

The Fundamentals: A Testimony To The Truth

These notes were written for friends who are facing serious problems through the inroads of "the emerging church" movement, therefore some of this material will not be relevant to you but nevertheless may provide a useful resource, giving you some idea of what is taking place in some evangelical churches. I have sought not to present only negative material therefore in the second half of my notes I have written a short study on Christ, the Church and the Bible.

The title for this study is taken from a series of volumes on the Fundamentals of evangelical teaching edited by A. C. Dixon and later by Reuben Archer Torrey. They are a set of 90 essays in 12 volumes published from 1910 to 1915 by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. They were designed to affirm orthodox Protestant beliefs and defend against ideas and teachings that challenged evangelicalism and Scripture. They are widely considered to be the foundation of the modern Fundamentalist movement within evangelicalism. I can remember that John Stott produced a pamphlet called "The Fundamentals" based on the earlier title. It is unfortunate that Stott and John Wenham embraced the false doctrine of annihilationism which denies eternal punishment.¹ Another area where Biblical truth has been undermined is not a new heresy but has emerged in a new coat; this is "Open Theism" and is associated with Clarke Pinnock or better known as universalism. This teaching is a distortion of the Arminian teaching of the availability of Christ's salvation to all (1Tim.2:3-6; Rom.10:11-13). In contrast Calvinism believes that Christ died only for the elect (limited atonement) and salvation only applies to the elect, salvation is not available to all. Those who are elect cannot fail to be saved (some would consider that a serious distortion of Calvinism!).

The essays set out what they believed to be the fundamentals of Christian faith. These were to be sent free to ministers, missionaries, Sunday School superintendents and others active in Christian ministry (they are still in print today). The volumes defended orthodox Protestant beliefs and attacked higher criticism, liberal theology, Catholicism (also called Romanism), socialism, modern philosophy, atheism, Christian Science, Mormonism, Millennial Dawn (an early term for a particular Christian Bible Student movement which mostly later became the "Witnesses"), Spiritism/occultism and evolution.

Contents of *The Fundamentals* (and authors)²

1). Volume I:

- The Virgin Birth of Christ - James Orr
- The Deity of Christ - Benjamin B. Warfield

¹ Annihilationism - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.url
annihilationism John Stott - Google Search.url
Enjoying God Ministries.url
Evangelical Annihilationism in Review by J.I. Packer.url
http://www.etsjets.org/files-JETS-PDFs-37-37-4-JETS_37-4_553-568_Peterson.pdf.url

² The text of each chapter: [www.gospelhall.org/fundamentals/fundamentals-1-01--contents.ht...](http://www.gospelhall.org/fundamentals/fundamentals-1-01--contents.html)
www.archive.org/fundamentalstest17chic/fundamentalstest17chic_...

- The Purposes of the Incarnation - G. Campbell Morgan
- The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit - R. A. Torrey
- The Proof of the Living God - Arthur T. Pierson
- History of the Higher Criticism - Dyson Hague
- A Personal Testimony - Howard A. Kelly

2). Volume II:

- The Testimony of the Monuments to the Truth of the Scriptures - George Frederick Wright
- The Recent Testimony of Archaeology to the Scriptures - M. G. Kyle
- Fallacies of the Higher Criticism - Franklin Johnson
- Christ and Criticism - Robert Anderson
- Modern Philosophy - Philip Mauro
- Justification by Faith - H. C. G. Moule
- Tributes to Christ and the Bible by Brainy Men not Known as Active Christians

3). Volume III:

- Inspiration of the Bible—Definition, Extent, and Proof - James M. Gray
- The Moral Glory of Jesus Christ a Proof of Inspiration - William G. Moorehead
- God in Christ the Only Revelation of the Fatherhood of God - Robert E. Speer
- The Testimony of Christian Experience - E. Y. Mullins
- Christianity No Fable - Thomas Whitelaw
- My Personal Experience with the Higher Criticism - J. J. Reeve
- The Personal Testimony of Charles T. Studd

4). Volume IV:

- The Tabernacle in the Wilderness: Did it Exist? - David Heagle
- The Testimony of Christ to the Old Testament - William Caven
- The Bible and Modern Criticism - F. Bettex
- Science and Christian Faith - James Orr
- A Personal Testimony - Philip Mauro

5). Volume V:

- Life in the Word - Philip Mauro
- The Scriptures - A. C. Dixon
- The Certainty and Importance of the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead - R. A. Torrey

- Observations of the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul - Lord Lyttleton (analyzed and condensed by J. L. Campbell)
- A Personal Testimony - H. W. Webb-Peploe

6). Volume VI:

- The Testimony of Foreign Missions to the Superintending Providence of God - Arthur T. Pierson.
- Is There a God? - Thomas Whitelaw
- Sin and Judgment to Come - Robert Anderson
- The Atonement - Franklin Johnson
- The God-Man - John Stock
- The Early Narratives of Genesis - James Orr
- The Person and Work of Jesus Christ - John L. Nuelsen
- The Hope of the Church - John McNicol

7). Volume VII:

- The Passing of Evolution - George Frederick Wright
- Inspiration - L. W. Munhall
- The Testimony of the Scriptures to Themselves - George S. Bishop
- Testimony of the Organic Unity of the Bible to its Inspiration - Arthur T. Pierson
- One Isaiah - George L. Robinson
- The Book of Daniel - Joseph D. Wilson
- Three Peculiarities of the Pentateuch - Andrew Craig Robinson
- Millennial Dawn: A Counterfeit of Christianity - William G. Moorehead

