

531 Every Knee and Every Tongue

In response to the way things are going in our society, in last week's Reflection we concentrated on the unchallengeable uniqueness of the Judeo-Christian Faith both in terms of its content, focussed on Jesus Christ as Messiah, Lord and Saviour, and in terms of its impressive underlying "truth-credentials". These truth-credentials, also known sometimes as "the Christian Evidences", comprise a great body of objective facts pointing strongly to the truth of the biblical Judeo-Christian Faith. As a result, far less faith is required for instance to believe that "Jesus Christ is Lord", with all that that Lordship involves, than to believe in the doctrinal truth of other Faiths now present in British society.

The ultimate Christian truth-credential is of course Jesus' physical resurrection from the dead (see the four Gospel accounts). The Holy Spirit also tells us through Paul that if the resurrection of Christ did NOT happen, then the whole Christian Faith is just a cruel waste of time (see I Corinthians 15.1-20, especially vv.12-19; and **, see the end of this Reflection). After carefully examining the pile of resurrection evidence as if in a court of law, Sir Robert Anderson, a senior Metropolitan Police officer and respected Bible teacher of the late nineteenth century, concluded that Jesus' resurrection is "the best attested fact of history". What a conclusion, and what a comfort! If and when our personal faith droops for whatever reason, as can happen at times, we lean afresh on the twin truths of the empty tomb and of the great resurrection cry, "Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!". Many of our earliest brothers and sisters in Christ suffered martyrdom rather than deny Jesus' resurrection: they knew it had happened – and so do we.

It is appropriate now in this Reflection to point out some of the rival Faiths now present in western society. We have come across the "four ugly sisters" before in these Reflections – namely Liberalism, Atheism, Secularism and Humanism (easily remembered as LASH). These four Faiths all believe in evolution; they all ignore Almighty God; and they all put Man on God's throne. Since the so-called "Enlightenment", these ugly sisters have become the dominant belief systems of the western world, with consequences all too plain to see.

Next, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism all now have a significant if quiet presence in Britain, whose adherents cause no particular problems; we pray for all, and especially for our Jewish

brethren, that their current blindness regarding their Messiah may soon be lifted (egs., Romans 11.25 / Zechariah 12.9-14 / Matthew 24.29-35).

Then we come to the special case of Islam. Though its underlying truth-credentials are virtually non-existent, Islam aggressively seeks global domination with a worldwide caliphate under sharia law. Islam is growing fast in western countries, by mass immigration and deliberately higher birth rates; in Britain for example 'Muhammed' in its various spellings has been the most popular boy's name for some years now.

At the start of this year's season of Ramadan, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said – "For well over a millennium, Islam's message of peace has inspired people ...". In speaking thus Mr Guterres clearly knows very little about Islam's "message of peace". "Islam" does not mean "peace", it means "submission", and Islam's track record over the centuries is clearly one of bloody conquest.

Next, for the first time ever there are streets in London now lit up with "Happy Ramadan!"-type lights, courtesy of Sadiq Khan, the Muslim Mayor of London. "Celebrate diversity!" is the great cry, but Ramadan is far from being a cosy Islamic parallel to Christmas. As two prominent Islamic spokesmen have recently put it, "Ramadan is a month of holy war and death, for Allah. It is a month for fighting the enemies of Allah and God's messenger, the Jews and their American facilitators ... Ramadan is the pious month of 'Jihad-o-Qital' (Jihad and killing). Those who attain martyrdom while waging Jihad, doors of heaven remain open". Is it really appropriate for such a season to be celebrated with lights in London at taxpayers' expense?

Christians need to understand the common tactics of Muslims in western countries: a steady message of victimhood, of innocence, of being misunderstood, of demands for special treatment, of violent anger if criticised, and of desire for peace, love, friendship and harmony with all - under sharia law. There is also the ambition to attain senior public office in any "infidel state" so as to further the sharia cause more effectively.

In our Christian response, we pray, we befriend where possible, (for many Muslims keep their distance from Qur'anic "jihad" in practice), and we speak when appropriate of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is revered in the Qur'an as a notable prophet.

But of course, praise God, Jesus is far more than that: it is before this Jesus, and no other, that one day “every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (from Philippians 2.9-11). We can be sure that the date for that solemn occasion is writ large in the Heavenly Diary.

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** On the This Week page of the website a pdf book, “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ – Reality and Response” can be downloaded without charge. This book of solid encouragement examines how the six most common attempts to write off the resurrection all fail, leaving only one rather obvious conclusion.