

# THE ARK

The ARK, a Publication of the American Association of Interchurch Families  
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July, August and September 2013



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Interchurch  
Families  
*"Listen with the  
ear of your heart"*

A Publication of the American Association  
of Interchurch Families

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**Interchurch Families:  
Christian Unity Made Visible in our Households**



## Pope Francis Meets Ecumenical and Interfaith leaders

L'Osservatore Romano, on March 20, 2013, reported that "during a meeting that day Pope Francis had emphasized the importance of the promotion of friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions. Pope Francis met with ecumenical and interfaith leaders who had attended his inauguration Mass."

From the beginning, Pope Francis initiated interchurch and interfaith, cross cultural dialogues.



(photos © L'Osservatore Romano)

# The Nature of Tolerance Seems to Rely on Wisdom

## Contents

Pages 1 & 3.....	Pope Francis Meets Ecumenical and Interfaith Leaders
Page 2.....	Contents and AAIF Contact Information
Pages 3 & 4.....	“What’s in a Name” by John Lepper, a Coordinator for the Kentucky Baptist
Pages 4 & 5.....	WCC General Secretary Congratulates New Pope with Implications for Interchurch Families
Page 6 .....	Ecumenical Corner by Father Ernest Falardeau, SSS - The Ecumenical Movement, Seeking and Finding Christian Unity, and the Role for Interchurch Families is explored 50 years after Vatican II
Page 7 .....	Is not the full realization of the decisions of Vatican II the real Vatican III for right now? Implications of a presentation made by Cardinal Godfried Danneels at Southwark Cathedral (with a link)
Page 8 .....	“The Promise” and The New Ecumenical Directory - Questions related to the promise arise regularly for interchurch couples, and especially for their extended families. (Link to IFIR)
Pages 9 - 12 .....	Excerpts from DIRECTORY FOR THE APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES AND NORMS ON ECUMENISM for Interchurch Families: Implications found in Vatican II Documents for Interchurch Families
Pages 13 - 15 .....	LETTER DOMINICAE CENAE OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF JOHN PAUL II TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH ON THE MYSTERY AND WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST with implications for Interchurch Families
Page 16 .....	“A Mystery” a reflection by The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw
Page 17.....	“No Exceptions” - Implications for Interchurch Families
Page 17.....	Humility and Christian Unity ~ Bishop Crispian Hollis (with link)
Page 18 .....	A Report from: The Interchurch Families International Network Theological Working Group: Study on Interchurch Families as Domestic Churches Interchurch Families live a life that is exceptional. (with a link to the original report)
Pages 19 - 25.....	Tolerance and Wisdom with a conclusion made by the Elijah Interfaith Institute
Pages 25 & 26 .....	Ten Lessons the Arts Teach By Elliot Eisner with Implications for Interchurch Families
Page 26 .....	The Spiritual Life, Living Between Mountains of Truth; Reflections by The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw
Pages 26 & 27 .....	Bible Verses About Creativity and Spirituality with Implications for Interchurch Families
Pages 27 - 29.....	“What If the Kids Don’t Want Our Church?” by Derel Penwell with Implications for Interchurch Families
Pages 30 - 35 .....	Re-finding Our God and Our Religious Heritage - Faith for the 21st Century with book reviews and implications for interchurch families
Pages 35 - 37.....	The Nature of What it Means to be a Christian living in a Multi-Cultural World with Implications for Interchurch Families and those who are seeking Christian Unity by M.J. Glauber.
Page 38 .....	Many Thanks

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The current term of office will be from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2014, at which time another election will be held.

Please contact any of the above mentioned officers if you would like to have information about how to become more actively involved with AAIF.

# Pope Francis meets Ecumenical and Interfaith Leaders - March 2013 ( continued from page one)

It should be noted that this meeting was preceded by private encounters with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, and the Metropolitan Hilarion, the chairman of the Department of External Church Relations for the Patriarchate of Moscow.

**Implications for Interchurch Families:** Dialogue across historic barriers is very important because it can lead to cooperation and toward finding solutions to problems for which the solutions have previously seemed impossible to resolve in mutually acceptable ways. This kind of interchurch or interfaith dialogue, especially one that is based on a mutual respect, provides a sense of hope for Interchurch Families for how we may encounter far more supportive communities in the future.

As interchurch families, we live a unity in our daily lives that may elude others. The gift of being in an interchurch marriage/family may not yet be adequately recognized as the gift it is and could be for our own parishes. Yet this is the unity for which Christ prayed. "Listening with the ear of our heart" is a rule that we live by naturally in interchurch family homes. ~ M.J. Glauber

## What's In a name



In March 2013, John Lepper, a Coordinator for the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship wrote, "Just a few weeks ago, Pope Benedict made history by being the first pope to resign in 6 centuries. The world watched as history was made at the Vatican and throughout the world."

Lepper observed, "Since then, several historic "firsts" have occurred. Never before has a Jesuit been named pope; never before has someone from Latin America been named pope; never before has a pope selected the name "Francis." "

Lepper noted that "In choosing the name Francis, the former Argentine Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio took his name from St. Francis of Assisi, the champion of the least among us. As the Washington Post described it, "He chose [a name] that harks back eight centuries, to Italy, and to a man who renounced a life of privilege, gave away everything he owned, wore a coarse woolen tunic, lived in a hut and took a vow of poverty." "

John Lepper asks, "What shall we make of this new pope and why would this Jesuit choose the name Francis?"

Lepper added, "At his installation mass, Pope Francis claimed and interpreted his role as leader of the church. His role, he suggested, is one of protection of all humanity, but "especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment of love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison." "

Lepper observed that "This pope, while the stated leader of 1.2 billion Catholics, has no authority over other Christians. However, we can gain inspiration from Pope Francis. I am

## What's in a name? (continued from page 3)

inspired by his words of hope in the presence of current hopelessness around the world.”

Lepper observed that at the installation mass of Pope Francis, he “challenged all Christians to, “see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others.

To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope, it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds.” ‘

John Lepper noted that he is “particularly struck by how Pope Francis’ lifestyle has brought credibility to his claim to reach out to the least of these. Pope Francis has walked the walk. While archbishop in Argentina, he gave up his chauffeur and took the bus to work. As archbishop, Bergoglio had the option to live in a palace but chose a simple apartment and cooked his own meals.”

John Lepper shares “the sentiments of Mike Ward, President of Kentucky Council of Churches when he said, ***“In the Body of Christ, something as important as the selection of a new pope affects us all. So it is that Protestants and Catholics join in prayer for Pope Francis. We pray for God’s blessings upon him, the Catholic Church, the universal Church and the world. May his identification with the poor of Argentina inspire us all to greater service. May his name remind us to care for God’s creation as did St. Francis. And may ecumenical efforts to mark his new leadership post lead us all to mutual love and unity so that ‘the world may believe.’”***

The original article can be read in its entirety at: <http://www.kybf.org/news/2013/3/22/whats-in-a-name>



Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the archbishop of Buenos Aires, has been elected the new pope. Photo: VanKleinen

## WCC General Secretary Congratulates New Pope

In March 2013, the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), expressed ecumenical greetings, and gave his assurance of continuing engagement with the Roman Catholic Church in the era of its new pontiff, Pope Francis.

The WCC reported that Tveit said “the election of Francis “is a turning point in the life of the Roman Catholic Church, but it also has an impact on people of other churches and faiths.” ‘

The WCC noted that “Commenting on the election of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio of Argentina, the first pope from the Global South, Tveit said, that through Francis, “who has lived a simple lifestyle and reflects a passion for social justice and lifting up the poor, we reaffirm our commitment to seeking justice and peace.”

## WCC General Secretary Congratulates New pope (continued from the previous page)

“Ever since the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches have enjoyed constructive dialogue and cooperation on matters of faith, witness and the fundamental unity of the whole body of Christ,” The WCC noted that Tveit said.

The WCC reported that Tveit said that **“We have learned that we are pilgrims together in the one ecumenical movement, and we are particularly grateful for the way the Catholic Church works with us on the highly significant issues of unity, ecclesiology, mission and inter-religious dialogue.”**

“Now, in close collaboration with Pope Francis, we look forward to building on this positive relationship with the Catholic Church that has been nurtured so carefully in the past,” The WCC noted that Tveit said.

The WCC clarified that “The Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, but the instrument of the Joint Working Group has fostered close cooperation. Delegates and observers are exchanged at the time of major meetings, and the Catholic Church is formally represented in such WCC-administered bodies as the Faith and Order Commission and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.”

The WCC observed that “Cardinal Bergoglio, former archbishop of Buenos Aires, was elected pope by the College of Cardinals on Wednesday 13 March 2013 at the conclave in the Vatican.”

The WCC observed that “In Latin America WCC member church leaders reflected positively on the election of Pope Francis.” and stated that they “congratulate Francis, the first Latin American to be elected pope.” The WCC is “aware of Bergoglio's work in the Diocese of Buenos Aires and we recognize him as a person of particular sensitivity to social problems and for ecumenical dialogue,” according to the Rev. Nilton Giese, general secretary of the Latin America Council of Churches.

“The Evangelical Church of the River Plate (Argentina) congratulates the faithful of the Roman

Catholic Church by the recent election of a new pope who, for the first time in history, is from Latin America, said Rev. Antonio Carlos Alfredo Duarte Voelker, president of the Evangelical Church of the River Plate. “We are also confident that his years of experience in the pastorate will help him to promote a new vision to those who suffer persecution and marginalization of any kind.”

The WCC noted that Tveit added, “An important aspect of the ecumenical movement is a concept of mutual accountability. We in the World Council of Churches offer our cooperation to Pope Francis and the whole of the Catholic Church in this spirit. We will continue to cooperate in a loving and affirming relationship. In this way, we will grow together in grace and in hope toward that true unity of believers for which Christ prayed.”

According to the WCC Tveit said that “Today the vast majority of Christians live in the Global South,” “The growth of Christianity in the South is likely to continue. This shift has already had an important impact on world Christianity. It is in this context that we will move forward, working together, building our relationship and addressing the important needs of all people today.”

**“Let us use this opportunity to pray for and with Pope Francis to reconfirm that we need one another, to address the challenges of the world in our time,”** Tveit concluded.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/wcc-offers-congratulation.html>

### Implications for Interchurch Families:

Interchurch Families around the world can affirm the fact that it is an opportunity to pray for and with Pope Francis to reconfirm that we need one another.

