

### *What do people follow Christianity for?*

The reasons that most give, that their community does it and their parents did it so they do it, are not reasons. It wouldn't do to dignify them even as excuses.

The more thoughtful will say one or more of the following,

a) Christianity makes me feel good and is a source of comfort to me.

That is not a reason for following Christianity and any religion can comfort you and some better than others. There are other religions and philosophies if you'd just get up and look into them. Work out what the best and most sensible one is and follow that.

This reason is the main reason people are religious. But curiously it is against your religion to use this reason. The greatest commandment in Christianity is to love God with all your heart and the second greatest to love others. But the reason starts with self-fulfilment. It should start with God. The person is only superficially Christian.

It is usually liberal Christianity that cares about or stresses the feel-good factor. Liberal Christianity is really just a distortion of Christianity. Many believers claim allegiance to Christ and the Church and distort their teaching and it is no surprise if whole denominations do the same. The fact of the matter is that liberal Christianity believes that God should be obeyed whether his dictates make sense to us or not just as much as fundamentalist Christianity does. It is just that the liberals think God has different dictates to what the fundamentalists say he has.

Fundamentalists are regarded as dangerous and a threat to science and truth. But the liberal only seems to be better. The underlying attitudes with all their dangers are still there. A liberal is nothing more than a fundamentalist who believes God isn't too fussy about what people believe and do.

People think it is those who take their Bibles literally who go out and persecute and cause trouble in the world. It is not their taking their Bibles literally at all that is the problem. It is their accepting the Bible as the word of God that is the problem. It is because of that that they may take it literally. A religion that tells the people the Bible is the word of God is saying that if it should be taken literally then take it literally - take the Bible as it was meant.

There are many forms of liberalism and most of them still think there is an everlasting Hell for sinners but choose to believe that few go there. Liberals have a weaker faith than fundamentalists. Fundamentalism is intolerant for it argues that its views are right and can be known to be true. It is actually more malicious for liberals who may admit the feebleness of the evidence for Christianity to teach Hell than for a cocksure fundamentalist to do it for the fundamentalist may think he has solid evidence for his or her fundamentalist faith.

Think about Christianity and its being a host of different Churches. The most basic religious idea they have then is, "I belong to my Church or version of the faith not yours." This translates as, "I am different from you." This is the language of division and promoting division. Differences are fine but religious differences just are not needed. If we had a spiritual supermarket style religion that provided a few basics but helped provide people with whatever religious turn-ons they wanted it would be so much better.

There is pride in the Christian. The Christian may read a book refuting the existence of God by a top scientist or philosopher and still follow his Church and not believe the book. So the Christian refuses to listen to the learned.

Why is it so important to religionists to put out their ethics but have little or no concern about how and why most people disobey the moral codes? Is it because they hope for a miraculous change – do they think knowing the moral truth magically increases the odds of living that truth? They keep hoping that the incorrigible will change even when the evidence is that they don't. That is a clear example of religion promoting doctrines and sacraments to give useless help. Grace becomes an excuse for doing something about the problem that may as well amount to nothing.

Christian leaders deny responsibility for the evils their doctrines do. For example, the pope refuses to contemplate the fact that he may be wrong to forbid contraception under all circumstances and so is responsible for the damage he does. He believes that he can't be wrong but even that if he is it is not his problem for he is sincere. But could Jack the Ripper get off the hook for killing prostitutes when killing them stopped them from spreading life-threatening diseases? If that was his reason and no matter how sincere he was, it would not change a thing. What he did was reprehensible. Believing one can't

be wrong when one does grave harm by ones commands and teachings speaks more of the arrogance of the person and how arrogance is put before all else. Such a person would necessarily be responsible for the evil they cause because their beliefs are more about being evil and proud than caring for others. Portraying them as caring is part of what the arrogance is about. If somebody doesn't foresee the evil that results from their actions or teachings and doesn't intend the evil are they still responsible for the evil? Not foreseeing will get nobody off the hook if what is foreseen could or should have been foreseen. And we must always try to do what we hope has the most good in it. If I have to hurt John to save Mary I may not be blamed for doing so but I am still responsible and need to make it up to John. If the pope wants wives to suffer because they believe in his authority he should sell his artworks and give them some compensation. If I go insane and hurt somebody, I still owe them some amends for somebody has to make amends. The vast majority of all people in the world and the vast majority of Catholics pay little attention to the pope's wishes and commands. When something is as irrelevant and unnecessary as the pope is doing harm with its teaching the more evil it is for it to teach doctrines that cause harm.

b) Christianity is good for it tells us how to be good and people don't know the difference between right and wrong these days.

Jesus himself said that wolves come dressed as lambs to oppose God by seeming to be his friends.

Christianity is not good. It tells God to kill people if he wants "God and Father, thy will not mine be done". This is total fanaticism when we are more sure others exist than that God does. If God appeared and asked you, "It is my will that the babies in the hospital die of a flesh-eating bug. Do you want me to do this?" you would have to say, "Yes Lord. You are always right so your will be done."

Fear is the cause of every single personality defect and psychological disorder. Religion increases fear with its doctrines about a punishing God and unending Hellfire. If you were free from fear you would not need religion so religion is always a sign of a personality/emotional disorder.

Do you need fear? You might think you do when a bus is hurtling along in your path to get out of the way. You need to feel fear but to think quick and react quickly and get out of the way. When fear takes over you could do the wrong thing. Then it is the fear that is in control and not you.

The good Christians do could be natural human goodness. It might be what they would be doing anyway even if they were not Christians. They could be doing it out of superstition. Christianity claims to not be superstition. But it is possible to follow a non-superstitious religion out of superstitious motives. It is also possible to imagine you believe in a religion while you are only assuming it is true. You just can't prove Christianity itself is good. People doing good in the name of religion does not mean that the religion is good for evil is a mixture of good and bad anyway.

