



Making Sense of Church:

Eavesdropping on Emerging Conversations about God, Community, and Culture

**by Spencer Burke
with Colleen Pepper**

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Tony Campolo - *Professor of Sociology, Eastern University*

Chapter 3

Teacher to Facilitator

A Conversation about “Learning”

I love the Psalms. I love the raw emotion that gushes out as David and others confess their inadequacies, cry out for mercy, and long to see justice come down on their enemies. For some reason, the Psalms touch me in a way that other books of the Bible do not.

The opposite of Psalms is Romans. In that rather formal letter, Paul carefully lays out the foundations of the Christian faith by following a specific order and pattern of logic. I imagine him agonizing over each word of the letter, struggling to get every nuance just right according to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

By comparison, the Psalms seem earthy and spontaneous. Equally inspired, the words strike me as less edited, less contrived.

A few years back, I decided I wanted to remind people at my church that they could be real with God and encourage them not to suppress their emotions (as if suppressing them were somehow more “spiritual”). As I set about preparing the lesson, I became more and more convinced that just teaching on the subject wasn’t going to cut it. I needed to engage people, to somehow create an environment where they could interact with the Psalms in a fresh way.

I decided to dole out clay. Lots of it. The idea was pretty straightforward. I simply asked the congregation to track with me as I talked—to sculpt emotions as I read through various Psalms. Occasionally, I’d ask them to make audible sounds matching those emotions. I still remember looking out and seeing 700 people growling and holding up little spiky sculptures while I talked about anger.

Playing with clay in a church service may seem silly, but it was a powerful way of getting people in touch with their feelings. Even more powerful was the time of communion at the end of the service. Earlier in the service, I had asked each person to make a sculpture depicting the emotion he or she felt most at that particular moment. In preparation for the table, I asked them stand up and bring their sculptures to the cross, naming the emotion as they came. Artist Doug Tennapel watched this procession carefully from the sidelines and then set about turning the hundreds of individual sculptures into one large creation.

When communion was over, I asked Doug to explain his creation to the congregation. For the next few minutes, he shared about his experiences. He talked about what he had observed—and why he felt compelled to form a lamb being destroyed by a serpent and the serpent being overtaken by a lion.

Those few minutes were invaluable. There was no doubt in my mind that Doug was exactly where God wanted him to be. He was using his gift to encourage the rest of the congregation. He wasn’t just an add-on to the service (or a sideshow in the foyer). Instead, he was an integral part of the worship event. He was doing something I never could have done.

Looking back, I see myself not so much as a teacher, but as a facilitator. Unlike most other Sundays, my role that week wasn’t to dispense information or even give a particularly thought-provoking sermon. Instead, it was to encourage people in their own learning—to create an environment where they could discover God for themselves.

The Shift

As I think about the emerging church, I see a similar shift occurring. In most traditional churches, the pastor’s role is to teach. As the fount of all knowledge, the pastor’s job is to overflow with spiritual truth each week while the congregation sits and absorbs this wisdom. Sure, there are other elements in a service—like music and prayer—but for the most part, the sermon is the focal point.

With so much riding on the weekly message, churches are susceptible to “charismatic” leaders—for better or for worse. Each Sunday, the pastor must deliver something new and inspirational to the congregation, lest he or she become the topic of conversation at lunch. As *the* name on the marquee outside, the pastor is inextricably linked to the success or failure of the church.

In many ways, the modern worship service is a thinly disguised university lecture. Congregants file in, face the front and frantically take notes while an established scholar—a spiritual giant in their midst—passes on formulas for a more fulfilling life.

At some churches, of course, the environment feels less academic and more like a TV show, complete with frequent applause from the audience. Theatre-style seating, stage lights, and video projectors often complete the effect. Part business presentation, part talk show, the modern “seeker-sensitive” service aims to entertain as well as educate. Engagement with all five senses is optional.

Church wasn’t always this way, of course. Go back several centuries and worship was a decidedly sensual experience. Your sense of awe inevitably began on the ride into town. Looking up, you’d see the church spire on the horizon, then the sharply pitched roof and the colorful stained glass windows. Enter through the massive wooden doors and you’d be greeted with the sweet smell of incense—a scent so distinct, you’d recognize it anywhere. Often you’d place your knee on a cold, hard floor and dip your hand into a bowl of cool, refreshing water.

