

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS TO BE CITED &/OR OF  
RELEVANCE**  
**Prepared for the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota Clergy Conference**  
**May 5, 2009**

**Interpretive Background (Historical)**

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

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

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

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

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

**Interpretive Background (Present Day)**

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

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

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

*The Age of the Unthinkable: Why the New World Disorder Constantly Surprises Us and What We Can Do About It*, Joshua Cooper Ramo (Little, Brown, 2009) is not an entirely satisfying read. It is, however, one of the best (if not, the best) presentations of emergence shifts in international politics and finance. To see emergence as it is effecting the world within which religion functions, one could do no better than to follow Ramo through this discussion of the chaotic order presently evolving in two of our other major, culturally institutionalized constructs.

#### **Interpretive Commentary on Current Christianity**

*An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*, Ray S. Anderson (IVP, 2007). Professor Anderson's presentation of the parallels between the first century Church and that of the twenty-first century illuminates the road we are on; and his identification of the Jerusalem Church as Inherited Church and of the Antioch Church as a Fresh Expression Church is particularly compelling.

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

\*\**The Practicing Congregation - Imagining a New Old Church and/or From Nomads to Pilgrims - Stories from Practicing Congregations*, Diana Butler Bass (The Alban Institute, 2004 and 2006 respectively with Joseph Stewart-Sicking as co-author on the second) Bass is the recognized Anglican authority on the current evolution of re-traditioning main-line churches. Her work is being used all over the country as a

diagnostic tool for parishes and dioceses. To approach the response to emergent Church by main-line Protestantism without her insights would be not only foolhardy, but almost impossible.

\* *Signs of Emergence - A Vision for the Church That Is*

*Organic/Networked/Decentralized/Bottom-up/Communal/Flexible {Always Evolving}*  
Kester Brewin (US edition: Baker Books, 2007). Brewin, who is the founding pastor of the alternative worship group, Vaux, in London, is one of the most respected leaders of emergence Christianity in the UK. The fourth chapter of this volume - "The Character of the Emergent Church" - is as clear a description of the its subject as there currently is.

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

*Rising from the Ashes – Rethinking Church*, Becky Garrison (Seabury Books, 2007)  
Garrison is an editor with The Wittenburg Door and by profession a religion satirist. She is also more knowledgeable about emergent and emerging Christianity than almost any other reporter covering the scene. In *Rising* she has managed to present with great clarity most of the major voices that are shaping North American Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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

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

\*\*\**The Lost History of Christianity - The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africe, and Asia*, Philip Jenkins (Oxford University Press,2008) Any useful understanding of the contemporary Church of necessity must rest upon a clear understanding of Christianity's global history. Nobody understands the nuances and implications of that truism better than Philip Jenkins, who has long-since established himself as an authority on global Christianity today. This most recent addition to Jenkins's work in that field should be required reading for every Christian leader and thinker.

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

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

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

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

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

\*\*\**The Becoming of G-d*, Ian Mobsby (ytcpress. 2008) *Becoming*, which is Fr. Mobsby's second volume in the field of emergence Christianity, is also one of the most powerful and thought-provoking ones to come out in the field during the last two or three years, theologically speaking. Emergence understanding of trinitarianism is brilliantly and cogently explicated here; and Mobsby's fond passion for his subject and his work informs and endears what might otherwise be a far less accessible body of work.

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

\*\*\* *A Christianity Worth Believing*, Doug Pagitt (Jossey-Bass, 2008) This very lively, candid, and accessible book gives voice and body to the basic theology of the Great Emergence in a way that most previous essays have failed to do

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

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

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

. \*\*\**The Fidelity of Betrayal – Towards a Church Beyond Belief*, Peter Rollins (Paraclete, 2008) Rollins, the founder of Ikon in Ireland, is a leader internationally in the emergent movement. He also holds a PhD in philosophy. The two together make him singularly well-equipped to be one of the outstanding thinkers and theologians of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He is especially brilliant and accessible in this volume.

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

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

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

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

Some parts of Wright's theology will offend American Christians; hopefully, most of it will not. Rather, they will find here a reasoned and pastoral voice offering a blessed place of thoughtful and faithful quiet in the midst of an otherwise disturbing storm system. Well worth the read by folk on all sides of our current debates, the first is the kind of "lest we forget" book that's good for all of us now and again; and the second is a clarion call to a re-considered Christian theology.