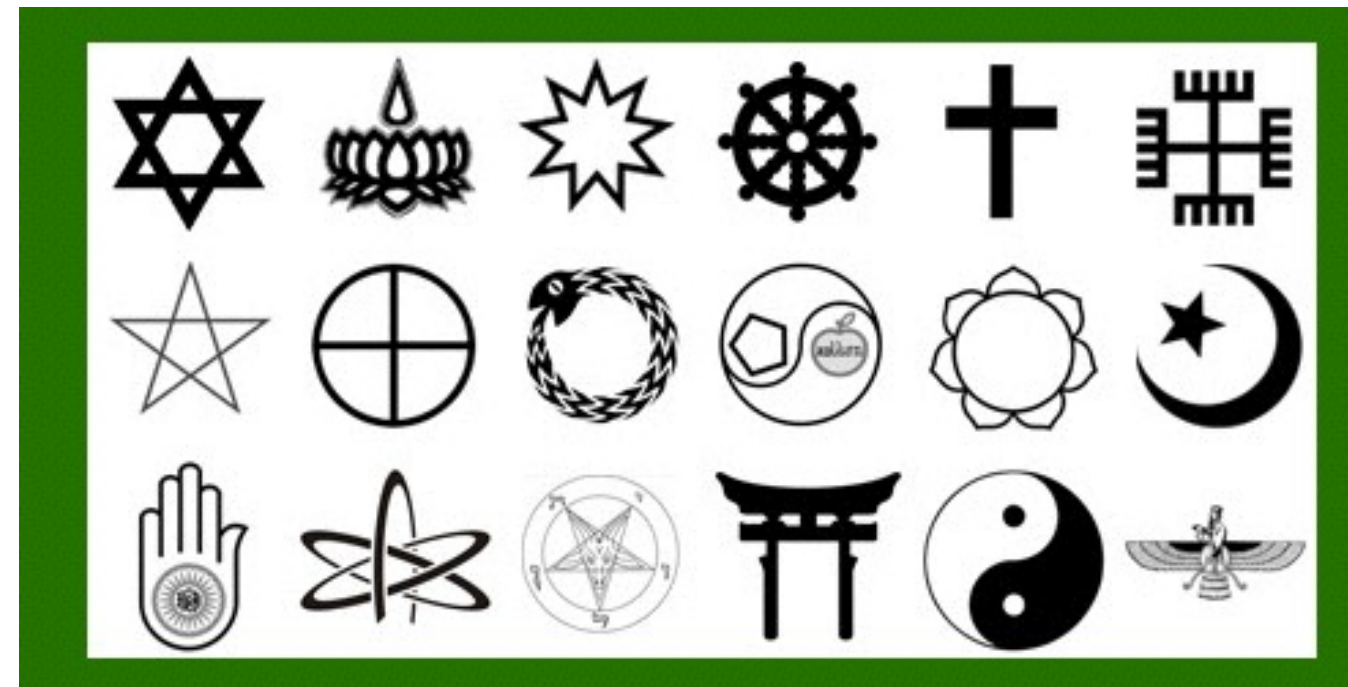


Building Your Own Theology

Tuesdays, 9:30am – 11:00am

1. *“Liberal Turn in Theology”*
2. *“Autobiography as Theology”*
3. *“Varieties of Religious **Experience**”*
“Human Nature” (theological anthropology)
4. *“**God**/Goddess/goddesses/gods/Spirit of Life/Ultimate Reality/Sacred/Divine/reality*
“Ethics”
5. *“Future”*
“So What?”
6. October 18:
“Credo: This I Believe” (500 words)
In(conclusion)



frederickuu.org/fcc

Building Your Own *Ethics*

Spring 2017

- Consider your beliefs, values and convictions in light of **ethical dilemmas in *dialogue*** with your classmates.
- Are you **consistent** in your ethical framework? (Why or why not?) (*Is consistency a virtue or vice?*)
- Is there a **pattern** (*logic/reason/emotion*) underneath your reactions/decisions?
- Do you find yourself **changing** from your initial “gut” reaction through the discussion process. (Why or why not?)

