



ALL SAINTS CHURCH  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

## **What Has Happened To Me? Reflections On My Sabbatical The Emerging Church**

A Presentation to the Rector's Forum by

Anne Breck Peterson

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### **Ed Bacon, Rector:**

It's so nice to see each of you. Thank you very much for coming together for this presentation. I want you to know a little about our sabbatical policy and about our speaker.

We have a policy here that every seven years or so, operations senior staff go away for a month or two or three or four to get some rest – the word “sabbath” is in the center of the “sabbatical” – and also to study something that will help All Saints in its current trajectory. Anne Peterson wanted to study the Emergent Church, and she is going to give us a report about that. We've been talking about that, kind of on the fringes, for quite a while, and Anne's presentation, and certainly her study, will help bring it to the center.

In any case, I simply wanted to know about that. Our sabbatical policy was enabled because a parishioner, when I first came, said, “I want to give you a certain amount of money to help out with the spiritual enhancement of the place,” and I talked with this person, and he said, “Obviously, yes, it could be used for sabbaticals.” So we have used a nice percentage of it sending everybody in turn on sabbaticals. That money is gone, so if anybody ever wants to endow the sabbatical policy of All Saints Church, please talk with me. I'd be glad to talk with you about that.

Anne Peterson came to work at All Saints a certain time ago. [Laughter] She has had many different titles in her position with the Rector Emeritus, my predecessor, George Regas, and now with me for more than 14 years. I think the best thing that sums it all up is “The Director of the Rector.” Her office is right outside the door of the Rector's office, and she does all sorts of things, and she has so much institutional knowledge of the place. But rather than being that crusty old wizened person in the church office who knows everything and who says, “We've always done it this way...” Anne Peterson is the most youthful person on the staff. She's always growing, always changing and always excited about life, and greets everyone with the radically open welcoming embrace that All Saints Church is known for. In addition to that, she's just a doggone good writer, speaker and poet. She admires people who give presentations with a poetic sense about them.

So I am really looking forward to not only the substance but the style of what we are about to hear. Would you warmly welcome my friend, Anne Peterson! [Applause]

### **Anne Peterson:**

After all that hyperbole, I think I should just say that I had a really good time, and are there any questions? [Laughter]

It is my really great pleasure to be here with you in the Rector's Forum this morning. I am so filled with gratitude – grateful to all of you for being here to make church happen; grateful to Ed Bacon and all my colleagues who made it possible to be away from this place, who covered my bases; grateful to all the people in so many places in this country who are struggling to understand God, Jesus, Spirit, church, themselves, the world, and how it all unfolds in this post-modern age of ours.

My lovely spouse, Stuart, has a house in the Bay Area. He married me for my church; I married him for his house. [Laughter] In order to feel that I was truly away from my usual routine, I packed myself up and parked myself there for the duration. He and I spent two weeks in Italy with dear friends, traveling through the hills of Umbria. We returned via New York and Boston for some interviews and a tour of family places. Two of those days were for Eleanor Roosevelt's home in Hyde Park, New York. She is one of the three women I most admire and consider to be my imaginary allies. Four other women I admire – Wilma Jakobsen, Zelda Kennedy, Susan Russell, and former staff priest Franny Hall Kieschnick<sup>1</sup> – came to lunch when they attended a retreat not far from Stuart's house. I saw friends in the Bay Area, and was able to be with both my daughters and my son-in-law and my extended family for the second birthday of my two grandchildren in San Francisco. I attended conferences and churches; I read and studied and exercised and rested.

The focus of my time away was the Emergent Church. I want to talk to you about three things:

- What seems to characterize the movement?
- What happened to me through visits to churches and reading?
- What are some “therefores” for All Saints Church?