8). Volume VIII:

- Old Testament Criticism and New Testament Christianity - W. H. Griffith Thomas
- Evolutionism in the Pulpit - Anonymous
- Decadence of Darwinism - Henry H. Beach
- Paul's Testimony to the Doctrine of Sin - Charles B. Williams
- The Science of Conversion - H. M. Sydenstricker
- The Doctrinal Value of the First Chapters of Genesis - Dyson Hague
- The Knowledge of God - James Burrell
- "Preach the Word" - Howard Crosby
- Mormonism: Its Origin, Characteristics, and Doctrines - R. G. McNiece

9). Volume IX:

- The True Church - Bishop Ryle
- The Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch - George Frederick Wright
- The Wisdom of this World - A. W. Pitzer
- Holy Scripture and Modern Negations - James Orr
- Salvation by Grace - Thomas Spurgeon
- Divine Efficacy of Prayer - Arthur T. Pierson
- What Christ Teaches Concerning Future Retribution - William C. Procter
- A Message from Missions - Charles A. Bowen
- Eddyism: Commonly Called Christian Science - Maurice E. Wilson

9). Volume X:

- Why Save the Lord's Day? - Daniel Hoffman Martin
- The Internal Evidence of the Fourth Gospel - Canon G. Osborne Troop
- The Nature of Regeneration - Thomas Boston
- Regeneration—Conversion—Reformation - George W. Lasher
- Our Lord's Teachings About Money - Arthur T. Pierson
- Satan and His Kingdom - Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis
- The Holy Spirit and the Sons of God - W. J. Erdman
- Consecration - Henry W. Frost
- The Apologetic Value of Paul's Epistles - E.J. Stobo
- What the Bible Contains for the Believer - George F. Pentecost
- Modern Spiritualism Briefly Tested by Scripture - Algernon J. Pollock

10). Volume XI:

- The Biblical Conception of Sin - Thomas Whitelaw
- At-One-Ment by Propitiation - Dyson Hague
- The Grace of God - C. I. Scofield
- Fulfilled Prophecy A Potent Argument for the Bible - Arno C. Gaebelein
- The Coming of Christ - Charles R. Erdman
- Is Romanism Christianity? - T. W. Medhurst
- Rome, The Antagonist of the Nation - J. M. Foster

11). Volume XII:

- Doctrines that Must be Emphasized in Successful Evangelism - L. W. Munhall

- Pastoral and Personal Evangelism, or Winning Men to Christ One-by-One - John Timothy Stone
- The Sunday School's True Evangelism - Charles Gallaudet Trumbull
- Foreign Missions or World-Wide Evangelism - Robert E. Speer
- What Missionary Motives Should Prevail? - Henry W. Frost
- The Place of Prayer in Evangelism - R. A. Torrey
- The Church and Socialism - Charles R. Erdman
- The Fifteen Books Most Indispensable for the Minister or the Christian Worker

Workshop project:

1. Identify from the above list what you believe are important issues for the church today.
2. Are there any issues we face today that are not covered by this comprehensive list?
3. How different is the church represented by the "Fundamentals" from today's church?

Resources for "Emerging Church" movement <http://emergingchurchconcerns.wordpress.com/>

VIDEO SOURCES ON THE EMERGING CHURCH The easiest (and my recommended) way of quickly finding out about the Emerging Church is to look at a few YouTube clips on the internet. These are ones that give the best picture of the movement, its key figures, and its leading critics. Click on the links on the electronic copy of this paper.

1. An Introduction:

PBS Documentary Report on The Emerging Church(10.45 mins)

Interviews with Brian McLaren, Doug Pagitt, and critic Theologian D.A. Carson. One of the interviewees says "It is hard to define". That was in 2007. It is not the case now.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGSQjtWtpaw&feature=Playlist&p=D677D8FA28998D9F&index=0>

Doug Pagitt interview (by Todd Friel) Essential viewing. (You will realise why when you see it!) In two parts: (1)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0isqLRhClo&feature=Playlist&p=D677D8FA28998D9F&index=2>

(2)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfYi2iXxQ0&feature=Playlist&p=D677D8FA28998D9F&index=3>

Brian McLaren on hell, judgement, and the purpose of Jesus' coming: Brian McLaren on the real meaning of Jesus coming and salvation (Interview extract)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mr8dTvks3Gs&feature=Playlist&p=D677D8FA28998D9F&index=8>

"A lot of us think the purpose Jesus came was to try to get us to heaven after we die. I'd like to raise some serious questions about that based on the New Testament. I'd like to suggest Jesus didn't

come here to tell us how to get to heaven after we die, primarily – he came to talk to us about how the kingdom of heaven can happen here on earth while we are here and when our children and our grandchildren are here” (McLaren promo DVD)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NtgjNLNpao&feature=related> (3.46)

2. ‘Emergence is a new Reformation – a once in 500 year phenomenon (and it started in Britain)’

Yes, they really *do* say that... Phyllis Tickle, leading emergent thinker, and author of *The Great Emergence* claims this on: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LY83MF2HZcU&feature=channel> and on: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1NI_nxfSE4&feature=channel. She also claims that ‘this thing is radically Jesus oriented’ but read that in the context of the background shot as she speaks – Doug Pagitt’s Solomon’s Porch Church and then watch Pagitt’s interview with Todd Friel cited in 1. above.

