

Beloved in the Lord,

Toronto is an exciting place. The longer I am here, the more interesting it becomes. What is the religious state of Toronto? Many of our neighbours believe in the God of the Bible or some other god or a creator of some sort. But many of the educated elite tell us that there is no God. But I think it is also true that many people live as there is no God. For many, religion is, after all, about feeling good about connecting to something or someone outside of ourselves. It is a hope that gives us a motivation for life beyond this miserable existence. What does it matter who we worship or how we worship or what we believe in as long as it makes us all feel just a little better and behave just a bit better? What's wrong with that?

Enter the Church of Jesus Christ with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church's witness to the world is that Christ is the only way to the living God. The Church cries out that humanity is estranged from God and cannot of his mind or imagination conceive of Him. We confess that everyone outside of God is a mere shell and that real life, meaning, and purpose is found in God's purpose for us. We confess a God who created us to live in communion with Him and that we broke the communion. We confess that there can be no communication with God when the communion is broken and that God must restore that communion.

And God has. The rest that man so looks for says the writer of Hebrews was contained in Sinai's law but was not responded to with faith. That communion with God has been restored in Jesus Christ, who is God and human.

There is one God and one way to Him. The Church's good news is not the gospel of our New Age. But it is the Gospel that has been given to the Church to sound bravely despite the world's criticism. I bring you the Word of the Lord under the theme: **Christ is the Way to God: 1. No Other Way 2. The Way**

No Other Way The Belgic Confession has shown us how it is we have been saved. It gives us the words that define what we believe about God and who He is. We confess that outside of Him; there is no life. That is, of course, fundamental. Who God is and how He works as revealed by the Bible, His self-revelation to us excludes all other definitions of God, salvation, and spirituality. The Bible and not man's imagination tell us what peace is. Outside of God, there is no Sabbath, and we must fear, says the writer of Hebrews, if we remain outside of it. The Hebrew Christians are told that Canaan was not itself the source of rest, nor Joshua, but God who has provided rest in Christ. That means that there is communion with God once again and rest for our spirits. For when the soul comes to God, the soul is comforted and at rest. So, we confess that ***we have no access unto God but alone through the only mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ the righteous.*** That is an exclusive statement. It denies Buddha, Allah, Mother Earth and the Great Spirit. It denies any communion to be had there because you cannot commune with a god that does not exist. It is an affirmation of the first commandment, you shall have no other God before me, for no other God could have brought us out of the land of slavery.

We confess that in our sin, we are depraved that in ourselves, we are unable to come to God, let alone conceive of Him. To be depraved means that we cannot imagine what real life and goodness is: what communion with God is. Thus, the sinful man may be looking, but he is looking for the wrong thing in all the wrong places. If you do not know what rest is, how are you going to find it?

It has been said that Christian existence is prayerful. What is prayer, but the communication of God's people following God's will? How can one pray to God if He does not know who God is? How will prayer be appropriately offered if one does not know the will of God for prayer? How can one communicate with God when we do not know how to communicate with God?

If there is no other God and we confess that there is no other way of life, then the reality is there is no other way to God than the way He provides. That is the confession of faith in Christ. That is the confession that comes not from man but God, that is, the confession that believes that all that God has said in His Word is true.

Here is the confession that came to the people in the time of the Reformation. Remember that the Roman Catholic church was preaching that God was an angry God who demanded that people pay for their sins. Christ made this payment possible, but He did not make the payment. They told the people that they were too unholy, imperfect,

and horrible to come before God. They were taught that Jesus was angry with them and would refuse to hear them. Thus, people to pray to God, getting around the angry Jesus through the church and the priests. They were told to call on the name of saints who faithful on earth were now faithful in heaven to intercede for them. In the Reformation days, the Roman Catholic Church paraded the saints, relics, a piece of hair or clothing of a saint; his bones or fragments of the cross were all said to contain special powers of grace. By 1563 the council of Trent had raised Mary to new heights. It was taught that she was born without sin, was the mother of God and grace, and that God, as Father, needed the revelation of Mary to show His more delicate side. Mary was the first to be saved and prepared the way for salvation. Thus, sinful unworthy people needed the saints and especially Mary to cover their sins and make sure that their prayers came to God.

But that was then. No Roman Catholic believes that anymore do they? The cult of Mary has never been more substantial. One Roman Catholic scholar wrote about prayer to the saints, ***God could help us by Himself, but He won't outside of the communion of love***, which means that we need the saints' help come to salvation. No, perhaps many Roman Catholics will deny all of this, but this is officially what their Church teaches. The Ave Marias still sound from their Cathedrals, and most are still offering their hail Mary's as if praying to God.

"No other way!" replied Calvin and De Bres. "No other way," trumpets the Bible. Christ alone is our advocate and intercessor. Sinful saints come to God in Christ just as we do. To go through the saints is to dishonour Christ and is a blasphemy against God. It is a violation of the first and second commandments. Such false religion can bring no hope, no comfort, and peace, for it does not correctly teach who God is and how He saves His people and like the Pharisees so long ago, it placed a yoke that broke the necks of the people.

