) welcome the stranger, and (5) serve with generosity.[72] Bonhoeffer would no doubt appreciate this emphasis on behavior inspired by the Sermon on the Mount.

In order to serve in the world, Bonhoeffer equipped himself and others with the spiritual resources that would strengthen one's character. There are some indicators that the emerging church movement is trying to do the same. Tony Jones, the only employee of the Emergent Village, has written a book about ancient spiritual disciplines.[73] Two practices named by Gibbs and Bolger as part of the ethos of emerging churches are: "(3) live highly communal lives" and "(9) take part in spiritual activities."[74] In many ways, Bonhoeffer and emerging church leaders share similar convictions.

However, emerging church leaders will be more effective by being cognizant of four ways that they differ from Bonhoeffer's ministry. First, emerging church leaders will want to consider how they will protest governmental injustice and church apostasy in light of their particular cultural circumstances. Nazism cannot validly be equated with the United States government, nor their denominational elders with the German Christians. The differences need to be carefully considered. Stanley Hauerwas suggests Bonhoeffer, if he would have lived longer, would have seen more fully that the church needs to be an example to a post-

---

[72] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 45. I have preserved Gibbs and Bolger's numbering.

[73] Tony Jones, *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

[74] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 45. I have preserved Gibbs and Bolger's numbering.

Christendom world.[75] In order to further his objectives in varying circumstances, Bonhoeffer

used a variety of roles throughout his life: professor, author, radio speaker, pastor to foreigners in

a foreign land, international diplomat, protestor, abbot, hermit, letter-writer, and double-agent.

How will emerging church leaders respond to their circumstances? The responses may need to

be fluid as exhibited in Bonhoeffer's life. The best emerging church leaders do not simply try to

justify their existence by arguing with critics on the internet. Rather they write constructive

theological works, inspire significant social justice action, and participate in projects with people

outside of their denominational circles. Birthed in response to cultural changes such as

postmodernity, emerging church leaders will continue to need to think carefully about ethical

response.

Second, emerging church leaders need to consider how to incorporate discipline and

authority into their church leadership. Young adults may relate to Bonhoeffer's resistance to his

Nazi authorities. Yet Bonhoeffer created a structured regimen in his preacher's academies and

emphasized obedience to godly church leaders. In 2006, emerging church leaders reacted in

dismay to Spencer Burke's book that seems to deny the Trinity and Mark Driscoll's comments

about women.[76] Because these leaders are not members of a structure, there are no formal

mechanisms for response. Some emerging church leaders reacted by distancing themselves from

---

[75] Stanley Hauerwas, *Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Violence* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2004), 33-54.

[76] Spencer Burke, *A Heretic's Guide to Eternity* (San Franciso: Jossey-Bass, 2006). Mark Driscoll, "Evangelical Leader Quits Amid Allegations of Gay Sex and Drug Use," *Weblog: Resurgence*. n.p. [cited 25 December 2006]. Online: http://theresurgence.com/md_blog_2006-11-03_evangelical_leader_quits. I hesitate to mention specific people. These have been painful encounters for Burke and Driscoll and those who have felt hurt by them. These incidents simply demonstrate that there are few "disciplinary" mechanisms within the emerging church community. One friend who read this paper noted that Driscoll's comments about women bear some resemblance to those of Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer's writing reflects traditional, hierarchical views of gender roles. Scholars speculate about what Bonhoeffer would have thought about women if he had lived today.

these leaders. Others responded with angry blog posts. Emerging church leaders will need to move beyond this crude form of discipline by forming consensus positions on a variety of issues.

Third, emerging church leaders need to continue to try to narrow their focus. Bonhoeffer's theological vision continued with him from *Sanctorum Communio* in 1930 through the dark days of 1945. It is not always clear what role innovations in emerging churches play. For example, many emerging church leaders do an excellent job of adapting their meetings to a certain cultural community such as the clubbers or the urban young adults. However, they sometimes languish after the cultural accommodation has been made. These churches might be strengthened by greater focus such as the one that fueled Bonhoeffer: equipping Christians for ethical integrity in the world.

