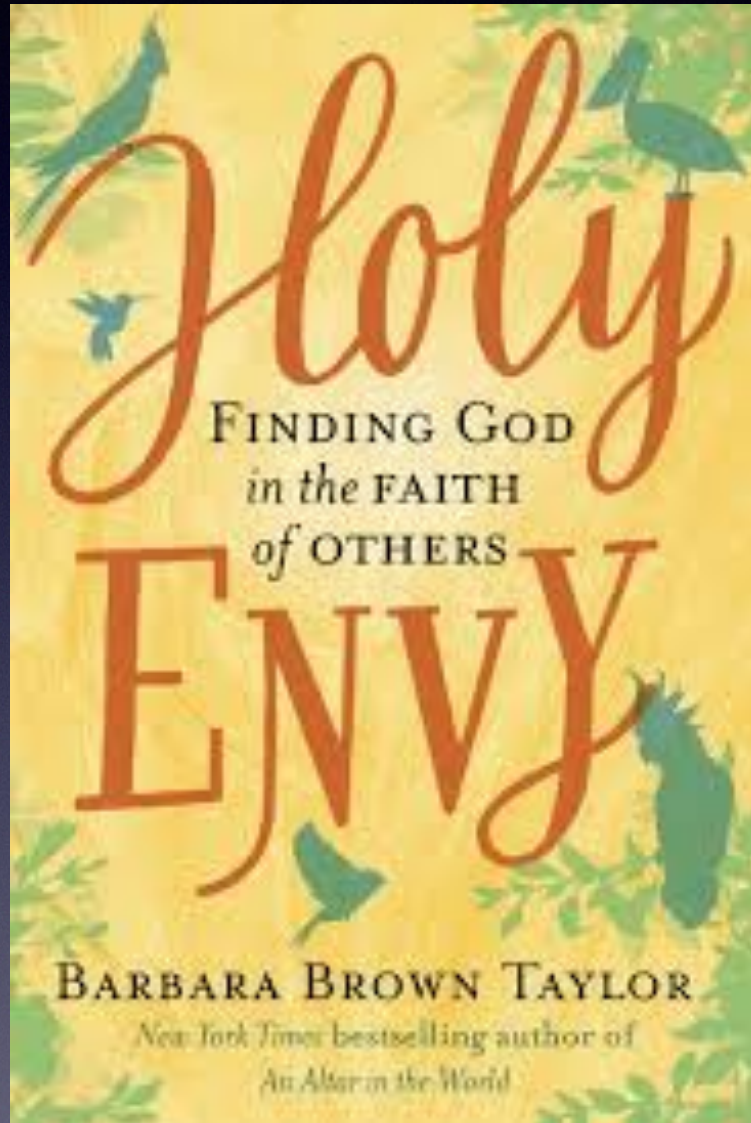


Holy Envy



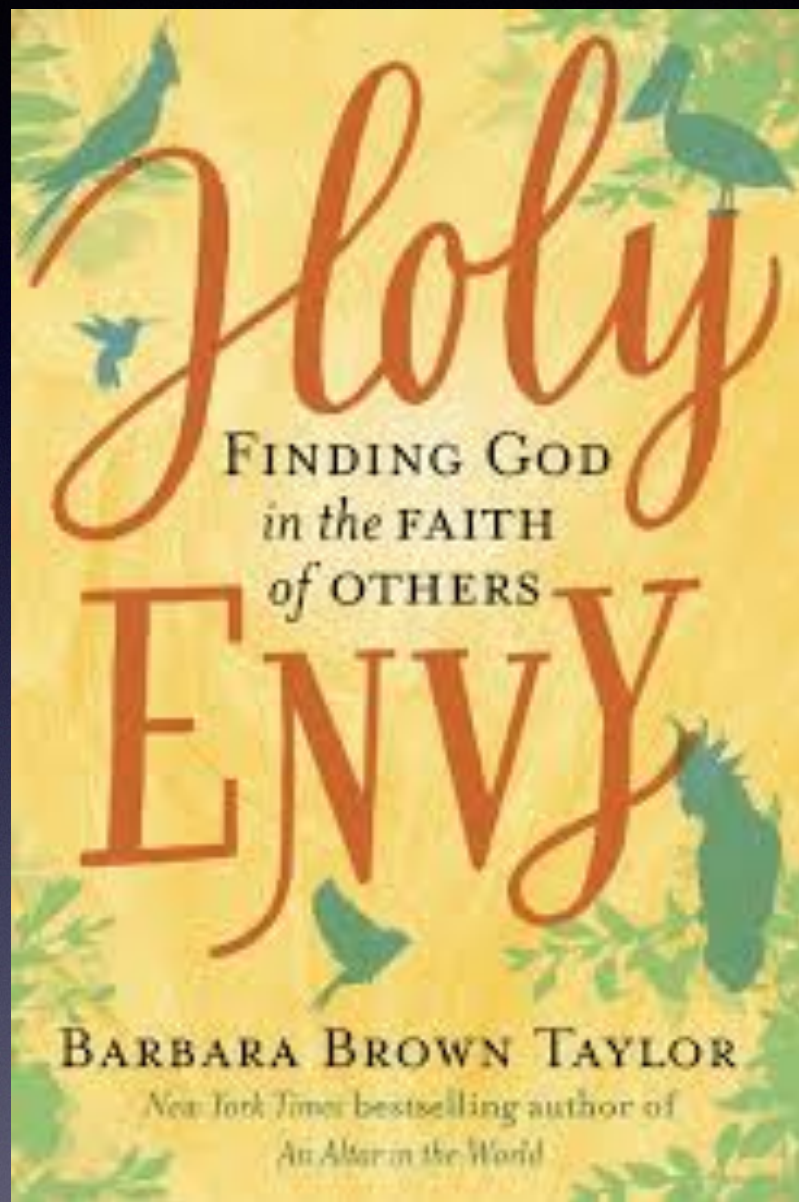
Holy Manners Bookstudy 43

ACTS
Fall 2019

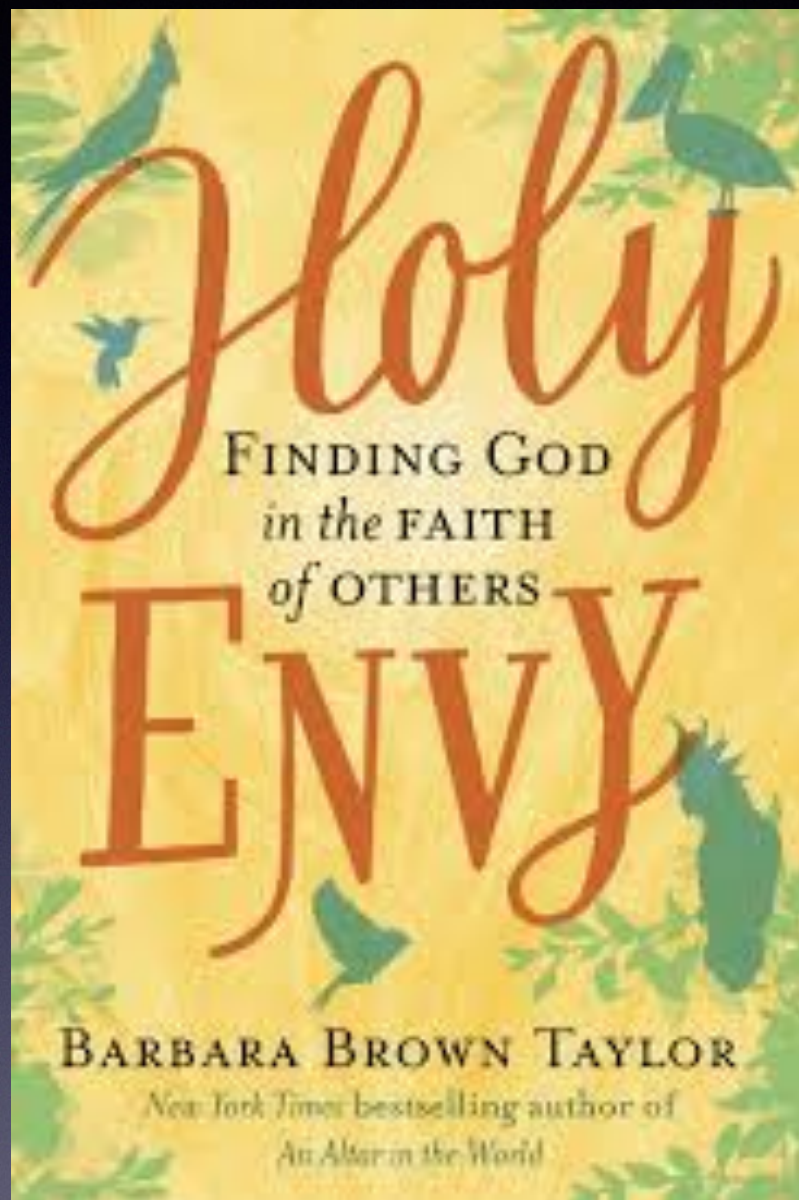
St David's United Church
Calgary

Session # 1

- Housekeeping
- Opening Prayer
- Opening - Mary Jo Leddy
- Welcomes & Introductions
- Review of ACTS
- Why this book?
- Discussions
 - Why have we come?
- Introducing Holy Envy.
- Hospitality Break
- Poem - Old Drum
- Video - The Author
- Discussion re 2 sessions
 - Visits and/or Guests
- Closing

