






Litmus Tests for a Valid Belief System



- Logical Consistency
- Empirical Adequacy
- Existential (or experiential) Relevancy

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Example of Logical Consistency



The goal of Buddhism is to rid yourself of all desire. But mustn't you have a desire to rid yourself of all desire?

Reincarnation says that every birth is a rebirth brought about by bad deeds committed in the prior life. If true, what brought about the very first birth?

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Example of Empirical Adequacy

"Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead ? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless ; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

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Existential Relevancy



- This requirement first asks if the belief system has compelling and rational answers to life's main questions (origins, meaning, morality, and destiny)
- Next, it says that the belief must match what we see or experience around us, in a relevant or meaningful way. If it does not, then we have reason to question the belief
- An example: both Hinduism and Christian Science say that evil and sickness are just illusions; they are not real. Such a claim may be argued philosophically, but it is impossible to defend practically in the real world (e.g. Mary Baker Eddy, suffered from illnesses and wore false teeth)

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The #1 Existential Argument Against Christianity

- The presence of evil in the world with the claim of an all-good, all-powerful God is typically the #1 argument against Christianity
- Called a "theodicy"
- Could also argue that it's a violation of logical consistency as well
- J. S. Mill and David Hume are the secular philosophers most famous for their arguments in this area
- "Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?" - Hume



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The Bible's Response

"The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil"
(Proverbs 16:4)

The Bible never denies the presence of evil in the world, but states that God is not the author of it and that He uses it for His own purpose to redeem good from evil.



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The Real #1 Argument Against Christianity



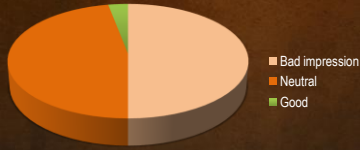
Thanks to John Verbrugge 08-09-1999
WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT ALL THIS YELLING AND SWEARING IF I WERE YOU ... THEY'LL KNOW THAT WE'RE CHRISTIANS BY OUR BUMPER STICKERS

The best argument against Christianity is the lives lived out by professing Christians

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Impressions of Christians

Impressions of Christians by Un-Believers



* UnChristian by David Kinnamon
 Mosaics (born between 1984 and 2002) and Bustlers (born between 1965 and 1983) generations of the United States, which currently comprise approximately 77% of America's population.

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Impressions of Christians

- Unbelieving postmodernists signaled negativity to what they termed the Christian "swagger" – how Christians go about things in the world, along with the bark and bite that unbelievers stated that they see in Christians' demeanor and actions
- Respondents said that the charity and compassion of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels have been dismissed by Christians in favor of combative actions against what they believe to be threats against their moral positions.
- They see Christianity being known for, an anti-homosexual stance ranks first (91%), followed by a judgmental attitude (87%).
- In other words, Christians have become famous for what they oppose and stand against rather than for what they are in favor of and champion.



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Reminder: The World will Reject Christian Morals



- Christians – in keeping with Scripture – do indeed oppose homosexuality, with few others (outside of perhaps Islam) raising an objection to the lifestyle
- History has shown that the world and humanity's fallen nature will never take kindly to Biblical pronouncements against the sin it cherishes and wants to practice
- "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you." (John 15:18)

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The #1 Verse Quoted by Non-Christians

"Do not judge so that you will not be judged." (Matt. 7:1)

In Context:

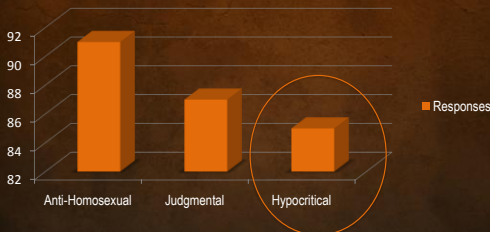
"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. "For in the way you judge, you will be judged ; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye ? "Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye ? "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matt 7:1-5)

- Jesus' first statement is itself a judgment
- Jesus commanded His followers to judge with a righteous judgment, but first make sure their own house is in order before they go about instructing others

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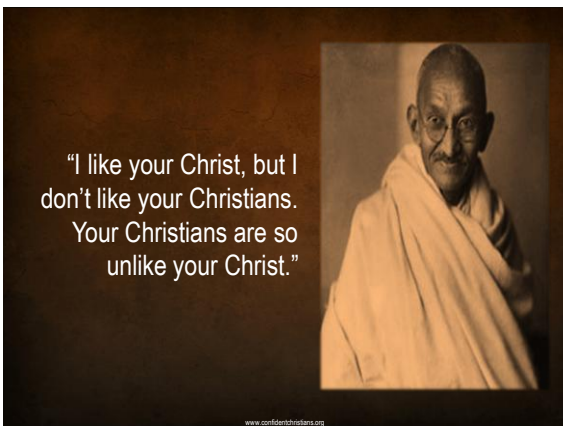
But...

