

What Really Matters

Insights from Church History

- **GOD**
- **God's Plan for Humanity: From Chaos to Order to Justice to Love**
- **The Role for the Government: Order with Justice— Freedom of Religion-Legal Separation of the Church and the State**
- **The Role for the Church and Individual Followers of Christ: Receiving God's love and Forgiveness and offering to the world**
- **The Role of the Bible: Authoritative when understood prayerfully through progressive revelation, guided by experience, reason and tradition... Revelation also includes scientific knowledge—knowledge from God's creation.**

THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH 1859-PRESENT

Context: The American Synthesis 1776-1859

**Not a Christian Nation but a nation of “Christians”
Official separation of Church and State
Christian churches of various denominations....
most based on the Nicene Creed**

Gradually becomes **the ideal in the Western world
as we move through the 19th and 20th centuries**



Deists— Thomas Paine, Ethan Allen

Supernatural world view— John Adams, Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry
wives and daughters

Practical Christians— George Washington (conservative)
Benjamin Franklin, James Monroe (liberal)

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S REDACTED BIBLE

I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion-for who can search the human heart? But I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society....

all sects preach the same moral law in the name of God...."

Alexis De Tocqueville: "Democracy in America" 1840

The Ideal is Challenged

The intellectual challenge

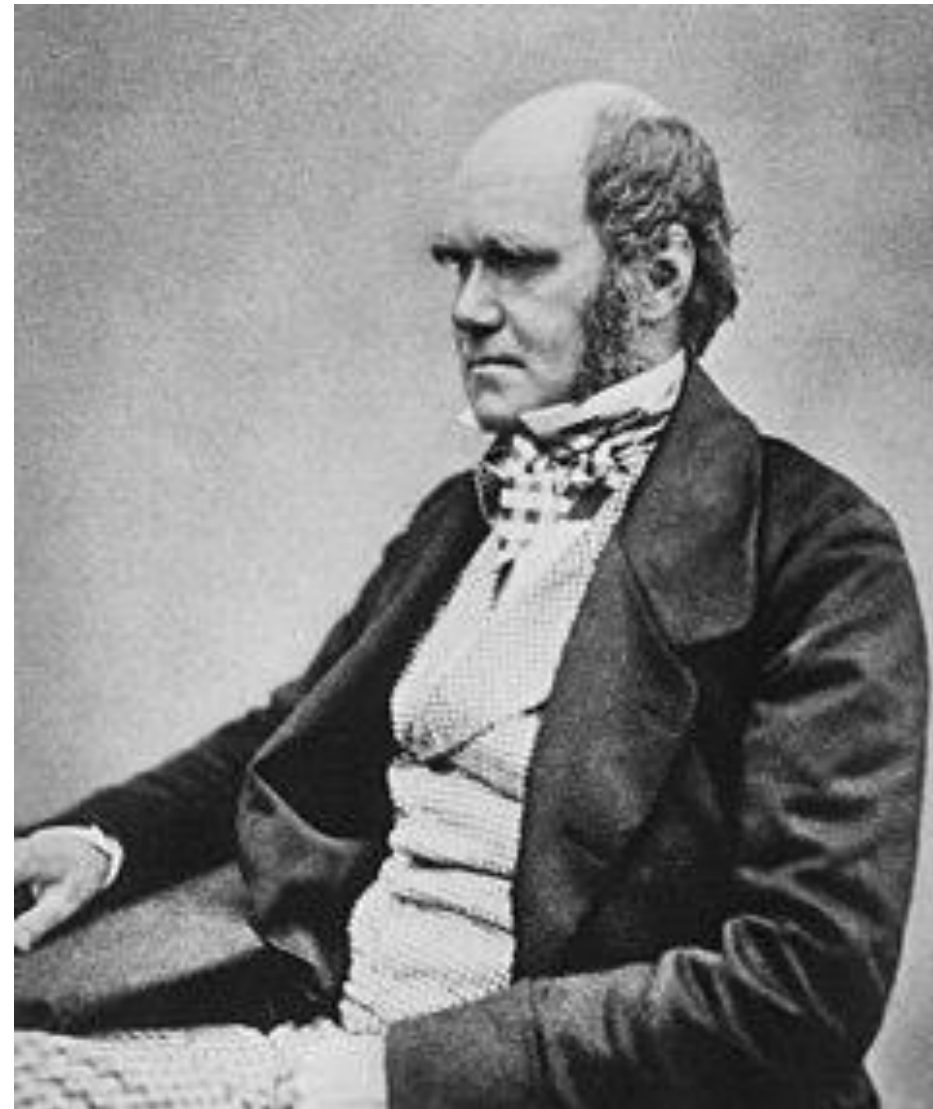
Charles Darwin 1809-1882

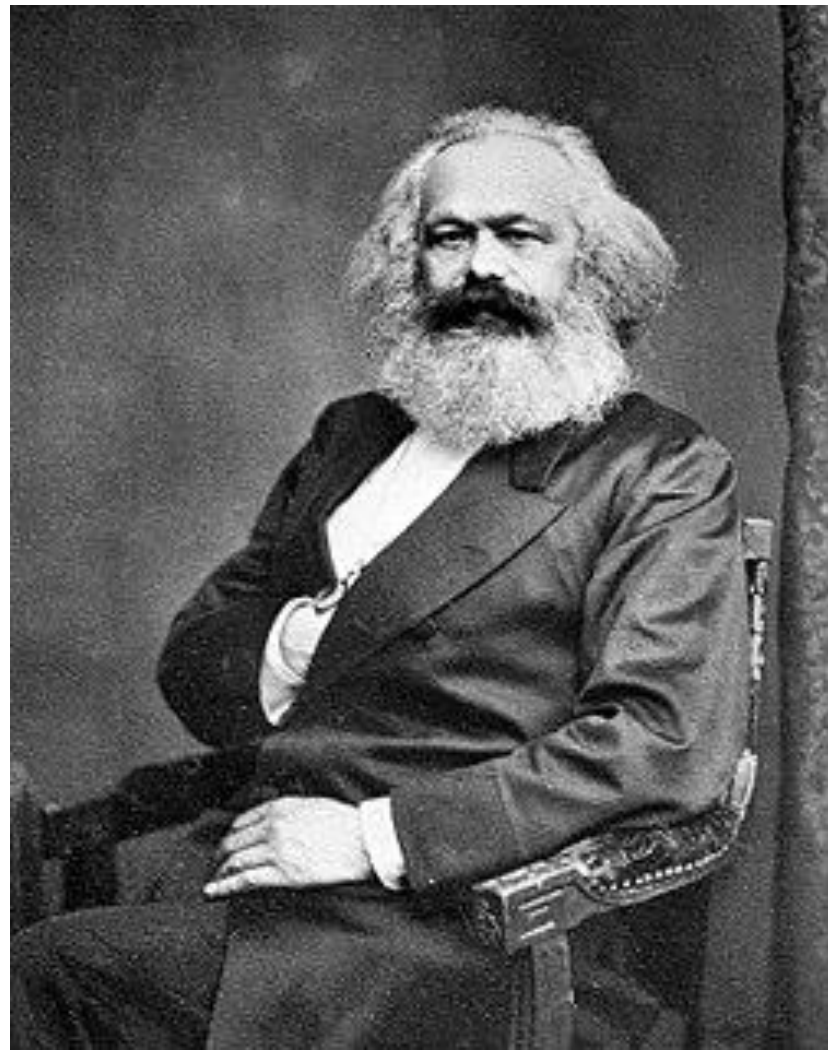
The Origin of Species 1859

His proposition that all species of life have evolved over time from common ancestors gradually became widely accepted, and is considered today a foundational concept in science...

A student at Cambridge in theology...

“I did not then in the least doubt the strict and literal truth of every word in the Bible,” .