3. Mark Driscoll replies: Mark Driscoll on the Emerging Church (7mins)

Driscoll applauds D.A.Carson and Wayne Grudem, makes useful distinctions between the three orthodox streams of the Emergent Church and is critical only of the Liberal Emergents among whom Driscoll specifically names Rob Bell, Brian McLaren, and Doug Pagitt. That stream, he says, is ‘totally off the highway and lost in the woods’. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58fgkFS6E-0>

This is an extract from a longer 60 min talk to his church on:

<http://www.marshallchurch.org/media/religionsaves/emerging-church>

Mark Driscoll Discusses The Emergent Church at Southern Baptist Seminary (2007) (80mins) This is an extremely important talk (80mins) and well worth listening to. Driscoll was one of the leaders in the early days and left because of his concerns that it was becoming heterodox

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7856171376481803784&hl=en#>

Some of the questions emergents have asked have been appropriate; some of their challenges have been timely. As critics Kevin De Young and Ted Kluck, in their book *Why We’re Not Emergent (By Two Guys Who Should Be)*, say: (The Emergents) have many good deeds. They want to be relevant. They want to reach out. They want to be authentic. They want to include the marginalized. They want to be kingdom disciples. They want community and life transformation... (However) Emergent Christians need to catch Jesus’ broader vision for the church—His vision for a church that is intolerant of error, maintains moral boundaries, promotes doctrinal integrity, stands strong in times of trial, remains vibrant in times of prosperity, believes in certain judgment and certain reward, even as it engages the culture, reaches out, loves, and serves. We need a church that reflects the Master’s vision—one that is deeply theological, deeply ethical, deeply compassionate, and deeply doxological.

The real problems have arisen when Emergents have moved beyond *new presentations* of bible truths to *new interpretations* of them. Dr Sam Storms, former Visiting Associate Professor of Theology at Wheaton College puts it clearly: My fear is that some, perhaps many, who are enamoured with the Emergent conversation simply haven’t wrestled with the far-reaching implications of (emergent leader Brian) McLaren’s theological convictions. Biblical inerrancy, substitutionary atonement, the existence of a personal devil, and the reality of eternal conscious punishment all come under criticism (if not outright denial) in his published works. He appears to embrace an evolutionary framework to account for the natural order, declines to identify homosexuality as sin or non-Christian religions as idolatry, and speaks approvingly of an inclusivist view on whether or not one must consciously believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

The problem that now faces the church is not one of a dispute over those *secondary* aspects of belief which have divided Christians for centuries: the charismatic gifts, the faith movement, the second coming, adult vs. infant baptism, etc. The problems are over *primary* issues of the faith and are far deeper and far more serious – all the more so because it is too late for the evangelical church to raise the drawbridge while it decides how to respond to the Emerging Church movement.

As those who have been troubled by the movement's departure from orthodoxy have left it, its core identity as a heretical movement has become clearer. It has its key figures – men like Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, and Doug Pagitt. They appear in each others' churches, on the same conference platforms, and endorse each other in their books. Their followers recognise and refer to them as leaders, and place links to their websites on their blogs. Emergent Christians unite on the web through a number of blogs and websites, and around the organisation which is the hub of the movement, Emergent Village www.emergentvillage.com which is co-ordinated by Tony Jones, another leading figure in the movement.

And from these leaders, a body of teaching *has* emerged. While it cannot be said that *every* emergent leader subscribes to *every* tenet of this new liberal Christian thinking, there are enough features in common for us to be able to arrive at a broad picture of what the Emerging Church is all about. And what is certain is that those whose position on some key doctrinal issues is unclear still hold so lightly to the primacy of scripture and truth (though expressed in admirable terms like 'choosing love over being right') that they happily associate with and do not challenge those of their number whose view on the same issues are clearly heterodox.

(i). Ambiguous/Misleading Language (i.e. see quotes in Appendix One, category i.) – using different meanings for accepted Christian terms. 'Evangelical' is used as a self-description by ECM people in spite of the fact that they are actually theological liberals and not evangelicals. In effect, they have tried to hijack the word. Describing themselves as evangelicals disarms many real evangelicals who welcome them and their teaching, believing they have the same basic beliefs about Christian fundamentals. They don't. They have a different meaning for many Christian terms – e.g. 'repentance', 'orthodox', 'save' (salvation becomes joining a movement not being born again), 'kingdom of God', 'hell', and even 'church'. "I am truly an evangelical Protestant in the sense that I believe we must go back and search the Scriptures and look at them afresh and see if there isn't something better than what we have been taught" (Brian McLaren). This is no description of an evangelical. A leader of a pseudo-Christian cult would say no different.

