

# ***Understanding the Changing Context of Faith Formation***

***Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Conference***

***(Tuesday Session)***

John Roberto

LifelongFaith Associates

[www.LifelongFaith.com](http://www.LifelongFaith.com) ([jroberto@lifelongfaith.com](mailto:jroberto@lifelongfaith.com))

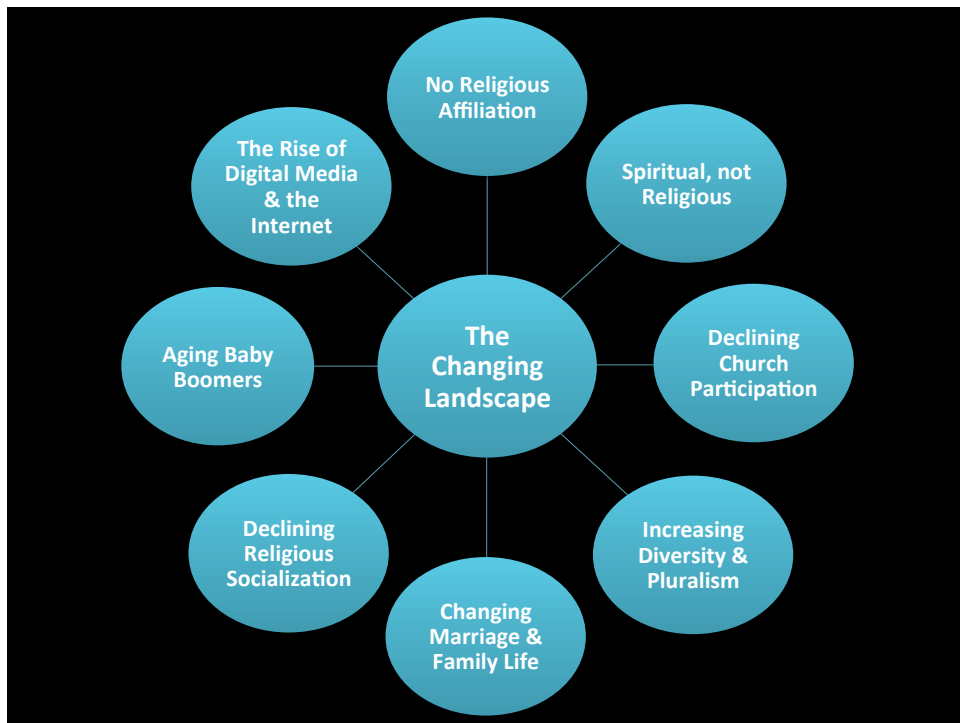
PowerPoint available online:

[www.LifelongFaith.com](http://www.LifelongFaith.com) – Go to Presentations

## **Topics**

- Part 1. Understanding Social, Cultural, Religious & Technological Forces
- Part 2. Understanding How Christianity Is Changing & Why
- Part 3. Understanding Key Factors in Promoting Faith Growth in the First Third of Life
- Part 4. Interpreting the Spiritual and Religious Needs of People Today

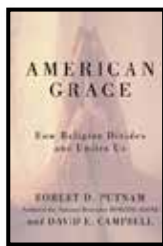
# Forces



## No Religious Affiliation

- 15% of all Americans claim no religious affiliation
- 25% of all 18-29 years
- 10% drop in the number of Christians
- *The challenge to Christianity in the U.S. does not come from other religions but from a rejection of all forms of organized religion.*

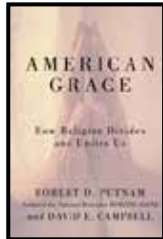
## No Religious Affiliation



### Three Seismic Shifts

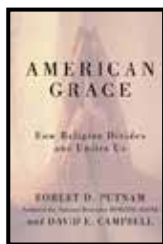
- **Major Shock:** The Sixties Revolution
- **Aftershock #1 (1970s-80s):** The Rise of Evangelicals and Conservative Churches, and the Religious Right
- **Aftershock #2 (1990s-2000s):** The Rise of Secular Generations

## No Religious Affiliation



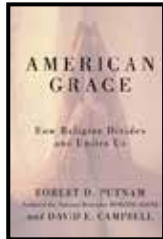
- The rise of the Nones in the 1990s was heavily driven by generational factors.
- The incidence of Nones was about 5-7% in the pre-boomer generations who reach adulthood before 1960
- Double to about 10-15% among the boomers (who came of age in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s)
- After 2000 doubled again to about 20-30% among the post-boomers (who came of age in the 1990s and 2000s).

