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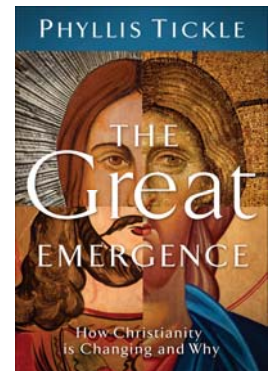
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NEW FACE OF THE CHURCH FITS AGE-OLD PATTERNS

“The Great Emergence” consistent with pattern of church shifts every 500 years

New churches across the country have scrapped plans for traditional buildings in favor of meeting in movie theaters, living rooms, and even bars. Denominational boundaries have blurred as many churches downplay traditional names and their congregants explore neo-monastic practices. The faithful are as likely to be concerned with the environment and AIDS as they are to be interested in overseas missions.

While the new face of the Church is breaking down boundaries and shattering stereotypes, the underground shifts causing the current change in landscape are as old as religion itself, says Phyllis Tickle. Tickle, former founding editor of the religion department at *Publishers Weekly*, is the author of ***The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*** (978-0-8010-1313-3, \$17.99, Oct 2008), a new book that explores the link between history and the new face of the church. What emerges over the course of history, Tickle says, is a pattern of upheaval every 500 years in which the church cleans out what is old and ill-fitting, forcing the church to continue to be relevant to the culture at large. These changes can be traced through Judaic culture to the time of the judges and exist not only in other religions such as Islam but in other aspects of the culture as well, as books like Fareed Zakaria’s new best-seller *The Post-American World* can attest.. Perhaps the most visible form of change today, however, is American Christianity,



These upheavals, dating to before the life of Christ, can be thought of as “rummage sales,” where the very foundations of power are shaken and the church creates not only a new and different version of itself but also a refined version of its old self.

The book starts with Jesus, then moves to the time of Gregory the Great and his papacy rule, to the Great Schism between Byzantine and the Old Roman Empire, to the Great Reformation that involved Catholicism and Protestantism, and wraps up with today’s Great Emergence movement.

Broken into three parts - “The Great Emergence: What Is It?”, “The Great Emergence: How Did It Come to Be?” and “The Great Emergence: Where Is It Going?” - the book portrays the ‘Great Emergence,’ whether good or bad, as a monumental phenomenon in this new season of humanity.

According to Tickle, empowered structures of institutionalized Christianity shatter every five hundred years to allow for new growth, after which three steps consistently fall into place: A new and more vital form of Christianity results; the previously dominant form of Christianity becomes more pure and less ossified and Christianity ‘breaks open,’ then spreads dramatically both geographically and demographically.

Tickle cannot say with certainty what Christian theology will look like in the coming years, but she predicts that “it will look far more Jewish, more paradoxical, more narrative and more mystical than anything in the last 1700 years or so.”

She understands that some people are unnerved by these changes, but she urges people to recognize the Great Emergence as the force it is. “What was once an innocuous phenomenon is no longer. The cub has grown into a young lion; and now is his hour of roaring.”

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phyllis Tickle is founding editor of the Religion Department of *Publishers Weekly*. One of the most respected authorities and popular speakers on religion in America today, she is frequently quoted and interviewed in such media outlets as the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, CNN, C-SPAN, and PBS. A Senior Fellow of Cathedral College at the National Cathedral in Washington, she is the author of more than two dozen books, including *God-Talk in America*, and makes her home on a small farm in Lucy, Tennessee.



ENDORSEMENTS

“Phyllis Tickle offers a creative and provocative overview of multiple social and cultural changes in our era, their relation to previous major paradigm shifts, and their particular impact on North American Christianity. This is an immensely important contribution to the current conversation about new and emerging forms of Christianity in a postmodern environment—and a delight to read!”

The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church

““Once in a great while, a book comes along and makes things make sense. With understated humility, *The Great Emergence* unpacks the chaos of contemporary cultural upheaval and the religious consequences of the changes that we now face. Tickle acts as a compassionate guide through the Christian past and toward its future, all the while opening the spiritual imagination to unexpected hopeful possibilities. After reading these pages, neither the church nor the world looks the same.”

Diana Butler Bass
author, *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*

“It is too easy to call the emerging movement a new reformation. Why? Find parallels to the sixteenth century, and you’ve got it. It is just as easy to debunk such a theory. Why? Find absences to the Reformation, and the parallel breaks down. That is why the emerging movement has to be explained as its own thing. Phyllis Tickle does just that. **One thing I’ve learned to appreciate as I’ve grown older is big theories—and that is what Phyllis gives us. Within a few pages you’ll be wondering if she’s onto something. If she is, then we’re in the eye of a storm.**”

Scot McKnight, Karl A. Olsson Professor in Religious Studies, North Park University

“I cannot speak highly enough of this new book by Phyllis Tickle. Astonishing in its panoramic scope, cultural insight and lucid brevity, *The Great Emergence* pinpoints the global emerging church movement within the greater drama of Christianity in a new world. Tickle shows us why *The Great Emergence* will not die away but will instead inaugurate and define the next epoch of Christianity. This book will raise eyebrows and expectations.”

Andrew Jones, Mission Consultant, tallskinnykiwi.com



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Emergent Village (www.emergentvillage.com), Emergent gathers reflective practitioners and engaged scholars for conversation and missional action around the issues of Christian theology, practice, spirituality, justice and church life. The network developed in the 1990’s and includes a wide range of Christian leaders from progressive evangelical, mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic backgrounds.



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS for PHYLLIS TICKLE
THE GREAT EMERGENCE

1. What is the 'Great Emergence'?
2. When did the 'Great Emergence' begin?
3. What are some characteristics of the 'Great Emergence'?
4. How is the 'Great Emergence' similar to and different from the re-formations that came before it?
5. How long does a re-formation tend to take?
6. What other writers and thinkers are also teaching this?
7. Would you describe 'The Gathering Center,' and explain how the confluence of Conservatives, Social Justice Workers, Liturgicals and Renewalists will affect our lives?
8. How will other faiths be affected by the 'Great Emergence'?
9. How do you predict the 'Great Emergence' will play out in years to come?
10. Is the 'Great Emergence' a good thing?