

POPE FRANCIS and SYNCRETISM

All Roads Leading To God?

On Tuesday 5th January 2016 Pope Francis published a first-ever video outlining his ‘**prayer intentions**’ and he called upon people to ‘**spread my prayer request this month**’. The content of that video has caused quite a stir and you can read a full account of it and the reaction to it by going to –

<http://christiannews.net/2016/01/09/pope-calls-for-collaboration-with-worlds-religions-those-who-meet-god-in-different-ways/>

There is a link to the video at the foot of the article but, just as a back-up, this link will also let you see what the Pope had to say –

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/in-first-video-message-pope-francis-stresses-unity-we-are-all-children-of-god-39381/>

Crucial statements in the Christian News article read as follows

Pope Francis called for dialogue and collaboration among those of the various world religions on Tuesday, asserting that they are simply “seeking or meeting God in different ways”...

Francis contends that all the religions of the world simply represent mankind’s diversity in seeking God. He says that despite the differing beliefs, everyone is a child of the same God.

In effect Pope Francis is saying that there is a viable and theologically legitimate ‘**broad-road**’ approach to a relationship with God and this reminded me of the very first booklet that I ever had published back in the late 1980’s. It was called –

SYNCRETISM: All roads leading to God

In that booklet I outlined how the then Archbishop of Canterbury, **Dr. Robert Runcie**, **The Vatican** and **Freemasonry** were united in proclaiming this ‘**broad-road**’ approach to God.

Whilst the holder of the office of Archbishop of Canterbury has changed (current incumbent Justin Welby – an avid admirer of Pope Francis) there has never been any repudiation of the views expressed by **Dr. Runcie**. **Freemasonry** has not changed its views and if anything **The Vatican** has reinforced and reaffirmed its **‘broad-road’** stance.

What I want to do now is to type the text of that booklet I had published back then and to affirm the **‘Closing Thought’** recorded at the end of it. This is what I wrote –

SYNCRETISM:
The strong delusion.
**“And for this cause God shall send them strong
delusion that they should believe a lie”**
2nd Thessalonians 2:11

Since the early part of this (20th) century, Christendom has witnessed the birth and growth of the ecumenical movement – the move towards one unified visible ‘Christian’ church – the so-called answer to the Lord’s high-priestly prayer in **John 17:21 “That they all may be one”**. The ecumenists have worked hard to bridge the gaps in areas such as doctrine, worship, praise and pastoral or priestly ministry. Many books have been written charting the beginning and development of this movement and it is not my intention to cover this ground again.

Rather I wish to highlight how the ecumenical movement and its supporters are, in modern parlance, **‘moving the goalposts’**. They are in fact widening the appeal of their movement and aims and seeking to enlist support from quarters which were previously regarded as being outside their sphere of fellowship.

A number of high-ranking leaders, individuals and groups in the ecumenical movement have either made statements themselves or authorised statements on behalf of their groups which show clearly that they are seeking to fuse their brands of ‘Christianity’ with other non-Christian religions. They are making utterances and taking part in events which recognise non-Christian faiths as being equally valid ways of approaching ‘God’.

According to their profession and practice Jesus Christ is no longer the only way to God. In this little booklet I want to highlight one individual and two groups who are allies in propagating this lie or **“strong delusion”**.

Dr. ROBERT RUNCIE

I want first to highlight some areas of a speech which the (then) present Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Robert Runcie, delivered in May 1986 at Lambeth Palace.

Dr. Runcie had been invited by the World Congress of Faiths to give the Sir Francis Younghusband Memorial Lecture – named after the founder of the movement. In the course of that speech Dr. Runcie encouraged **'true dialogue'** as he felt that would help overcome **'religious divisiveness'** and as a result could **'create conditions for greater fellowship and deeper communion'**.

He then went on to make the following, and what I can only describe as, astonishing statement – **'it can help us to recognise other faiths than our own are genuine mansions of the Spirit with many rooms to be discovered'**. Later in the speech he also said the following **'the idea of the harmony of all religions beyond the diversity of practice is a prophetic vision which we find again and again in Christian thought'**.

In the quotations we have referred to it is quite plain that Dr. Runcie is teaching the following:-

- (1) God, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the only true Triune God is equally at home in the lives of non-Christians as He is in the lives of those converted to Christ.
- (2) The co-operation of faiths, their working side by side in harmony rather than in opposition or confrontation is compatible with Christian thought and practice.

These two points are heresies, which if believed and followed, will lead many into a lost eternity **"where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"** (Matthew 24:51).

God, the Holy Spirit, is like the wind and blows wheresoever He desires and can convict and regenerate a sinner of any religious persuasion or none, but He only indwells those truly converted to Christ. We have this confirmation to us in **John 7:39** where the Apostle wrote, **"But this spake he (Jesus) of the spirit, whom they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified"**.

God cannot contradict Himself so to suggest that the Holy Spirit is operational within the lives of non-Christians, just as He is in the lives of those converted to Christ, or that He would seek to promote non-Christian faiths is a satanic lie.

As regards Dr. Runcie's assertion that **'the harmony of all religions... is a prophetic vision... in Christian thought'** I can only state that rather than being a **'prophetic vision'** this is a **'pathetic perversion'** of God's truth.

The doctrine of Christ (**"I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me"** John 14:6) is unique and exclusive. It is at the heart of true Christian faith and the only true Gospel.

Are we to share the glory of that faith with other religious systems? In his epistle, **Jude in verse 3** exhorts those **"preserved in Jesus Christ"** (verse 1) to **"earnestly contend for THE faith which was once delivered unto the saints"** because in **verse 4** we read of some who were **"denying the ONLY Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ"**.

In the book of **Isaiah**, one which Jesus Christ Himself read from, God said **"I am the Lord: that id my name and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images"** (42:8) and in a later chapter we read **"I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God beside me"** (45:5).