These are my own observations and opinions. None of this material has been approved by Ed Bacon or anyone in any higher authority. [Laughter]

If you have ever been involved in successful online dating, you know that the pool from which to choose is marked, “Spiritual but not religious.” If you wander into the “religious” – or, God forbid, the “Christian” – categories, you will likely meet people you have absolutely nothing in common with. Several years ago, on a plane returning from a conference, I was working on a matrix that would integrate a list of spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible with so-called “natural” gifts. The woman sitting next to me leaned over smiling and said, “Are you a Christian?” I smiled back and said, “No, I'm a writer. I'm just doing research.” [Loud laughter] Even in my early days of working at All Saints, if I were at a stand-up party where there were people I didn't know who were unfamiliar with All Saints, if someone were to ask me what I did I would say, “I work at a church, but it's not what you think.” [Laughter] At what point did nice people like me stop referring to themselves as Christian? At what point did religion and spirituality become uncoupled? How did the Religious Right claim the stage and the airwaves? How did the public face of Christianity automatically become associated with a punitive God and a narrow moral agenda opposing choice and homosexuality?

What is the Emergent Church? It's a terrible name, first of all. Things have been emerging forever; the Church is always emerging, so calling it the “emergent” church seems to be slightly a misnomer. And it is hard to define what it is, because it is not a thing, it is not an institution. It is sort of an energy that is taking forms in different places in different times. But one of the things you can say about the Emergent Church is that many members, or people involved in this, who consider themselves to be Emergent, are turned off by the institutional church. They find it repressive, or stuffy, or boring, or hurtful. They express a desire to go back to what was happening in the first century, when Christianity was vibrant and vital. “What was it,” they ask, “in the Early Church that was so important that it was worth dying for? Creeds are not important to this particular group of people, because they are all about defining the nature of Jesus, and they totally ignore his entire ministry – which seems to be the point – and what drew people to him and changed the way people understood God?”

Reading the Hebrew Scriptures is important; putting Jesus in his context. It is more important to understand Jesus in his context than the people who wrote about him afterwards. Jesus and the Gospels are central; in the Bible, Peter is more important than Paul because Peter is the pastor who learns about forgiveness – and forgiveness is central, because one has to be able to forgive in order to love.

According to a survey by the Barna Research Group<sup>2</sup>, one third of all Americans have been involved in some sort of Emergent Church or experience over the past year. Of these, a third are under forty, and a third are over sixty. You may have thought they were all young people who were messing about with this.

In traditional churches, the process for membership is that the newcomer believes what the church believes, behaves accordingly, and then belongs – believe, behave, belong. In the Emergent Church one feels a sense of belonging first, then behaves accordingly and finally comes to believe – belong, behave, believe. For the Emergent community, the Kingdom of God is here and now; the atonement – God sending Jesus down to save us from ourselves because we were bad – doesn't make any sense. It is not individual salvation that is important; it is the people of God, the community as a whole, that is the organizing element. Emergent communities are self-organizing, spontaneous, non-hierarchical; so they are unhampered by layers of authority, with no Pope or Archbishop of Canterbury to run things past for a yes or no answer. Some of these gatherings meet once a week, some of them once a month. Some could be called congregations; others gather on the Internet or for an event. In Second Life<sup>3</sup> – you all know about Second Life – your avatar can go to church, and the question is, is the virtual Eucharist valid? [Laughter]

Episcopal laywoman and historian Phyllis Tickle gives a context for this Emergent phenomenon in her book, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing, and Why*<sup>4</sup>. She borrows an image from Anglican Bishop Mark Dyer, who observes that every five hundred years or so the institutional church undergoes a big shift. This requires the church to hold what Dyer calls “a giant rummage sale” to clear things out that are no longer needed. The last big one was the Protestant Reformation, or the Great Reformation, in the fourteen and fifteen hundreds, and we appear to be about a hundred and fifty years into the next one. I've always loved the Protestant Reformation; in this time of fermentation, our tradition, Anglicanism, of which All Saints is a part, was an emergent church. As Anglicanism split from Roman Catholicism, it combined the sacraments and pageantry, with the great outfits, of the Roman Catholic tradition with the importance of the Scripture and preaching from the new Protestant tradition. What would it have been like to have lived your whole life in a church that did everything in a language you didn't understand – Latin? In which you would have to have the message of the Bible mediated for you by a priest? Then all of a sudden someone translates the Bible into a language you actually understand, and a new technology – the printing press – brings the price down so far that you can have your very own copy to read in the privacy of your own room. Powerful, exciting stuff; this was the Protestant Reformation.