## No Religious Affiliation



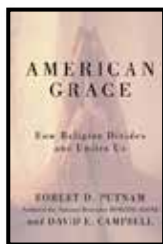
- Being raised with no religion fueled cohort change
- The Nones were disproportionately raised in nonreligious backgrounds, so some of them are the children of boomers who have discarded formal religious affiliations a generation ago.
- On the other hand, the rise of the Nones is apparent even among young people whose parents were religiously observant.

## No Religious Affiliation



- Putnam and Campbell suggest the dramatic contrast between a young generation increasingly liberal on certain moral and lifestyle issues (though still potentially open to religious feelings and ideals) and an older generation of religious leaders who seemed to them consumed by the political fight against homosexuality and gay marriage was an important source of the second aftershock.

## No Religious Affiliation



- When asked why they rejected religious identification, the new Nones reported that “they became unaffiliated, as least in part, because they think of religious people as hypocritical, judgmental, or insincere. Large numbers also say they became unaffiliated because they think that religious organizations focus too much on rules and not enough on spirituality. This youthful generation seems unwilling or unable to distinguish the stance of the most visible, most political, and most conservative religious leaders from organized religion in general.

## Spiritual but not Religious

- Today, 18% of 18-39 year olds say that are “spiritual, but not religious” compared to only 11% a decade ago.

## Participation in Churches

- Declining worship attendance
- Declining participation in celebration of sacraments & rites of passage

## Diversity & Pluralism

- Diversity of ethnic cultures & nationalities
- No single authority exercises supremacy; no single belief or ideology dominations
- Tapestry of religious and spiritual alternatives and choices

## Family Life

- Delaying marriage
- Having fewer children and later in life
- Decreasing number of children in two-parent households
- Increasing number of unmarried couples living together

## Changing Views of Family

	A Family	Not a Family
Married Coupled with Children	99	1
Married Couple without Children	88	10
Single Parent with Children	86	12
Unmarried Couple with Children	80	18
Same-Sex Couple with Children	63	34
Same-Sex Couple without Children	45	52
Unmarried Coupled without Children	43	54

Pew Research, 2011

## Changing Views of Family

- Fully eight-in-ten adults younger than 30 say a same-sex couple with children is a family, more than double the proportion of those 65 and older who share this view (80% vs. 37%).
- Among those ages 30 to 49, two-thirds (67%) see a same-sex couple with children as a family, compared with 58% of all 50- to 64-year-olds.

(Pew Research, 2011)

## Family Religious Socialization

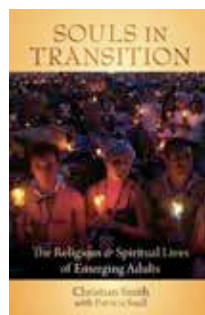
### Declining Family Religious Socialization

#### Yet we know....

- **Parent Influence:** The single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of children, teens, and emerging adults is their parents.
- **Embedded Family Religious Practices:** Effective religious socialization comes about through specific religious activities that are firmly intertwined with the daily habits of family life

## Family Religious Socialization

*"... teenagers with seriously religious parents are more likely than those without such parents to have been trained in their lives to think, feel, believe, and act as serious religious believers, and that that training "sticks" with them even when they leave home and enter emerging adulthood."*



**5 of the 6 paths to highly religious emerging adults involve parents, parental faith, & family faith practices**

## Baby Boomers

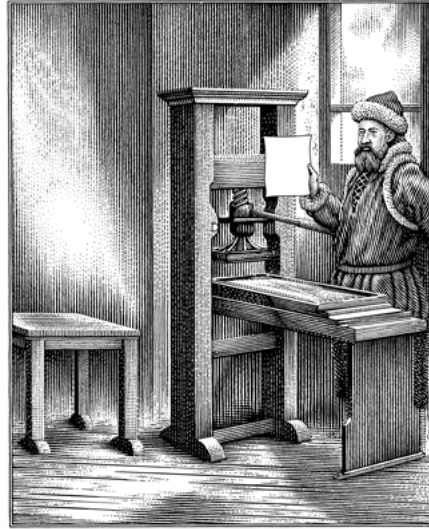
- On Jan. 1, 2011, the oldest Baby Boomers will turn 65. Every day for the next 19 years, about 10,000 more will cross that threshold.
- By 2030, when all Baby Boomers will have turned 65, fully 18% of the nation's population will be at least that age (13% today)
- We are witnessing the emergence of a new stage of life between adult midlife—typically focused on career and child-rearing—and old age, traditionally marked by increasing frailty and decline. This new stage of life spans several decades and is characterized by generally good health, relative financial stability, and an active, engaged lifestyle.

