Christian Voices

Community Apologetics Digest

Question:

What are the reasons why you think Christianity is true?

Interviews
Testimonies
Opinions
Book Reviews
Arts & Letters

"God transformed

me during the Covid-19 pandemic"

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"Always be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is within you."

-1 Peter 3:15



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Christian Voices is an interdenominational non-for-profit community digest owned by Drew Eldridge.



Drew E. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Christian Voices is a local interdenominational Christian apologetics digest that is intended to serve as a platform for free speech and cultivate civil and productive dialogue with the rest of the community. I call it "community apologetics." Apologetics is all about having conversations one on one. Community apologetics is about having that conversation in a larger and more easily accessible format.

This is particularly important when

living in a democracy. In a democracy, it matters what people think of Christians because they will vote for or against things that affect us. So, it's important that there is good, clear communication both ways. If there isn't, then it means our neighbours will have to rely on what they see in the media. And in the media. Christians are portrayed in a way that is highly misleading. They are completely misrepresented. Social media is even worse. The internet is full of people who spread anti-Christian propaganda. Atheist, secular humanist, and other groups often use this to legislate against Christians. But I think this is a lot less likely to happen if the general public gets to know us for who we really are, rather than for who the media makes us out to be, or from the bad apples

that can be found in any group.

This is all very relevant to Christian apologetics in general because, before we can even do apologetics for our religion, it needs to be legal to do apologetics. Right now, Christian apologetics is legal. But this is slowly changing. So, it's very important that we not only know how to defend the truth of our religion, but how to defend it as an intellectually and morally viable position worth tolerating by non-Christians. And I believe that starts with conversation especially listening.

The publication features opinions, essays, book reviews, interviews, testimonies, Q&A's from outreach and even promotions of talented local Christian artists of various kinds. All of it is intended to

glorify God, proclaim the truth of the Bible and serve as a means of evangelism— or at the very least, a means of clean and friendly communication.

It's a grass roots movement. Anyone can write in and contribute simply by visiting our website or sending us an email. Non-Christians are encouraged to ask questions or write in letters to the editor We have a new podcast available on YouTube and other platforms. Volunteers are also welcome to get involved in door knocking and postcarding and other outreach projects.

Website: www.christianvoices.com

Email: yourvoice@christian-voices.com

Leslie F.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

I lost a dear friend to the Covid 19 virus. It's real and it's so important that we protect the vulnerable from it. The Bible teaches that all of God's children are precious. We need to make sure that vulnerable people are protected and that they have everything they need until it becomes safer. I pray that God keeps all of our loved ones safe and secure this summer.

"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." -1 John 4:8

God transformed me during this Covid 19 pandemic. He put into my heart a deeper care for the vulnerable. Especially those who are alone, with no family or friends to help. There are so many ways of doing that.

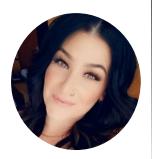
One idea I have had is to call vulnerable friends, family members and anyone else to safely deliver supplies for anyone self-isolating. We all have a duty to chip in. And we should keep doing it even when all of this is over!



Tobias T. Steinbach, Manitoba

Church is essential. Being a Christian is not just something nice or a hobby. It's a lifestyle. It's a calling. It's something many have given their life for. Scripture instructs us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

Also, do not forget to communicate. Gathering to worship God and encourage and exhorting one another is what real Christians do. We have an Eternity to prepare for in this life and we take that very seriously.



Bryna W. Winnipeg, Manitoba

I'm just an everyday person. A single mom of two who loves Jesus and seeks Him daily for guidance and wisdom. He's been guiding me through this whole covid pandemic to be a light in the darkness and be an example to those that are serving their fear instead of their faith- through my boldness.