Upon completing these rituals you’d take your place on a hand-carved bench, perhaps one crafted by an uncle or grandfather. Sitting there in the stillness, you couldn’t help but be reminded of the awesomeness of God. A few moments later, the procession would come down the aisle and your eyes would struggle to take it all in—the colorful vestments, the swinging censor, the golden cross.

From behind you, the high-pitched sounds of a choir would ring out, their angelic praise reverberating off the rough-hewn walls. Then there was the celebration of the Eucharist, the reciting of prayers, and other rituals. Every element was carefully planned and executed for dramatic effect. It seemed God was “wholly other,” far greater than we could ever comprehend, and thus worthy of much pageantry. Church engaged all your senses and worship was a full-bodied affair. Priests were present, but hardly the stars of the show—especially since they rarely used the language of the people.

But times changed, of course. People grew tired of all the ritual. Church leaders abused their power and symbols lost their meaning. As the Enlightenment took hold, worship became a much more rational endeavor. Soon every element was about engaging the mind and presenting a logical, well-reasoned argument. In time, sanctuaries began to look like classrooms and pastors began looking more and more like college professors.

Somehow, over the centuries, knowledge has become king. We’ve effectively said that knowing about God will ultimately help us know God. As a result, we often focused more on the Word, than on the Word become flesh. And yet, as A.W. Tozer pointed out, God cannot be contained in any object or that object will become our god. Could it be that we’ve created an idol and have actually begun to worship Christian education or the Bible?

Churches today have been expressly designed for passing on knowledge. Objects that appeal to the senses have been removed. Ironically, this switch to a “user-friendly” environment is problematic for many postmodern people—the very people churches say they want to reach. While there is something to be said for comfortable chairs and trouble-free parking, slick worship services seem exactly that—slick. It’s Amway with a thin spiritual veneer.

Thom S. Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, told *The Washington Times* that the main reason people leave church is it’s too similar to their everyday lives. Could it be the seeker-sensitive movement has actually backfired?

Another Way

People seem to be hungering for a return to mysticism. Increasingly, they want to encounter the Divine, not just hear a great sermon. They want to experience God sensually, not just understand cognitively.

Consider the renewed interest in rituals. Practices that were once seen as dry and dusty are now embraced as fresh expressions of faith and opportunities to tap into the rich heritage of our Christian ancestors. At the same time, however, postmodern people are also eager to try new things—to break away from tradition and encounter Jesus Christ in their own unique, uncensored ways.

Postmodern people don't want to be preached at so much as encouraged. Whereas teachers impart information, facilitators create opportunities for learning. They understand the importance of experience-based learning. They're not afraid to invite others to participate in the learning journey and to take over on occasion, adding their unique perspective to the mix. And they're not concerned with reputation in quite the same way. Since facilitators are not the "stars" of the church, but rather the individuals who keep things moving, they often feel less pressure to perform. They're free to try new things, to experiment, and to let the Holy Spirit truly lead.

In all this, I can't help but think of Jesus. Yes, he taught on occasion, but he also spent a lot of time just being with people. He created opportunities for individuals to discover on their own what his kingdom was about. He used stories, metaphors, and parables to speak into people's lives. And Jesus didn't simply teach—he often healed people, fed or ate with them, traveled together by boat, and leisurely walked with them along the road.

We often say that Jesus is the greatest teacher of all, but in actual fact, the Scriptures show Jesus formally teaching only a few times. The rest of the accounts describe him helping people learn in the context of their real lives—coming alongside them, asking thought-provoking questions, and giving them an opportunity to fit the pieces together on their own.

The idea of worship¹—what it should and shouldn't be—is a hot topic in the emerging church. But at the root of that conversation are often deeper questions about pastoral leadership. Just what is the role of the pastor? Have we become so enamored with teaching that we've actually inhibited spiritual growth?

Topic: *Leadership in the Emerging Church?*

Posted by: moshie

The last few months I've been part of a team that meets as a leadership for our community. We share a meal together and chat about what God is doing in our lives. Lately I'm wondering what the leadership structure of the emerging culture would look like. One of my conclusions is that the modern church placed huge emphasis on the gift of leadership—and spent a huge amount of time defining that gift through a CEO/Stephen Covey, et al., lens. This effectively squashed all the other gifts and what we can bring to the party. I believe that we should have a balanced view of leadership—shepherding leaders, teaching leaders, apostolic leaders, messed up leaders.... NO ONE-MAN SHOWS.

