

Does Being A Christian Make Sense?

Or when I come to church do I leave my brain at the door?

Background:

- In a secular society like Australia, many people simply do not see the need for belief in God
- Faith is viewed as a personal preference
- Appeals to tradition, authority or revelation are not seen as being convincing
- As Christians, we have an experiential knowledge of our faith – we have ‘tasted and know that God is good’
- The challenge is in sharing our faith with those who have no felt need for God, and probably no concept of spirituality
- Where to start?
- 1 Peter 3:15-16 ‘But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.’

Where To Start? Four Rules When Sharing The Gospel

1. Try to establish a conversation, rather than start an argument
2. Focus on what makes sense to *me*, what I have found in *my* life
3. Remember that you cannot prove God
4. Remember the Kenny Rogers’s song: ‘You’ve got to know when to.....’

Common Arguments Against Christianity:

What about evolution? Doesn’t that mean that there is no need for God?

- *This argument has no provable end-point, and side-tracks the conversation away from Jesus, to discussions about science and pseudo-science*
- *What no-one knows is why there is something instead of nothing – what was there before the big-bang?*
- *I would rather believe in an eternal God than eternal helium*
- *I have to live life as if it means something, and evolution does not provide meaning in my life*

How can we believe the Bible? Hasn't it been proved to be inconsistent and made up?

- *Whilst people may not believe what Jesus said, it is difficult to argue that he didn't exist*
- *Archaeology and textual criticism both indicate that the text of the Bible is as accurate as any, and better than most, ancient documents we have*
- *I have no problem with believing Jesus was an historical character*

What about other religions? Why aren't they true?

- *This is really an excuse for believing nothing because there are a number of different choices – which isn't logical*
- *Christianity is one of the underlying foundations of Western civilisation, its moral codes, science, art, literature and philosophy*
- *I'm not an expert on world religions, however I'm happy that Christianity is based on a real person in history, gives meaning to my life and works in the real world*

Isn't religion the cause of most world conflicts? Wouldn't we be better off without it?

- *Some people use religion as an excuse to do evil things.*
- *Remember that the perpetrators of the worst atrocities of the 20th century were all atheists – Stalin, Hitler and Pol Pot*
- *Remember that Christianity was the force behind the end of slavery in the UK and USA, civil rights in the USA, and peaceful regime change in Philippines and South Africa*
- *I don't have any problem with the idea that Christianity, rightly lived, is a positive force for change in the world*

Summing Up:

- *Feel confident that Christianity makes sense*
- *Remember we can't prove God – he can handle that himself*
- *In discussing our faith, 'I' statements can keep the conversation open, 'you' statements can shut it down*

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