Of course, the Bible is quite a confusing document and very old, filled with myth and poetry as well as history. Without guidance from some historical scholars, it might not be beyond you to begin to believe that God sat down one day and wrote the whole thing out. In this new access to Scripture, and the freedom to interpret, the roots of Fundamentalism are born. In the Enlightenment and the rise of science, we began to understand more and more about our world, measuring things, quantifying things, and facts began to push aside metaphor and mystery. Science posited a new theory of the creation of the world which did not square with the Bible's six days of creation. If you understood that the Bible's story of creation is a myth – a story that is not factual, but contains deep truths about life – then you could accommodate the Bible story and science's Theory of Evolution. But if the Bible story is a factual document, then you cannot accept the Big Bang theory or Evolution, and you have to devise your own theory of Creationism, or Intelligent Design, in order to hang on to your own way of viewing the world. Karen Armstrong's book, *The Case for God*<sup>5</sup> – may be something you read on your Kindle if you were taking it to the beach – deals with all this in a clear and compelling way, explaining ways in which what she calls “The New Atheism” is a response to the image of God that Fundamentalism presents and which has become so dominant in our age.

In so many ways, All Saints Church *is* an Emergent church. As long as I've been here, people like Marcus Borg and James Carroll have been coming to speak, bringing new language, new ideas, new ways of understanding our faith. One of the characteristics Phyllis Tickle identifies for emergent is **embodiment**. Look at the last 70+ years of rectors at All Saints Church. Frank Scott literally put his body in front of a train that was sending Japanese-Americans to internment camps during World War II. John Burt walked in Selma, and introduced Martin Luther King, Jr., at a civil rights rally at the Coliseum. George Regas vigorously protested the Vietnam War, nearly losing his job. Ed Bacon found ways to seriously engage ongoing partnerships with Jews and Muslims after 9/11. Physical manifestations of a passionate faith by people at All Saints Church are all over Pasadena: Union Station, the AIDS Service Center, Young and Healthy, the Coral Center for underserved children in the public schools, City Conversations – serious dialogue about race in Pasadena.

Another characteristic of emergent churches is the **blurring of brand loyalty**. Brian McClaren is a central figure in the Emergent movement. I heard him at a conference in Albuquerque, and many of you might have heard him at the General Convention of the National Episcopal Church in Anaheim this summer, or at our own Diocesan Convention in Riverside in early December. I love the way he describes himself. He says he is, “A missional, Evangelical, post-Protestant liberal/conservative, mystical/poetic, Biblical, charismatic, contemplative, Fundamentalist, Calvinist, Anabaptist, Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, green, Incarnational, depressed yet hopeful, emergent and unfinished Christian.” One of the other speakers at the conference in Albuquerque, who credits the Roman Catholic Church in her South Bronx neighborhood for saving her life, says that she regularly attends Sunday Mass, and on Saturday nights they attend Reverend Ray's Pentecostal service “because they love him, they love his work, and they love the way they feel the Spirit stirring in them when they are there.” Look at our own Episcopal Rector, Ed Bacon. [Laughter]

For the most part people do not come to All Saints because we are an Episcopal Church. They come – I understand from my conversations with people – because they feel that something is going on here in the worship and in the sense of urgency that everyone must be about something that will hasten the arrival of heaven on earth. In its early history, All Saints was very traditional. There were rented pews, ushers in formal dress, and women in the kitchen. The crisis over the Vietnam War was a watershed moment that divided the church and changed what All Saints was about in a major way. The preaching from the pulpit, the use of contemporary music in the service – remember how spiritual that secular music of the early '70s was? – monthly rock masses with real bread, wine and a live band – all this drew people from all different faith groups, people who were looking for someplace to register their moral opposition to this war. Despite the opposition of a group of parishioners, the rector stayed; and many of the people who had come to protest the war also stayed. All Saints was suddenly populated by Methodists and Congregationalists and Buddhists and Quakers – with people from nearly every faith tradition.

