Where is God? How do we experience that of God in our time and place in history?

Inspiration and theme:

1 Kings Chapter 19:12 “And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”

Matthew 18:20 New International Version (NIV)

20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

God is with us in all of the ordinary, daily interactions that all of us encounter everywhere. What are some examples from those ordinary experiences?

~M.J. Glauber

'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful'  (Lk 6:36) http://en.romereports.com

“Can there be a Christian who is not merciful?
No. The Christian must necessarily be merciful, because this is the heart of the Gospel.”

~ Pope Frances
Contents:

Page 1  Inspiration: A Still Small Voice; Where is God? How do we experience that of God in our time and place in history?
Page 2  Contents, Theme, AAIF Contacts, Bible Verse for Reflection
Pages 3 - 7 Finding A New Mindset; The World We Live in Now with Implications for Interchurch Families and for those who give us pastoral care
Page 8  Pope Francis to visit the U.S.A. in 2015
Pages 9 - 12 The Synod on the Family
Page 12 Links to The INTAMS review. Journal for the Study of Marriage & Spirituality
Page 9  “I can, with one eyed squinted, take it all as a blessing”. - Flannery O’Connor, Poets Corner, St John the Divine - Ecumenical Recognition for Flannery O’Connor
Page 13 Three Prayers Written by The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw
Page 14  A List of “10 Ways to Love” created by Michael J. Maher based on Bible Verses
Page 14  So that all the world might see and might say—“See how they love each other!”
A Quote by Sarah Monroe with a link to her blogsite
Page 15  Church in the U.S.A. at this time in History; Listening to Young Atheists: Lessons for a Stronger Christianity with a link to the website of Larry Alex Tauton
Pages 16 - 17 links for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: January 18 - 25, 2015; The Most Rev. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury attends conference in NYC on inequality
Page 18  Many thanks; Memorial for Maryann Wingenbach

Interchurch Families “Listen with the ear of your heart”
- Carrying Forward the theme from the 2012 AAIF Conference held in Minnesota

Important Dates for US Ecumenists
Interfaith Curriculum for Peacemaking (Kindle Edition)
http://www.amazon.com/Interfaith-Curriculum-for-Peacemaking-ebook/dp/B009OUY9MC

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A Bible Verse Upon Which We Can Reflect:

Matthew 22:35-40 New International Version (NIV) 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”
Finding A New Mindset;
The World We Live in Now with Implications for Interchurch Families and for those who give us pastoral care

We consult the Bible for guidance in everything, including the best practices for how best to raise our children. Interchurch Couples who are parents share the Bible as a common source for finding the best ways to raise our children. Infants are born, but they do not arrive with a set of specific directions. Clearly “love” should be our foremost guide. As parents, we are often required to address the unique needs of the child we have been given as a gift by God so that we can properly nurture our child in love, our love and God’s Love. In so many instances, the life of Christ may provide us with suggestions. As an adult and as a parent, I have found the following Bible passages to be helpful, and comforting.

Proverbs 22:6 ESV
“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Psalm 127:3 ESV
“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.”

Romans 8: 28 ESV
“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

← Lamar Burton, at the AAIF Conference in 2006, volunteering as an AAIF Board Member, Lamar also donated his time to give us a guided tour at the backside of the track at Churchill Downs.

We are most thankful for all that Lamar has done for AAIF over the years, for his dedication to ecumenism as a member of an interchurch marriage, and for being willing to serve regularly on the AAIF volunteer board.

Thank you, Lamar, for all of the good you have so generously given to the world.

Lamar Burton, at the AAIF

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Page 3

Theme: Where is God?
How do we experience that of God in our time and place in history?

Continued on the next page
Luke 2:52 ESV
“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.”

Philippians 4:8 ESV
“Finally, brothers (and sisters), whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

However, I should note that the message found in Matthew 19:14 is the one that gave me great comfort as a child. Knowing that God and Jesus considered children, all children, including me, to be special was of great comfort to me as a child.

