

'Hip' Church Gives Biblical Christians New Label: 'Hater'

Exclusive: Jim Fletcher warns of dangerous trend in evangelicalism

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By [Jim Fletcher](#)

Blogger and researcher Jim Fletcher has worked in the book publishing industry for 15 years, and is now director of the apologetics group [Prophecy Matters](#). His new book, "Truth Wins," provides important analysis of Rob Bell and his Emergent friends.



←Pastor Steven Furtick

Oddly, within American evangelicalism and media circles, a concept and term have emerged that place conservative Christians on the outside, in effect, becoming “other.” And we all know what happens when a group is labeled “other” (see Jews, World War II).

Sometime back, the progressive mega church pastor, Steven Furtick (Elevation Church, Charlotte, North Carolina), mentored as he is by evangelical bigwigs like Rick Warren and Bill Hybels, felt bold enough to post a YouTube video in which he sneeringly challenged what I'd call traditional Christians to basically get out of the way, because their time is past.

Presumably, to Furtick, it's the “new generation's” time now, so step aside with your stodgy hymns and expositional preaching style. Never mind that Furtick's goofy/disturbing video/rant looks like a “Saturday Night Live” parody. His view is somewhat main stream among Christian Millennials. Masked a bit by a pious nod toward humanitarian causes, the leadership of this group is quite nasty, albeit in subtle ways.

Witness Mr. Jonathan Merritt. I consider Merritt – son of former president of the Southern Baptist Convention Dr. James Merritt – to be a leading change agent within evangelicalism, in the broader attempt to move evangelicals to center-left perspectives. Jonathan Merritt is essentially Southern Baptist “royalty,” having moved from Atlanta to New York City sometime back. He uses his perch as columnist for Religion News Service to advocate for center-left (at best) perspectives.

Take his take on Rob Bell, from a Nov. 24 post, as he describes Bell's move to the (Oprah) OWN Network: “Riding on the success of a pile of bestselling books and a hit video series, Pastor Rob Bell became one of the most sought after religious speakers in America during the early 2000's. But after Bell questioned whether hell was real in his New York Times bestselling book ‘Love Wins,’ many conservative Christians tried to oust him from the inner circle of evangelicalism. “How did Bell respond? By quietly bidding his haters adieu, leaving his church, and attaining even more success,” Merritt concludes.

Okay, this is really interesting. Let's look at what Merritt is doing here, because in my opinion, in this column, it is Merritt and not Bell who is the real story. It's all about propaganda. Notice that ...

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