¹ Of course, worship means different things to different people. In this chapter, however, the word "worship" primarily refers to the big event—the Sunday service—in most instances encompassing music, prayer, Bible teaching, etc.

Posted by: adcreech

Our big challenge regarding leadership in the emerging church is going to be letting go of control, but not giving up the idea of leadership all together. Many have just jettisoned the idea—no leadership. Nope. Others have put far too much emphasis on “the dude” as the only conduit through which God can build or strengthen the church. Nope. Getting our balance will be difficult.

Posted by: jmyers

I am not convinced that we lead people. People lead themselves.

What I observe when someone has leading gifts is they are gifted in helping others lead their own lives forward. The definition of leading has become a little skewed. It has almost nothing to do with controlling, fixing, knowing what’s best, and other commonly held views.

It is freeing to know that Jesus promoted helping others with their lives as leading. For him, giving almost enough help to be helpful was leading. I don’t have to know what is best for others. I don’t have to fix their life. I provide them help and they lead their own life.

Posted by: moshie

---QUOTED---

It has almost nothing to do with controlling, fixing, knowing what’s best, and other commonly held views.

---END QUOTE---

Leadership should be a natural outflow of a community walking together—where the best course of action is a product of the “Aha!” moments of the community. The leader is the person who has the ability to frame the “Aha!” moment. People inspire and infuse each other. Thus all the “one another” admonitions in the Bible. The challenge is to get away from the model where one person constantly creates the “Aha!” moment—because it always leads to some kind of manipulation. And over time resembles more of a fart than a fragrance. Does this make sense?

Do sermons stink? No, really, I mean it. How valuable is the traditional sermon? What value does it add to people’s lives? Is it the best way of communicating God’s truth—or is it more like a bad infomercial?

For professional clergy, the stakes are particularly high. Are we willing to risk losing our identity for the sake of Jesus Christ?

Posted by: tammy

---QUOTED---

People lead themselves.

---END QUOTE---

How does that jive with the Scriptures where Jesus looks at the people without leadership and mourns, because they wander around like lost sheep?

I think of most people as followers. Few of us have original ideas about anything.

Posted by: jmyers

I think we need to take a clean look at “shepherd.”

Shepherds do not lead sheep. There is an understanding between sheep and shepherd. Sheep lead their own lives forward. Shepherds help sheep with their lives. They marshal, drive, guide, steer, propel, and direct. These activities are hardly ever performed from the front.

These words are great synonyms for leader. However, in each of these words there is a recognition that you are not truly in control. You are in agreement.

Again, we see people willing to ask the tough questions. What does it mean to “shepherd” a church? Language, remember, is not an exact science, and so part of the unpacking process involves taking a fresh look at our terms. Shepherds are a great example. In explaining the Christmas story, I’ve often heard pastors describe the shepherds as “the kind of guys you wouldn’t let date your daughter,” and yet Jesus calls himself “the good shepherd.” What does the word “shepherd” imply? Is the shepherd the definitive model for biblical leadership?

Posted by: moshie

I think this might be one of the strengths of emerging leadership. We should be conduits, helping others to be drawn to God, not ourselves. Background leadership will be as, if not more, important than “stage” leadership. 1 Corinthians 3:7 says, “So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”

Some of the most influential people in my life were background/ordinary people. They pointed me to God.

Topic: A New Kind of Pastor

Posted by: footer

...The truth is that when I was in professional ministry I liked to be in charge. I liked to make things happen. I liked being “successful.” I liked being told I was doing great. I liked hearing through the grapevine that people talked about what we were doing with a sense of awe. I liked being considered an expert. I liked being offered jobs and getting raises because of it. I liked building my own little comfortable kingdom...until I realized how empty it was. Maybe part of the issue really has been, is, and will be us. Maybe we’ve created all these expectations congregations have.

We need to be willing to take a closer look at own hearts when it comes to leadership. The reality is, pastors do get something out of being pastors. The problem, I think, is many of us aren’t willing to admit it. We’re fearful of what we might find.

Posted by: ezekiel1

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The story is told about Ghandi meeting E. Stanley Jones. When Jones asked Ghandi about his spiritual beliefs, he reportedly said, in essence, "Oh, I don't reject your Christ. I love your Christ. It's just that so many of you Christians are so unlike your Christ." Again, we need to be willing to see ourselves as others see us—no matter how much it hurts.

