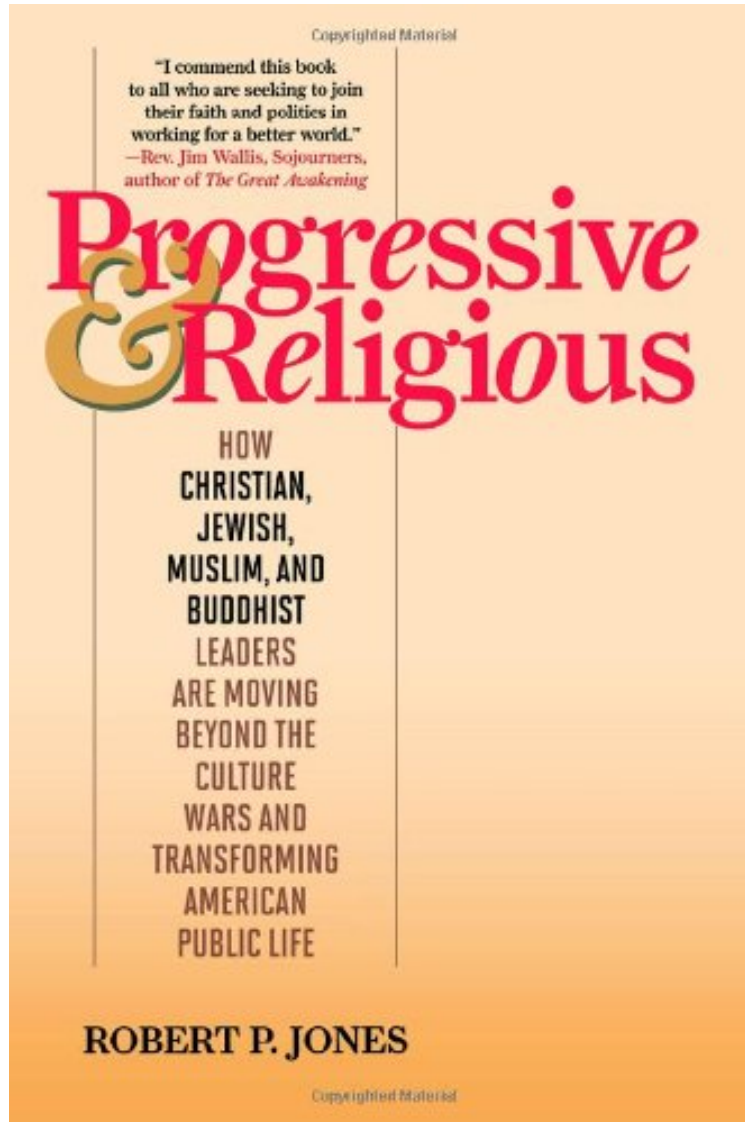


(Read now) Progressive Religious: How Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist Leaders are Moving Beyond the Culture Wars and Transforming American Public Life

# Progressive Religious: How Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist Leaders are Moving Beyond the Culture Wars and Transforming American Public Life

Robert P. Jones

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Robert P. Jones : **Progressive Religious: How Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist Leaders are Moving Beyond the Culture Wars and Transforming American Public Life** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Progressive Religious: How Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist

## Leaders are Moving Beyond the Culture Wars and Transforming American Public Life:

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The group that I was in discussed the above mentioned book. We found it enlightening and well written, especially all of the resources given. We had good discussions. I recommend the book highly. Nina Bruns - Columbus, OH  
2 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Progressive and religious. By Customer  
I did not find this book an enjoyable read - perhaps my own fault, but it read too much like a very long magazine article. I am afraid I returned the book. Still, I do want to congratulate the author for dealing with an important and difficult subject.  
3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Can Religion Really Be Progressive? By Chelle K  
When people usually think about the mixing of religion and politics, they jump to the idea of the Christian Right, which is one of the most vocal religious groups (if you can call it a group) involved in politics. They also have a huge outreach. For instance, Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs sends out ten monthly magazines to a combined 2.3 million subscribers. James Dobson, the founder of the organization, maintains several other organizations as well that had a combined revenue of \$162 million in 2005. Who would think, then, that there was a religious left, then, with this strong influence of the religious right? Robert P. Jones looked into the phenomenon of religious organizations actually leaning to the left, or simply working towards progress. He outlines many of these organizations, and the religions they belong to, in his book *Progressive and Religious*. In this book, he recounts his interviews with many religious leaders that are working towards progress. He recounts how many of them have had issues with the left's insistence that religion be left behind or be kept hidden as the reason of participating in progress. He explains how each of the major religious traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism) looks at social progress on the large scale, often because of their religious teachings. After all, he says, Martin Luther King, Jr "was first of all Rev. King, a Baptist minister who skillfully wove biblical lines about "justice rolling down like waters" and "righteousness as a mighty stream" into a new American dream that moved huge segments of our nation to action." It is certainly an interesting book to read. I know I learned to see many of the similarities between the religious because of their mutual desire to better the world. It also shows how many religious individuals are getting involved in politics because of this desire. However, the way the book is set up makes it rather difficult to read through quickly. Jones jumps around from interview to interview, offering a small bit of dry commentary between. While its fairly easy to get the basic idea of the text while skimming through it, it is also very easy for your mind to wander while reading it (at least, it was for me). The writing is not very engaging, and only interest in the various religions kept me reading the book. I give it 3.5 of 5 stars.

