

Finding God

My work has taken me to many parts of the world. Seldom for leisure, and often to witness the realities of life. I have seen the best and worst, wining and dining with the powerful and privileged, but also helping build the resilience of families that would not know where to get the next meal. I have also wondered how humans could be capable of making fellow human beings destitute, live in filth, just so only a handful could deserve life beyond the dreams of *mankind* (or, as we would prefer it in my work place, also the dreams of *womankind*).

But I have also seen terrible things happen to those that have everything. Much closer to my heart, and this is not to say Judy and I have everything in the world, although we can confidently claim we have everything we *need*, the life of an innocent girl – our little girl – slipped off our hands right about the time of her birth – all because of very avoidable causes, causes just an armlength away from our reach.

So, it comes as no surprise that these professional and personal journeys have inevitably invoked a resounding voice that's always whispered something to me. Today, friends, I will not shy away from telling you what my biggest spiritual inquisition has always been: **Where is God?** Where is He when all the strife happens? When hunger, conflict, preventable diseases, human-induced damage to the only piece of real estate we have been given as a species (our planet), intolerance, degradation of human values happen? What's worse is how I have come to realize that all these vices can be resolved, if only selfishness were wiped away.

Yet He lets it all continue to inflict pain on His creation. In my mind, I envision God sitting in a large Godly chair, holding a large, magical, remote control, flipping through different channels of our worldly sitcoms of drama, comedy, science fiction, and even thriller (particularly, cause I'm convinced that certain human actions surprise Him just as much as they do you and me). But while my imaginations see Him entertained by the fruits of our *free will*, that silent voice tells me He must laugh, anger, and even weep with us whenever tears call for it.

Despite the gloom and astonishment at His most prized creation, i.e., **us**, I must say I see Him everywhere. I see Him in the eyes of the poorest, who bewilder me with a smile more heartwarming than that of the rich; in the daily reassurance for Martha and Tom, our best friends, who, despite trying for a child for twelve years, nurture an enduring bond of friendship and adventure; in the story of late Rebecca Katsuva from the DRC, whose own repeated experiences of rape in the midst of war brought

her two daughters who would, themselves, be raped by militias at ages 9 and 13. Yet Rebecca turned her tragedies into a miracle for her selfless work assisting fellow victims of rape. Her death in 2016, a result of malaria and not a bullet, has become a symbol of the enormous human capacity to share hope and love in our world. I see God's presence in the miracle of my own wife and children; in the magnificence of nature; **I see Him in this church.**

Friends, the walls of this sanctuary contain a safe space where such stories can and should be told. Every Sunday, or indeed every passing day that I know Pastor Leah or a fellow Deacon is only a phone call away, is a refuge to which things unanswered always have a place where to find peace.

I am blessed to share these walls with you, and may this place be as worthy to you as it has been for me these past almost-four years.

AMEN!