

Handout For

Is the Organic Church Heretical?

A Church Growth Researcher Lives Among Them

By Dr. Bob Whitesel

Seminar overview. The emerging postmodern church worries many Christians, usually because of a perceived non-orthodox theology. Researcher and professor Dr. Bob Whitesel investigates the theology of a widely divergent sample of 12 churches and uncovers some startling answers.

The research base. I surveyed dozens of organic congregations that are reaching young people. From this group I selected 12 to include in my fourth book for Abingdon Press titled *Inside the Organic Church: Learning from 12 Emerging Congregations* (2006). Some of these churches are small, some are struggling, some might be called mega-churches, but all had transferable lessons that other churches can use to reach people under 35.

Research results. Subsequently, *Inside the Organic Church* lists 36 ideas that almost any church can utilize to reach younger generations. I also add to the Gibbs/Bolger list of identifying marks, 12 more distinguishing characteristics.

1. The melody of orthodoxy.

The Bridge, Phoenix AZ

St. Thomas' Church, Sheffield, UK

Bluer, Minneapolis, MN

2. The melody of authenticity.

Vintage Faith, Santa Cruz, CA

Church of the Apostles, Seattle, WA

Solomon's Porch, Minneapolis, MN

3. The melody of engagement.

the sol café, Edmonton, AB

Freeway, Baton Rouge, LA

One Place, Phoenix, AZ

Scum of the Earth, Denver, CO

4. Melody of missional church growth

Mars Hill, Grandville, MI

The Tribe of LA, Los Angeles, CA

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