Fourth, emerging church leaders need to continue to assess the importance of preaching. Bonhoeffer and the Confessing church mourned greatly that they were forbidden to preach. In general, emerging church leaders do not emphasize preaching as a powerful way to see the formation of ethical integrity.[77] Emerging church leaders have explored the role of narrative and interaction in preaching but this topic remains relatively unimportant in emerging church literature.[78]

B. How emerging churches compare with Bonhoeffer's goal to see greater fellowship

Second, Bonhoeffer emphasized innovative practices that would lead to greater fellowship. This was the central purpose of his ecumenical travels and his work with the preachers' academies.

---

[77] For example, Gibbs and Bolger's index has only three references in the index to preaching. Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging,* 20, 165, 229.

[78] Doug Pagitt, *Preaching Re-Imagined: The Role of the Sermon in Communities of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

Though few pastors will travel as Bonhoeffer did or live in a monastic setting, emerging church leaders are creatively searching out support and companionship. Like the preacher's schools, many emerging church leaders tend to live with or near other people in their local church community. Furthermore, there are a number of different organizations loosely connected to the emerging church movement. The Emergent Village, the most well-known emerging church organization in the United States, specifically exists to help like-minded church leaders converse with one another. Bonhoeffer communicated by letter, publication and travel with his ecumenical colleagues – searching for consensus and support. Emerging church leaders communicate with one another in almost identical ways except that letters are replaced by internet communication. From these meetings, emerging church leaders develop connections that foster writing books together and conferring about how to address issues of the day including homosexuality and reaching out to artistic, urban, secular people.

In light of Bonhoeffer's example, emerging church leaders may want to reconsider their reluctance to craft corporate theological statements. The emerging church has been skittish about "statements of faith" because of the reductionistic and divisive nature of these types of statements. But this should not dissuade emerging church leaders from trying to come to consensus on important issues. As yet, emerging church leaders tend to publish books by individuals. Bonhoeffer and the Confessing church continually sought to craft representative statements on issues of the day. Bonhoeffer often had his wording changed or voted down. But these statements of unity carried considerable force. They affirmed that there was a large community of people who agreed on these points. As stated above, emerging church leaders are distinguished by their tendency to innovate and experiment. They tend to have strong

independent personalities. But emerging church leaders could work together to articulate

consensus positions on issues important to them[79]

C. How emerging churches compare with Bonhoeffer's aversion to conversion

We also identified two reasons that Bonhoeffer did not consider valid for instituting innovations.

Bonhoeffer was more concerned about inspiring lapsed Christians to Christ-propelled

ethical action than conversion. Emerging churches are often planted in order to reach people

who are not usually reached by traditional churches. Gibbs and Bolger say that the "first

emerging church" was the Nine O'clock Service (NOS) which began in the north of England and

ran from 1987-1995. Paul Wilson says about it, "NOS was the most exciting club in the U.K. for

Christians or non-Christians . . . It was amazing dance culture . . . and it was a gritty urban

expression of the church."[80] The Christians of NOS would fully participate in club culture.

Bonhoeffer did not face post-Christendom directly. During his time, most Germans

considered themselves Christians and had been baptized as infants. Thus Bonhoeffer exhorted

them to live in a Christ-like way. Emerging church leaders need to reflect theologically on

conversion. They will need to interact with other theologians who have considered what it

means for the church to be missional within explicitly secular cultures. Some may find

Bonhoeffer's aversion to conversion applicable to today's culture. Others may conclude that

---

[79] See Ancient Evangelical Future's *The Call* statement as an attempt in 2006 to find consensus on a number of current issues. This group includes some people who consider themselves part of the emerging church movement such as Tony Jones, Dan Kimball, Brian McLaren and Holly Rankin Zaher. Robert Webber, "The Call," n.p. [cited 25 December 2006]. Online: http://www.growcenter.org/AEFCall.htm

[80] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 85.

regardless whether Bonhoeffer would be pro or anti conversion today, it is preferable to be pro-conversion in this post-Christendom culture.[81]

D. How emerging churches compare with Bonhoeffer's aversion to idealistic communities

Finally, though Bonhoeffer did create a homogenous community at Finkenwalde, he did not form churches based on a certain culture. Emerging church leaders tend to reject the affinity-based church structures of the American megachurch of the 1980's. Many congregations are small and thus have children, adults and senior citizens worshipping together. They promote racial and economic diversity. But despite noble aims, many emerging churches tend to consist largely of young people. These young adults are also often highly educated with a strong appreciation for artistic expression. Bonhoeffer did not consider the idea of church planting when other faithful churches were in the area. He did not think about planting churches that were designed for people with negative associations toward the traditional church. Church leaders may decide to form churches like this but they will need to look to other theologians for guidance. Still, they should take into account Bonhoeffer's concern that this practice has the tendency to alienate and have pernicious effects on others outside of that group.

