



Issues, Etc.TM

Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio

TRANSCRIPT

Rev. Todd Wilken, Host

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"Sacramental Entrepreneurs and the FiveTwo Network"

Guest:

Pastor Chris Rosebrough
Kongsvinger Lutheran Church, Oslo, MN
Host of "Fighting for the Faith"

Wednesday, October 22, 2014

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BILL WOOLSEY AUDIO CLIP: That's what we're about: fueling a movement of sacramental entrepreneurs who start a variety of spiritual communities that create baptized followers of Jesus from lost people. We believe the church is called to reach new, and in order to do that, we need to start new. Some of us are ready to start. Others of us need some sharpening. We all need someone to lead the efforts. Those are the sacramental entrepreneurs that we're looking for. You might say those men

and women, they're the engines that make FiveTwo go. Well, we want to ID these people. We want to equip them and launch them, ASAP. They're the ones we want to invest in. We believe they're in one of two places: either already in your congregation, hiding out in your pews or in your groups. Or they're in your community, waiting to be befriended by the church, which is you.

WILKEN: That's Pastor Bill Woolsey, pastor in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

and founding leader of a church planting network called “FiveTwo.” He used a term there, “sacramental entrepreneurs.” Now, I’m not a businessman; I’m a pastor. I know what a sacrament is, and I think I know what an entrepreneur is, in terms of business. I have a vague idea about what it is – a person who takes risks and starts new things, fails as often as they succeed, but comes up with new ideas and is willing to take the risk to see them through. I think that’s what an entrepreneur is. I don’t know how those two things necessarily go together in the term that Woolsey claims to have coined, that is, “sacramental entrepreneur.”

We’re going to be talking about a church planting organization called FiveTwo and its annual WikiConference with Chris Rosebrough of Fighting for the Faith in this hour of *Issues, Etc.*

Now, we did contact Pastor Woolsey and ask him to come on the program. He did refuse. He cited what he called “personal attacks” by me on social media, but we did contact him and ask him to be on the program.

Joining us to talk about this church planting organization called FiveTwo and its annual WikiConference: Chris Rosebrough. He’s pastor of Kongsvinger Lutheran Church in Oslo, Minnesota, and he’s host of a daily Internet talk show called “Fighting for the Faith.” Chris, welcome back.

ROSEBROUGH: Thanks for having me on, Todd.

WILKEN: Chris, when we first started talking years ago, you were a guest on the program. You had some religious training, but you were a businessman. You actually were, I think, an entrepreneur. You lived that life, you started a business – some succeeded, some failed – and you’ve actually started more than one. In the business world, when we get into this term

“sacramental entrepreneur,” let’s first deal with what an entrepreneur is, in its proper context.

ROSEBROUGH: I think my wife would argue that being an entrepreneur is a form of a mental illness. [*chuckles*] It’s this idea that you basically specialize in coming up with ideas that you think would help your neighbor, and actually, that you can turn a profit doing that and make a living at it. And so you take the risk, you invest money, you invest time and resources into these ideas, all with the idea that you think you have something that will make the world better, or you have a better way of doing business. Entrepreneurs are a vital part of the US economy. They’re great people, but at the same time, they can be a little on the crazy-obsessive side, because sometimes entrepreneurs don’t feel like they’re alive unless they’re risking everything on some new business venture.

WILKEN: Why is that entrepreneurial idea vital in the business world, but dangerous in the world of the church?

ROSEBROUGH: In the business world, business is always moving forward, technology is always improving. So the idea of an entrepreneur – these are vital parts of the economy so that the economy doesn’t stagnate, so that business and products and services don’t stagnate and continue to be the same. But the thing is that in the church, the church is the faith once delivered to the saints. And so the church itself is an institution. It has an eternal message that we are to be proclaiming until Christ returns. The things that are vital for entrepreneurship that make it so that you can be successful in the business world, those actually end up warring against the institution of the church and the timeless message of the Gospel, and the timeless means by which that Gospel is to be proclaimed.

WILKEN: So what do you make of the term “sacramental entrepreneur”?

