

"THE TURNING POINT OF THE CHURCH"  
Questions from The Path Sermon  
May 22, 2011

What changes do you see happening in the world today? What changes do you see happening in the Church? How would this relate to Isaiah 43:19?

Phyllis Tickle said in her book, The Great Emergence: "The Great Emergence, like the Great Reformation or the Great Schism or the time of the Great Gregory or the Great Transformation is a *generalized social/political/economic/intellectual/cultural shift*." Discuss what shifts have happened in each of these areas over the past several years.

How has technology influenced change in our world today? How has that affected the Church?

What do you think of the idea of a recurring "500 year rummage sale," particularly in the Church?

Consider the changes in each of the Turning Points mentioned in the sermon. What do you remember about each of these periods? What was the central event associated with the period? What changes resulted in the Church? What remained the same?

The Great Transformation – the coming of Jesus Christ into the world

The Great "Gregory" – the Fall of Rome & establishment of monasteries

The Great Schism – the division of the church into East and West

The Great Reformation – Protestant split from Roman Catholic

The Great Emergence – changes in the way Christians worship and Incarnational theology

Read Matthew 13:1-3. What was Jesus speaking of here? How might what Jesus said be applied to other significant movements of God? How is this different from assigning dates for Judgment Day? (If you are reading this, you either were not raptured like other Christians on May 21<sup>st</sup> or it didn't happen!!)

Tickle says that after each turning point or shift of the Church, at least 3 things happen:

- 1) A new, more vital form of Christianity emerges.
- 2) The organized expression of Christianity which up until then had been the dominant one is reconstituted into a more pure and less *fossilized* expression of its former self.
- 3) Every time renewal comes the faith has spread dramatically into new geographic and demographic areas. (p.17)

How do you think this will affect Church as we know it now?

How should Christians today respond to these changes brought on by the Great Emergence?