Responses from UnChristian



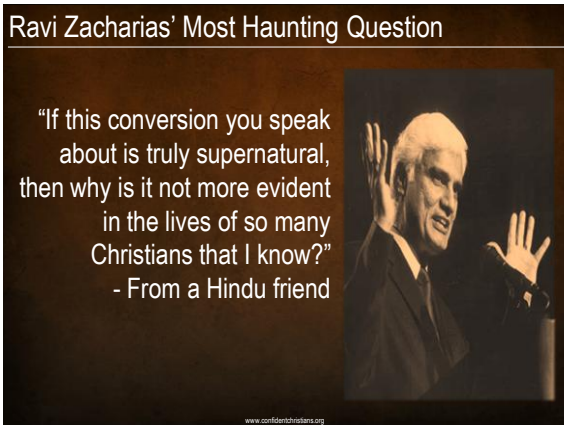
85% said that Christians are known most for being hypocritical

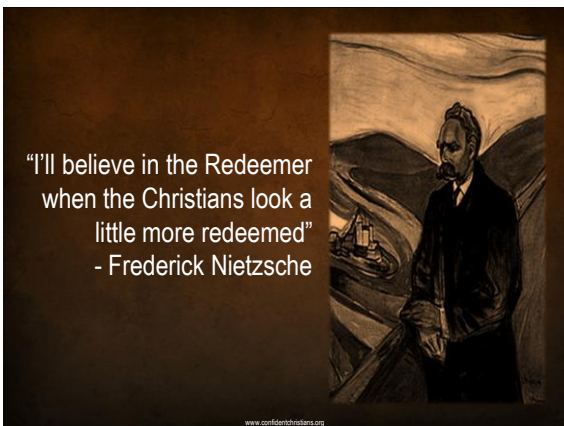
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Some Examples...

“I don't like doing business with Christians. You'd be surprised how many people order tapes from the ministry and never pay for them.”
- R. C. Sproul



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You are the Fifth Gospel



- You are the fifth gospel; many times you are the ONLY gospel that an unbeliever will ever read
- When the non-Christian sees a mismatch between what they have heard piecemeal about the teachings and life of Jesus and His professing followers, they naturally get confused
- Many times they walk away and in doing so give Christianity an "F" in the existential relevancy test

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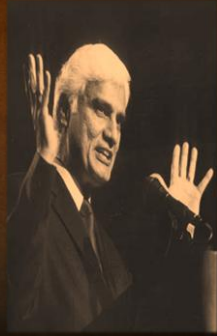
“The name of God is Blasphemed because of you”



“You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just as it is written.”
(Romans 2:21-24)

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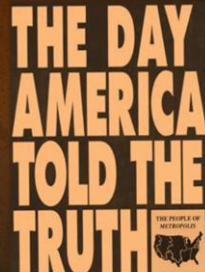
"How do you communicate with a generation that listens with its eyes and thinks with its feelings? You will need an apologetic that is not merely heard, but is also seen. If my Christian life is not visible to my neighbor, no amount of prophetic utterance is going to convince that neighbor that Christianity is true. Is your life in private that which you claim in public?"
 - Ravi Zacharias



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The Opportunity – Lights in a Dark World

- Women are morally superior to men, on every moral issue tested. They lie less, and can be trusted more
- America has no moral leadership. All business, political, and religious leaders have failed
- We are making up our own rules and our own laws. Only 13% believe in the 10 commandments. No moral consensus.
- Young American males are the biggest national tragedy. Men between 18-25 account for most crime, violent, and untrustworthy
- The official crime statistics are off by more than 600%
- Lying has become an integral part of our culture and character
- Community and the hometown no longer exists

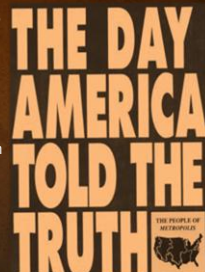


What People Really Believe About Everything That Really Matters
 JAMES PATTERSON AND PETER KIM

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The Opportunity – Lights in a Dark World