Dr. Runcie is one of the 'leading lights' in the ecumenical movement, and, as I stated at the beginning of this booklet, this movement lays great emphasis on the words of Jesus when he prayed **"That they all may be one"** (John 17:21). What a pity that Dr. Runcie did not lay the same emphasis on the words of Jesus recorded earlier in **verse 20** of the same chapter where He prays **"Neither pray I for these alone but for them also who shall believe ON ME through their word"**.

The pen of the Apostle John and the sayings of the Saviour show the teachings of Dr. Runcie to be nothing more than **"fables"** as predicted by the Apostle Paul (2 Timothy 4:4) and **"damnable heresies"** as prophesied by the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 2:1).

Another doctor, Dr. Luke, wrote these inspired words **"Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?"** (Luke 6:39). Those who are led by Dr. Runcie along this road he describes will fall hand in hand into the ditch of **Gehenna**. Those who allow themselves to be guided and directed by leaders like Dr. Runcie would do well to remember the words of the Apostle John recorded in **2 John: 9** **"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God"**.

On 20th July 1986 at Inish Rath Island, where there is a commune of Hare Krishnas, Dr. Owen Cole, the head of Religious Studies at the West Sussex Institute for Higher Education and an Interfaith Consultant with the Archbishop of Canterbury gave an address during which he said the following -

'The Hare Krishna devotees, together with the Jews in our midst, whose spirituality has gone unnoticed for so long, and Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists, remind us that the world is not all Christian. They invite us to ask whether we can really believe that when over half the religious people in the world pray and praise God their supplications and worship are ignored... The religious pluralism of the global village which the world now is offers the western world hope, if only it will become humble and tractable... so I pray that all who worship in this (Hare Krishna) temple may pass from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality'

Are there any concrete examples of actual churches now departing from the historic reformation view of the uniqueness of salvation in Christ alone, and accommodating or tolerating other approaches to God? It is sad to record that the answer is **'yes'**.

The magazine **'Prophecy Today'** in its May/June 1989 issue devoted its entire editorial to an article entitled **'Enter the Apostate Church'**. In this article is disclosed how the Anglican Church of St. James, Piccadilly had planned to hold a special service on 20th April to celebrate **Buddha's Birthday**. Part of their publicity for this event read as follows –

'There is also a living legend which states that at this full moon the Buddha and the Christ join together with all other liberated beings and with the communion of saints to invoke a great annual blessing for the planet'.

Mystical nonsense is the only way to describe this evil statement. The article then went on to describe a typical weekly diary of events offered under the title of **New Age Alternative Ministries**. These included Yoga, Zen Buddhism, Meditation, Faith Mysteries, Parapsychology and Sacred Art Dance. They declare their aim to be to help people find guidance from their own inner self – apparently there is no room here for the guidance of the promised (to truly converted Christian believers) Holy Spirit.

Following the publication of the article, the minister of St. James, Mr. Donald Reeves, was given space in the July/August 1989 issue of **'Prophecy Today'** to enable him to reply to what had been written about his church and its activities.

He described a picture which had accompanied the original article as **'mischievous and misleading'** and went on to deny that his church embraced the **New Age**. However, later in his reply, Mr. Reeves commented on texts such as **1 Timothy 2:5** ("For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus") **Acts 4:12** ("Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name (Jesus Christ) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved") and **John 14:6** ("Jesus saith unto him (Thomas) I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me") which he stated were used to argue the point that **'Christianity is exclusive'** and **'superior to all other religions'**. His comment was as follows –

'I do not understand these texts in this way – all the “one and only” words used to describe Jesus in the New Testament belong NOT to doctrine, dogma or theology but to the language of confession and testimony... This language of testimony means “I am fully committed to Christ” not that no one else is worthy of commitment’.

In an article on this subject published in the Daily Telegraph,
Mr. Reeves is quoted as saying -

'I'm fed up with receiving letters from these sorts of people saying Jesus Christ is the sole saviour, the sole mediator. The language of the New Testament is about testimony, not dogma and doctrine'.

Cecil: The following is an addition to the original text of my booklet:

So, according to Mr. Reeves
**'the language of the New Testament is
about testimony, not dogma and doctrine'.**

The question is – who shall I believe?

Mr Reeves or the apostle Paul who wrote –

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine,
for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”**

(2 Timothy 3:16)

No mention there of **'testimony'** but primary mention of **“doctrine”**.

I know who gets my vote and it isn't Mr. Reeves

If I understand correctly what Mr. Reeves is saying he appears to be teaching that the texts referred to are exclusive when cited in personal confession and testimony by believers on the Lord Jesus Christ when they confess and testify to His saving grace in their own personal life BUT he does not understand them to teach that this necessarily will be the confession and testimony of all 'saved' people. In other words he appears to believe that there is salvation in names other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the same issue of **'Prophecy Today'** a letter was published from a member of the general public who had during the previous year visited St. James and in his words –

'was horrified to see first of all the bookstall with shelves and shelves of what I considered occult books and books about other religions. In the church itself were various leaflets advertising events about reincarnation and transcendental meditation'

Another letter from a parishioner of St. James, a supporter of Mr. Reeves stated -

'From the Buddhists we can learn how to meditate more fully... I was really excited that the Buddhists felt they could celebrate the Buddha's birthday in our church'

Perhaps it might be appropriate at this particular moment to remind ourselves of the words of **Isaiah 42:8** **“I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another neither my praise to graven images”**.

Christians are indeed called upon to testify to the people of the world of whatever religious persuasion or none to the saving grace of God through faith (alone) in **“the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29). We are commanded to witness to those of other faiths but not to join with them in any form of ‘fellowship’ (see **Ephesians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18**) or to give them a ‘platform’ or ‘outlet’ for their pagan practices (**1 Timothy 5:22**).

Having read carefully the reply of Mr. Reeves I am persuaded that he is twisting the clear teaching and doctrine of the Bible concerning the uniqueness of the person of Christ and of the salvation accomplished by Him alone at Calvary in order to justify the clearly unscriptural ‘goings-on’ at St. James.

