

FAITH UNDONE

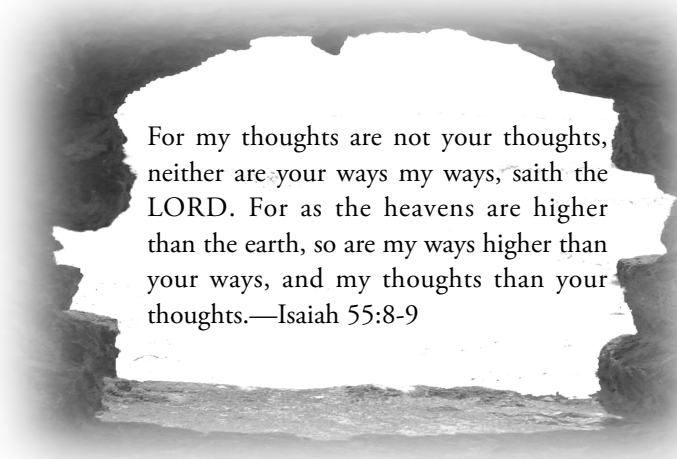
the emerging
church . . .
a new
reformation
or an
end-time
deception

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The Birth of the Emerging Church



For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.—Isaiah 55:8-9

You've heard the old saying, "Things are not always as they seem." That adage implies that what appears to be good could very well be quite the opposite. A perfect example of this from Scripture would be Eve in the Garden of Eden. The serpent promised her eternal life and the chance to be like God. His offer came in the form of an appealing, attractive piece of fruit. Eve, even though God had already warned Adam and her, succumbed to what appeared to be so good. And of course, the results were devastating (Genesis 3).

Today, man is still being allured by seemingly wonderful ideas and schemes. But the Lord has made it clear that His ways are so much higher than our ways, and what often appears to be a good thing is not that at all. As we examine the birth of the emerging church in this chapter, I believe you will see that in this case also, things are not as they seem.

While this chapter will lay out the origins of the emerging church, I do not wish to give the impression that this is merely a human endeavor. A distinct spiritual component to it implies a guiding force from the supernatural realm. This movement is very complex, and a short synopsis like this chapter cannot explain all the underlying factors that played a role in its inception.

My intent is to describe the framework in which this movement sprang and was able to gain the momentum it now enjoys.

Leadership Network

Contrary to what many believe, the current emerging church movement was not initiated by a group of disillusioned young people who were tired of organized religion and could only afford to meet in old coffee houses and run-down basements. In reality, the movement was largely the inspiration of a successful business guru whose ideas of an emerging church were catapulted into existence by *other* successful businessmen, and thus it became the influential religious force it is today. The guru was Peter Drucker, who was writing about the emerging church long before many of today's emerging church leaders were even born. But before we go back to the 1950s and the man Peter Drucker, let's start in the 1990s when the emerging church got its *official* start.

In an article in the *Criswell Theological Review* written by Mark Driscoll of Mars Hill Fellowship, Driscoll recalls the early days:

In the mid-1990s I was a young church planter trying to establish a church in the city of Seattle when I got a call to speak at my first conference. It was hosted by Leadership Network and focused on the subject of Generation X. . . . Out of that conference a small team was formed to continue conversing about post-modernism. . . .

By this time Leadership Network hired Doug Pagitt to lead the team and organize the events. He began

growing the team and it soon included Brian McLaren. . . . Pagitt, McLaren, and others such as Chris Seay, Tony Jones, Dan Kimball, and Andrew Jones stayed together and continued speaking and writing together as friends. . . .

McLaren, a very gifted writer, rose to team leader in part because he had an established family and church, which allowed him to devote a lot of time to the team. That team eventually morphed into what is now known as Emergent.^{1*}

To understand the significance of Leadership Network's role in the emerging church, we need to look briefly at the structure and makeup of that organization, which began in 1984 by Bob Buford. At the time, Buford was the owner of a successful cable television company in Texas. With the help of Harold Myra and Paul Robbins of *Christianity Today*, Buford introduced Leadership Network as a "resource broker" to churches, hoping to help leaders of "innovative churches" connect.² However, Leadership Network was not the sole inspiration of Buford. Even before he began the organization, he was consulting with business/management guru, the late Peter Drucker.

