



## **A Tribute to Bishop John Shelby Spong by Rev. Mark Sandlin**

Bishop John Shelby Spong provided a much needed place for those of us who did not connect with traditional theology. He began to awaken within me (and, I suspect, many others) this “thing” that knew much of what I’d been taught in church was not necessarily the actual Gospel even though it frequently was taught as if it were. Spong helped demystify the Bible for me, helped wrestle it from the overtly possessive hands of literalist, and helped reposition it from a rulebook handed down from God to the guidebook from our spiritual ancestors about what a healthy spiritual life looks like that it was meant to be.

He gave us a spiritual home. He gave us permission to ask difficult questions and to expect non-hypocritical answers. He grew our faiths in ways we never could have imagined. He now joins those who know what is next and most assuredly is experiencing the Divine embrace.

I give thanks for his life and how this world is better off because of it.

We love you, Bishop Spong. You will be deeply missed.

PEACE!

~ Rev. Mark Sandlin



**Rev. Mark Sandlin** is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) from the South. He currently serves at Presbyterian Church of the Covenant. Mark also serves as the President and Co-executive Director of ProgressiveChristianity.org. He is a co-founder of The Christian Left. His blog, has been named as one of the “Top Ten Christian Blogs.” Mark received The Associated Church Press’ Award of Excellence in 2012. Follow Mark on Facebook and Twitter @marksandlin.