So, I felt a huge urge in my spirit to hold a March for Jesus on resurrection Sunday to get the Holy Spirit moving in this city through the streets to express to unbelievers the need of a saviour. Also, to give like-minded Believers a place to actively honor their Lord and remind them where our healing comes from. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

We ended up meeting at the legislative building. We prayed for twenty minutes and marched down Broadway Avenue. We heard many honks in agreement and excitement. We had a few naysayers, but we blessed them on the mic and we had some upbeat praise and worship playing as well, to keep us reminded of the cross and the atmosphere in a place of gratitude.

We had kids riding their bikes and scooters too. It was wonderful. They had a blast! We turned onto Main Street, then turned into The Forks and ended at The Human Rights Museum. We said a last wrap up prayer and blessed the city, the leaders and the province— and that Believers eyes would be opened and a fire lit under their butts to come out and actively be His hands and feet. Nobody needs to get ahold of me to organize. I'd ask them to seek the Lord themselves in their prayer closet and step out of their comfort zone to honor our Lord and reach lives for Christ.

"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

-Matthew 12:30

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

-Matthew 18:20

Jesse A. Winnipeg, Manitoba

We deliver free masks to anyone who wants them. My friends and I have a car. We safely deliver supplies. Some people can't go out and don't have anyone to help them. It's very hard for people with a mental illness. Jesus teaches to help everyone! Love your neighbours! May God's blessing be upon you.



Todd M. Winnipeg, Manitoba

The feeling of being together with people in prayer and in song is as much a part of the cathartic and uplifting experience of being at church as prayer itself.

Danielle S.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

As an essential worker, I can tell vou that this virus is real and very dangerous to people who are in a state of vulnerability. I know people personally who have died. It's a terrible thing. Essential workers and infected people need our prayers. So, please pray and encourage one another. The Lord is Good. May God help us.

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: It is more blessed to give than to receive."

-Acts 20:35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

-John 13:34

Brian R.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

The reason why I protest abortion is because it's wrong to kill human beings. The young women who go to these clinics are lied to. What they need is love, charity and kindness. We also need to make it easier to adopt. Too many great couples are denied the opportunity. Please call your local representatives and tell them they need to be pro-life to have your vote. There is a walk for life event. Please come out and stand up for our children. Also, come and take a stand for mothers. Every mother who is considering abortion must be surrounded by love and care.

Crisis Pregnancy Centre 650 Broadway Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 1-800-665-0570



Colette A. Lethbridge, Alberta

My name is Colette Aikema, and I wish our government had only banned conversion therapy with Bill C-6.

I do not wish to limit the rights of LGBTQ Canadians, nor do I support conversion therapy. In fact, I had hoped that our government would vote to ban torture and abuse against the LGBTQ community, but instead they have also criminalized therapy I needed and asked for.

When I was a teenager, I was gang raped and I became addicted to hardcore pornography. The gay and bisexual feelings I had escalated; and because of the trauma, my sexuality became a source of distress. I even became suicidal.

My life was saved when I found help through a 12-step support group and a secular counselor at the University of Lethbridge. This therapy, just because it reduced my non-heterosexual behaviours and attractions, is defined as conversion therapy in Bill C-6.

If this conversion therapy ban had been in place while I was going through therapy, I would not have recovered from my porn and sex addiction the way I did. In fact, if it weren't for that support group and my secular counselor, I am not sure I would even be alive to speak to you today. I despair of the day I need this care again, and will be unable to find it because BillC6 has criminalized it. Now our government says I have nothing to

worry about because their exemption allows for exploratory and 'legitimate' conversations. But by refusing to see the need of myself and people like me for behavioral therapy as legitimate, they themselves have rejected my lived experience and victimized me again. My interest in therapy was not to explore my sexually distressing feelings - I knew where they came from. Instead, I needed help reducing my nonheterosexual attractions and behaviors.

Despite telling Parliament my story, Canadian leaders created a new definition in Bill C-6 that restricts my access to care as a trauma victim. They have defined conversion therapy as not just forced orientation change, but also behavior change. No other jurisdiction or professional body in the world has done this.