Matthew 19:14 ESV states:
‘But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”’

Of concern in the past few years, the issue facing many parents, including Esther Cespeda, herself, at this time in the United States pertains to the mindset that appears to be guiding, or rather negatively affecting many. The way we approach how we motivate children to learn, to take on new challenges and to be able to learn from our/their mistakes needs to be reconsidered so that a new approach, one that works better can be found.

Esther Cespeda in a newspaper article (which can be read in full at http://syndication.washingtonpost.com/esther-cepeda and at http://www.600words.com/page/2/ [scroll down the page that opens up to find this date:] from Thursday, 07 Aug 2014, entitled: “Mindsets worth changing”) discusses the fact that “School starts next week and (her) two sons are inconsolable about having to return to their hated ‘prisons.’” Cespeda observes that “These boys (her own sons) believe that people are either brilliant or not -- and that any effort put into activities has little impact on personal successes.”

Cespeda observes that what her own children feel about learning reflect the research findings of Carol Dweck. Cespeda observes that “Based on the teachings of professor and researcher Carol Dweck, author of “Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,” they (her own children and perhaps many American children as well) surely have a fixed idea about themselves.”

School age children are still very much in their formative years. Their full potential hasn’t yet been explored.

Cespeda points out that “According to Dweck, simplistic praise for success sets up children to believe that their parents’ love or self-worth is tied to their ultimate performance, rather than...

..."simplistic praise for success sets up children to believe that their parents' love or self-worth is tied to their ultimate performance, rather than their hard work toward a goal"...
their hard work toward a goal -- a sense that makes every subsequent action a high-stakes endeavor that could end either with only more, similar praise or with a devaluing of the child’s abilities and self-esteem. Combine this with an “everyone is special” society and the ubiquitous educational philosophy that enables children to believe they’re perfect and you’ve got a recipe for kids who don’t love learning and can’t see the point in trying harder.”

Cespeda explains that “this translates into an academic experience in which few risks are taken because failure reflects on their own unchangeable traits, and success carries with it the burden of having to live up to a higher, more difficult bar.”

Cespeda explains that “Dweck shows how unconstructive praise can undermine parental efforts: “Parents think they can hand children permanent confidence -- like a gift -- by praising their brains and talent.”

Cespeda explains that “According to Dweck, that “We are telling children that what we prize are speed and perfection.” Then Cespeda explains that Dweck goes on to explain that “Speed and perfection are the enemy of difficult learning: (for example) If you think I am smart when I am fast and perfect, I’d better not take on anything challenging.”

Then Cespeda observes that “Dweck believes that the best thing teachers and parents can do is “teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. That way, their children don’t have to be slaves of praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence.” I reasoned that many of us enjoy reading a good mystery. Why then wouldn’t we also enjoy solving mysteries or other things that puzzle us, I wondered.

Cespeda highlights the advice that Dweck gives to Americans: ‘ “It’s not too late, though. Anyone can change their mindset and influence others’ mindsets, although it is not fast or easy. Instead of “How was your day?” you may wish to try asking: “What mistake did you make that taught you something?” or “What new thing did you try that you found difficult today?” In mysteries, we often observe how the sleuth gets new insight so that they change their mind; this allows them to solve the mystery.

Finally, Cespeda poses a challenge for all of us by concluding that, “Any parent, teacher or coach hoping to make a difference in a child’s life first has to understand their own beliefs -- and then decide if they’re willing to invest in cultivating their own growth mindset.”

In effect then, Cespeda has just given us an outline for how to begin to create the changes we wish to see. This is our own challenge and challenges are to be valued as opportunities for growth in understanding.
We are being asked to discern what we actually believe, as parents, as the adults in American society, who may influence children in many ways. Understanding our own belief system is an exercise in introspection; becoming still and listening for the voice of God within us can become a spiritual practice.

In Psalm 46:10 (ESV), we read “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

In Psalm 119:105 (ESV) we read that “Your (God’s) word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

In 1 Kings Chapter 19: 11 - 13 (KJV), we read: “11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: 12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. 13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?”

