# DA CARSON ON THE EMERGING CHURCH

*Posted on August 18, 2005 by Eddie*

Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and its Implications
**Category:** Reviews

Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications If you are interested in the Emerging Church (note the capital letters), a Christian critique of post-modernism or a critical review of Steve Chalke's new book, then this is probably a good place to start. The chapter titles give you a good idea of the content:

> *The Emerging Church Profile.*
> *Emerging Church Strengths in Reading the Times.*
> *Emerging Church Analysis of Contemporary Culture.*
> *Personal Relections on Postmodernism's Contribution and Challenges.*
> *Emerging Church Critique of Postmodernism.*
> *Emerging Church Weaknesses Illustrated in Two Significant Books.*
> *Some Biblical Passages to Help Us in Our Evaluation.*
> *A Biblical Meditation on Truth and Experience.*

Carson points to some fairly serious theological weaknesses in the Emergent scene and this book doesn't always make comfortable reading. I've not read enough by the Emergent authors myself to say whether or not I agree with the criticisms Carson makes, though he does document his sources very thoroughly, so I assume that his criticisms are accurate. That being said, I found that this book left me wanting more.

To be a little provocative: I am increasingly convinced that Churches whose primary mode of functioning is the traditional service (with the vast majority of people sitting in pews facing the front and one or two people teaching and leading from the front) are not going to make an impact on post-modern society. I think we need to seriously rethink how we *experience church*. I am not convinced that the pattern of service that dominates Church life in the UK and elsewhere is Scripturally ordained and I believe that a style of worship and teaching that is more dialogue and participation based is much more appropriate in our culture. This does not mean that I want to ditch the traditional service format, but I would like to sideline them somewhat in the life of the Christian community.

The reasons I am attracted to what I have read from Emergent is that here there is a group of people who are willing to reconsider how Christians should relate to one another and how they should grow and express their faith. However, as Carson points out, the Emergent school is not just rethinking the way that the Church lives out its life, they are also rethinking other areas which I am less comfortable with.

So, for me one big question remains unanwered. Is it possible for Evangelicals to radically rethink the way that the Church works while remaining Evanglicals?

I've tried to allow comments on this post, so if you feel that you would like to comment please give it

a try.