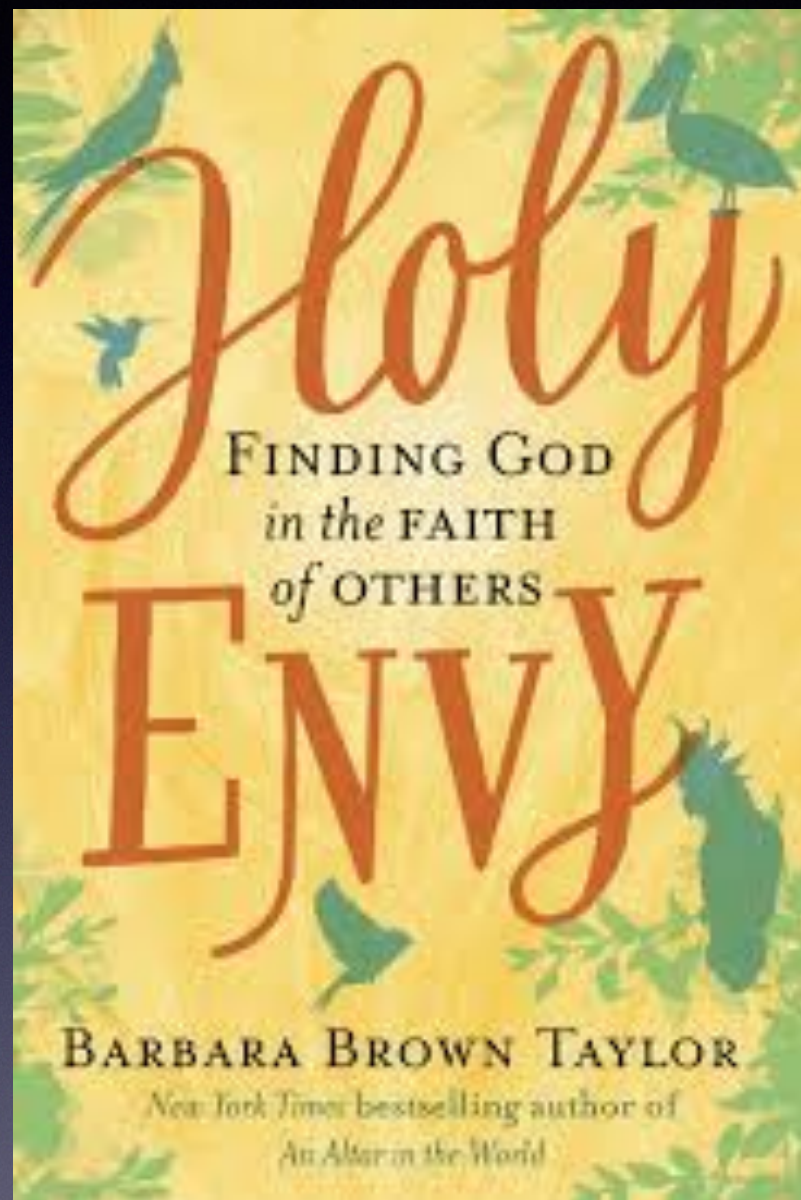


Housekeeping & Opening Prayer



Opening

Brenda - Mary Jo
Leddy



Holy Envy

Welcomes,
Introductions &
Housekeeping

ACTS

Awakening **C**ompassion
through
Theology and **S**pirituality.

A short 20 year review of ACTS at StDavids.

“Adult Education” to “Adult Spiritual Development” to “ACTS”

ACTS - Book Studies

A short explanation to what we mean by "Adult Studies"

Adult studies provide opportunities to build our faith in community and in ever more mature ways as we confront life's opportunities and challenges
We sponsor both "book studies" and "Bible studies"

What is a book study?

We attempt to offer books that encourage a stimulating exchange of ideas that can result in spiritual growth

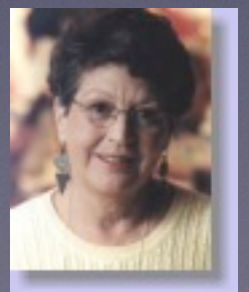
We are inclusive, not divisive, and live "holy manners"

ACTS - Holy Manners

Marion Pardy was the 37th Moderator of the United Church of Canada from 2000 to 2003. She brought Holy Manners to the UCC with the 38th Council which adopted these principles: " We will:

- keep God at the centre of everything we do
- separate people from problems
- allow for full and equitable participation
- listen carefully without interruption
- welcome the conflict of ideas
- honour the decisions of the body"

Article on the history and use in the church of the phrase:
<http://www.1journey.net/stdavids/SD/HolyMannersPage.htm>



ACTS - Book Studies

Our studies seek to complement other ministries here at the church in creating mutual spiritual support and development.

We are concerned about both "in reach" and "outreach".

We seek to be inclusive, not divisive, and live "holy manners" in the way we relate to each other.

We try to appeal to people of "our faith" "other faiths" or "no faith" preferences.

We seek to broaden our horizons and deepen our understandings of life in community.

ACTS - Book Studies

The Selection of “ Holy Envy”

Why did ACTS select this book from five nominations?

On the Brink of Everything (Palmer)

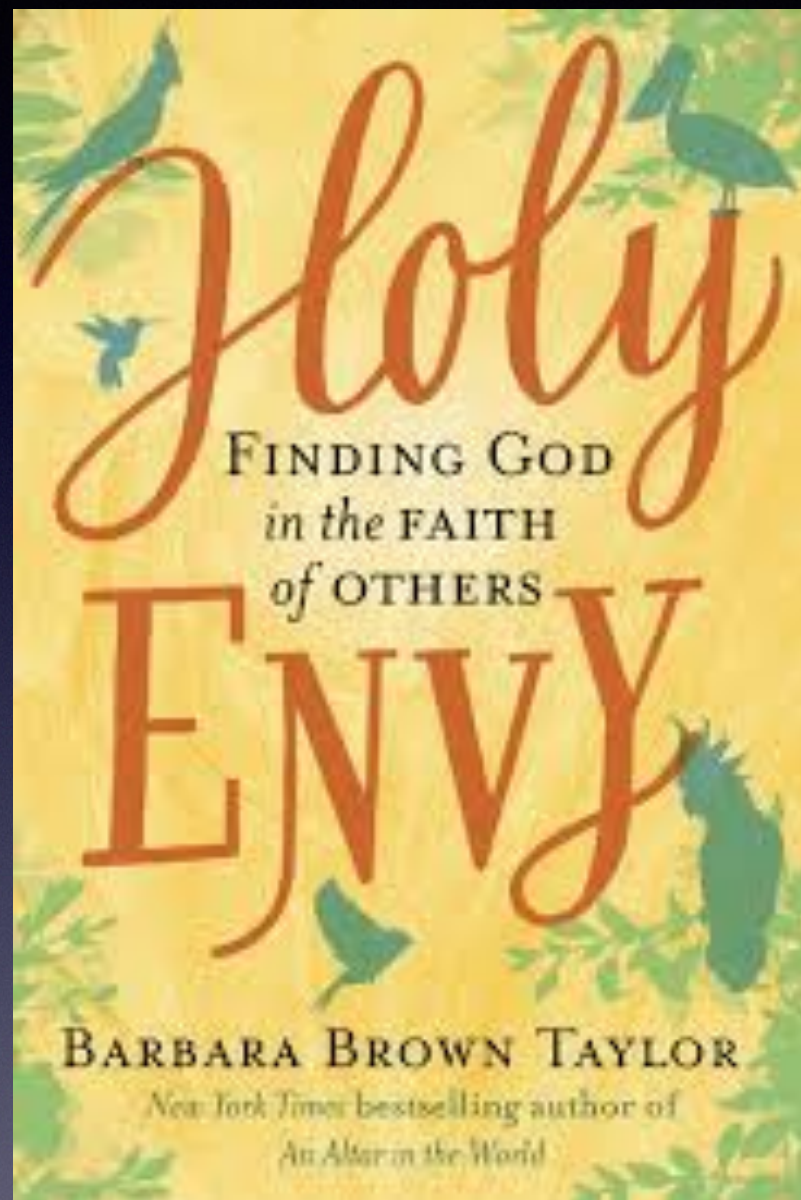
Atheist Outreach (Smith)