ROSEBROUGH: It’s kind of an oxymoron. The question I have is what does the word “sacramental” mean in that context? I’ve listened to enough of Bill Woolsey to understand that what he is basically arguing is that Christians have Christ dwelling within them, and that somehow humans beings are little sacraments to their communities. The problem is that he’s confusing two theological categories: the theological category that we call the mystical union, which we talk about as Christ indwelling believers, and sacramental union – this is Christ’s actual presence within the sacraments. And he [Woolsey] is basically playing fast and loose with these words, kind of in a postmodern, deconstructionist way, and as a result of it, when you start monkeying with these established theological and biblical categories, you start losing the actual true definition of what the word “sacramental” is.

WILKEN: Okay, so what are we looking at here, if we’re looking at FiveTwo as a church planting network, the tactic that it employs? How would you describe it, how would you summarize it?

ROSEBROUGH: See, that’s the issue – they’re creating these new church offices that have never existed before. These are offices that sound nothing like what we find in Scripture or anything of the sort, and as a result of it, what they’re doing is basically innovating on a level where I don’t know if they’re planting a church, a community, if they’re creating something that is going to end up being basically a community service organization – I don’t know exactly what it is that he’s actually creating through this church planting network, even though they’re supposedly a church planting network.

WILKEN: Okay, so is the problem redefinition, or is it simply that it’s vague?

ROSEBROUGH: I think it’s intentionally vague, and that’s the interesting thing, as I study and listen to Bill Woolsey. I’ve heard all of this before. It’s like a brand-spanking-new facelift to what, back in the early part of the century, we talked about the emergent church movement, where they come up with all of these new innovative terms that sound kind of Biblical but aren’t. If you remember when the emergent church came out, they talked about the importance of planting “incarnational missional communities.” And you asked, “What does ‘incarnational’ mean, and what exactly does ‘missional’ mean?” And they were purposefully vague. It’s this subterfuge language that you can’t really pin down – in fact, pinning it down is like nailing Jell-O to the wall. But, see, this is a very dangerous thing, because if you don’t understand what something is, and you can’t look it up in your Bible and be able to clearly define it, then generally people are up to no good, and monkeying around with things for the purpose of deconstructing what exists, so they can build what they want to build in its place.

WILKEN: Well, here again is Pastor Bill Woolsey; he’s an ordained minister in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and founding leader of a church planting network called FiveTwo, speaking at FiveTwo’s recent Wiki14 Conference in Katy, Texas, explaining the sacramental entrepreneur:

BILL WOOLSEY AUDIO CLIP: And it’s going to take what we call “sacramental entrepreneurs.” Now, that’s a phrase that we’ve really started running hard with this last year. If you Google it, you’ll find out that we’re the culprit. And I want to unpack it just very briefly; I want to fly through this, and you’ll get this off our blog and other places, but I want to take you through our mission: “FiveTwo exists to fuel a movement of sacramental entrepreneurs, who start a variety of sacramental communities that create baptized followers of Jesus of lost people.”

I want to show you each word. So, first of all, we're here to fuel, which means that when we fuel something, we are not the ones who are creating it. We're simply seeing where God is moving and throw gas on it in the form of camaraderie and courage and content. It's a movement. This is global, and it's beyond any individual or community. We're not an institution trying to make you into our image. We network your image with other images so that the whole body of Christ may be blessed. We're sacramental. We're both historical and contemporary. We're mystical and we're material; we're deepening and we're extending. And sacramental: this is men and women with a deep love for the mysterious work of Jesus in the sacraments, and a deep belief in His presence in them that makes them [the men and women] the presence of Jesus, His littlest sacraments for the world.

WILKEN: Okay, first of all, what is he saying, and you mentioned before that this all sounds rather familiar to you, Chris. Take that up, if you would.

ROSEBROUGH: Yes. Well, what he's saying is actually difficult to define and pin down, because you'll notice he keeps talking where he uses words that mean the exact opposite. It would be like me saying, "Listen, I'm fat and thin, I'm black and white, I'm up and down, I'm embracing the mystical." Now, what does that mean, at the end of the day? He's using nouns, he's using verbs, but it's about as useful as the sentence, "Blue sleeps faster than Tuesday." Yeah, I'm using nouns and verbs, but at the end of the day, what's the cash value of those words? And what Bill Woolsey is doing – this is the emergent church playbook, where you just throw out these opposite words in some kind of mystical way, and there's enough Biblical language peppered into it that people say, "Oh, well, that sounds Biblical and right..." but at the end of the day, what's the cash value of the statement? So the reality is that

