

Many think that the Emerging Church movement was started by a bunch of young people who wanted a hip atmosphere at church ... not so at all.

According to an article in the recent edition of [Criswell Theological Review](#), written by [Mark Driscoll](#) of Mars Hill, it was the Leadership Network that initiated the Emerging Church movement. Driscoll states:

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 postmodernism ...

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. (Mark Driscoll, "A Pastoral Perspective on the Emerging Church")

Incidentally, in Driscoll's article about the emerging church, he left out the one element that counts the most - the emerging church's affinity with contemplative spirituality. As I have often said, remove contemplative from emerging and all you have left is coffee, couches and candles.

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It is more than significant to understand the implications

that Leadership Network actually launched the Emerging Church. To understand just how pervasive the connections are, it is necessary to take a look at CCN ([Church Communications Network](#) which is an Innovation Series of Leadership Network). CCN carries [most of today's top Christian leaders](#) including James Dobson, Nicky Gumbel (creator of the Alpha course) Richard Foster (a speaker for the Be Still CCN conference), various Saddleback pastors, including Rick Warren, Bob Buford (founder of Leadership Network) and the list goes on and includes several emerging leaders such as McLaren, Leonard Sweet and Erwin McManus. The point is that while many are saying they do not agree with the emerging church and what it stands for, some of these same so called critics have been behind it all along.