The other reason people say they come is for the worship, for the challenging preaching, for the transporting music from all over the world, for prayer that addresses the needs of the world as well as the parish – and, of course, for the architecture. Some of the places I visited meet in very different sorts of places, and I realized how much I love the space of All Saints. I feel the beauty contributes to my spirituality. In contrast to many of the Episcopal churches I visited, at the center of this place is the belief that the purpose of worship is not to follow every rubric or rule to the letter; the purpose of worship is to move the heart, because conversion takes place in the heart, not in the head.

OK, so what happened to me? I had wonderful meetings with lots of people. I saw my friend Bill Tully in New York City, with his fabulous St. Bartholomew's Church<sup>6</sup>. He talked to me about a wonderful service that they had created in the Emergent tradition called “Where the Urban Meets the Ancient.” They had a backdrop of a big screen with pictures of New York City constantly moving during the service, and they hired someone to do the service, and they put a lot of money into it, and it was very successful for quite a period of time. His church is in the middle of the Financial District, so when the great “earthquake” happened they lost a lot. One of the things they lost was this special service, because it took a lot of money to make it happen. They

now close the church during the evenings. They don't have a Eucharist in the middle of the week or in the evenings. They don't have anything that happens in the evening except paid things, because they don't want to heat and light the church; their budget is that constrained.

I met with lots of people in different places. I attended a service in Seattle, sort of in a theater place where everything was on the screen and they had a three-piece band, drums and electric guitars, and people were milling about. People wandered around, and finally the service started about ten after five. I'm looking at my watch wondering when these people were going to get going, but I decided to relax and accept that this was a different sort of experience. It was very interesting. A lay person read the Gospel. Everything you needed to know was on the screen. It was All Saints Sunday, so there was a baptism; these cute babies got plopped directly into the baptismal bowl. It was an Episcopal school church; the rector coached the participants, and it was a very wonderful thing. At one point it said on the screen there was seven minutes of silence – seven minutes of free time – during which you could go to the laptop and enter names of people who had died this past year that would be read at the end of the service, or you could go to a prayer station and light candles in front of an icon. I would say about twenty people went to the laptop and ten people went to the prayer station, and the rest of the people milled around and talked. There was pumpkin pie at the back, and there was coffee; it was kind of a lovely thing.

The place was full; I'd say there were 120 people. There were young couples – gay couples, straight couples – single people, older people, and there were families there. It was quite the congregation, and I was interested in why they were here. It was church done badly [Laughter] – only my opinion – and I wondered why anyone would come. I talked to some people afterward and asked, “Why are you here?” They were there because it was in their neighborhood, because 5:00 on Sunday evening is the perfect time, because it's not stuffy, it's not their parents' church, and because of the community work in the neighborhood – which, of course, I didn't experience while I was there. And then I realized that I was comparing that experience to my experience at All Saints Church in Pasadena! And then I went to some other churches – and there were wonderful things going on; I don't want to be demeaning – but what we have here is amazing, and I don't want to pull away from that. I mean, the music, and the level of, well, performance – because it is a drama – is very high. So if I was comparing that with one of these other churches I went to, I might be attracted to it, because of the community, because of the informality, because of the way things go on. So I opened my heart to those other possibilities, and tried not to be such a snob about my religion. [Laughter]