Covenant

- Use **“I” statements**: speak from your own experience.
- **Ask permission** before sharing other participants’ stories outside the group. *(And they have permission to say no without giving a reason.)*
- **“Lean in, Lean back”**: Be conscious of your level of participation. Allow everyone a chance to speak before you speak again.
- You always have **permission to “pass.”**



Credo: “This I Believe” (500 words)

- What have you **clarified** for yourself about your spiritual journey? (*autobiography*)
- What do you know based on your **reason** and **experience**? (*liberal turn*)
- How would you describe God/Spirit/Sacred/(Ultimate)**Reality**? (*theology*)
- How your the theology you have built “**interfere**” with your life? (What *difference* does it make in the way you live? What are the *main obstacles* in living your convictions? What *concrete steps* might you take to bring your life into line with your theology? What will you do *differently* because of BYOT?)
On what are your **ethics** based?
- How would you describe **human nature** (*theological anthropology*)?
- How would you define/describe what is **religion/religious** for you?
- What is the **purpose** of (your) life — or of the universe? (*so what?*)
- What will happen in the end? (*eschatology*)
- What stories/quotes/comments/insights from this class have been particularly **meaningful/memorable** for you?

- Religion is on the decline in America as many people leave behind traditional religious practices.

- What appears to be a decline may signal a major transformation in how people understand and experience God.
- The distant God of conventional religion has given way to a more intimate sense of the sacred that is with us in the world.
- This shift, from a vertical understanding of God to a God found on the horizons of nature and human community, is at the heart of a spiritual revolution that surrounds us – and that is challenging not only religious institutions but political and social ones as well.

