Interrupted By Hope

ADVENT AS REORIENTATION

(Brian Zahnd “Learning How to Hope” video)

How do we mark our time? Is it by our schedules and watches or is there something that interrupts our calendars? Brian Zahnd talks about re-orienting our lives through the life of Jesus. This is first done through the church’s calendar that starts with Advent (in which the date changes every year), and it moves into our lives to change the rhythm and flow of our lives.

Questions for Reflection

1. The interview starts by asking, “How do you see Advent?” Zahnd comments, “I love the Christian calendar because it speaks to the reality of the Empire of Christ. That there is even another way of telling time.”

   How does Advent break into our usual thinking about time?
   How does it speak of the reality of Christ’s rule in our lives?

2. Zahnd comments on how “[The story of Christ] starts with this anticipation. It does not start with December 25; it starts with the first Sunday in Advent.”

   How can we join the prophets and others in the biblical stories in anticipating Christ’s arrival?

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1 Brian Zahnd here uses “Empire of Christ” interchangeably with “Kingdom of God.” Usually the word “empire” has a negative connotation, but can mean an overarching rule over a group of states or countries. Zahnd responded to my inquiry by saying that “…I used [the term] as a way of subverting the pretentious claims of beastly empire. The term "kingdom of God" can get buried under cliche and lose its punch. I think I was trying to recover some its original scandal by changing kingdom of God to empire of Christ.”
3. Zahnd observes that Christmas then becomes a twelve-day feast because “God has broken into history. The Word is become flesh. God is now with us.”

   How does this “breaking into history” become a source of hope for us?
   How is this a good disruption to our lives?

4. Zahnd says, “Advent is about learning how to hope and to orient our lives in the direction of hope.”

   How can we better move towards hope with “patience”?
   In what ways do we live our lives that bring us more anxiety rather than hope?

5. When asked, “Do you think we need patience in our time?” Zahnd responds by saying, “Patience is the heart of wisdom” and that “One of the primary characteristics [of wise people] is their patience.”

   How is wisdom rooted in patience? How can we learn to cultivate more patience during this season of this season of Advent?