



— introduces —

*a progressive alternative for Christian invitation, initiation, and spiritual formation*

*“Wisdom is asking the questions for which there are no answers.” – Harrell Beck*

## OVERVIEW

People know that at its core, Christianity has something good to offer the human race. At the same time, many have a sense that they are alone in being a “thinking” Christian and that “salvaging” Christianity is a hopeless task. What is needed is a safe environment where people have permission to ask the questions they’ve always wanted to ask but have been afraid to voice for fear of being thought a heretic.

Living the Questions is a 12-week DVD and **down-loaded**, web-based small group study material exploring beyond the traditions and rote theologies in which so many people and local churches seem to be stuck Ideal for Christian invitation, initiation and spiritual formation. Living the Questions will help seekers and “church alumni/ae” alike in discovering the significance of Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and what a meaningful faith can look like in today’s world

### **Weekly sessions will include:**

- participant and leaders guides
- conversations with leading theologians, church leaders, sociologists and biblical scholars
- sermon and lecture clips
- digital stories illustrating aspects of an evolving faith
- concrete spiritual practices (e.g., lectio divina, body prayer, journaling)
- spiritual disciplines (centering, openness, . . .)
- suggestions for engagement in acts of social justice

### **PLUS:**

- fresh, original jazz interpretations of classic hymns arranged by Barb Catlin
- other internet resources (including a glossary of traditional theological ideas reinterpreted for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century)

Perfect for a Lenten Study and ideal for new member classes, Living the Questions can be utilized for discussion groups and various settings focused on spiritual development and exploration in general. Modeled on the Alpha Course format, Living the Questions is an open-minded alternative to studies that attempt to give participants all the answers and instead strives to create an environment where participants can discuss the revolutionary re-visioning of Christianity already emerging in the world.

The format of each 2½ hour weekly session includes a shared meal, video, guided discussion, spiritual exercises and Bible study.



## THEMES

1. *An Invitation to Journey*
2. *Thinking Theologically*
3. *Creativity and Stories of Creation*
4. *Restoring Relationships*
5. *Evil and a God of Love: The Place of Suffering*
6. *A Kingdom Without Walls: Ruth & Jonah*
7. *Social Justice and The Prophets*
8. *Intimacy with God*
9. *Lives of Jesus*
10. *Compassion: the Heart of Jesus' Ministry*
11. *A Passion for Christ: Paul the Apostle*
12. *Out into the World: Challenges Facing Progressive Christianity*
13. *The Contribution of Wesleyan Theology (Bonus Session for United Methodists)*

Ongoing themes will include:

- Biblical authority
- Metaphor and how it shapes us
- The Jesus/Christ dichotomy
- What does faith look like in the 21st Century?

The 20-30 minute videos for each session will include conversation, sermon clips, comedy/satire, lecture excerpts, and spiritual exercises for practical applications (including different forms of prayer and meditation, movement, walking the labyrinth, etc). Since the overall theme is that of faith as a journey, not a destination, the [livingthequestions.com](http://livingthequestions.com) web site will offer resources for continued exploration, including downloadable expanded study guides, extra video resources, and links.

## CONTRIBUTERS

Contributors include:

*Nancy Ammerman*  
*Marcus Borg*  
*John Cobb*  
*Minerva Carcaño*

*Lloyd Geering*  
*Leslie Griffiths*  
*Stanley Hauerwas*  
*Culver "Bill" Nelson*

*Siyoung Park*  
*Tex Sample*  
*John Shelby Spong*  
*and Emilie Townes.*

*--with John Dominic Crossan and others scheduled to be added next year--*

### **Nancy Ammerman**

Professor of Sociology of Religion at Boston University School of Theology and author of *Congregation and Community* and the soon to be released *Organizing Religious Work: American Congregations and their Partners, Building Faith, Building Community*.

### **Marcus Borg**

Hundere Professor of Religion and Culture at

Oregon State University.

Author of over ten books including *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*, and *The Heart of Christianity*. His work has been translated into five languages; Dr. Borg lectures extensively throughout North America and overseas.

### **Minerva Carcaño**

Having served as an organizer of various

cooperative ministries and a pastor in churches from Texas to California, Bishop Carcaño is the first Hispanic woman to be elected to the Episcopacy in the United Methodist Church. Former Director of the Mexican-American Program of Hispanic Studies at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, she is currently serving as the Bishop of the Desert Southwest Conference.

**John Cobb**

Emeritus Professor at the Claremont School of Theology and Graduate School and Founding Co-Director of the Center for Process Theology. Recipient of the Grawemeyer Award of Ideas Improving World Order, his many writings include *Christ in a Pluralistic Age*, *God and the World*, *For the Common Good*, and *Reclaiming the Church*.