if you were to just sit down and listen to what he said, write it out, and then ask yourself, "What does this actually mean?" – you're going to find that it doesn't really have a good cash value to it because he's purposefully engaging in language subterfuge to motivate people to jump on board with what he's doing. It sounds inspirational – "Oh, I want to be a part of whatever this is, but I'm not sure what this is" – it leaves a lot of question marks at the end of it. And this is exactly what we saw when the emergent church showed up and talked about planting incarnational missional communities. It reminds me of when Starbucks first came out. I had to learn a whole new language just to order a coffee. You can't just say "I'd like a large coffee" at Starbucks, you need a "Venti Pike Place" and "I want it decaf and no whip." You have to learn a whole new language. It's kind of like that.

WILKEN: We'll take a break; when we come back, we'll talk more about this church planting organization called FiveTwo and its annual WikiConference.

Chris Rosebrough is our guest. He's pastor of Kongsvinger Lutheran Church in Oslo, Minnesota, and he hosts a daily Internet talk show called "Fighting for the Faith."

[BREAK]

WILKEN: Welcome back to *Issues, Etc.* I'm Todd Wilken. On this Wednesday afternoon, October the 22nd, we're talking with Chris Rosebrough of "Fighting for the Faith" about a church planting organization called FiveTwo and its annual WikiConference.

Chris, before the break, you were talking about – you used the term word games, redefining words or deconstructing words. When you observed this tactic in the emergent church movement in broad evangelicalism, what is the goal of taking stock words that, say, the Christian is familiar with, in terms of their Biblical

definition, and tweaking their definitions or stretching the definitions? What is the goal?

ROSEBROUGH: The goal is to literally get somebody off balance and make it so that they're not so certain about what they believe anymore, so that the person who's trying to introduce new concepts has the mental space to introduce these new ideas. So it's purposely designed to create doubt in the mind of the person who's hearing the person use this language, as to whether or not they rightly understood what Scripture says, or what the church has traditionally taught. Basically, it's the same tactic that the serpent used in the garden when he said, "Did God really say?" Deconstructing language like this has the same kind of impact, where you're not so sure anymore about what it is that you believe and what you've been taught, because the person is causing you to doubt those things.

WILKEN: What does this do to the congregation? What does this do to lay people who are hearing this?

ROSEBROUGH: Well, what it ends up doing is creating confusion for some, and the other people go, "Oh, wow, this is something new," and then they end up embracing it, and all the while using this tactic, what it ends up doing is like pouring acid on sound doctrine. Eventually it's just going to erode the entire basis of truth because when you take away the meaning of words and they no longer have a fixed meaning or a proper definition, then anything becomes possible. You can make a word mean whatever you want, and it doesn't matter what the word is. You take the word "sacrament" and you evacuate it of its original meaning and its proper meaning, then you can pour into it whatever you want. This is a very, very dangerous thing that ultimately leads to rampant false doctrine and all kinds of false practices as well.

WILKEN: Another idea that the FiveTwo church planting network appears to have

embraced is the idea of vision casting, and maybe we should come at it from this angle: what office is Bill Woolsey speaking from?

ROSEBROUGH: Even though Bill is a pastor in the Missouri Synod, when he is speaking as the leader of the FiveTwo network, he is not speaking from the pastoral office. Instead, the office that he is speaking from is of the vision-casting leader. And this is important: Bill Woolsey, the best way to describe him is that because he is a network leader, he is in the same category as Bill Hybels, who is the head of the Willow Creek network, and Rick Warren, who is the head of the Purpose-Driven network, or you can say Bob Buford, who is the head of the Leadership network. Those are the people who would be his equals out there in the church world. This is where it is really important: because this network is equipping so-called "sacramental entrepreneurs" and sending them out to "start something new," the question that comes up is, how did Bill Woolsey become this leader? Who is holding him accountable? How long is his term as the leader of this network? I would argue that based upon the structure and what they're doing, the FiveTwo network has become its own synod. This is a very dangerous thing, because the question is, who is going to hold him accountable? What recourse do pastors and congregations have that are part of this network? It opens up all kinds of different cans of worms because the "office" of vision-casting leader is not a Biblical, ecclesiastical office.

WILKEN: For that matter, before we hear again from Bill Woolsey, is the office of sacramental entrepreneur a Biblical office?