VII. CONCLUSION

The practical theology framework has helped us move from "what is going on?" to "why is it going on?" With Bonhoeffer as dialogue partner we moved to "what should be going on?" and

---

[81] Cf. Gordon T. Smith, *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion & Authentic Transformation* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2001).

finally to "how the emerging church movement might change what is going on." The emerging church shares Bonhoeffer's desire to encourage ethical integrity outside of traditional religiosity and to facilitate fellowship.

Still, there are a number of ways that the young emerging church movement can learn and be challenged by Bonhoeffer's example. (1) Emerging church leaders will need to move beyond deconstruction and consider a variety of culturally appropriate methods to promote change in ecclesiological and political institutions. (2) Emerging church leaders need to consider how to incorporate stronger bonds of unity among churches in order to help one another when moral and theological aberrations surface. (3) Though innovative practices will understandably be experimental, they eventually need to be subjected to detailed examination. Innovative practices need to accomplish more than effective cultural adaptation. (4) Emerging church leaders need to more effectively use preaching. Traditional preaching has been deconstructed but little has replaced it. Other emerging church leaders have ignored the deconstruction and have continued to preach in the traditional style. (5) Emerging church leaders could gain strength as a movement by working together to articulate consensus positions on issues important to them (6) Emerging church leaders need to articulate a theologically nuanced understanding of conversion so that they can better articulate what they are trying do in cultural engagement. (7) Emerging church leaders will need to continue to be self-critical about their own homogeneity.

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITIONS OF THE EMERGING CHURCH MOVEMENT IN *EMERGING CHURCHES*
BY GIBBS AND BOLGER

My critique of Gibbs and Bolger's *Emerging Churches* is that it dwells almost exclusively on

congregations under fifty people. It tacitly implies that larger churches are too bulky and

institutional to introduce radical innovative practices. Though this view underestimates the

leadership capability of some large church pastors, the point is generally true. There are large

church pastors, traditional church pastors, youth pastors, and Next-Gen pastors "in the

conversation" at any Emergent Village conference or emerging church website, but you do not

hear from them in this book. Gibbs and Bolger have made the crucial decision to exclude Gen-X

megachurches and Gen-X/young adult services from their portrait of the emerging church. They

admit that these forms of church are often what people think of when they use the term emerging

churches. They write,

> Popularly, the term *emerging church* has been applied to high-profile, youth-oriented
> congregations that have gained attention on account of their rapid numerical growth; their
> ability to attract (or retain) twentysomethings; their contemporary worship, which draws
> from popular musical styles; and their ability to promote themselves to the Christian
> subculture through websites and by word of mouth.[82]

Though most people consider these youthful expressions of church part of the emerging church

movement, Gibbs and Bolger dismiss these expressions as hopelessly "modern." They write,

> Taking postmodernity seriously requires that all church practices come into question. In
> contrast, Gen-X churches involve simply changes in strategy from what came before
> (e.g., adding stories, video, raw music, vulnerable preaching, art, and candles). However,
> to be missional is to go way beyond strategy. It is to look for church practices that can be
> embodied within a particular culture. In other words, theologies given birth within
> modernity will not transfer to postmodern cultures.[83]

---

[82] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 41.

[83] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 34.

They too quickly dismiss the possibility that Gen-X churches are missional. Popularized by Darrell Guder's *The Missional Church,* the term "missional" means a fresh application of the techniques of missiology to Western culture. According to this definition, there is no reason why only church plants or house churches can be missional. In fact, the book is edited by Darrell Guder, whose background is in the PCUSA, with the intention of reviving mainline churches.[84] The word "postmodern" is also problematic as all acknowledge that modernity is not something people truly move beyond. The influence of modernity continues in the form of printed Bibles, automobiles, public transit, computers, phones, etc.

Because of their definition, the description by Gibbs and Bolger of "emerging churches" becomes very similar to "house churches." A small group of 10-100 people come together, discuss some Scripture, care for one another, stress participation in worship, eat a meal together, share leadership, do good to those in the community, and do friendship evangelism. They write, "When emerging churches meet in a large congregational setting, they widen their community ties and build on the intimacy developed in their small groups. These networks of small groups may gather together on a monthly basis. However, the large group meeting is of secondary importance."[85] There are many church leaders who are not specifically house church-oriented that have been highly involved in discussing how to minister to postmoderns.