Topic: Jazz Preaching

Posted by: mr_magoo

Here's my stupid idea I'd like to try someday. Anyone seen anything like this?

*Pick a topic and four people of varying backgrounds.
The four get together a couple of times to drink coffee and talk about the topic.*

On Sunday morning, they do that again, only in front of people.

You get the improvisation of a jazz quartet, where each player knows what the other one will do, supporting the other in order to create something. It is like a panel discussion except the point isn't to win an argument, but to make something beautiful together.

Posted by: preachinjesus

Isn't "jazz preaching" (i.e. improv preaching) what Primitive Baptists do every Sunday?

Posted by: tammy

Primitive Baptists. I'm showing my prejudice, but I think of people trying to outdo each other.

The quartet—sounds more like a cooperative effort, with no lone ranger heroes.

Posted by: the_soulsurfer

I've always been intrigued by Paul's instructions to the Corinthians about their gatherings.... Remember where he said that two or three prophets should speak and everyone weigh out what they say. If a revelation comes to someone sitting down, the first should stop.... It's a give and take sort of thing so that "everyone is instructed." That has always seemed to me like what

Magoo is describing...a sort of improv. I suppose that's what PJ is saying about the Primitive Baptists...but there is such a cacophony in that, it seems hard to be instructed. I had always experimented more with interactive discussion (timed things, approaches inspired by Fight Club...), but I really like the idea of a limited number of speakers, with a pre-arranged agenda, and then a spontaneous weaving of perspective and idea around the subject.

Posted by: robbay828

Many years ago I was attending a church where one week the associate pastor sat amongst the congregation and during the senior pastor's sermon, stood up and asked some really good questions. They dialogued for about five to 10 minutes, then the senior pastor continued. All the senior pastor knew ahead of time was that he might be interrupted. It was a huge success. People really responded to hearing the questions that were bouncing around in their head articulated and discussed. Future attempts to capture the spontaneity didn't work as well, but I thought the exchanges were awesome!

Posted by: angie

I personally would love to take part in something like that. Conversation rather than talking head...I like it.

Finding the right balance between talking heads and unstructured chaos isn't easy. Just the same, I think we owe it to ourselves to start trying new things—new ways of interacting with each other and the Word as part of “worship.”

The danger, of course, will be latching onto something new that “works” and exchanging one formula for another. Today's drama could easily become tomorrow's sermon.

Topic: *Consumerism or Paganism*

Posted by: footer

I wonder what it would be like if a preacher did nothing but quote the words of Jesus Christ for a few weeks in a sermon. How would the congregation respond?

It's an interesting point, but others are saying, in effect, “Look, it isn't what's being said in the sermon that's the problem. The sermon itself is the problem.” That seems to be a common sentiment in the emerging church. Again, people are beginning to question whether the most effective way to develop disciples is by teaching in a lecture format.

Posted by: TheMuse

Don't you think church would be more eventful if you let some of the onlookers teach or sing a hymn or something? Why do you think people transmigrate from churches so much? There's no practical involvement to bring about change in their lives. People need to exercise the information they've been storing away. How can they when their only function is to sit and watch?

Posted by: tammy

My husband spent nearly a year reading through the Bible, chapter by chapter, aloud to the congregation, and commenting on what he was reading. Not that he didn't prepare (he did read it at home beforehand and do some study), but he didn't make any notes. He just spoke to what he felt God was trying to say to us on that day through that Scripture. He covered several books of the Bible this way. Some people loved it. A few accused him of not "preaching the Word." (What ELSE was he reading, then??) Most didn't seem to notice that much had changed!

Posted by: TheMuse

You know what I've always wanted to do:

You know that part in a preacher's sermon when he says, "Is anyone getting this?" I wanna jump up and say, "Yeah, I got it and you know what else? I think this could be applied to this, this and this...."

I'm sorry, but it gets really old being on the end of a one-way conversation. Why even ask the congregation? Are they just looking for an "Amen" to feel good about themselves? Or are they really trying to teach me? This is why so many teens are getting lost. Their minds are going 180 mph and they can't even give feedback.

AAAAAArgh!!! What can be done????

