

## **AANHEGSEL 4 (Let veral op die gedeeltes wat in **GEEL** gemerk is)** **Guillaume Smit demoniseer Tom Lessing**

7 APRIL 2007

### **THE ONGOING DISCUSSION WITH TOM LESSING**

Labels: emerging church

#### **Dear Tom**

It is against my better judgment that I engage in this correspondence with you. I am afraid that you will take what I write and strip it of its original context and use the quote as if itself was what I meant to say. This being said, I want to put a few things into perspective about the ongoing discussions on our different weblogs (your part of the discussion can be accessed here):

\* First of all, a mere technicality: You used a photograph of me without permission. Please refrain from doing so and be so kind and remove the photo. It was posted on websites that allow me to use my own photos while accepting the responsibility of copyright protecting it on my behalf. We all tend to right click and save pictures from the internet, without taking the time to read the copyright stipulations. It is actually quite unethical.

\* I am not a follower of Stephan Joubert's thoughts. I came to my own conclusions by theological study and personal reflection and an ongoing investigation of the Bible. For the record, conclusions I made in 1997 during postgraduate studies regarding the need for a new evangelistic approach and ecclesiology (or teaching about the nature of the church), was afterward also reflected by pastors and ministers in what eventually came to be known as the emerging church. Stephan was not my promotor for this study. We are, however, good friends, and I trust his integrity and judgment. When he attests to somebody else's authenticity, such as what he said about Rob Bell (and that I referred to during the radio programme), I have enough trust in his opinion and integrity to accept it at face value. By the way, I will correct the typo in my previous blogpost on Rob Bell. It was unintentional.

\* I deliberately refrain from using Scripture references when I write to you. The Bible is not intended to be a proof text for one's arguments. The Bible is also not intended to be used as a legalistic document viewed as containing only universal laws to be abided. The Bible is God's Word, through the testimonies of the faithful believers who wrote it down. Furthermore, the Bible writers never used chapters and verses. It was included into the Biblical text to allow for easier reference, somewhere in the earlier period of church history (300-1000 AD). Biblical texts should actually be read as a whole, with regard to a text's specific style of writing (a psalm is read differently as a gospel, for example). I will thus not be falling in the trap of trying to proof-text any theological arguments from the Bible.

\* **It never was my intention to attack you personally.** When I sent out my text message on Twitter, and placing my previous post on my weblog, I wanted to share my thoughts with my network of friends only. Perhaps I should adjust the settings on my twitter account so that my sms's will be restricted to my friends alone. When I grouped you with Sarel vd Merwe, I did it on the basis of your own weblog serving as a mouth piece to his conferences and workshops.

You yourself made the association as being one of his grouping of followers. And with followers I mean it in the broadest sense - the agenda you are pursuing is made up by people following it, like yourself and Sarel.

\* My use of the metaphor of being declared the enemy of the state, stems from the fact that Sarel devoted a whole afternoon session of his February conference to pastors and ministers being misled by the Emerging Church Movement (as you yourself reported on your blog). Your approach reflects the viewpoint, "if you're not with us, you are against us." I also personally spoke to several ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, all over the country, who attest to the fact that he does indeed keep a list of some sorts of pastors which he deems dangerous to his idea of biblical truth. It just makes sense to generalise this subversive way of operating by speaking of it as a black list.

\* It seems that your underlying issue is with the New Age Movement. You force remarks from leaders in the Dutch Reformed Church, as well as people associated with the emerging church movement, into a common denominator, by declaring them all to be New Age adherents or worse. There is a saying that goes something like this: If you look for the devil behind every bush, all you will eventually see is the devil. In this process **you and Sarel van der Merwe** take remarks from its intended context and meaning; you intentionally attack and belittle the integrity of people who sincerely love and serve Jesus Christ; you **spread malicious half-truths to the people who read your blog or attend your workshops**; you intimidate ministers of religion and other Christian leaders by trying to hijack every meeting where your favourite subject is being discussed or your current enemies are involved. In all this **you forget the overarching principle of Christ's love** as the ultimate driving force in Christian dealings. My actual problem is that you consequently accuse everybody associated with the Emerging Church Movement of being deluded by New Age Philosophy, but nowhere do you provide substance to your accusations (i.e. you do not explain why it is new age or how any reasonable reader or listener will be induced into new age philosophy by listening or reading it). You also expect your readers/listeners to know what the true gospel is that you so vociferously defend without putting it forth as alternative to that with which you differ. All I read is biblical verses that you use as support for your own arguments. Please, help me here, what exactly should we preach, in your opinion? Perhaps you could devote a blog post to elaborating on your beliefs and theology? It should be a recurring thing, however, because from time to time newer readers should be able to understand why you think the way you do.

\* My final remark - and this will be the last time I will be participating in a discussion with you about this subject - is the following: I am concerned about your absolute legalistic approach to the Christian faith. You use a yard stick of right and wrong, abusing the Bible, to fit your interpretation and view point of what should be right or wrong. You do not acknowledge for a single moment your own shortcomings in the way you interpret Scripture, expecting from your readers to accept your interpretation as the one and only single possible reading. From this viewpoint you spend all your time and energy attacking Christian leaders and pastors and thinkers - people who mostly stood up to the challenge of communicating Jesus' redemption to a group of people who cannot be reached by your way of evangelism or your black-and-white theology anymore. **You use a tactic of divide and intimidate and the spreading of slanderous comments about the integrity of people you disagree with under the guise of protecting the faith. In the mean time you have become an agent of the devil himself.** When I read the Bible I see that Jesus reserved his most scathing criticism for the Pharisees and rabbis of his time, people who used the Old Testament in exactly the same legalistic way

you are doing today with the whole Bible. In stead of attacking Christians who are trying to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to a increasingly broken generation, why don't you start spending your considerable energy and knowledge to find ways to help broken, lost and destitute seekers see the light of God's presence, and the love of Jesus, without judging them?

Thank you for this brief opportunity to engage in discussion with you. **I trust you will see I have no intention of degrading your person** or your passion. Neither is my intention to try and convince you to my viewpoint. **I only ask that you respectfully accept my views** in the same way I do yours, even though I fundamentally differ from them. **I am, after all, also a brother in Christ**, having given my life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and serving Him and Him alone.

I will follow your blog with interest from here on, for **I am convinced that God will expose the hidden agendas that drive this mission of yours to attack the church.**

**Sincerely**  
**Guillaume Smit**

POSTED BY GUILLAUME SMIT LINKS TO THIS POST  

0 COMMENTS