## Impact of Digital Media & Web Technologies

- 93% of teens & young adults are online
- "Computer in your pocket" - increasing mobile access - iPhone
- 8-18 year olds spend on average 7½ hours a day with media



## The Printing Press Johannes Gutenberg



## The First Book



# The New "Book"



# iTunes U



HOME PAGE | TODAY'S PAPER | VIDEO | MOST POPULAR | TIMES TOPICS

Welcome, Log Out | Help

**The New York Times**  
Thursday, November 1, 2012

**Times Topics**

WORLD | U.S. | N.Y. / REGION | BUSINESS | TECHNOLOGY | SCIENCE | HEALTH | SPORTS | OPINION | ARTS | STYLE | TRAVEL | JOBS | REAL ESTATE | AUTOS

Join now to receive the Outlook on Benefits e-newsletter. **MetLife**

**Featured Topic: European Debt Crisis**

**Browse All Topics**

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N  
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 0-9

PEOPLE | SUBJECTS | PLACES | ORGANIZATIONS

**About Times Topics**

Each topic page collates all the news, reference and archival information, photos, graphics, audio and video files published on topics ranging from Madonna to Myanmar. This treasure trove is available without charge or extra fee, going back to 1980.

**How to Google** what's what?

**New John Strydom**  
Strydom is a Partner at the Law Firm of Strydom, The Litigators.  
www.strydom.com

**Clean your Mac**  
New! Download Clean-up utility for Top Performance of your Mac!  
MacCleaner.com/CleanUp2.com

**Credit Score for Free**  
Free Credit Score from PrivacyGuard Check Your Credit Score Free Now!  
www.FGScore.com/Credit-Score

**Carolee John**  
Find the Right Job For You. Apply for the Position Now!  
carolee.forthrightjob.com

**Howard University's MBA**  
Join a legacy with your MBA! No GMAT required. AACSB Accredited.  
mba@hawaii.howard.edu

**Portrait Photography \$175**  
Receive a portrait photographs in 8 weeks! Great training & fine models.  
www.joshuamartian.com

Advertisements on NYTimes.com

**In the News**

Barack Obama | Facebook | Bernard L. Madoff | Citigroup Inc. | J. Eric Bertozzi | Steve Jobs


**Recently Updated**

Long Island Rail Road | Syria - Protest | Occupy Wall Street | Afghanistan | X-Quada | Libya - Revolution

**npr music** FIND A STATION SEARCH

ROCK/POP/FOLK CLASSICAL JAZZ & BLUES HIP-HOP/R&B WORLD STATION STREAMS

HOME LISTEN CONCERTS INTERVIEWS MUSIC NEWS MUSIC PROGRAMS MUSIC BLOGS FIND ARTISTS A-Z




**Wu Man: Tiny Desk Concert**  
Watch the world's reigning pipe virtuoso play ancient music from her Chinese homeland.

**FEATURED MUSIC STREAMS**

- The All Songs 24/7 Music Channel**  
NOW PLAYING: The Clash "London Calling"
- KJMN's "Train To Glory" Gospel Mix**  
NOW PLAYING: Solé's Barry F. C. Barnes "Old Ship Of Zion"

all music streams



**ALL SONGS 24/7 MUSIC CHANNEL**  
All Songs. Always On.  
LISTEN NOW

**MORE HEADLINES**

- Analyzing The Pop Charts: Is Social Science Rockist?**
- "Saamagam," A New Cross-Cultural**

**STUDIO SESSIONS**

- Charles Bradley: Hip-Jerking, Heartfelt Soul (2017)**

**SONG OF THE DAY**

- 'Usual Suspects' by Ka Ha Tonka**

**Livemocha**

"Livemocha is the best online language program I have seen and used—vastly superior to Rosetta Stone in terms of cost and the variety of language functions it offers."  
Dr. Steven J. Sarno, Language Professor, San Diego State University  
PhD in Foreign Language Education

**Social Language Learning - Online!**

- Learn languages online at your own pace with fun language lessons
- Connect with foreign language partners around the world

IT'S FREE TO JOIN

I Speak:

I am Learning:

**Get Started**



**Learn Languages Online**  
Livemocha blends engaging online lessons and the world's largest language learning community to create the most natural way to learn a language. [Learn More](#)

**Livemocha Challenge**  
Learning a new language? Take the Livemocha Challenge and test your foreign language skills!

I am Learning  **Play Now!**



**Learn Practice Share Connect**



**Livemocha Active English**

**Language Learning on Livemocha**

## YouVersion Bible App



## Generational Change

## Generational Change

- If only the youngest cohort in society changes (and then persists in that new direction throughout their own life cycle), society as whole changes inexorably but almost imperceptibly, like a massive supertanker changing course.
- If the differences between one generation and the next are small, then generationally based social change will be real (and significant) but very slow. If for some reason a younger generation deviates substantially from its predecessors, then the aggregate social change may be quick—significant over a few decades.

