

There is no God?

As I write this article, we have just come through the 1996 Christmas period. One thing that always surprises me about this time of year is that thousands – perhaps millions – of people who deny or ignore God for the rest of the year *find religion* for a couple of weeks either side of December 25th.

It is not my purpose to criticize them. I have work with some of these people every day of my working life and have managed to get along very well with most of them. Perhaps you do too. People who live their lives as if there were no God. Some of them are very nice people. Some of them are not. Some of them live a somewhat decent life. Some of them do not.

It appears that, as this millennium draws to a close, only a handful of Canadians profess to believe in God and act upon that belief. One wonders if Jesus Christ is today repeating His words from Matthew 17:17: "O unbelieving and perverse generation... how long shall I put up with you?" We do know that He foresaw the conditions in the end time that caused Him to ask, "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8)

Still, it always boggles my mind that so many people can live from day to day with the idea that there is no God, that the whole, vast, fabulous universe is nothing but a series of accidents, that they have nothing to look forward to beyond their allotted threescore and ten years other than an eternity of nothing. In the mean time, they appear to be saying my their action and their inaction, *Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die*.

In James Autry's book, *The Spirit of Retirement*, the author recalls this remarkable quote from a lady by the name of Marti Sivi:

My whole life I have sought to find God. When I was a little girl, I asked my mother where was God. When she said she didn't know, nor did anyone else, I remember thinking, 'Well, why is everybody doing all kinds of things every day instead of trying to find out?' I couldn't believe people were shopping, talking, making money, et cetera, without being preoccupied about finding God. I have looked for God everywhere in my life. I wanted certainty, I wanted hard facts. I wanted to know where the manual was for human relationships if God existed. Why did he just leave us here with nothing but our curiosity?

Ms. Sivi would be happy to learn that God did *not* leave us here with nothing but our curiosity. He gave us His manual for living. He gave us His Word.

I have believed in God for as long as I can remember. This, I know, does not make me any better than those who do not believe in Him. When we were very young, my brother and I would make space in our beds at night to accommodate God the Father, Jesus Christ, and at least one angel! Over the years since then, I have seen the hand of God working in and through His people. Like many of you, I have seen Him work miracles right here in my own family. I have asked Him to heal my seriously ill child and He has answered with a clear "Yes." Then, later and for reasons known only to Him, He has answered a similar request with a clear "No, not yet." Then, yet again with another clear "Yes." I have seen my family doctor's mouth drop open in amazement at some of the healings God has performed for my daughters. Don't tell me that there is no God!

If an atheist were to ask me why I believe in God, I doubt that he would be willing to spare the time that my answer would take. I don't have the space here to express all of my reasons, but I know that most of you who are reading this already have a strong belief in God. This is good because I'm not sure that I can do justice to the setting down of all of these factors *on paper*. My efforts at writing cannot compete with the world's gifted professional authors. Many chapters from me could not convey this point to you any better than the following brief article* written thirty years ago by the late Jim Bishop, author of *The Day Christ Died*:

There is no God.

All of the wonders around us are accidental. No almighty hand made a thousand billion stars. They made themselves. No power keeps them on their steady course. The earth spins itself to keep the oceans from falling off towards the sun. The earth gives itself day and night, tilts itself so that we get seasons. Without the magnetic poles man would be unable to navigate the trackless oceans of water and air, but they just grew there.

The human heart will beat for seventy or eighty years without faltering. How does it get sufficient rest between beats?

A kidney will filter poison from the blood, and leave good things alone. How does it know one from the other? How about the sugar thermostat in the pancreas? It maintains a level of sugar in the blood sufficient for energy; without it, all of us would fall into a coma and die.

Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words – and a brain to understand them – but denied this to all other animals? Do infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt?

Who showed a womb how to take the love of two persons and keep splitting a tiny fertilized ovum until, in time, a baby would have the proper number of fingers, eyes, ears and hair in the right places and come into the world when it is strong enough to sustain life?

There is no God?

'The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God.'" (Psalms 14:1; 53:1)

* Copyright © 1966 by Jim Bishop, Miami Herald (July 27, 1987), Miami, Florida: Used by permission

John Plunkett

Building Bridges, The Church of God Canada

Qualicum Beach, British Columbia, Canada