I read three books that were very important to me – I read a lot of books, but these three were the most important to me. The first one is called *How (Not) to Speak of God*, by Peter Rollins<sup>7</sup>. Rollins is a young man in Northern Ireland who is at the center of the Emergent Church movement. He has a monthly “experience” for people – the group is called Ikon. He plans this with a group that meets every Monday night of the month, and then everybody gathers together for this experience. He said it is not a church; he said he expects people to go to church other places, or to not go to church anywhere if it is not working for them. But he wants them to have some kind of experience of God in these places. The first part of the book is about his theology, and the second part is about some of these experiences that he has planned. One of them was described by Phyllis Tickle; it was during Advent, which is about waiting. Everybody gathered, sat, and waited ... and waited ... and waited ... and waited. People started fidgeting and looking at their watches and getting up and walking around. And that was it. Advent is about waiting, and being uncomfortable because you don't know exactly what you are waiting for. It might have been brilliant; I don't know. [Laughter]

I was deeply moved by his description of God in the darkness, a God who cannot be named. He has been a student of philosophy, and he was very drawn to Ludwig Wittgenstein's statement, “What we cannot speak about, we must pass over in silence.” But before he had been a philosophy student he had had a conversion experience at the age of 17, and he had become part of the Evangelical charismatic movement. He was captured by the one statement he sensed there: “God is the one subject of whom we must never stop talking.” So the philosophical statement drew him toward a mystical humanism, and the other toward a religious

Fundamentalism. He would go back and forth between the two until he discovered the Christian mystics, and then he was able to resolve the dilemma of the two in this statement, “That we cannot speak of is the one thing about whom, and to whom, we must never stop speaking.” He discovered that the mystics’ approach to God was that God was a secret which one was compelled to share – yet which retained its secrecy. God is revealed in Jesus, yet God remains unknown. I’ve used the words, “God known and beyond all knowing” all my adult life; reading this book brought a deeper sense of meaning to that.

Rollins sees the term “Emerging Church” to be misleading, since it is not so much a movement to develop a distinct religious tradition in Christianity, but it is reintroducing ideas that helped to revitalize already-existing religious traditions, and to build bridges between them. It is not a revolution that is in process of creating something new, he says. Rather it is one that is returning to something that is very old. It is also not so much believing in the right things as it is believing in the right way – that is, in a loving, sacrificial and Christ-like manner.

The second most important book for me was Marcus Borg’s *The God We Never Knew*<sup>8</sup>. He talks about growing up a Lutheran in South Dakota with the idea of a God that was “out there,” a being that transcended our human realm in whom we needed to believe even if some of these things seemed highly improbable. Faith, he says, came to mean believing in the improbable. It was all about being good here on earth in order to get to heaven, and in order to get to heaven there were requirements. Borg traced the theologians over his growing up and adult years who said that the God “out there” no longer worked, and that God must be known in the depths of personal experience. Borg says that in his journey he has moved from a secondhand experience of God to experiencing firsthand a relationship with the sacred – from *believing in* to *having a relationship with* the divine – and from what he calls spiritual theism to panentheism – from God *out there* to God *right here, and everywhere*.

I have worked at All Saints Church for exactly half my life. I have been thrilled to be part of its expansive agenda, especially in the late ‘80s as we were struggling to make the language of the liturgy more inclusive especially in relation to images of God, and in the early ‘90s when we worked through a process of declaring ourselves to be a prayerfully pro-choice church. I have felt so with it, so progressive and so evolved. Yet in Borg’s description of himself, I saw myself. I reflected on all those years of growing up in St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral in Denver, where that transcendent, “out there” God of requirements was front and center, and I realized it was still inside me, evidently unexamined, even though I no longer believed in that God. I found myself tearing up as I read. I wanted that other kind of relationship, with a relational God, and I had done little or nothing to cultivate one.