Drucker was born in 1909 in Austria and over the course of his life rose to a position of great respect for his contribution to management and business. He died in 2005 at the age of 95, but his influence lives on, not only in the business world but in the religious world as well.

Bob Buford has often publicly expressed his deep admiration for Drucker. Of him, Buford says:

*The term emergent was first used by the group (McLaren, Jones, Kimball, Driscoll, etc.) originally called Young Leaders Network. When they left Leadership Network to go on their own, they became Emergent. Today the terms *emergent* and *emerging* are often used interchangeably.

Peter Drucker is the “intellectual father” of most all that guides my approach to philanthropy. I’ve long since ceased trying to determine what thoughts are mine and which come from Peter.³

In 1988, four years after launching Leadership Network, Buford sought out Drucker, asking him to:

. . .lend his name, his great mind, and occasionally his presence to establish an operating foundation for the purpose of leading social sector organizations toward excellence in performance.⁴

Buford had a high esteem for the elder mentor, saying Drucker was “the man who formed my mind.”⁵

With Drucker’s influence and Buford’s devotion to Drucker, Leadership Network was bound to succeed. By this time in his life, Drucker had indeed built a “name” for himself and few would argue that his “great mind” and “presence” would be a tremendous asset to any company.

Peter Drucker and Mysticism

If we want to grasp the philosophy and ideologies of Leadership Network, we need to examine Drucker’s beliefs. Remember, Buford said he had “ceased trying to determine what thoughts are mine and which come from Peter.” And while Drucker no doubt brought his *business* sense to the Leadership Network table, his spiritual overtones were prevalent as well; and they were passed on to Buford, who in turn passed them on to the emerging church.

Something that would turn out to be extremely significant in the long run was Peter Drucker’s attraction to mystics. In particular, he was greatly influenced by existential philosopher and mystic Soren Kierkegaard. According to a *New York Times* article, “A Man’s Spiritual Journey from Kierkegaard to General Motors,” Drucker was “bowled over” by the writings of Kierkegaard. Drucker called him a “prophet”⁶ and being so impressed with Kierkegaard, he

“studied Danish in order to read Kierkegaard’s yet-untranslated works.”⁷ Drucker said Kierkegaard’s “religious experience” was “meaningful for the modern world in its agony.”⁸

In a dissertation at Purdue University, called “Faith and nothingness in Kierkegaard: A mystical reading of the God-relationship,” the writer said of Kierkegaard:

[He] has marked structural similarities to mystics such as Eckhart, who is warmly received by the Japanese philosophical tradition, particularly in the writings of its Zen and Pure Land Buddhist representatives.⁹

Drucker attested to Kierkegaard’s mystical affinities, saying he “stands squarely in the great Western tradition of religious experience, the tradition of . . . St. John of the Cross,”¹⁰ a mystic in the 1500s.

For those who wonder if Drucker’s interest in mysticism and Kierkegaard influenced Bob Buford, we can turn to Buford’s autobiography, *Halftime*. In the book, Buford favorably quotes Kierkegaard a number of times and refers to others with mystical persuasions. And on his website, Buford endorses a man named Jim Collins,¹¹ who took a course by Michael Ray called *Creativity in Business* in 1982. The course (and the book named after the course) takes “much of its inspiration from Eastern philosophies, mysticism, and meditation techniques.”¹² The book talks about “your wisdom-keeper or spirit guide—an inner person who can be with you in life” and says, “We meditate to unfold our inner being.”¹³ The book also presents Tarot cards. Collins calls the course “profoundly life changing” and says “[I] would not be where I am today, with the wonderful life I’ve been given, without that course.”¹⁴

Collins was so inspired by Ray’s course that he wrote the foreword for Ray’s 2004 book, *The Highest Goal*. In that book, Ray tells readers to “practice emptying your mind,”¹⁵ “experience not thinking,”¹⁶ and “meditate regularly.”¹⁷ Other quotes in the book include those of Eastern religion gurus such as Ram Dass, Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Swami Shantananda.