- 1 in 7 have been sexually abused as a child and 1 in 6 physically abused as a child. These numbers far exceed national statistics
- The idea of childhood has ended. Many lose their virginity by age 13
- Date rape is a national epidemic; 20% of those surveyed had been raped by their dates
- The U.S. Is one of the most violent industrial nations in the world
- While we still marry we have lost faith in marriage; 30% of those surveyed weren't sure if they still loved their spouse
- A majority will not take care of parents in their old age
- #1 cause of business decline is traced to low ethical behavior of business executives; 68% don't believe we have a single hero right now
- 80% believe morals and ethics should be taught in our schools again



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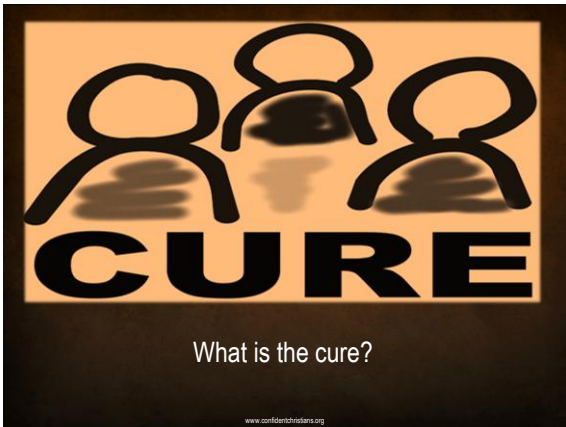
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The Opportunity – Lights in a Dark World



"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
- Matt. 15:16

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What is the cure?

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The Cure – Make True Believers




The current Church is pregnant with unbelievers

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The Cure – Make True Believers

"The church has failed to tell me that I am a sinner. The church has failed to deal with me as a lost individual. The church has failed to offer me salvation in Jesus Christ alone. The church has failed to tell me of the horrible consequences of sin, the certainty of hell, and the fact that Jesus Christ alone can save. We need more of the last judgment . . . more of the living God and the living devil as well, more of a heaven to gain and a hell to shun. The church must bring me not a message of cultivation but of rebirth. I might fail that kind of church, but that kind of church will not fail me."
 - Stanley High

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"And when statistics come out that show how the divorce rate among Christians is really no different than that of the rest of the world . . . and when other studies are done that show how unmarried teen pregnancy rates are no different inside or outside the Body of Christ . . . and when reports come out that speak to heavy use of alcohol and drugs among professing believers . . . you have to pause and wonder . . . why – with a God who transforms lives – why are so many supposed Christians living lives with no evidence of any transformation having taken place?"
 - John MacArthur

The Cure - Examine Ourselves



"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?"
 (2 Corinthians 13:5)

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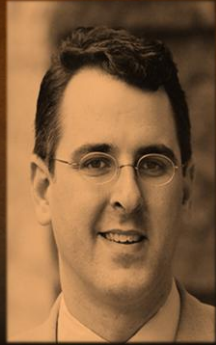
“The principle evidence of life is motion; so the principle evidence of saving grace is holy motion.”
- Jonathan Edwards



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A Disturbing and Telling Question

“When was the last time someone asked you why you’re different? If you’re not getting asked questions by non-Christians, then perhaps it’s because your life doesn’t show anything new, attractive, or different than the world.”
- Michael Ramsden



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The Cure - Examine Ourselves



“Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you”
(2 Peter 1:10)

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One Self-Exam

1. Do I have a longing for holy things?
2. Do I seek those things that honor God?
3. Am I sensitive to sin?
4. Am I enjoying fellowship with God?
5. Do I delight in God's Word and ways?
6. Am I bearing fruit for God in a consistent way?



The Cure – Submit to the Lordship of Christ



"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord' and not do what I say?"
(Luke 6:46)

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The Cure – Submit to the Lordship of Christ



"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."
(James 1:22-25)

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The Cure – Wake Up to the Spiritual War

WAKEUP



"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."
(Ephesians 6:12-13)

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The Cure – Walk and Live by the Spirit



"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16)

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The Cure – Get Active and Involved



"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:16-17)

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The Cure – Simply Follow The Golden Rule



"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12)

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Our Goal



"Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1)

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Conclusions



- The best argument against Christianity is the contradictory life or professing believers that does not match the life and teachings of Christ
- We malign God when we exhibit an ethical life that's not in keeping with His Word
- The cure for this problem is to ensure we are true believers, submit to the lordship of Christ, actively combat the spiritual foes we have, become doers of His Word, and ultimately, imitate and show Jesus to the world

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