What portion of a worship service needs to be about teaching to make it a valid event? What becomes of the senior pastor if he preaches less and the congregation participates more? In the megachurch, the senior pastor has already offloaded all the traditional pastoral care responsibilities to others. He's the CEO, not the one who visits hospitals and prisons. If he stops preaching, what then?

Posted by: dwight

Our homily is very much akin to speeches in the Roman Court. Jesus had a more Socratic method of teaching that was highly interactive. Plenty of feedback. I have a friend, God bless him, he's not all there, but he will stop a pastor in the middle of a sermon to ask for clarification. The church isn't large, and no one seems to mind.

Somehow we've made knowledge the zenith of the Christian life. And yet, how many Bible verses and stories does the average Christian know? How much is all that knowledge making an impact for the kingdom? The challenge of the emerging church is to wrestle through these questions—to take a hard look at the aggressive educational system we've cloaked as worship and then risk suggesting other ways. Alternative worship may be a part of the answer.

Topic: *Alternative Worship*

Posted by: kirstin

In a church I attend, we are working on starting a service that would incorporate alternative worship styles in more than just music. We are talking about different ways of having communion together,

different ways of speaking/sharing, the possibility of foot washing and of group serving. Do you have thoughts or suggestions for alternative styles of worship? I would love to hear them and pass them on to the pastor I am working with.

One of the characteristics of the emerging church is a willingness to make worship a less stage-driven activity. I think it's fair to say that worship is being de-centralized. People are being released to worship in their own unique ways.

Posted by: aaronsharem

I took our home group through a worship experience where I gave each person a picture to meditate on and then pray about.

I have also played a song about heaven by MercyMe called "I Can Only Imagine," then had each person draw a picture of themselves meeting Jesus or describe how they imagine the experience.

Posted by: sudrumguy

We have a thing called the four corners. During the singing/musical time, people are heartily encouraged, if they feel led, to "visit a corner."

In one corner, there are some stones, a bucket of water, and some other containers filled with sand. The stones represent things we need to let go of and are dropped in the water. A person is encouraged to write their sins in the sand and then wipe them away as symbolic of what Jesus Christ has already done for us.

In another corner is a prayer area, where a person can light a candle as they pray for someone else. These candles then melt together on a large platter, indicating all the prayers that have gone to God.

Another area is devoted to "artistic" or "creative" worship. We have different things artists can use (large canvas, paint, pencils, notebook paper).... This is also the area where people can give money or time or drop their information card.

The last corner is the Lord's Supper, communion—whatever you like to call it...

Posted by: nilomeca

Yeah, I've experienced a few alternative worship elements. One was writing poetry, another was being creative with clay and paint, and another was a sort of candle lighting....

Posted by: jmorgan

Howdy!

I had a chance to worship with Bobby from Coast Hills Church in Southern California this last year. During one of the songs, he had a series of images of Jesus Christ through different paintings, both new and old. I forget how many there were—maybe 20? But as these images were flashing on the screen, we were also walking to the cross to take communion. It was really intense....

Posted by: Butterfly

My husband and I started and hosted a worship circle 1x/month. We would lay out all kinds of acoustic instruments (guitars, hand drums, tambourines, blocks, bells, tin whistle, etc.) and other things that made sound for anyone to take during our time of prayer and worship. It was very open, with no specific worship or prayer leader. At one time a girl brought artwork to share. It...really challenged us to trust each other more and we grew closer because of it. More importantly, we came to rely more on the Holy Spirit's leading.

While all these ideas are great, I think it's important not to slip into an "Ohhh...so that's what postmodern worship is!" mindset. These posts describe expressions of worship that worked for specific communities. The "what" in worship isn't nearly as important as the "how." It's the authenticity that matters and whether the expression matches the worshiper's heart. Doing something different just to be different—or doing it because it's cool—isn't the point.

In the emerging church, the focus is on worshiping in a way that fits your culture. Maybe your community isn't ready to do Play-Doh sculpture or bang on hand drums. That's okay. The idea is to release people to do whatever it is they need to do to have a genuine encounter with God—and to facilitate those experiences.

Topic: *Excavating Classical Christianity*

Posted by: exekie1

Hey guys,

I'm doing a conference in July talking about recovery, discovery, and the excavation of classical Christianity in the emerging church.

I'd love to hear your experiences as I prepare...