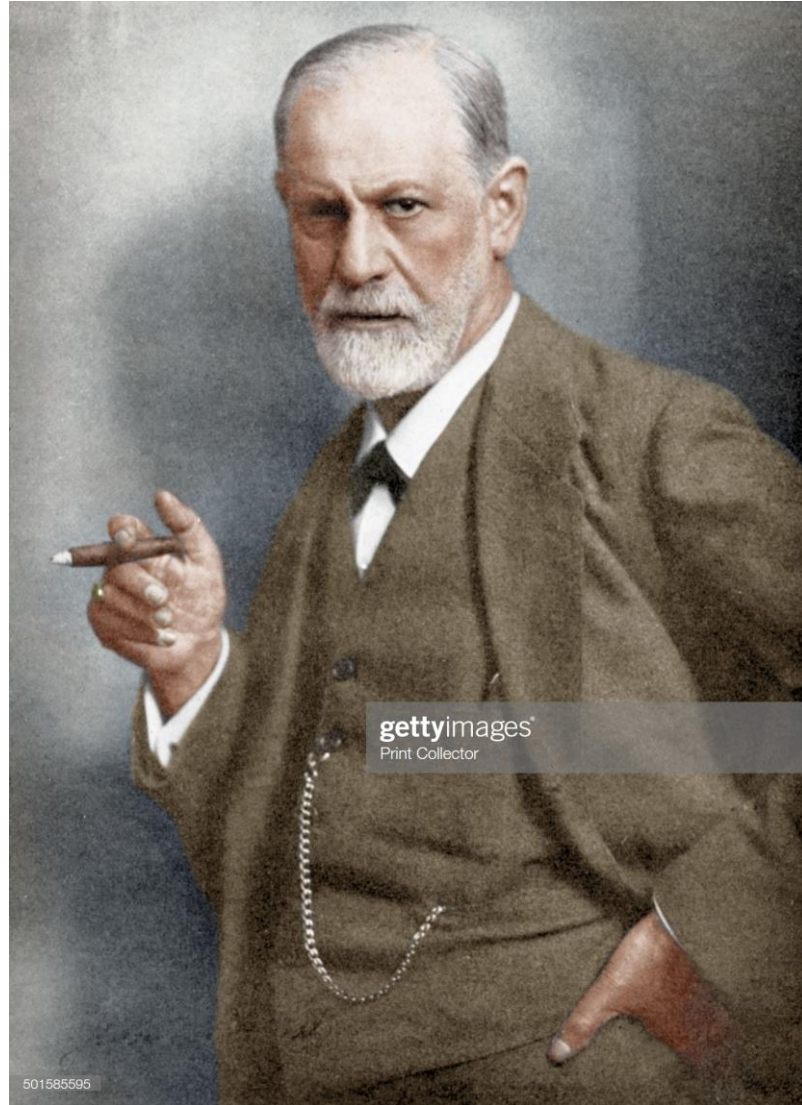
Karl Marx 1818-1883

German philosopher, economist,
historian, sociologist, political theorist, journalist
and socialist revolutionary.

but...Christian upbringing

"The Union of the Faithful with Christ, according to St. John 15:1-14, presented in its Reason and Essence, in its Absolute Necessity and its Effects."

Marx notices that corruption and alienation are present in humankind to an intolerable and terrifying degree. No matter how much human beings strive, they know themselves to be incapable of achieving their purpose without divine help. So he depicts human beings as creatures at the mercy of their vices, saved only by the mercy of God. Without God people are helpless; with God they become divine....but they didn't so became disillusioned



Sigmund Freud— *Psychology* 1856-1939

Freud's family were Jewish but he was himself non-practicing.

In 1873, Freud began to study medicine at the University of Vienna.

psychology is defined as "the scientific study of behavior and mental processes"

Freud's psychoanalytic perspective viewed religion as the unconscious mind's need for wish fulfillment. Because people need to feel secure and absolve themselves of their own guilt, Freud believed that they choose to believe in God, who represents a powerful father-figure. Psycho analysis... id, ego super ego.. sexuality....

The Moral Challenge

Slavery 1619- 1865.....

Biblically defended...”actually helpful to inferior people

Some theologians said it was providence that had brought

Africans to as slaves, since their enslavement

would allow them to encounter the Christian message

and thus their eternal souls would be saved....

others promoted the idea that Africans were the descendants of Ham, cursed in the book of Genesis, and thus their enslavement was fitting.

Colossians, “slaves, obey your earthly master,”

“slave Bible,” published in 1807, which removed portions

of Scripture including the Exodus story that could inspire rebellious thinking.



Harriet Tubman



Nat Turner's Bible

Treatment of Native Americans

Throughout most of our history.....
One story to illustrate



**Chief Joseph the elder
1785-1871**

**Chief of the Wallowa branch
of the Nez Perce**

One of the first to become a Christian
who then vigorously
advocated for peace with the
white settlers... and the army

**Peace was achieved and the Wallowa land was saved
for a time... then lost as the Gold Rush expanded. The US violated
the treaty. Joseph renounced his faith, ripped up the American flag
and his Bible.**