Buford's website not only carries an endorsement for Jim Collins but also a number of articles by or about those who promote mysticism as well.¹⁸ Clearly, Drucker's interest in mysticism rubbed off on Buford.

The Emerging Society of Peter Drucker

Long before Leadership Network even began, Peter Drucker was writing about emerging spirituality. In his 1957 book *Landmarks of Tomorrow*, the introduction titled "This Post-Modern World" states:

At some unmarked point during the last twenty years we imperceptibly moved out of the Modern Age and into a new, as yet nameless era. Our view of the world [has] changed. . . . There is a new spiritual center to human existence.¹⁹

What Drucker called the "Post-Modern World" had already started, as he saw it. In fact, he was formulating ideas that would be integrated into what would become the emerging church fifty years later. Listen to a few of his statements:

We thus live in an age of transition, an age of overlap, in which the old "modern" of yesterday no longer acts effectively . . . while the new, the "post-modern," . . . effectively controls our actions and their impact.²⁰

[W]e still need the great imaginer, the great creative thinker, the great innovator, of a new synthesis, of a new philosophy.²¹

This is a new view, different alike from the traditional.²²

Words like "purpose," "emergence," "new frontiers," and "disciplines," fill the pages of *Landmarks of Tomorrow*. These terms (and concepts) are often used by many of today's Christian leaders.

When it states that “we will create a new philosophy—a fresh way of looking at the world,”²³ it sounds very much like what is said today by those in the emerging church.

Drucker felt a strong bond not only with Kierkegaard but also with a panentheist/mystic named Martin Buber (1878-1965), who embraced the teachings of Hasidism (Jewish mysticism).²⁴ Buber believed that “a divine spark”²⁵ exists within every human and within everything in creation. He spoke of the relationship, which “must exist between individuals and everything on the planet.”²⁶ In his book *Between Man and Man*, Buber further expresses his views of mysticism:

Since 1900 I had first been under the influence of German mysticism from Meister Eckhart [a mystic] . . . then I had been under the influence of the later Kabbalah [Jewish mysticism] and of Hasidism.²⁷

In *Landmarks of Tomorrow*, Drucker referenced Buber when he stated:

Mankind needs the return to spiritual values, for it needs compassion. It needs the deep experience that the Thou and the I [from Buber’s book, *I and Thou*] are one, which all higher religions share.²⁸

In addition, one of Drucker’s biographers said that Drucker “[drew] upon the wisdom of the philosopher Martin Buber,”²⁹ and another writer said that Drucker “was a student of Buber’s at the University of Frankfurt.”³⁰

Drucker’s attraction to the mystical did not end with his fascination for Buber and Kierkegaard. In 1990, Drucker established the Leader to Leader Institute, an interspiritual *thought forum*, which to this day includes Buddhist sympathizers, globalists, evangelicals, and New Age sympathizers.³¹ Drucker’s philosophy of gathering together ideologies from *great thinkers* was not something he saw as contrary to his ideas of religion. He believed that

“people’s needs” supersede “doctrine” or “institutional structure.”³² This view of minimizing doctrine would become one of the earmarks of the emerging church, which in reality was to be a testing ground for high-tech marketing skills, business management techniques, and an experience-based religion; but its foundation is flawed with a non-biblical, mystical premise.

