

## [What Does the Emergent Church Movement Believe?](#)



By [Nathan Jones](#)

Pinning down what the Emergent Church movement believes is kind of like trying to nail jell-o to the wall. Because the movement exists to break with all things Christian traditional and intellectual... well, ah, there you go — that's exactly what they believe and why the movement exists.

All that breaking for the purpose of elevating experiential worship creates all sorts of different expressions, and therefore different offshoots of beliefs. Our friend at Olive Tree Ministries, Jan Markel, has written an article titled "[Will the Emergent Church Submerge Yours?](#)" based on her radio interview with Elwood McQuaid of Friends of Israel. Jan's done a wonderful job of compiling the different offshoots into an overview of what the movement is attempting to embrace.

1. Scripture is no longer the ultimate authority as the basis for the Christian faith.
2. The centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ is being replaced by humanistic methods promoting church growth and a social gospel.
3. More and more emphasis is being placed on building the kingdom of God now and less and less on the warnings of Scripture about the imminent return of Jesus Christ and a coming judgment in the future.
4. The teaching that Jesus Christ will rule and reign in a literal millennial period is considered unbiblical and heretical.
5. The teaching that the church has taken the place of Israel and Israel has no prophetic significance is often embraced.
6. The teaching that the book of Revelation does not refer to the future, but instead has been already fulfilled in the past or is allegorical.
7. An experiential mystical form of Christianity begins to be promoted as a method to reach the postmodern generation.

8. Ideas are promoted teaching that Christianity needs to be reinvented in order to provide meaning for this generation.
9. The pastor may implement an idea called "ancient-future" or "vintage Christianity" claiming that in order to take the church forward, we need to go back in church history and find out what experiences were effective to get people to embrace Christianity.
10. While the authority of the Word of God is undermined, images and sensual experiences are promoted as the key to experiencing and knowing God.
11. These experiences include icons, candles, incense, liturgy, labyrinths, prayer stations, contemplative prayer, experiencing the sacraments (for Protestants), particularly the sacrament of the Eucharist.
12. There seems to be a strong emphasis on ecumenism indicating that a bridge is being established that leads in the direction of unity with the Roman Catholic Church. (This will ultimately lead to the one world religion of Revelation.)
13. Some "evangelical" Protestant leaders are saying that the Reformation went too far. They are reexamining the claims of the "church fathers" saying that communion is more than a symbol and that Jesus actually becomes present in the wafer at communion.
14. Some suggest there are many ways to God.
15. Members of churches who question or resist the new changes that the pastor is implementing are reprimanded and usually asked to leave. If you are over age 50, your opinion will not even matter.

What pains me as a 30-something Baby Buster is that the movement began with some wonderfully talented preachers. My generation has benefited from Rob Bell's *Nooma* series and Erwin McManus' point-sinking illustrations. The loss of these and other preachers from the land of sound doctrine is painful, but goes to show how susceptible each and every one of us is to apostasy when we stray from the literal teachings of the Bible. And in this, despite all the "newness" the Emergent Church movement is trying to create, there truly is "nothing new under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9).