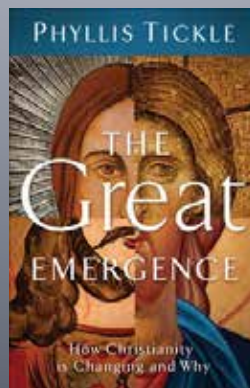
## Trends & Shifts

1. Increasing number of “Nones”
2. Increasing number of “Spiritual but not Religious”
3. Accepting and embracing diversity: culturally, sexually, and in family structures
4. Declining participation in Sunday worship and sacraments/rites of passage (marriage, baptism)
5. Living together, marrying later, and having children later
6. Declining levels of family faith practice & socialization

## Generational Shifts

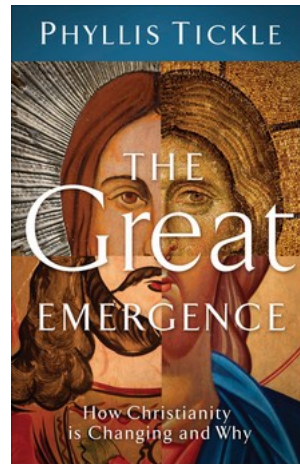
- Significant **Generational Change** began in the early 1990s among the younger generations and is influencing society and the older generations
- These trends are having a significant impact on a **Life Cycle** approach to faith formation and church life, in general.
  - fewer marriages – marrying later – fewer baptisms – fewer young families – lower Sunday worship attendance.....

## Changing Christianity



## The Great Emergence

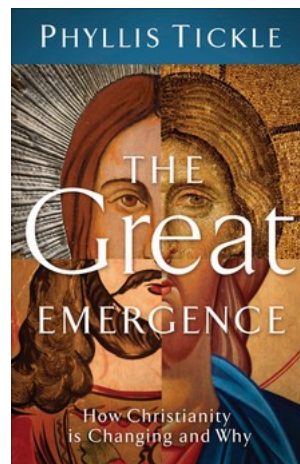
The "Great Emergence" is a generalized social, political, economic, intellectual, and cultural shift.



## The Great Emergence

Every 500 years or so, the church—and the world—experience huge social, political, economic, and cultural shifts.

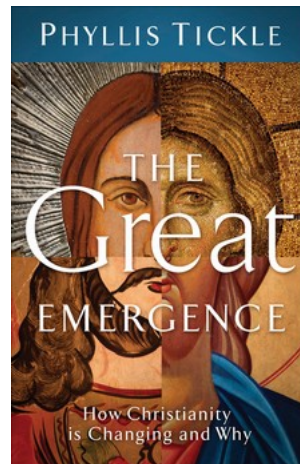
"Every 500 years the church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale."



## The Great Emergence

### 500 Year Cycles

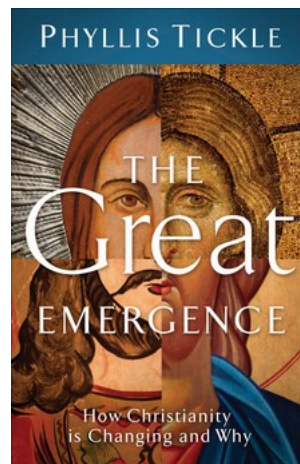
1. Time of Christ
2. Monastic Culture & Dark Ages
3. Great Schism: East-West
4. Reformation
5. Great Emergence



## The Great Emergence

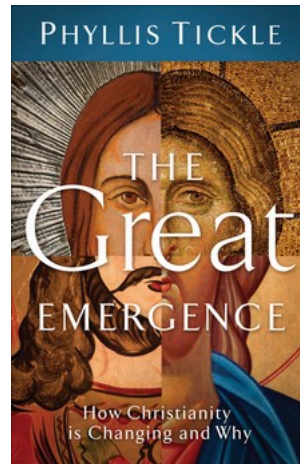
Every 500 years the empowered structures of institutionalized Christianity, whatever they may be at the time, become an intolerable carapace\* that must be shattered in order that renewal and new growth may occur. When the mighty upheaval happens, history shows us, there are always at least three consistent results or corollary events.

