

FOCUS ON FAITH

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PROBABLY THE BEST WAY TO LIVE?

This month saw the start of an advertising campaign on London buses launched by the British Humanist Association and backed by Professor Richard Dawkins. The campaign slogan proclaims "*There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life*".

Now even though I'm a committed Christian personally I don't have any problem with the first part of the statement. Everyone has a right to believe what they want to and whether they are an atheist (someone who denies the existence of a supreme being) or an agnostic (someone who isn't sure) or someone who has a particular 'brand' of faith – Christian or not – I believe we each have the right to express our views.

What I do find interesting, and not a little disturbing, though is the second sentence in the campaign. That somehow the non-existence (possibly) of God means that we can therefore stop worrying and enjoy ourselves. This seems to me to be totally illogical because if there is no 'force for good' think what kind of mess the world is going to end up in.

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There is no doubt that religious intolerance – even between so-called Christians let alone other faiths – has caused wars, pain and misery. So I'm not naïve enough to believe that Christians are perfect and that we have everything all sorted out. I often refer to the fact that we are '*practising Christians*' because we haven't yet become faultless and we need to keep on practicing.

But it seems to me that God gets a lot of bad press. Every time something goes wrong in the world He seems to be the villain yet whenever anything happens that's beneficial He never gets the credit. You may think I'm being controversial but I don't think it's His fault – it's more the way He's been represented over the years by those of us who claim to know and follow Him.

However according to the Bible the one person who really knows what God is like is Jesus. He said that He came to show us what God is like, to represent Him and to demonstrate His nature and character. Now of course it's possible to argue that the Bible could be totally fictitious, that it's just a collection of ramblings by a bunch of misguided individuals who

liked to tell stories. I accept it takes a lot of faith to believe – in fact the Bible says that the only way we can please God is by exercising faith.

But let's say, just imagine for a moment the possibility, that there really is a God and that Jesus is as the Bible says "**the exact representation**" of Him. Let's consider what the outcome could be based on just four statements Jesus made:

- "**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you...Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid**" – now wouldn't that make a difference to how we think and act?
- "**Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**" – wouldn't that also change the way we live?
- "**Father, forgive them**" – just think of the world issues that could be alleviated if we practiced that one!
- "**Do not judge....For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you**" – that might make us do unto others the things we'd like for ourselves.

In John 10:10 Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." That seems to me to be a promise that is worth investigating and investing in. Whilst I believe that humanly speaking we've tried to make things work I'd argue that we've settled for the second rate instead of the best that's available. After all can you tell me that the world would be a better place if there was no God? For years, at best, we've sidelined God and at worst actively gone against Him by ignoring His ways and commands.

Perhaps we could turn the slogan around and make it: "**There probably is a God. So start believing and enjoy your life.**"

Bringing God back into every aspect of what we believe and do makes much more sense to me – both now and in the long term of eternity.

If you'd like to find out more information on local Churches together with contact details, plus information on activities and other Christian resources, please log on to www.lifting-jesus-higher.org.uk.