

DIFFICULT
QUESTIONS about
CHRISTIANITY

EXAMINING SOME OF THE MOST
CHALLENGING QUESTIONS
CHRISTIANS FACE



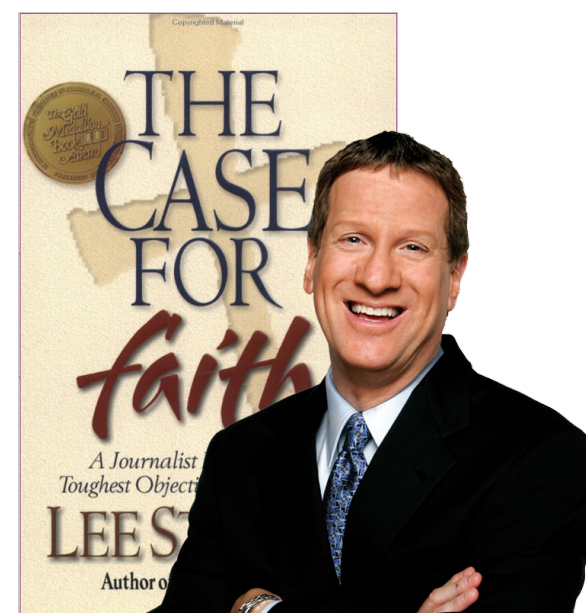
*INJUSTICE:
HASN'T CHRISTIANITY
BEEN AN INSTRUMENT
FOR OPPRESSION?*

DIFFICULT
QUESTIONS about
CHRISTIANITY



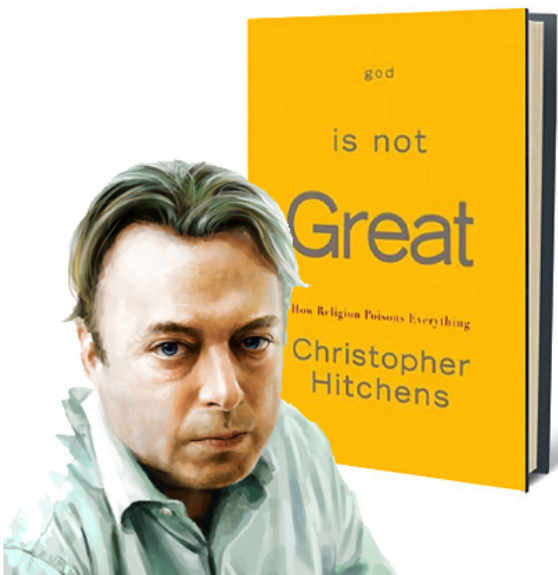
Christianity has, by certain people, been used throughout history as an excuse for some of the most brutal, heartless, and senseless atrocities known to man. The historical examples are not difficult to recall: the Crusades, the Inquisitions, the witch-burnings... Ken Schei

Objection #7: Church History Is Littered With Oppression and Violence
Lee Strobel, *The Case for Faith*. Page 271



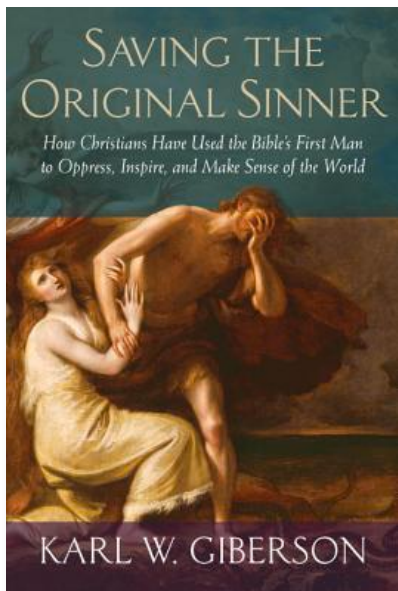
(Religion) has a historic responsibility for the Crusades, for persecution of Catholics, Jews, and Dissenters, and for combat against science and reason. The level of intensity fluctuates according to time and place, but it can be stated as a truth that religion does not, and in the long run cannot, be content with its own marvelous claims and sublime assurances. It *must* seek to

interfere with the lives of nonbelievers, or heretics, or adherents of other faiths. It may speak about the bliss of the next world, but it wants power in this one.



Unfortunately, the Bible is not very helpful when it comes to race issues. Many have found within its pages justifications for slavery, abuse of African-Americans and segregation. Unfortunately, the divisions between the races are exacerbated, not diminished, by Christianity. Martin Luther King Jr.

famously said in 1963, “It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o’clock on Sunday morning.”



Karl Giberson, *Saving The Original Sinner*. Professor of Science and Religion, Stonehill College

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/karl-giberson-phd/the-biblical-roots-of-racism_b_7649390.html

