

### Christian Rights

“Everyone else seems to be allowed to stand up for their beliefs except for Christians.”

We live in a world where people talk a lot about ‘rights’. We also live a world where there are certain groups of people who demand their rights, while at the same time refusing to allow others the same rights they demand. And this is in a world where Christians are by far the most persecuted group of people. So this is a look at setting some facts straight. It’s not always popular to talk about ‘Christian rights’ because some Christians seem to think that being humble and being persecuted means not standing up (in a Godly way) for ourselves. But this is the wrong attitude. We don’t accept sin in our lives because we live in a ‘sin-filled world’. So we respond well. But we must respond and knowing the truth helps us.

If you want to see the reality of some of what is happening to Christians and Christian issues in the UK, take a look at places like [Christian Concern](#).

### True UK Case Studies – we could choose from many

1. A Christian couple in their 60s running a guest-house have a rule that married couples only should stay at their B&B. This is before the time of ‘gay marriage’. A gay couple want to stay and are refused (as heterosexual couples are) because the owners don’t want them sleeping together in the same room. This is made out to be against the rights of the gay couple. The couple are forced to sell their business. They were also sent vicious hate mail, abusive phone calls and death threats. But according to these radical activists it was the Christian couple who were ‘hate-filled’.
2. A woman working within the NHS is friends with a Muslim lady. The Muslim lady is going through a hard time and wants to leave her job. The Christian lady gives her a book about (the many) people converting from Islam to Christianity and offers to pray for her. She also encourages the Muslim lady to stay in her job. The Christian lady is then disciplined for allegedly ‘forcing her faith’ on the Muslim lady when she was in no way doing this. She is forced to move jobs and is clearly upset. She is taking legal action.
3. A magistrate (and experienced NHS manager) called Mr Page, working in the UK makes a comment to colleagues about a case (behind closed doors), saying that he feels it would be better for a child to be brought up with a mother and father, rather than by a gay couple. He is subsequently suspended for alleged ‘prejudice’, removed from family court cases. He was later found guilty of serious misconduct by a senior Tory Cabinet Minister. He must go on an ‘equality’ course before being allowed back in court. As Mr Page rightly said, “Everyone else seems to be allowed to stand up for their beliefs except for Christians.”
4. A Christian was told not to preach in a mainly Muslim part of Birmingham because he may inflame tensions. He was actually arrested (one of a few preachers who have been wrongly arrested in the UK in recent years). The police continue to arrest Christians (probably an easy target) despite having to misuse their powers to do so.

## Discussion Questions

1. If you were one of these individuals above, how would you respond?
2. How do we respond to those who deliberately or unintentionally appear to persecute Christians?
3. How do we help people know about the truth of God without being hateful or hurtful?
4. What would you do if the Law told you to do / not do something that was right at the centre of who you are as a Christian?

We need to think about these questions as this is already a reality for many Christians in the world – and increasingly in places like the UK and USA.

## God is an evil God? Really?

The (fundamentalist) atheist Richard Dawkins wrote a book called 'The God Delusion' in which he wrote about God, basically saying he was evil, horrible and a murderer. (It's interesting that a book as written responding to Dawkins that completely destroyed all his arguments but the media has chosen to ignore this book!)

Unfortunately, some celebrities choose to buy into this lie, saying the same kinds of things. Often they do so (as in the case of one scientist) without revealing things like they are part of Humanist organisations etc. Others use their presence in the media to further the aims of things that stand against Biblical worldviews.

Sadly, people are used by the devil who wants people to believe that God is someone who wants to control and is evil – and that the devil is the one who wants to liberate people and give them freedom. The truth is that the 'freedom' that the devil offers is slavery. He is a liar and is the one manipulating people who speak against God, mostly without them realising it.

## Some of the Tactics of those who hate God

One thing we need to recognise is some of the tactics of those who oppose the Bible, Christians and God. These people are becoming increasingly vocal.

