

Interview with Brian D. McLaren

More Ready than You Realize (ISBN 0310239648)

Brian D. McLaren is founding pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church (www.crc.org), an innovative church in Spencerville, Maryland. He is a popular speaker and is the author of [Finding Faith](#) and [The Church on the Other Side](#), and coauthor with Leonard Sweet and Jerry Haselmayer of *A is for Abductive* (May 2002).

Zondervan: The title of your latest book is *More Ready Than You Realize*. What do you mean by that?

BDM: The title has a couple of different meanings. It really comes from a line in an email. The book is based on a series of emails that were exchanged between a young spiritual seeker and myself, and at one point she said that she is more ready than she realizes to come to Christ. That's one meaning of it: that a lot of our friends are more ready than they or we realize to make a move toward God. The other meaning is that a lot of us who are committed Christians are more ready than we realize to play an active part in sharing our faith.

Zondervan: What kind of need is there for this book?

BDM: One simple way to put it is that for most people, evangelism is way too complicated and way too difficult, and often the more we try to learn about it the more stressed we get... and pressured we get... and guilty we feel. What I'm saying in this book is "You're more ready than you realize." If you have the ability to be friendly, if you have the ability to listen, and if you have the ability to ask questions, then you have a lot more ability to share your faith than you realize.

Zondervan: What's the relationship between "evangelism" and "disciple making?"

BDM: I try to suggest in the book that we take the word evangelism, which really is not a biblical word, and fold it into a more biblical word, which is "making disciples." I would take what we traditionally call evangelism and pre-evangelism and follow-up and put it all under this bigger category of disciple making.

Zondervan: Could you briefly explain your conversation with the "cyber-seeker" in the book?

BDM: After my last book, *Finding Faith*, was published, I had a book signing, and the people who put on the book signing hired a harpist to play some background music. After the event was over, I noticed her picking up a copy of the book and looking at it. I went over and offered to help her put her harp back in her truck, and then she asked me a question about the book. The question was, "Do you really believe all that stuff you wrote in the book, or are you just trying to make Christianity look good?"—a fascinating question, and it turned out to be very well thought-out—so I gave her a copy of the book and then she began asking me questions by email and I began answering them, and that ended up becoming a more than two year conversation.

Zondervan: How is evangelism different in postmodern times than it was in modern times?

BDM: In our modern approaches to evangelism, we were interested in boiling the gospel down into a simple outline or a simple transaction. We were very oriented around events and decisions rather than processes and growth. What happens in the postmodern world is that we relax a lot, and we learn that evangelism is more about an ongoing conversation than it is about pressuring anyone to make an immediate decision that we could count as a conversion. So it's a much more natural process: it involves dialogue instead of monologue; it involves listening more than it

involves talking; it is being willing to say "I don't know" rather than having all the answers. It's offering ourselves as what a friend of mine calls a "Christian consultant" who can help a spiritually seeking friend in their search.

BDM: I hope this book will be especially helpful to people who are realizing that for the emerging generation, who are highly educated yet for the most part less familiar with anything traditionally Christian, this book could really open up some new territory. I also hope they find it to be a very encouraging resource and something they can get a group of people studying to talk about how we can become more effective in sharing our faith.