

"Easter – What If?"
(Rev. Robert Heffernan)

In Canada, Good Friday and Easter Monday are both statutory holidays. Along with Thanksgiving, it is noteworthy how religious our past is as a country simply based on our federally mandated days off each year. Moreover, how Christian our religious past becomes quite apparent.

Consider Easter Monday. Do you know what that is about? Many popularly think of the Easter bunny, chocolates, etc. because that is what most of us do. You know the corporate slant that turns it into a profit and increases our waistlines.

Spiritually for others, regardless of religious leanings, it is considered a time of new beginnings, a fresh start perhaps, or even a launching pad to Spring where all things are made new again. Again, very true and meaningful, but not quite enough for a government to put it in the same category as say Remembrance Day.

Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's right, a man named Jesus from Nazareth was crucified and died (Good Friday) and then came alive again on the third day (Easter). "Up from the grave he arose" says the refrain from the hymn, "Christ Arose".

How do you respond to that? Think about it. A man died and then days later comes back to life and appears to hundreds of people to verify that reality (1 Corinthians 15:6). What if I'm making it up? What if it's true? What if? You decide.

Well, let me be the straight shooter people these days like it served. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then my Christian faith is a complete sham. Or as the Apostle Paul wrote, "...if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." (1 Corinthians 15:14) Christianity is a lie at that point, full stop. Because in the words of NT Wright, Christianity is "a resurrection movement." One would do well at this juncture to follow in the steps of Lee Strobel, an American journalist, and investigate the actual facts on what happened during Jesus' final days on earth in his own life changing novel, "The Case for Christ".

But what if Jesus *actually* did bodily resurrect? It would literally change everything. Actual evidence of someone who died, never to die again or reincarnate or anything of the sort. A person confirmed dead taken down from his cross, whose own body was handled by Joseph of Arimathea post-mortem for burial, then appears in some kind of new body, yet still recognizably his, that can walk through physical boundaries (John 20:26)!?! Doubt it? So did Thomas and then he touched Jesus' hands and side.

If true, then all known constraints – physical, mental, scientific, experiential, etc. – on this earth as we know it are shattered in Christ. All of a sudden anything becomes possible with God. A whole new reality has begun that changes everything about our future. What if it could help you on your own spiritual journey? What if it was more than a day off?