Yes, we are indeed unworthy in our sin, but we do not base our religion, faith, and confession on our unworthiness. Instead, we come to God based on Christ's worthiness, for this is what the Bible teaches us. He is the Way and the Truth and the Light, and no comes to the Father except through Him. And why would we look for any other way?

The Way "One way," the bumper sticker used to read. And One way it is. There is no other way to God in prayer and worship but Christ. The confession of the Christian is relatively simple. We confess a God who has brought us back unto Himself through His Son Jesus Christ.

We confess that Jesus Christ is our advocate. It is not Mary or the saints who plead our case before God, but it is Christ alone. He is not the prosecutor but is our defence attorney. He does not take a break but pleads for us constantly at the right hand of God. Where the Word of God judges us and leaves us naked before the judgement seat of God, Christ steps in. He has passed through heavens. His sacrifice on the cross has provided communion between God and His people possible because of His great power to wash through the baptism of His Spirit. We come in Jesus Christ. He has paid the penalty, and He has paid the price. By His stripe, we are healed, and through His bloodshed on the cross, peace has been made between man and God. he is the first fruits of the dead, and his children look experience blessed communion now and look forward to perfect harmony forever. As we stand before the judgement seat of God, as points out the writer to the Hebrews, when we come in Christ, we will experience rest. And as Paul wrote to Timothy ***For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus who gave Himself as a ransom for all to be testified in due time***. No saints, no Buddhist priests or totem poles, Christ alone. Who else could make it possible?

But more than just being our advocate, He is our intercessor. That means He brings our prayers to God. Where the Holy Spirit, as we read in Romans 8:26, interceded in us through our prayers, Christ intercedes for us. We could not come to God, let alone pray to Him, if we were isolated from Him. Chris has restored the covenant fellowship. In Christ, God has said that He is our God and that we are His people.

And so, we pray. It is not so much a matter of praying when we feel like, but rather it is a matter of who we are; that is, we do feel like it. We in Christ through His Word and Spirit must know God and understand our sin and misery outside of that comfort. Thus, we are in constant want of prayer. It is the heart's desire. We changed by grace, now seek communion once more with the God of Grace. We pray to praise, thank, and glorify Him, and Christ makes

this possible. Christ, as true man, takes our prayers and brings them to the Father as true God. He cleanses them through His blood and makes our unworthy and weak prayers powerful in the ears of God. Who will sooner be heard says the confession than God's Son? Why would we bring our prayers through the saints?

Christ is the way to God because though human, He is God. How did He restore man to God? Because He is a man. Christ is not some outside third party here. He stands as God on behalf of God to us, and He stands as a man on behalf of us to God. He is one with God, and He is one with us. There are not three parties, but two who meet in the one who is the Son of God and the Son of man! Because He is god, he reveals God to us and the will of God for us. Because He is a man, he can hear and understand us. He was made like us, tempted like us sin excepted. He suffered way beyond the human capacity for suffering when He took our sins upon Himself. As a man, He understands the human experience. When He brings our prayers, He understands the so much more deeply than we know them ourselves.

The result now is communion with God. Not through the mass or the priest but Christ. This article is very personal in the end. For it speaks of the way a man may communicate once more with God. In the land of rest, Israel was to commune with God. How much more deeply are we to commune as the people of rest? Therefore, we pray, and we come in confidence and boldness. We recall Abraham, who pleaded with boldness for the righteous of Sodom and Gomorra. We come in the confidence of an Advocate who has pleaded and successfully defended us and will make our petitions heard. We pray out of the sense of joy that comes from the knowledge of being the children of God.

And we may come even in times of need. It is especially then that we are to come. When we feel the lowest and the most unworthy, that is when we are to come. We are come to God, thanking Him for Jesus Christ. We are commanded to go in those times when we are in need; it is when we recognize God's power often the most clearly. And Christ, who made Himself of no reputation, can articulate the prayer in a way that no other can, for He not only knows to suffer, He knows your agony. There is no need to come in the name of another. There is no way to go in the name of another. We confess the name of no other. Thus, Christ said, *Abide in me and I in you.*

Conclusion It does not matter so much what our neighbours think about God or whether it is a god or who that god is. Tolerance and fuzziness are the keywords. Canadians want a God who fits their sensibilities. What will the Church do? What will we do? Will we honour God and our Saviour Jesus Christ? Will we listen to the Spirit of grace and confess the Word of God? Are we willing to say, "No other way!"? We confess the one way to God is through Christ. We come as praying for people into a world that cannot know how to pray. Of course, this confession of Christ is fundamental to what we confess about God and our salvation. The Confession will formulate the Bible teaching on the Catholic Christian Church for us, which is a union of those who live in true communion with God in Christ. Let us not seek another but give glory to God. Let us come with assurance and boldness to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ as He commanded us to do. Let us come boldly that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in our time of need. Let us come in the name of Jesus. Amen.