As John Donne said, “No man is an island.” No one is an island. We are all one body through Christ. All efforts at unity help to support interchurch families as we live a Christian Unity in our homes.

~ M.J. Glauber

*Reprinted with permission*

## Bishop Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

On February 4, 2013 the Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, the Reverend Robert Willis took the decision of the 35-strong College of Canons, made up of senior clergy and lay people from the Diocese of Canterbury, to St. Paul's Cathedral in London and presented it to the Queen's commission. Dr. Willis said "The decision we made this morning (January 11, 2013) is taken formally to London. They will say it is valid, legal and right and at that moment Justin Welby becomes in all powers the Archbishop of Canterbury." He is the 105<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, succeeding Dr. Rowan Williams, the 104<sup>th</sup> who resigned at the end of 2012.

Bishop Welby is the bishop of Durham, the fourth-most-senior position in the Church of England, to which he was consecrated in October 2011 and automatically granted a seat in the House of Commons. Church of England bishops are appointed rather than elected, with a 16-member Crown Nominations Commission putting forward two names (a preferred candidate and a second candidate) to Downing Street. The U.K. Prime Minister then seeks approval from the British monarch, who is the supreme governor of the Church of England.

Before his ordination to the priesthood in 1992, Welby studied law and history at Cambridge University and then spent 11 years as an executive in the oil industry. After a decade in parish ministry, he was appointed a canon residentiary, and later sub-dean, of Coventry Cathedral. He served as dean of Liverpool Cathedral from 2007-2011.

Welby's enthronement as 105<sup>th</sup> archbishop of Canterbury will be held March 21, 2013 in Canterbury Cathedral. He is married to Caroline and they have five children, aged 16-27.

Concerning his appointment, Bishop Welby said "I don't think anyone could be more surprised than me at the outcome of this process. It has been an experience, reading more about me than I knew myself. To be nominated to Canterbury is at the same time overwhelming and astonishing. It is overwhelming because those I follow and the responsibility it has. It is astonishing because it is something I never expected to happen."

Dr. Rowan Williams said: "I am delighted at the appointment. He has an extraordinary range of skills and is a person of grace, patience, wisdom and humor. He will bring to this office both a rich pastoral experience and a keen sense of international priorities, for church and world. I wish him –with Caroline and the family – every blessing, and hope that the Church of England and the Anglican Communion will share my pleasure at this appointment and support him with prayer and love."

## Ecumenical Significance

The goal of the movement for Christian unity, which the Catholic Church has embraced dramatically in the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, is the visible unity of all Christians. Speaking of the Anglican Communion, the council emphasized that it has "a special place" because of its history, structure and influence among the Christian communions. Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Reform churches have been engaged in serious and continuous dialogue since the Second Vatican Council, and much progress has been achieved in the fifty years since the beginning of that council.

Father Ernest Falardeau, SSS

**The Ecumenical Movement,  
Seeking and Finding  
Christian Unity,  
and the Role for  
Interchurch Families  
is explored 50 years after  
Vatican II**

## Implications for Interchurch Families

If you have ever wondered about what Vatican II was really all about or how it may have impacted interchurch families and the on-going search for Christian Unity, I believe that your questions will be answered in the following commentary give by Cardinal Godfried Danneels on the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. I have included his review of the outcome and documents of Vatican II because I thought that Cardinal Danneels did an excellent job of explaining what happened. He also finds those documents to be useful still and especially at this point in history. Vatican II was very pastoral in its focus. Interchurch Families have expressed gratitude for any and all positive pastoral care that they/we have received. Please read for yourself to refresh your memory about potential that the Vatican II documents still hold for all of us.

~ M.J. Glauber

# Vatican II - an unprecedented event, a council like no other

*Is not the full realization of the decisions of  
Vatican II the real Vatican III for right now?*

## The Tablet Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council

### Vatican II - an unprecedented event, a council like no other

*Cardinal Godfried Danneels speaks at  
Southwark Cathedral*

25 October 2012, 9:00

(The original article can be read in its entirety at  
the following link:

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/394/24>

Vatican II was a council unlike any preceding one.  
It was a special event for many reasons. Even  
though it stands in a long line of councils: it was in  
many respects a new kind of council.

The article found in The Tablet at the link above is  
excellent.

It is a thorough overview of Vatican II that Daneels  
follows up with some probing questions about  
applying Vatican II to our time and place in history  
now.

Cardinal Godfried Danneels gave the well  
researched presentation in Amigo Hall, Saint

George's Cathedral, Southwark on 18 October  
2012.

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/394/24>

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### Implications for Interchurch Families:

It clearly is the time to look back over the body of  
works that were created by Vatican II. Have those  
guidelines been  
properly  
understood and  
put into place?

If not what has  
held that back  
from happening?  
Where to from  
here? What  
ecumenical  
implications can  
be found for us  
at this time within  
the documents  
created by  
Vatican II?

I would like to  
thank Cardinal  
Godfried



## Is not the full realization of the decisions of Vatican II the real Vatican III for right now?

Danneels for his in depth clarification about Vatican II and the wisdom that can be found within those documents. His comprehensive overview of Vatican II and the role that it should play now that 50 years have passed since it originated are clearly explained. This article should be on the must read list of all Ecumenists and Interchurch Families.

Now seems to be the right time to review what is actually stated in those Vatican II documents and then to move forward using them. If they weren't properly understood or properly applied when

they first came out, those guidelines can still be explored and studied.

Interchurch Families around the world have found inspiration and hope for Christian Unity within those documents.

May this be the beginning of a bright future that leads us further along that path toward Christian Unity. ~ M.J. Glauber

## “The Promise” and The New Ecumenical Directory - Questions related to the promise arise regularly for interchurch couples, and especially for their extended families.

*Because questions about “The Promise” come up fairly regularly, I believe that this indicates a need for more remote preparation that includes not only the likelihood but also a consideration for the ways that the positive aspects of the lived experience of being part of an interchurch family in our current society can be cultivated. This kind of study if it also examines thoroughly all of the ways for the community to become a support system not only for the marriage, and all marriages in general, but also if it explores the role that interchurch families can and do play on our journey toward and seeking Christian Unity, we, all of society, will all be the better for it.*

An excellent discussion of “The Promise” as it is defined and clarified in the New Ecumenical Directory can be found at <http://www.interchurchfamilies.org/journal/93su10.html>

The discussion presented at the preceding link also takes into consideration how we live as interchurch families and how we are affected by the New Ecumenical Directory.

John Coventry, S.J. concludes his discussion by stating that “One has to recognise with gratitude very considerable progress, even if there is still some way to go, particularly in consideration of interchurch children. And it is a pity that almost exclusive stress is laid on the wedding as an occasion for eucharistic sharing, even though it is seen that there are other “exceptional cases”.

“As AIF ( Association of Interchurch Family) members well know, such sharing is a growing need in a united Christian life and does not exist only for certain highlight occasions near the start of a marriage; the couple and the family need lifelong nourishment if they are to be “builders of unity”. ‘

“However, the Directory banishes for ever the mistaken and oft repeated answer, always in conflict with Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism, n. 8, that eucharistic sharing can only be a sign of full communion and never an expression of partial communion as a means towards full communion.” Ecumenists, those seeking Christian Unity and interchurch families will find John Coventry, S.J.'s document to be enlightening and encouraging.

~ M.J. Glauber

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## ***DIRECTORY FOR THE APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES AND NORMS ON ECUMENISM***

### ***PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM AD CHRISTIANORUM UNITATEM FOVENDAM DIRECTORY FOR THE APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES AND NORMS ON ECUMENISM***

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_25031993\\_principles-and-norms-on-ecumenism\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_25031993_principles-and-norms-on-ecumenism_en.html)

*Have you ever wondered just what the Vatican has to say about the role that the pursuit of Christian Unity should be in our lives?*

*Have you ever wondered if Christian Unity is actually the focus of the Roman Catholic Church?*

*Have you ever wondered exactly what the Vatican does say about "mixed marriages" or what is also know as "Interchurch Marriages"?*

*Below you will find some excerpts from The Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms on Ecumenism.*

*The entire document can be found at the Vatican Website at the link above. I would urge you to spend some time reading/studying this document in search of the positive potential that can be found within it.*

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### **Excerpts from DIRECTORY FOR THE APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES AND NORMS ON ECUMENISM for Interchurch Families**

#### **PREFACE**

1. The search for Christian Unity was one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. The Ecumenical Directory, called for during the Council and published in two parts, one in 1967 and the other in 1970,1 "has given a most valuable service in directing, coordinating and developing the ecumenical effort." 2 ...

#### **To Whom is the Directory Addressed**

4. The Directory is addressed to the Pastors of the Catholic Church, but it also concerns all the faithful, who are called to pray and work for the unity of Christians, under the direction of their Bishops. The Bishops, individually for their own

dioceses, and collegially for the whole Church, are, under the authority of the Holy See, responsible for ecumenical policy and practice. 5

5. At the same time it is hoped that the Directory will also be useful to members of Churches and ecclesial Communities that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church.

They share with Catholics a concern for the quality of ecumenical activity. It will be an advantage for them to know the direction those guiding the ecumenical movement in the Catholic Church wish to give to ecumenical action, and the criteria that are officially approved in the Church. It will help them to evaluate the initiatives that come from Catholics, so as to respond to them

adequately, and will also help them better to understand the Catholic responses to their initiatives.

It should be kept in mind that the Directory does not intend to deal with the relations of the Catholic Church with sects or with new religious movements. 6

## Outline of the Directory

7. The Directory begins with a declaration of the commitment of the Catholic Church to ecumenism (Chapter I). This is followed by an account of the steps taken by the Catholic Church to put this commitment into practice. It does this through the organization and formation of its own members (Chapters II and III). It is to them thus organized and formed, that the provisions of Chapters IV and V on ecumenical activity are addressed.

### I. The Search for Christian Unity

The ecumenical commitment of the Catholic Church based on the doctrinal principles of the Second Vatican Council.

### II. Organization in the Catholic Church at the Service of Christian Unity

Persons and structures involved in promoting ecumenism at all levels, and the norms that direct their activity.

### III. Ecumenical Formation in the Catholic Church

Categories of people to be formed, those responsible for formation; the aim and methods of formation; its doctrinal and practical aspects.

## IV. Communion in Life and Spiritual Activity Among the Baptized

The communion that exists with other Christians on the basis of the sacramental bond of Baptism, and the norms for sharing in prayer and other spiritual activities, including in particular cases sacramental sharing.