ROSEBROUGH: Not that I'm aware of. I haven't been able to find it in Scripture anywhere!

WILKEN: Here again is Pastor Bill Woolsey. He's an ordained minister in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and founding

leader of a church planting network called FiveTwo, speaking at FiveTwo's recent Wiki14 Conference in Katy, Texas, about a change that needs to take place in the office of pastor.

BILL WOOLSEY AUDIO CLIP: We start new to reach new, and we reposition the ordained leaders into a new perspective for what they should be doing and how they should be leading. What if we shifted them from doer and oppressor to equipper and overseer?

WILKEN: What is "doer and oppressor"?

ROSEBROUGH: That is a pejorative way to talk about somebody who is in the pastoral office, don't you think? We've got a big problem here, and here's the idea: Bill Woolsey is picking up on something that is going on in the greater purpose-driven and seeker-driven churches, and this is in some part driven by some of the newer translations that we have, like the NIV and the ESV, of Ephesians 4. Let me read it to you from the ESV so you can see what's going on here. Their argument is that the job of the pastor is to equip people for ministry. Let's look at what it says: "And He" – this would be Jesus – "gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ." Now, the issue here is that this passage from the newer translations makes it look like the job of the pastor is to equip lay people to actually do Word and Sacrament ministry. But I would point you back to the Greek, because the contested phrase here in the Greek is *eis ergon diakonias*, "into works of ministry," but I think the King James gets this right in how it works with it: "And He, Jesus, gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" – why did He give them? – "for the perfecting of saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ." So what we're dealing with here is that they're basically taking a

hard line on Ephesians 4:12 and saying, "The job of the pastor is to equip the people in the church to do the ministry in the church, aka Word and Sacrament ministry." But the problem is this – historically, the church has never understood it the way they've talked about it, the way the King James gets it puts gets it right, I think; according to the Greek, it's a more faithful translation. But the other thing is that the Lutheran Confessions make it clear: it's the job of the *pastor* to do Word and Sacrament ministry, and you can't do Word and Sacrament ministry without a proper call. And so what these guys are doing is taking this text, basing it on modern English translations, and then saying, "We've got to completely redo Word and Sacrament ministry so that the pastor isn't the 'oppressor.' He's the guy doing the work; instead, he's supposed to be a manager, and it's his job to equip the people under him to do the Word and Sacrament ministry." This is a completely different ecclesiology that the FiveTwo Network is putting out there, and they didn't come up with it themselves. They've adopted this from the general seeker-driven movement.

BILL WOOLSEY AUDIO CLIP: Jesus' models become elders and overseers. And they're responsible for shaping the local body into being more like Jesus. Frankly, they're held more accountable for it. So they have this great responsibility to care for the congregation spiritually, to protect it, but one of the main ways they do that, Ephesians 4, is to equip and release the laity to serve in new ways that maybe they had never served before. They want to serve that way, they think maybe they should, but someone has put a lid on them and said, "No, no, no, you can't do that. Only I can do that." In one of our districts right now, there's this one apostolic-minded pastor who, just because that's what he does, he's apostolic, he's identified three or four lay leaders in these little outposts that are about anywhere from 30-75 miles away from him. At first, when he saw these, he thought, "Okay, I've got to

schedule them out, so you're gonna worship at 8 am, you're gonna worship at 10 am, you're gonna worship at 2 am, you're gonna worship at 4 pm, so that I can drive here and do this, and drive here and do this." So he started talking, and he says, "You know, all these places, they have leaders, and they've got people who say, 'You're our leader. You're our shepherd, our protector, you're the one taking charge of this thing.'" So the pastor says, "Do you think maybe I could just train them to celebrate the Supper or baptize when they need it, or lead worship; do you think I have to drive and go do that all the time? Don't you think if I could get our elders here to agree to that kind of model, do you think that I could give them a little bit of authority that the church has given me? They'll be under my authority, and we'll work together, but do you think I could do that?" And if the elders nodded yes, do you think it has to be 30-55 miles away? What if it's 3 miles away, or 3 blocks away? Could we tap those and raise up those leaders to do that in apartment complexes or urban communities?

WILKEN: Chris, what is Bill Woolsey envisioning there? Explain that to me.