*\* the hard upper shell of a turtle or crustacean.*



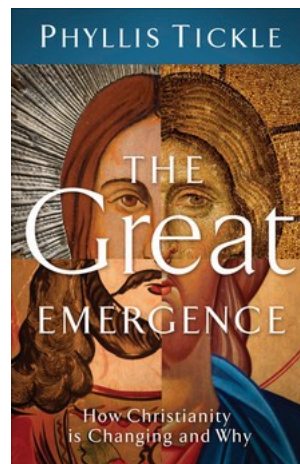
## The Great Emergence

1. A new more vital form of Christianity emerges.
2. The organized expression of Christianity which up until then had been the dominant one is reconstituted into a more pure and less ossified expression of its former self.



## The Great Emergence

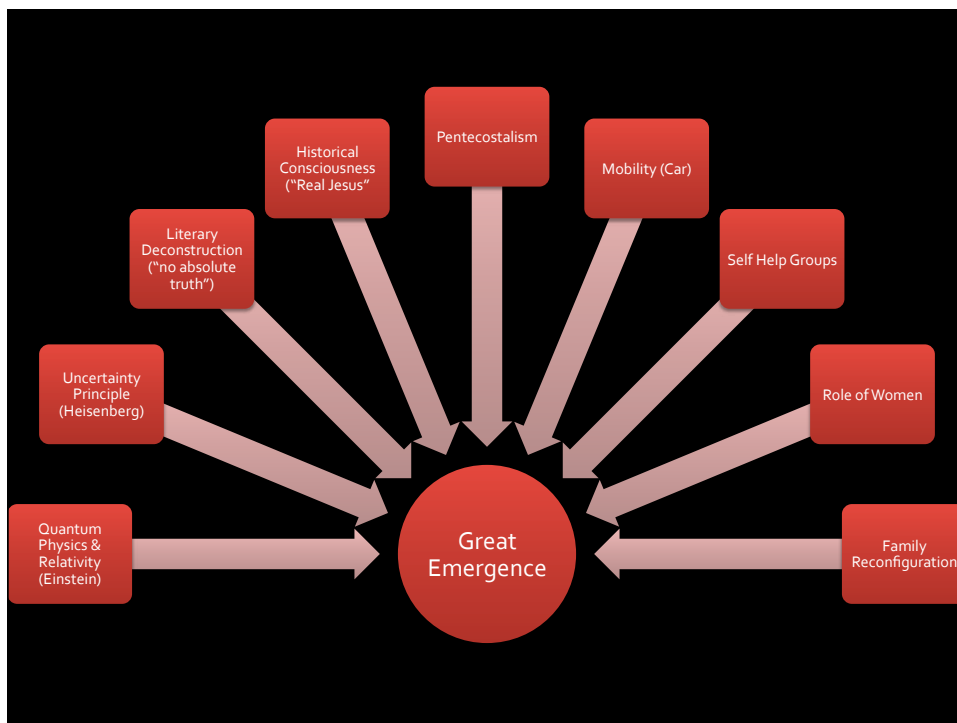
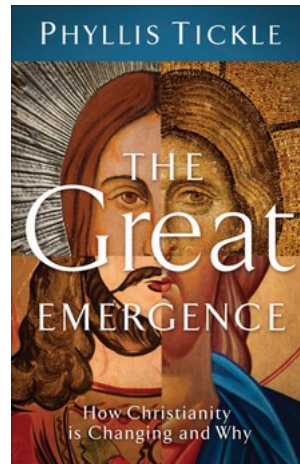
3. Every time the incrustations of an overly established Christianity have been broken open, the faith has spread—and been spread—dramatically into new geographic and demographic areas, thereby increasing exponentially the range and depth of Christianity's reach as a result of its time of unease and distress.



# The Great Emergence

## Toward the Great Emergence

- **Darwin:** evolution
- **Faraday:** field theory, electromagnetic forces
- **Freud & Jung:** psychology & “the new world of the mind”
- **Campbell:** universality and commonality of religious thought & sensibility

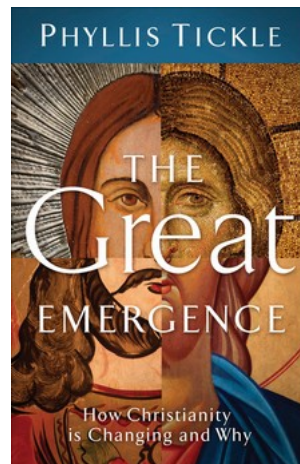


## The Great Emergence

### A New Self?

A whole coterie of scientists began to question the old, standing definitions of "self."