Care of the Soul (Moore)

The Triumph of Christianity (Ehrman)

Holy Envy (Taylor)

We feel this is a good time to focus on a book of comparative faith traditions, with a spiritual, not so much a theological, emphasis.

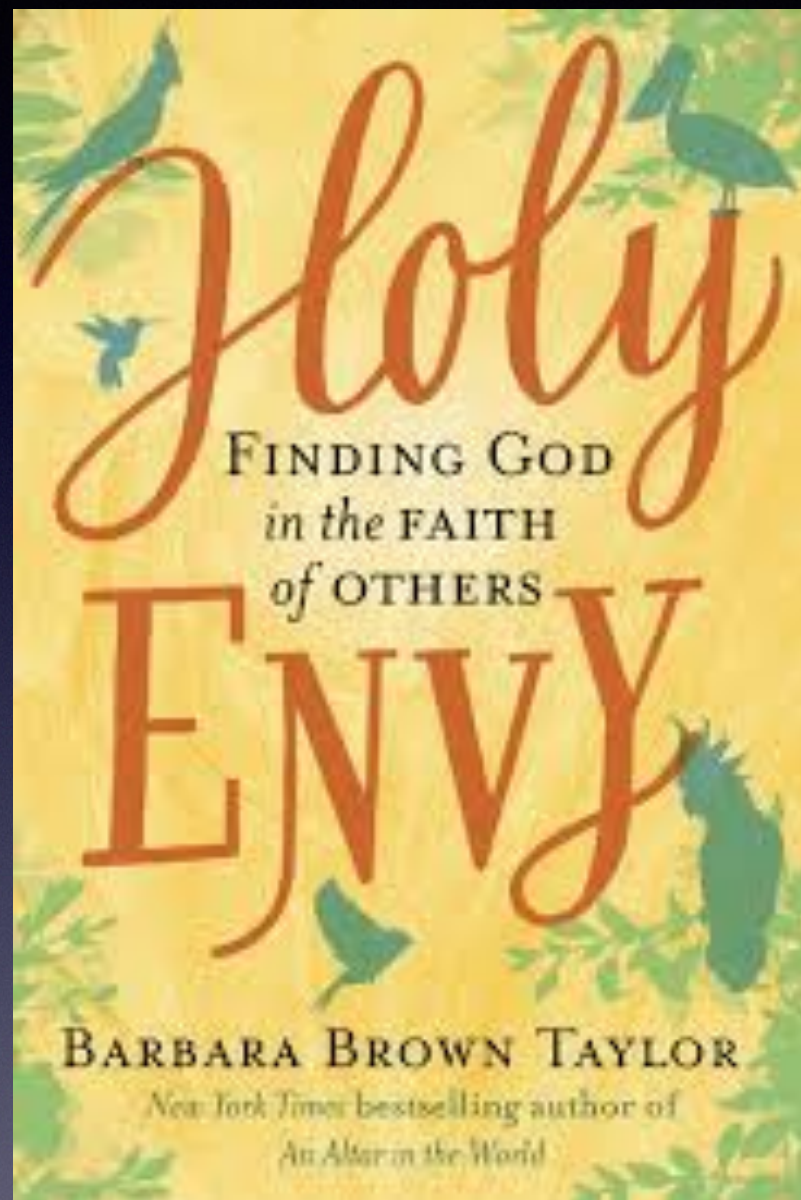


Small Group Discussion

Why have I decided to take on this class?

What do I want to take from my learnings?

Group Review



Key Points on the Book and Author

Book Review by Wayne Holst

Finding God in the Faith of Others, by Barbara Brown Taylor

HarperOne, Toronto, ON. March, 2019, Hardcover. 238 pages. \$29.00 CAD

Publishers Promo:

The renowned and beloved New York Times bestselling author of *An Altar in the World* and *Learning to Walk in the Dark* recounts her moving discoveries of finding the sacred in unexpected places while teaching the world's religions to undergraduates in rural Georgia, revealing how God delights in confounding our expectations.

Barbara Brown Taylor continues her spiritual journey begun in *Leaving Church* of finding out what the world looks like after taking off her clergy collar. In *Holy Envy*, she contemplates the myriad ways other people and traditions encounter the Transcendent, both by digging deeper into those traditions herself and by seeing them through her students' eyes as she sets off with them on field trips to monasteries, temples, and mosques.

Troubled and inspired by what she learns, Taylor returns to her own tradition for guidance, finding new meaning in old teachings that have too often been used to exclude religious strangers instead of embracing the divine challenges they present. Re-imagining some central stories from the religion she knows best, she takes heart in how often God chooses outsiders to teach insiders how out-of-bounds God really is.

Throughout *Holy Envy*, Taylor weaves together stories from the classroom with reflections on how her own spiritual journey has been complicated and renewed by connecting with people of other traditions—even those whose truths are quite different from hers.

The one constant in her odyssey is the sense that God is the one calling her to disown her version of God—a change that ultimately enriches her faith in other human beings and in God.

Author's Words: ... - a summary of the "Introduction - The Smaller Picture"