## V. Ecumenical Cooperation, Dialogue and Common Witness

Principles, different forms and norms for cooperation between Christians with a view to dialogue and common witness in the world.

8. Thus, in a time of increasingly marked secularization, which calls Christians to common action in their hope for the Kingdom of God, the norms that regulate relations between Catholics and other Christians and the different forms of collaboration they practice are laid down, so that the promotion of the unity desired by Christ may be sought in a balanced and consistent way, in the line of, and according to the principles established by the Second Vatican Council.

### THE SEARCH FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

*9. The ecumenical movement seeks to be a response to the gift of God's grace which calls all Christians to faith in the mystery of the Church according to the design of God who wishes to bring humanity to salvation and unity in Christ through the Holy Spirit. This movement calls them to the hope that the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one" will be fully realized. 9*

*It calls them to that charity which is the new commandment of Christ and the gift*

**Excerpts from DIRECTORY FOR THE APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES  
AND NORMS ON ECUMENISM for Interchurch Families**

*by which the Holy Spirit unites all believers.*

The Second Vatican Council clearly asked Catholics to reach out in love to all other Christians with a charity that desires and works actively to overcome in truth whatever divides them from one another.

**For the Council, Catholics are to act in hope and in prayer to promote Christian unity.**

## **Divisions among Christians and the Re-establishing of Unity**

18. Human folly and human sinfulness however have at times opposed the unifying purpose of the Holy Spirit and weakened that power of love which overcomes the inherent tensions in ecclesial life. From the beginning of the Church certain rifts came into being. ... The Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council recognizes that some dissensions have come about "for which often enough men of both sides were to blame". 26

Yet however much human culpability has damaged communion, it has never destroyed it.

.....20. The Catholic Church solemnly pledged itself to work for Christian unity at the Second Vatican Council. ... The Council affirms that this unity by no means requires the sacrifice of the rich diversity of spirituality, discipline, liturgical rites and elaborations of revealed truth that has grown up among Christians in the measure that this diversity remains faithful to the apostolic Tradition.

21. Since the time of the Second Vatican Council ecumenical activity in the entire Catholic Church has been inspired and guided by various documents and initiatives of the Holy See and, in particular Churches, by documents and initiatives of Bishops, Synods of Eastern Catholic Churches and Episcopal Conferences. Also to be noted is the progress

made in different kinds of ecumenical dialogue and in the manifold forms of ecumenical collaboration undertaken. Ecumenism has, in the words of the Synod of Bishops of 1985, "inscribed itself deeply and indelibly in the consciousness of the Church".

## **Ecumenism in the Life of Christians**

22. The ecumenical movement is a grace of God, given by the Father in answer to the prayer of Jesus 35 and the supplication of the Church inspired by the Holy Spirit. 36

While it is carried out within the general mission of the Church to unite humanity in Christ, its own specific field is the restoration of unity among Christians. 37 Those who are baptized in the name of Christ are, by that very fact, called to commit themselves to the search for unity. 38

Baptismal communion tends towards full ecclesial communion. To live our Baptism is to be caught up in Christ's mission of making all things one.....

... **25.** Because ecumenism with all its human and moral requirements is rooted so profoundly in the mysterious working out of the providence of the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit, it reaches into the depths of Christian spirituality.

It calls for that "change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians", that the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council calls "spiritual ecumenism", and regards as "the soul of the ecumenical movement." 43

Those who identify deeply with Christ must identify with his prayer, and especially with his prayer for unity; those who live in the Spirit must let themselves be transformed by the love that, for the sake of unity, "bears all things,

Excerpts from DIRECTORY FOR THE APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES  
AND NORMS ON ECUMENISM for Interchurch Families

believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things"; 44 those whose lives are marked by repentance will be especially sensitive to the sinfulness of divisions and will pray for forgiveness and conversion.

Those who seek holiness will be able to recognize its fruits also outside the visible boundaries of their own Church. 45.....

### ...C. MIXED MARRIAGES

144. In all marriages, the primary concern of the Church is to uphold the strength and stability of the indissoluble marital union and the family life that flows from it. ....

**...145. In view, however, of the growing number of mixed marriages in many parts of the world, the Church includes within its urgent pastoral solicitude couples preparing to enter, or already having entered, such marriages.**

**These marriages, even if they have their own particular difficulties, "contain numerous elements that could well be made good use of and develop both for their intrinsic value and for the contribution they can make to the ecumenical movement.**

This is particularly true when both parties are faithful to their religious duties. Their common baptism and the dynamism of grace provide the spouses in these marriages with the basis and motivation for expressing unity in the sphere of moral and spiritual values." 140.....

**...152.** While keeping clearly in mind that doctrinal differences impede full sacramental and canonical communion between the Catholic Church and the various Eastern Churches, in the pastoral care of marriages between Catholics and Eastern Christians, particular attention should be given to the sound and

consistent teaching of the faith which is shared by both and to the fact that in the Eastern Churches are to be found "true sacraments, and above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closest intimacy". 144

**If proper pastoral care is given to persons involved in these marriages, the faithful of both communions can be helped to understand how children born of such marriages will be initiated into and spiritually nourished by the sacramental mysteries of Christ.** Their formation in authentic Christian doctrine and ways of Christian living would, for the most part, be similar in each Church. Diversity in liturgical life and private devotion can be made to encourage rather than hinder family prayer. ...

**...160.** Although the spouses in a mixed marriage share the sacraments of baptism and marriage, ***Eucharistic sharing can only be exceptional*** and in each case the norms stated above concerning the admission of a non-Catholic Christian to Eucharistic communion,<sup>154</sup> as well as those concerning the participation of a Catholic in Eucharistic communion in another Church,<sup>155</sup> must be observed.

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*Interchurch Families live a life that is exceptional.*

*Does not our lived experience of being actively engaged in being and creating truly interchurch families create a situation that is exceptional?*  
~M.J. Glauber



# LETTER DOMINICAE CENAE OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF JOHN PAUL II TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH ON THE MYSTERY AND WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST

*The entire letter can be found at this Vatican*

*Website link:*

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_24021980\\_dominicae-cenae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_24021980_dominicae-cenae_en.html)

Excerpts from this document follow:

## **Eucharist and Church**

4. Thanks to the Council we have realized with renewed force the following truth: Just as the Church "makes the Eucharist" so "the Eucharist builds up" the Church(16); ...

And carrying out this command of His, they entered for the first time into sacramental communion with the Son of God, a communion that is a pledge of eternal life.

From that moment until the end of time, the Church is being built up through that same communion with the Son of God, a communion which is a pledge of the eternal Passover....

## **Eucharist and Charity**

5. Before proceeding to more detailed observations on the subject of the celebration of the holy Sacrifice, I wish briefly to reaffirm the fact that eucharistic worship constitutes the soul of all Christian life. In fact, Christian life is expressed in the fulfilling of the greatest commandment, that is to say, in the love of God and neighbor, and this love finds its source in the blessed Sacrament, which is commonly called the sacrament of love.....

## **Eucharist and Neighbor**

6. The authentic sense of the Eucharist becomes of itself the school of active love for neighbor. We know that this is the true and full order of love that the Lord has taught us: "By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples."(25)

The Eucharist educates us to this love in a deeper way; it shows us, in fact, what value

each person, our brother or sister, has in God's eyes, if Christ offers Himself equally to each one, under the species of bread and wine.

If our Eucharistic worship is authentic, it must make us grow in awareness of the dignity of each person. The awareness of that dignity becomes the deepest motive of our relationship with our neighbor.

We must also become particularly sensitive to all human suffering and misery, to all injustice and wrong, and seek the way to redress them effectively.

Let us learn to discover with respect the truth about the inner self that becomes the dwelling place of God present in the Eucharist.

Christ comes into the hearts of our brothers and sisters and visits their consciences.

How the image of each and every one changes, when we become aware of this reality, when we make it the subject of our reflections!

The sense of the Eucharistic Mystery leads us to a love for our neighbor, to a love for every human being.(26)....

## **Eucharist and Life**

7. Since therefore the Eucharist is the source of charity, it has always been at the center of the life of Christ's disciples.

It has the appearance of bread and wine, that is to say of food and drink; it is therefore as familiar to people, as closely linked to their life, as food and drink.

The veneration of God, who is love, springs, in eucharistic worship, from that kind of intimacy in which He Himself, by analogy with food and drink, fills our spiritual being, ensuring its life, as food and drink do.

## **A Common Possession of the Church**

12. We cannot, even for a moment, forget that the Eucharist is a special possession belonging to the whole Church.... The Eucharist is a common possession of the whole Church as the sacrament of her unity.....

## TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH ON THE MYSTERY AND WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST

### CONCLUSION

13. Permit me, venerable and dear brothers, to end these reflections of mine, which have been restricted to a detailed examination of only a few questions. In undertaking these reflections, I have had before my eyes all the work carried out by the Second Vatican Council, and have kept in mind Paul VI's Encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*, promulgated during that Council, and all the documents issued after the same Council for the purpose of implementing the post-conciliar liturgical renewal.

A very close and organic bond exists between the renewal of the liturgy and the renewal of the whole life of the Church.

The Church not only acts but also expresses herself in the liturgy, lives by the liturgy and draws from the liturgy the strength for her life. For this reason liturgical renewal carried out correctly in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council is, in a certain sense, the measure and the condition for putting into effect the teaching of that Council which we wish to accept with profound faith, convinced as we are that by means of this Council the Holy Spirit "has spoken to the Church" the truths and given the indications for carrying out her mission among the people of today and tomorrow.

We shall continue in the future to take special care to promote and follow the renewal of the Church according to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, in the spirit of an ever living Tradition.

In fact, to the substance of Tradition properly understood belongs also a correct re-reading of the "signs of the times, which require us to draw from the rich treasure of Revelation "things both new and old."(71)

Acting in this spirit, in accordance with this counsel of the Gospel, the Second Vatican Council carried out a providential effort to renew the face of the Church in the sacred liturgy, most often having recourse to what is "ancient,"

what comes from the heritage of the Fathers and is the expression of the faith and doctrine of a Church which has remained united for so many centuries.

In order to be able to continue in the future to put into practice the directives of the Council in the field of liturgy, and in particular in the field of eucharistic worship, close collaboration is necessary between the competent department of the Holy See and each episcopal conference, a collaboration which must be at the same time vigilant and creative.

We must keep our sights fixed on the greatness of the most holy Mystery and at the same time on spiritual movements and social changes, which are so significant for our times, since they not only sometimes create difficulties but also prepare us for a new way of participating in that great Mystery of Faith.