Posted by: ultraman

I once went to a Catholic church with my roommate on Good Friday and they did this service called the Veneration of the Cross, which was really cool. So a while later I was leading a service at my own church...and I appropriated (stole) large chunks of the Veneration liturgy (found online) as well as my own musings to make a really cool guided meditation. I had a large wooden cross in the middle of our room for us to look at while we meditated.

More and more evangelicals are experimenting with liturgy and symbolism. It's a weird world. Time-Life has spent millions to market Songs 4 Worship on TV and evangelicals are doing Veneration of the Cross. Wild!

Posted by: talitha

I was raised in the Methodist church, but my parents were involved in the '70s charismatic movement. I have attended churches of different denominations, but I have never been Catholic.

*One of the most meaningful devotional practices I have encountered is the Catholic practice of contemplation (see Henri Nouwen's book, *With Open Hands*). I understand the Quakers practice something similar in their meetings.... Long silences punctuated by the input of the Lord.... I also practice *lectio divina* in which the reader reads slowly, waiting for the "divine light" to be cast upon a word or phrase or selection. In Protestant terms, that would be letting the Holy Spirit instruct as you read. Both of these practices have deepened my walk....*

Posted by: rj24601

One of the coolest adaptations of ancient-future things was "Catacomb Communion" with my youth group. The youth pastor read selections from Corinthians and from historical accounts of early Christians when they would sneak into the Catacombs under Rome and take communion. I don't know how historically accurate it was, but wow, it was powerful!

He covered all the windows and doors with black paper. The room was totally dark except for candles. Then we would come forward and tear off a piece of bread, dip it in this cool, old looking goblet of grape juice and find a place for prayer and mediation. We would take the bread on our own, not led by any order. The point was for us to contemplate our life of sacrifice for Christ while taking in His great sacrifice.

Beyond Coffee and Candles

You know, I really didn't intend to call this book *Making Sense of Church*. My original title was *Beyond Coffee and Candles*—suggesting there's more to the postmodern story than meets the eye.

What makes a service postmodern?

What makes a church emerging? Is it the style of music? The ambiance? The flow of activities?

No.

I think it's important to recognize that introducing icons and liturgy—or even coffee and candles—won't make your church postmodern. Lots of established churches offer smells and bells, but it doesn't put them in the emerging category. Likewise, a traditional church doesn't become postmodern by suddenly bringing in electric guitars and selling its pipe organ.

While people in the emerging church are willing to try new things in worship, they are, more importantly, willing to relinquish control. The shift from teacher to facilitator means letting go and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead. It means taking the weight of the service off the pastor and, instead, celebrating everyone's gifts.

What is the job of the facilitator? It's this: To create an environment where individuals can meet with God in significant, life-changing ways. That may involve traditional preaching, or it may not.

For years, we have elevated teaching to the exclusion of other gifts. Paul described the church in terms of a body. Whether we realize it or not, we're walking around with a body that's grossly out of proportion to our head. Our obsession with teaching has made us a caricature of what God intended.

The shift from teacher to facilitator ultimately requires wrestling with our own motivations. The bitter, resentful, angry pastor is not a pretty picture—and yet it's a reality in many churches. The more worship is decentralized, the more humility is required.

After years of being the star of the show, many pastors find it hard to take a back seat and let others take the spotlight. Becoming a facilitator requires dying to pride and recognizing just how much identity we've drawn from our position of power.

At the same time, however, the facilitator model has the potential to be incredibly freeing. It effectively ends perfectionism and "pulpit envy" by removing the need for pastors to be smarter than everyone else. Rather than feeling threatened by others' talents and abilities, leaders can embrace these gifts and truly celebrate them.

As facilitators, pastors can admit where their inadequacies lie and look to others to fill in the gaps. They can rest, knowing that worship doesn't begin and end with them. Indeed, they can experience a sense of serenity and peace in their ministries.

Application:

1. Where is your church on the teacher to facilitator continuum?

Teacher	Facilitator
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I believe our gatherings are primarily about passing down knowledge• My focus is preaching• I believe Bible teaching alone changes lives• I believe I would be failing God and my church if I didn't faithfully preach a sermon each Sunday• "I'm God's appointed leader..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I believe we can learn from each other• My focus is participation• I believe the Lord can and prefers to use a combination of influences to change our hearts and lives• I believe preaching is one way of communicating the truths of Scripture• "I'm only one of God's leaders of this community..."