"What do they know of England who only England know?" ... Rudyard Kipling

The book in your hands is a small window on a large subject. Set at a private liberal arts college... the story of a Christian minister who lost her way in the church and found a new home in the class-room where she taught religions of the world.

As soon as she recovered from the shock of reading God in so many new hats, she fell for every religion she taught... It was only when she taught Christianity that the fire sputtered, because her religion looked so different when she saw it lined up with the others.

She always promised her students that studying other faiths would not make them lose their own. Then she lost hers, or at least the one she started out with.

This is the story about how that happened, and what happened next. Many of our young people are growing up with a lot more religious diversity than their parents or grandparents did. Many of us are still trying to decide if this is a good or a bad thing... Will the faith they know best survive, or is it dying of old age?

My credentials for teaching in college were a masters degree in divinity, deep emersion in one Christian denomination, and a lifelong curiosity about religion.

Both my parents had such a low opinion of religion that they raised their children to believe in higher education instead of a higher power. We went to the library every week, not church. We read Shakespeare, not the Bible...

I rebelled by trying out many Christian denominations and going to a seminary where my favourite prof was a high Anglican who taught New Testament.

I became a confirmed Episcopalian, and then applied to take on holy orders... There, as a priest and an alchemist of God's grace, I was allowed into the most private rooms of people's lives which gave me a more spacious heart.

But the spiritual well I drank from, good as it was, did not sustain me after quite a few years in ministry. I was invited to teach world religions at a nearby college, and soon became part of the process of helping students become better citizens of a pluralistic world...

My mistake was to think I could add my new discoveries about these new faith traditions without upsetting consequences to the old Christian ones I was still trying to claim.