***Above all I wish to emphasize that the problems of the liturgy, and in particular of the Eucharistic Liturgy, must not be an occasion of dividing Catholics and for threatening the unity of the Church.***

***This is demanded by an elementary understanding of that sacrament which Christ has left us as the source of spiritual unity.***

***And how could the Eucharist, which in the Church is the sacramentum pietatis, signum unitatis, vinculum caritatis,(72) form between us at this time a point or division and a source of distortion of thought and of behavior, instead of being the focal point and constitutive center, which it truly is in its essence, of the unity of the Church herself?***

***We are all equally indebted to our Redeemer.*** We should all listen together to that spirit of truth and of love whom He has promised to the Church and who is operative in her. In the name of this truth and of this love, in the name of the crucified Christ and of His

## TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH ON THE MYSTERY AND WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST

Mother, I ask you, and beg you: Let us abandon all opposition and division, and let us all unite in this great mission of salvation which is the price and at the same time the fruit of our redemption.

The Apostolic See will continue to do all that is possible to provide the means of ensuring that unity of which we speak. Let everyone avoid anything in his own way of acting which could "grieve the Holy Spirit."(73)

In order that this unity and the constant and systematic collaboration which leads to it may be perseveringly continued, I beg on my knees that, through the intercession of Mary, holy spouse of the Holy Spirit and Mother of the Church, we may all receive the light of the Holy Spirit.

And blessing everyone, with all my heart I once more address myself to you, my venerable and dear brothers in the episcopate, with a fraternal greeting and with full trust. In this collegial unity in which we share, let us do all we can to ensure that the Eucharist may become an ever greater source of life and light for the consciences of all our brothers and sisters of all the communities in the universal unity of Christ's Church on earth.

In a spirit of fraternal charity, to you and to all our confreres in the priesthood I cordially impart the apostolic blessing.

From the Vatican, February 24, First Sunday of Lent, in the year 1980, the second of the Pontificate, presented in excerpted form here. The complete document can be read in its entirety at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_25031993\\_principles-and-norms-on-ecumenism\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_25031993_principles-and-norms-on-ecumenism_en.html)

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## Implications for Interchurch Families:

*You may already be very familiar with all of the Vatican Documents that promoted and encourage all of us to pursue a path toward Christian Unity, together as brothers and sisters united by Christ. I was struck by the call to listen; it states, " We should all listen together to that spirit of truth and of love whom He has promised to the Church and who is operative in her." It may serve us well if we all took a few moments to linger over what John Paul II is telling us as we all seek to become one community that nurtures diversity within unity.*

*We would like to hear from you about how your life has been shaped by the ecumenical dialogues and endeavors that were initially inspired by the first documents coming out of Vatican II and which have been reinforced in subsequent documents?*

*How does the pursuit of Christian Unity affect the way that you live your life?*

*Please consider sharing the stories of your lived experience of being an interchurch family with the readers of the ARK. ~ M.J. Glauber*

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MJG©

# A Mystery

*"Listen, let me tell you a mystery. It is when we are the most tired, when we feel we cannot take another step forward, that we are nearest to the strength and hope of God."*

*"Why?"*

*"Because God is not some distant cool intellect observing us as though we were an experiment, but a living being who has shared our struggles, known our pain, felt the loss that steals away hope like leaves caught on an autumn wind."*

*"Grace comes to us not from pity, but recognition. It comes from a greater heart who understands and who loves us all the more for the knowing."*

~ The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw





## No Exceptions

"We are the children of God. All of us.  
No exceptions. No orphans.  
Every human being is a child of God.  
Every one of us.

God called you into life when you took your first breath.  
God has watched over your life every year that you have lived.  
And God will hold your life in safe keeping even after you lay it down and walk from this world to the next.

There is no space outside the circle of God's care.  
We are all the beloved of the household of God.  
No exceptions. No orphans.  
We are the children of God.

We are what love becomes when love is given life."

~ The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw

## "No Exceptions" - Implications for Interchurch Families

I considered the term "No Exceptions" to be significant especially for this time period in American History.

We are all one human family created by God who wished us all to be one, as in "No Exceptions."

We read in John 17: 21 *"so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me."* This would mean "No Exceptions" and that God is the one in control.

This highlights the need for Christian Unity and certainly compassion for all others. None of us wish to be excluded. We all want to be invited to the meal, to the table, so that we can share that Holy Experience together.

We are well aware what is written in Matthew 18:20 ESV  
***"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."***

Christ/God is among us when we are gathered together in communities. Do we recognize God's presence there with us and allow God to be the one who is in charge of what transpires?  
~ M.J. Glauber

## Humility and Christian Unity

You (Interchurch Families) see yourselves, rightly in my view, at the cutting edge of the ecumenical enterprise. You are driven by a holy impatience while, at the same time, living and experiencing in your own hearts that longing for unity, a unity that deeply respects and values what the Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sachs describes as "the dignity of difference".

~ Bishop Crispian Hollis,

From Interchurch Families Journal, Volume 11, Number 2, Summer 2003

Please see the entire journal which can be found at [interchurchfamilies.org/journal/pdf/2003V11N02Summer.pdf](http://interchurchfamilies.org/journal/pdf/2003V11N02Summer.pdf)

## The Interchurch Families International Network Theological Working Group: Study on Interchurch Families as Domestic Churches

In the autumn of 2005, members of the Interchurch Families International Network (IFIN) had an opportunity to meet with several staff of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). In the course of that meeting, it was suggested that we interchurch families help the Church explore the concept of the term "domestic church" as raised in the Second Council of the Vatican.

As early as 2007, the IFIN Theological Working Group had considered and then responses that were shared for the following questions in regard to Interchurch Families and Interchurch Marriages:

- ***How do you as an interchurch family experience unity in your marriage and family life?***
- ***How does this affect your understanding of the church(es)?***

Ruth Reardon has compiled the responses to these questions proposed by Thomas Knieps; they can be found at the following link:

<http://interchurchfamilies.org/dc/IFIN-TWGReportonAIFGroupsSpring2007.html>

Some of the points that were made in this report include:

*We are like other Christian families.  
We have a strong sense that it is God who has brought us together.  
We love one another.  
We experience our unity through our diversity.  
Where our relationship with God is concerned, because this is so central to our lives, many of us find that it is very important to pray and read the Bible together. In this way we experience our unity in our home with an intensity that might have been lacking if we were one-church couples.*

*We belong together and we live a unity in spite of experiencing rejection at times or when we are*

*considered as being "non-....." or "other." We share our faith in Christ with our children and strive to live in our home that one Church of Christ that is both deeper than, and transcends, our divisions.*

*Because we have had to overcome our prejudice and ignorance about our partner's church, we have developed a more respectful and inclusive attitude to others. Many families have become involved in some kind of ecumenical work. Because we have crossed boundaries in our marriages, we are more willing to cross other boundaries. For one family it is work with refugees and asylum-seekers, for another with world development, for another inter-faith relations. Because our marriages have caused us to go deeper into our faith, for some it is work in the field of spirituality.*

*It seems to us that the churches need to relate to one another in the way that married couples do, if they really want to grow into unity.*

At this link, <http://interchurchfamilies.org/dc/IFIN-TWGReportonAIFGroupsSpring2007.html> you will find coming from them suggestions for the ways that Interchurch Couples as Domestic Churches/Little Churches of the Home can and do serve as role models for Christian unity further suggestions for the churches.

The compilation is well crafted and well worth reading by everyone who is endeavoring to find Christian Unity or to become reconciled with others. Interchurch Families from around the world have all contributed to this study of the Domestic Church as it exists in our homes and the benefits we have uncovered through this lived experience.



# Tolerance and Wisdom

## **“What is tolerance?”**

It is the consequence of humanity.  
We are all formed of frailty and error; let us  
pardon reciprocally each other’s folly - that is  
the first law of nature.” ~ Voltaire

Many have considered the role of Tolerance  
and Wisdom. Here is a small sampling of their  
observations:

*“The highest result of education is tolerance.”*  
~ Helen Keller

*“And love’s the noblest frailty of the mind.”*  
~ John Dryden

“Tolerance implies no lack of commitment to  
one’s own beliefs. Rather it condemns the  
oppression or persecution of others.”  
~ John F. Kennedy

*“For I have learned to look on nature, not as in  
the hour of thoughtless youth, but hearing  
oftentimes the still, sad music of humanity.”*  
~ William Wordsworth

*“The world is indebted for all triumphs which  
have been gained by reason and humanity over  
error and oppression.”* ~ Thomas Jefferson

*“The responsibility of tolerance lies with those  
who have the wider vision.”* ~ George Elliot

*“Evil is not to be traced back to the individual  
but to the collective behavior of humanity.”*  
~ Reinhold Niebuhr

*“Experience is not what happens to you; it’s  
what you do with what happens to you.”*  
~ Aldous Huxley

*“ In recognizing the humanity of our fellow  
beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute.”*  
~ Thurgood Marshall

*“It is all about humanity, humility and integrity.”*  
~ Debra Wilson

In the Bible, we find many references guiding  
us to try to be more tolerant and to view the  
world with love, a form of wisdom:

**Ephesians 4:2-5 ESV** *With all humility  
and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one  
another in love, eager to maintain the unity of  
the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one  
body and one Spirit—just as you were called to  
the one hope that belongs to your call— one  
Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

**Psalms 133:1** *Behold, how good and pleasant  
it is when brothers dwell in unity!*

**Matthew 7:12** *So whatever you wish that  
others would do to you, do also to them, for this  
is the Law and the Prophets.*

**1 Corinthians 2:12-30ESV**  
*For just as the body is one and has many  
members, and all the members of the body,  
though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.  
For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one  
body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all  
were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body  
does not consist of one member but of many. If  
the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I  
do not belong to the body,” that would not make  
it any less a part of the body. And if the ear  
should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not  
belong to the body,” that would not make it any  
less a part of the body.*

**Tolerance, in religious terms, means  
“sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or  
practices differing from or conflicting with  
one’s own”**

**However, “living in tolerance” is far more  
involved than simply showing sympathy or  
an indulgence for beliefs or practices  
differing from or conflicting with one’s own.**

Let’s look a bit further into the concepts of  
Tolerance and Wisdom

## Tolerance and Wisdom

Wiki "How to" suggests

### 5 steps to becoming more tolerant:

#### 1. Think about why you've been judgmental toward others in the past.

Were you raised to believe that certain people are inferior to you, or have you had negative experiences? Diagnose why you feel a certain way about a certain group of people.