World Wars and the Atomic Bomb

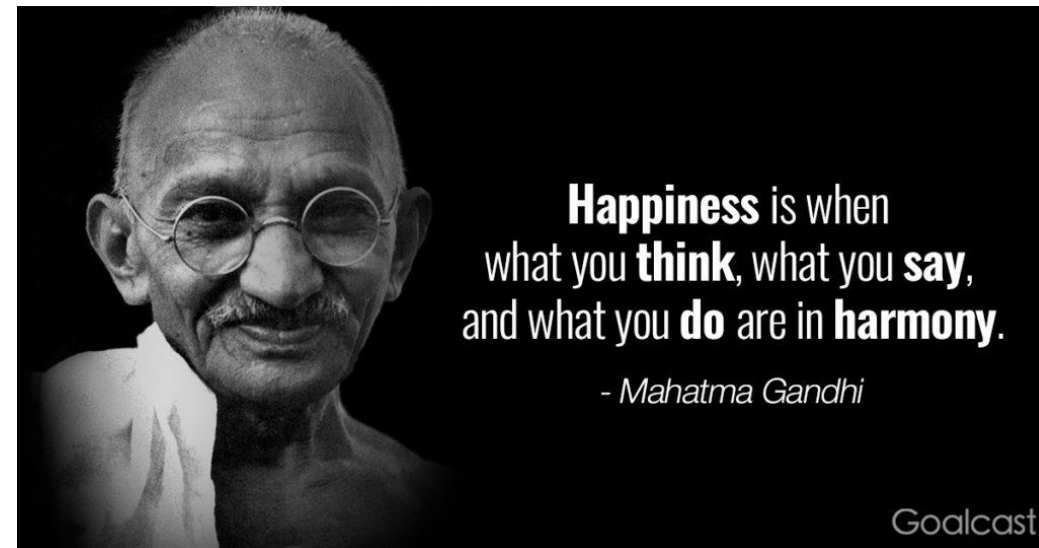


**The American bombing of
Dresden... and the atomic
bombs on Japan
decimating civilian populations**

**So called Christian nations fighting
against each other....
Hitler and the Holocaust supported
by the German Protestant Church**

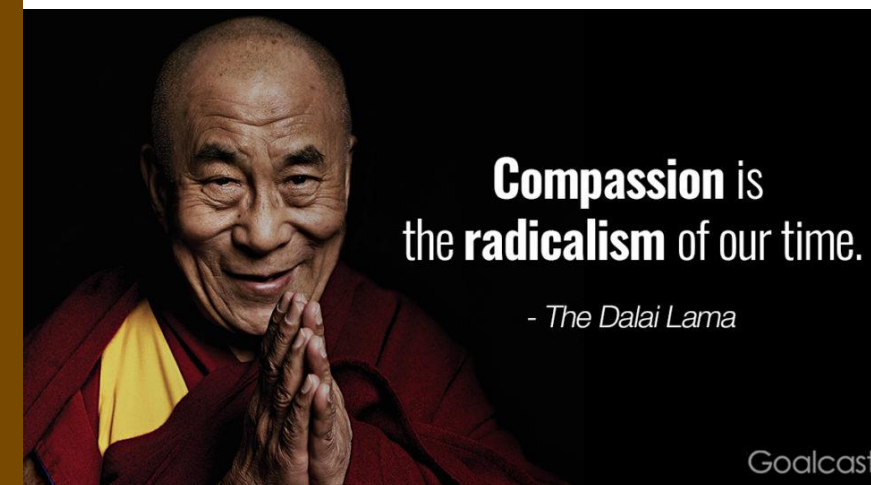
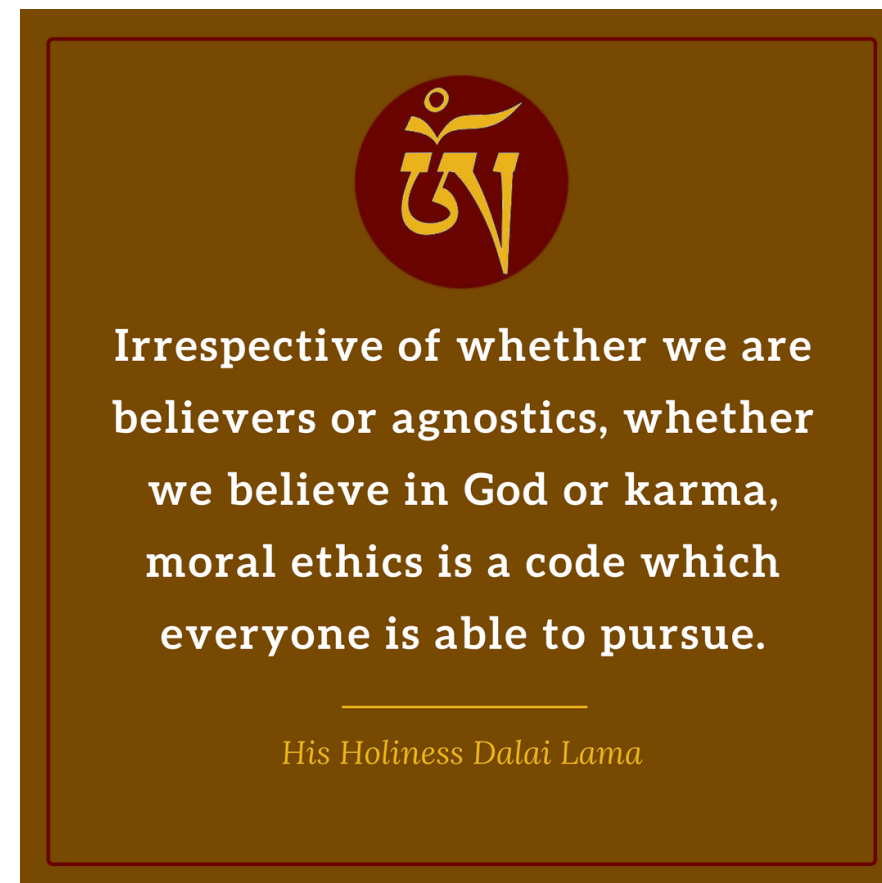


