

Dear Colleagues in the Søren Kierkegaard to Joe Mathews Historical Wake,

I am spending 2013 writing a book that I have provisionally titled:

The Love of History and the Future of Christianity *A Manifesto for a Post-Christendom Christianity*

which focuses on history as a recovery of the past for the sake of anticipating the future in order to live fully in the present. I am assuming that a love of history and a loyal service of that Mysterious Power experienced in the unstoppable flow of time is foundational for a vital resurgence of a Christian-heritage-related religious practice. I am further assuming that such a recovery not only serves us, but contributes to our present moment a uniquely needed revolutionary force that can assist all humans to create a viable future for the human species.

This book is a follow up of completing in 2012:

The Enigma of Consciousness *A Philosophy of Profound Humanness and Religion*

This book on what Joe Mathews called “The New Religious Mode.” In writing this book, I was assuming that we can further what Joe had begun with regard to doing a thoroughgoing redefinition of the word “religion.” That is, “religion” is no longer to be understood as beliefs and behaviors that are somehow inspired from some otherworldly realm, but as down-to-Earth human practices that assist human beings to access their profound humanness. The word “profound” in this sentence carries the same deep meaning that the old mode of religious expression was getting at with its transcendent talk – namely, that a fully realized human being (Jesus, Buddha, or whoever) is both fully human and fully an offspring of Eternity (i.e. of the WAY IT IS). But this profundity no longer needs two-story drama to give it expression. We can express this profound ground of our being as an Ultimate quality shining through our everyday temporal experience.

Resurgent Buddhism has taught us that religion is a practice, an Earthly practice like meditation that can make us more accident prone to the accident of enlightenment, salvation, profound healing, whatever words we find best to name this “resurrection” of our essential being. The whole of any religion can be viewed as a set of rituals, icons, stories, theoretics, communal methods, conversation methods, heritage recovery methods, communication methods, social transformation methods, etc. that has the intent and potential result of assisting human beings to access their profound humanness.

The two books above form a trilogy with a book completed in 2011 by Ben Ball, Marsha Buck, Ken Kruetzigler, Alan Richard, and myself entitled:

The Road from Empire to Eco-Democracy

This book on what Joe Mathews called “The New Social Vehicle.” We attempted in this book to move beyond the sensibilities of the 1970s toward a full appropriation of the ecological crises and a full dismantling of an imperial, hierarchical society that allows both extreme wealth and power and grueling poverty and powerlessness. Patriarchy,

racism, and theocracy are also part of our description of how the human species is gridlocked in old ideas and practices that are not going to work for the 21st Century. Civilization is ending. Humanity does not have to end with the end of civilization, but an alternative to civilization needs to be organized with considerable haste.

“Eco-Democracy” is the authors’ name for a future society that is fully democratic and ecologically sane. “Eco-Democracy” is code for a consensus being built by the progressive portion of humanity. “Empire” means an obsolete quality that is built into the mode of social organization we have called “civilization.” “Road” is poetry for an effective strategy for dismantling civilization and constructing Eco-Democracy.

Part One of this book spells out ten ways that civilized people are waking up to the extent of our crisis. Part Two provides an overview of how we are in the midst of a massive turning in human history that is at least as radical as the turning from tribal societies to the pattern of civilization. Part Three is about comprehensively envisioning a whole society, how contemporary society is out of balance, and how the whole must be healed in order to fully heal any part of society. Part Four is about the “road” or “way” from our tragic “here” to a viable and flourishing “there.” In Part Four the authors examine the plausibility of occasioning avalanches of change that can slide toward the unprecedented future we need. They examine the forces that can envision, this massive change and the core strategies that can be employed to occasion it. Such viable strategy provide context for discerning the roles each of us might take in lifting our tiny corner of this massive weight.

* * * * *

Both *Enigma* and *Road* form context for the mission of a Next Christianity and the mission to create a Next Christianity that can occasion a profound humanness recovery that can work with all other practitioners toward accessing the profound humanness to see and perform a common cause together on behalf of all humans living and yet unborn.

In composing a manifesto for a Next Christianity I want to be convincing that creating a religious practice of any sort, and more particularly a Christian practice, is a meaningful task to do – indeed, a revolutionary thing to do. I am convinced (as are most awakening people) that minor repairs on the old Christianity is not enough. We who want to invent and do a best-case Christian practice face a thoroughgoing job of rethinking what in the hellish caverns of despair this is all about.

I am writing this to request your participatoin in forging this manifesto and actually manifesting a practice of this Next Christianity. Following is a first draft of a table of contents upon which I have begun work. If you want to provide feedback, make suggestions, call attention to resourses, or in any other way assist me make this book a useful product let me know (jgmarshall@cableone.net). I will figure out a way to make whatever you suggest workable.

The Love of History and the Future of Christianity

A Manifesto for a Post-Christendom Christianity

Introduction: What is a Manifesto and Why do we need a Next Christianity?

Part One: The Love-of-History Challenge

1. Christianity and the Love of History
2. The Word of God Controversy
3. Christianity and Church History

4. The Calcedonian “Solution”

Part Two: Big Historical Turning Points in Western Church History

5. Augustine and a Greek/Hebrew Synthesis

6. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotelian Worldliness

7. Luther and the Reform of Authority

8. Kierkegaard and the End of Authority

Part Three: A Reconstruction of Christian Practice

9. An Existential Trinitarianism

10. Christianity as Healing Methods

11. Post-Christendom Institutionalization

12. Circles, Assemblies, and Retreats

13. The Eternal Mission to Planet Earth