#### 2. Think of these people as just that--people.

They are human just like you and me. We all want to be loved and accepted for who we really are. Everyone should have the right to be exactly who they are without being harassed about it. This brings me to my next point.

#### 3. Realize that there are plenty of intolerant people in this world.

Plenty to be prejudiced toward that group, and to hate them or fear them....

If these people you are judging are homosexual, of a certain race or religion, or something else entirely, they already have an enormous amount of people who despise them already and remind them every day of the fact that they are different. *That would make you an unnecessary addition.*

#### 4. Be part of the solution.

Be the one to love every person for who they truly are.

Make people comfortable around you, and allow them to be themselves with you. You will gain a lot of friends, and gain respect from the friends you already have.

#### 5. Stand up for others!

Don't allow negative joking about the group they belong to. Encourage your new found tolerance with everyone around you.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Be-Tolerant-of-Others>

### *And what if you are on the receiving end of intolerant actions or words?*

*Tolerance is positive force that we would like to practice, but it can be put to a real challenge at those moment when we feel misunderstood, discredited or blamed unnecessarily.*

*How should you respond? Should you respond? From such a position, what possibilities exist for correcting or for improving the situation? How can this situation be recreated into one of those teaching opportunities?*

For moments like this, the Bible offers us some insight:

#### **Luke 9:52-56**

And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.

#### **Romans 16:17**

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

#### **Matthew 7:1 ESV**

Judge not, that you be not judged

#### **Job 34:4 ESV**

Let us choose what is right; let us know among ourselves what is good

#### **John 7:24 ESV**

Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.

#### **Ephesians 5:7-10 ESV**

Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you

# Tolerance and Wisdom

are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

## **I Thessalonians 5:20-22 ESV**

Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

## **I John 4:1 ESV**

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

## ***Let's examine the role of Wisdom:* Combating Hatred and Intolerance with Wisdom**

### ***A 12 Step Vision for Religious Communities and their Leaders Offered by Scholars and Religious Leaders of the Elijah Interfaith Institute***

The daily news makes us increasingly aware of growing hatred and intolerance in our global society. Much of this hatred is aimed at other religions. Too many people have been led to believe that in order to be faithful to their religion and defend its truth, they must denigrate and reject people of other faiths and adopt attitudes and actions of disrespect and intolerance. While Islam has been at the forefront of recent expressions of religious hate, the problem is global and affects all our religious communities. All our religious traditions are both vulnerable to hateful attacks from others and susceptible to exploitation as a basis for hostility and intolerance toward others.

The quest for happiness and well-being is common to all of humanity, and yet we are all capable of practices that get in the way of such happiness. Therefore, dealing with religiously-based hatred is a major challenge for religious leaders worldwide, in the service of their communities.

We, scholars and religious leaders, affiliated with the Elijah Interfaith Institute, would like to share our experience and vision with religious communities, in the hope of stemming the tide of religiously based hate.

**We offer the following 12 points, as a common ground for all religions, based on our common quest for wisdom, with the hope of inspiring reflection and action that will bring us closer to peace and harmonious living.**

These 12 points are broken down in light of three main wisdom teachings, recognized by all world religions.

## **I. KNOW YOURSELF**

The great principle of the spiritual life, that is common to all our traditions is self knowledge.

Without proper self knowledge, we are prone to behavior that we may not be aware of and that we may ultimately not really believe in.

Self knowledge provides the foundation for combating intolerance, violence and religious hate.

### **1. Stop and think. The wise stop and think before they speak and act.**

***Explanation:*** We often pick up attitudes from our environment, and find support for attitudes and actions among our peers. (Some of these environmental influences may either be so pervasive or so well disguised as being the only truth that we are all vulnerable to them.)

We may be well intentioned members of religious communities who do not consider ourselves hateful or intolerant.

But good intentions are not a guarantee of right action.

**The first counsel of wisdom is to stop and think.** View yourself from the outside, take nothing for granted, consider whether what you say is really what you believe and what your tradition teaches you.

# Tolerance and Wisdom

Break the cycle of automatic behavior and of the negative hysteria, even if these have been generated in the name of your religious tradition.

## 2. Be Aware.

**The wise are alert and constantly monitor their own attitudes.**

**Explanation:** Much of our behavior in the personal and collective arena stems from lack of awareness.

Examine yourself. Could there be attitudes in you that might reflect hateful intolerance and lack of acceptance of the other?

Have you fallen into the kind of self righteousness wherein your own value comes at the expense of the other?

Has your religious enthusiasm blinded you to negative or even violent tendencies that have crept into your thoughts and actions? Do such tendencies really cohere with the teachings of your religion?

## 3. Recognize Fear. The wise recognize fear, and combat it with knowledge.

**Explanation:** Hate is sometimes the result of fear.

One fears the unknown, and one may be fearful of other religions because one does not know them, or their practitioners.

Identify any fear within yourself, and overcome it by obtaining knowledge about other faiths.

Do not let fear rule you.

## II. PRACTICE THE GOLDEN RULE

One of the most fundamental teaching of all our religions is the golden rule. It states that you should do unto others as you would want to have done unto yourself.

This principle of reciprocity is articulated in all world religions, without exception. Practicing

the golden rule can help us advance in combating intolerance and the hate it breeds.

## 4. Find the Good in the Other.

**The wise Find what is good in the other. This is their truth.**

**Explanation:** Hate is often founded upon presenting the other in a distorted light that brings out the worst in the other.

Would you like to be presented based on the acts of a few people whose teachings do not represent your view?

Seek to represent the other in a way that is true to historical facts and to the self understanding of the other.

Do not manipulate information about other faiths. Represent them as fairly as you would want them to represent you. And always, seek to find what is good about them.

## 5. Get to Know the Other.

**The wise get to know the other personally.** *(On March 20, 2013, Pope Francis I, invited interchurch and interfaith leaders to meet. This is an important example for all of us. We must engage with others across all traditional and historic barriers so that we can let God be in charge.)*

**Explanation:** Fear and hatred are the products of ignorance.

if we do not know the other, we easily portray the other in negative terms, born of our fear.

Get to know the other in his/her reality. Get to know the other personally. Life looks different when we have friends. And the clash between peoples and religions is radically transformed when we have even a single friend from another tradition.

It is appropriate to criticize, to have difference of opinion and disagreement. That happens between friends as well. But make your disagreements the disagreements of friends.

No matter what you hear about people of other faiths, remember that they are human beings,

# Tolerance and Wisdom

with much more in common with you than is different.

## 6. Understand the viewpoint of the other.

**The wise consider the viewpoint of the other.**

**Explanation:** It is not enough to know the other as portrayed by an external source of knowledge.

We must understand how the other understands himself/herself, even if we do not see eye to eye with him/her.

Only by understanding the other as he or she does can we have compassion and the kind of understanding that cures hatred.

Imagine yourself in the shoes of the people of another religion.

If the problem at hand did not concern another religion, but your own, how would you respond? Would your responses be the same?

## 7 Do not generalize or stereotype. The wise do not generalize.

**Explanation:** Each of our religions has various expressions, faces and ideologies.

With some we identify, others we reject. No religion is a monolith. Therefore, do not make claims about all members of a religion - Jews, Muslims, Hindus, or of an entire religion as such - Islam, Buddhism.

Speak of an individual person, a specific teaching, the problem at hand.

Do not use specific incidents involving practitioners of a religion to condemn the tradition in its entirety.

Condemn the evil acts, not all members of the faith.

Again, think of the diversity of views within your own faith tradition, and how unfair it would be

for you to be held responsible for the attitudes and actions of others in your tradition who do not represent your perspective at all.

## 8. Speak out Against Hate.

**The wise speak out against wrong-doing.**

**Explanation:** When we are down and under attack we want others to stand up for us.

If you see another faith attacked, do for them as you would have done for yourself.

Speak out against what you identify as hateful, stand in solidarity with those who are being persecuted and who are victims of hatred.

**Remember that no one is immune to persecution. Today, the victims may be people of another faith. Tomorrow, it could be you.**

## III. SEEK WISDOM

A wise person cannot be intolerant, nor can she hate.

Wisdom is one of the deepest quests of our religions, and all our religions recognize the value of wisdom.

Wisdom provides an antidote to hatred, violence and intolerance.

The wisdom of our traditions is a response to intolerance.

The test, the true fruit of our religions, is found in the ideal of wisdom, not in the extremism that relies on one sided reading of Scripture and superficial religious enthusiasm.

## 9. Get correct knowledge.

**The wise seek reliable information about other faiths.**

**Explanation:** We all suffer from inadequate knowledge, concerning the other.

Much of our knowledge comes from the media. It is the media's job to simplify and to provide headlines. But the media can often play a negative role in stirring conflict.

# Tolerance and Wisdom

Do not consider the media authoritative. Learn about the other, get first hand knowledge, find facts out for yourself.

Ensure that your sources of knowledge are reliable and not tainted.

Ensure your information has not been manipulated for political gain.

Consult scholars and experts of the tradition, from it and outside it, in attempt to obtain the most reliable knowledge you can.

## 10. Learn the lessons of history.

**The wise learn the lessons of history: Violence and destruction are always regretted.**

*Explanation:* History is full of moments of burning the books of the other.

Books of Jews were burned by Christians in the middle ages, and by Nazis during the third Reich. With the passage of time and maturing of understanding these became sources for regret.

No one looks back with pride today at injuries inflicted in the past. Why do something that you, or your descendants, will regret?

## 11. Practice Humility.

**The wise are humble.**

*Explanation:* Religious hatred and intolerance come from arrogance about ones own faith, knowledge, or virtue.

True virtue consists of humility, which is the sign of wisdom.

It is a spiritual strength, not a weakness.

Humility leads us to recognize that our knowledge of God is always partial, and that no one has a monopoly on wisdom.

We can always learn from others, even from those with whom we disagree on important matters.

A humble attitude to others will open the gates to acknowledging the wisdom of the other, thus enriching our experience of our own faith

## 12. Share wisdom.

**The wise recognize wisdom wherever it is found and share it.**

*Explanation:* Wisdom is one of the highest fruits of the religious life.

Seek it in your tradition, be open to sharing it with others and recognizing it in other traditions.

All religions are fountains of wisdom and the love that flows from it.

Sharing wisdom will open the doors of friendship and acceptance and provide an antidote to hatred and intolerance.