ROSEBROUGH: Let's put it in the context he uses. He was describing somebody who is an ordained pastor, who has multiple parishes that he takes care of. In the way Woolsey is envisioning it here, rather than that guy going to Parish #1 at 10 in the morning and doing a Divine Service, and then at 12 in the afternoon going to the other parish and doing Divine Service, and then 2 in the afternoon doing a Divine Service, he envisions that this guy's job is to take the lay people in the congregation and equip and train them to administer the sacraments, do the preaching – basically run the Divine Service so that the guy who's the pastor, he's just kind of their supervisor and their trainer, is what he's saying. But again, this is *not* what Scripture is teaching! Nor is this what the Lutheran Confessions teach regarding the responsibility of the

office of pastor. Also notice something else that he did there that was kind of fascinating: in describing this guy who wants to equip the lay people to administer the sacraments, to actually preside at the Divine Service, do the preaching and the baptizing and the Lord's Supper, he said, "That guy was apostolic." An apostolic-minded guy. Whereas those people who subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions and believe what the Lutheran Confessions teach regarding the office of the ministry, that those people are oppressors. Notice the language that he's using – this is on purpose, because what he's basically trying to do is create a whole new ecclesiastical structure where the duties and offices of the pastor no longer exist in the way we understand them according to the Confessions. And the reason why we understand them this way in the Confessions is because this is what Scripture teaches. Instead, he wants to completely tear down the entire institution as it's already existed for millennia and build up this idea of sacramental entrepreneurs and guys who are apostolically minded, who are overseers, who are equipping lay people to do Word and Sacrament ministry. And, by the way, sacramental entrepreneurs, if you listen to Woolsey very carefully, a sacramental entrepreneur can either be a guy or a girl. My question for him is, should we really expect that in these churches that are a part of the FiveTwo network, if there's a female sacramental entrepreneur, that she can be presiding as a lay ministrix at a Divine Service? It seems like it's pretty open there.

WILKEN: One other thing I noticed he did there is he started the scenario of a pastor who has to drive some rather great distance, time-consuming distance, between three parishes, and then at the end said, "Well, if we can do it at 30 miles, why can't we just do it at 3 blocks?" What was going on there? Because it seems that the premise for doing it was that the pastor couldn't possibly spread himself that thin.

“Well, but if we’re going to go ahead and have lay people preaching and administering the sacrament, does it really matter how far away they are?”

ROSEBROUGH: [chuckles] Yeah, that’s kind of his point. It doesn’t really matter. As Pastor Rosenblatt likes to say, “A difference that makes no difference is no difference at all.” So he’s just thinking out loud here, and basically saying, “Well, if 30 miles is the issue – I mean, this poor pastor, he serves all these different congregations, he’s driving all over the place – what does it matter if it’s 3 miles away, 3 blocks away, just across the street? It doesn’t matter; just go and equip these lay people to do all the sacramental work.” That’s pretty much what he’s advocating for.

WILKEN: Chris Rosebrough is our guest; we’ll take another break. We’re talking about church planting organization called FiveTwo and its annual WikiConference. We will get back to the subject of being “apostolically minded,” and then whether or not the church should let the culture be the guide, and what happens – what has happened – when it does. We’ll be right back.

[BREAK]

WILKEN: Welcome back to *Issues, Etc.* I’m Todd Wilken. On this Wednesday afternoon, October the 22nd, we’re talking about a church planting organization called FiveTwo and its annual WikiConference. Chris Rosebrough of “Fighting for the Faith” is our guest.

I should say, Pastor Bill Woolsey, who is the founder and leader and president of the FiveTwo organization, did decline our request for an interview, for what he called “personal attacks” that he says I have made against him via social media. Chris Rosebrough is our guest.

Chris, I want to return to the “apostolically minded” concept here. Now, “apostolic” in the Western church generally has an accepted meaning, especially among Lutherans. Apostolic refers to 12 or 13 guys who were called directly by the Savior to occupy a unique office of apostle that ceased with the death of the last of them. Has Woolsey redefined that word, too?

