"Why God?"

For Froese and Bader talking about God solves the basic dilemma of asking Americans direct questions about how the center of moral authority, collective or individual, is determined. They state, "When we talk about God, we are actually addressing the moral and philosophical issues that are of such interest to researchers" (p. 147). This is likely because people can more comfortably project their attitudes and beliefs upon God and in so doing escape any personal responsibility to explain themselves. This deflection of personal responsibility is highly attractive in a postmodern world of political correctness. McRaney states, "Typically individuals see themselves as the final arbiter of truth and reality… People today want to live guilt free. American pop culture has skyrocketed the value of tolerance. To offer a different view of reality or practice is now seen as a moral and social taboo."\(^1\) The problem with this philosophy is obvious when considered in light of the growing religious illiteracy in America. Froese and Bader state, "Religious illiteracy increases the odds of misunderstanding and conflict" (p. 3). Americans actually fuel the fires of controversy in attributing their own attitudes and beliefs to God because of their ignorance of the beliefs of other Americans. All the while, the whole situation being made worse by the politicized agendas of public figures (p. 3).

My General Understanding of the Biblical God

For me, God is Abba Father who desires to have a personal intimate love relationship with me. He has created me for this purpose. Factually, God intimately rules with providential care over His creation according to His own purposes. He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and omni-benevolent. This is God as He has revealed Himself in the Bible. I

believe the Bible is clear that God will judge the sin of the world and the individual sins of everyone who is not in Christ. According to Froese and Bader, "This is the [Authoritative] God of the Old Testament, who became incensed with the debaucheries of Sodom and Gomorrah and threatened to destroy both cities as Abraham begged for mercy" (p. 28). My alignment with this category of America's four Gods is supported by the results of taking The God Test at www.americasfourgods.com (p. 161).

_How God Is Perceived in My Personal Experience, Church, and Community_

My faithfulness to my own belief system is revealed in the church of which I am a member. ClearView Church, located in Fishersville, Virginia, is the resulting body of Christ from a schism away from a legalistic and judgmental mainline denominational church, which at the time of the schism, boasted a larger attendance at church business meetings than at worship. The fruit of the Spirit is highly evident amongst ClearView Church in many ways but most notably in the number of new believer baptisms. I have personally witnessed 10 times as many professions of faith during the three-year life of ClearView Church than during the previous nine year's attendance of the mainline denominational church from which ClearView Church emerged. ClearView Church has become my community for while I live in Fishersville, I no more communally identify myself with geography than do the members of the "tiny rural southern Baptist church in central Texas" investigated by Froese and Bader (pp. 52-54).

_The Authors' Research and Conclusion_

Froese and Bader's research is highly insightful in pursuing the answers to their two main questions: "To what extent does God interact with the world [and] to what extent does God judge the world" (p. 10)? While their re-segmentation of America along the four quadrants developed by the intersection of these two matrices is informative, it is self-admittedly a
simplification of a significantly more complex issue. Their groundbreaking observation for me is in their assessment of the general religious illiteracy amongst all groups – a clarion call to action to the heart of the teacher residing in me.

Bibliography
