



December 17, 2017

Emerging Christianity

I am a big fan of Catholic Theologian Fr. Richard Rohrer. His daily emailed meditations help me start my day in a good frame of heart. (I am still working to end my day there. Prayers appreciated). You can subscribe here: <https://cac.org/>. Last week he shared this reflection-- words I wish I had written. In this season of Advent practices and Christmas preparation, they seemed particularly meaningful.

Practical, practice-based Christianity has been avoided, denied, minimized, ignored, delayed, and sidelined for too many centuries, by too many Christians who were never told Christianity was anything more than a belonging or belief system. Now we know that there is no Methodist or Catholic way of loving. There is no Orthodox or Presbyterian way of living a simple and nonviolent life. There is no Lutheran or Evangelical way of showing mercy. There is no Baptist or Episcopalian way of visiting the imprisoned. If there is, we are invariably emphasizing the accidentals, which distract us from the very "marrow of the Gospel," as St. Francis called it. We have made this mistake for too long. We cannot keep avoiding what Jesus actually emphasized and mandated. In this most urgent time, "it is the very love of Christ that now urges us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Quaker pastor Philip Gulley superbly summarizes how we must rebuild spirituality from the bottom up in his book, *If the Church Were Christian*. Here I take the liberty of using my own words to restate his message, which offers a rather excellent description of Emerging Christianity:

- Jesus is a model for living more than an object of worship.
- Affirming people's potential is more important than reminding them of their brokenness.

- The work of reconciliation should be valued over making judgments.
- Gracious behavior is more important than right belief.
- Inviting questions is more valuable than supplying answers.
- Encouraging the personal search is more important than group uniformity.
- Meeting actual needs is more important than maintaining institutions.
- Peacemaking is more important than power.
- We should care more about love and less about sex.
- Life in this world is more important than the afterlife (eternity is God's work anyway).

If this makes sense to you, you are already inside of Emerging Christianity.

- Rev. William P. Worley, Conference Minister



Training the Volunteers who Make It Happen!

- Develop strong leadership skills in your church and ministry team leads
- Team members feel heard and know their opinion is valued
- The Leadership Training Program is four modules:
 - ◇ Effectively Engaging a Project Team
 - ◇ Running an Effective Meeting
 - ◇ Listening Fully, Responding Intentionally
 - ◇ From Conflict to Conversation
 - ◇ Videos introduce each learning module
- Each module contains three lessons
 - ◇ Videos are used to explain important skills in each lesson
 - ◇ Each lesson provides one or more guide, worksheet and template to implement the skills taught.

This is a new resource for all our churches and leaders!

Read next week's Communitas for details!