In recent years, Americans have become frustrated with the troubled relationship between religion and politics: an exclusive claim on faith and values from the right and a radical divorce of faith from politics on the left. Now a new generation of religious leaders is re-envisioning religion in public life, leading grassroots movements to go beyond partisan politics to work for a more just and inclusive society. *Progressive Religious* tells the dynamic stories of these leaders. Through nearly 100 in-depth interviews with Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist leaders, this book explains how they are tapping the deep connections between religion and social justice to work on issues like poverty and worker's rights, the environment, health care, pluralism, and human rights. Interviewees include David Saperstein, Michael Lerner, Jim Wallis, Brian McLaren, Feisal Abdul Rauf, Eboo Patel, Kecia Ali, Lama Surya Das, Robert Thurman, and E. J. Dionne.

From Publishers Weekly  
Much attention has been paid to the role of the religious right in American politics, but this work offers an account of religious progressives who are seeking to make their own impact on public life. Jones, a scholar at the Center for American Progress, interviewed nearly 100 leaders from the four religious groups enumerated in the subtitle and discovered a diverse and vibrant community committed to issues like social justice, inclusion and economic fairness—a pluralistic hodgepodge Jones describes as "the other religious America." The author briefly depicts the long history of religious progressivism in America, but his book concentrates on contemporary activists, such as Jewish Funds for Justice or the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Each faith has its own distinctive theological basis for its progressive politics, yet Jones also shows common characteristics, including a relational approach to truth and a belief in the unity of all humanity. This book will cheer religious progressives who believe their voices are underrepresented in the current conversation about faith and politics in America. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. By seeking out and presenting American opinion leaders who are committed to human rights and social justice from their respective religious perspectives, *Progressive Religious* is particularly timely in these perilous times of polarization and social regression among religious communities. A pioneering initiative for social change. (Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, Emory University School of Law)  
Through his work with Third Way, Robert Jones has been working hard to heal religious fractures, bringing together political progressives and conservative Christians so they stop culture warfare and start behaving more Christianly toward one another, collaborating for the common good. In *Progressive Religious*, he engenders hope for a new day by identifying the growing chorus of voices seeking in the words of the Hebrew prophet to beat swords into

plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. (Brian McLaren, speaker, pastor, and author of *The Road We Make by Walking*) No one who reads this book will end up doubting the breadth and depth of commitment to progressive visions that are deeply rooted in the wisdoms of the whole spectrum of American religious life; and everyone who reads it will end up knowing a great deal more about both progressive thought and religious life. Hallelu-yah! (Rabbi Arthur Waskow, director, The Shalom Center; author, *Down-to-Earth Judaism*) Let's face it: Jesus was a rabble-rouser. The Hebrew prophets castigated the rich. Muhammad challenged Arabian elites. The Buddha opposed the status quo. By insisting that social injustices and not just personal moral infractions are matters of concern for any religiously grounded ethics, the people and organizations profiled in Robert Jones's *Progressive Religious* are challenging dominant visions of religious activism as inherently conservative. It's about time. (Kecia Ali, Boston University) This is an important book. Robert Jones's *Progressive Religious* refutes the falsehood that only conservative evangelicals are seriously religious. It gives a vibrant picture of how American Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists are uniting deep religious faith and engagement in social justice. (Rosemary Radford Ruether, Claremont School of Theology) This is an exceptional book. It is both a window into a post-Religious Right America, and an invitation to people from all faith backgrounds and none at all to build what Robert Jones calls a land of new possibilities.' (Eboo Patel, Interfaith Youth Core, author of *Acts of Faith*) *Progressive Religious* takes a unique look at the political views of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist leaders, and offers an insightful analysis of their diverse perspectives. Any one who cares about the future of American faith-based politics will profit from this excellent book. (John C. Green, University of Akron, Pew Forum on Religion Public Life) *Progressive Religious* finally puts to rest the myth that one cannot be both religious and politically progressive. This book makes a major contribution to our understanding of religion in public life by highlighting the deep, authentic connections that exist between progressive religious belief and practice on the one hand and a commitment to a politics of the common good on the other. (Rev. Jennifer Butler, *Faith and Public Life*, author of *Born Again*) An illuminating road map to religious re-discovery in contemporary America. With a marriage of journalistic enthusiasm and intellectual rigor, Robert P. Jones skips among the tensions that mar intra-religious relations in our society, smashing erroneous preconceptions and championing a renaissance in the way we look at faith. The result is a thorough examination of religion in modernity that highlights the progressive tendencies shared by ALL faiths in highly readable form. (Imam Feisal Rauf, American Society for Muslim Advancement) This book is long overdue. *Progressive Religious* tells the inspiring story of leaders who are declaring that religion is not simply about personal holiness, but also about public holiness. My hope is that the many religious Americans who recognize their own religious convictions in these pages and become part of this new face of public religion that brings people together and calls for justice for all. (Rev. Leah Daughtry, Democratic National Committee) Robert P. Jones has put together an instructive analytic survey of the progressive religious movements in the U.S. that should be in front of every newspaper journalist and every spiritual progressive. Sensitive to theological as well as political concerns, Jones has provided a valuable introduction to the contemporary struggle for a progressive spiritual transformation of the world that is taking place in most of the world's religions. (Rabbi Michael Lerner, *Tikkun Magazine*, *The Network of Spiritual Progressives*) In a world plagued by religiously motivated violence, anyone who wishes to become part of the solution and not part of the problem must read Robert Jones' book. Wonderfully written and an enjoyable read, this is a timely, insightful, and critically important book. It should be read and carefully pondered, not only by every Jew, Christian, and Muslim, but by every person who cares about the fate of humanity. (Khaled Abou el Fadl, UCLA School of Law, author of *The Great Theft*) Robert Jones understands that progressive faith is not simply a 'left' alternative to the Religious Right, but a bringing together of religious belief and practice with progressive politics. *Progressive Religious* convincingly shows how people of many different faiths are creating an authentic social vision for a pluralistic America. I commend this book to all who are seeking to join their faith and politics in working for a better world. (Rev. Jim Wallis, *Sojourners*, author of *The Great Awakening*) Throughout American history, religious voices have played a central role in progressive politics, but we seem to have forgotten that in the last two decades. Robert Jones is one of the most searching, thoughtful, and practical thinkers in the revival of religiously-rooted progressivism, and his book is a great blessing for that cause and for the country. Anyone-left, right or center-who wants a guide to this new movement would do well to spend time with this book. (E. J. Dionne Jr., *The Washington Post*; author of *Souled Out*) Robert Jones has made a significant contribution to the fields of contemporary religious and political studies. In sharing the stories of progressive faith leaders from several different traditions he has helped all of us better understand our commonalities and differences, and the possibility of working together for the common good. (Rabbi Or N. Rose, *The Rabbinical School of Hebrew College*, author of *Righteous Indignation*) This important book is a compelling rebuttal to the widespread bias in our society that the more fundamentalist religious people are, the more authentic they are. *Progressive Religious* powerfully reminds us that working as God's partners to heal the world is a profoundly religious task that stands in the mainstream of our religious ethical traditions. (Rabbi David Saperstein, *Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism*) *Progressive Religious* tells the story of a shared journey toward social holiness. These progressive faith leaders-Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist-demonstrate a kind of militant tolerance and a passion for healing the world. We religious progressives are finding our voices and testifying to this truth: God loves this world and all that is within it. And we

are asking you to do the same. (Rev. Dr. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, Chicago Theological Seminary) Much attention has been paid to the role of the religious right in American politics, but this work offers an account of religious progressives who are seeking to make their own impact on public life. . . . Each faith has its own distinctive theological basis for its progressive politics, yet Jones also shows common characteristics, including a relational approach to truth and a belief in the unity of all humanity. This book will cheer religious progressives who believe their voices are underrepresented in the current conversation about faith and politics in America. (8/13/08 Publishers Weekly) About the Author Robert P. Jones, Ph.D., is president of Public Religion Research, a consulting firm advising national advocacy groups, and visiting fellow in religion at The Third Way, a progressive think tank.