1. They paint their cause as one of 'rights'. They paint their cause as being one of persecution and of being oppressed, so that they need 'defending'. This is very rarely true.
2. They call others who oppose them as being 'something-phobic'.
3. They call those who oppose them as being 'bigots' or full of 'hate'. They use single words that stop arguments and stop debate.
4. They reject anyone's opinion if it opposes them. On one TV show, an activist shouted at a woman quietly and simply defending the Bible. He was full of anger, saying, 'How dare you tell me what to do...'
5. At the same time, these very same people refuse to allow a Biblical worldview. They don't want people to say anything from the Bible and increasingly are working to stop people being allowed to even believe the Bible.

6. They maintain the same arguments repeating them over and over. Whether the arguments are true is irrelevant. If you say the same thing over and over again, it seems to become 'truth'. In the USA, secularists are even writing history books that are filled with lies and deliberately leave out the Christian element of America. These books even make it into high schools.

7. Some of these causes are painted as being 'heroic' and worth celebrating. There are 'history weeks' celebrating some of these causes. They confront certain people and certain things in very deliberate ways so that their cause is promoted.

8. People deliberately (and occasionally unintentionally) misrepresent God, especially those who claim to be unbiased scientists. Again, the point is to say things about God and the Bible that are not true but that will get in the heads of people so that people think these things are true. The basic lie that is told is that 'if God exists then it's him that is evil'. This is a real lie.

9. People want to have their way and have their rights, even if it means that this is destructive for themselves and for society – and even if evidence points to the fact that their way would be destructive to society.

10. Christian truths and Christian people are not spoken of, written out of books and their influence and faith denied. These people intentionally paint Christians as narrow-minded or backward. They deny the massive impact that Christians have in the world and they manipulate and badger the media to do the same. They want to make Christianity appear irrelevant, dead or destructive. (Actually Christianity is growing at a faster rate worldwide than ever in history).

11. Other causes are pursued by violence, intimidation, murder and oppression. This is the way that many religions run things – and so do countries that reject God. Examples of these places would include Islamist countries like Saudi Arabia and communist countries like North Korea etc.

12. A final tactic is to make things that stand against a Biblical worldview appear very cool and desirable through film, fashion, music and TV shows. The intention is to marginalise a Christian worldview which is seen as backward and less cool. Not true!

## Standing Up To Lies

In the Bible, we learn that those who overcame, did so 'by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony and didn't love their life to death.' (Revelation 12.11)

This gives us a clue that the battle belongs to God. In fact, Jesus has already defeated satan and his evil forces by what Jesus did on the cross (Colossians 2.15). God longs that no-one should die but that everyone would accept his offer to believe in him and have eternal life.

The truth is that globally, it is not people who are gay or people who are Muslim that are persecuted anything like as much as those who are Christians. This is not to deny their suffering about simply to put this into perspective. Thousands of Christians are killed in the world each year simply for being Christians. And let's not forget that well over a hundred Christians (like William Tyndale) lost their lives here in the UK simply for wanting the Bible (in the 15th-18th centuries).

God is not the enemy. This a lie from the pit of hell ! When you see so much evil in the world, don't blame God who made the world perfect and who's the one working to put things right. God isn't persecuting man for doing wrong, he's working to make things beautiful after man messed up.

Blaming God is the wrong perspective. When people are angry with God, they're wrong! It is the devil who destroys, kills and brings disease and all evil. He is the one who kills people, destroys people, brings sickness, brings death and horrible things. It is God who works directly and through his church to alleviate, help, support, comfort, heal, restore, change, encourage and equip people against evil and for good.

There is so much good and so much that doesn't go wrong in this world. Instead of 'blaming' God for all the 'wrong' (and it's not his fault anyway!), why not encourage people to thank God for all that is right (like the Hudson River plane in New York as one of 1000s of examples!)

We know that as Christians, our 'weapons' are not physical but spiritual and are mighty powerful in God to pull down strongholds, see God's power released and situations and even nations changed. (Ephesians 6 / 1 Corinthians 10).

## Positive Facts about Christianity

Just to help counter some of the lies spoken about Christians...

### **1. Science**

The very truths of Christianity led to the birth of science in the UK and Europe. The early pioneering scientists were very often Christians.