(ii). Evasion and Dissembling– While a true evangelical, usually with reference to scripture, can be specific about the pillars of Christian faith, ECM leaders often dodge direct questions about their beliefs, either by answering another question or by insisting that the ECM is trying to avoid being straightjacketed by definitions and that they are unhelpful. See the Doug Pagitt interview on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0isqLRhClo&feature=Playlist&p=D677D8FA28998D9F&index=2>

(iii). Denial that Christian certainty (over truth, doctrine and the scriptures) can be known Claiming postmodern principles apply, they insist that postmodernism precludes all objective certainty about doctrine and faith. "The ultimate bible study or sermon in recent decades yielded clarity. That clarity unfortunately was also often boring and probably not that accurate, either, since reality is seldom clear but usually fuzzy mysticism, not black and white but in living colour ... Arguments that pit absolutism versus relativism, and objectivism versus subjectivism, prove meaningless or absurd to postmodern people" (Brian McLaren).

(iv). Refusal to self-identify as a movement “I generally don’t even use the term movement at this point... I think it’s more of a conversation. It’s a group of people who are talking about the Gospel and church and mission, especially in terms of changes going on in our culture that some people call a shift from modern to postmodern culture” (Brian McLaren).

(v). Refusal to define a Christian in terms of being saved or not saved, ‘in’ or ‘out.’ We obsess on “who’s in” and “who’s out.” Jesus, however, seems to be asking the question, “How can the kingdom of God more fully come on earth as it is in heaven” (Brian McLaren).

“For the vast majority of people outside the Church, the term [born again] has come to symbolise everything about Christianity they most despise and fear...a type of Christianity that is not only judgemental, bigoted, arrogant and narrow-minded but is also about a ‘them’ and ‘us’; ‘in’ or ‘out’, *pharisaic* approach to life” (Italics added) (Steve Chalke).

Mixing truth with error – some of their *challenges* are valid. Many of their *conclusions* are not.

(vi). Questioning/challenging doctrines without actually denying them but doing it in such a way that their centrality within Christian orthodoxy is undermined.

What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archaeologists find Larry’s tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was really just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births? (Rob Bell)

(vii). False dichotomies/Exaggerated Stereotypes– portraying Christians and their beliefs in exaggerated stereotypes and then presenting the ECM’s teaching as a necessary and justified response to that error:

- Stereotypes of the church – heartless, right-wing, introverted, inflexible, fundamentalist, wedded to violence in theology and politics, out of date and unwelcoming to the under 30s
- Stereotypes of the gospel message presented by the traditional church – all about going to heaven and nothing about changing the world for the better now.

The idea that the world is going down the toilet and that we should just abandon and prepare for evacuation, I think, creates horrible possibilities of injustice. [Emergents do not] stand on the edge with condemnation and judgment, because we’re always planning to depart. (Brian McLaren)

(viii). Internal contradictions– the ECM’s contention that there are *no absolutes* (see Denial of Certainty, iii above), that truth cannot be known, especially in reference to interpreting the bible, is presented as an *unchallengeable absolute*.

Emergent doesn’t have a position on absolute truth, or on anything for that matter. Do you show up at a dinner party with your neighbors and ask, ‘What’s this dinner party’s position on absolute truth?’ No, you don’t, because it’s a nonsensical question. **(Tony Jones)**

2. Errors Of Doctrine (The Greater Problem)

(ix). Denial of original sin

I have come to reject the notion of Original Sin. I consider it neither biblically, philosophically, nor scientifically tenable. (Tony Jones) ... (Original sin is) biblically questionable, extreme, and profoundly unhelpful. (Dave Tomlinson)

(x). Universalism – believing that all will go to heaven (because there is no judgement of sin and no eternal judgement of unrepentant sinners in hell)

The news that the Christian message is universally good news for Christians and non-Christians alike is, to some, unheard of, strange, and perhaps heretical. To me it has become natural and obvious. (Brian McLaren) ... God is going to judge the life and repair, and restore and heal the life of *everybody* in the same way. (Doug Pagitt)

(xi). Denial of the inerrancy of the Bible– Many don't say this outright, but just say that the bible needs to be interpreted 'in its historical context', and that *doctrine* (not just church practice) needs to be re-written for today (see Bible study at the end of this material).

The inerrancy debate is based on the belief that the Bible is the word of God, that the Bible is true because God made it and gave it to us as a guide to truth. But that's not what the Bible says. (Doug Pagitt) ... We want the bible to be God's answer book. The only people in Jesus' day who would have had anything close to these expectations would have been the scribes and the Pharisees. (Brian McLaren) ... We must stop looking for some objective Truth that is available when we delve into the text of the Bible. (Tony Jones). Added to this is the insistence that a postmodern perspective on the bible and truth means it cannot be relied upon to give us any sure doctrine or guidance for living.

(xii). Redefinition of the purpose of the Jesus' first coming – Instead of *primarily* to save sinners from hell (with the consequences of their salvation in this life being works of social justice, love, and community), emergents present it as *pre-eminently* to model good works in this life and all emphasis on the afterlife is downplayed and portrayed as a negative stereotype (See vii.). "People often ask me what do I think is the way to heaven. I have a problem when they ask me this question because it assumes that the primary purpose of Jesus' coming and the primary message of Jesus was a message about how to get to heaven" (Brian McLaren).

(xiii). Denial of the existence of hell "The conventional doctrine of hell has too often engendered a view of a deity who suffers from a borderline personality disorder or some worse sociopathic diagnosis" (*Brian McLaren*),..."The language of hell is not intended to provide literal or detailed fortune-telling or prognostication about the hereafter" (Brian McLaren).