**Lloyd Geering**

Emeritus Professor of Religious Studies at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, a fellow of The Jesus Seminar, and an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. He is the author of *God in the New World*, *The World to Come*, and *Christianity without God*. He was honored in 1988 as a Companion of the British Empire and in 2001 as Principal Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

**Leslie Griffiths**

Former President of the British Methodist Conference, Leslie Griffiths is currently Superintendent Minister at Wesley Chapel and the Leysian Mission in London. A well-known author and broadcaster, he is described by Archbishop Rowan Williams as "one of British Methodism's most distinctive and creative voices."

**Stanley Hauerwas**

Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics at Duke Divinity School with a joint appointment in Duke Law School. Named "America's Best Theologian" by Time in 2001, his work synthesizes

systematic theology, philosophical theology and ethics, political theory, and the philosophy of social science and medical ethics. His book, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, was selected as one of the 100 most important books on religion of the 20th century.

**Culver "Bill" Nelson**

Founding Pastor Emeritus of the Church of the Beatitudes in Phoenix (which grew into the largest church in the United Church of Christ under his leadership). A founding member of the Jesus Seminar, he serves as the editor of the Westar Institute's magazine, *The Fourth R*, and is a much sought-after lecturer and speaker.

**Siyoung Park**

Dr. Siyoung Park is one of the core faculty members of the Center for Korean Studies at Western Illinois University and Professor of Geography. Recipient of Fulbright, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Science Foundation and numerous other grants and awards, Dr. Park's teaching and research focus on Human and Historical Geography.

**Tex Sample**

Former Academic Dean and Emeritus Robert B. and Kathleen Rogers Professor of Church and Society at the Saint Paul School of Theology, is as a freelance lecturer, workshop leader, consultant, and author. His books include *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will*

Rogers, *Uncle Remus*, and *Minnie Pearl*; *The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World*; and co-editor of *The Loyal Opposition: Struggling with the Church on Homosexuality*. He is currently the coordinator of the Network for the Study of U.S. Lifestyles a member of the Society of Christian Ethics and a member and Fellow of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

**John Shelby Spong**

The Right Reverend John Shelby Spong is retired Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, columnist, and author of over fourteen books including, *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*, and *A New Christianity for a New World*. Lecturer at Harvard University (2000), Humanist of the Year (1999), and guest on numerous national television broadcasts including *The Today Show*, *Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher*, and *Larry King Live*, Bishop Spong is an internationally sought-after speaker, lecturing around the world.

**Emilie Townes**

Carolyn Williams Beard Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Theological School in New York City. Focusing on Christian ethics, womanist ethics, critical social theory, cultural theory and studies, as well as on postmodernism and social postmodernism, she is the author of such books as *Womanist Justice*, *Womanist Hope*, and *Breaking the Fine Rain of Death*. Professor Townes is an ordained American Baptist clergywoman.

## Authors:

Jeff Procter-Murphy and David Felten are United Methodist pastors at diverse and theologically progressive congregations, one inner city and one exurban. Trained at Claremont School of Theology and Boston University, Reverends Procter-Murphy and Felten have over forty years of experience in local church ministry. After searching in vain for a number of years, it was clear that in order to offer a practical tool for attracting, educating, and equipping thinking Christians, something new would have to be created. Utilizing input from some of our generations' most provocative and thoughtful theological voices, "Living the Questions" is their effort to help people wrestle with the questions they hear asked in their congregations – questions for which there are no easy answers but which stimulate exciting possibilities for practicing the Christian Faith in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Assisting with Living The Questions:

David Ice is an editor and videographer with nearly 30 years of film-editing experience, including 15 years in Hollywood. He was sound editor for the last six seasons of M\*A\*S\*H, as well as 65 feature films. David received an Emmy nomination for his work on M\*A\*S\*H and an Oscar nomination for his work on "Sphinx."

John Gates is an Emmy-award-winning lighting director with over 20 years' experience in film, television, theater, and a special-events lighting. John is a lecturer in cinematography at Boston University's College of Communication.



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[www.mediacom.org.au](http://www.mediacom.org.au)

## An unapologetically liberal alternative to the Alpha course

A 12 week dvd and **down-loaded**, web-based small group program of Christian *invitation, initiation* and *spiritual formation*

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Web access required to download study material (included and valid for one year from registration)



PO Box 610 Unley SA 5061  
Fax (08) 8297 8719  
Toll free 1800 811 311  
Email [admin@mediacom.org.au](mailto:admin@mediacom.org.au)  
Website [www.mediacom.org.au](http://www.mediacom.org.au)

