

Unificationist Finds the First “American Museum for God”

Jonathan Halsey
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Unificationist Jonathan Halsey, 63, has undertaken an unprecedented initiative by founding the American Museum of God, through which he features original artwork and hopes to help actualize the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth by encouraging a better understanding of God’s creations. The father of seven children, Halsey lives in Irving, Texas with his wife and takes pride in being an Eagle Scout, a Viet Nam-Era veteran, and a 1976 “cum laude” graduate in Psychology from U.T. Austin. He worked as an ad salesman for The Washington Times (1983-1993) and for The Dallas Morning News (1994-2004), and he started his own newspaper in 1993 called The Times of Texas. He is currently a truck driver and an interfaith activist and volunteer for Keep Irving Beautiful. The following is his proposal for building world peace through these “Museums of God.”

The idea for a “Museum of God” popped into my head one day back in 2002. I had always been fascinated with museums since I was a kid. By the age of 10, I had collected several dozen animal teeth and won first place in my fifth-grade science fair with an entry called “Different Kinds and Shapes of Teeth.” Then, in high school, I started finding fossil shark teeth and fossil mammoth teeth in the Dallas area. I didn’t date or go to football games; I went fossil hunting.

While going to the University of Texas at Austin in the 1970’s, the Texas Hill Country awakened my senses to a different kind of treasure: abandoned farm houses and barns. I would go tooling around the back country roads in my ’66 VW. I’d find artifacts of a bygone era in these dilapidated buildings, things that I felt yearned and clamored to be immortalized in some way. Even though I was an agnostic at the time, I realized years later that God was calling me through the things of creation. I was able to understand the words of St. Paul in Romans 1:20: “Ever since the creation of the world, His invisible nature, namely His eternal power and deity, have been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they (men) are without excuse.”

From 1993 to 2002, I made several artistic creations from my collection of fossils, rocks, farm tools, cow bones, tree stumps and a variety of other “found” objects. I think the Museum of God idea really hit me, because I had read about the great museums and monuments of the world dedicated to man and his things, but I couldn’t find a museum for God, the creator of all things, on the internet or in *The Yellow Pages*. One day in 2002, I went down to the Dallas County Records building and, for \$12, registered “The American Museum of God.” Work and family caused the museum idea to languish on the back burner for a few years, but I continued to make more art. I sold some of it, won a few art shows and put some items on display for the public in Irving.

On November 21, 2009 a public radio station associated with National Public Radio (NPR) aired an interview with me as part of an hour-long program about Charles Darwin and evolution. I made the case to the reporter that the so-called “laws” of evolution were actually the forces of energy that God constantly uses to modify, fine-tune, and develop life on the planet. I also posed the question, “Why was God in such a big hurry to create life in six days anyway?” when the Bible says, “A day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day.” My father, an eminent PhD geologist and devout Catholic, didn’t see a disconnect between Creationism and Evolution either. He showed me where the six days corresponded to six periods of geological history. It was a great interview. NPR has aired it several times

since. You can Google Museum of God. It's the sixth listing down.



The Purposes of the Museum of God

Purpose (A): The primary purpose of The American Museum of God is to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth through a better understanding of God's nature, His principles of creation, and His providence for mankind.

It's a tall order. I'm not a pastor, I haven't been to the seminary, and I have character flaws. But for over 40 years I've keenly observed human nature, I've studied different religions and philosophies, and I've had a variety of uplifting and painful experiences. Why would *The Lord's Prayer* talk about "...Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth..." if it wasn't supposed to happen?