Both Mr. Reeves and his supportive parishioner drew attention to many traditional Christian activities which take place at St. James. However, their declared understanding of scripture and their following of practices in relation to other faiths, which are clearly forbidden by the Bible, show that these outward expressions of ‘Christianity’ are branches of a tree which is clearly corrupt at the root.

In his article Mr. Reeves shows that he is deceived, as are many today, into thinking that ‘making a commitment to Christ’ is at the heart of Christian salvation – that a person can be saved by exercising their will. The Bible declares that those who received Jesus **“were born NOT of blood, NOR of the will of the flesh, NOR of the will of man, BUT of God”** (John 1:13) and the Apostle Paul wrote **“So then it is NOT of him that willeth, NOR of him that runneth, BUT of God that showeth mercy”** (Romans 9:16).

‘Commitment to Christ’ is a clever, modern-way of expressing the old-age religion of Cain – salvation by the works of one’s own hands.

Cecil:

Perhaps at this point I could supply a link to an article on the ministry web site that deals with this matter of ‘Commitment to Christ’ – it is found on <http://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2015/March/Commitment-is-not-Conversion.pdf>

At the heart of true Biblical Salvation is **‘being converted’** (see **Matthew 13:15; 18:3; Mark 4:12; Acts 3:19**) and then committing that which has been converted to God. This was the testimony of the Apostle Paul in the words of **2 Timothy 1:12** (**“for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to KEEP that which I have COMMITTED unto him against that day”**).

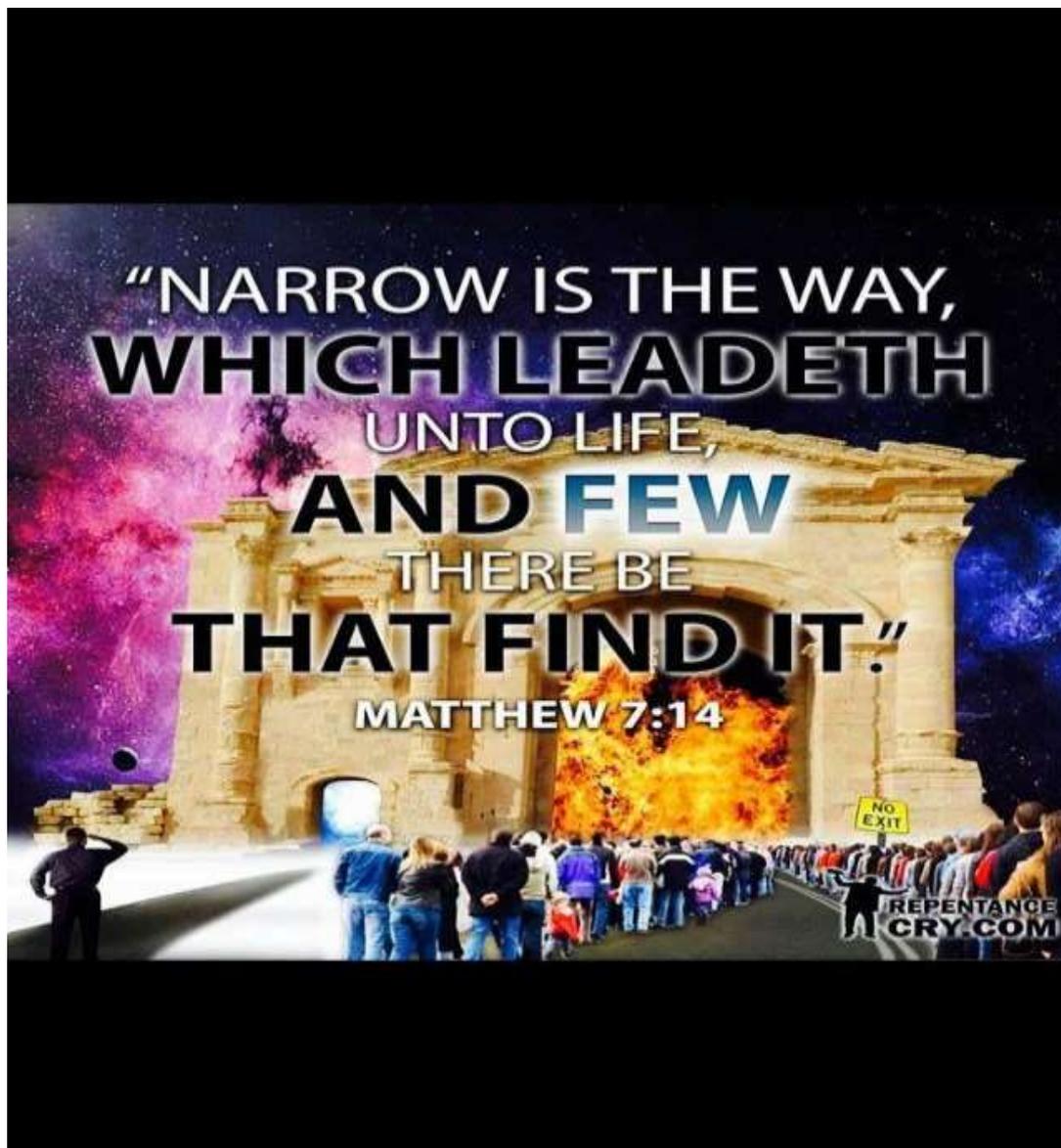
Being savingly converted (turned around) is possible only by encountering personally on the 'road of life' the person and work on the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the clear message, not only of the Apostle Paul on the 'road to Damascus', but also of Simon of Cyrene who was completely 'turned around' (converted) from the direction in which he was going when he met Christ on the road to Calvary (Luke 23:26).

The words and actions of those involved in the work at St. James show clearly that their approach to and understanding of salvation is syncretistic.

Cecil:

The following verse (copied from a post on Facebook) seems appropriate in the wake of what I have just written



Even in Scotland there is an example of syncretistic thinking. The Bishop of St. Andrews wrote in these terms about a new Buddhist Temple which had opened near Lockerbie – **‘Here is a place where not only ideas but a LIVING experience of prayer may be shared’**. It is statements like this, or the denial of the virgin birth, literal bodily resurrection and ascension into heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ which can bring down from on high the wrath of God’s righteous anger against such heresies – **“There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction”** (2 Peter 2:1) – it is indeed sobering to reflect upon the terrible destruction which can be wrought by either a bolt of lightning or an exploding aircraft.

