

## THE REALITY of GOD

.....the hopes and fears of all the years.....

Recently in England, a sign on London buses proclaimed: " There probably is no God".

The responses were emotional, ranging from relief to fear to apathy. For many Christians, to call into question the existence of God is unthinkable. For others, it is long overdue.

The debate over the existence of God has been around for decades. 'Death of God' theology emerged in the 60's, when truth came to be equated with fact. Contemporary theologians have much to say about it.

Marcus Borg writes: " The reality of God is problematic for many. The modern preoccupation with factuality has had a pervasive and distorting effect on how we see the Bible and Christianity.....God is a reality known in human experience. Whether or not God is real in a factual sense, God is real to those who believe, those who have experienced God personally, those who have faith."

John Shelby Spong writes: " The traditional image of God has changed many times in the past, even in the Bible. The experience of God is surely eternal, but the form in which this God experience is understood in any age is always bound and warped by time."

Gretta Vosper writes: "As science explains more and more, we need God less and less as an explanatory factor. For what reason do we hold on to God?"

We are left with many questions. Is God's function to explain what we cannot ourselves explain? Are there limits on what we can question? What is our response when confronted by a sign which reads " There probably is no God."?

The sign challenges us to ask hard questions. Is there a God? If the answer is 'yes', then how is this God experienced? Are there new understandings of God arising out of our experiences of the divine in our time and culture?

If we acknowledge the possibility of truth in the bus declaration, where does that leave us or take us? Are we faced with not knowing who we are, where we come from, why we are here, and what happens to us when we die? Or, are we invited to explore and develop new notions, images, and understandings of the divine

which speak more clearly to us in our context today?

In the tension between God and no God, how then shall we live?