

The World is About to Turn: Mending a Nation's Broken Faith

STUDY GUIDE

Chapter One Reflection Questions:

1. How has religion been used as a “weapon” to intimidate or manipulate people?
2. How do you think myths like the “doctrine of discovery” or “manifest destiny” have contributed to the notion that America is God’s chosen nation?
3. What are some examples of the way that politics and religion have become co-mingled? How can this be a dangerous thing?
4. Can you describe the reasons for the religious and political divide in this country?
5. Why is the manifesto “Reclaiming Jesus” a hopeful sign? Are there other hopeful signs?

Chapter Two Reflection Questions:

1. What are some of the things that can contribute to “fear of the other”?
2. Describe some examples of injustice in our nation and in our world today?
3. What does “Biblical justice” consist of? Where does it originate?
4. How can faith communities become instruments of justice?
5. In what ways can the act of resistance contribute to bringing about justice?

Chapter Three Reflection Questions:

1. What might you describe as acts of kindness and compassion toward others? Can you think of ways that your religion or faith perspective encourages this?
2. How do you think Jesus tried to expand our understanding of who our neighbor is in the parable of the Good Samaritan? How did this contrast with the common understanding of most Jews in the first century?
3. How are we challenged by people who are new or different? How are we enriched by strangers or “outsiders” who may become our friends?
4. What does the Bible (Old or New Testament) teach us about how we are to deal with strangers in our midst?
5. What are ways that our homes, our country, and our places of worship can be more welcoming to those who are different?

Chapter Four Reflection Questions:

1. What issues or truths are common in the story of the Gerasene Demonic (Luke 8:26-39) and in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
2. How would you describe the “sin of arrogance”?
3. Why does humility require a degree of vulnerability?
4. What are three of the steps or examples of humility described in this chapter.
5. Consider some of the examples of repentance and reconciliation mentioned in this chapter. Which one do you think best describes “walking humbly with God”?

Chapter Five Reflection Questions:

1. How is the “Golden Rule” an example of a common value among various religions traditions?
2. What are other common themes in various religions such as justice, mercy, and humility?
3. Do all the religions mentioned in this chapter view life as sacred?
4. What are some of the differences of emphasis that you noted in the various religious practices?
5. Why do you think that people of certain religious traditions are sometimes suspicious or fearful of those who believe or practice their faith differently?

Chapter Six Reflection Questions:

1. How do you understand the difference between choosing exile and exodus?
2. What were some teachings from the Islamic tradition that you found helpful or interesting?
3. What is your reaction to Richard Rohr’s description of the Cosmic Christ? How does he contribute to the conversation about religious pluralism?
4. How might you and your faith community engage with persons of another religious tradition?
5. What are some of the obstacles to authentic inter-religious dialogue?

Chapter Seven Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think of the statement “the world cannot abide those who both condemn evil and envision a better future”? How is this true or not true?
2. If you were to prioritize the Ten Ways Forward that are described in this chapter, which two or three would you consider the most important?
3. Are there other “ways forward” that you can think of?
4. Are there opportunities in your community for engaging in multicultural or inter-religious dialogue? How might one go about starting such a conversation?
5. What do you think is God’s vision for America’s future? Describe your hope and dream