Cecil:

The significance of these last 2 comments will be better understood by reading the articles on these two links

<http://home.bt.com/news/world-news/july-9-1984-wrath-of-god-the-prime-suspect-as-lightning-bolt-sparks-york-minster-blaze-11363991251682>

and

<http://www.history.com/news/remembering-the-1988-lockerbie-bombing>

THE VATICAN

One of the claims the Roman Catholic church makes is that she never changes – **‘always the same’** is the translation of her Latin motto – **‘Semper Idem’**. This is emphasised again and again that she never changes because as the ‘one holy, catholic and apostolic church’ she has been **‘preserved from error’** down through the centuries especially in areas of doctrine, sacraments and government – **that is her claim.**

In Ireland a widely used Roman Catholic catechism is that of the Most Reverend Dr. James Butler which when published had the approval and recommendation of the Irish Roman Catholic Archbishops.

In **Lesson X**, which deals with **‘The True Church’**, which of course the Roman Catholic church claims to be, the following questions are asked:-

3. (Q) Is there any other true church besides the Holy Catholic Church?

(A) No... there is but one true church.

4. (Q) Are all obliged to be of the true church?

(A) Yes: No one can be saved out of it.

In **Lesson X1, 'The Unerring Church'** is taught as follows:-

7. (Q) Can the church err in what it teaches?

(A) No: Because Christ promised to guide the pastors of His church.

Lorraine Boettner, in his excellent book, '**Roman Catholicism**', outlined this same point in chapter 2, '**The Church**', when on page 25 he quoted various points which **Pope Pius 1X** set forth in his '**Syllabus of Errors**' issued in 1864:-

Point 17: 'The eternal salvation of any out of the true church of Christ is not even to be hoped for'.

The '**true church**' the Pope was referring to was of course the Roman Catholic church. It is worth remembering that this same **Pope Pius 1X** also said the following

'I alone, despite my unworthiness, am the successor of the Apostles, the Vicar of Jesus Christ: I alone have the mission to guide and direct the barque of Peter: I am the way, the truth and the life'.

Protestants were of course in the past regarded as heretics and merited death if they did not recant and agree with the doctrine of the '**real presence**' in the sacrifice of the mass where the Roman Catholic priest is deemed to have '**immolated the host**' (i.e. '**killed the victim**'). Many did indeed pay for their witness with their lives and accounts of their painful deaths can be found in '**Foxe's Book of Martyrs**' and Bishop J. C. Ryle's '**Five English Reformers**'.

The central doctrinal truth preached by the Reformers was that a sinner can be '**justified (declared righteous) by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone**'. Works play no part in a person's justification but rather are the expected fruit of a life regenerated by the Spirit of God.

At the **Council of Trent (1545-1563)** Rome gave her response in these words –

'If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake alone or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be anathema'.

How these words from the lips of men contrast with the inspired words of Holy Scripture which declare – "**Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law**" (Romans 3:28). How appropriate that the apostle Paul should have written these words to the Church in Rome.

Since Vatican 2 there has however been a subtle change in the tactics employed by the Roman Catholic church. Believing that she could not 'take over' other denominations and faiths through direct confrontation she has sought ways to be able to justify 'absorbing' them into her system without having to compromise beliefs previously held and taught.

As a result of Vatican 2 Protestants are no longer regarded as 'heretics' but can now in appropriate circumstances be known as 'separated brethren'. Rome has of course had to be able to justify this change in terminology and this she did in these words –

Referring to those **'quite large communities'** who have become **'separated from full communion with the Catholic Church'** Vatican 2 (Ecumenism 1:3) says –

'One cannot impute the sin of separation to those who at present are born into those communities and are instilled with Christ's faith. The Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers. For men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptised are brought into certain, though imperfect communion with the Catholic Church. All those justified by faith through baptism are incorporated into Christ. They therefore have a right to be honoured by the title of Christian and are properly regarded as brothers in the Lord by sons of the Catholic Church'.

Cecil:

At this point it might be helpful to clarify that in Rome's view when people are according to her 'justified by faith through baptism' she is of course referring to 'water baptism'. Baptism, no matter how or when performed, has no power to bring about Rome's claim of being 'justified'. A helpful short talk on this subject of baptism can be heard on this link

<http://www.gty.org.uk/MediaPlayer/archive/7431>

So, whether a baptised ('properly' of course) professing Protestant realises it or not, he or she, according to the Church of Rome is in communion (albeit 'imperfect') with the Pope through the merits of their water baptism. However, although Rome now concedes the title of 'Christian' to 'properly baptised' Protestants, salvation CANNOT be theirs outside the Catholic church because the decree goes on to say –

'Nevertheless our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or communities and Churches are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wishes to bestow on all those whom He has regenerated and vivified into one body and newness of life – that unity which the Holy Scriptures and Revered Tradition of the church proclaim. For it is through Christ's Catholic Church ALONE, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the FULLNESS of the means of salvation can be obtained'.

Rome is saying that 'properly baptised' professing Protestants are 'Christians' who are cut off from the **'all-embracing means of salvation'**. Does this mean that 'properly baptised' professing Protestants are Christians who are lost? That certainly seems to be what Rome is saying.

In the communist world the influence of Rome has increased dramatically since the election (by the Cardinals) of Pope John Paul II and the high profile of priests and bishops, particularly in Poland, has had considerable influence in shaping the political/trade-union relationships which now exist.

In Central America, the Church of Rome has been prominent in siding with 'the people' as has been evident following the chaotic elections in Panama in May 1989 and of course in South America **'Liberation Theology'** has been used to allow the priests of the Roman Catholic church to side with armed revolutionaries.

So, from these few brief statements, we can see how Rome is able to absorb many varied factions into her way of working without having to compromise on any of her doctrines.