God wasn’t in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire but in a still small voice. We are called to become quiet and calm in a world that appears chaotic so that we can listen for the voice of God. We are called to listen carefully so that we might discern between what is our own human ego speaking, or if it is God who is leading us into that Holy Light; God’s Holy Light guiding our way forward that is if we are willing to listen and to follow. Knowing this gives us a sense of hope.

Implications for Interchurch Families and for those who give us pastoral care:

We can learn from our mistakes. We should know and take comfort in knowing that it is possible to learn from our mistakes so that we keep trying to achieve Christian Unity although we may have failed in the past. We should keep trying. We should be ready to adjust our approach as we learn from our mistakes and our on-going efforts to try to achieve the Christian Unity we are seeking.

It is true that history exists and that it affects the world we find upon our birth into this world. However, if mistakes were made in the past, it is not in anyone’s best interest to keep repeating those same mistakes. Just because we have always done something one way doesn’t mean that it was the best way or that one way forward is the only way forward. Change is possible. What we believe will affect the outcome we are able to achieve.
We are called to listen for God’s still small voice in a chaotic world. God’s message may come through the voice of others. Are we listening carefully?

Believing that we can improve the world’s problems that exist today gives us a renewed sense of hope.

Guided by the Bible verse found at John 17:21 (ESV) which says: “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me,” we, as interchurch families, who are inspired by the concept of receptive ecumenism, hope to find a new way forward that allows us to become one family of believers so that any of the difficulties we find by being interchurch can be minimized or removed, so that our gifts of being interchurch can be properly recognized by our churches of origin, so that we can be properly included and nurtured by our churches of origin. God is with us.

That small still voice has a lot of power behind it; we should be listening to what God is telling us in John 17:21. We remain hopeful that God’s message will be heard. As interchurch families, we are all inspired by God’s message found in John 17:21. We live as a single domestic church within our homes; may this example become visible for the potential that is there for our churches. ~ M.J. Glauber

Wholehearted Living


First Brown introduces us to what Wholehearted Living is. Then she explains the role and importance of Courage, Compassion and Connection as they relate to the Gifts of Imperfection. Brown explains the role of shame by explaining that “Shame hates it when we reach out and tell our story.” Brown observes that when, “We bury our story, the shame metastasizes.” and that “Shame loves secrecy.” Brown explains the pure joy she felt after sharing her story when that person “didn’t try to fix her or make her feel better.” This may seem counterintuitive to many of us.

Brown describes “Courage” as being an ordinary, not heroic, nor any manner of an unusual sort of deed. Brown explains that “Ordinary Courage is about putting our vulnerability on the line.” Then Brown adds that “putting our own vulnerability on the line” is “pretty extraordinary in our world today.” Brown later reasons...
that in reality, “We’re all in the same boat.” Brown observed that this kind of story sharing of our ordinary vulnerabilities, and that kind of ordinary courage “has a (positive) ripple effect.” Brown explains that “Compassion practice is daring.” She says that “It involves learning to relax and allow ourselves to move gently toward what scares us.” Brown observes that our natural “first response to pain - ours and someone else’s - is to self-protect.” She explains that we try to “Protect ourselves by looking for someone or something to blame.” Brown also notes that we may sometimes “shield ourselves by turning to judgment or by immediately going into fix-it mode.”

Brown explains that “compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It’s a relationship between equals.” Brown then notes that “One of the greatest (and least discussed) barriers to compassion practice is the fear of setting boundaries and holding people accountable.”

Brown observes that “we live in a blame culture - we want to know whose fault it is and how they are going to pay.” Brown observes that this trait, that cycle of “rage-blame-too tired and busy to follow through mindset is why we’re so heavy on self-righteous anger and so low on compassion.” Then Brown explains the role and importance of holding people accountable. This is a very important detail. Brown explains that “for our own sake it’s dangerous to our relationships and (our) own well-being to get mired in shame and blame.” This detail of accountability is so well explained by Brown in her book that I suggest that you read it for yourself.

