

Critical Communities, Movements and Institutions

The **emerging church** is not (yet) a **movement**.

Glady Ganiel (QUB) calls it an '**orientation**'.

Brian McLaren calls it a '**conversation**'.

McLaren would also call it a '**critical community**'.

What do we mean by these terms?

Critical Communities

- A **critical community** is a gathering of people who create space to think about reality in different ways.
- They notice things that other people don't see.
- They find new ways of describing reality.
- No **movement** is ever born without a **critical community** that creates some new thinking.
- But a lot of **critical communities** never become **movements**.

Movements

- **Movements** are organisations that propose gains to current **institutions**.
- **Movement** leaders are rarely institutional leaders. This is because institutional leaders find out it is extremely hard to maintain the gains of the past. Just keeping the status quo at its present level and not letting it disintegrate, is for them, job enough. Movement leaders tend to come from the fringes without credentials, although they may have expertise in other fields.

Institutions

- **Institutions** are organisations that preserve the gains achieved by past **movements**.
- Unfortunately too often we have religious institutions without movements challenging them to move forward and make new gains.

Question:

How would you describe the Association of Catholics (ACI)?