Islam has historically been an arch-enemy of Christianity and the centuries of conflict bear witness to this truth. Over the past decade the world has seen a dramatic rise in the growth and influence of Islamic Fundamentalism. In Great Britain mosques are now common-place and, as we shall see later in this booklet, joint worship between 'Christians' and Muslims is taking place in 'high places'. Again it would appear that Rome is adopting an attitude that does not confront Islam but portrays a view that both religions are mutually compatible.

Cecil:

I'm simply 'staggered' that I wrote this over 25 years ago especially when I see what is happening in the world today

The following statement was put out by the Vatican following the month of fasting (Ramadan) by Muslims in 1988 –

'During the month of Ramadan you have shown by prayer and fasting your faith in God and your submission to his holy will. This faith in the ONE God, living and true, a faith which is the heritage of all the spiritual children of Abraham, the father of believers, UNITES US as brothers and sisters in God and encourages us to work together for solidarity, justice and peace among all peoples'.

Just as 'water baptism' was used as a means to recognise non-catholic 'Christians' as **'brothers in the Lord'** so it would appear that the foundations are being laid to accord the same respect and title to the followers of Islam, again without having to compromise Catholic doctrine. The justifying ground in this case is not 'water baptism' but the mutual **'faith in the one God'** and the declaration of being **'the spiritual children of Abraham'**.

Cecil:

Galatians 3:29 simply 'shreds' this claim by Rome about Muslims being 'the spiritual children of Abraham'. Paul makes VERY clear who the true 'spiritual children of Abraham' are by writing

"IF YE BE CHRIST'S then are ye ABRAHAM'S SEED and heirs according to the promise".

Only TRUE Christians are the 'spiritual children of Abraham' and as Muslims deny both the deity and death of the Lord Jesus Christ they have no spiritual relationship either to Him or all His people (including Abraham).

PAVING THE WAY FOR SYNCRETISM

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

No longer is it fashionable to teach the truths of biblical Christianity as being absolute truths and to proclaim that faith alone in Christ alone is the only basis for true salvation. In schools and colleges 'Christianity' is presented as merely one religious system amongst many which are regarded as equally valid ways of approaching 'God'.

At the National Association of Head Teachers conference in Llandudno at the beginning of June 1989, Mr. John Swallow, a member of the association's council said the following – **'It ought to be inconceivable to have any act of collective worship unless it is multi-faith'**. Mr. Swallow, head of a school in Essex, is also a member of the Church of England General synod.

TELEVISION COVERAGE

In years past a 'religious broadcast' would simply have meant coverage of a 'Christian' event. Not so today; morning worship on television has included a 'service' from a Hindu Temple and 'Friday prayers' was of course special coverage of Islamic activities during their month of prayer and fasting (Ramadan).

On 18th July 1989 on BBC 1 television a children's programme entitled 'Umbrella' was broadcast between 9.15am and 9.30am. In the course of the programme a story was told by one of the presenters how 'once upon a time' a wise king in India sent one of his servants to find as many blind men as possible. Having assembled a group of eight a very large elephant was brought out and each of the blind men had his hand placed upon a different part of the elephant – head, ear, tusk etc.

Afterwards they were asked by the king to describe what they thought an elephant was. The one who touched the head said it must be **like a big pot**; the one who touched the ear thought it was **like a huge clothes basket** and the one who touched the tusk thought it was **a huge spike**.

The story goes on to say that soon they were all quarrelling – each one claiming to have the right idea about an elephant. The king is reported as saying – **'Amazing! Each one of them was right – but only partly right. Being blind none of them could see the full picture'**.

The moral of the story was then described in these words –

'The followers of the great religions of the world are a bit like that. When it comes to asking "Who made the world?" they have a slightly different answer. It's right – but only partly right because each is looking from only one point of view... if people of different religions can understand this, then perhaps they can learn to live together without disagreeing and from time to time fighting and killing each other'.

Following inquiry, the BBC disclosed that the story was an ancient Buddhist story from the 'Udana' and that a copy of the story could be obtained from The Buddhist Society in London.

Cecil:

**How blessed are we to know, as Paul wrote, concerning Christ
"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell"**

(Colossians 1:19)

"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"

(Colossians 2:9)

Through education and media attitude the uniqueness of Christianity is being eroded and the claims of rival religions are being elevated until the view put across is that they are all really in harmony with each other and that 'God' is really at the back of them all. Once that conclusion is arrived at then what is to stop the followers of each system meeting together to worship their common 'God'?

SYNCRETISM IN ACTION

ST. JOHN the DIVINE, EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL, NEW YORK

In the early part of the 20th century a Japanese lady by the name of Nao Deguchi founded an organisation known as **The Oomoto Foundation**. This was a school which promoted traditional Japanese arts but it also had a broader vision of bringing harmony between those of differing religious traditions – traditions which had often been at war with each other such as Buddhists and Shintos.

In 1975 **Oomoto** held an exhibition of its art works in the Cathedral Church of **St. John the Divine**, an Episcopal Cathedral in New York City. As well as staging the exhibition, **Oomoto** asked if they could stage their own **Shinto** ceremony in the cathedral in a spirit of '**gratitude to the Divine**' (quote taken from their own magazine: January-March 1982) for the opportunity of putting on the exhibition and for the new friendship developing between the two religions.

Dean James Parks Morton of the cathedral not only gave his permission but '**took part in the ceremony in a gesture of ecumenical hospitality**' (How's that for 'moving the ecumenical goal-posts?') In the cathedral one can now view '**The Oomoto Corner**' – a permanent reminder of the 'spiritual links' which now exist between the two religious groupings. The following year Dean Morton was invited '**to come to Japan and perform a Christian service in Oomoto's main sanctuary at Ayabe**'.

