

## THE GOOD THAT CHRISTIANS DO

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There are people who positively hate Christians. Some insist that Christians, or religion, is responsible for all or most wars.

There has also been a lot of justified criticism about Christians or, rather, churches, throughout the centuries and in recent times.

Consequently, many people claim that all Christians are weirdos and are not to be trusted. Many people have a hatred towards the church and Christianity. Some believers are called God freaks!

In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church was anti-Semitic. And before this, they set up the ghastly Inquisitions, evil persecutions which were certainly not Christian and, in 1588, the Spanish Armada came close to the shores of Britain to convert the British back to Catholicism bringing with them instruments of torture. The intended conquerors were the Jesuits, the military arm of the Roman church.

Catholics put people to the stake and, later, some Protestants put Catholics to the stake.

In our day, there are Catholics who abuse boys, and others and, as with previous examples, this is deplorable and, in my view, unforgivable. But such abusers are in a minority.

Among the Pentecostal and charismatic churches and similar organisations, there is a high percentage of frauds many of which have made headlines. In the USA, there are countless sects who dare to call themselves Christians but they are not. Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons have ideas and beliefs that do not agree with the Bible and therefore are not Christians in the correct meaning of the word.

That there are so many divergences and hypocrites, frauds and charlatans is utterly deplorable and there is no defence. They only serve to give Christianity a bad name and, I judge that these people are not Christians.

It has been said that Christianity is a religion of fear and full of what you cannot do. It is also claimed that some Christians regard themselves as always right and perhaps perfect. The true Christian does not acquiesce to that.

Another accusation is that Christians are out to convert the world and rule it and that missionaries go abroad solely to convert people and interfere in existing societies.

As we have said, it is asserted that all wars are due to religion, which is untrue. The sixteen most devastating wars that have cost over 2 trillion lives were non-religious wars. Why do people make such inaccurate statements?

Let us look at some facts.

Christians are the largest providers of health care and education in the world especially in some countries where no other care is available. Evangelical churches and the Plymouth and Exclusive Brethren are a very close second provider. Surgeons, doctors and nurses have gone to all parts of the globe, saved millions of lives and shown that they are real Christians.

The pioneer of good quality social work, including the bridging of the gap between the poor and the rich, is the result of Christianity. Christians formed the London Society for the prevention of

cruelty to children. They formed the Save the Children Society, originated the Red Cross Society, which was inspired by the Cross of Christ, and pioneered homes for abused and abandoned children. Years ago, particularly in the Middle Ages, children were abandoned at the doors of churches and cared for by Christians. The early churches spoke against polygamy, unnecessary abortion, infanticide and child abuse. Their concept of marriage was to protect both parties in a marriage and maintaining the wife's rights. They brought about the English Factory Reform Bill and introduced the anti-poor movement.

Thomas John Barnardo (1845-1905), of the group known as Brethren, studied medicine and became a doctor. He set up homes for poor Victorian children, the first in Stepney in the East End of London in 1867. He received waifs and strays feeding and clothing them and caring for them and giving them an education.

Another example is of George Muller founder of the Ashley Down Orphanage in Bristol which cared for over 10,000 children during his lifetime. He also established 117 schools to serve over 120,000 children, many of who were orphans. He was also of the groups known as Brethren.

They provided alms-houses to protect the poor and aged. They also provided other housing, food and clothing for abandoned old people.

It was Christians who introduced civil liberties and prison reform so that prisoners could be treated better. Believers were dedicated to improving conditions for the working class and the welfare system. They were behind the Braille system so that the blind could 'read'.

It was Christians who brought about International Fair Trade.

They established the organisation known as Shelter. It was the money and expertise of Christians who found a cure for leprosy and Christian surgeons operated on patients in hospitals, which they had both funded and set up themselves.

Sadly, the idea that Christians did all this to ram the Gospel down people's throats is both untrue and unfair.

Of course, there are many non-Christians who do good works and this must not be forgotten. I do have a little trouble with some charities that do excellent work but have high and expensive overheads and wages bills, but then these costs have to be met.

I must not generalise but many missionaries and Christians performed their magnificent work entirely from their own monies and resources. There are celebrities today who have substantial incomes and they give generously and are not prompted by Christian beliefs. Of course, we commend their fine work but we must also remember that they can afford to be generous. Many missionaries sell what they have and fund their own way to serve on the mission field.

Some missionaries have gone to turbulent and dangerous areas of the world and been murdered. They knew the risks but their faith and their desire to help people in need was paramount. Stories of their faith, dedication and immense courage cannot be underestimated.