## Conclusion made by the Elijah Interfaith Institute about Tolerance and Wisdom:

In conclusion, we call upon all religious leaders, our brothers and sisters in faith, to look deep within and to identify the sources of intolerance and violence not only within our traditions but also within our own hearts.

The keys to world peace are in our hearts.

Let us purify and open our hearts so that we find the good in the other, practice love and compassion and work together for the happiness and well-being of all.

The Elijah Interfaith Institute will continue to provide resources and direction in the quest for spiritual information through sharing wisdom.  
<http://www.elijah-interfaith.org/index.php?id=1061>

I would like to express my gratitude to the Elijah Interfaith Institute for their wisdom and input regarding how to become more tolerant.

~ M.J. Glauber

# Tolerance and Wisdom

## Implications for Interchurch Families

*How has tolerance and wisdom served us as we move forward on the path toward Christian Unity and in the ways that we may seek to serve humanity?*

*Do you have stories about how tolerance and/or wisdom have served you or someone close to you?*

*Are you inspired by specific Bible verses that pertain to tolerance and/or wisdom? If so, in what ways have these verses affected your lived experience of being interchurch? Do you have some insights that you can share with others?*

*Please consider sharing your stories with readers of the ARK.*

~ M.J. Glauber



I found this article by Elliot Eisner. It addresses why art is so important in education. Many of the points he makes are so applicable to many other endeavors, and perhaps also they may have potential as an application for those who are working toward creating or finding Christian Unity that I thought I'd share it here:

## Ten Lessons the Arts Teach

By Elliot Eisner

- 1. The arts teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships.** Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail.
- 2. The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.**
- 3. The arts celebrate multiple perspectives.** One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.
- 4. The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity.**

Learning in the arts requires the ability and a willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.

**5. The arts make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form nor number exhaust what we can know.** The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition.

**6. The arts teach students that small differences can have large effects.** The arts traffic in subtleties.

**7. The arts teach students to think through and within a material.** All art forms employ some means through which images become real.

**8. The arts help children learn to say what cannot be said.** When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them feel, they must reach into their poetic capacities to find the words that will do the job.

**9. The arts enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.**

**10. The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.**

*SOURCE: Eisner, E. (2002). The Arts and the Creation of Mind, Chapter 4, What the Arts Teach and How It Shows. (pp. 70-92). Yale University Press. Available from NAEA Publications.*

I especially like the points made, that problems can have more than one solution, and that we celebrate multiple perspectives.

We can find suggestions in art that can be applied to many aspects of our lives to live in a society that is diverse and where each person is viewed as a gift or for their potential to become a gift to society.

The arts may become useful as a way of helping to lead all of us to find ways to create cultural bridges.

It seems that at this time in our history that we need to find that of God in the ordinary talents and gifts that we already possess and to look for that of God in the face and work of Others. Each of us has some worthwhile gift or talent to share.

# Ten Lessons the Arts Teach *and* The Spiritual Life

Once again, I am reminded of the following Bible verse: **Philippians 4:8** New International Version (NIV)

**8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.**

## Implications for Interchurch Families:

For interchurch Families, If the arts attend to the subtleties, if the arts are not limited by vocabulary, if the arts open us up to a willingness to accept, if the arts teach us that there are more than one solution for any given problem, if the arts celebrate multiple perspectives, if the arts rely greatly on judgment or preferences in taste as opposed to the adherence to rigid rules, if the arts allows us to explore emotions in a comfortable way, the arts may help us to move forward in other areas where we are looking for solutions where previously none seemed to have existed or to be impossible for us to find previously.

If collaborative creations could be considered in the creation of art and then re-applied to other areas in our lives, I see great potential and hope for the future. Art opens up our own potential to be able to create something beautiful and to seek and find new solutions, and this is exactly what seems to be needed in other areas of the lived American experience at this time.

Please consider how art may be helpful to us as we seek to build cultural bridges in our society and the world. ~ M.J.



## The Spiritual Life, Living Between Mountains of Truth:

*"The spiritual life is lived in the tension between opposites. For example, we must be confident enough to be humble, wise enough to know we are foolish, strong enough to see our weakness. Keeping a sense of balance between these end points keeps us alert. It requires daily practice. We study, we pray, we give, we receive.*

*Every day is a lesson in itself. Let us be mindful of what we have learned. We would not know peace without struggle, gain without loss, faith without doubt.*

*We do not live on a flat earth of the spirit, but between mountains of truth."*

~ The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw



***How then do we apply what we learn in our spiritual lives for how to live in the world?***



## Bible Verses About Creativity and Spirituality

**Genesis 1:27 ESV** *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."*

**Genesis 1:31 ESV** *"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day."*

**Isaiah 64:8 ESV** *"But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand."*

## Bible Verses About Creativity and Spirituality

**1 Corinthians 16:14 ESV** “14 Let all that you do be done in love.”

**Colossians 3:23** “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men”

**2 Timothy 1:6 ESV** “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,”

### Implications for Interchurch Families:

*We are called to be creative and spiritual as we seek a pathway forward on our journey as seekers of Christian Unity.*

*All that we do must be founded in love and for the glory of God although what we do, we perceive as only serving humanity. We may perceive our simple acts of kindness toward those who are more vulnerable than we are to be of little importance.*

*And yet, it is in those spaces of time where and how we act may matter the most.*

*God created all of us.*

*Loving our neighbor as ourselves is a simple guideline, but this may actually be one of the most difficult tasks we are ever given.*

*~ M.J. Glauber*



*Something to reflect upon*

**Posted under the tags: Christianity, Emerging Church, Religion in America, Generation X, Mega-church, Millennial Generation, Postmodern Christianity, Spiritual But Not Religious, Religion News**

## Estate Planning for 2013

### “What If the Kids Don't Want Our Church?”

*In March 2013, Derel Penwell asked “What if the kids don't want our church? That title caught my attention. Here is what Derel Penwell, an author, an editor, a speaker and an activist wrote:*

*“I had a conversation with a man not long ago who has the unenviable task of sorting through his mother's considerable estate, deciding what to keep, what to sell and what to throw away. While sorting, in an act of extraordinary self-awareness, he stopped to consider just what his three adult daughters might like to keep when they find themselves going through *his* stuff after he's gone.”*

*“During this moment of reflection, my friend had an epiphany: “*

**“What if his kids don't want all the stuff he's worked so hard to acquire?”**

*“He was struck by the fact that his adult daughters have no real attachment to all the antiques and precious heirlooms his family has spent so much time accumulating. He went on to observe that his daughters and their partners tend to value instead*

## Christian Estate Planning: What if the kids don't want our church?

things like mobility and flexibility. They've shown no desire to become curators of a bunch of stuff -- even special stuff, really *good* stuff."

"For one thing, they don't have the room for it. They live in apartments and small houses. They don't have any space to house an armoire, no place to stash a dining room table for 12. When your biggest piece of furniture is a flat screen TV, and your idea of rearranging the living room is pushing a stack of magazines to the other side of the Ikea coffee table, the prospect of being responsible for a 12 place-setting china inheritance feels like a commitment on par with marriage, or deciding to take in a stray dachshund."

"For another thing, their lives are centered on adventure and experience. They love the outdoors, love to travel. They're used to packing light. They tend to have a different relationship to "stuff." Oh, they like nice stuff, to be sure. It's just that they view stuff instrumentally. Stuff is a tool for the accomplishment of purposes. And to the extent that a nice tool helps accomplish its purpose more efficiently than a lousy one, they value it. The question put to a thing is not whether its value is intrinsic or even sentimental, but whether it's useful. To their way of thinking, you use stuff to help you do things you want to do, not to make you feel good about things you've *already* done."

**"And how can we blame them, really?** We raised them to think of things as disposable. Sporks, iPods, jobs, marriages -- use a thing until either it breaks (in which case, you buy another one) or you don't need it anymore (in which case, you throw it out and look to the next thing)."

"For previous generations, stuff was what you spent the bulk of your time working to acquire, then spent the leftover time working to maintain and repair, so that you would have something to hand down to your children. And they to their

children. And so on, in an endless string of accumulation and maintenance, world without end. Amen." But what happens when a generation comes along that doesn't care about the game you've spent so much time buying equipment for, has little invested in the durable nature of the stuff you value? What happens when your kids say, "Don't give me all that stuff. I'll just have a yard sale, and call Goodwill to haul away what's left over"?

"Now, you could spend your time trying to convince them that they have a responsibility to value the things you value. You've lived. You know. They're going to want this stuff. It's *worth* something -- not like that stupid crap they spend their money on. (Oh, sure a mountain biking trip in New Zealand would be "fun," but what do you have left when you get back and unpack your luggage?)"

"Convince them the stuff they value is pointless and shallow. That should work. How did that conversation go, by the way, when -- you remember, right? -- when your parents took great pains to try to persuade you how the Beatles couldn't hold a candle to the greats like Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole?"

"Or, you could keep your wisdom to yourself and grouse in silence about the fact that they just don't appreciate all you've worked to give them. (Don't they realize how much time and energy you've put into making something for them to have?) I mean, you *could* do that. Lord knows it's been done before. But you know, deep down you know, that that just makes you the bitter crank you always used to make fun of: "Hey, you kids get off of my Antique American Oak Bow Glass China Cabinet!"

"Or you could make peace with the fact that the way they make it through life will inevitably look different from the way you did".

**"Why is this in the Religion section?"**

*Something to reflect upon*

## **Christian Estate Planning: What if the kids don't want our church?**

“Because churches with massive overhead invested in things like church buildings, denominational infrastructures, functional church organizational models (think: a baptized version of General Motors' organizational structure, complete with a board of directors, departments, departmental committees, etc.) are awakening to the fact that the generations that are supposed to be taking the institutional baton are showing very little interest in grabbing for it.”

“In fact, in many ways, these generations increasingly think the church has been running toward the wrong finish line for years --concerned as it seems to have been not with figuring out how more faithfully to live like the Jesus of the Gospels, but in acquiring bigger and better stuff to hand down to a generation that doesn't particularly want to inherit it.”

“You could try to convince the emerging generations that they ought to value the tools you've always used, that they should want to take care of them, that they're going to need them someday, that they should want to pass them down to their children.”

“Or, you could complain about the fact that these kids just don't appreciate what you've done for them.”

“Or, you could suck it up and bless them on their next wild adventure.”