A "Mega" Paradigm Shift

When Bob Buford gathered the initial group of young emerging leaders, one of those he chose was Doug Pagitt, a youth pastor from Wooddale Church (a Minneapolis megachurch). Leith Anderson (Pagitt’s pastor) had already been helping set the tone for the emerging church. In Anderson’s 1992 book *A Church for the 21st Century*, he said a paradigm shift was needed:

The only way to cope and be effective during this period of structural change in society is to change some of the ways we view our world and the church. It is what some call a paradigm shift—a new way of looking at something. Such a shift will allow us to view our changing world with new perspective. It is like a map. Old maps from 1950 may have sufficed before the construction of interstate highways and the expansion of major cities, but new maps are needed now. Likewise, we need a paradigm shift for the future.³³

This idea of a paradigm shift would become an integral element of the emerging church. *Webster’s Dictionary* defines paradigm as “a philosophical or theoretical framework of any kind.”³⁴ Thus, paradigm *shift* is a shift or change from the present framework. Anderson, Buford, and Drucker all played a role in bringing this about.

While Leadership Network was the catalyst that initially launched the emerging church, many other ministries and organizations have helped to fuel it. One of the major catalysts is Rick Warren. Warren’s support for Buford and Leadership Network

goes back many years. Warren endorsed Buford's 1994 book, *Halftime*, calling Buford a "rare individual."³⁵ But perhaps more important is the fact that Warren shared Buford's great admiration for Drucker. At a 2005 Pew Forum on Religion gathering called "Myths of the Modern Mega-Church," Rick Warren stated:

I did a series of lectures for the faculty in the Kennedy School . . . I started with this quote from Peter Drucker: "The most significant sociological phenomenon of the first half of the 20th century was the rise of the corporation. The most significant sociological phenomenon of the second half of the 20th century has been the development of the large pastoral church—of the mega-church. It is the only organization that is actually working in our society."

Now Drucker has said that at least six times. I happen to know because he's *my mentor*. I've spent 20 years under his tutelage learning about leadership from him, and he's written it in two or three books, and he says he thinks it's [the mega-church] the only thing that really works in society.³⁶

Incidentally, not only does this quote reveal Warren's devotion to Drucker, but it also shows why Drucker became involved with Leadership Network. Buford's goal was to be a resource to the megachurch, because he saw it as a highly influential instrument for societal changes. Perhaps it was Drucker who convinced Buford to start Leadership Network in the first place.

Warren's view that Buford was a "rare individual" was mutual. Buford reciprocated the admiration when he described Warren and Bill Hybels (Willow Creek) as "change makers" in "the early days of Leadership Network."³⁷ As for Willow Creek's role with Leadership Network, Buford states:

The first Foundation conference was held in Dallas and was the beginning of a partnership between Bob

and Linda, Leadership Network and Willow Creek Community Church.³⁸

Willow Creek's partnership with Leadership Network has proven to be very helpful for the emerging church shift. Through Willow Creek's various well-attended conferences, and with their endorsements and promotions of books, leaders like Leonard Sweet, Brian McLaren, and Erwin McManus have been able to further propagate the emerging spirituality message.

In this fast moving paradigm, Rick Warren recognizes Leadership Network's role in the success of the emerging church. In one of Warren's e-newsletters, it reveals: "Leadership Network bills itself as the advance scout for the emerging church."³⁹

Rick Warren's Tides of Change

If Leadership Network was the "advance scout" for the emerging church, Warren's role was also vital to the emerging church's growth. Even before the Young Leaders Network (later becoming Emergent) was launched, Warren was drawn to the emergent conversation. In 1995, he joined with emerging leader Leonard Sweet to do an audio series titled *Tides of Change*.⁴⁰ Sweet is Professor of Evangelism at Drew University, a self-proclaimed futurist, and a popular author and speaker. For 2006, he was voted as one of "The 50 Most Influential Christians in America,"⁴¹ listed as number eight just under Bill Hybels (Willow Creek), Billy Graham, and Joel Osteen, and ranking higher than President Bush, Robert Schuller, and Rick Warren.