The third book that was most helpful for me was the aforementioned *The Case for God*, by Karen Armstrong<sup>9</sup>. She makes the case not only for God but for religion. Before our modern era, she says, religion was not something people thought, but something they did. She writes, “Religion is a practical discipline that teaches us to discover new capacities of mind and heart.... It is no use magisterially weighing up the teachings of religion to judge their truth or falsehood before embarking on a religious way of life. You discover their truth – or their lack of truth – only if you translate these doctrines into ritual or ethical action. Like any skill, religion requires perseverance, hard work and discipline.” She says, “Some people will be better at it than others, some appallingly inept, and some will miss the point entirely. But those who don’t apply themselves will get nowhere at all.”<sup>10</sup>

One of the best things for me about being in a new context on a sabbatical is the expansive way in which the natural beauty of this world pulls me up and out of myself in a visceral way. On our trip to Italy, in the town of Orvieto, as we approached the place for our gorgeous picnic lunch, we came upon an astonishing sight - a 180-degree view of a vast green hillside dotted with a tiny monastery, a little castle, little houses and cypress trees. It was breathtaking; something no photo could capture. I felt small against its great expanse and grandeur. I wanted to spend the rest of my life just gazing at it.

Two weeks later, in Connecticut, driving on a 2-lane road, we came up over a rise to see a 180-degree view of a vast and verdant valley packed with layer upon layer of trees in reds and golds and oranges and purples and green. It was breathtaking, and I felt small against its expanse and grandeur. I wanted to spend the rest of my life just gazing at it.

Over the years I have lost the sense of myth, mystery and metaphor of religion. I have found it in poetry. Poetry and spirituality both center in the imagination. Poetry emerges from the imagination. It looks at the world in a different way, it comes through a different door, it is freed from linear thinking, it opens us to new vistas, new feelings, new experiences. Poetry has become my spirituality. I want that feeling in my religion. I want to engage in the interior work so that I am pulled out of my natural preoccupation with myself into the stream of passion and action for all humanity on a regular, ongoing basis.

When we were in Assisi, we visited a wonderful basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. It's a huge, baroque thing; it is just absolutely stunningly gorgeous or awful, depending on how you feel about many colors and ribbons of marble everywhere and angels with big, heavy wings and roses and plaster everywhere – it was just wonderful. [Laughter] And then in the center of this was a tiny church that wasn't always there, it had been moved from another location where St. Francis had seen the crucifix that spoke to him. It said that he needed to go about the business of helping the poor. Painted on the picture were all the important things, and one of the important scenes was the Annunciation – the angel coming to Mary and telling her the good news. In this one the angel has all the colors that are in the marble; it has the angel with raised wings, with gold coming out of the wings, and the angel is kind of kneeling before her. And Mary is wearing a black robe with a sort of hood, and she has a little book there – she's probably reading the latest detective fiction. [Laughter] She's pulling her garment; she's kind of pulling away from the angel. I always meditated on the Annunciation because I always wondered how God is calling me. You know, if I were Mary, how would God be calling me currently? And I thought, "Yeah, that's me. The angel's calling me, and I'm kind of like, well, you know, I'm not really sure." [Laughter] So I am taking off the black outfits, and I'm putting the book down, and I'm going to try to get into it.

OK, lastly, what might All Saints do? I have listed three things to which I wish to commit my energy:

First, I would like us to be more intentional about equipping people with the tools for effective religion. This would include regular, ongoing Bible instruction and study. We say that Anglicans read the Bible differently, and then we don't really equip people, or show them what that means. So let's show the new people – and some of the older people – what that means. It would also include teaching the tools with which to do the relational work with God – centering prayer, meditation, and a long list of other things.