The Spiritual Challenge From the East



Ghandi and India's independence

"I'd be a Christian if it were not for the Christians."

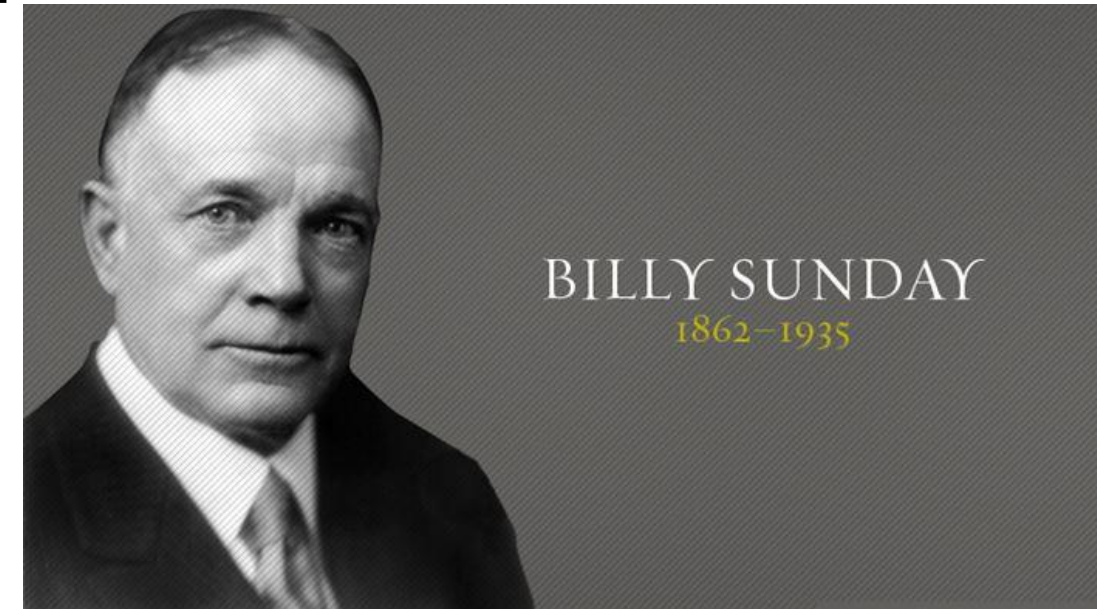


The Dalai Lama

The Christian Response

Biblical Fundamentalism... from the Bible is inspired and authoritative, to infallible in what it intends to teach to inerrant in everything... OT and NT instructive...