Most of the leaders of the emerging church Gibbs and Bolger interviewed would consider the Gen-X church leaders part of the "emerging church conversation." Consider these definitions.

---

[84] Guder, *Missional Church.*

[85] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 112.

- Jonny Baker: "Church, as we have inherited it, is no longer working for vast groups of people. The world has changed so much. So I think the term *emerging church* is nothing more than a way of expressing that we need new forms of church that relate to culture."
- Ben Edson: "So emerging church for me is quite simply a church that is rooted in the emerging context and is exploring worship, mission, and community within that context."
- Karen Ward: what is "coming to the surface that is new, unformed, still happening, emerging."
- Mark Scandrette: "The emerging church is a quest for a more integrated and whole life of faith. There is a bit of theological questioning going on, focusing more on kingdom theology, the inner life, friendship/community, justice, earth keeping, inclusivity, and inspirational leadership. In addition, the arts are in a renaissance, as are the classical spiritual disciplines. Overall, it is a quest for a holistic spirituality."
- Gibbs and Bolger describe Doug Pagitt's definition which they end up endorsing. "He [Pagitt] sees three types of responses to the current context: (1) a return to the Reformation (e.g., Mars Hill in Seattle); (2) deep systemic changes, but Christianity and the church are still in the center and theological changes are not needed (e.g., University Baptist in Waco and Mosaic in Los Angeles); and (3) seeing the church as not necessarily the center of God's intentions. God is working in the world, and the church has the option to join God or not. The third approach focuses more on the kingdom than on the church, and it reflects the perspective of Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis and characterizes what Pagitt would classify as emerging."[86]

Gibbs and Bolger essentially decide to accept Pagitt's most exclusive third approach as their working definition and ignore the broader definitions articulated by Baker, Edson, Ward and Scandrette. It should also be said that the third approach is not articulated well in the quote above. How is the church not the center of God's intentions? They are trying to say that these churches have a fresh awareness of the importance of a kingdom perspective but this is overstated and unclear in the quote.

Gibbs and Bolger could not profile everyone who is part of the emerging church conversation. They have to draw the line somewhere. So they have decided to argue that the emerging church is very different from other expressions of church. But their definition ends up excluding some of the leading voices in the movement: Brian McLaren, Chris Seay, Rob Bell, Mark Driscoll, and Erwin McManus. McLaren, indisputably one of the leaders of the

---

[86] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 41-42.

movement, is rarely quoted in the book and his church is never mentioned as an example of an emerging church. Rob Bell, who is not explicitly part of the movement but was featured in the *Christianity Today* article by Andy Crouch on the emerging church and is extremely influential among young church leaders, is never mentioned.[87] For Gibbs and Bolger, if you have not planted it from scratch, then it does not count as an "emerging church." There are a range of emerging churches who are involved in the conversation. However, Gibbs and Bolger limit themselves to just numbers 8-9.

1. Mosaic (Erwin McManus)
2. Mars Hill Church (Mark Driscoll)
3. Traditional churches that are being led by young pastors who are trying to adapt them to reach a postmodern culture
4. Gen-X/young adult services
5. Gen-X Churches
6. Mars Hill Bible Church (Rob Bell)
7. Cedar Ridge Community Church (Brian McLaren)
8. Solomon's Porch (Doug Pagitt)
9. House churches / post-modern church plants

To be fair, Gibbs and Bolger intend to include the overhaul of traditional churches and also large churches in their analysis. They write,

> Most of these emerging churches are new, while others represent the rejuvenation of long-standing congregations and ancient traditions. Some of these frontline churches are large, the biggest attracting crowds of several hundreds or even thousands, but the majority are small, consisting of independent groups of less than thirty or clusters of house groups totally less than one hundred.[88]

---

[87] Andy Crouch, "The Emergent Mystique," *Christianity Today* (November 2004). n.p. [cited 27 November 2006]. Online: http://www.culture-makers.com/articles/the_emergent_mystique. Chris Seay, author of *Faith of My Fathers: Conversations with Three Generations of Pastors about Church, Ministry, and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), is omitted. I would also recommend older works such as *The Younger Evangelicals* by Robert Webber, *The Church on the Other Side* by Brian McLaren (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000), and *The Emerging Church* by Dan Kimball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003) which include a broader definition of emerging churches – though they are narrower in that they do not discuss anything but American churches. They include the many young pastors who are trying to help traditional, seeker and modern churches become more adept at ministering in a postmodern context.