(xiv). Denial of the reality of Satan "Maybe it is no sin to think of Satan as a metaphor, a horribly real metaphor for a terribly real force in the universe" (Brian McLaren).

(xv). Denial that Jesus' second coming will be to judge the earth "Many, and *perhaps even all* of Jesus' hell-fire or end-of-the-universe statements refer not to postmortem [after death] judgment but to the very historic consequences of rejecting his kingdom message of reconciliation and peacemaking" (Italics added) (**Brian McLaren**).

(xvi). Dismissal of penal substitutionary atonement as ‘divine child abuse’ because to accept it would imply consent to the idea that God *judges* sin and *condemns* the unrepentant to hell, which is denied. “The fact is that the cross isn’t a form of *cosmic child abuse*—a vengeful father, punishing his son for an offence he has not even committed. (this is a) twisted version of events (which is) morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith... If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus’ own teaching to love your enemies and refuse to repay evil with evil” (Steve Chalke), “... If God wants to forgive us, why doesn’t he just do it? How does punishing an innocent person make things better? That just sounds like one more injustice in the cosmic equation. *It sounds like divine child abuse*” (Brian McLaren).

(xvii). Denial of, or downplaying, the need to be born again and reinterpreting conversion as joining a movement. “Doesn’t [emphasising] the very importance of my personal salvation pose a kind of temptation – to want heaven more than I want good; to want to escape hell more than I want reconciliation with my neighbours?” (Brian McLaren). “ ... The truth is that when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus... he was not using the term ‘born-again’ in the same sense we have come to do. Jesus was simply saying that entering into God’s Kingdom or Shalom is about seeing the world differently and adopting his new agenda” (Steve Chalke).

(xviii). Pacifism based upon the abandonment of penal substitution. There can be no ‘just war’ if a central plank of the Emergents’ denial of the need to be born again to escape judgment is the insistence that a loving God could not punish and is incapable of ‘violence’. (This is not a criticism of Christian pacifism or pacifists, merely an observation that *Emergents’* pacifism is a *consequence* of heterodox bible interpretation)

“[The] view of God as vengeful torturer ... has played a role, I believe, in horrible behavior on the part of Western Christians... if we can identify some people as God’s enemies, hated by God for all eternity, we can find ourselves directly disobeying Jesus’ clear teachings about loving our neighbors and our enemies” (Brian McLaren). “ ... [The] eschatological understanding of a violent second coming leads us to believe (as we’ve said before) that in the end, even God finds it impossible to fix the world apart from violence and coercion; no one should be surprised when those shaped by this theology behave accordingly” (Brian McLaren).

(xix) Christianity just one of many ways to God albeit the preferable one. “I don’t hope all Jews or Hindus will become members of the Christian religion. But I do hope all who feel so called will become Jewish or Hindu followers of Jesus” (Brian McLaren), ... “No one comes to the Father except through me?” Clearly, taken in context, these words are not intended as an insult to followers of Mohammed, the Buddha, Lao Tsu, Enlightenment rationalism, or anybody or anything else” (Brian McLaren).

(xx). Elevating tolerance above truth and the denying the inerrancy of scripture means that many Emergents condone **homosexual practice** and support homosexual monogamy among Christians. “Anytime someone makes you feel guilty about how you are living, that is part of the old system (pre-Christ). (Rob Bell) ...I now believe that GLBTQ [Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & questioning] can live lives in accord with biblical Christianity (as least as much as any of us can!), and that their monogamy can and should be sanctioned and blessed by church and state” (Tony Jones).

Workshop:

1). Identify the key doctrines of Christianity that are being challenged (list them). Produce Biblical doctrines stating the truth and back these up with recognized theologians. Combat error with truth. Identify leading evangelicals who have erred doctrinally on key doctrines.

2). Examine the key areas of ministry in your church particularly the preaching and the teaching ministry in each department (e.g. your leaders may be using teaching material in the Sunday School that is opening the door to wrong teaching). Does your church belong to the Evangelical Alliance? (Is their Doctrinal statement weak in any of these points?). On Sunday I visited one of the wealthiest Baptist Churches in the U.K. and found in their bookshop (in the church) 3 books by Brian McLaren - accidental or purposeful? When the pastor advocates Rob Bell the rot has already begun. It is very difficult for the congregation to rise above their leadership.

3). How to handle wrong teaching in your church (I am simply giving some ideas here).

a) Examine the main preaching occasion (Sunday morning) and every channel of teaching in the programme of the church. Identify wrong teaching and be specific and keep a record. Do this over the coming months. Does the church have a doctrinal statement of doctrine/faith? Identify your core values – what is distinctive about the core teachings of your church? Have these been neglected?

b) Do you have godly members on your church Board? People who stand for Biblical truth? Surely the preacher/pastor is accountable to them for what he preaches. I do not know your situation, nor do I know the constitution of your church. Nor do I know your pastor or what he preaches. That puts me at a disadvantage in giving you counsel. Could you raise awareness in a godly manner as to what is happening in your church? Is the pastor approachable? What do you do when all means of approach fail? Some will feel led to remain and some will feel it is moral compromise to remain under a ministry that is not honouring Biblical truth. Does your church have spiritual men on the outside that can be approached? If you are a denominational church can you approach the leaders of your denomination?

c) Unite together in prayer for the cause of truth. Surely you can pray with authority, and wait on God for instruction and direction. Prayer can impact what is ministered on Sunday morning – “we wrestle not against flesh and blood ...”

