

I Was Just Wondering!

Opening:

Week 2

Introductions – Name, tell us about your life this past week but make it a weather report, i.e., Perhaps it's been rainy and wet this past week, and my life has followed that weather pattern. Where did you experience God's creative force this past week? Was it family related, maybe a gesture from a friend or an associate at work, or in some other way?

Prayer

Suggestions, some basic ground rules to remember in a small group

The art of listening, respecting one another's opinions, and listening carefully.

The art of sharing, do not monopolize the conversation and speak from the heart.

The art of NOT gossiping; what's shared stays in the group. Trust is quickly squandered.

- 1) P 41- The "sharing time" was like a textbook small group, marked by compassionate listening, warm responses, and many hugs. Introductions went like this: "Hi, I'm Tom, and I'm an alcoholic and a drug addict." Everyone shouted in unison, like a Greek chorus, "Hi, Tom!" Each person attending gave a personal progress report on the battle with addiction. *What do you think of the author's comparison between AA and a church small group?*
- 2) P 42 -The founders of AA built-in safeguards that would kill off anything that might lead to a bureaucracy. They believed their program could only work if it stayed at the most basic, intimate level: one alcoholic giving their life to help another addict. *Luther once said Christianity is like one beggar telling another beggar where to find food. Do you think, as a church, we have stayed true to that idea, and if not, why not? Why do you think AA seems so raw and poignant about one person giving his/her life to helping another?*
- 3) P 43 - A local church is the last place they would stand up and declare, "Hi, I'm Tom. I'm an alcoholic and a drug addict." No one would holler back, "Hi, Tom!" *Why do you suppose we can't do something like this in church? Would you want to, or would that be too intense in church sensibility today?*
- 4) P 44 - "None of us can make it on our own — isn't that why Jesus came?" he explained. "Yet most church people give off a self-satisfied air of piety or superiority. I don't sense them consciously leaning on God or each other. Their lives appear to be in order. An alcoholic who goes to church feels inferior and incomplete." He sat in silence for a while until a smile began to crease his face. *What do you think of this response from Yancey's friend when asked why AA meets the needs of some folks when the church does not?*
- 5) P 49 - Luke 13:1-5. When some people asked him about a contemporary tragedy, he responded: Do you think these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them — do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. *What do you think of what Jesus said here?*
- 6) P 50 - Finally, catastrophe joins victim and bystander in a common call to repentance by abruptly reminding us of the brevity of life. It warns us to prepare ourselves if we are the

I Was Just Wondering!

next victim of a falling tower — or an AIDS virus. *Life is not fair. Why? How can we understand this concept in our modern world?*

- 7) P 54 - Despite the many bumbling errors of paternalistic missionaries, the Christians have given India an inspired legacy of education and medicine. If you say the word “Christian” to an Indian peasant — who may never have heard of Jesus Christ — the first image to pop into her mind may well be that of a hospital or of a medical van that stops by her village once a month to provide free, personal care in Christ’s name. It’s certainly not the whole of the gospel, but it’s not a bad place to start. *What do you think of our missionary spirit in the church today? Are we the model Jesus had in mind in Matt 28:17-20?*
- 8) P 61 - I left the camp after a few days, and as my truck pulled away from the camp, a chilling realization set in. The camp doctor had told me that one in six refugees would likely die of malnutrition or disease within the next month. It struck me with an awful force that during my stay in the camp, I had spent far more energy and time worrying about those damnable scorpions than about the 10,000 refugees destined to die. *How do we balance our world and the world of refugees, the starving, and the poor? Should we?*
- 9) P 68 - Scottish writer George MacDonald. **Why is God so restrained in the face of the world’s evil**, MacDonald wondered? Why did Jesus Christ take such a passive role when threatened with violence? MacDonald concluded: Instead of crushing the power of evil by divine force; instead of compelling justice and destroying the wicked; instead of making peace on the earth by the rule of a perfect prince; instead of gathering the children of Jerusalem under His wings whether they would or not, and saving them from the horrors that anguished His prophetic soul — He let evil work its will while it lived; He contented himself with the slow unencouraging ways of help essential; making men good; casting out, not merely controlling Satan. Throughout His life on earth, He resisted every impulse to work more rapidly for a lower good — perhaps stronger when He saw old age, innocence, and righteousness trodden underfoot. MacDonald adds one sentence, a poignant reminder for all of us: “To love righteousness is to make it grow, not to avenge it.” *What do you think of this statement by MacDonald? Do you agree?*
- 10) P 73 - The Bible adds an interesting twist to one aspect of this dilemma. It relates to an old-fashioned theological word that kept cropping up in Wiesenthal’s book: “reconciliation.” A phrase from 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 convinces me that we have the right to offer forgiveness on behalf of another. *What do you think?*
- 11) P 78 - Nothing prepared them, and nothing could possibly prepare them for what they found inside. “A buddy and I were assigned to one boxcar. Inside were human corpses stacked in neat rows, exactly like firewood. The Germans, ever meticulous, had planned out the rows — alternating the heads and feet and accommodating different sizes and shapes of bodies. Our job was like moving furniture. We would pick up each body — so light! — and carry it to a designated area. Some fellows couldn’t do this part. They stood by the barbed wire fences, retching. “I couldn’t believe it the first time we came across a person in a pile still alive. But it was true. *How would you have responded to this unbelievable situation the soldiers found at Dachau? How can we help our world not slip into this sort of barbarism again?*