In the *Tides of Change* audio series, Sweet and Warren talked about "a new spirituality" that was looming on the horizon. Both Warren and Sweet emulated Drucker in the audio, talking about "new frontiers," "changing times," and letting go of traditions and the old way of doing things. In fact, the similarities between the audio in 1995 and Drucker in 1957 are striking. Of such changes and *new ideas*, Drucker stated:

We thus live in an age of transition, an age of overlap, in which the old “modern” of yesterday no longer acts effectively . . . but what matters most for us—the first post-modern generation—is the change in *fundamental world-view*.⁴²

In the shift from yesterday’s “progress” to today’s “innovation” . . . This is a new view.⁴³

In a way, Warren and Sweet’s audio (subtitled *Riding the Next Wave in Ministry*) sent up an emerging church trial balloon. How would people react to the idea of “new frontiers” and “waves of change”? Sweet had already predicted what the next wave would be in 1991 when he wrote *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic*. In light of Sweet’s role in the emerging church movement, and considering his connections with someone as influential as Rick Warren, we should not ignore what he has to say in *Quantum Spirituality*.

Leonard Sweet's "New Lights"

In the “Acknowledgments” section of Sweet’s book, he details that his journey of faith was influenced by a myriad of individuals he calls “New Light leaders.” He writes:

I have followed these “New Light leaders,” as I am calling them, from varying distances. But it is largely because of their writings and lives that I have been compelled to join Abraham on the journey. They are my personal role models (in an earlier day one could get away with “heroes”) of the true nature of the postmodern apologetic. More than anyone else, they have been my teachers on how to translate, without compromising content, the gospel into the indigenous context of the postmodern vernacular.⁴⁴

When Sweet says these “New Light” leaders have taught him how to translate “the gospel” without compromise, this certainly

would sound like the right thing; however, it soon becomes apparent that many of Sweet's "New Light"⁴⁵ mentors who led him "into new light" have done Sweet a terrible disservice. His translation of the Christian faith has completely dismantled true biblical faith, as I will show you.

In the "Preface" of *Quantum Spirituality*, Sweet writes:

The emergence of this New Light apologetic is a harbinger [forerunner] and hope that . . . the church may now be on the edge of another awakening. . . .

The New Light movement is characterized by bizarre, sometimes anxious alliances of a ragbag assortment of preachers, theologians, pastors, professors, artists, scientists, business leaders and scholars. What ties their creative piracy together is a radical faith commitment that is willing to dance to a new rhythm.⁴⁶

To understand what Sweet means by dancing to a "new rhythm," it is necessary to look at this "ragbag assortment" of "New Light" leaders he refers to. By his own admission, they have molded and persuaded him in spiritual matters. Thus, if we want to understand what Leonard Sweet believes, it is fair to say we need only look to what his teachers believe as he has given them such a dominant role in his life, saying, "more than anyone else, they have been my teachers."⁴⁷

You may be surprised to learn that Sweet's three pages of acknowledgments of "New Light" teachers is a who's who of the New Age movement. While some names are lesser known, others are quite prolific, such as M. Scott Peck, Matthew Fox, Willis Harman, and Morton Kelsey.⁴⁸ Ken Wilber is also named.⁴⁹ It is hard to understand how proponents of New Age spirituality can help Sweet "translate, without compromising content, the gospel" message.

The Cosmic Christ Emerges

Sweet's acknowledgment of Matthew Fox is very telling of Sweet's spiritual proclivities. Fox, an Episcopal priest and long-time promoter of New Age spirituality, is the author of *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, in which Fox states:

I foresee a renaissance, "a rebirth based on a spiritual initiative" . . . This new birth will cut through all cultures and all religions and indeed will draw forth the wisdom common to all vital mystical traditions in a global religious awakening I call "deep ecumenism."⁵⁰

The theme of Fox's book is that the "Cosmic Christ" (as opposed to the historical person of Jesus Christ) resides in all humans. He teaches that Jesus was not *the* Christ but had this *christ-consciousness*, and he was just one of many who did. Gandhi, Moses, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Buddha had it as well, Fox notes.⁵¹

Equally revealing is Sweet's favorable mention of Ken Wilber and M. Scott Peck, both of whom share Fox's views on spiritual matters.

