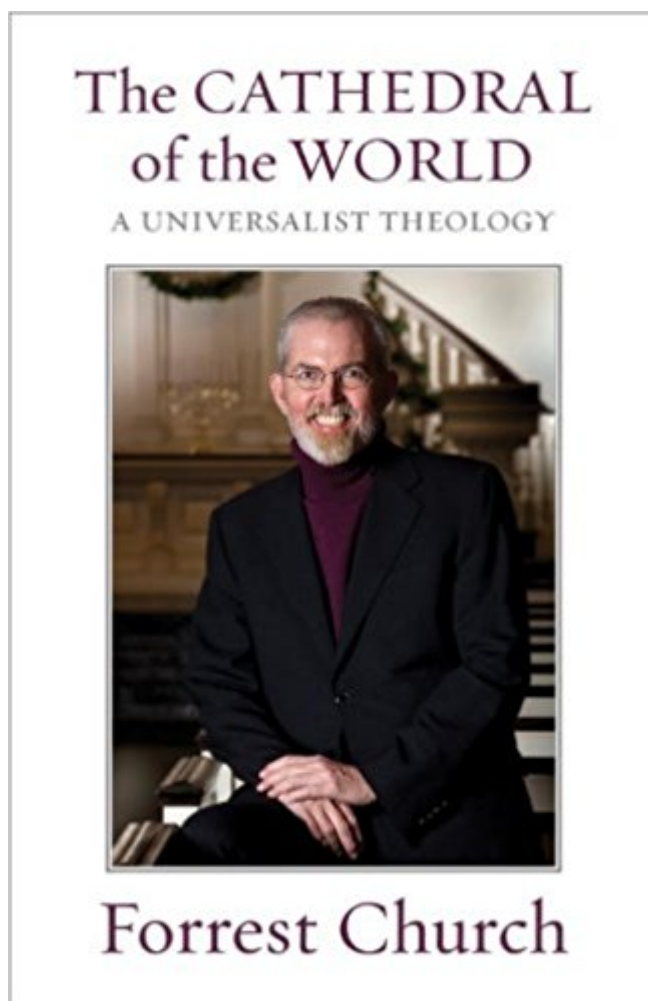


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# The Cathedral Of The World: A Universalist Theology



## Synopsis

Described by Cornel West as “a towering public intellectual and the leading universalist philosopher of his generation,” Forrest Church was one of the preeminent liberal theologians of our time. His final gift, *The Cathedral of the World*, draws from the entire span of Church’s life and work to leave behind a clear statement of his universalist theology and liberal faith. Giving new voice to the power of liberal religion, Church invites all seekers to enter the Cathedral of the World, home to many windows but only one Light.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this collection of sermons, essays and speeches, author and longtime Unitarian minister Church lays out a framework for a 21st-century universalist faith. Contrary to popular opinion, he says, universalism is the most morally rigorous of theologies because of its call to respect and even embrace otherness, rather than merely to tolerate or, even worse, dismiss it. The son of a senator, Church makes a nuanced argument for the role of spirituality in politics, and argues that the story of America is a narrative of gradual moral progress, in which deed begins to approximate creed. As with many such collections, this volume at times feels too dated (in chapters focused on Terri Schiavo, the Oklahoma City bombing, and Y2K), too local (in sermons given to his congregation) and too oral (in jokes that were surely funnier when spoken aloud). Yet considering that Church has terminal cancer and thought his previous book, *Love and Death*, would be his last, such

imperfections fade. An acclaimed minister's erudite and perhaps final treatise against theological parochialism, what he calls our era's most dangerous dysfunction, this book is an essential read for anyone interested in liberal religion. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

After his ostensible last book, *Love & Death* (2008), Church was reprieved from terminal cancer. Although no one was more surprised, he didn't let the extended opportunity to grace us with more inspiring wisdom and blessing slip away. He reminds us in so many words how lucky he and we are to be in the hands of a lovingly liberal God. His message in a nutshell: "The same light shines through every religious window. That is, while everyone perceives God through the prism of his or her own experience, the creator remains unchanged. A bit more political than his previous book he spends several chapters defending a liberal God against charges made by the "right" that God is unreservedly conservative this one feels like a swinging wide open of the doors of a dusty house and a letting-in of sunshine and fresh air. At the very least, it probably cheers many with its reassurance that people like Church, if not the man himself, who died in September 2009, are still around. --Donna Chavez --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Believing he had only a few months left to live, Church wrote what he intended as his final book, *Love & Death: My Journey through the Valley of the Shadow*, in the spring of 2008. The unexpected success of a new cancer treatment allowed him the time to write the one book he had never managed previously relating his "thoughts on religion, faith and God": *Cathedral of the World* (p.x). *Cathedral* includes excerpts or reprints of sermons, essays and speeches from Church's many years in ministry. The text is divided into five "books." The fourth, "Universalism for the Twenty-First Century," is something close to an overview of Church's systematic theology. Along with the third book, "A Liberal Pulpit," these two sections provide readers with an appreciation for what Church will be remembered as for generations to come within the liberal religious community: pastor and theologian. Five brief quotes from this portion of the book follow: "The Commonwealth of God is grounded not in uniformity but mutuality. We are not replicates of one another but related to one another in a single body with many different members, each with a unique gift (p.69). "Death is not a curse to be outwitted no matter the cost. Death is the natural pivot point on which life turns, without which life as we know it could not be (p.93). "I live according to a few simple principles. One I call

"nostalgia for the present" (embracing each day as it passes rather than ruining it after it's gone - p.111). \*I don't disbelieve in an afterlife; I simply have yet to experience an afterlife, and therefore have little to say concerning one (p.121). Jesus was anything but a biblical literalist. He teaches parable by parable, not by citing chapter and verse, and gets into holy mischief repeatedly for breaking the letter of scripture (p.141).

Every time I try to open the download, Kindle turns off. There are too many instances where download problems render Kindle titles unreadable. I'm going back to real books. So disappointing, as this is a title that comes highly recommended by my UU minister.

This is far beyond my expectations. The author explains his point of view with clarity and logic. I found so many of his ideas mirror mine. There is one light, and many windows. Exactly! There is a God and we all see the supreme spirit through our own eyes. I so highly recommend this book.

I read this book on recommendation of a friend as I seek to understand UU thinking and theology. I find I have just as many questions at the end as I did before I started.

My favorite Church book that really sums up his universalism, concisely.

Excellent service. Outstanding book.

I love reading about different religions and denominations, but I don't really subscribe to any of them, being more agnostic than anything. But Forrest Church knows (knew) how to put things into perspective, even within religion, which is usually hard to do when one is discussing the topic in general. This actually made me want to check out a Unitarian Universalist Church

Very good, thoughtful and inspiring book! I would recommend anything written by this man and only wish he were still here to write more wonderful books. An earlier book of his, SO HELP ME GOD: The Founding Fathers and the First Great Battle Over Church and State, was quite a scholarly treatise which gave much insight into a period of our history of which I found I knew so shockingly little!

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