Brown defines, “Connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from relationship.” Brown explains that “Our innate need for connection makes the consequences of disconnection that much more real and dangerous.” Brown is speaking of face to face, person to person connectedness. Brown explains that “When we attach judgment to receiving help, we knowingly or unknowingly attach judgment to giving help.” Brown adds that “If connection is the energy that surges between people, we have to remember that those surges must travel in both directions.” Brown explains that “The Wholehearted journey is not the path of least resistance,” but rather, “it’s a path of consciousness and choice.” Brown explains that “The willingness to tell our stories, feel the pain of others, and stay genuinely connected in this disconnected world is not something we can do half-heartedly.”

Then she explores the

*** Pope Francis to visit the U.S.A. in 2015 ***

VATICAN CITY through the CNS reports that Pope Francis said he would attend the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in September, making it the first confirmed stop on what is expected to be a more extensive papal visit to North America.
power of love, belonging and being enough.

The book is divided into topics where Brown discusses the things that get in our way by using 10 Guideposts. Brown urges us to let go of what people think in order to be able to cultivate authenticity. I believe that many would benefit, appreciate and enjoy considering the concepts that Brene Brown sets forth in her book, *The Gifts of Imperfection; Let Go of Who You Think You’re Supposed to be and Embrace Who You Are: Your Guide to A Wholehearted Life.* It may be readily available at your local library. Telling our stories is important; this aspect of life may need to be restored in some form so as to help us to create meaning and a sense of connectedness one to the other. Listening carefully to the stories of Others is also very important if we are to be able to successfully examine the potential to be found within the concept of Receptive Ecumenism. As I think over this message, I realize that the Bible is filled with human stories. Story telling is part of our identity as Christians ~ Review by M. J. Glauber

### The Synod on the Family

Relatio 2014 - The Synod on the Family appears to be based first upon the assumption or the premise that “the Church as a whole "subsists" within the Catholic Church?” However, it should also be noted that all believers follow the belief system where they also believe that they can find “the Church as a whole” to subsist in their own church denomination. It seems logical that no one would remain as a member or a parishioner in a church where it didn’t fulfill that basic premise for them. The use of the term “subsists” seems to be divisive at present. On the other hand, if “subsists” is applied to the churches of all believers, then the connotation that it carries may become far more universal in the way that it describes Christianity. We hope that some other way will be found to express why people remain in their churches of origin. Are there possibly some other interpretations for the word: “subsists”?

“Subsists, a term used in the Roman Catholic Church” is defined as: “sub-sist (sb-sst) v. sub-sist-ed, sub-sist-ing, sub-sists  v.intr.  1. a. To exist; be.  b. To remain or continue in existence.  2. To

The writer Flannery O’Connor was inducted into The American Poet’s Corner at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City on Sunday, November 2nd, 2014.....

“O’Connor’s fiction is known for its gothic sensibility, dark humor and haunting spirituality.” ~ Deacon Greg Kandra

Of note: This is an ecumenical event.

maintain life; live: subsisted on one meal a day. 3. To be logically conceivable. v.tr. To maintain or support with provisions.”

Does the word imply more than what the verb “to be” would imply? It isn’t clear from an ecumenical perspective as to why this statement has been made or what it is intended to accomplish from an Ecumenical perspective especially since the Roman Catholic Church may be one of the churches that is more on the forefront of promoting Christian Unity.

http://www.catholic.com/tracts/filioque

http://www.ncregister.com/blog/jimmy-akin/is-the-catholic-church-the-one-true-church-5-things-to-know-and-share/


Relatio 2014 - Synod on the Family

What is The Synod on the Family all about? Does it properly address the needs of the American Family or of Americans in general? Interchurch Families? I will let you decide. Here are some of the links that I found on line regarding “The Vatican Synod on the Family”:


Continued on the next page

Theme: Where is God?
How do we experience that of God in our time and place in history?