In *Quantum Spirituality*, Sweet lays the groundwork for the *emerging manifesto* by declaring:

Mysticism, once cast to the sidelines of the Christian tradition, is now situated in postmodernist culture near the center . . . Too many people are nothing, as our empty pews are shouting to us, because we give them neither an energy-fire experience of Christ nor the Christ of an energy-fire experience. We may help them apprehend reality through the rudiments of mystical speculations, but not the rapture of flow experiences . . . Mysticism (which Einstein called "cosmic religiosity") is metaphysics arrived at through mindbody experiences. Mysticism begins in experience; *it ends in theology*. (emphasis added)⁵²

It is important to see why Warren and Sweet's alliance is so serious and should not be overlooked. Additionally, neither should Bob Buford's view of Sweet. Seeing Sweet's meaningful role in the emerging church, Buford states:

I think of Len Sweet as the icebreaker for the 21st-century-church—breaking a path through frozen ideas and methods to the new realities that are shaping the world to come.⁵³

Thus, the founder of the emerging church movement welcomes and endorses Leonard Sweet's "New Light movement." Remember, at this time historically, the New Age movement has been radically introducing the world to Eastern mysticism. Now a bridge is being built to those who profess to be Christian. The seduction of Christianity has now crossed a line that few would have believed possible a decade or so ago. If highly influential people like Warren, Hybels, Sweet, and Buford are promoting this "new man for the new era" in the name of Christ, it could only be a matter of time before Jesus Christ is replaced by the "Cosmic Christ."

In 2003, Rick Warren gave the emerging church movement a tremendous boost by endorsing and writing the foreword for Dan Kimball's signature book, *The Emerging Church*. Warren made no mistake about his admiration and support for Kimball and the emerging church. (Brian McLaren also wrote a foreword in the book). In Warren's foreword, he states:

This book is a wonderful, detailed example of what a purpose-driven church can look like in a postmodern world. My friend Dan Kimball writes passionately . . . While my book *The Purpose-Driven Church* explained what the church is called to do, Dan's book explains how to do it.⁵⁴

Throughout the book, Warren wrote several sidebar comments and reaffirmed his support for the emerging church.

Warren has consistently promoted the emerging church in both word and deed; he has not only been a proponent through his many book endorsements, but has subscribed to the emerging church mindset in several significant ways. With Rick Warren's help and Leadership Network's resources, the emerging church movement is a sure thing.

Shaping the Minds of the Youth

In the late 1960s, two youth workers in their twenties, Mike Yaconelli and Wayne Rice (who happened to be working for Youth for Christ at the time), wanted to change the way youth ministry was viewed and approached. They self-published a small booklet called *Ideas*, began talking to senior pastors and churches, and in 1970 held their first conference. They called the company Youth Specialties. Interestingly, the late theologian Francis Schaeffer attended their second annual conference.⁵⁵ Schaeffer would be very surprised if he had known that thirty years down the road this young, sprouting organization would become one of the major catalysts for the emerging church movement.

Just a few years after Youth Specialties was launched, Zondervan publishers took notice of the two men's work:

Youth Specialties' passion for youth workers caught the attention of Zondervan Publishing House in 1974. Zondervan came to YS and said, "You guys are weird and unpredictable. We want to put your books in bookstores," recalls Mike. Zondervan was very Dutch, very Grand Rapids, very conservative—but hey, they believed in our mission!⁵⁶

Zondervan's interest in Youth Specialties would only increase, and over the next thirty years, the two companies would publish over 500 resources for youth workers. It is worth mentioning that Zondervan became the property of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation in 1988. Murdoch's corporation, also owner of Fox News, has been a major catalyst for *Purpose Driven Life* and now,

we see, for the emerging church through Zondervan. This is significant in light of Rick Warren's relationship with Murdoch. Warren says he is Murdoch's pastor;⁵⁷ it is clear that both he and Youth Specialties benefited from a corporation that had a net profit of 21 *billion* dollars for the 2004 fiscal year,⁵⁸ and whose founder (Murdoch) received a "papal knighthood" from Pope John Paul II for Murdoch's donation of "large sums of money" to the Catholic church.⁵⁹

In 1984, as Youth Specialties grew and its circle of influence spread across the country, Zondervan signed a co-publishing agreement with Youth Specialties. Eventually, there was the National Youth Workers Convention, the National Pastors Convention, and another 100 seminars throughout the year around the country.