ROSEBROUGH: Yeah, he’s playing fast and loose again. This is this postmodern word game deconstruction stuff that he’s doing. I understand, for instance, when we confess in the Creed, “I believe in one holy, catholic, and *apostolic* church.” I understand what we talk about when we’re saying we believe in an apostolic doctrine – we can go to the Scriptures and the New Testament, and there we can find the apostolic teaching. But the way he uses “apostolic” is kind of the way he uses “sacramental.” The question is what does it mean when he uses it in that way? The best I can come up with, after literally spending hours listening to this guy, is that when he’s using the word “apostolic,” basically the definition is “guys who agree with him regarding his new ecclesiology and these ideas that the pastor is not the one who does Word and sacrament ministry, but is a manger and a leader equipping lay people to do that.” That’s what he means by apostolic, but that’s not the historic, or even the recognized definition of the word “apostolic.”

WILKEN: We’ve heard from Bill Woolsey on the step-by-step process by which a lay person gets into the pulpit. Here he is again on the subject.

BILL WOOLSEY SOUND CLIP: So, get this: if I get a good guy who has a preaching gift and I work with him and I pour good theology into him, and then I help him try so that he can learn it, here’s how I’m going to do it: I’m going to start new to reach new by raising him up so he gets to do new, and maybe I’m going to give him a little pulpit, or a bigger pulpit, or maybe even “The Pulpit.”

One of my favorites in our ministry is our Director of Youth Ministry, Jason Maroney, who's not ordained, but God has given him this ability to preach circles around many of the ordained men that I know. And everyone can see it! You're all sitting there going, "Dude, that boy can preach!" So I'd be derelict to not let him preach.

WILKEN: What's your response, Chris?

ROSEBROUGH: I think he'd be derelict to not send that boy to seminary! Here's the question that immediately comes up: I'm no longer in the Missouri Synod, but I spend two decades in the Missouri Synod, and my question is, if you have a non-rostered, non-ordained guy who's preaching at an LCMS church, what is his status within the LCMS? He hasn't presented himself before the body that regulatively puts their certifications on pastors. Who is this guy? Where did he come from? Who's holding him accountable? Where did he study? What credentials does he have to preach, other than the opinion of one guy who says, "Oh, he can preach circles around everybody else!" Well, has he studied hermeneutics? Can you show me what qualifies him to be preaching? This opens up all kinds of cans of worms, where you basically have lay people who, oh, they've got major ability to preach, but you're not sending them to seminary? They're not studying and showing themselves approved? Do they know the Biblical languages? What is going on here, and what would be their status on the LCMS's clergy roster? What is this preacher? What's this office? I don't know what to do with this.

WILKEN: My question would be, who called them? Just because a pastor wants to put a man in his pulpit – I don't know, if I wanted to put a man into the pulpit, I don't think I have the authority to call him all by myself.

ROSEBROUGH: *[chuckling]* Yeah, that's generally how that works. Generally, a person has to actually receive a call from a

congregation in order to preach – that's how that works. So he's circumvented the entire call process now, where the congregation has no say whatsoever in calling a pastor. Instead, it's just the opinion of the vision-casting leader that this guy has the ability to preach; therefore I'm going to go ahead and give him the pulpit. This is no way to do anything! This is not the Biblical office; this is not what the Lutheran Confessions teach. This is something completely different – this is actually flinging open the gates and basically saying, "Anyone who wants to, go ahead and come on in and preach! If we like you, you can preach!" Yet the guy hasn't been tested, you haven't checked to see whether or not the guy believes in false doctrine; I mean, you're basically opening up your congregation to be attacked by wolves at this point. And what's the recourse if the guy starts teaching false doctrine?

WILKEN: Well, he could just walk down the street and start his own church, I suppose, since he's now been given a pulpit.

I wanted to talk about this, and that is the general trend that I've seen in the emergent church, and I'm wondering if it applies here in your observation to the FiveTwo church planting network. That is, looking out into the emergent church – even though they get very sensitive about this – what they do is essentially take their guidance from the culture. They capitulate to culture in order to reach people *in* the culture. That's the standard method there. Do you find that in FiveTwo? What are your concerns?

ROSEBROUGH: Yeah, not only do I see that in FiveTwo but I see it modeled by Bill Woolsey himself. In fact, if you were to go onto the Vimeo account for CrossPoint Church in Katy, Texas, what they've done there is very, very much akin to what you even see at Perry Noble's church, where you have the praise band leader as part of the Divine Service, basically covering secular songs, including AC/DC's "Highway

to Hell.” What function does having a cover song of “Highway to Hell” have? It doesn’t make any sense! And the problem here is that there’s a false assumption that actually borders on, if not completely gets itself into, the Pelagian Heresy. Here’s the false premise that’s unstated (but oftentimes it *is* stated): “The reason why unbelievers don’t come to church is because our church is irrelevant. We’re behind the times. We have these liturgical structures and things that look like they come out of the Gregorian Chant period of history, right? If only we would spice things up and let the general culture take over our church, then people would come and become Christians.”

