

Conversations for Common Questions and Doubts:
Isn't Christianity the Cause of So Many Historical Injustices?

Lenon and Ono's "Imagine" (1971)



*Imagine there's no heaven,
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us, only sky
Imagine all the people
Livin' for today*

*Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion, too
Imagine all the people
Livin' life in peace*

*You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one*

- It is not uncommon to now hear that Christianity promotes bigotry, oppression, racism, misogyny, slavery, and violence.
 - "It is a first-class human tragedy that people of the earth who claim to believe in the message of Jesus, whom they describe as the Prince of Peace, show little of that belief in actual practice." - Mahatma Gandhi

Christianity Doesn't Promise to Have Perfect Followers

- The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints.

*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

Micah 6:8

- "I am not the man I ought to be, I am not the man I wish to be, and I am not the man I hope to be, but by the grace of God, I am not the man I used to be." – John Newton (pastor, former slave trader, writer of the hymn Amazing Grace)

Does The Bible Itself Condemn These Injustices?

- Ironically, secular people's typical criticisms of the Christian church's oppressiveness and injustices actually come from Christianity's own resources for critiquing itself.
 - So, the answer is not to abandon the Christian faith—that would leave us with neither the standards nor the resources to make corrections.
- Because where did we get the list of virtues to which we hold the church accountable?
 - From the Bible itself!



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How Should We Answer Accusations of Historical Injustice?

1. Acknowledge and Show Compassion for Human Suffering Committed in the Name of Christ
 - a) **The first thing the gospel trains us to do is repent.**

2. Distinguish Between Christianity's Misuse and the Actual Teaching of Christ
 - a. **The misuse of an idea doesn't invalidate its truth.**
 - b. **Human sin, not Christ's teachings, are the root cause of injustice**
 - i. **Romans 3:23** - "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
 - ii. The gospel calls individuals to transformation, not oppression.

3. Distinguish Between "Cultural Christianity" and the Authentic Gospel Message
 - a) **Fallacy of Composition**
 - b) **"We don't preach Christianity; we preach Christ."**
 - c) Cultural Christianity refers to the social or institutional use of Christianity that aligns more with societal customs, political ideologies, or traditions than with the teachings of Christ. It is often disconnected from authentic discipleship and personal faith in Jesus.

4. Illustrate Christianity as a Historical Force for Good - Christians are Good for the World
 - a) 1st century Christians were noted for inverting societal expectations for women, slaves, orphans, widows, the poor, and the sick.
 - b) **"See how they love one another...and how they are ready to die for one another."**
 - c) The vast multitude of charitable organizations stem from Christian influences.

5. Distinguish Between Institutions and the People that Comprise Them
 - a) **Moral Neutrality of Institutions:** Just as political systems or science can be used for both good and harm, the morality of all religions depends on how they are practiced.

6. Illustrate Christianity as a Compelling Moral Framework
 - a) **Consider the radical nature of the actual gospel.**
 - b) How does the true gospel invert and upend societal thinking about: Race, Class, Gender, Economic status, Political power, etc.
 - c) **Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
 - d) **Colossians 3:11** Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.
 - e) **James 1:27** – Pure religion involves caring for the vulnerable/oppressed
 - f) **Psalms 89:14:** "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne."
 - g) **Isaiah 1:17:** "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."

7. Hold A More Eschatological Perspective on Justice
 - a) **Amo 5:24** But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