[88] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 29.

But in the end it is difficult to identify any churches that have "thousands" in attendance or are the result of a traditional church being adapted in their research. They also try to distinguish these emerging churches from "house churches."[89] "Unlike the stereotypical house church, emerging churches do not exist in isolation but establish networks for mutual support and encouragement."[90] Still the churches they describe are very similar to house churches. It would have been more fruitful to pick out how all sorts of churches are trying to reach postmoderns.

Some conservative evangelicals have misunderstood the emerging church movement and then criticized it because they have focused on doctrinal and philosophical issues such as "relativism and absolute truth."[91] North Park University New Testament professor Scot McKnight's critiques the influential book by Trinity Evangelical Divinity School New Testament professor D.A. Carson along these lines.

> this book (almost) narrows the discussion to one person – Brian McLaren – and narrows the issue – to postmodernist epistemology – and then nearly always defines the latter in "hard" postmodernist categories in spite of the fact that no Christian – at least not Brian McLaren – could ever be a hardpostmodernist. Carson's awareness of the distinction between "hard" and "soft" did not inform his analysis of McLaren . . . I have probed and prodded emerging church leaders and ordinaries for about two years now, and I have almost never heard anything that resembles what Carson thinks is so typical of the emerging "church."[92]

---

[89] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 60.

[90] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches,* 113.

[91] See Carson, *Conversant.*

[92] See Scot McKnight, "What is the Emerging Church? and Misnomers Surrounding the Emerging Church," (paper presented at the Fall Contemporary Issues Conference at Westminster Theological Seminary, Glenside, Penn., 26 October 2006): 2. Cited 27 November 2006. Online: http://www.foolishsage.com/wp-content/uploads/McKnight%20-%20What%20is%20the%20Emerging%20Church.pdf

In contrast, the movement is primarily about a rethinking of "practices." There is a sense that "new wineskins" are needed for "postmodern cultures." (See the Gibbs and Bolger subtitle – "creating Christian community in postmodern cultures").[93]

As much as I have made the case that distinctive practices distinguish emerging churches as opposed to a distinct theology, discussions about practices quickly transition into discussions about the theological rationale for these practices. Emerging church people want to have "conversation" about theological issues that are grounded in practical or "missional" questions. The organization "Emergent Village" which encourages "conversation" among the emerging church movement in the United States has organized what they have called "Theological Conversations" with N.T. Wright, Stanley Hauerwas, Walter Brueggemann, Miroslav Volf, and Jack Caputo for just this purpose.

---

[93] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches.*

APPENDIX 2

LISTS OF CHRISTIAN PRACTICES

Dorothy Bass focuses on twelve practices in the book *Practicing Our Faith*.[94]	Kenda Creasy Dean, has summarized Craig Dykstra's contemporary constellation of Christian practices.[95]	David Augsburger has written a new book encouraging the wider church to adopt eight Anabaptist practices.[96]	Randy Frazee lists ten "Ancient Christian Practices" in his book *The Connecting Church*.[97]
• Honoring the body • Hospitality Household economics Saying yes and saying no • Keeping Sabbath • Discernment Testimony • Shaping communities • Forgiveness • Healing • Dying well • and Singing our lives to God.	• Struggling together to discern • Praying • Resisting sin and the powers of evil • Telling the Christian story • Working together for justice • Giving generously • Worshipping God together • Interpreting Scripture and the tradition of the church together • Providing hospitality and care • Communing life journeys • Serving and witnessing • Suffering with and for one another • Confessing and forgiving sin • Encouraging vocation.	• Radical Attachment to Jesus • Stubborn Loyalty • Tenacious Serenity • Habitual Humility • Resolute Nonviolence • Concrete Service • Authentic Witness and Subversive Spirituality.	• Worship • Prayer • Bible Study • Single-mindedness • Biblical Community • Spiritual Gifts • Giving Away Our Time • Giving Away our Money • Giving Away Our Faith • Giving Away our Life.

---

[94] Volf and Bass, eds., *Practicing Theology,* 19.

[95] Dean, *Practicing Passion*, 155.

