



WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD TODAY? "A Non-sectarian Christian Pope," by Robert Mickens, Rome January 21, 2023

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"... One cannot begin to understand or evaluate the pontificate of Pope Francis without stepping back and taking a broad view of the world today. **Christianity is an incarnate faith and the world (and reality) as it actually is, and not as we would prefer it to be, is the setting in which we must live out our faith.**

The world is currently going through perhaps its biggest upheaval in all of human history. We are in the midst of a tidal wave of rapid foundational changes that are hard to keep up with. The digital revolution that began a few decades ago is nowhere near completion. And we are now just beginning to confront other dizzying technological advancements, such as in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). Our current migration "crisis" is said to be the biggest mass movement of peoples ever. And the physical state of the planet and its natural resources appears to be more precarious than any other period.

Meanwhile, the steady implosion of the hierarchical/monarchical structure of the Christian Church, which began ever so slowly several hundred years ago, is gaining increasing momentum. Every denomination of Christianity is in deep institutional crisis. No branch springing from the trunk of the one — yet divided — Church of Christ has been spared. Surveys show consistently that people are turning away from institutional Christian religion for various reasons.

This is the world in which Francis must exercise his ministry as arguably the most identifiable and prominent Christian on earth. His plan has been to keep it simple and radically evangelical. Acutely aware that we are facing an extremely uncertain future, his message could be boiled down to this: wherever the world is heading, just make sure you take God with you. Yes, it's that basic.

And the way to do that is by focusing on the bare essentials of our faith -- Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again. The pope offers the scriptures, especially the Beatitudes that are found in the synoptic Gospels, as the guide for living that faith practically"