Cecil:

On the following links-page you can see that there is still a friendship connection between St. John the Divine Cathedral and The Oomoto Foundation
<http://www.oomoto.or.jp/English/enLink/linksen.html>

In November 1981 Dean Morton returned once again to Ayabe for another service this time in the presence of fifteen hundred worshippers. The occasion, known as a '**Kiss of Peace**' service was '**presided over by nineteen priests representing nine sects and denominations of the Shinto, Buddhist, Islamic and Christian faiths**'.

A description of what took place reads as follows –

'After the priests took their places facing each other at either side of the altar, the service began with a ritual of purification in the Oomoto manner, using a paper-tasselled wand, and the chief Oomoto priest chanted a "norito" prayer announcing the service and its purpose and beseeching God's blessing.

In a pattern of alternation followed throughout, the ceremony then proceeded with elements from Christian services. A choir of Oomoto youths sang the Latin hymn “*Spiritus Domini*” and the Rev. Sekimoto read a prayer for God’s divine aid in bringing peace to men’s hearts and to the world.

Following this came a reading of the Sermon on the Mount with choral response, providing a most appropriate transition to the central event of the service, the multi-religious prayer for peace’.

The closing of the service was described in these terms –

‘As the choir sang, all the priests stood and embraced each other in a spirit of brotherhood and peace. They then filed down from the altar and through the midst of the congregation, who rose to meet and embrace them and each other as the priests passed slowly through the huge Miroku-den’.

Cecil:

I think this would be better described as a ‘Kiss of Death’ service, especially with those references to ‘the altar’ (a place of death). True Christian worship no longer involves an ‘altar’ but rather often centres round a simple table to remember the Lord’s sacrifice on God’s ‘altar’ – the Cross of Calvary

In an interview recorded in the magazine Dean Morton disclosed that between 1975 and 1981, nine services of joint worship had taken place – three in Japan, five in New York and one at Mount Sinai. He stated that in the most recent of the services held he had found the ‘**testimonies**’ of four Shinto priests and two Muslims ‘**deeply moving**’.

Commenting on the first service in New York in 1975 and his visit to Japan the following year, Dean Morton said –

‘He (Kyotara Deguchi) had never, I suppose, offered the Oomoto ritual in anything other than a Shinto shrine, and doing it in a cathedral, a Christian place of worship, well I thought of it as simply being hospitable, but he saw it as The New Age. I saw it as The New Age only when he asked me to do my own thing at his house and this was the moment of truth’.

Cecil:

At this point the following scriptures seem most appropriate
“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work...
And then shall that wicked one be revealed...
And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion,
that they should believe a lie”
2 Thessalonians 2: 7, 8, 11.

Towards the end of the interview Dean Morton stated **'old fashioned ideas will only make matters worse – such as religious practices being exclusive'** and concluded with these words **'THE ONLY WAY to continue growing spiritually is to be in the company of brothers and sisters who are very different from myself. And that at root is what Oomoto and the Cathedral and joint worship are all about'**.

Cecil:

Towards the conclusion of my article I will make specific reference to Dean Morton's use of and views on what he called 'THE ONLY WAY'.

COMMONWEALTH DAY 1987

At a service conducted by the Dean of Westminster Abbey in the presence of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh there were readings from the Svetavatara Upanishad (Hindu) and the Koran (Moslem). A discourse of the Buddha was also read. Amongst prayers offered were some in Hebrews by a Jewish Rabbi. Amongst other guests were the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and a representative of Cardinal Hume, the Roman Catholic leader.

PEACE PRAYER MEETING IN ASSISSI

A number of years ago the religious leaders of practically every faith requested all groups engaged in armed conflict to observe a 24-hour cease fire and then these same religious leaders converged on Assisi to meet together to pray to their own particular 'God' for peace.

PRAYER CHAPEL AT HEATHROW

A 'multi-faith' chapel has been opened at Heathrow airport where passengers can go to pray before their flights. Displayed on a large curtain at the front are the symbols of the major religious faiths. As well as the Cross, the Crescent of Islam was seen to be prominently displayed.

SERVICE OF DEDICATION FOR WINTER OLYMPICS 1988

In Calgary, Canada, prior to the official opening of the winter Olympic Games, a 'multi-faith' service was held for those competing, officiating etc. Every 'shade' of religion participated and much of the stewarding for the event was handled by Mormons.

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, INDIANAPOLIS, USA

In March 1989, what was billed as an 'ecumenical' service took place in the above church, but in fact there was participation in the event by Muslims and Bahais.

CANTERBUY FESTIVAL OF FAITH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

This event is planned for the weekend of 15-17 September 1989. Throughout the festival there will be worship and prayer by groups such as Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Bahais, Jews, Sikhs and Hindus. Two pilgrimages which are planned to converge on Canterbury, one from Winchester and the other from Watford, will be led by a Bahai and a Hindu respectively. On the Saturday afternoon, it is planned to hold a display in the cloisters of the Cathedral, mounted by the different faiths and ecology groups. On the Saturday evening the Cathedral itself will host a 'New celebration in music, dance, sound and symbol... drawing upon the teachings and beliefs of many faiths'.

Cecil:

This last event held at CANTERBURY provided the backdrop for a series of 3 15-minute TV programmes called 'All God's Children' and shortly I shall provide a link to enable you to watch them. The following are just a few brief observations about each of the 3 programmes.

Programme 1: Apart from the views expressed by Tony Higton and to a degree by Patrick Sookhdeo the rest of the views expressed were to say the least 'depressing' especially those of Kenneth Cracknel and his students.

Programme 2: Mary Hall of the 'Multi-faith centre' was certainly plugging religious pluralism and a religious 'all-encompassing' view contrary to the words of the Peter in Acts 4:12. There was often much use of the word 'understanding' but the only 'understanding' that needs to be compassionately conveyed to non-Christians is found in the words of the Paul in Ephesians 2:12 that such were "without Christ... having no hope and without God in the world".