Exploring alternative approaches through art
The Synod on the Family

http://www.romereports.com/pg158620-synod-on-the-family-top-5-points-discussed-en


http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2014/10/03/october-3-2014-family-synod-conversation/24298/
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2014/03/28/president-pope/22597/

http://www.dioceseoftulsa.org/index.cfm?load=news&newsarticle=3091
http://www.familiam.org/famiglia_eng/church/0009755_A_Gospel_in_Every_Family.html
http://www.romereports.com/pg158531-cardinal-de-paolis-on-the-synod-families-are-facing-many-serious-problems-en
http://www.familiam.org/famiglia_eng/church/0009620_The_Synod__46_Questions_to_the_World_s_Families.html

http://www.the perspective.org/polygyny.html
http://people.bridgewater.edu/~mtembo/menu/articles/TraditionalAfricanFamily.shtml
http://www.occatholicnews.com/synod-on-the-family-consensus/

Continued on the next page

Theme: Where is God?
How do we experience that of God in our time and place in history?
The ARK, A Publication of the American Association of Interchurch Families

January, February and March 2015               Volume 26; Edition 1

Speaking to Interchurch families, to those who give pastoral care to interchurch families and to ecumenists, have all of your questions been answered at the links above about the Synod on the Family? Are the most important issues facing interchurch families being addressed satisfactorily? If, yes, how? Please explain. If no, in what ways are changes needed so that the pastoral needs of interchurch families are being met? Your thoughtful input is being sought. ~ M.J. Glauber

INTAMS

Please also see The INTAMS review, which is an international refereed journal dedicated to promoting theological and cross-disciplinary reflection on marriage and related topics. Edited by the International Academy for Marital Spirituality (INTAMS) since 1995, the INTAMS review offers scholars a platform to explore areas of current theological interest and to enter into an international and interdisciplinary dialogue on a variety of topics. Appealing to a wide academic and professional community interested in marriage and family-related issues. “The INTAMS review. Journal for the Study of Marriage & Spirituality has consecrated the first volume of 2014 to the reports that have been sent for the Synod. Authors from 20 countries report on how and what their local church has contributed.

You can order a copy by sending a mail to dominique.vanhaelst@intams.org. “...

These country reports may be extremely important to our understanding of what is being done and why regarding the Synod on the Family. ~ M.J.Glauber

A Prayer For Winter:
Circle us, Lord. Keep darkness out, keep light within.
Keep fear without, keep peace within.
Keep hatred out, keep love within.

~ From “Celtic Worship Through the Year”
Remembering the Source of Wonder; 
Our Relationship with All of Creation.

"I know there is more than a little of the mystic within you. You have lived on the wilder shores of faith, along the rocky coast of polite religion, where visions can roll in like storms, and the Spirit can move like a strong wind from the sea. There is more the scent of wood smoke around you than incense, something older, something from the Earth, a faith that has deeper roots, an ancient memory that remembers the source of wonder. There is more than a little of the prophet within you, the quiet word of what is coming, the kind word of what it means, the word of wisdom to spin another dream from the pale light of the moon." ~ The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw

Allowing God’s Holy Light to be Present in All That We Say and Do

"Let there be light, please God, in all that I say and do. There are enough shadows in the world, let me not add to the darkness, but shine forth a brighter hope. Even if I am burdened in my own life, let me speak of my reality truthfully, but never slide into a constant complaint. Keep me from bitter words, a need to blame, a lament that allows no room for others. Balance my life with laughter, open my spirit to see reason to rejoice, bless me with the gift of finding the good. No matter what course my life has taken, however hard the road may have been, let me make my final journey, not in resignation, but walking to meet you with a smile."

~ The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw

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The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston was the president and dean of Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, MA, having served 1999-2008. He is currently interim dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in Oklahoma City, OK. The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston retired as President and Dean of Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, one of the historic theological seminaries training both lay and ordained leadership for the church. A citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Bishop Charleston was born and raised in that state in a family that has had a long history of service in the Christian Native American community.