d) It is a good time to assure one another of the fundamentals of Biblical truth (that is why at the beginning I asked you to identify from the original list of fundamentals what you considered to be the key doctrines of the Bible). You may have noticed how evangelicals who are truly conservative in the right meaning of the word are linked with fundamentalists of other religions, thus deriding those who hold to the truths of the Bible without compromise.

e) A point that has not come up in our discussions of emerging church and doctrinal error is the positive teachings of Scripture regarding Christian experience – new birth, the indwelling Christ and the anointed life. Spiritual dynamic and the preaching of truth are powerful weapons to combat error. Choice of wrong men to lead has a long term detrimental effect on the spiritual health of the church. Spiritual growth will be affected and souls will not find Christ. The moving of the Holy Spirit is essential to maintaining the spiritual life of the church. Those who lead worship as well as those who preach must be anointed by God. Problems emerge when men and women hold important positions in the church based on natural gift rather than God’s calling and anointing.

f) Another issue that is of paramount importance is: what kind of church do you really want? Do your core values represent the core values of the church to which you belong? Perhaps the church no longer represents your core values.

g) Often problems may emerge from the core of your leadership in terms of the overseership of the church. Do you have godly men at the helm? I suspect that often the church was already in a poor spiritual state before this influence came along. Of course some churches are led by a singular leader, usually called a pastor. He may be the cause of bringing in emergent influences. The elders at Ephesus were responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church (Acts Ch.20).

I am in contact with friends in the Nazarene church in U.S.A and the denomination and its universities are being swept away by this movement simply because they had already lost their vibrant spirituality: www.reformednazarene.wordpress.com and <http://carm.org/emerging-church> A feature that is prominent in the States is the influence of Roger Foster regarding meditative prayer, <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=2017>

h) Some of you who are facing the spiritual demolition of your church may meet in a home group of like minded people. Meet together be for true fellowship and encouragement. Let love fill your hearts as you wait on the Lord. Let the word of God be central and share along the lines of the pivotal teachings of the Bible. Pray for your pastor/s, they will not be able to teach error if they are anointed by the Holy Spirit. Be sensitive to the leadings and timings of the Holy Spirit. Do not compromise the truth. But whatever you say let it be with authority, humility and love. Keep the whole matter under review and keep bringing it to the Lord and seek to maintain fellowship together. I'm sure more wisdom will be given as you continue in prayer together. The church is the body of Christ and therefore a primary ministry of Christians is to nourish one another, care for one another. Don't ever let emerging church issues dominate or take first place. Guard your heart from bitterness.

In the light of our discussions, we need to identify key areas of teaching that we need to study

- (1) The doctrine of **God** (theology) – this includes the trinity and the attributes of God.
- (2) The doctrine of **Christ** (Christology).
- (3) The doctrine of the **Holy Spirit** (pneumatology).
- (4) The doctrine of **man** (anthropology).
- (5) The doctrine of **sin** (hamartiology) judgment and hell End time judgment is usually dealt with under “End Times (8).
- (6) The doctrine of **salvation** (soteriology) this doctrine is usually taught alongside Christology.
- (7) The **Christian life** – New birth, sanctification and the baptism in the Spirit.
- (8) The doctrine of the “**End Times**” (eschatology).
- (9) The doctrine of the **church** (ecclesiology), leadership, gifts and contemporary issues.
- (10) The **Bible** – inspiration and authority, Bible study.

The Christ, the Church and the Bible

The church results directly from the work of Christ – salvation being at the core. Salvation is only possible if the crucified Saviour is the Son of God which is the revelation of Scripture, thus our three key elements are intrinsic to one another. They stand or fall together.

THE CHRIST: MESSIAH

A general introduction to the titles linked with the person of Christ in the N.T. is crucial to a full understanding of who He is. It is equally important to trace the biblical/prophetic revelation of Christ in the O.T. especially through the messianic prophecies. Jesus Christ is there in the beginning in the context of trinity and associated with creation and His continuing presence in the salvation history of the Jewish people. He is the focus of unfolding prophetic revelation. Veiled in the mystery of God, seeming somewhat apart, but strategically immanent on occasion, nevertheless prophecy insists on His existence and presence, anticipating His full disclosure through the incarnation. The gospels affirm both His divine pre-existence as the **Son of God** and his human origin as the **Son of Man**. Jesus purposefully chose to speak of Himself as the “Son of Man,” simply because of all that was associated with the title “Messiah” in the minds of His contemporaries. Ordinariness (humanness) is associated with the “Son of Man,” whereas political implications are associated with Messianic claims. Choosing to be known to His own disciples as Son of Man is powerfully demonstrated at Caesarea Philippi (**Mat.17:16**). Peter had declared Christ’s Messiahship, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” and Jesus addresses Himself as the Son of Man.

Scholars declare that Jesus denied Messiahship. At least He veiled it in the three Synoptic gospels. John’s gospel is different in that He spoke openly about it, shown in His open confession to the woman at the well (Jn.Ch.4 see also Jn.Ch.1). In John 1:34 John Baptist declares and confesses Jesus as “*the Son of God.*” Of course the baptism of Jesus is the open affirmation of Jesus by Father, “*This is me beloved Son*” (Mat.2:17) and three verses later Satan questions Jesus, “*if You are the Son of God ...*” The title Son of God affirms his deity and thus is a continuing focus of Satan’s attack. The pre-existence of Jesus Christ alongside His divine credentials are central to the Biblical revelation. No less than God can save the lost. No blood but that of the divine Son can wash away sins stain. There is salvation in none other except the Suffering Servant of Isaiah.