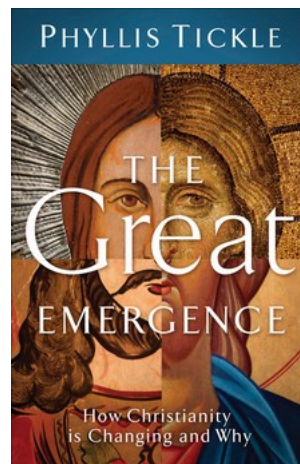
- Who are you?
- What are you?
- How do you know?
- How do you know you know?
- What is a soul?  
(And how do you "save" a soul?)



## The Great Emergence

### Essential Questions

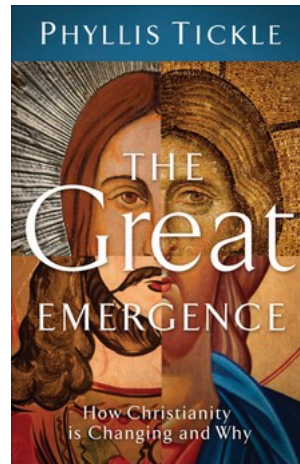
- **Where now is our authority?** – the fundamental or foundational question of all human existence for an individual or social group
- Without an answer to it, the individual personality (or group) fall into disarray and ultimate chaos.

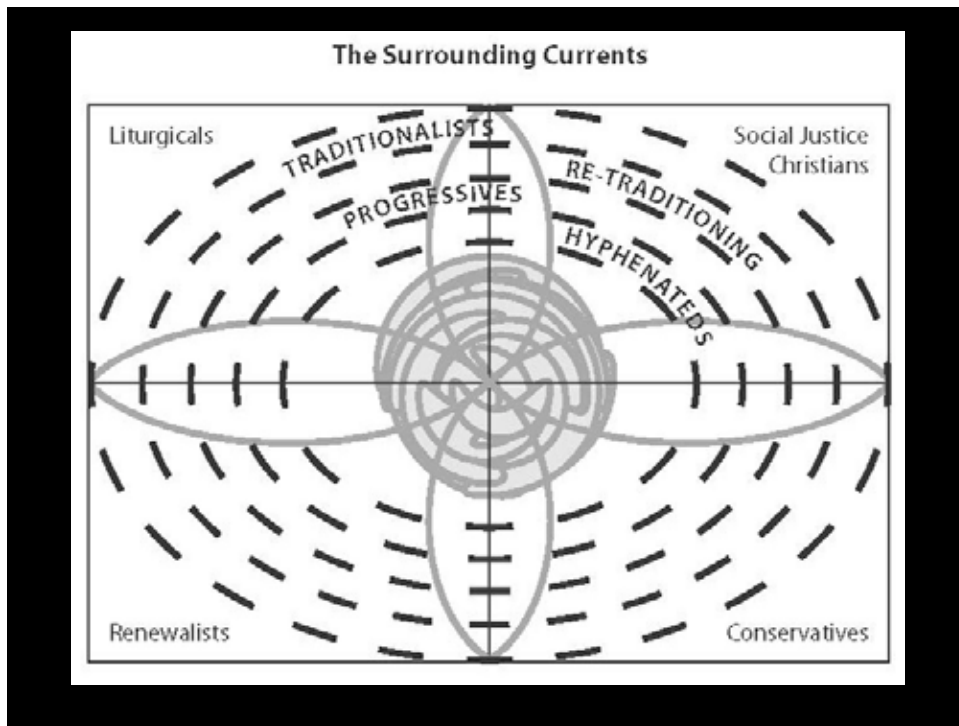


# The Great Emergence

## Essential Questions

- What is human consciousness and/or the humanness of the human?
- What is the relation of all religions to one another—or how can we live responsibly as devout and faithful adherents of one religion in a world of many religions?

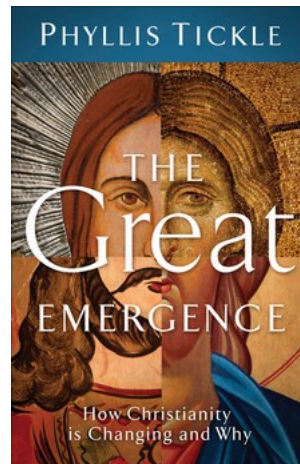




## The Great Emergence

### The Gathering Center

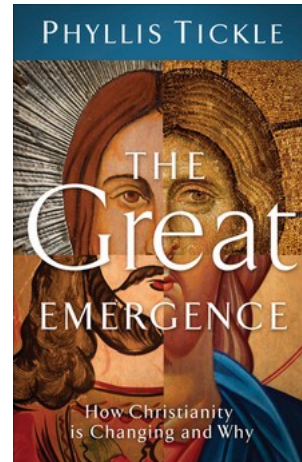
- A center is emerging – a mélange of things drawn from the 4 quadrants
- From inherited church to new forms of church – emerging Christians
- A challenge to the boundaries of established churches
- “Backlash” – fundamentalism in a variety of forms: Scripture and/or Doctrine/Tradition