But see, here’s the deal: Scripture doesn’t say that the reason why people don’t come to your church is because you’re not adopting the general culture. The reason why people don’t come to church is because they’re born dead in trespasses and sin. And it’s not your cool guitar riffs that bring people to penitent faith in Christ, it’s the proclamation of Christ and Him crucified for their sins, and calling people to repent and to be forgiven that God uses then as the means to regenerate people and to bring them to penitent faith in Christ. And so what’s needed is faithful proclamation of Christ and Him crucified, *not* cool guitar riffs, as if somehow if only we would somehow get past being irrelevant. Of course we’re going to be irrelevant to the pagan world, because people who are born dead in trespasses and sins, they’re not neutral towards God. They’re not like Switzerland; they’re actually hostile toward God and they hate Him!

WILKEN: What happens – and we’ve watched it happen; Hillsong in Australia has been in the headlines lately. Brian Houston, their visionary leader there, has hemmed and hawed on the issue of homosexuality. What happens when the culture and the church that follows it becomes more and more, as you said, pagan?

ROSEBROUGH: This is where it gets interesting. One of the major reasons why Hillsong is in the conundrum that they’re in is because, if you listen carefully to what they say internally and at their leadership conferences and stuff like this, they are anemic and allergic to actually preaching God’s Law. The Hillsong movement in itself is kind of a tacit Antinomianism, where they want to preach the Gospel and tell people good news, make them feel good about themselves, but when you push their leaders and say, “God’s Word tells you to preach the Law as well,” they can’t do it. So on the issue of homosexual sins and same-sex marriage, they’ve decided not to take any public stand at all, because that requires them to say something that is unpopular, which would then lead to less people showing up at their church – at least, this is how they see it. Because if you were to actually say, “Listen, God’s Word says this is a sin, and you need to repent and to be forgiven,” that’s not a popular message. That doesn’t draw a crowd – that’s actually part of the “scandal” of preaching. So the same thing happens with all of these churches that put the culture in the driver’s seat. That’s the first compromise that eventually leads down the line to where they refuse to say the truth about the sins that are taking place in the culture because they don’t want to take the risk of slowing down their growth rate.

WILKEN: Chris Rosebrough is our guest. We’re talking about a church planting organization called FiveTwo and its annual WikiConference. We’ll get to that conference on the other side of the break. Chris is pastor of Kongsvinger Lutheran Church in Oslo, Minnesota, and host of a daily Internet talk show called “Fighting for the Faith.”

[BREAK]

WILKEN: Chris Rosebrough is our guest. We’re talking about a church planting

organization called FiveTwo and its annual WikiConference.

Chris, I do have a question to put a bow on something we were discussing before about the connection in the Lutheran Confessions – because we are talking about, ostensibly, at least, what claims to be a Lutheran organization. The connection in the Lutheran Confessions between the vitality of justification and of this ministry that we've been talking about so much with respect to this church planting organization – how would you take us through that, briefly?

ROSEBROUGH: Right. If you look at the Augsburg Confession, Article IV, everybody knows this one. This is the article that talks about justification. Here's what it says: "It is taught that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sins and righteousness before God through our merit or work or satisfactions, but that we *receive* forgiveness of sins and become righteous before God out of grace for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ has suffered for us and that for his sake, our sin is forgiven and our righteousness and eternal life are given to us. For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness in His sight, as St. Paul says in Romans 3." Everybody knows Article IV regarding justification. But the fun thing is that if you look this up in German – I don't read German, but I've been told by my German-speaking Lutheran pastor friends – that Article V, then, hinges on this: that "to obtain such a faith, God instituted the office of preaching, giving the Gospel and the Sacraments. Through these, as through means, He gives the Holy Spirit, who produces faith when and where He wills, ...hear the Gospel. It teaches that we have a gracious God, not through our merit but through Christ's merit when we so believe." And this is exactly what Scripture teaches when Paul asks the question, "How can they believe if they haven't heard? How can they hear unless somebody is sent to preach?" So the idea is that the great news of justification by grace alone, through faith

alone, hinges, according to the Augsburg Confession – and I would even argue this is what Scripture teaches – on the *office of preaching*. And the church isn't a movement; the church is an institution. The preaching office is an office, an established Biblical office within the church, and we can't change this. This is the model that's revealed in Scripture, and to monkey with this and alter what Scripture says and turn the church into a movement and just obliterate the preaching office, even though it's done in the name of evangelism, ultimately leads to the dead end that we see going on in seeker-driven churches and in the emergent church movement.