Secondly, I would like to explore ways to bring people in touch with God in the mystery of our worship. (I have no idea what that means.) [Laughter]

And third, I would really like us to try to find ways to share what we do here with others. People in other churches, mostly smaller, who don't have the history we have lived through and don't have the resources we have, can't imagine how we do what we do – and some of them would like to know. I know there are other churches who invite people periodically to come, and they share with them how they welcome newcomers, and they have a dialogue about what's going on there. I think we could do that here, but I think it's hard to do that here, because the excitement here is to go on to the next thing. There are so many things to do, so we want to keep doing and enjoying and bringing more things in that we could do. But I think that we have something to share, and I think that we could help people learn to be bolder – and their churches would be a lot more interesting.

OK, now you. Help me. Comments? Questions? [Applause]

**Questioner #1:** Thanks so much for sharing from your sabbatical. I'm so pleased that All Saints gives staff the opportunity to be enriched the way you have. Some of us don't have that opportunity for a sabbatical, and I'm wondering if you have any pointers to offer that you might offer those of us who don't have that opportunity but maybe could somehow do a virtual sabbatical in some fashion – and I have no idea what that means. [Laughter]

**Anne Peterson:** I think that's a great idea. Maybe you could go onto Second Life, and your avatar could go on a sabbatical. [Laughter] One of the things that Ed has also modeled for the staff, and which we have taken on, is to have a second Sabbath, because we sometimes work on Sundays and sometimes work on Saturdays, so we each have a day off during the week. To take one of those days and make that really a time away – not going to the grocery store, not making a list of things that need to be done, and do like Jews do, or people who keep the Sabbath. They read spiritual material, or they read rewarding material. Ed Bacon would take himself to the beach, because he feels the energy of the ocean of the beach. I know Wilma goes to a friend's in Santa Barbara so that she can go to the beach. Or maybe it's sleeping; I did a lot of that on my sabbatical. Or maybe it's just not doing some of the things that you would ordinarily do. If people have other ideas, I think that would be really helpful, because most people can't go away for three months as I could. I realize that, and I feel privileged. Thanks for the question.

**Questioner #2:** Welcome back. Harvey Cox has come out with a new book called *The Future of Faith*<sup>11</sup>, and he argues that we had 300 years of being “The Way,” as Christianity in the Early Church was called, and then we had 1,500 years of belief systems starting with Constantine, and that's what we are getting rid of. It seems to me this church has been in the forefront of that by saying, “Wherever you are on your journey of faith...”, that we are not doctrinal. I think that is the glory of the Emergent Church, that we are no longer checking on your belief systems to see if you belong.

**Anne Peterson:** I agree. And then one of the fears – that some people have posited, anyway – is, then where is authority? Where does authority lie if it is all spontaneous and no one's paying attention to what you are doing, and there's no official person who is in charge and it's OK to sort of let that run its course, and if they get into trouble they'll fall apart... So I think there are a lot of questions about that, about where the authority lies. A lot of modern thinking is that the authority lies within the group, and the group can monitor itself. So it will be interesting to see what happens after we have “emerged,” whenever that is going to be. By that time something else will be emerging.

**Questioner #3:** I am one of those people who flocked here in the early '70s from reading the Calendar Section of the LA Times, where it said “They share cup and bread, come to All Saints Church.” I had been involved with sort of creative sessions in worship before that, in which the effort was misplaced in its enthusiasm, and I realized that. Since that time... Keeping a rock band going is expensive, with all the big speakers and all the other things that are required. But somehow there has to be a way to take all that enthusiasm and the contemporaneous music that would draw a lot of the young people here, and keep them, without running into the red quite so quickly, as in that example you gave of using high technology in that church. I've been involved in multiple-screen projections in church, which wouldn't work at all in this architecture – which I love. But those are the directions that I wish we could consider and go in some ways.

**Anne Peterson:** When we get a group together, I'll call you. Thank you, Glen.

**Questioner #4:** Anne, you have always been a personally compelling presence here, so I am going to ask you a personal question. Did your sabbatical touch on your perspective of your injury?