It is accepted that some Christians or churches have a poor record. There are Catholic clerics that have abused altar boys and other children. Some nuns are dreadfully cruel. The ultra extreme exclusive brethren are so rigid and narrow-minded; the charismatic and Pentecostals emphasis some Scriptures to the point of gross error and prejudice. As we have said, among these groups there are some infamous frauds and charlatans and there is no wonder that some non-believers believe that all Christians are weird.

There are people who claim to be Christians and will nobble you in the street and ask intrusive questions about you. Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons do this but they are not Christians and, where I live, there is a group of charismatics lead by a Nigerian who wear badges indicating that they belong to Jesus but they are frauds. They will talk to anyone and they are a nuisance.

Christianity has slumped since World War Two. This war produced the attitude of "Let's have fun and worry about nothing since tomorrow we might be dead." That basic attitude continued after the war, an attitude of anything goes and the morality of the Bible and so-called old-fashioned decency was no longer a consideration. Christians who were called traditionalists and not living in the real world and were and are ridiculed and despised.

Some churches responded by incorporating new methods. They had to cash in on modern developments and modern worship was born. These churches now took on a community status with coffee bars and drop-in centres which were all very well but the counsellors of drop-ins were unequal to their needs. For example, the best person to help an alcoholic is a recovered alcoholic not a young Christian who has no experience.

In the 1950s with the rise of fashion and pop music, the churches took in such innovations and, consequently traditional hymns with an organ often gave way to new worship songs with guitars and drums. It is true that this style of music was often given prominence over spiritual matters and the Pentecostal and charismatic people emphasised their own experiences and we had a plethora of books which were not primarily Bible based, but the life stories and experiences of someone. There were many books on how to speak in tongues, how to learn to prophesy, how you can win souls for Christ, how to form a Christian rock band, how your church needs a football team, pub quizzes and the emphasis was not only on self but social activities. Sundays were now to be fun days. There was to be dancing by pretty girls who were also to be dressed in modern fashions and the boys would wear jeans often torn and I have seen tee shirts with offensive words on them. While I do not wish to be too severe on these things, one could say that what some people wear may be inappropriate.

What some may not know is that books about self and the work of Christian pop groups earned much money for the authors and performers and did not pay towards the upkeep of the church and that money could have been used for more important matters than self, such as the poor and needy and refugees who have nothing.

Visitors to Christian bookshops have been disappointed to find comparatively few books on spiritual matters but very many books on personal experiences and life stories. It is undeniable that the Pentecostal/charismatic situation has been the most divisive since the Reformation in the 16th century.

People want fun and excitement in any church situation, not stuffy Bible study although that is profitable for life itself.

The main reason why people hate Christians is because the Bible advocates clean living, decency, morality, honesty and respect for others and disapproves of what many people want to do. As a non- controversial example, drunkenness is condemned, and yet when you think about it, it is not a condition of which to be proud.

People are quick to condemn Christians and not quick to condemn, for example, left wing politics, some aspects of Socialism, Marxism and Communism, which has a staggering, amount of crime, social injustice, cruelty and deaths such as the kulaks in Russia. Michael Foot said that you cannot be a Socialist and a Christian and this may explain why so many British Socialists and other left- wingers are atheists.

One has to be fair and balanced in all things, and I may be repeating some points. It is my opinion, and shared by many, that in the last century or so, the church has gone into serious decline and, by implication, Christians are in decline. Churches are frightened to preach truth and morality as it is unpopular since we now live in a secular society. There are despicable frauds among some Christian groups and thousands of cults which call themselves Christians. Churches are being criticised for getting involved in politics but, like anyone else, they have a right to their views. I have heard clergymen dispute Biblical teaching and say, ineffectively, that the Bible is wrong. Darwinism is right, Genesis is wrong.

The Old Order of traditional and moral values must go and the New Order must take over. Feminism teaches that a woman needs a man just as a fish needs a bicycle. God is such a God of love, that if He exists, everyone will go to Heaven and there is no judgment. God did not create the universe or man. It was aliens that brought human life to Earth. There was no flood or Noah's Ark and the opening chapters of Genesis are lies and myths. The social gospel ( Be nice to every one ) is being proclaimed rather than the Biblical evangelical Gospel. Loyal adherence to the Bible is old fashioned, redundant and not wanted.

Those of us who are Christians are being persecuted as are the Jews. We are not perfect ; We make mistakes and we have feelings. But we are ridiculed by the atheism of left wing politicians, spiritualists, mediums, physics and the like, science, some feminists and a society that does not believe in God or the Lord Jesus and claim that the Bible is full of things that must not be done. It is said that everyone has the right to live their own life their way and not kowtow to a God that they cannot see. This is why God has given us all freewill to make our choices.

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