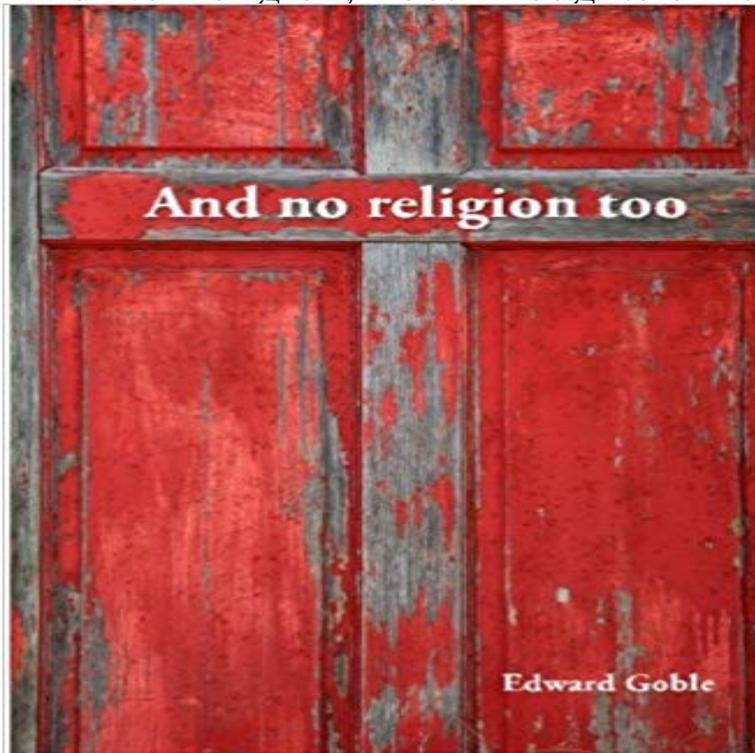


And No Religion, Too: Thoughts on faith and church



And No Religion, Too is a group of essays about life in the Kingdom of God. Some of the stories are about faith and simplicity, about the sacramental experience with the risen Christ that seems to war against the rational, rigid, unbudging mandates of actual church life in the West. Some of the writing is about the Western church itself, the fragmented but beautiful, self-guided but sincere, expression of the Body of Christ passed down to us from the Reformers, who, I've always thought, didn't reform nearly enough. As I was writing ANRT, musing about John Lennon and the haunting lyrics of Imagine, writing stories about dog kennels and The Green Mile, I was thinking hard about my walk with Christ for some thirty-plus years and wondering how, with the best of intentions, we'd gotten so far removed from that amazing, Spirit-filled, expression of kingdom life we read about in the Gospel. I began to consider that maybe the Reformation, as good as it was, was not the proper starting point for a heart that was crying out for relationship with the risen Lord and community with His Body. I began to read the old stuff. There for a while if it was written after about 800 AD I wasn't interested. I read the church fathers, the real ones, the guys that were handed the reins from the very Apostles. Bishops, priests, monks and holy people who wrote about the very things my heart was longing for. What I found was a wealth of literature and faith that I didn't even know existed. Works written long before Rome split from Orthodox Constantinople, ultimately winding up with the papacy, and centuries before the Reformers rocked that paradigm. And No Religion, Too, is the tip of the iceberg for me. It was baby-step number one. My journey since 2007 when this book was finished has been different than I would have ever imagined. It has taken my wife and I, and our youngest daughter, down a path that led east. To Greece,

Russia, Constantinople, to the ancient faith of the Orthodox church. And the more I study the more amazed and humbled I become. Im not there yet. Who is? right? But if you choose to read ANRT, maybe it will trigger your journey, I dont know. Maybe it will resonate in your heart another way or just make you mad. The things that I felt strongly about in 2007, many of them anyway, arent even on my radar anymore. I would have written it completely different if Id penned it in 2015, but I guess thats the beauty of walking with Jesus; we change, but He never does. He just keeps drawing us into a deeper walk with Him and, if were open to His Spirit, Hell keep breaking, and changing, and molding us into His image. I can feel that happening to me, and I see it taking place in my wife and youngest daughter. God bless you, friend. May your journey lead to the end of yourself and the blessed peace of Christ. Ed Goble, March, 2015

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