Sir Isaac Newton was a very famous scientist who was inspired by his strong Christian faith. He was a physicist and mathematician who discovered the laws of motion and universal gravitation. He was a key person in the scientific revolution. He invented the first reflecting telescope and was a key part of many other scientific discoveries.

There are many other scientists, including very many today who are Christians – even up to those working in the Royal Observatory.

### **2. Hospitals and Medical Care**

The name that people associate with this, is Florence Nightingale, the so-called 'Lady of the Lamp' who led a team to care for injured soldiers in the Crimean War, which Britain, France and Turkey fought against Russia in 1854. She set new standards of care for the troops, wrote home for them, and looked after a team of nurses. She introduced a nurses training college in England and was responsible for many changes in hospital and health care across the nation.

### **3. Factories, Social Reform, Schools**

Lord Shaftesbury will always be associated with factory reform in the UK. Also legislation to help women and stop under 13s working in factories. Lord Shaftesbury also helped Florence Nightingale on army and nursing reforms, and set up schools in inner cities to help poor children.

In the USA, places like Harvard and Yale were set up by Christians. Sadly they have mostly lost their Christian heritage today.

The Message Trust out of Manchester is a modern day organisation working to bring transformation and hope to inner cities. Through their many projects, they have brought change to hundreds of lives across Manchester, have been credited by the police with falls in crime and have expanded their Eden Project across the major cities of the UK and even into South Africa.

#### **4. The Law**

The Bible is the world's best selling book. Many people leave their Bible on a shelf. But the Bible has played a major part in forming the law in this country and around the world. Did you know the Bible is full of good advice to do with crime, punishment and helping sort out people who commit crime. The Bible tells us about honesty, about love, about forgiving others and about having responsibilities, not just rights. It's an incredibly practical book.

Many phrases that we use in terms of justice today are from the Bible (e.g. murder as having to have 'malice aforethought') and many other examples.

#### **5. Housing**

One thing that Christians have always been at the forefront of, is housing and making sure that people have good housing and places to live. One of many examples of this is Bournville and Cadburys.

George and Richard Cadbury were Quakers (Christians). Their business was expanding so they moved from central Birmingham to what is now known as 'Bournville'. This was to be a cleaner and healthier place to live and work. They were loyal employers, paid relatively high wages and pioneered pension schemes, committees and a full staff medical service. In 1893, George Cadbury built a large 'village' to alleviate bad living conditions in inner cities. This had all kinds of amenities for the workers, including arts and facilities for health and fitness.

This continues today through a number of agencies. You'll find that many homelessness projects, community projects and housing projects were started and pioneered by Christians (as one of many hundreds of examples – St Petrocks centre for homeless people in Exeter or the YMCA).

#### **6. Children's Homes**

George Mueller rescued and taught 10,000 orphans off the streets of Bristol in schools, providing shelter for them. He set up and maintained the great orphanages in Bristol. He also acquired funds to teach 122,000 in schools and do much more. In all this, he did so without any of his own money, relying on prayer and gifts. In all the time, not one child went without a meal. He hadn't always been a saint, however. He had led a very colourful life and even been imprisoned, before finding God and developing a heart to help those who were not privileged.

#### **7. Prisons**

Elizabeth Fry did great work, first with women prisoners and their children, initiating prison reform for them, and then also for male prisoners. She also set up District Visiting Societies to work with the poor, libraries for coastguards, a training school for nurses and help for homeless women and children.

#### **8. Slavery**

The issue of slavery was first raised and questioned by Society of Friends (Quakers / Methodists, who are Christians). The cause was then helped by a Christian with influence, called William Wilberforce. In 1787, he formed the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. He overcame disappointment and setbacks to finally see the Abolition of the Slave Trade Bill pass on 25th March 1807.

### **9. Mother Theresa**

A famous lady, who died within the same week that the famous Princess Diana died. She received far less attention, but her work was equally if not far more valuable. From 1931 to 1948 Mother Teresa taught at St. Mary's High School in Calcutta. However, she saw such suffering and poverty outside the convent walls that in 1948 she received permission to leave the convent school. She went outside the walls of the convent and devoted herself to working among the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta. She had no money, relying instead on God to provide. She started an open-air school for slum children. Soon she was joined by volunteers and missionaries and more financial support came along.