The doctrine of everlasting inescapable retribution in Hell doesn't stop you doing wrong. It only stops you doing it with the intention to separate from God.

There is no evidence in favour of the divine and therefore good origin for this sinister religion of Christ at all so how could it be good or advisable to follow it? What use is it to encourage good behaviour when the wrong reasons are given for being good? That only produces deceit and hypocrisy. To be really good you have to be good for the right reasons. People will find out if goodness is a sham and that will lead to the collapse of civilisation so you have to be right.

You don't accuse people of murder without very strong proof. Yet Christians are routinely instructed to accuse themselves and others of a worse crime, the crime of deserving endless punishment. Imagine how strong the proof would need to be for that and they cannot give it! That crime is so bad that it cancels out any good the religion would do just like committing murder takes away any right to the comforts you earned before you murdered.

There is no excuse. We condemn mothers who leave their seven year old sons or daughters in the house alone and go out at night even when we are sure they would never harm their child and that they meant no harm and they need to be corrected and exposed by the law. Why should religion get away with what it does? And its sincerity is anything but credible.

It is illogical to point to this good and that good and then to say that Christianity has some use. This good will still happen without it. Christianity is useless for it is human nature that produces the good. We prefer the desire we have to the desired so it is human nature not religion that produces good.

There is no use in religion boasting that it is good for the world when it cannot prove that it or its believers have the right motives. We can prove it for our doctrine that self-love is the root of all good and makes good attractive shows that when a person loves themselves they are good to others for the right reasons for it is nice to love yourself and enjoyable. Christianity offers a God whose most dedicated believers love to disobey for serving him is a chore and so few do it.

Christianity says that we must love the sinner and hate the sin. Jesus said that we should prefer our arm cut off it leads us to sin implying that we should hate it unnaturally. Sins are not made to suffer for being bad but the sinner so we dismiss the allegation that we can hate sin only and not the sinner as a hypocritical farce. The sinner hates people having a bad attitude towards him in case it will lead them to harm him. Their bad attitude towards the sin does the same thing. So there is no practical difference between hating the sin and hating the sinner and therefore between loving the sinner and loving the sin.

The more Christians hate sin the more they hate the sinner. And the idea that God is going to be good to us forever implies that God should receive unlimited service from us which suggests that sin is infinitely bad and should be hated with all our power for the more we love God the more we hate what he hates. We have to prefer a person to drop dead than to for them to sin.

We have a bad enough tendency to focus on a bad thing a person died to the disregard of the good they have done which will be far greater without Christianity trying to make it worse by taking sin with infinite seriousness.

It has been said that the best argument for Christianity is that it works and people are led by it to live holy lives and do good works. If that is true, then merely intellectual arguments for the faith will not have much effect. The bad and lukewarm example of most Christians certainly is to blame for Christianity being in its current moribund state. Christianity has always been mostly a half-dead corpse with most people not living impressive lives. There is nothing remarkable or evidently supernatural about the good lives of Christians. There is nothing to set it apart from natural human goodness.

c) Christianity is true so I have to follow it.

Christianity, like everything that uses the Machiavellian ways of politics, has the appearance of truth if you don't look too closely. Its apologists use the following tricks. They present the evidence for what they believe and ignore the greater evidences against it. For example, they tell you that Jesus proved he was a supernatural messenger who should be given control of our lives when he rose from the dead. But if Jesus misled us all the resurrections in the world cannot make him right. So we are back where we started. What they don't tell you is that miracles cannot be signs and only a phoney would do them. Even the Bible at times denies that miracles are signs. If you believe in miracles, then when you find the smoking gun in Kelly's hand and a body at her feet you cannot say it proves she shot the person. Miracles threaten evidence and sometimes make it entirely useless so one would have a nerve saying that a miracle is evidence for anything.

THE REAL REASONS???

The reasons for having such a big serious religion seem thin. The following reasons have more weight. If you condemn the whole human race you will tend to be kind in a patronising way to it. That is easier than being really kind. It serves your ego.

Christianity teaches that our reason has been distorted and warped since the fall of Adam and Eve which is why we are prone to sin and to refuse the happiness of a relationship with God. The fall need not have effected our reason. God then must have done a miracle to make sure that it would. CS Lewis said that we can't really know anything if our mental faculties and our reason are unreliable. Once you ditch reason you cannot use reason to argue that reason is or can be reliable! The Christians say that if our reason is caused by blind forces and a material process in the atheist Darwinian way then we cannot trust it. But we know by experience that we can. It doesn't matter how it was made or came to be - we can trust in it. Therefore it is irrational to say we need to believe in God in order to trust our reason. Christianity undermines reason. If atheist Darwinism undermines it too then it at least is not as bad. Go for the lesser evil.

So we see that these doctrines accuse all of being dangerous, of being potentially even more dangerous and of being irrational. So you feel you are in a position to condescendingly sort the people out. This gives comfort for life is horrible at times.

Comfort is sought the other way too.

Christians like their beliefs because they think it gives them comfort. Many of them take great comfort in the thought that those of different religions or who they consider immoral will go to Hell forever. The fact that the beliefs give them comfort does not automatically mean that they are wrong. Nor does it mean that they necessarily only have the beliefs for the sake of the comfort.

The issue with somebody saying their faith comforts them is that this is smug - "I am so good that I let God give me his gift of comforting faith."

FINALLY

Have good reasons for following any religion or non-religion for that is part of being whole - integrity means being whole.

You are not an island so be a person of integrity.