[96] David Augsburger, *Dissident Discipleship,* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006), 5.

[97] Randy Frazee, *The Connecting Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 78-79.

APPENDIX 3

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES TO THE EMERGING CHURCH MOVEMENT

Earl Creps, director of the Doctor of Ministry program at the Assemblies of God Theological

Seminary, teases boomer pastors for inevitably asking him, "What's working really well in the

innovative churches you have visited?" He goes on to explain: "The questioner here determines

to elicit a set of best practices that could be imported into her or his ministry."[98] Creps is right to

expose the desire for pragmatic, technique-driven ministry shortcuts. But these innovative

churches exist to experiment and innovate. It is entirely appropriate to learn from the

laboratory's discoveries and duds.

> Sharon Parks notes in *The Critical Years*,
>
> Much is lost to the quality of individual and collective life when the potential contribution of this era [young adulthood] in human development is dismissed as "youthful idealism." Young adulthood is the birthplace of adult vision. Never before and never again in the life cycle is there the same constellation of forces available to enable the formulation of life-transforming vision. The vision that grounds the young adult self will, for better or worse, enhance or dimi nish the possibilities of the whole of adult life. The era of young adult faith – which truth, meaning, and ultimacy are recomposed – is a vital opportunity given to every generation for the renewal of human life. The tension between the critical capacity of the young adult and the world-as-it-is can potentially empower a creative, transforming critique.[99]

Brian McLaren urges denominations to invest financial and human resources into these

experimental church plants.[100] He cites the oft-quoted-but-origin-unknown statistic that seven

out of ten church plants fail in their first five years of existence. He points out that if the point of

these churches is to experiment and learn and innovative, then they have not necessarily failed

even if they no longer exist. During the time of their brief existence, leaders have had the

---

[98] Creps, *Off-Road,* 3.

[99] Parks, *Critical,* 97.

[100] See Brian McLaren, "The Church Emerging & Mainline Theological Education."

opportunity to make mistakes and try new things. They will take these experiences and invest in

other churches with greater wisdom and courage.[101]

---

[101] The concept of churches that intentionally experiment with practices bears some resemblances to "church planting." However, some church plants do not have this mentality. They are rather birthed as imitations with a "successful" large church as the model. George Barna's "revolution" Christian communities differ from emerging churches in that they do not necessarily attempt to fulfill orthodox Christian practices. A Christian may "find community and fellowship" with a group of other home schooling families but no connection is made to ancient ecclesiological practices. George Barna, *Revolution* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2005). Hence the emerging church movement best captures innovative church planting.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Ray S. *The Shape of Practical Theology.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.

Augsburger, David. *Dissident Discipleship.* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006.

Barna, George. *Revolution.* Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2005.

Bethge, Ebehard. *Bonhoeffer: Exile and Martyr*. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

Bethge, Eberhard. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography.* Rev. ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke*. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1986-1999.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Ethics.* New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers from Prison.* New York: Macmillan, 1967.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship.* New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1954.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Sanctorum Communio.* Vol. 1 of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

Browning, Don S. *A Fundamental Practical Theology.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

Burke, Spencer. *A Heretic's Guide to Eternity.* San Franciso: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

Carson, D.A. *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Coupland, Douglas. *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture.* New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1991.

Creps, Earl. *Off-Road Disciplines: Spiritual Adventures of Missional Leaders.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

Crouch, Andy. "The Emergent Mystique." *Christianity Today.* November (2004): 37-41. Cited 27 November 2006. Online: http://www.culture-makers.com/articles/the_emergent_mystique.

De Gruchy, John W. *Bonhoeffer and South Africa: Theology in Dialogue.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.

De Gruchy, John W., ed. *Bonhoeffer for a New Day: Theology in a Time of Transition.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

De Gruchy, John W. "A Concrete Ethic of the Cross: Interpreting Bonhoeffer's Ethics in North America's Backyard." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 58 (2004): 33-45.

Dean, Kenda Creasy. *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

Driscoll, Mark. "Evangelical Leader Quits Amid Allegations of Gay Sex and Drug Use." *Weblog: Resurgence*. n.p. Cited 25 December 2006. Online: http://theresurgence.com/md_blog_2006-11-03_evangelical_leader_quits.

