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A review of Carl Raschke, *GloboChrist: The Great Commission Takes a Postmodern Turn*. The Church and Postmodern Culture. Series ed. James K. A. Smith. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008. 175 pp. ISBN 978-0-8010-3267-5.

**G** *loboChrist* is a manifesto on the radical possibility of a Christian future; it is bold, often compelling, and radical—but not as radical as it believes itself to be. It is particularly fresh in its bold approach, unafraid to draw a line in the sand. The intellectual enemies of the book are many, but radical Islam, consumerist Christianity, and “emerging” Christianity are clearly the primary targets. Few theologians today write with such honesty as Raschke does on Islam or American Christianity; and more theological critiques of the emergent movement are sorely needed.

Regarding the latter, however, Raschke gets personal with Brian McLaren, particularly assaulting McLaren’s *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Zondervan, 2004), when they often write about the same things. In particular, Raschke attacks McLaren’s chapter on incarnational Christianity as having made tolerance and liberal political correctness an idol (Raschke, 160-161), while my reading of the same chapter shows far more in common between what Raschke and McLaren are really saying. In *A Generous Orthodoxy*, McLaren boldly condemns much of evangelical Christianity as “McDonaldized,” that is to say, consumer- and market-driven Christianity, a term evoked in John Drane’s important work in evangelicalism (see, for example, McLaren, 286), yet Raschke invents a new term for roughly the same concept, “Burger King Christianity.” Burger King Christianity is McDonalization with an extra side of philosophical postmodernism. Raschke’s choice to attack McLaren is not necessarily a mistake, and Raschke does admit that they both riding “the same wave” (Raschke 160); however, a quick checking of the sources reveals that Raschke and McLaren are really saying much of the same things, and the intellectual choices are not too much different than choosing between a McDonald’s or a Burger King for a quick lunch. Their marketing strategies might be very different, the value or nutrition might be debated, but the food is generally the same. Perhaps Raschke here is implying, by invoking Burger King, a situation far worse than McDonald’s, which to this reader is a reasonable value judgment, yet the conversation does not proceed in this direction, and for those of us who care about what is really being said and how arguments are being made are left to wonder about what Raschke is really arguing, or who he is really arguing against. (It’s worth noting that Raschke takes a similar *ad hominem* jab at Tony

Jones of Emergent Village as an evangelical mouthpiece for the Democratic National Committee.)

Raschke's most compelling chapter, the fourth, "A Closer Look through the 10/40 Window," culminates several themes in his earlier work. I have yet to read a theological account on the rise of radical Islam that is as thoughtful and relevant as these twenty pages. Simply stated, the primary issue to be considered regarding radical Islam is secularism, since secularism similarly discloses the rise of fundamentalist Christianity in the West. Similarly to Islam, Raschke writes, in approaching secularism Christianity has generally shifted in two different ways as a response: to become anti-secular or to "adopt some form of quasi-Marxist liberation theology...which turns out to be just as nonsensical." Instead, Raschke proposes, "Christianity must become far more radical than it has ever imagined" (114).

This radical Christianity is a global one—"GloboChristianity"—that approaches alien religions from a relational context, rather than theological. In other words, there can be no significant theological agreement between a radical Christianity and Islam unless both Christianity and Islam agree on a common enemy of secularism or cheapen their own theological claims (115). Truly incarnational Christianity continues its relational agenda into an ecclesiology where individuals "are always Christs to one another" (119). This leads Raschke to employ Deleuze's metaphor of the rhizome for authentic Christian community, "the multiplication and interconnectivity of meaning in the postmodern moment" (121). "A radical rhizomatic relationality that is revelatory of who God in Christ truly is," Raschke writes, "gives us a broad theological inkling of what amounts to the body of Christ in the postmodern cosmopolis" (123). In other words, we are to take on a kind of enfleshed immanence, that is, being "Christs to one another," as "harbingers of the eschaton, when Christ through us will become 'all in all'" (133).

How radical is this? While I appreciate Raschke's move to thinking ecclesialogically, Raschke is clearly post-church: "Forget about the local church as the paradigm of Christian community" (121). I understand that it is not fashionable to think about the local church as a site for a "Globopomo" community that follows Raschke's "four R's"—radical, relational, rhizomatic, revelatory (116)—yet the question of how to move beyond the local Raschkean (the 'fifth R') paradigm into something practiced publicly, rather than in a secret society, remains. Even the unfortunate vocabulary employed here throughout the book is a kind of post-Masonic esoterism—GloboChrist, GloboAntichrist, globopomo, bobopomo—which dissolves into a Baden-Powellesque fraternity of humankind rooted in the *heredom* of the *saeculum* out of which Christs incarnate *en masse*. This sort of thinking is public in the sense that it holds eschatological hope for many to participate and self-incarnate, which is, as it turns out, what the "GloboChrist" is (169).

But is this really radical theology? My suspicion here is yes, *GloboChrist* clearly is rooted in the Radical Christian tradition—death of God theology matter-of-factly

comes up in the narrative about as often as Baker editors would probably allow—yet the pathway of a secular theology that identifies the parousia as a purely anthropological one is removed from an ontological diachrony of the sacred. A perhaps obvious question regarding radicalism here is how different a global realization of relational Christitude is different than the social-justice orientation of Buddhahood in certain strands of eschatological Buddhism. Nonetheless, *GloboChrist* understands itself as a kind of radical evangelicalism, that is, an emergent theology that the current ongoing “emergent conversation” sorely needs, even if it is dismissive of its own audience. What remains to be seen of *GloboChrist* is whether the emergent and evangelical audience, who I assume to be the primary audience of this book, will be alienated by the book or even consider the obscure and often forced new theological language it proposes: this is to ask, will evangelicals take this book seriously?

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