WILKEN: Here, finally, is Pastor Bill Woolsey on the issue of worship and what needs to change.

BILL WOOLSEY SOUND CLIP: Maybe we need a new worship plan. What if we changed our strategy, and we allowed our worship forms to embrace the language and the nuance of the culture, rather than demandingly creating a sub-culture that appears like we time-machined back to when my great-great-great-great-great grandparents got off the boat? I'm by no means saying that you do away with the holy and the mystical; quite the opposite. I'm just wondering out loud if they are necessarily the same as the Germanic, emotionless ritual that communicates God at a distance, making me think maybe we're in the Holy of Holies with His High Priest, and I'm not schlepping in the Gentile court.

WILKEN: What is he saying there about what we would call the Divine Service, or the historic forms of worship in the church?

ROSEBROUGH: Well, the Divine Service predates Germany by a long time, so for him to accuse the Divine Service of somehow being Germanic, I think is historically completely inaccurate. Not only that, but if the Divine Service is done right, there is no audience. The Divine Service is

done in such a way that Christ is there to serve us. God is there to serve us, and the pastor, by his movements, shows us whether or not it's this congregation speaking, or God is proclaiming it, basically, with how he's facing. So for [Woolsey] to tarnish the Divine Service in that way is, I think, absolutely false, propaganda; it's a mischaracterization on purpose, and kind of shows that he despises it and thinks that it's the reason why, supposedly, the Lutheran Church isn't growing. But I can point you to literally dozens upon dozens of congregations that do the Divine Service week after week, and they're growing by leaps and bounds. I would point people to Faith Lutheran Church in Capistrano Beach, California: they're literally bursting at the seams, and they're doing the Divine Service – it's a very liturgical church. The reason why they're growing is specifically because the Divine Service is not this thing where we're outside on the periphery in the Gentile court, but instead we are there in the Holy of Holies to partake and to be served by our God. What he's doing is just showing his contempt, but it's not based in a real, accurate understanding or even a love for the history of where this thing comes from.

WILKEN: Chris, with only 30 seconds, you've said several times that you have seen this before. It looks very familiar to you. You've seen it in the emergent church and in the broader evangelicalism seeker-driven movement. Where does it go, with about 30 seconds?

ROSEBROUGH: It ends up in one of two places: either like Doug Pagitt's Solomon's Porch, where you've got complete postmodern liberalism, or it ends up like

Mark Driscoll's church, where you have these abusive vision-casting leaders and a pile of dead bodies behind your butt. That's literally where this goes, because this vision-casting, entrepreneurial model that these guys are foisting upon the church is not revealed in Scripture, and when you start employing business models – business is oftentimes a cutthroat thing, and highly competitive, and in the business world you want to obliterate competitors. But not in the church – no, you've got to take care of Christ's sheep, and you don't get rid of people who dissent from vision and stuff like that. This is where you end up – you either end up in the liberal ditch, or you end up with abusive vision-casting churches like Mars Hill and Mark Driscoll.

WILKEN: Folks, you can listen to Chris Rosebrough on "Fighting for the Faith." He is pastor of Kongsvinger Lutheran Church in Oslo, Minnesota, and hosts the daily Internet talk show called "Fighting for the Faith." Chris, thank you very much.

ROSEBROUGH: Thank you, Todd.

WILKEN: What has Christ given us? Has He given us these general marching orders and said, "Now, you guys go out there and do it however you see fit, however the culture dictates"? No. It's very specific. He has given us the message to preach, the men to preach it, the call for those men, the Sacraments to administer. And you know what? Christ is really, *really* good at making disciples the way *He* instituted.

I'm Todd Wilken. Thanks for listening to *Issues, Etc.*