Twelve years later, Youth Specialties partnered with San Francisco Theological Seminary to form the Youth Ministry & Spirituality Project.⁶⁰ The following year, the young organization was awarded a grant by the Lilly Endowment.^{61*} By this time, Youth Specialties had contacted the new *emergent* leaders and said they wanted to work together. Sharing many of the same spiritual affinities as Emergent, Youth Specialties hoped to help take the movement to the next level with more books, more conferences, and more growth.

In 2006, Zondervan bought Youth Specialties.⁶² After the purchase, Zondervan made a commitment that it would continue its support of the emerging leaders.

While Zondervan's role in helping build the emerging church movement cannot be minimized, it is not the only Christian publisher that has added force to the movement. In fact, most major Christian publishing houses have released at least a few books written by emerging church leaders or books that have an emerging spirituality bent to them.

* In 2001, the Lilly Endowment awarded Youth Ministry & Spirituality Project another even bigger grant—\$691,000.

The secular publishing industry has also played a significant part in the emerging church's tremendous success in getting their message out. In 1996, Leadership Network established a partnership agreement with Jossey-Bass (a large San Francisco-based publishing house), which would turn out to be most beneficial for both parties.⁶³ Incidentally, Jossey-Bass had a close ongoing relationship with Peter Drucker, who sat on the Jossey-Bass board, and his *Leader to Leader Journal* is to this day published by Jossey-Bass.

Through this strong-arm publishing alliance of Jossey-Bass and Leadership Network, the handful of carefully selected young men (Young Leaders Network) began writing books, and with the Drucker/Buford marketing energies, these young emerging leaders became known world-wide in just a few years, so much so, that in 2005, *Time* magazine named Brian McLaren one of the country's top 25 "Most Influential Evangelicals."⁶⁴

In addition to numerous books being published by the Jossey-Bass Leadership Network series, several conferences have taken place that have further propelled this movement. The secular *Mother Jones* magazine took notice of the young emergent movement and its benefactors, stating:

Postmoderns receive crucial support—financial and otherwise—from the megachurches. These postmodern ministries are loosely organized by the Leadership Network, a Dallas-based umbrella group for many of the nation's megachurches. It's the Leadership Network that keeps Driscoll's bohemian Mars Hill ministry in touch with the fast-growing, but more traditional, University Baptist Church in Waco by holding conferences and seminars. For the past three years the network has sponsored national conferences that bring together postmodern leaders.⁶⁵

There is little doubt that the emerging church movement would not be what it is today without the zeal, backing, and efforts of Leadership Network, Rupert Murdoch, Jossey-Bass,

Youth Specialties, Willow Creek, Peter Drucker, Rick Warren, Zondervan publishing, and the Lilly Endowment.

Bob Buford has stated that, “A few men can make a huge difference,” and he adds, “[I]t has become my firm conviction that the way to affect multitudes is to Focus on the Few.”⁶⁶ With such a stealth backing, I can see why this would be true. But if these “Few” are preaching a different gospel, the “affect” on the “multitudes” could produce a terrible falling away from the faith.

If such a process does occur, what will it look like? Will it happen overnight, or will there be a seductive alluring over time? Will the youth be targeted? And what will happen to those who warn about this seduction? Will they be considered out of touch and narrow-minded, holding back *new frontiers* and *tides of change*?

For Christianity to be restructured, a spiritual paradigm shift of a magnificent strength and clever strategy would have to take place. It would have to involve all denominations, even ones that were once biblically based. While humans will carry out this shift, we know the Bible teaches that the battle we face is not against flesh and blood and that there is an evil one “which deceiveth the whole world” (Revelation 12:9). When man turns his back on what the Lord has said, nothing good can come from it:

Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. (Jeremiah 17:5-6)