We are so thankful for the wisdom that Bishop Charleston shares with those of us who are ordinary seekers. It should also be noted that I greatly admire his work. I like how Bishop Charleston connects our ordinary lived experience to the Divine. ~ M.J. Glauber

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Theme: Where is God? How do we experience that of God in our time and place in history?
**A List of “10 Ways to Love” created by Michael J. Maher based on Bible Verses**

1. Listen without interrupting. (Proverbs 18)
2. Speak without accusing. (James 1:19)
3. Give without sparing. (Proverbs 21:26)
4. Pray without ceasing. (Colossians 1:9)
5. Answer without arguing. (Proverbs 17:1)
6. Share without pretending. (Ephesians 4:15)
7. Enjoy without complaint. (Philippians 2:14)
8. Trust without wavering. (Corinthians 13:7)
9. Forgive without punishing. (Colossians 3:13)
10. Promise without forgetting. (Proverbs 13:12)

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At the link above you can find her complete sermon

**So that all the world might see and might say**

—“See how they love each other!”

"And lets be clear. Love is not some warm, mushy feeling. Love is one of the most courageous things we do. It means that we put our lives on the line for each other. That we look after our children and our young people. That we treat each other as full human beings, with respect, knowing that—in every person is the image of God, no matter who they are or where they came from or what they are dealing with. It means that people get the support they need to become the full children of God that they are. It means that no one goes hungry and no one shivers in unheated apartments. It means we make the commitment to each other and our communities that, to the best of our ability, no one dies alone.”

Quote by Sarah Monroe
Montesano, WA, United States

*Sarah Monroe is a priest in the Episcopal Church; she is a pastor, a preacher, and a writer.*

http://awanderingminister.blogspot.com/2014/10/sermon-see-how-they-love-each-other.html

At the link above you can find her complete sermon

How best can we connect this insight to our lived ecumenical experience of being interchurch families?

~ M.J. Glauber
Church in the U.S.A. at this time in History

“That these students were, above all else, idealists who longed for authenticity, and having failed to find it in their churches, they settled for a non-belief that, while less grand in its promises, felt more genuine and attainable. I again quote Michael: 'Christianity is something that if you really believed it, it would change your life and you would want to change [the lives] of others. I haven't seen too much of that.'” said Larry Alex Tauton.

According to a recent Pew study of American Religion, the fastest growing denomination is that of being a non-believer, non-member, non-attender. This statistic makes all of us stop to wonder why and to search for answers or an explanation as to “why?”, or to “why now?”, or to “what should we do now?” I cannot provide yet any single answer, but here is another perspective for all of us to consider.

The excerpted article above can be read in full at the link below:  

Highlights from that article indicate some common themes coming from a composite of American college-aged atheists, which are listed briefly below:

Listening to Young Atheists: Lessons for a Stronger Christianity

When a Christian foundation interviewed college nonbelievers about how and why they left religion, surprising themes emerged. Asking, “What led you to become an atheist?” Tauton pieces together some interesting data.

“Slowly,” he observed, “a composite sketch of American college-aged atheists began to emerge and it would challenge all that we thought we knew about this demographic. Here is what we learned:

They had attended church
Most of our participants had not chosen their worldview from ideologically neutral positions at all, but in reaction to Christianity. Not Islam. Not Buddhism. Christianity.”

“The mission and message of their churches was vague”
Tauton states that “These students heard plenty of messages encouraging "social justice," community involvement, and "being good," but they seldom saw the relationship between that message, Jesus Christ, and the Bible.”

“They felt their churches offered superficial answers to life's difficult questions”

“They expressed their respect for those ministers who took the Bible seriously.”(The term “Taking the Bible seriously”, may need to be better defined for those who read this this article)....

“Ages 14-17 were decisive”...

“The decision to embrace unbelief was often an emotional one.”...

“The internet factored heavily into their conversion to atheism.”....

The article written by Larry Alex Tauton notes that only atheists were interviewed for his report. On the other hand, these findings do indicate some of the disillusionments with church as our youth may perceive church at this time in history. Some further clarifications may be needed. However, there may be an opportunity within this message for all of us who are seeking Christian Unity and/ or who live as interchurch families. This may be a call for all of us to listen with the ears of our hearts. ~ M.J. Glauber

Larry Alex Tauton is the executive director of the Fixed Point Foundation and author of The Grace Effect: How the Power of One Life Can Reverse the Corruption of Unbelief

ARK Theme: Where is God?
How do we experience that of God in our time and place in history?
Are we listening with the ears of our hearts?
THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

JANUARY 18–25, 2015

The theme for the 2015 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is taken from John 4:7 in which Jesus asked the Samaritan woman: “Give me a drink.”

The Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute informs us that “The materials for our celebrations this year were prepared by the churches of Brazil, specifically the National Council of Churches of Brazil in association with the Brazilian Regional Office of the Latin American Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Centre for Bible Study.”

They explain that “In the text Jesus is seen as a foreigner, tired and thirsty. The woman is in her own land where the well belongs to her people but she is also thirsty. They each have their own needs. The complementarity takes place when Jesus does not cease to be Jewish because he drank from the water offered by the Samaritan woman and the Samaritan woman does not reject who she is in following Jesus.”

They explain, “So in drinking from the well of another we are taking the first step in experiencing the way of life of the other. This leads to an exchange of gifts that enriches everyone. Through this experience we come to recognize that persons, communities, cultures, religions and ethnicities need each other, are a gift for one another.”


Pope Francis told an ecumenical delegation from Finland on Thursday January 22, 2015, that Catholics and Lutherans can do much together “to bear witness to God’s mercy.” The delegation’s visit to Rome coincides with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the Feast of St. Henry, the patron saint of Finland. The full report can be found at: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/01/22/pope francis catholics, lutherans share christian witness/1119342

This is an example of ecumenical cooperation that will bring all of us closer to finding that of God in our ordinary lives. Every positive example is good for all of us who are seeking Christian Unity. ~ M.J. Glauber

Theme for this edition of the ARK:
Where is God?
How do we experience that of God in our time and place in history?
Are we listening with the ears of our hearts?

An old tree growing in Grinnell, Iowa

MJG ©
The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity


and at http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/week-of-prayer

The theme for the 2015 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity seems to be carrying forth and exploring in greater depth the concept of Receptive Ecumenism. Please see http://centreforcatholicstudies.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Receptive-Ecumenism-Newsletter.pdf, for further information about the concept and practice surrounding “Receptive Ecumenism.”

I hope that you will feel inspired by the 2015 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity so that your ecumenical journey will be enhanced by this experience.

Although January 18 - 25, 2015 has been set aside to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we hope that some will continue to explore this theme throughout the year. ~ M.J. Glauber

Inequality as a Religious Issue: A Conversation With the Archbishop of Canterbury

At the link: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/24/us/archbishop-of-canterbury-inequality.html?_r=0 from the January 23, 2015 edition of the New York Times, Michael Paulson writes about the visit and interview that he had with “The Most Rev. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Trinity Church in Manhattan in January 2015. He was in New York for a conference on inequality.” Bishop Welby noted the spiritual need for a “re-centering of the ministry of the church on the love of Christ for the human being. And on the dignity of the human being, whoever they are, particularly where they’re marginalized.” Bishop Welby noted that this cause is, and that it should be responded to through an ecumenical movement. Bishop Welby discusses the current “march of secularism.” The New York Times article is well worth reading at the link above.

~ M.J. Glauber

Earlier editions of the ARK, A Publication of the American Association of Interchurch Families can be found at interchurchfamilies.org. - Please look at the site map and then scroll down to find the ARK Page 17

Exploring alternative approaches through art - art may allow us to be able to explore new combinations and to find new solutions when applied to other areas of our lives.
Many Thanks

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~ M.J. Glauber

MEMORIAL: Maryann Wingenbach, who for over 53 years, was the beloved spouse of Fr. Gregory C. Wingenbach (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese) died recently in Louisville, KY. Many interchurch couples met the Wingenbachs at various interchurch conferences over the years. Fr. Wingenbach participated in the interchurch families conference sponsored by N.I.M.M.A. in 1990 at Corrymeela in County Antrim in Northern Ireland. Both Maryann and Fr. Gregory Wingenbach participated in the International English speaking Interchurch Conference in 1996. Fr. Wingenbach was a panelist at the 2006 Interchurch Families Conference in Louisville, KY. A.A.I.F. would like to express their sympathy to Fr. Wingenbach and their children. The online obituary can be found at the following link: http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/louisville/obituary.aspx?pid=173851977

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