**Anne Peterson:** For those of you who are new here, I was walking across the street in Laguna Beach on February 15, 2007, and got hit by a car. I was away from church – Sunday church – for about 6 months, and I have been working through all of that. I think some of it is recovered, and some of it is permanent – it's not

going to be recovered – and I’ve been working with my trainer. So the big thing was that I was going to be away from my trainer for three months. I could be away from some things for three months, but my trainer was very important. He gave me exercises to do, and told me that when I was driving up from Pasadena to Burlingame that I should stop every hundred miles and get out and do these exercises and walk around, and that I should probably spend the night in Atascadero and then drive the rest of the way, because driving is terrible for what I have, and blah blah blah. I did more walking on sabbatical, but of course I did more eating, too, so that sort of balanced out. [Laughter] So I thought it was good. Part of a sabbatical is to be refreshed and restored, and I think that part was helpful to my leg, so maybe I need just to keep on walking.

**Questioner #5:** Anne, it appears that we are going to profit from your sabbatical quite a bit, and we appreciate it. I think it is wonderful the things that you are bringing back to us. One of the things that you mentioned that I think was in Karen Armstrong’s book was that religion has to work; it has to produce something of value. That’s been one of the great values of All Saints, is that we have looked at religion in that manner. We need to do it a lot more. Theoretical religion is fine, but religion that works, and improves our lives, is what’s valuable. I think your talk about having more classes in methods of meditation, and having actually taking religion and putting it to work in our own lives is very valuable, and I’d like to encourage that as well.

**Anne Peterson:** And you’ll help me with that, too, won’t you, Margaret? [Laughter]

**Questioner #5:** My dear, I’ll lead it.

**Ed Bacon:**

I need to call an end to this. Thank you very much, Anne Peterson! [Loud applause]

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The following notes have been added by the transcriber, and were not part of Anne Peterson’s presentation:

<sup>1</sup> Wilma Jacobsen, Zelda Kennedy and Susan Russell are currently staff priests at All Saints Church; Franny Hall Kieschnick is currently Senior Associate Rector and Director of Contemplative Engagement at Trinity Church in Menlo Park, California.

<sup>2</sup> The full research report to which Anne Peterson refers is apparently not available online, but the Barna Research Group has a cluster of four research summaries on this topic at their Website that one might want to read. They are available at <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/19-organic-church>.

<sup>3</sup> Second Life is a 3-dimensional virtual world in which participants can create avatars of themselves to participate in that world. Go to the Second Life Website for a video introduction to what is available there, at <http://secondlife.com/whatis/>. The *Wikipedia* article, “Second Life,” particularly the short section, “Religion,” might be interesting. It is located online at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Life](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Life).

<sup>4</sup> Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing, and Why* (Baker Books, 2008) 176 pages. Bishop Dyer’s view is presented on page 16.

<sup>5</sup> Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God* (Knopf, 2009) 432 pages

<sup>6</sup> When one explores the St. Bartholomew’s Website, at <http://www.stbarts.org/>, reading, for example, Bill Tully’s biography at <http://www.stbarts.org/clergyandstaff.asp>, and other pages in the “Who We Are” section of the Website, one gets a sense that there are a lot of similarities between All Saints Church and St. Bart’s.

The *Wikipedia* article titled “St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church, New York City,” focuses primarily on the church’s architecture and on its musical heritage. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Bartholomew's\\_Episcopal\\_Church,\\_New\\_York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Bartholomew's_Episcopal_Church,_New_York))

<sup>7</sup> Peter Rollins, *How (Not) to Speak of God – Marks of the Emerging Church* (Paraclete Press, 2006) Paperback 144 pages

<sup>8</sup> Marcus Borg, *The God We Never Knew: Beyond Dogmatic Faith to a More Authentic Contemporary Faith* (Harper San Francisco, 1997) 192 pages

<sup>9</sup> Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God* (Knopf, 2009) 239 pages

<sup>10</sup> Armstrong, p. xiii

<sup>11</sup> Harvey Gallagher Cox, *The Future of Faith* (HarperOne, 2009) 256 pages