At His trial Jesus was questioned by the High Priest regarding His Messiahship, “*Are you the Christ the Son of the blessed?*” Jesus replied with a clear affirmation, “*I am*” (Mk.14:61-62). The *titulus* nailed to the cross declared the truth, “*JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS*” (Jn.19:19). Following the resurrection of Jesus He was faced with unbelief and doubt from His own disciples. This was dramatically demonstrated by Thomas who was absent on one of the occasions when Jesus appeared among His disciples resulting in his public outburst of unbelief. Later, when Jesus revisited them He demanded that Thomas reach forth his finger and place it in His hand wounds and with his hand thrust it into Christ’s side wound. Reproved and humiliated Thomas immediately recognized the reality of Jesus’ physical resurrection and spontaneously cried out to Jesus, “*You are my Lord and my God*” (Jn.20:28). John who wrote these words follows the event with a summary of Christ’s further activity among His disciples before His ascension and then states his purpose in writing, “*But*

*these are written that you might believe that **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God**, and that believing we might have life through His name” (Jn.20:31).*

For your homework I want you to meditate and study the three Christological passages in Paul: 1Cor.8:6-13; Col.1:12-17; Phil.2:6-8 (see my Module on these passages “The Doctrine of Christ” pp120-142 you will find this on website).

THE CHURCH

To speak of salvation demands the deity of Christ. If Christ is not God then salvation is impossible. If salvation has not been accomplished there can be no church, because the church consists of redeemed people. We believe the outpouring of the Holy Spirit results from Christ’s ascension and exaltation – that is what Peter tells us in his first sermon on the day of Pentecost and so we see that the Person of Jesus Christ the Son of God is the founding apostle of the church; the foundation being His work of salvation through His death on the cross.

The church through the ages has always looked to the church as it is portrayed in the book of Acts as its blue-print and model. The central features of that first church are outlined for us at the end of Ch.2:41-47 and Ch.4:31-35. Included in this first chapter of the churches history (Acts Ch.2) are the following features:

- The church: the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer.
- Signs and wonders are done by the apostles.
- Community of goods.
- Continuing links with the temple.
- Daily growth by the addition of new believers.

These features that characterized the first days of the outpouring are but the beginning of a continued and ongoing momentum of the Spirit’s presence and works which is marked by miracles and aggressive preaching by the apostles. The immediate result of the first miracle and the bold confrontational preaching of Peter and John results in their first taste of persecution and the second outpouring of the Spirit and is directly associated with specific prayer for (1) boldness in the face of persecution, and a second prayer request which is the outcome of the first, which is (2) for God to continue to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Jesus - as in the case of the lame man (3:6-7). They do not pray for protection, but for continued boldness to proclaim Jesus’ Name (3:16).

- The *place was shaken* under the power of God where they are gathered together.
- They were *all* filled with the Spirit (again!). Some for the first time. The result of outpouring is ingathering of new believers, filled with the Holy Spirit.
- They spoke the word of God with boldness and power (specific answer to prayer)
- Healings (v15-16; 5:12) - (specific answer to prayer)

- Unity of the multitude of new believers – community of goods (as in Ch.2). Part of deepening commitment results in selling houses and land to meet the needs of the multitude of new believers.

Further outcomes require one to carefully examine the progress of the church as it unfolds in subsequent chapters. Alongside the *manifestations* of the Holy Spirit we also note the *works* of the Holy Spirit. The preaching of the apostles is the primary work of the Holy Spirit. You must study the preaching of the apostles and the impact of the Word related to the growth of the church throughout the book of Acts. Note also those occasions when a newly gathered church was taught “the apostles’ doctrine” (2:42; Eph.4:4-6 see also Acts 11:26; 18:11; 19:9-10). Note every reference to healing by the apostles, beginning with 2:43. Philip’s preaching is accompanied by an outbreak of miracles of healing and exorcisms (8:5-8). Further outbreaks of miraculous power occur in Peter’s ministry (5:16), and later in Paul’s ministry (19:11-12). Perhaps we should adopt the Biblical phrase found in 5:12 – “signs and wonders” to describe the operation of the Holy Spirit in miracles.

The Holy Spirit not only fills those who repent and believe but He also directs events and precipitates actions. He is in control. With the call of Paul and his separation by the Holy Spirit for mission a change occurs (from Ch.13 onwards), in that Paul now becomes the strategist and the evangelist and the apostle, although the Holy Spirit continues to direct Him. (I have dealt with the early Church in more detail in my pamphlet entitled “The Prayer Life of the early Church” and my Module on the Church (ecclesiology) – see website).