Contrary to popular opinion, all religions are not alike. Their followers see the world in very distinct ways. I found things to envy in all the religions I taught. I began to ask myself - can my faith be improved by the faith of others? Clearly, my answer to this question was "yes" else you would not be holding this book in your hands.

I had originally wanted to write a book about teaching students world religions. What this book is about is the teacher of the class, and what she learned about seeing the divine mystery through other people's eyes. As my title suggests, it is a book about how my envy of other traditions turned into holy envy, offering me a chance to be born again within my own religion. This book is about my experience of teaching religion in a classroom situated in rural Georgia - 75 miles from a large city. But modern travel and communications has helped me to grow from living in both the "smaller" and the "larger" worlds that most people inhabit today.

I hope that I have written that kind of book for you.

Author's Bio:

Barbara Brown Taylor is the author of thirteen books, including the *New York Times* bestseller *An Altar in the World* and *Leaving Church*, which received an Author of the Year award from the Georgia Writers Association. Taylor is the Butman Professor of Religion at Piedmont College, where she has taught since 1998. She lives on a working farm in rural northeast Georgia with her husband.

Wikipedia Bio: (which includes a list of her books)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Brown_Taylor

Wayne's Thoughts:

Christians may have many ministries over the period of a lifetime, but essentially, they have only one vocation - that of serving God. Henri Nouwen taught me this, and I thought of him while getting into Barbara Brown Taylor's latest book "Holy Envy".

Taylor spent quite a few years as a priest of the Episcopal Church USA, but the time came for her to leave that work and she became a college professor of comparative studies in religion.

She may have changed ministries, but not her vocation. She continues to serve God even as she has evolved from a priest to a professor. I can appreciate that personally.

A second important understanding I take from this book is that it is important to learn all we can from other faiths, but that will only serve our ultimate spiritual growth if we find ways to allow our formative faith to be enhanced.

The idea of cafeteria religion (pick some of this and some of that) is very popular today. But what is the grounding core of all that assimilation? For many, it is the original faith into which they were born. Of course, the challenge is that many today have no formative faith. Yet, for many, there is at least one great faith available to base their "spiritual envy" of others. The Judeo-Christian tradition is a grounding one. We can only enhance that tradition by being open to other great faiths, but replacing the old with the new is not likely to be very productive.

Barbara Brown Taylor is a beautiful writer, and any of her books are worth reading. This book is for people who may be tempted to throw out their Christian inheritance because, for example, they have discovered some meaningful Buddhist spiritual values.

In "The Book of Joy" which many of us have recently read, Christian Desmond Tutu and Buddhist, the Dalai Lama, would caution against "conversion to the other." Allow the faith you "envy" about the other to enhance your own. This was an ecumenical principle we began learning half a century ago. We now need to apply it to the world of interfaith relations.

Taylor has given us an enticing introduction to just that.

BREAK





Time now. Please return.



hinduism



buddhism



taoism



judaism

old drum

religion is a tired old drum.
our ears hear its dark muffled sound,
but our feet cannot dance to its beat,
and our hearts cannot sing to its song.
neighbours don't understand what we do.
strangers don't care what we do.

we want new life with new rhythm,
and knowing of science and art,
make grand and lovely new drums.
these drums our ears hear quite well,
yet our feet cannot move,
and our hearts are still quiet.

...cont



christianity



islam



sufism

it is a time without synchronicity,
when the events of our lives,
don't fit the new plan.
we are an exiled people,
returning home to rebuild the temple,
discovering its plan in the dust.

we will open our hearts,
and turning in the right way,
see, hear, and understand
that the need of our neighbour,
and the plea of the stranger,
are the true heart beats of our precious old drum.

“Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.” ... Isaiah 30:21 (RSV)

In our age, the insights that first ordered civilization are unfamiliar to the secular person, and seen as corrupt by the enlightened person. John Spong's image of exile suggested this ecumenical theme of rebuilding and of return to the spirit of wonder and ethic that first displaced our fear of the world.