Today I ask you to

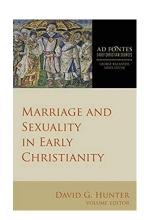
tell your local Member of Parliament about my story. I need your help ensuring that our government knows that there are many legitimate reasons someone may want to reduce their nonheterosexual attractions or behaviors. And I hope we all agree - none of those are for the government to decide, nor dismiss.

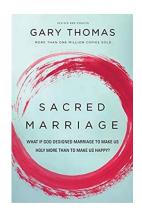
Why does Bill C-6 harm LGBTQ Canadians? Because the definition of conversion therapy in Bill C-6 actually bans two kinds of counseling: a practice, treatment or service aimed to change someone's orientation from gay to straight, the definition professional bodies use, AND a practice, treatment or service. that would reduce or repress nonheterosexual behaviour or noncisgender gender identity. The way this is worded means that

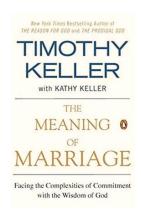
the two definitions do not have to be connected. Counseling to reduce nonheterosexual behaviour would be "conversion therapy" even if the client is not attempting to change their orientation.

Because Bill-6 uses this definition, it criminalizes any kind of counseling or support that LGBTQ Canadians may seek to simply reduce nonheterosexual behaviours or attractions they do not want to engage in. A counselor could help someone reduce their unwanted attraction to a co-worker for example, only if that co-worker is of the opposite sex. That would be a violation of the fundamental Charter Rights of Canadians, especially LGBTQ Canadians.

"Forced"
counseling is banned
under one section of
Bill C-6. But the rest
of the Bill bans much
more than "forced







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counseling." In fact, Justice Minister David Lametti admitted that consenting adults would not be able to pay for counseling they want in Parliament, stating, "We also recognize that criminalizing profiting from conversion therapy means that consenting adults would be prevented from accessing conversion therapy unless it is available free of charge." He also said mature minors would not be able to get any kind of counseling, paid or unpaid, to reduce unwanted nonheterosexual behaviour or non-cisgender gender identity or gender expression. This ban prevents even a child who wants that support from receiving it. He stated, "We recognize the proposed amendments limit certain choices, including, for example, for mature minors (Oct. 26, 2020 House of Commons.

Such a ban would directly violate the

rights of LGBTQ Canadians since those seeking to reduce their heterosexual attractions and behaviour would not be hindered from getting that support. Do your part to protect the right to holistic, and Christian, care and talk to your local MP. Ask them to push for a broad consensus on the definition - one that doesn't discriminate against Canadians.

Rachel M.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Good afternoon. I have something I would like to write in your book. It's about Bill C-10. Bill C-10 is about extending censorship to the internet. It gives the government more power to control what we can say and access. Do you really want the government to be able to have that kind of control? They want to push an agenda.

But today that's often a very anti-Christian agenda. Lots of things Christians believe is considered hate speech even if it's said respectfully.

I believe in free speech for everyone. There should be a completely free press as well. Why should we tell other people what to think or what they can say? It doesn't make any sense. I'm against being rude. But laws like Bill C-10 won't help. They just make things worse.

I would encourage you to resist the passing of this law. Or it should at least be changed. If we keep allowing our government to have more control over what we say or where we say it, we will lose our voice. Right now, it might not be that bad. But if this continues, we will not be building a good future for our children and grandchildren. They might look back and see that we were the ones who let that happen.



Mark L. Winnipeg, Manitoba

God is the creator. of the whole universe (Genesis 1:1). God has revealed Himself as three distinct persons, but is one eternal being. He has revealed Himself as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7). Jesus is the Son of God, and first person of the Godhead. Though fully God, Jesus submitted Himself and came to Earth as a human to die on the cross and reconcile this fallen world back to God Himself. If you acknowledge that you have sinned against a Holy God, repent and turn from those sins

and then put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross, you will receive eternal life in Heaven.



Paula Winnipeg, Manitoba

"How far can the grace of God take us?"