## The Great Emergence

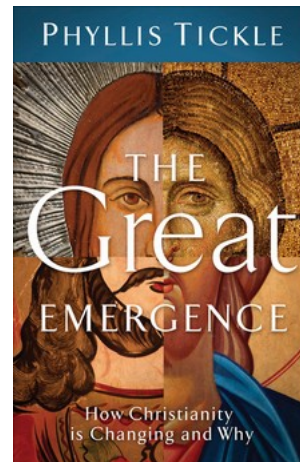
### Where now is authority?

- In Scripture & the community
- **Networked authority:** the church is a self-organizing system of relations, symmetrical and otherwise, between innumerable member-parts that themselves form subsets of relations within their small networks, etc., in interlacing levels of complexity



## The Great Emergence

- No one of the member parts or connecting networks has the whole or entire “truth” of anything.
- Each is only a single working piece of what is evolving and is sustainable so long as the interconnectivity of the whole remains intact.
- “Crowd-sourcing” – egalitarianism



## The Great Emergence

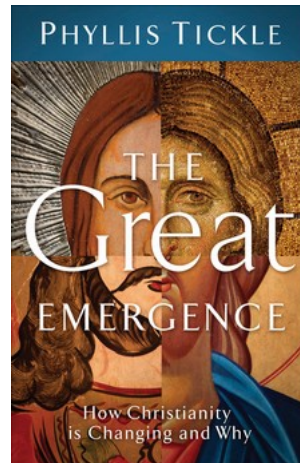
### Changing Patterns

From...

Believe—Behave—Belong

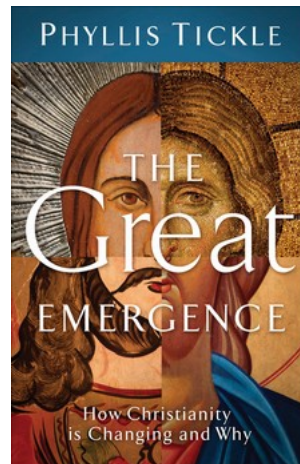
To...

Belong—Behave—Believe



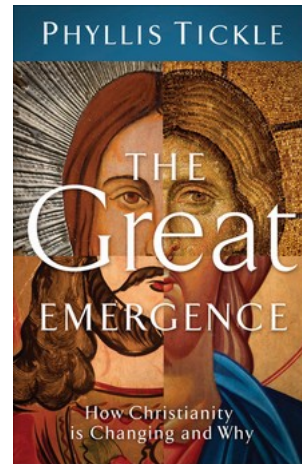
## The Great Emergence

- One simply belongs to gathering of Christians by a shared humanity and an affinity with the group.
- One may begin to behave and think in a way that informs the whole group.
- As behavior begins to condition living, it also begins to shape belief until the two become one.



## The Great Emergence

There are congregations that are completely new conceptualizations of what "church" is to be. They are emergent away from, or emerging up out of, the traditional flow of "church" as we normally think of it, and they are a legitimate new form of Christianity as surely as, 500 years ago, bodies protesting the dominance of Latin Catholicism were emerging and protesting and forming new bodies of the faithful and were legitimately Christian.



## The Great Emergence

Emerging churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures. This definition encompasses nine practices. Emerging churches:

- 1) Identify with the life of Jesus
- 2) Transform the secular realm, and
- 3) Live highly communal lives

Because of these three activities, they:

- 4) Welcome the stranger
- 5) Serve with generosity
- 6) Participate as producers
- 7) Create as created beings
- 8) Lead as a body, and
- 9) Take part in spiritual activities