You can read the original article at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/derek-penwell/what-if-the-kids-dont-want-our-church\\_b\\_2902781.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/derek-penwell/what-if-the-kids-dont-want-our-church_b_2902781.html)

+++++

### **Implications for Interchurch Families:**

*The vernacular of the final line above grabbed my attention as much as the initial question posed by Penwell had grabbed my attention.*

*What will religion and church affiliation look like in the future?*

*The fact that people may be valued over the ownership of things is a good thing to be valued. How can we foster and nurture this positive aspect of our ambient culture that has an aversion to materialism while maintaining church affiliations that nurtured us?*

*Are we inadvertently sabotaging the religion and religious values that we had hoped to pass on to future generations? If so how and why are we, as a culture or society of people, doing this?*

*This is not an issue that is related sole to being in an interchurch marriage, but it is an issue for the culture we live in that surrounds us. We are affected by our environment.*

*It may also be an issue which may have served to distract our churches from being able to see the potential resource that we, as interchurch families, could provide them through our lived example of unity.*

*~ M.J. Glauber*



## Re-finding Our God and Our Religious Heritage - Faith for the 21st Century

*Some theologians, along with ordinary people, have reflected over and considered in effect the question posed on the pages immediately proceeding this page. By asking “What if our children (and here the term “children” is referring to all of our children, not only those who have been brought up in an interchurch family) don’t want to be part of our religious heritage?”*

*This is a question for all Americans because statistics found in a recent Pew Report indicate a drop in church membership in “Mainline Churches” as well as in the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S.A. Asking why and endeavoring to find out the causes for this change is important at this juncture in our American history. ~ M.J. Glauber*

*Books recently published:*

\* **From Each Brave Eye: Reflections on the Arts, Ministry, and Holy Imagination**

was published on January 28, 2013 in Kindle Format.

The publishers created the following book description: “All too often, the metaphors and methods that we apply to the work of the church are those of bureaucracy and business—Robert’s Rules and sales pitches for salvation. Yet many who take the church seriously, ordained ministers and laity alike, yearn for something more.”

“They seek to carve out in their ministries a space for beauty. From Each Brave Eye is a collection of essays by men and women committed to the work of the church and to exploring the intersection between theological reflection and artistic expression.”

“These essays grow out of a common conviction that the human imagination can be sanctified, and that creative engagement with a variety of artists—from Wendell Berry and Richard Russo, to Five Iron Frenzy and Tim Burton—can provide nourishment and life to the contemporary church.” This is a book description for “From Each Brave Eye: Reflections on the Arts, Ministry, and Holy Imagination”

Entries used to create this book include articles written by:

Michael Sares (with Dave Meserve) on Greek Orthodox icons and holy imagination.

Timoth W. Ross on Wendell Berry and the least of these.

Debra Dean Murphy on poetry and the theological task.

Derek L. Penwell on The Empire Grill and community building.

Erik W. Dailey on Five Iron Frenzy and faithful living in a broken world.

Meredith A. Holladay on the Indigo Girls and social justice.

Tom M. Trinidad on Big Fish and our Christian stories.

Todd Edmondson on contemporary film and John Howard Yoder.

Katie Mulligan on salsa dancing and welcoming with discomfort.

\* **Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power—And How They Can Be Restored**

**by Marcus Borg**

was published on April 12, 2011 in Kindle Format. The publishers created the following book description:

# Re-finding Our God and Our Religious Heritage

## - Faith for the 21st Century

Reviewers say the following about Borg's book: "This book could start a revolution. Borg cracks open the encrusted words of faith and pops them into fresh language that people can understand and trust. The last time this happened, we got the Reformation." —Anne Sutherland Howard, executive director of The Beatitudes Society

In a revolutionary argument vital to every person of faith in the English-speaking world, acclaimed Bible scholar Marcus Borg—author of Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time—argues that the very language Christians use has become dangerously distilled, distorted, and disconnected from the beliefs which once underpinned it.

Stating a case that will resonate with readers of N. T. Wright's *Simply Christian*, Borg calls for a radical change to the language we use to invoke our beliefs—the only remedy that will allow the Church's words to once again ring with truth, power, and hope.

### \* The Power of Parable: How Fiction by Jesus Became Fiction about Jesus by John Dominic Crossan

was first published on March 6, 2012 in Kindle Format. The publishers created the following book description:

"In 1969, I was teaching at two seminaries in the Chicago area. One of my courses was on the parables by Jesus and the other was on the resurrection stories about Jesus. I had observed that the parabolic stories by Jesus seemed remarkably similar to the resurrection stories about Jesus. Were the latter intended as parables just as much as the former? Had we been reading parable, presuming history, and misunderstanding both?

~ from *The Power of Parable*

"So begins the quest of renowned Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan as he unlocks the true

meanings and purposes of parable in the Bible so that modern Christians can respond genuinely to Jesus's call to fully participate in the kingdom of God. In *The Power of Parable*, Crossan examines Jesus's parables and identifies what he calls the "challenge parable" as Jesus's chosen teaching tool for gently urging his followers to probe, question, and debate the ideological absolutes of religious faith and the presuppositions of social, political, and economic traditions."

"Moving from parables by Jesus to parables about Jesus, Crossan then presents the four gospels as "mega-parables." By revealing how the gospels are not reflections of the actual biography of Jesus but rather (mis-)interpretations by the gospel writers themselves, Crossan reaffirms the power of parables to challenge and enable us to co-create with God a world of justice, love, and peace."

**Editorial Reviews** for "The Power of Parable: How Fiction by Jesus Became Fiction about Jesus" provided by the publishers indicate:

"A refreshing and stunningly insightful treatment of the gospels as parables. In this book John Dominic Crossan has solidified his reputation as the greatest New Testament scholar of our generation." (John Shelby Spong, author of *Re-Claiming the Bible for a Non-Religious World* )

"John Dominic Crossan, who has given the world a series of insightful books on Jesus, has done it again. His innovative presentation... offers a brilliant new way of looking at parable and metaphor in the gospels and in the life of Jesus of Nazareth." (Marvin Meyer, Ph.D., Griset Professor of Bible and Christian Studies Chapman University )

"Moving from the parables of Israel's Scriptures to the parables told by Jesus of Nazareth to the parables of his life recorded in the ancient Gospels, Crossan combines acute historical investigation with challenging theological observation. In so doing, he recovers the profundity, and the provocation, of the biblical

## Re-finding Our God and Our Religious Heritage - Faith for the 21st Century

tradition.” (Amy-Jill Levine, author of THE MEANING OF THE BIBLE )

“This book is like unto a virus, which a crafty leprechaun took, and infected our preferred operating systems with a Jesus O/S, that is incompatible with previous versions. Verily I say unto ye, Fortunate is the church if a little Crossan goes viral. It may leaveneth the whole lump.” (Rev. David Felten & Rev. Jeff Procter-Murphy, co-creators of the Living the Questions series )

“A remarkable and important book for Christians and for all who seek to understand the Bible better—Crossan combines his customary literary and historical brilliance with fresh insights that illuminate not only the parables of Jesus but much of the Bible as a whole.” (Marcus J. Borg, author of Speaking Christian )

“John Dominic Crossan has done it again. His innovative presentation of how Jesus told stories about God’s kingdom and how the gospel authors told stories about Jesus offers a brilliant new way of looking at parable and metaphor in the gospels and in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.” (Marvin Meyer, Ph.D., Griset Professor of Bible and Christian Studies Chapman University )

“A fascinating book, written with Crossan’s usual lucidity but likely to disturb conservative Christians; a must for most academic and seminary libraries as well as many church groups and pastors.” (Library Journal )

“Crossan’s exceptional clarity and methodical presentation combine to make this one of the best, most enthralling Bible-study courses many readers will ever take.” (Booklist (starred review) )

“Offers valuable and accessible insights into the intentions of the evangelists and the revolutionary content of the gospels.” (Publishers Weekly )

### \* Still: Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis by Lauren F. Winner

was published on January 31, 2012 in Kindle format.

“The publishers have provided the following book description: “Following up her highly acclaimed Girl Meets God, author Lauren F. Winner has written an engrossing reflection of literary grace and spiritual wisdom with Still: Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis.”

“As she lives through a failed marriage and the loss of her mother, Winner finds her Christian faith slipping away. Through reading religious works and tomes and being counseled by leaders of the church, she learns she must find the courage to trust in God in order to to find His presence.”

“Elegantly written and profound, Still offers reflections on how murky and gray the spiritual life can be while, at the same time, shows us how to see the light we do encounter more clearly.” This resonated with me.

Book reviewers have provided the following perspectives:

In Girl Meets God (2002), Winner wrote about moving from Judaism to Orthodox Judaism to Christianity. Now, 10 years on, she has hit a rough patch. The death of her mother and a much-stewed-over divorce have thrown her into a spiritual crisis, and she no longer feels God near.

To miss the presence of God is not new. In the sixteenth century, St. John of the Cross called it “the long night of the soul,” and more recently, Mother Teresa’s letters recount the absence of Jesus for more than half her life. Within this framework, Winner seems, well, a bit of a whiner. Even her spiritual advisor tells her at one point that she might do less thinking and more serving church, God, and neighbor. Although she muses throughout, Winner never really makes clear to

# Re-finding Our God and Our Religious Heritage

## - Faith for the 21st Century

readers, or perhaps to herself, why she thinks this space has formed between her and God. That said, those musings, in short chapters, are elegantly written, and the author's strong personality makes the book eminently readable, even when you want to tell her to snap out of it. --Ilene Cooper, Booklist

"Anyone committed to truly examining the shape of personal faith, unfolding over the years in a broken world, should sense a fruitful opportunity, if not a solemn obligation, to expound at length... [Winner] probes these depths as deftly and eloquently as anyone writing today... An instant spiritual classic." (Christianity Today )

"In present-tense, lyrical essays . . . [Winner] explores her emotional landscape as she struggles to move beyond the depression that plagues her following her mother's death and her own divorce. Examining feelings of grief, failure, and doubt . . . Winner brings poetic nuances to her exquisitely crafted prose." (Publishers Weekly ( a starred review by Publisher's Weekly ) )

"Compulsively readable, direct yet never indiscreet, Winner's book shows intelligence and verve as it seriously addresses the spiritual crises around God's apparent absence or silence, as faced by many. A must-have for Winner's readers and fans of Anne Lamott." (Library Journal (starred review) )

"Titles to pick up now... Still: Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis: insights on spiritual uncertainty from a devout Christian convert." (O, the Oprah Magazine )

"Elegantly written . . . eminently readable." (Booklist )

"The book is made to pour over again and again. You'll fill the pages with underlines, the margins with notes. Each short chapter is loaded with insights that don't so much build on one another as weave a rich tapestry of possibilities in the midst of a spiritual desert." (Relevant Magazine )