The grace of God can take us to a place of spending eternity with Him! What Jesus did on the cross was the perfect display of His grace. Our part is to repent, which is admit we have sinned against God, turn from what that sin is, and confess/put our faith in Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross. With a sincere heart, God's grace will

be with you each day of your life. Romans 10:9-10



Yvonne E. Winnipeg, Manitoba

"Can God communicate in dreams?"

Yes, God can, no question! I would caution the notion that every dream must be a message from God though. I have had dreams which completely contradict God's Word, so you must test every dream if you think its a Word from God.

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans."

-Proverbs 16:3



David O. Winnipeg, Manitoba

"Is the devil a real person?"

The devil is real indeed. He was an angel, who ended up rebelling against His creator (God) and is actively trying to destroy the rest of God's creation.



Wes P.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

"Where is the answer to all life's questions?"

The answers to life's questions we can find in Jesus Christ. In John 14:6, Jesus states He is the way, the truth, and the life. The best way to know truth, and find answers to life's questions in Jesus is by reading the Bible.



Eric C. Winnipeg, Manitoba

I first listened to "Together Building Africa" in July of 2018. After their presentation, I was so moved with the Holy Spirit, I would've gone to the DRC (Congo) the next day if they'd asked me. I believe I was called because I thought about them

every day for a year. I also prayed for them on a regular basis throughout that year. I also listened to other missionaries, some to Central America, some to China—all very great believers and missionary ministries. But nothing stood out to me the way "Together Building Africa" did. So, in 2019, I heard that Doreen Lundy was presenting in Beausejour, so I hopped in my car and went to see her presentation again of her most recent mission trip, and I was just as captivated and amazed at God's glory and provision through simple people, felt amazing love for the Congolese just as much this second time as the first. I knew I needed to go over there. So, afterwards, I walked up to Doreen and asked her "what will it take for you



guys to take me with you?" I had money saved up and wanted to pay my own way. After Doreen prayed, and discussed it with her adopted Congolese son whose name is Pastor Raha, they phoned me a couple months later and invited me out. Doreen affirmed that the excitement and drive I felt, and love for people I never met, reminded her of when she felt called to do missions there. Pastor Raha affirmed it through prayer and felt it was a calling. So, it felt right, having two witnesses to affirm my calling, and knowing the reason why I never stopped thinking about them and remembering them in prayer for a year.

"Together
Building Africa" is a
Canadian charity that
is based in
Beausejour, Manitoba.
It was started by a
homemaking,
homeschooling,

Foster and adoption wife named Doreen Lundy. She decided to go with her church on a trip to Congo, and once she arrived, she fell in love with the people, and immediately felt the calling from God. Everyone around her thought she was crazy and having a midlife crisis. But she knew who was calling her. It was the LORD.

Not long after she started her ministry, she met Pastor Raha out in Bukavu, DRC, and they really connected as a team. It wasn't long before Doreen and her husband invited Pastor Raha, who was an orphan, to become a member of their family— to become their son.

This ministry is the perfect underdog story. She was an uneducated housewife, who everyone around her thought was crazy, banding together with one Pastor who has been an orphan for a major part of his life, whose heart was for his people to be saved through Jesus, and they became a well-established ministry that has been going strong thanks to the Grace of our LORD, and the amazing Godfearing supporters who donate for over a decade.

The need in the Congo is very severe: poverty, bush fighting, unemployment and old infrastructure that is breaking down. They are, I believe, the underdogs of Africa. That country possesses the third richest resources in the world, yet they are in the bottom three for being the poorest in the country according to the world bank. They used to be the lowest, but some other countries fell below them. We cannot tell if the other countries got poorer, or if Congo improved slightly. They are facing severe

starvation, because humanitarian organizations have pulled out due to Covid. Also, a volcano erupted in eastern Congo, which has caused millions to flee their homes. While fleeing, the tremors caused cracks in the roads. There are approximately 735 children separated from their families in these areas. Great devastation and damage done to these parts.