I want to help actualize God's Kingdom by bringing people of conscience together and letting them have give and take about God and the problems we all face. The American Museum of God will be a place of congeniality, open-mindedness, patience, kindness, reverence, humor, tolerance, peace, empathy and safety. Visitors will be able to view and touch the intriguing and fascinating artifacts, pictures, videos, writings, diaries, art, testimonies, etc. in the museum. The exhibits will come from these primary sources:



- **Religion:** There are five major religions of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, plus a few hundred major sects. I believe that when members of these religions visit The Museum of God, they won't be able to help but notice each other's beautiful families. Then the barriers will come down and minds and hearts will open.
- **The Secular World:** God is bigger than religion. That's why the institutions of science, academia, art, music, literature, business, technology, industry, government, medicine, the media, the military, Hollywood, Republicans, Democrats, etc. have to be represented. I'll encourage these institutions to submit an official "statement," an editorial, maybe even a song about God. Wouldn't it be interesting to hear what MIT or Walmart might have to say?
- **Individuals:** The best expressions of God are people because they are all created in God's image and likeness. The deepest insights into God's heart are not from a religious doctrine or a corporate position paper but from the hearts of people, God's children.
- **Myself:** The artifacts I've collected are external expressions of the internal character of God whereas the pieces of art I've made with these artifacts represent my internal personality as an artist. My Museum of God is decidedly Texan, earthy, and rugged because that's who I am. Unlike most museums, I have taken the found artifacts of creation and turned them into artistic and functional sculptures, such as lamps, clocks, collages, and tables. I have also enhanced the visual stimulation of my museum displays through the use of background music and the sense of touch.



Purpose (B): To encourage others to start their own Museums of God using artifacts that reflect their personal beliefs in God.

- Individuals and families could collect pictures of family, friends, vacation spots, sports victories, daily affirmations, and prayers showing expressions and activities of familial love and harmony.
- Communities, groups and organizations could install a Museum of God featuring that group's unique accomplishments, activities, and distinguished citizens.
- Every state should have Museums of God to remind people of America's true heritage as a chosen nation of God, as a nation of goodness.
- Our nation was founded on godly principles. America needs a national Museum of God with the same status as The Smithsonian to tell the truth about the history of the United States from God's point of view.
- Each country could have its own Museums of God. There could even be an exchange program, which art museums currently use.

Purpose (C): Conduct education and research about God. There is scientific truth and spiritual truth. The former is visible and tangible. It has consensus based on so-called "empirical" evidence. But there is little agreement in the latter because it's in the invisible realm of the supernatural. Won't a biologist and a physicist leave their laboratories to get married because of this intangible quantity called "love?" How to break down the barriers among religions and then between religion and science is not that daunting a task. All it takes is dialogue and a little humility. A Museum of God would foster a consensus about God because the emphasis would be on exchanging ideas, not debating them.

Purpose (D): Promote the development of character, virtue, and ethics. Imagine a universal code of ethics that all human beings, governments, and corporations could voluntarily commit to. What are the principles that bring joy to the individual, promote love and harmony in the family, insure integrity in government, foster honesty in the workplace and establish peace among nations?



Purpose (E): Develop strategies to solve human problems. What is the main problem that has plagued man? God created the universe out of love. That's why love is the most powerful force in our lives. But since the dawn of history, love has been corrupted. False love is most commonly expressed in selfishness and all the other vices. On the social level we see these vices manifested in crime, war, family breakdown and poverty. The American Museum of God can partner with other groups to bring together the greatest minds of society, people with wisdom, humility and heart, examine the historical roots of selfish love and discuss the most promising antidote for selfish love, which evidence has shown is the God-centered, two-

parent family.

Purpose (F) Establish an International Registry of Faith. Encourage all individuals to register a summary of their belief or disbelief in God for the benefit of their family, friends, and descendants. It could be a source of pride, knowing that hundreds of years from now, people would know that a man or woman believed in God and practiced love and virtue. The statement could be long or short, public or private. But it would be an historical record of righteousness. Corporations, organizations, and governments, and any organized group could do the same.

If you would like to loan or donate an artifact to The American Museum of God or submit a statement of faith to the International Registry of Faith you can mail both to Jonathan Halsey, 415 E. 9th St., Irving, Texas, 75060. For the sake of posterity you might like to sign and date your materials.

Thank you for your kind attention to this plan for The American Museum of God. I welcome your comments and criticisms.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Halsey