

I was reading Tony Jones' latest blog entry this morning ["Why I'm Not An Atheist"](#); He concludes by asking others to comment on why they believe or not believe. It got me to thinking... and I thought I would share my thoughts with you.

Here is, more or less, why I believe.

I believe because I cannot not believe. I have tried, but the more I learn, the more I believe in God. The more I learn about genetics leads me to God. The more I see how creation fits together leads me to God. The more I see people rise up to serve, reach outside of themselves, be moved to make a difference leads me to God. The more I see people face down evil with good/faith/hope leads me to God. I have seen people crumble in the face of evil as well, and the compassion shown by people around them leads me to God. Curiously, seeing the evil has not led me away from God. Probably because the good/faith/hope/compassion overcomes it (even though it sometimes takes a very long time and sometimes I don't get to see it first hand. I have seen it enough to choose to trust that it happens other times too, just outside of my purview.)

There is a theological perspective that claims God as "first cause." That fits for me. Something caused the beginning of the beginning. I choose to call that God. I also have chosen long ago to not question the "why" or the "how" of faith. It is OK that it is beyond my understanding. I recognize there is a difference between knowledge and faith. I do not have to know everything, and even if I did, it still wouldn't have much to do with faith. Faith is a different

substance AND process than knowledge. So why do I believe? Because I cannot not believe.

One person indicated he did not believe and concluded his post by asking &quot;If god is truly a forgiving god (especially for those who lead good lives), why believe at all?&quot; That got me thinking as well. I would have expected him to qualify it with (especially for those who cannot or will not lead good lives) instead. People, even those who claim not to believe in God, expect the relationship between God and humans to be some kind of *quid pro quo* arrangement. It seems to me he was telling himself he did not think it was necessary to believe in order to get what he wanted (forgiveness) when it was going to be given anyway. My answer would be the same regardless of how he or anyone qualifies the question... I use the Spartan proverb quoted by Erasmus and re-quoted by Carl Jung: Bidden or not bidden, God is present. I believe because I believe. I just do. It isn't about getting something (i.e. forgiveness) as he implied, or abundance as some evangelicals would imply, or salvation or anything. It is about being in relationship and acknowledging that, celebrating it, and being enlivened and empowered by that. Besides, I believe because I cannot not believe.

blessings to you from Pastor Karla