When I first arrived in Congo, I remember being surprised at how many hills there were. As soon as I get over a hill, thinking I'm above all the rest, there's more hills above and below me! That was different, being a man from the Canadian prairies haha!

I was surprised how willing the Congolese people were to help each other. Pretty much everywhere I went,

it wasn't abnormal to see someone get stuck, or drop something, and see Congolese stop to help, as if it was an automatic thing to do. It made me wonder if it was an inner unity they had, knowing how important it is to help each other. As if they subconsciously knew that to survive together, they needed to help each other out.

Everywhere I went, there was worship. It wasn't abnormal to hear drums and corporate singing around the city, and in communities. I was very blessed and touched to see and hear Jesus being praised all over the place.

The worship in Congo was WAY different then here in the West. Everyone not only stands up, but they BOOGIE. They sway from left to right, bounce, clap and twist. It's a bash for them. A party for the

LORD. There are some speaker hook ups where I was, but not the full band. We had one young man playing the guitar for a few songs. But the rest was acapella singing, or drums and homemade rice shakers at the most. Very talented with very little! But they didn't seem to care about what they didn't have, they just WORSHIPPED, because that's what you do for Jesus. I miss it!

My favorite work was pastoral visitations. We walked for most of the day through the community, visiting and encouraging people. Unfortunately, Covid prevented us from going out more. But we managed to raise money for an elderly Congolese woman who had leaks in her roof. We got her roof replaced. We drove out to a country community outside Bukavu. We got to

present goats to each farming family, who were going to graze their goats together. That was like giving out free cars. They danced and sang, and were ecstatic at receiving an animal that could eventually provide meat, and milk etc. I went and did some evangelism on the streets, talking to young people. Unemployment is high over there, and a lot of young people walk around during the day, so hearing about the hope of Jesus is very effective for them. We visited one of the ministries we help called Wezesha outside of Bukavu. It's a microfinancing program that helps Congolese women with no credit get a loan to start a business. It's a selfsustaining program that opens doors for other women to get loans. God put it on the heart of Pastor Raha and Doreen to

start cell groups of small house churches that could evangelize their small communities. They were designed to spread throughout the community like a contagion. They had a conference planned and organized, and on the last day of the conference, all the churches got closed down because of Covid. So, my ministry leaders unknowingly prepared the church there for Covid, and those small house churches became its own "pandemic", as it didn't take long for the groups to start growing. One group influenced a Congolese Muslim to come and learn. God knows what he's doing. I learnt how different the church is to the Congolese compared to us here in the west. Church is hope, Church is life, Church is incredibly important for the Congolese. A part of serving Christ is to

serve and attend a congregation, and have that reflect through your daily and weekly life. What I have found, especially in my own walk, is that church here can be taken for granted easier. What's the big deal if we miss a service? The building isn't going anywhere. It'll be there next week. Not to the Congolese I met! Attending came across to me as not just something you do, but something that was incredibly important to do, to reflect Jesus in your life from your community and congregation. It challenged my first world mindset. Don't take the endless supply of Bibles for granted, the endless resources for study and research in the scriptures for granted. Don't take your church building and community for granted. And most importantly, don't take the life

given by our Messiah for granted either. They taught me that gratitude for what we have isn't just a choice, but it is glorifying Jesus.

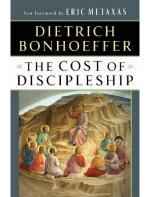
God willing, with His Grace and provision, I plan to go back. I've asked God to place the best part of my heart in that country. Advice I would have for others who hear this call is to be aware at the possibility of having naysayers who are close to you. Most likely they are well intentioned, but don't be surprised if even those closest to you, have an "eye rolling" or negative response. Don't rely on them for a blessing, but keep your sights on Christ, and your ears listening to the Spirit. I don't want this to sound like I'm telling people to be rebellious, and disrespectful. So have Grace for those who don't see or hear the calling on your life,

and be obedient to God.