2. Think for a moment of all the areas of your life where you effectively act as a "teacher." What would it look like if you were to become more of a facilitator? How would your mode of relating change?

3. Think back to ways you have embraced change. What were the circumstances? Was your learning taught, facilitated, or both?

What others are saying about the book

"Some Christians have the ability to make you want to be a Christian, just by being who they are. They make the Gospel alive, real, healing, and utterly attractive. I think Spencer is just one of those people, and he is sharing himself and his vision in this fine book."

Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

Center for Action and Contemplation, Albuquerque, New Mexico

"Spencer Burke is that true friend who lovingly tells you the brutal truth about yourself. At first it hurts, but then it leads to the most important change in your life. The conversation recorded "Making Sense of Church" is something all Christians need to hear and church leaders dare not miss. It contains great insights for those who are ready to move from chat room rant to real-life change."

Chuck Smith

Senior Pastor Capo Beach Calvary and author of Epiphany

"A lot of good conceptual books and articles have been written the last five years about the postmodern conversation among young evangelicals. But "Making Sense of Church" is the best, most revealing book I've read on the real, ground-level dialog. For five years, The Ooze and Spencer Burke have been at the hub--they might even be THE cyber hub--of this communication. Listening in as Spencer interacts with this dialog is a good read and an enjoyable journey of learning."

Todd Hunter

Allelon Community of Churches and Former National Director: Vineyard-USA

"In the face of a growing sense that the standard evangelical approach is not working, heated conversations are springing up, a time of fertile ferment. The Ooze, and this book's distillation of Ooze conversations, focuses on some of those conversations and points to solutions. This is an engaging, stimulating presentation of bubbling new ideas at the very moment of their birth."

Frederica Mathewes-Green

Author of Facing East, www.frederica.com

"For all those confused about where the church is going and what we should be doing about it, *Making Sense of Church* is a big help. It's a sensible rapprochement between established churches and the emerging churches of the 21st century."

Tony Campolo

Professor of Sociology, Eastern University

"It is rare that a person writes a book to explain his obsession. It is rare that a person's obsession is to explore the complexity of how a 2000+ year old body called the church is navigating a series of tectonic changes in the global culture. Some obsessions are more interesting, more complex and more urgent than others. This ranks high on all counts. This book is neither a prophetic diatribe nor a happy faced cheerbook about the church and its culture. It is a serious reflection from a man who sits in the center of many conversations about the topic and knows better than to attempt a neatly tied solution. It allows the reader to enter into the confusion and emerge unscathed in the body, but changed in the heart. It will result in a greater depth of understanding of a very complex issue and a greater hope in God's character as the one who is controlling the affairs of both the church and the culture."

Brad Smith

Executive Director, International Urban Associates

"If the only reason you have devoted so much of your own money, time and energy to TheOoze was to write the book *Making Sense of Church*, then, in my opinion, it was worth it. Truly, this book has helped me to understand part of the journey I have traveled in the last ten years. The Ooze message board contributions and your authentic and vulnerable narrative illustrate the current transition that the North American church faces. Thanks for your attempt at making sense of church in the postmodern era."

Charlie Wear

Publisher, Next-Wave web magazine and fellow traveler on the journey with Jesus

"Bulletin boards like TheOoze.com are where the emerging church was birthed, and *Making Sense of Church* is like sneaking into the maternity ward."

Tony Jones

Author of Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry.

"Spencer Burke is a hospitable guy, and when you experience his hospitality, you're guaranteed to learn a lot. He's been throwing "learning parties" around the country and online for the last several years, and now, through this book, you can experience the next best thing to being there. This is an understandable and enjoyable onramp to the emerging church conversation."

Brian McLaren

Pastor (crcc.org), author of A New Kind of Christian, and others, fellow in emergent (emergentvillage.com)

"This is a unique contribution in the study of the emerging church in a postmodern cultural context. Spencer Burke is in direct contact on a daily basis with the people we need to hear from through his highly acclaimed web-site. The postings are riveting and Spencer's commentary provides a penetrating analysis."

Eddie Gibbs

Author of ChurchNext: Quantum Changes in The Way We Do Ministry and Professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary

"If anyone has not only an ear, but an eye, mind and heart tuned into the conversations of the emerging church it is Spencer. *Making Sense of Church* will bring you into the very questions, ponderings, frustrations and joys of those rethinking and reimagining the church."