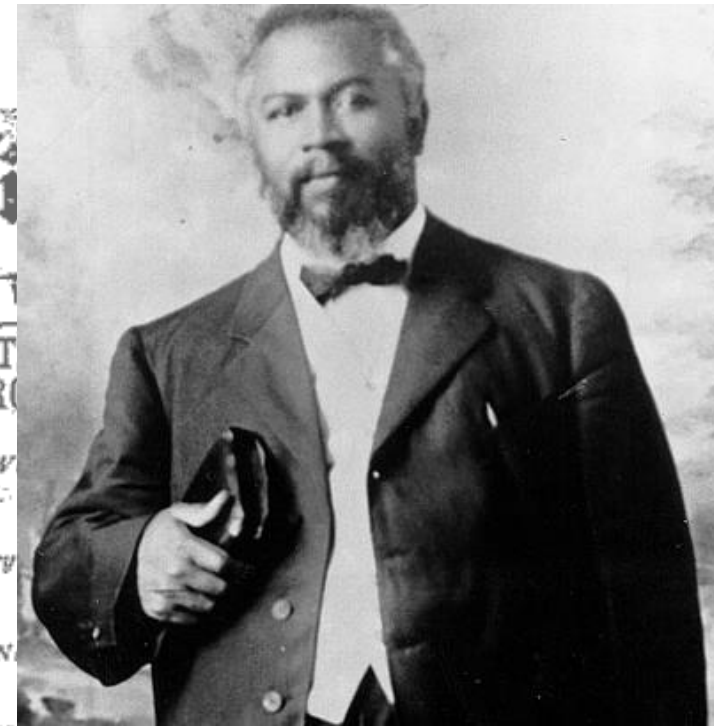
"I want to preach the gospel so plainly, that men can come from the factories and not have to bring a dictionary."



"I don't believe your own bastard theory of evolution, either; I believe it's pure jackass nonsense"

The Charismatic Movement

The Asuza Street Revival 1906-08



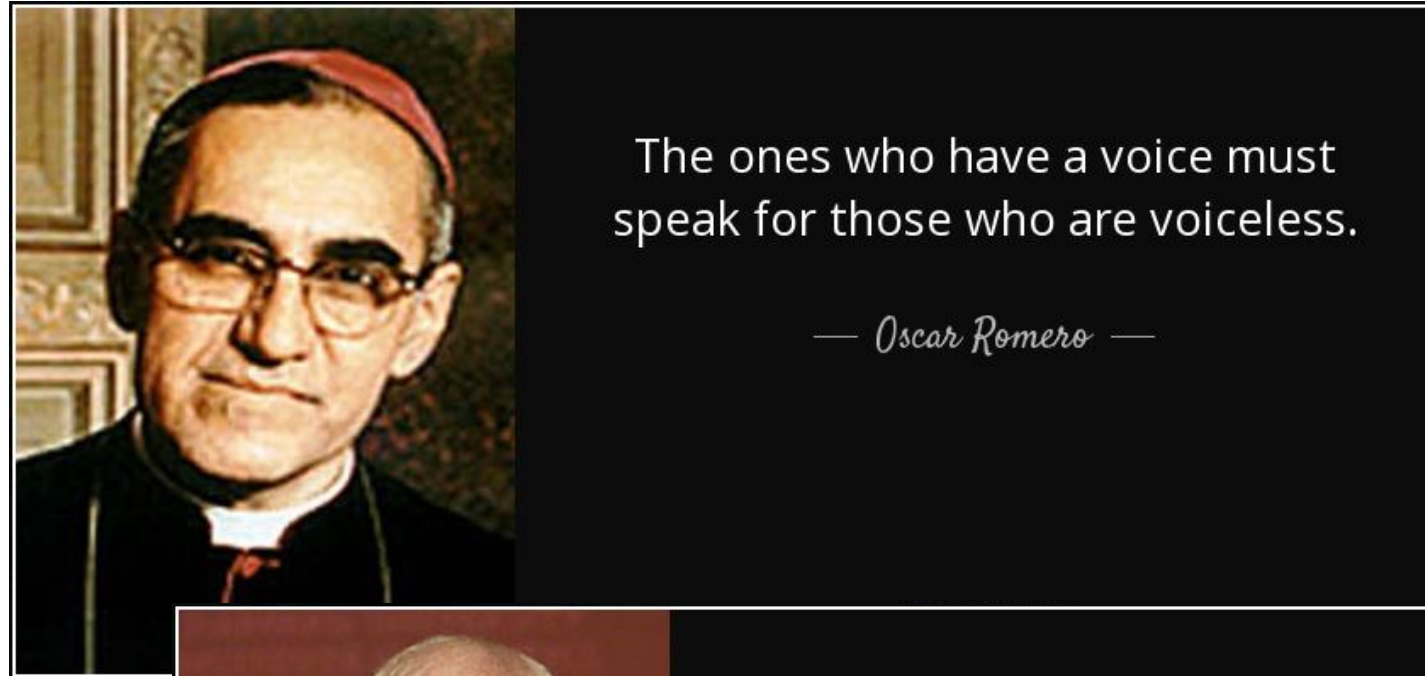
William Seymour 1870-1922

Gradually beyond the Pentecostal Church... influenced many denominations in the 20th century