Programme 3: At least the lady Eileen Barker had the honesty to acknowledge that a syncretistic form of religion was happening and the 'communal prayer' that followed demonstrated that. The man Don Cupitt articulated his spiritual poison that basically 'everyone should be free to do that which is right in his own eyes' and firmly rejected 'the narrow way'. 'Dialogue' was strongly advocated but we learn from Cain's experience with his brother Abel that 'dialogue alone is dangerous and deadly'. The Apostle Paul formally rejected inter-faith, multi-faith spirituality in these words of 2nd Corinthians 6:14-17 "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God... wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate". The presenter summed up with her own conclusions (1) that differing religions should be 'correctives on each other'. I disagree for the truth is that error cannot correct truth; rather error is exposed by truth. (2) She concluded we are 'all God's children'. The scriptures (Bible) do not support this false conclusion and only those 'born again' and 'adopted' are 'God's children.' The link to view these programmes (there is a bumpy transition between 2 & 3) is

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zir6Co0g4A1>

Returning once again to the mantra of 'understanding' I will now give links to 2 videos made up of quite a number of TV programmes that I recorded over a period of time on these subjects of 'Inter-Faith' and Multi-Faith.' These show just how far from Biblical Christianity much of professing Christendom had departed from the 'Great Commission', even back in the early 1990's.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g727y_21sg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0g01B0DloGk>

In my concluding remarks I shall quote two portions of scripture, one Old Testament and the other New Testament, that to me contain principles that clearly caution against the God-dishonouring pursuit of 'Inter and Multi-Faithism'.

FREEMASONRY

Within the ranks of Freemasonry there may well be a number of truly "born-again" disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and they would most likely be horrified at the suggestion that their membership of this organisation is incompatible with allegiance to Jesus Christ and that they were in fact aiding the work of the devil himself.

In truth I sincerely believe that such have simply not 'thought through' the full implications of being a member of the Freemasons whilst at the same time claiming to be a Christian. For someone to become a Freemason they have to declare their belief in a 'Supreme Being' whether that be the God of the Bible or some other non-Christian deity. On this basis members regard each other as '**brothers**'.

However, this is a false brotherhood, outside of natural family relationships, because such '**brothers**' must have a common father, and 'the God of the Bible Supreme Being' is not the same as 'the Supreme Being God' of non-Christian religions.

There is of course a genuine brotherhood outside of natural family relationships and that is the brotherhood (and sisterhood) of truly "born again" believers. A Christian, who is also a Freemason, and acknowledges a non-Christian Freemason as a '**brother**' is in fact breaking the first commandment. He is also giving credence to the view that Christianity is only one of many equally valid religions, faiths and traditions.

Because the worship is designed to exclude the name of any one particular deity and can be harmoniously entered into by '**brothers**' of differing faiths, it shares the glory of true worship with pagan deities and stands in direct opposition to the Word of God quoted earlier – "**I am the Lord: that is my name and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images**" (Isaiah 42:8). Freemasonry is a staunch supporter and promoter of **SYNCRETISM** – whether the members realise it or not.

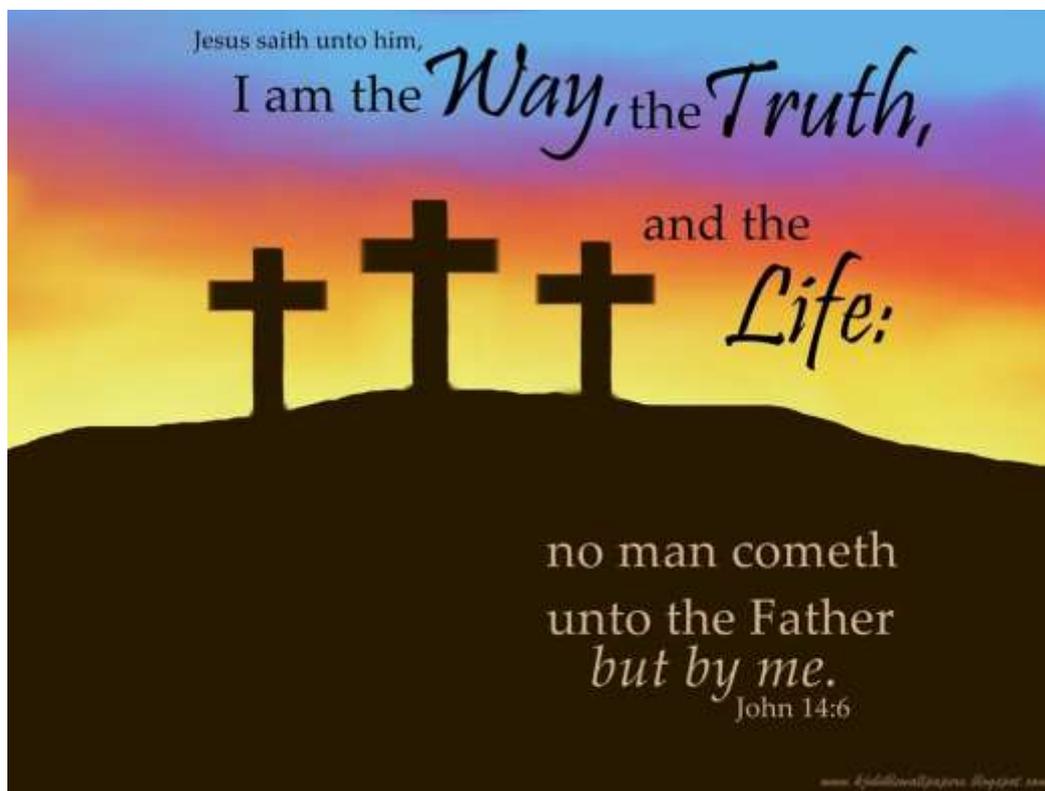
CLOSING THOUGHT

We are truly living in an era when the exclusive claims of the God of the Bible are under great attack, not just from without, but from people in high places who claim to be within the Christian family.