"[A] provocative memoir . . . an open, honest contemplation of a spiritual impasse." (Kirkus Reviews )

"Winner writes thoughtfully and eloquently about finding herself in the middle and accepting her place there." (Shelf Awareness )

"Still grasps for faith in a Middle space and discovers a stranger, bigger and more faithful God than we expected." (Relevant Magazine )

"Soft and vulnerable, yet blunt and veracious . . . If you're a lover of books like Traveling Mercies by Anne Lamott or any other writers who are not afraid to unveil their imperfections in hopes of finding kindred spirits, then take this walk with Winner." (Beliefnet )

"Winner possesses a flair for narrative and a willingness to use her life's story as an easel. . . . Like Anne Lamott (Traveling Mercies), or Elizabeth Gilbert (Eat, Pray, Love), Winner is at her best spinning small but hopeful meditations on life's imperfections." (The Washington Post )

"Lauren Winner's brave, spare, and subtle book is a great gift to the church. She lifts up doubt and absence with enough honesty to reveal the unfinished edges, and the radiance, of faith itself." (Sara Miles, author of Take This Bread and Jesus Freak )

*"Winner grabs God's hiddenness by the shoulders and will not let go. She knows the grace that can only be learned when we stand with Moses, staring into the raging waters, and hear a voice say, 'The LORD will fight for you; you need only to stand still.'" (Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, author of The Wisdom of Stability )*

"Still water reveals depth--as does this account of ordinary life and what lies beneath." (Philip Yancey, author of What Good Is God? )

"An unusually painful story, told with rare honesty by an unusually gifted writer." (N.T. Wright, author of Simply Jesus.)

## Re-finding Our God and Our Religious Heritage - Faith for the 21st Century

“Not for the faint-hearted, Winner’s book not only undresses and confronts doubt, but imparts new courage to trust God through it.” (Worship Leader Magazine )

“Winner is one of those gifted teachers who slips in some wisdom along with the sweet stuff on the spoon. We take our medicine from the ancients, the Christian mystics and the scriptures while tasting the sweetness of her narrative.” (Christian Century )

“In an age when it is much easier to make fun of the church than to love it ... Winner has made the church a main character so honestly drawn that we recognize it ... treasure it and laugh in amazement that God can work with it. Still.” (Christian Century )

“Still is about losing the connection to God, or Jesus, and then getting that connection back.” (Washington Post )

“Despite deep pain and doubt, Winner relentlessly searches God’s mysteries, seeking peace and authenticity in her faith. Her spiritual memoir is unblinking, credible, and compelling.” (Christianity Today (Christianity Today 2013 Book Award, Spirituality )



### Implications for Interchurch Families and those who are seeking Christian Unity

These works may not necessarily reflect the views of all the members of AAIF, interchurch families, IFIN, ecumenists, nor those who are seeking Christian Unity.

These books represent different viewpoints and thoughts about our spirituality and religiosity that are circulating in our American Society at this time. In this sense, it may serve us well to read and to seek to understand how many or how some people may view the world we find ourselves living in at this time.

Ark readers would like to hear what books you would suggest because these books may

provide an insight into another viewpoint leading toward solutions for problems that otherwise may seem impossible to find.

*It is a good thing to examine with the intent to seek out the best way to address the human and spiritual needs of our contemporary society. Even if we read viewpoints that completely disagree with what we may consider to be a viable solution, it is in our best interest to try to understand how those people came to hold a viewpoint that may be far different from the one we may hold.*

*The ARK would like to hear what books you have found that address spirituality in the U.S.A. at this time, and what suggestions are offered. Do you agree or disagree with what is being stated and with what is being proposed as a solution?*

*Do you have books that you have read that surprised you by the insight they give into our contemporary society?*

*Have the books you have found connected our ordinary lived experiences with our spiritual being? How was this achieved?*

*What are the positive aspects being suggested as a solution? What part of the suggestions being offered could be ‘tweaked a bit’ so that they could become useful for helping to create what our community may be seeking? And, What is contemporary society seeking? Is it really so different from what has been sought in the past? Some of the changes in church affiliation have been highlighted in the Pew research and statistics. What are we missing? And, Are we missing or overlooking something? Or, Are the solutions simply eluding us? Where to from here? What other factors need to be considered?*

*The time has come in America that we cannot keep doing what we have always done and expect new results. What books exist that may provide new insight and hope and that are inclusive or universal because we are seeking Christian Unity.*

# Re-finding Our God and Our Religious Heritage - Faith for the 21st Century

*Ark readers would like to hear what books you would suggest because these books may provide an insight into another viewpoint leading toward solutions for problems that otherwise may seem impossible to find.*

*~ M.J. Glauber*

## We Are All Interconnected

# The Nature of What it Means to be a Christian living in a Multi-Cultural World

There are a multitude of quotes coming from many perspectives, including the Bible itself, that highlight the fact that we are all interconnected. None of us can actually survive all alone. We need each other to become whole.

We are not called to become identical to one another, but to love one another. Each of us may have been given certain gifts, talents, and skills, but none of these are of any use except in community with each other.

Interchurch Families, those who are seeking Christian Unity, those who are seeking global peace and prosperity, those who are actively engaged in interfaith and/or interchurch dialogues that promote the creation of bridges between two or more diverse cultures or historic religious divisions may find inspiration in the following quotes that come from all around the world and from different historical eras.

Please know that all of the quotes that follow provide a similar insight to a basic need that we are all in need of loving each other, as God has loved us.

As simple as this may seem loving and being loved seem to be one of the most difficult tasks that humanity has ever been requested of us by our creator. In spite of the fact that many have acknowledged our interconnectedness, we still seem to struggle to find the ways that we are

naturally connected one to the other in society in general.

On the other hand, interchurch families, have made a loving connection across an historic division. This marriage seems so natural to us that we may even fail to see the potential that the gift of our lived example can hold for the world.

Wikipedia explains that "Humility, in various interpretations, is widely seen as a virtue in many religious and philosophical traditions, being connected with notions of ego-lessness. All of the major world religions value "humility"

The dictionary definition for being humble explains that it includes characteristics of serving others, to be unpretentious, to be lacking arrogance and excessive pride.

In Mark 12:13, we read "The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

If any lesson should be taken from what is required of us, the one given to us in Mark 12:13 should be noted for its importance for all people in all time periods.

**Here are further quotes about humility and our interconnectedness with each other.**

*"Humility is not the denial of our special talents, but the understanding that those talents never stand alone.*

*We are not solo performers, but members of a symphony.*

*The conductor may give us our individual moments to shine, but we never play the music of life alone.*

*We are accompanied by others and dependent upon them.*

*With enough practice, any one of us can let*

## The Nature of What it Means to be a Christian living in a Multi-Cultural World

*our sounds soar above the rest, taking pride in what we do, but we always return to support the next person to play, for our lives were composed in harmony, our gifts best heard when shared."*

~ The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston,  
Choctaw

### John 13:34-35

**34** I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.

**35** This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

### 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 4 *Mutual Charity.*

9 On the subject of mutual charity you have no need for anyone to write you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.

### Leviticus 19:18

Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your own people. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

*"We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results."*

~ Herman Melville

*"Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone - we find it with another."*

~Thomas Merton, *Love and Living*

*"We are all wonderful, beautiful wrecks. That's what connects us--that we're all broken, all beautifully imperfect."*

~ Emilio Estevez

*"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."*

~ Chief Seattle

*"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly."*

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

*"Spirituality is recognizing and celebrating that we are all inextricably connected to each other by a power greater than all of us, and that our connection to that power and to one another is grounded in love and compassion. Practicing spirituality brings a sense of perspective, meaning and purpose to our lives."*

~ Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You are*

*"It is man's social nature which distinguishes him from the brute creation. If it is his privilege to be independent, it is equally his duty to be inter-dependent. Only an arrogant man will claim to be independent of everybody else and be self-contained."*

~ Mahatma Gandhi

*"Our ancient experience confirms at every point that everything is linked together, everything is inseparable."*

~Dalai Lama XIV

*And that is just a sampling of all of the quotes that exist on this topic "We are all interconnected"*

## Implications For Interchurch Families

## The Nature of What it Means to be a Christian living in a Multi Cultural World

We may each and everyone of us be imperfect. Although we were, meaning all of us, each and everyone of us, created in God's image.

God is perfect, but we, as human beings, are imperfect. We can grow in our love and understanding.

We seek to be as much like Jesus, as Christians as we possibly can become. However, we are still frail human beings. In spite of our best efforts, we often fail. God is right there with us on our journey; we are never alone.

God loves us and has given us one basic and simple task in life. We are born so we are expected to be in and of the world. All that God requires of us is to love our neighbors.

Although our sole task is to love our neighbors, historically this has proven to be a very difficult task. Centuries of war and other historical divisions of one kind or another highlight that we have failed to be able to love each other as we should. What is it that gets in our way that prevents us from loving our neighbors, those

people who may seem to be very different from us although we are all part of this global community that God has created?

We are interconnected to all of creation, God's Creation, which includes all of humanity, every plant, every animal, all drops of water, the air we all breathe, every stone and every grain of sand.

Our task has been given to us all by our Divine Creator. Interchurch Families have bridged an historical divide through love. We live "a good example" for the world in spite of the fact that our gift of a lived unity in a very divided world may not be recognized for the positive attributes to be found within our lived experience.

Our lived example of unity across historical barriers is that of God working through our lives.

It is love that encourages us to open our hearts to those Others.

~ M.J. Glauber



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~ M.J. Glauber

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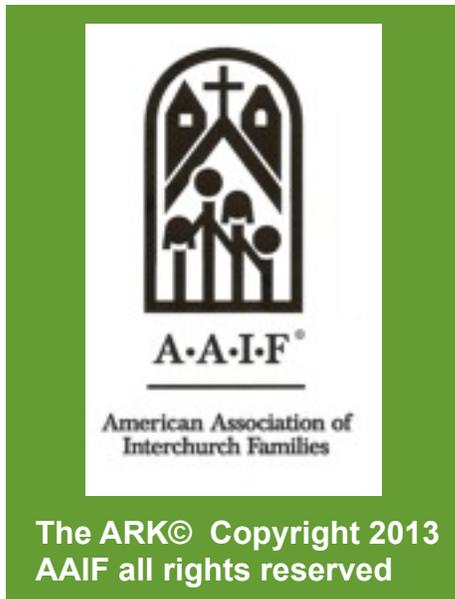
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