# Interpreting

## 4 Scenarios

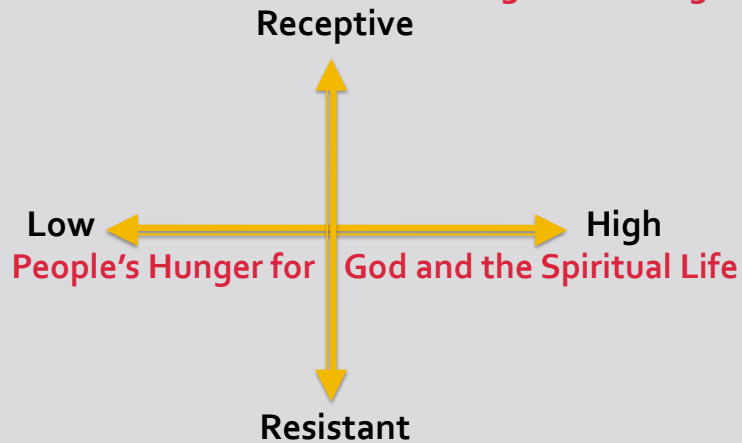
## Two Critical Uncertainties



1. Will trends in U.S. culture lead people to become more receptive to organized religion, and in particular Christianity or will trends lead people to become more resistant to organized religion and Christianity?
2. Will people's hunger for and openness to God and the spiritual life increase over the next decade or will people's hunger for and openness to God and the spiritual life decrease.

# Faith Formation 2020 Matrix

Dominant Cultural Attitude toward Organized Religion



# Four Scenarios for the Future



## 4 Scenarios for the Future



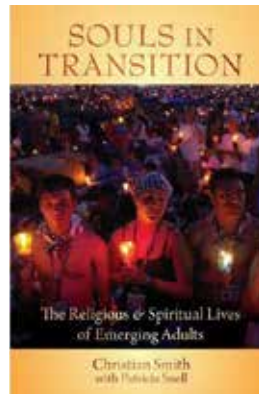
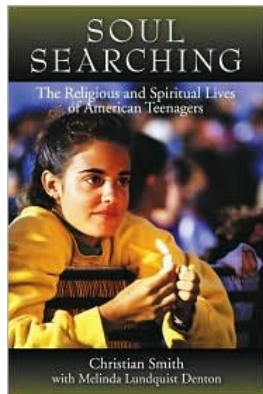
Scenario 4  
Uncommitted &  
Participating

Scenario 1  
Vibrant Faith  
& Active  
Engagement

Scenario 3  
Unaffiliated &  
Uninterested

Scenario 2  
Spiritual but  
Not Religious

## NSYR Research



## Youth & Young Adult Religiosity

### Youth

Abiders	Adapters	Assenters	Avoiders	Atheists
20%	20%	31%	24%	5%

---

### Young Adult

Committed Traditionalists	Selected Adherents	Spiritually Open	Religiously Indifferent	Religiously Disconnected	Irreligious
15%	30%	15%	25%	5%	10%

---

## Typology of Adolescent Religiosity

- **Abiders:** highest levels of religiosity and practice: believe in God, pray regularly, engage in personal religious practice, attend services, serve others, think about the meaning of life; most likely to say their religion is the only true faith
- **Adapters:** high levels of personal religiosity + accepting of other people's faiths + attend religious services more sporadically
- **Assenters:** believe in God and feel somewhat close to God, but they are minimally engaged with their faith and practice only occasionally. Religion is tangential to other aspects of their lives.
- **Avoiders:** believe in God but have low levels of religious practice; God is distant, impersonal; and often don't name a religious affiliation.
- **Atheists:** don't believe in God and don't attend services.

## Typology of Emerging Adult Religiosity

- **Committed Traditionalists:** strong religious faith; articulate beliefs; actively practice. Personal commitment to faith is a significant part of their identities and moral reasoning, and they are at least somewhat regularly involved in some religious group
- **Selected Adherents:** believe and perform certain aspects of their religious traditions but neglect and ignore others; more discriminating about what they are willing to adopt of their religious tradition's beliefs and practices
- **Spiritually Open:** not very committed to a religious faith but are nonetheless receptive to and at least mildly interested in some spiritual or religious matters.

## Typology of Emerging Adult Religiosity

- **Religiously Indifferent:** neither care to practice religion nor oppose it; simply not invested in religion either way; too distracted with and invested in other things in life and unconcerned with matters of faith to pay any real attention to religion.
- **Religiously Disconnected:** have little to no exposure or connection to religious people, ideas, or organizations; neither interested in nor opposed to religion. Faith simply has not been a part of their lives in any significant way.
- **Irreligious:** hold skeptical attitudes about and make critical arguments against religion generally, rejecting the idea of personal faith

## Assessing

### Viewed through the lens of the 4 Scenarios...

- Who is your outdoor ministry programming serving today?
- Who do you need to reach and engage?
- Whose spiritual and religious needs are your programs addressing?
- Whose spiritual and religious needs do you need to address?

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Faith Formation

### *What could a 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to faith formation look like?*

- ⦿ How would we address the diversity of people's religious and spiritual needs today?
- ⦿ How would we engage people? How would we reach people?
- ⦿ What technologies would we use?
- ⦿ What resources would we access?