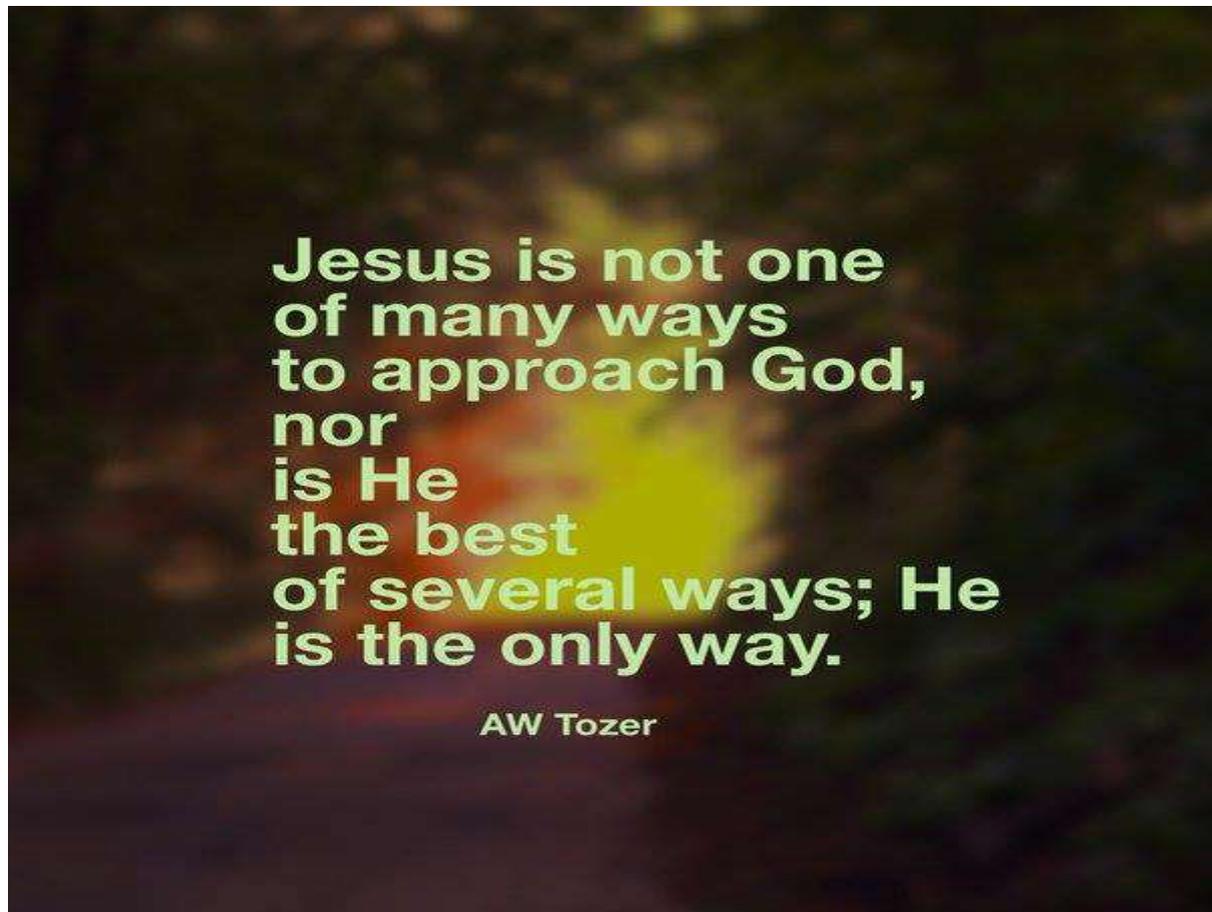
Today, more than ever, those converted to the only Saviour of men. The Lord Jesus Christ, need to **“run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith”** (Hebrews 12:1-2).

He alone is **“the way the truth and the life”** (John 14:6) and the good news is that **“He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”** (Hebrews 7:25).

Earlier on page 18 I wrote **‘Towards the conclusion of my article I will make specific reference to Dean Morton’s use of and views on what he called ‘THE ONLY WAY’**. Dean Morton was of course advocating a ‘broad road’ approach in religion as being **‘The Only Way’**. By advocating such an ‘approach’ Dean Morton was putting himself directly at loggerheads with the Saviour Himself whose words I quoted in the closing paragraph of my booklet – namely the words in this graphic



I think it would be accurate to say that in many religious and non-religious circles **these words are probably amongst the most hated ever uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ.** Whilst they may be hated and loathed it is nevertheless true as A W Tozer said -



As for final words (of others) in this article perhaps I could direct readers to the following. Firstly there is an analysis of the heretical prophetic '**ecumenical utterings**' of **Beth Moore** who has recently taken on the role of a programme presenter on **TBN TV**

<http://pulpitandpen.org/2016/02/05/beth-moore-predicts-god-will-unite-all-sectors-of-christendom/>

Then secondly, and more specifically aimed at the subject matter of '**SYNCRETISM**' let me direct you to a recent panel discussion involving amongst others my good friend Roger Oakland. All of the discussion is relevant and helpful but perhaps you might get the best 'flavour' by watching **from 15:51 to 21:20** as in that portion direct reference is made to the video featuring Pope Francis that I referred to in the opening paragraph of this article. The link to the video is -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww3hN2XeQP8&app=desktop>

Earlier (on page 20) I wrote –

In my concluding remarks I shall quote two portions of scripture, one Old Testament and the other New Testament, that to me contain principles that clearly caution against the God-dishonouring pursuit of 'Inter and Multi-Faithism'.

These are the two portions -

“And Joshua called for all Israel and for their elders, and for their heads and for their judges and for their officers and said unto them... Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefore to the right hand or to the left; That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them nor bow yourselves unto them. BUT cleave unto the Lord your God as ye have done unto this day... Else if ye do in any way go back and cling to the remnant of these nations, even those who remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you, Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you, but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides and thorns in your eyes” (excerpts from Joshua 23:2-13).

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given over to idolatry...Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are very religious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God, who made the world and all things in it, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, Neither is worshipped with men's hands... And the times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man, whom he hath ordained; concerning which he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead” (excerpts from Acts 17:16-31).

As for final words in this article I can think of no better words than these

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”

1st Timothy 2:5

Cecil Andrews – ‘Take Heed’ Ministries – 15th February 2016