"Emerging Church Movement," *Wikipedia*. No pages. Cited 25 November 2006. Online: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerging_church_movement

Erikson, Erik. "The Eight Stages of Man," *Childhood and Society*, 2d ed. New York: Norton, 1963.

Floyd, Wayne Whitson Jr. and Charles Marsh, eds. *Theology and the Practice of Responsibility: Essays on Dietrich Bonhoeffer.* Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994.

Garber, Steven. *The Fabric of Faithfulness.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996.

Gibbs, Eddie and Ryan K. Bolger. *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

Green, Clifford. "Human sociality and Christian community." Pages 113-133 in *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer.* Edited by John W. de Gruchy. Cambridge: Cambridge, 1999.

Guder, Darrell, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Frazee, Randy. *The Connecting Church.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

Hall, Douglas John. "Ecclesia Crucis: The Disciple Community and the Future of the Church in North America," Pages 59-73 in *Theology and the Practice of Responsibility: Essays on Dietrich Bonhoeffer.* Edited by Floyd, Wayne Whitson Jr. and Charles Marsh. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994.

Hamilton, William. "Bonhoeffer: Christology and Ethic United." *Christianity and Crisis* 23 (October 19, 1964): 195-98.

Hauerwas, Stanley. *Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Violence.* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2004.

Haynes, Stephen R. *The Bonhoeffer Legacy: Post-Holocaust Perspectives.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.

Haynes, Stephen R. *The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.

Hopper, David H. *A Dissent on Bonhoeffer.* Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975.

Huldschiner, Robert E. "A Review Article – The Quest for the Historical Bonhoeffer." *Lutheran Forum* 3 (September 1969): 12-13.

Jones, Tony. *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Jones, Tony. "Emerging Practices in the Emerging Church." Paper presented at the Faithful Practices Research Conference, Princeton Theological Seminary. Princeton, NJ. (March 27, 2006): 1-10. Cited 27 November 2006. Online: http://www.faithfulpractices.org/Documents/Jones.pdf

Kelly, Geffrey B. and F. Burton Nelson. *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Kelly, Geffrey B. and F. Burton Nelson. *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990.

Kimball, Dan. *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

Marsh, Charles. *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer: The Promise of His Theology.* New York: Oxford, 1994.

Martinson, Roland. "Spiritual but Not Religious: Reaching an Invisible Generation." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 29 (2002): 326-340.

McLaren, Brian. "The Church Emerging & Mainline Theological Education," Lecture at Princeton Theological Seminary. Princeton, NJ. October 19, 2005. No pages. Online: http://cleave.blogs.com/pomomusings/2005/11/emerging_church.html .

McLaren, Brian. *The Church on the Other Side*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000.

McLaren, Brian. *A New Kind of Christian.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

McKnight, Scot. "What is the Emerging Church? and Misnomers Surrounding the Emerging Church." Paper presented at the Fall Contemporary Issues Conference at Westminster Theological Seminary. Glenside, Penn. (October 26, 2006): 1-30. Cited November 27, 2006. Online: http://www.foolishsage.com/wp-content/uploads/McKnight%20-%20What%20is%20the%20Emerging%20Church.pdf

Ortberg, John. *The Life You've Always Wanted.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Osmer, Richard R. and Friedrich L. Schweitzer, eds. *Developing A Public Faith: New Directions in Practical Theology– Essays in Honor of James W. Fowler.* St Louis: Chalice Press, 2003.

Osmer, Richard Robert. *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Pagitt, Doug. *Church Re-Imagined: The Spiritual Formation of People in Communities of Faith.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Pagitt, Doug. *Preaching Re-Imagined: The Role of the Sermon in Communities of Faith.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Parks, Sharon. *The Critical Years: The Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By.* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986.

Rasmussen, Larry with Renate Bethge. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer – His Significance for North Americans.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

Root, Andrew. "Practical Theology as Social Ethical Action in Christian Ministry." *International Journal of Practical Theology.* 10 (2006): 53-75.

Seay, Chris. *Faith of My Fathers: Conversations with Three Generations of Pastors about Church, Ministry, and Culture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Smith, Gordon T. *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion & Authentic Transformation.* Downers Grove,InterVarsity, 2001.

Volf, Miroslav and Dorothy C. Bass, eds. *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002.

Webber, Robert. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World.* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.

Webber, Robert. "The Call," n.p. Cited 25 December 2006. Online: http://www.growcenter.org/AEFCall.htm

Webber, Robert. *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.