

Who is Doug Pagitt?

Born July 5, 1966, Pagitt graduated in 1988 from Bethel University with a degree in Anthropology and a M.A. in Theology from Bethel Theological Seminary in 1992. He is founder and head pastor of "Solomon's Porch" in Minneapolis. Pagitt is a Senior Fellow (and one of the founders) with the "Emergent Village," author, speaker, and host of the radio show "Doug Pagitt Radio Program" to discuss theology and culture. Some of his book titles are: "Church in the Inventive Age," "Church Re-Imagined," "BodyPrayer," and "Christianity Worth Believing."

(Summarized from dougpagitt.com entry on "About;" © Copyright 2008-2011 Doug Pagitt)

"... In the book *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches*, to which we both contributed, Pagitt said that "what we [Christians] believe is not 'timeless,'" that theology will be "ever-changing," and that "complex understandings meant for all people, in all places, for all times, are simply not possible." For Pagitt, theology is not timeless truth, a "faith that was once for all delivered" as Jude 3 says, but changing perspective.

"Regarding human sinfulness, Pagitt asserts that in the historic conflict between Augustine, who defended the doctrine of original sin, and Pelagius, who denied original sin, Augustine's influence has had "too much sway." He also states that Pelagius was excommunicated from Rome "on false pretenses for personal and political, not primarily doctrinal reasons." Pagitt thus doctrinally defends Pelagius, who was denounced as a heretic at the Council of Carthage in 418 for denying human sinfulness.

"Pagitt also has promoted the reconsideration of paganism, which is the belief that there is no distinction between Creator and creation, saying, "The idea that there is a necessary distinction of matter from spirit, or creation from creator, is being reconsidered." Romans 1:25 defines paganism plainly: "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." The result of pagan thinking, according to the rest of Romans 1, is the approval of sexual sins including homosexuality; in many ways, sinful sex is the worship and sacrament of paganism. This helps to explain why during a conference called *Emergence 2007* hosted by our church in Seattle and moderated by Krista Tippett from NPR, I asked Pagitt, "Is homosexuality an acceptable practice for a Christian?" Pagitt answered plainly, "Yes.""

(Summarized from the equip.org article on "Navigating the Emerging Church Highway;" by Mark Driscoll; Christian Research Institute)

Then, John MacArthur, one of the most respected voices within the Body of Christ, said:

Let me just cut to the chase on this one: [Doug] Pagitt is a Universalist. What he was saying is real simple. He was saying when you die your spirit goes to God and

judgment means that whatever was not right about you, whatever was bad about you, whatever was substantially lacking about you, gets all resolved. It doesn't matter whether you're a Buddhist, a Hindu or a Muslim—doesn't matter whether you're a Christian really; we're all going to end up in this wonderful, warm and fuzzy relationship with God. That's just classic universalism.

Solomon's Porch website states the following:

"Please know that this website is meant as an information piece and not the ultimate experience of our community.

"Many people use the sister-site, My.SolomonsPorch.com, for interaction and connection. You are welcome to join that site as well. You will not find full explanations of everything Solomon's Porch does (as we believe that all the activities of our community make-up Solomon's Porch), but we have tried listed many activities and invite you to participate in everything you find here.

"You will not find statements of what our community believes on this site. Belief is a dynamic lived reality and doesn't lend itself to website statements. Also, you will not find our priorities listed on the site, but you will find them in the lived expression of our community so please join us."

Emerging Leader, author and pastor of Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis, was asked "Is homosexuality incompatible with Christian faith?" Pagitt simply replied: "*NO. Being Gay and Christian is not a contradiction in any way.*" - Quoted by Mark Driscoll in "Why I Left the Emerging Church" at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fall 2007.

Pagitt Sees Theology as 'Ever-Changing'

By Jack Zavada

Doug Pagitt is one of the more controversial leaders of the emerging church movement, an ongoing conversation that questions many aspects of traditional evangelical Christianity.

Pagitt, as well as fellow emerging church figures Rob Bell and Brian McLaren, have all drawn criticism from traditional Christians for their views about the nature of hell and their ideas that theology is an "ever-changing" thing.

Pagitt challenges the doctrine that heaven and hell are places. He defines hell as "disconnection and disintegration with God." He also sees Christianity as an evolving system: "Christianity is not a stagnant belief, and it's not about uniformity."

While Doug Pagitt and others in the emerging church question orthodox Christianity, they are unconcerned with specific statements of their own faith. Solomon's Porch, the Minneapolis, Minnesota church Pagitt founded in 2000, addresses that issue this way:

"You will not find statements of what our community believes on this site. Belief is a dynamic lived reality and doesn't lend itself to website statements."

Instead, the site has a list of 23 "dreams" for the church. Like the emerging church movement, Solomon's Porch has its own vocabulary, calling itself a "Holistic Missional Christian Community."

(Doug Pagitt and Solomon's Porch)

Located in south Minneapolis, Solomon's Porch is one of many seeker-oriented churches in the Twin Cities. The area is home to one of the largest college campuses in the United States and has thousands of students who have dropped out of church or are frustrated with traditional church services.

Solomon's Porch rarely refers to itself as a church. It doesn't hold "services" but "Sunday Gatherings," usually in the evening. And, its worship is anything but traditional. Participants sit on sofas arranged in a circle, facing one another. There is no pulpit. Pagitt, the pastor, sits on a stool in the center. Rather than giving lecture-type sermons, he leads discussions and welcomes any type of question.

Pagitt took on traditional Christian preaching in his 2005 book *Preaching Re-imagined: The Role of the Sermon in Communities of Faith*. He coined the term "speaching," saying traditional sermons are a combination of preaching and giving a speech--a one-sided affair that sets up the pastor as an authority figure with more power and information than his listeners.

As in other emerging churches, Solomon's Porch stresses participation and relationships. Fast-paced computer images and contemporary music keep the digital-age young people involved.

Doug Pagitt, *Social and Theological Entrepreneur*

On his personal website, Pagitt refers to himself as "a social and theological entrepreneur."

He was born in 1966 in the Minneapolis area, earned his BA in Anthropology in 1988 from Bethel College and his MA in Theology from Bethel Seminary in 1992.

In addition to founding Solomon's Porch, he is also one of the founders of the Emergent Village, a social network of Christians around the world. While the two are often confused, "emerging church" properly refers to the focus of the movement, an ongoing conversation questioning established Christianity, while "emergent" is properly applied to the organization known as the Emergent Village, a

communication network and conferences. The members and dialogue of the two often overlap.

Doug Pagitt has also written or contributed to the following books:

Church in the Inventive Age
A Christianity Worth Believing
Church Re-Imagined
Preaching Re-Imagined
BodyPrayer
An Emergent Manifesto of Hope
The Post-Evangelical
Practioners
Listening to the Beliefs of the Emerging Church

He owns a property management business and a wellness center in Minneapolis, and is co-owner, with Tony Jones, another emerging church leader, of an event production company called JoPa Productions. He is also a speaker and consultant for churches, denominations and businesses in the U.S. and globally.

Pagitt and his wife Shelley were married in 1988 and are the parents of four young adult children.

(Sources: Solomon's Porch, dougpagitt.com, EmergentVillage.com, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Christianity Today, and YouTube.com.)