DIANA BUTLER BASS

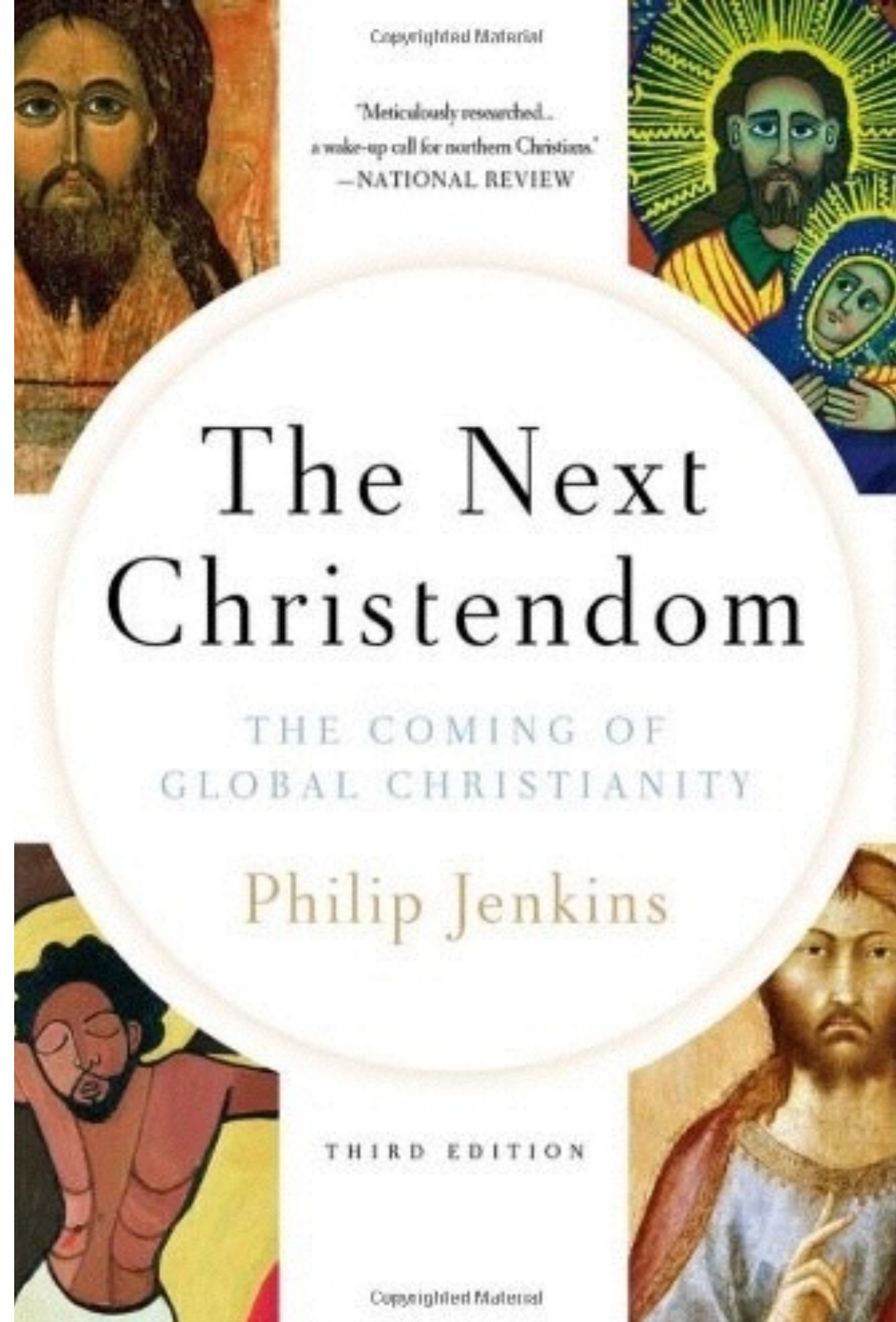
Author of Christianity After Religion

GROUNDED



FINDING GOD IN THE WORLD
A SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION

- This new and substantially expanded 3rd Edition, illuminates the remarkable expansion of Christianity in the global South--in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- Drawing upon the extensive new scholarship that has appeared on this topic in recent years, he asks how the new Christianity is likely to affect the poor, among whom it finds its most devoted adherents.
- How should we interpret the enormous success of prosperity churches across the Global South? Politically, what will be the impact of new Christian movements?
- Will Christianity contribute to liberating the poor, to give voices to the previously silent, or does it threaten only to bring new kinds of division and conflict?
- Does Christianity liberate women, or introduce new scriptural bases for subjection?



-
- Harvard religion scholar Harvey Cox's landmark exploration of why Christian dogmatism is giving way to a grassroots Christianity rooted in social justice and spirituality.
 - Cox laid the groundwork for modern religious writing with his 1965 classic, *The Secular City*, paving the way for writers like Diana Butler Bass, Karen Armstrong, and Stephen Prothero.

the future of faith

"A timely and prophetic book."

—KAREN ARMSTRONG, author of *A History of God*

HARVEY COX

Credo:

“Pluralism, Progressivism, Pragmatism” Sources of Authority

- I believe we should **balance**
 - the **wisdom of the world’s religion traditions**
 - *with reason*, the insights of **science**, and our own firsthand **experiences**.
- *(Rationalists need to be challenged by mystics and vice-versa.)*

Credo:
“Pluralism, Progressivism, Pragmatism”
Theology

- “God” is a **word in human language** (“*God is not ‘God’s name.’*”)
- “I am interested in the ‘**event**’ **playing itself out underneath the word ‘God’**” (Caputo).
- If “**God is a verb,**” perhaps we should be talking more about ‘**godding,**’ as something one does or experiences — more ***becoming*** than Being.

Credo:
“Pluralism, Progressivism, Pragmatism”
Ethics

- Behavior is believable.
- Practice makes *permanent*, not perfect.

Credo:
“Pluralism, Progressivism, Pragmatism”
Anthropology

- *Homo sapiens sapiens* are *not* “a little lower than the angels,” but rather a **“little higher than the apes”**
- — and deeply interconnected with other life forms and the larger ecosystems of this planet.
- Accordingly, we need to increasingly part reorient *from* speciesism *to* **interdependence.**

Credo:
“Pluralism, Progressivism, Pragmatism”
Ecclesiology

- We need a better “conveyer belt”
 - *Ego*-centric
 - *Ethno*-centric
 - *Globo*-centric
 - *Cosmo*-centric

Credo:
“Pluralism, Progressivism, Pragmatism”
Eschatology

- **No Perfect Past** to which we can return
(stories of exemplary lives and communities can still inspire us).
- **No Perfect Future** *(choose love, trust, & hope anyway)*
- **No Single, Perfect Way** *(look for touchstones such as tradition, reason, and experience)*

Spiritual Practices	Triple Threats to MLK's "<u>Beloved Community</u>"	<u>Intersectionality</u> & "Dismantling the Master's House" <i>(Audre Lorde / bell hooks)</i>	<u>Triple Bottom Line</u> <i>(not "profit" as the allegedly sole "bottom line")</i>	Buddhisms' Three Poisons <i>("unwholesome roots" or kleshas)</i>
encourage spiritual growth	Materialism	Capitalism	Profit	Greed / Desire Attachment
build a beloved community	Racism	White Supremacy	People	Delusion / Ignorance
act for peace and justice	Militarism	Patriarchy	Planet	Anger / Aggression / Aversion



frederickuu.org/fcc