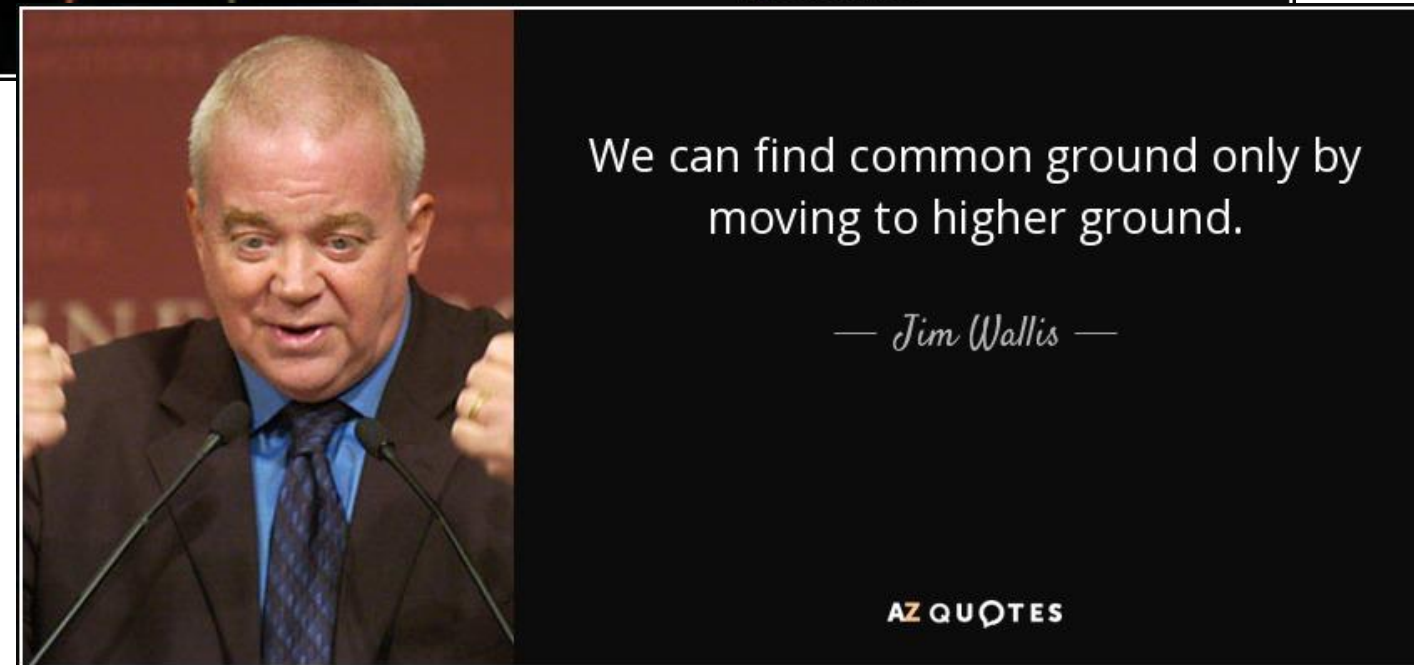
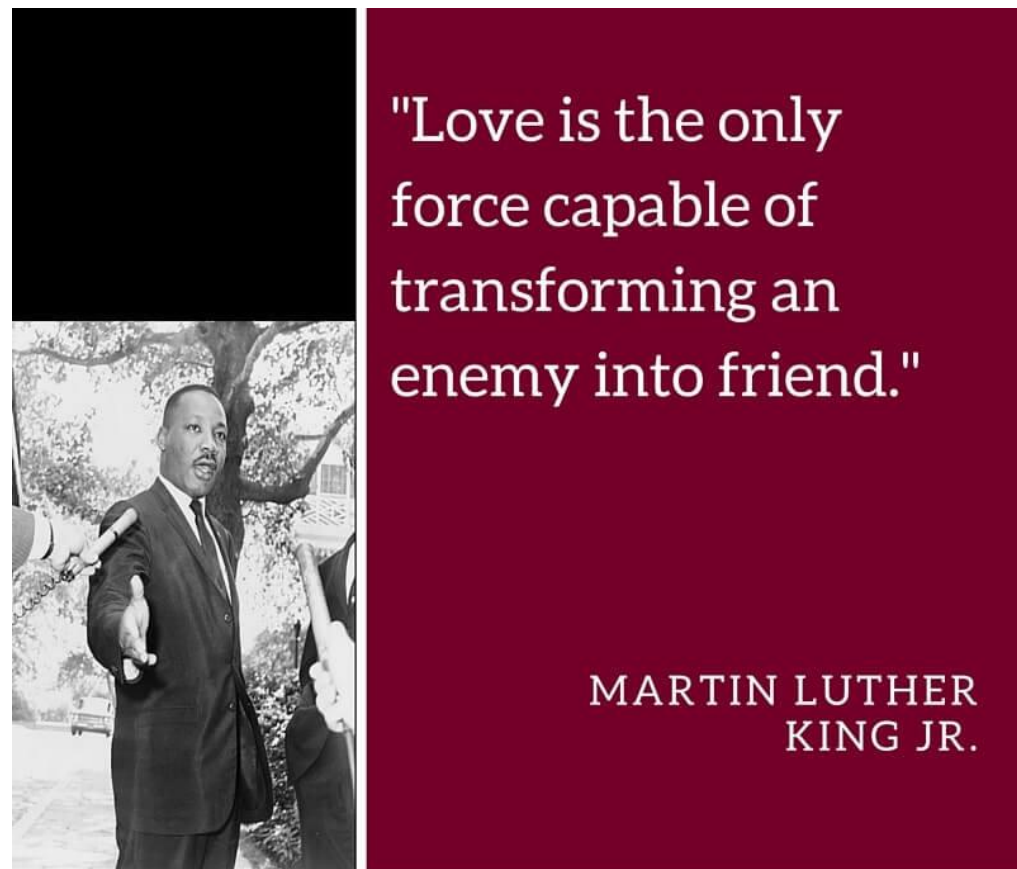
Explosive growth today— Pew Study