Having recognized that the heart of the N.T. church was intimacy translated into caring practical provision, we have indicated the priority of prayer, but there is one remaining area that needs to be considered. In Acts 2:42 we read that, “*they continued in the apostles’ doctrine.*” In Eph.4:4-6 Paul gives a clear outline of his teaching,

- “*There is one body,*” This represents Paul’s doctrine of the church as declared in Corinthians and Ephesians.
- “*There is one Spirit,*” This is Paul’s doctrine of the Holy Spirit - you will need to survey Paul’s letters and particularly Rom.Ch.8
- “*There is one hope of your calling.*” Paul’s doctrine of eschatology. The future hope of resurrection: 1Cor.Ch.15.
- “*There is one Lord,*” His name is Jesus! (1Cor.12:3). The Person of Christ (Phil.2:6-11), in each letter we read, “*The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
- “*There is one faith,*” The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal.1:6-8; Rom.10:8-13).
- “*There is one baptism,*” It is the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2-6) preceded by water baptism. The truth of water baptism is fulfilled in Spirit baptism (Rom.Ch.6)

- **“There is one God and Father of all.”** “God is ONE (Deut.6.4). “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph.1:3; 17). Eph. Ch.1 is a key chapter - see also 1Cor.15:28.

Workshop: further study is needed based on Paul’s letters, thus providing a good yardstick for assessing truth and error and provides a theological framework for a comprehensive teaching programme in the church or home group.

THE BIBLE

The Greek translation of the Hebrew O.T. (LXX) was the primary tool of mission in the early church and for the apostle Paul. Jesus declared His mission by reading from Isaiah’s prophecy (Lk.4:7-21 cf. Isa.61.1-2). Jesus strongly affirms the inspiration and authority of Scripture. Philip gives the meaning of Isaiah Ch.53 declaring that these O.T. scriptures speak directly of Jesus (Acts Ch.7). The gospel writers all quoted O.T. prophecy in confirmation of Jesus. We have noted already when referring to Jesus’ Messiahship that the truth of His pre-existence stretches back to the very beginning of Genesis where His inclusion in creation is shown - and so we could continue giving examples of how apostles affirm the O.T. while writing the N.T. Of course the canon of Scripture is now complete but the author of Scripture continues to speak and to reveal divine truth. We do not place prophecy and present day teaching alongside Scripture but we do recognize the authentic voice and revelation of the Holy Spirit as consistent with the teaching of Scripture. We also recognize when men’s teaching is not compatible with Scripture and therefore reject it. Because present day prophecy is a phenomena in the church the *“spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophet’s”* making those who speak in the Lord’s name accountable to one another.

What is Scripture?

Can we formulate a doctrine of Biblical inspiration?

To answer these questions I recommend you go to our website (Type Derrick Harrison in Google and it will direct you there), having arrived go to the section “Biblical Theology” and my module entitled “Doctrine of the Bible.”

A SUMMARY STATEMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY (ICBI), who in 1977 began a 10 year campaign to promote biblical inerrancy, points 4 and 5 of this statement deals with the matter of inerrancy.

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: It is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.

3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

THE FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF SCRIPTURE that make up a doctrine of Scripture:

(1) Authority/Inerrancy, (2) Clarity/Understanding, (3) Necessity, (4) Sufficiency

1). The **inerrancy** of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact. In simple terms this means that the Bible always tells the truth. And tells the truth concerning everything it talks about. The central issue is the question of truthfulness in speech.

2). The **clarity** of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing to follow it."

3). The **necessity** of Scripture means that the Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and for knowing God's will, but is not necessary for knowing that God exists or for knowing something about God's character and moral laws.

4). The **sufficiency** of Scripture means that the sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now Doctrine of the Bible contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly.

Grudem concludes by saying, we recognize disagreements, which sometimes come to us from history, from churches or denominations that emphasised a certain truth that God had revealed to them. We recognize differences in church government, in Calvinism and Arminianism, in baptism, in Breaking of Bread, and those events that surround the Second Coming! The Bible is silent about a lot of things, and so often we can come to Scripture to prove our point or to seek affirmation of our doctrine, thus manipulating Scripture to our own ends. We may even have made mistakes in our interpretation of Scripture. One thing stands out in all this: the Bible cannot be wrong, nor is the Bible confusing on any issue. We may not have all the answers, but we must recognize this and wait on God for answers. Sometimes we not wish to receive the answers of Scripture to our situation.

My conclusion is this about Scripture, this should be a great encouragement to Christians, in that we can read our Bibles daily knowing that God will speak to us and reveal to us his mind and his heart, and will continually reveal the rich truths of Scripture to us as we wait on him. We must diligently study Scripture to clarify our understanding of God because truth is our great weapon against error. As shepherds of the flock we are guardians against error. One of our chief weapons is the preaching of God's word week by week and then the supervision of all teaching material that is used in the church. I think most error enters the church because vital truths have been neglected to be preached. The Ephesian church lost their first love by failing to love the Lord Jesus with all their heart, mind and strength. This applies to all those key teachings we have identified as essential

truths about God, man and salvation. For example, neglect teaching the truth of holiness from Scripture and it will quickly be side-lined as a vital doctrine of the church. This applies to all truth. Of course what I have emphasised calls for a certain kind of preaching which is doctrinal. However, I am not suggesting all preaching is occupied with doctrine because some will be pastoral and exhortative and some will deal with matters of Christian experience. Such preaching is focused on God and “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), and employs Scripture to that end. I believe humility is required by all leaders alongside alertness and a strategy of continual prayer. The seven churches of the Revelation are a witness to the inroads of the enemy and the danger of complacency. Derrick Harrison March 1st 2012.