Dan Kimball

Author of The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations and pastor, Vintage Faith Church, Santa Cruz, CA

"Nine times the gospels record Jesus as saying, "He who has ears to hear, hear." This book is the best listening post out there to hear the authentic voice of the future in its cries for God."

Leonard Sweet

Drew University, George Fox University, preachingplus.com

"Spencer is one of the youngest, freshest minds I know. I love his thoughts—they challenge me to think."

Kenton Beshore

Sr. Pastor Mariners Church, Irvine CA

"Thanks for the privilege of previewing *Making Sense of Church*. Congrats... you've just opened up a brand new window on ministry in the postmodern transition: from information, positioning, and image to essence, presence, and transparency. Your combination of humility and winsome truth-telling gives the most skeptical leader permission to find himself/herself in your journey."

Sally Morgenthaler

Sacramentis.com, author of Worship Evangelism

"Love the book. The warrior to gardener is a needed transition for church in a security age. The thing I like most about your book is that it gives a voice to those who are not usually heard. It lets the young people themselves speak out, rather than attempting to speak for them."

Andrew Jones

The Boaz Project Prague, Czech Republic

"What a great read. Not only the thoughts of one man but the contribution of many make it impossible to ignore the aspirations of many who love God with all their heart but have found the church of Jesus a hard place to grow up. The key thing at this time is that we start to think differently. Spencer's use of

changing metaphors gives us some new pictures to look at and new thoughts to think. Those who have ears or eyes - look and listen!"

Billy Kennedy

Team Leader - Community Church, Southmpton, UK

"Finding new metaphors has become an urgent task of the young leaders concerned about ministry in a postmodern world. Spencer Burke and Colleen Pepper are masters at capturing the new images, symbols and words that express the journey into the future. They provide us with handles to walk the journey into the future, and they do so with unforgettable color and challenging imagery."

Robert Webber

Myers Professor of ministry Northern Seminary Author of The Younger Evangelicals

"Spencer Burke is the right man at the right place at the right time. He enjoys a ringside seat in the dramatic dialogue between the church of history and the church of post-history. He stands in the middle between where God has been and where God is going. No iconoclast, Burke embraces both past and future while challenging—at the same time—the dead metaphors of a passing culture and the overnight clichés of the new "cool" culture. Throughout his book, he blows away church leaders at both ends of the spectrum with the "extreme reality" of a loving Christ."

Thomas Hohstadt

Author of Dying to Live, FutureChurch.net

About the Authors

Spencer Burke

A former pastor and accomplished photographer, Spencer Burke is the creator of TheOoze.com, a Web site focusing on issues facing the emerging church. He is also the founder of ETREK.com, an innovative experiential learning program connecting leaders in the local church with those at the forefront of the emerging church conversation. Spencer is a well-known speaker and the host of Soularize: A Learning Party—a national gathering of traditional and non-traditional theologians, church planters, artists, and musicians.

Before getting involved in the emerging church dialogue, Spencer spent twenty-two years in traditional ministry environments, serving in a variety of denominations. Most recently, he spent eight years at Mariners Church in Irvine, California, and has served the past four years on the board of elders at ROCKharbor Church in Costa Mesa, California. Spencer is a founding board member of the Damah Film Festival, an annual competition celebrating spiritual experiences in film.

Spencer is married to Lisa and they live in a small 1920s BeachShack in Newport Beach, California. They have two children, Alden (age six) and Grace (two).

Colleen Pepper

Colleen completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in communications and history at Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia. She spent three years working as a staff writer for a large parachurch organization before launching her own communications firm, Pepper Creative (www.peppercreative.ca), in 2001.

She and her husband Jeremy live in Vancouver, British Columbia, and attend a small Presbyterian church—a mission to one of the most unchurched areas in North America.

Other Opportunities

Collaborative Learning Groups

Spencer Burke also oversees an educational alternative called ETREK, collaborative learning journeys, beginning every September and January. Check www.ETREK.com for details.

Speaking, Consulting and/or Facilitating

Spencer is available for speaking, consulting or facilitating about subjects from the book or on his websites. For information, contact him directly at Spencer@theooze.com.

For a schedule of other speaking engagements, check www.MakingSenseOfChurch.com.

Local Gatherings

Members of TheOoze community and other emerging organizations gather offline on a monthly basis through <http://IndieAllies.meetup.com>. For details, check www.indieallies.com.