### **10. Peace**

Canon Andrew White and his team have a modern day incredible influence with the leaders across the Middle East, mainly Iraq, Israel, and Palestine. He has access to most of the leaders and has some incredible stories to tell. He is a contemporary Christian – making (and trying to make) a great difference for peace. He is one of many unsung heroes working to bring change.

### **11. Dedication of America and Politics**

On many occasions, the founding fathers and those who set up governments and states were motivated very directly, even solely, because of their faith in God. One of the most famous early Presidents of the USA (1789-1800) had faith in God, prayed, and included God in many of his statements and things that he did. George Bush Snr was also a strong Christian. In the UK, the often unpopular Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher also had a strong faith. While not everyone agrees with everything she did, she was used by God to fight off the rise of extremist and very nasty people seeking to take over the UK. Today, a number of politicians are Christians.

### **12. On the Streets and Fighting Modern-Day Slavery**

Christians have been right at the forefront of fighting modern day slavery and sex trafficking. Campaigns such as Stop The Traffik, the A1 Project and many other projects work to fight sex trafficking, the trafficking and slavery of children and adults and to fight modern-day slavery.

On local levels most towns and cities across the UK have 'Street Pastors' whose role has proved an invaluable resource for police. Their motto is 'The Church in action on the streets. Caring, Listening, Helping.' Street Pastors engage with people on the streets to care for them, listen to them and help them. They work together with other partners in the night-time economy to make communities safer.

### **13. Christians in schools and youth work**

By far the largest group of people working with young people in the UK today are Christians. There are more Christian youth workers (by far) than secular youth workers, even before all the government cuts. Christians work in places and times that others don't

and make a massive difference in the lives of thousands and thousands of young people and schools across the UK. These services are free and very widely used.

#### **14. Contribution to the Economy**

A survey a few years ago found that the Welsh church contributed £1 billion a year of free services into the Welsh economy. That would make the church in Wales (population 3.1 million) one of the country's largest organisations. If we use the same formula for England (in terms of difference of population, population 53.5 million) we'd find that the English church must contribute at least £18 billion to the English economy and probably more, considering how economically powerful London is. The Scottish population is around 5.4 million so this would mean a contribution of around £1.75 billion into the Scottish economy each year. This would make the church the second largest 'private business' in the UK.

#### **15. Stopping Revolution**

In the 18th century there was a real threat of revolution and civil war in England (there was a revolution in France). The reason that this didn't happen in England was largely down to Methodism. Many would call this a 'revival' in the UK where many thousands turned back to God, from the preaching of Charles Wesley and George Whitfield. Some modern day historians disagree with this but in my view they are incorrect.

#### **16. English Literature**

A key figure who often loses credit that's wrongly given to Shakespeare is William Tyndale who was strangled and then burned to death in England in 1536 simply because he believed the Bible should be in the language of the people.

Called by some the "Architect of the English Language," Tyndale coined many of the cherished phrases and familiar expressions we know today. "Fight the good fight of faith," "give up the ghost," "daily bread," "God forbid," "scapegoat," and "my brother's keeper" ([Source](#) – learnreligions.com, accessed April 2019)

#### **17. Giving**

The UK is one of the largest givers to the charity in the world (in real terms). The church is without doubt one of the biggest (probably the biggest) individual 'giver' into social and other good causes globally. Not even Bill Gates' foundation can match that.

## **Conclusion**

This is written to help 'arm' you against some of the tactics and lies of others. As was written at the start of this session, "Everyone else seems to be allowed to stand up for their beliefs except for Christians."

This is no idle statement. It will become a reality unless we stand together in prayer, in word, in action, in love and with God's supernatural power. A powerless church is a pointless church! So let's 'arm' ourselves with God's spiritual weapons and fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6.12).

It is time for the rights of Christians to be considered, protected and fought for.