

## Painting's Perspective



This, I think has been the hardest question that I've so far tackled and I would not want anyone to go away thinking that this is the definitive right answer. These are though important questions to raise and mull over. I hope that my response might help with your own reflections and recognize that you might be led in a different direction to the approach that I've taken here.

### **Is any faith better than no faith?**

Faith is about believing certain principles and trusting that belief sufficiently for it to influence the decisions you make and the way that you live out your life. In this sense everyone has faith in something. Atheists put their faith in the belief that there is no God and so probably look to human reason and intellect as the main means by which they make life choices.

Clearly the best position is to have faith in the truth, in things as they really are. The primary question is 'does God exist?' From that other things follow. For if God does exist we have an objective source of all other truth, because as creator of all that is, God must know all there is to know. The Bible puts it like this; "the secret things belong to God but the things revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may follow all the words of this law" (Deut 29:29). In other words God knows everything and reveals some of it to people and they hand it down.

So now we can think about the various faith positions. The doctrines and practices of each of the major world religions, other minor ones and even cults have emerged out of what their founders and adherents believe are truths revealed by God. So which of these doctrines or principles are actually true and what do we put our faith in?

There are problems with having faith in rule based religion. One is that a static set of rules is open to corruption over the generations. A second problem is that human beings do not seem to have the power to live by an external set of rules. Thirdly, general principles cannot always be applied to a multitude of

specific situations. In daily life what we need rather than rules is an on-going communication with God who knows truth and is truth.

I believe that there are people of all faiths who seek out this kind of communication and relationship with God. Jesus though claimed that He alone made it possible by His life, death and resurrection. No founder of any of the other major religions has ever made the same sort of claims. For the Christian then the spiritual connection with God (the Holy Spirit) is a natural one. I believe that through Jesus I have access to God's truth and so make my decisions and choices. There are moral formulae and rules in the Bible that express God's truth as I'm sure there are in the Holy books of other faiths but it is through the Holy Spirit that I seek to understand those principles and gain the power to apply them.

In conclusion I'm convinced it is true that God exists and so it is better to believe that and humbly seek His direction than to either deny His existence or live life without reference to Him. From that point on things get blurred. I'm sure that the doctrines of the other religions contain truths from God but the Christian perspective differs to the other faiths in how we gain access to God. That is why I personally remain a Christian. I recognize however that my own relationship with Jesus is far from perfect and that in this age we can never get a pure truth. The source of truth is sound but I'm not sure how well I connect with it. I suggest that it is very likely that people can, through other faiths, find a route to Jesus's saving grace and that for some the Church has been more of an obstacle than a path in making that journey.

*Steve*