1journey.net jul 1999 elias

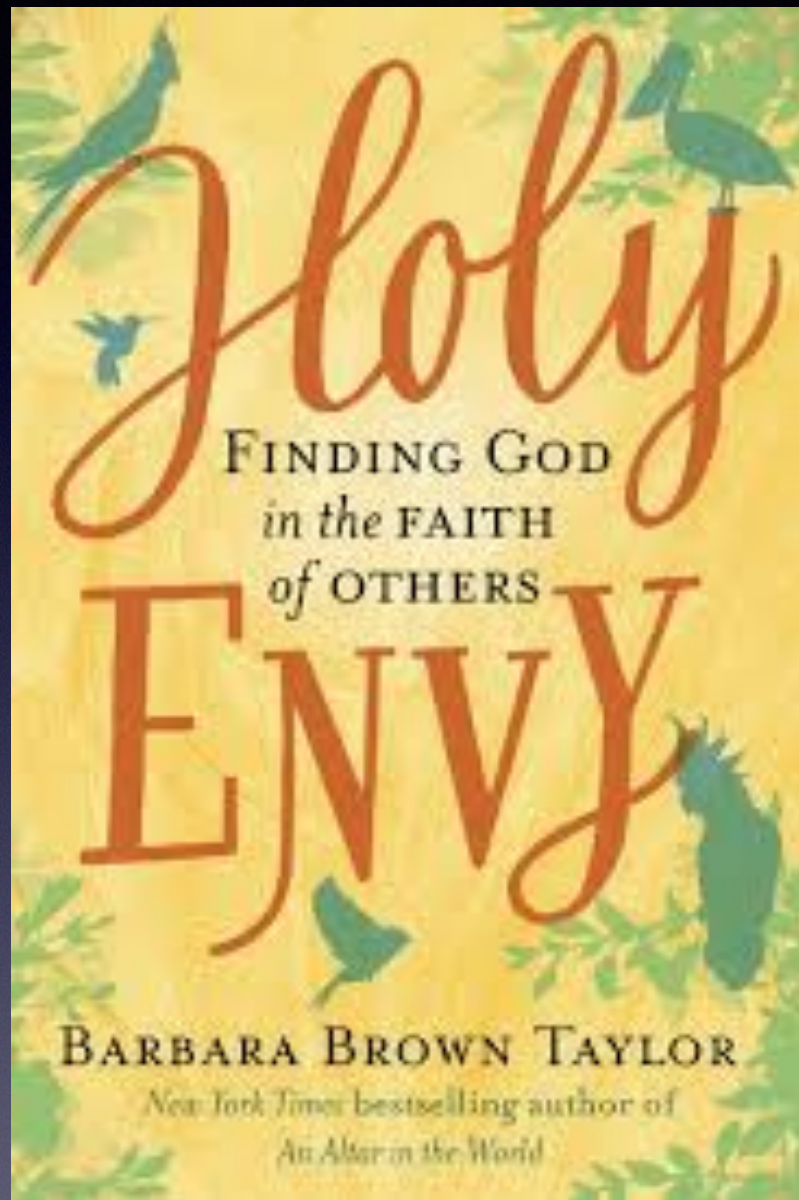


Introducing the Author

Barbara
Brown
Taylor



Finding God in the Faith of Others - Barbara Brown Taylor
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis. Townhall Forum - April 30, 2019
excerpts 19 min from 52 min
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eA0YGAVI58&t=8s>



Discussion

There are 2 freestanding sessions dedicated to exploring the interfaith dimensions.

How shall we organize these 2 sessions?

The manner of the author.

Invitation to spokespersons.

Trips of a few to other faith sites.

Who will assist in the extra planning?

Next Readings


Session 2 - 23 Sep 2017

Introduction: The Smaller Picture

Ch 1. Religion 101

Study Website

sduc.ca

A top-down view of a child with long, curly brown hair, wearing a teal shirt, sitting on a blue rug. The child is drawing a simple figure on a white piece of paper with a green crayon. The figure has a smiling face and the word 'God' written on its chest. The child's left hand is resting on the paper. To the right of the paper is a red plastic box filled with many colorful crayons. The background is a light-colored wooden floor.

Kids Describe “God”

Closing Meditation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPYyWhtTDmQ>