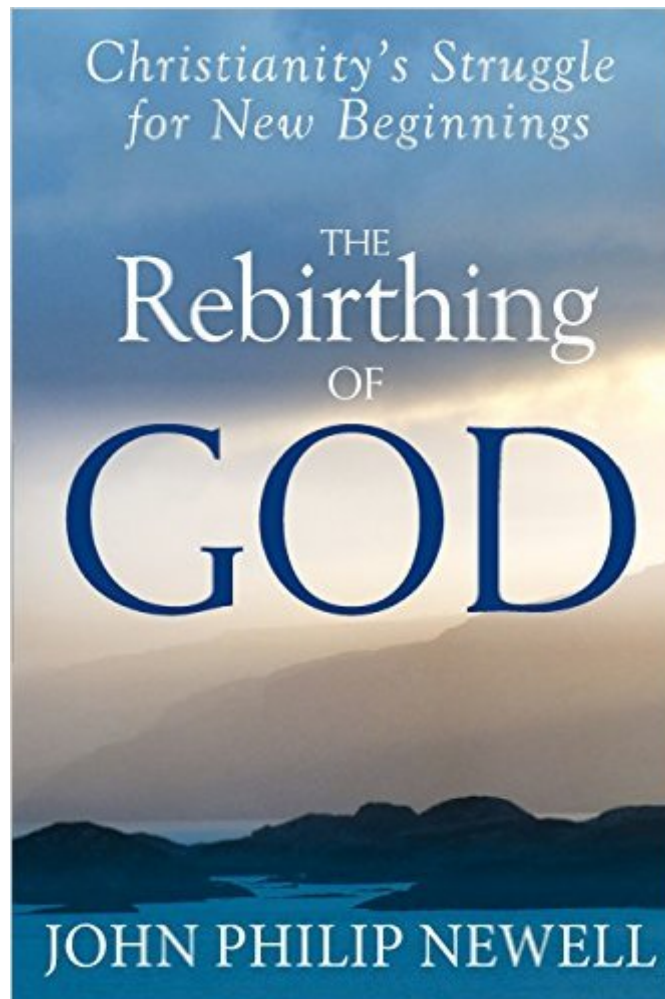


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The Rebirthing Of God: Christianity's Struggle For New Beginnings



Synopsis

Dare to imagine a new birth from deep within Christianity, a fresh stirring of the Spirit."The walls of Western Christianity are collapsing. In many parts of the West that collapse can only be described as seismic.... There are three main responses or reactions to this collapse. The first is to deny that it is happening. The second is to frantically try to shore up the foundations of the old thing. The third, which I invite us into, is to ask what is trying to be born that requires a radical reorientation of our vision. What is the new thing that is trying to emerge from deep within us and from deep within the collective soul of Christianity?"

•from the Introduction

In the midst of dramatic changes in Western Christianity, internationally respected spiritual leader, peacemaker and scholar John Philip Newell offers the hope of a fresh stirring of the Spirit among us. He invites us to be part of a new holy birth of sacred living. Speaking directly to the heart of Christians

•those within the well-defined bounds of Christian practice and those on the disenchanting edges

•as well as to the faithful and seekers of other traditions, he explores eight major features of a new birthing of Christianity:

- Coming back into relationship with the Earth as sacred
- Reconnecting with compassion as the ground of true relationship
- Celebrating the Light that is at the heart of all life
- Reverencing the wisdom of other religious traditions
- Rediscovering spiritual practice as the basis for transformation
- Living the way of nonviolence among nations
- Looking to the unconscious as the wellspring of new vision
- Following love as the seed-force of new birth in our lives and world

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Customer Reviews

John Philip Newell's new book is an inspiring and prophetic meditation on one of the most important

phenomena in the world today. Much is being said and written about the decline of traditional Christianity, and people are simultaneously noticing the burgeoning interest in matters of faith and spirituality, contemplative prayer and healing, theology and spiritual practice. Cynthia Bourgeault, an Episcopal priest, author, and much-sought-after teacher on centering prayer, has said that she can't decide if she is a hospice worker or a midwife. Clearly, something is dying, but something is also coming to life. John Philip Newell sees this dying and rising again as a sacred moment in history that calls for reverent attention. Throughout the book, John Philip provides vignettes that beautifully illustrate his reflections. In the introduction, he tells of a worship service he attended at the abbey on Iona. All of the worship leaders were women, the exact opposite of the tragic gender imbalance that plagued so much of Christian history, and John Philip was somewhat irritated that at least one or two men could not be found to serve. But then he remembered that it was the women in Jesus' day who stuck around as Jesus was dying and who even came to anoint his body for burial. "Instead of seeing [this worship service] as a communion procession," he writes, "I begin to experience it as a funeral procession. Instead of bread and wine being carried forward for the sacrament, it becomes in my soul's eye the Church as body of Christ being borne for burial.... The women have not fled at the death. They are faithfully tending the body with care, with reverence. And such huge sorrow. This is death. This form will be no more.

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