Social Justice Christianity

Oscar Romero 1917-1980



Martin Luther King 1929-1968



Jim Wallis 1948-

Evangelism and Evangelical Christianity

Focus on Personal Salvation

Billy Graham



**“I look forward to death with great anticipation” and “My home is in heaven.
I’m just traveling through this world.”**

Christian Contemplation

Richard Foster 1942—

Celebration of Discipline

Streams of Living Water

Renovare



A farmer is helpless to grow grain; all he can do is provide the right conditions for the growing of grain. He cultivates the ground, he plants the seed, he waters the plants, and then the natural forces of the earth take over and up comes the grain...This is the way it is with the Spiritual Disciplines - they are a way of sowing to the Spirit... By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done.”

[Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth](#)

Combinations...?



Phyllis Tickle The Great Emergence

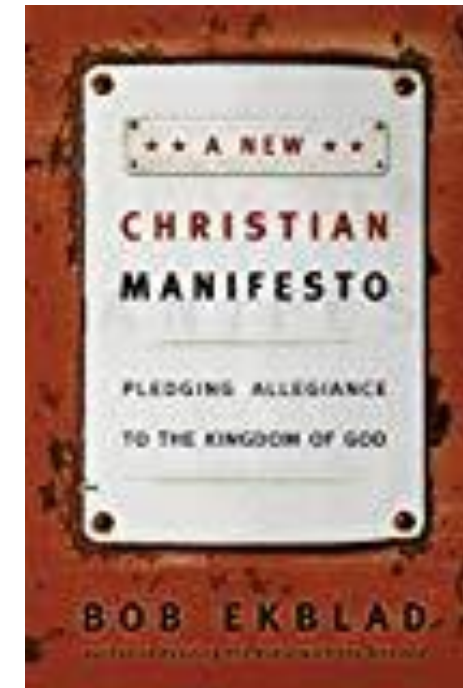
“about every five hundred years the Church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale. And, we are living in and through one of those five-hundred-year sales right now.”

Fundamentalists
Charismatics
Social Gospel Advocates
Evangelicals
Contemplatives

**Let's get rid of the narrow mindedness
of the Fundamentalists
and add their extra dose of courage to the other four**



**Bob and Gracie Ekblad
Tierra Nueva**



“Is it too late for mainstream America? I wonder. As long as we are convinced that our problems are due to an abundance of wickedness that we must combat, we are in serious trouble. We need to learn to turn over the problem of the wicked to God and focus on remedying the tragic absence of good. In the absence of good, all efforts to combat evil are doomed to failure.”

— Bob Ekblad, [**A New Christian Manifesto: Pledging Allegiance to the Kingdom of Go**](#)

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revelation, guided by experience, reason and tradition... Revelation also includes

scientific knowledge—knowledge from God's creation.**
- **Living the Christian faith today with Charismatic Power, Social Justice

Advocacy, Evangelical Zeal and Contemplative Hope**