A Legitimate Question

1. It's True

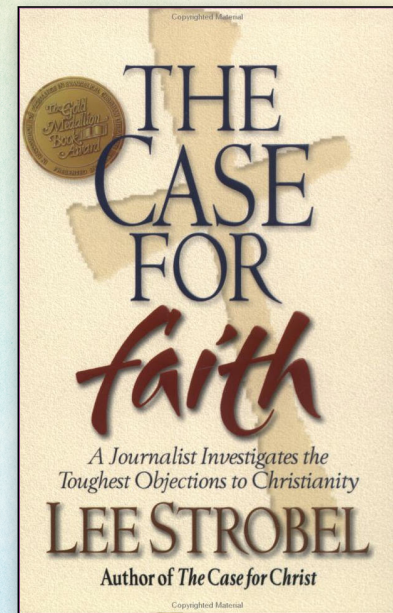
#1 The Crusades

#2 The Inquisitions

#3 Salem Witch Trials

#4 Exploitation by Missionaries

#5 Anti-Semitism



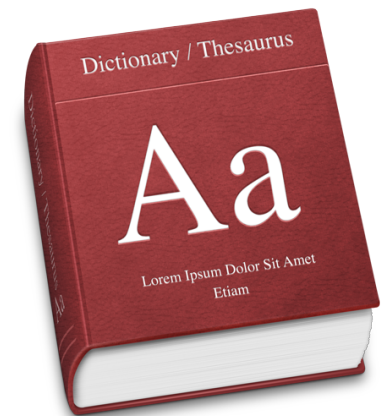
A Legitimate Question

2. No one likes injustice or oppression.

oppression |ə'preʃHən|

noun

- the state of being subject to unjust treatment or control.



A Legitimate Question

2. No one likes injustice or oppression.

Using your power to manipulate, control, or taking advantage of someone to get what you want.

-Marriage

-With our Children

-People we work with

Legitimate Question

3. Jesus says it is an issue!

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law— *justice, mercy* and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.” —*Matthew 23: 23*

**Do not oppress the widow
or the fatherless, the
foreigner or the poor.**

-Zechariah 7:10

This is what the Lord says: “Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.”

-Jeremiah 22:3

If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly,⁶ if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm,⁷ then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and ever.

-Jeremiah 7:5-7

Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. ¹⁵ Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin...

-Deuteronomy 24:14-18

¹⁷ Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice... ¹⁸ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

-Deuteronomy 24:14-18

**Blessed are the merciful, for they will
be shown mercy. -*Matthew 5:7***

**because judgment without mercy will be
shown to anyone who has not been
merciful. Mercy triumphs over
judgment! -*James 2:13***

How do we answer the question?

1. With Humility

A gentle response turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath.

-Proverbs 15:1

How do we answer the question?

2. Explore the obvious historical benefits.

#1 Explore the foundation for morality



BY MICHAEL NOVAKI DECEMBER 6, 1999

Where Would Civilization Be Without Christianity? The Gift of Dignity

Both Aristotle and Plato held that most humans are by nature slavish and suitable only for slavery. Most do not have natures worthy of freedom. The Greeks used "dignity" for only the few, rather than for all human beings. By contrast, Christianity insisted that every single human is loved by the Creator, made in the Creator's image, and destined for eternal friendship and communion with him.

How do we answer the question?

2. Explore the obvious historical benefits.

#1 Explore the foundation for morality

#2 Explore the service and generosity gap.



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Monday 20 September
2010 07.58 EDT

the guardian

no accident that education, access to clean water and literacy are most frequently found where Missionaries work!

Would aid flourish without religion?

The Catholic church alone runs 15,208 houses for the elderly, chronically ill and physically disabled around the world; runs 577 leprosy clinics, provides quarter of the HIV care in Africa and provides 12 million school places in sub-Saharan Africa.

I believe that we would have aid without religion – but I am pretty sure that even the best *most rigorous scientific study would reveal that religious groups have made a disproportionately significant contribution.* Refusing to acknowledge that is its own form of bias.

-Fiona Fox,
Science Media Centre

"In the US, religious believers give more money than secular [even] to secular charities, and to their neighbors. They give more of their time, too, and of their blood. Even if you excuse secular liberals from charity because they vote for government welfare programs, it is awfully hard to explain why secular liberals give so little blood.

Psychologist Jonathan Haidt

https://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/haidto7/haidto7_index.html (atheist)



How do we answer the question?

2. Explore the obvious historical benefits.

#1 Explore the foundation for morality

#2 Explore the service and generosity gap.

#3 Explore demise of slavery.

#4 Consider why science, medicine, & technology all flourished under the Judeo-Christian worldview.

How should it shape our lives?

1. Remind people that Christians aren't perfect, Jesus is.

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. - John 14:6

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How should it shape our lives?

2. It should remind us that we are God's ambassadors.

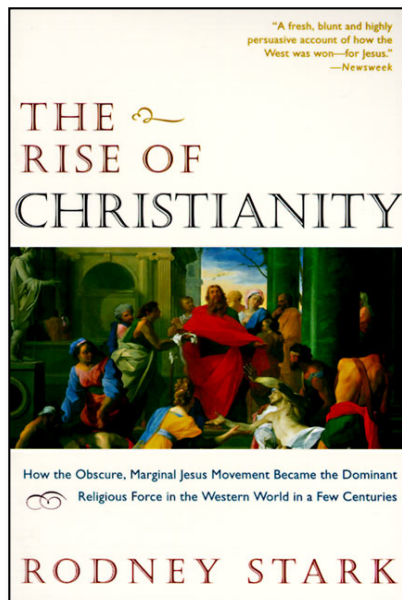
"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. -Matt. 5:14-16

How should it shape our lives?

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Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors*, as though God were making his appeal through us. -*Corinthians 5: 17-20*

“To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachment. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fire, and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective nursing services”



Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, Princeton University Press, 1996, page 161.

How should it shape our lives?

3. Be quick to confess you sin.

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." -Luke 18:8

How should it shape our lives?

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**The repentance
of Judge Samuel
Sewall.**

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