"Go into the world and proclaim all of the gospel to all of creation. Those who believe will be saved." -Mark 16 15-16

'Blesssd are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy, that those who have this quality, are willing to have mercy on those even at the cost of their own reputation. Showing mercy to those we would automatically see on the surface as not deserving it."

-Deitrich Bonhoeffer



Brett W. Winnipeg, Manitoba

No Christian should be ashamed of telling the truth about Jesus. Go and proclaim the truth to everyone you meet who hasn't heard the good news.

"Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

-Romans 10:9

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

-Acts :12

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

-John 14:6

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

-Mark 16:16





Jared P. Winnipeg, Manitoba

My name is Jared. I've been evangelizing in this city for many years. I have seen many people repent of their sins and give their lives to Christ. Let me share just one story with you.

I met a man last year on the street. He had no money or place to live. He also suffered from a terrible illness. I don't remember what it's called, but it took away his energy. He couldn't walk for long periods of time. I shared the gospel with him and he wanted to learn more. That very day I took him out for coffee and explained that Jesus loved him and he would grant him healing and eternal life if he repented and asked. We know this is true because it's in scripture:

"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

-Romans 10:9

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
-Romans 6:23

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." -John 14:6

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

-John 12-13

The man repented of his sins and was filled

with the Holy Spirit. Today, his life is much better. He walked in obedience and the Lord rewarded him.

It isn't true that evangelists save people. Only God saves people. He died on the cross so that we could be saved. The Holy Spirit moves and awakens people. Every evangelist should remember that and be humble. We need to pray that God continues to use us every time we minister.

I can tell you that God exists onehundred percent. There is no doubt at all. Everyone can know God for themselves if they really want to. Repent. Confess your sins in humility. God is listening always. Do you think money can buy happiness? Nope. You've got to give your life to the Lord. Only He has that power. We can't get it for ourselves. All is done through Him.



Rose S. Winnipeg, Manitoba

I have had many conversations with strangers on the streets of downtown Winnipeg and on university campuses as part of the CCBR (Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform) Manitoba Initiative's "Choice"-Chain project. Usually, I start the dialogue with, "What do you think about abortion?" This simple question gets varying responses, depending on whether they agree with it or not. The discussion begins with my follow-up to their response. Many people today justify abortion by saying it is a woman's right to have control over her body. So many say

it is okay for a woman to end a pregnancy. However, those of us who are pro-life know that it is wrong to end a pregnancy. Why do we know it is wrong? As people who are pro-life, we know that to end a pregnancy means to end the life of the developing child; essentially, to end a pregnancy through abortion means to kill an innocent human directly and intentionally. As Christians, we know that to kill a human is to violate God's law. How can we communicate this knowledge to others? The world proclaims that abortion is a good thing, something to be celebrated and promoted. As Christians, we know that life begins in the womb, that God knits and forms us in His image. However, if we try to communicate our pro-life position only on our religious viewpoints, our

proclamations will fall on deaf ears because the secular world is blind to God's truth. Therefore, we must approach the secular world, bearing Christ's love through our words and actions as we continue to speak His truth in the language of secularism. This means a vocabulary including human rights, freedoms, and scientific evidence. An effective conversation structure that I use on the street is: 1) common ground, 2) analogy, and 3) questions. With this structure, I can agree to certain freedoms I have as an individual human, and then I break it down into a human rights conversation using analogies and questions. For example, a response to the question, "What do you think about abortion?" might be, "I think it's the woman's right to choose." My common

ground would be to agree to the freedom I have to choose and not have things dictated to me. My analogy would question my freedom to choose to swing my arm and punch someone. Usually, people say it is not a good idea to hurt someone else for no reason, which makes them aware that even though individuals have bodily autonomy, their rights end when another person's rights begin. The next part of the discussion would be to identify the humanity of the preborn. Science tells us so many things, including human development beginning from the moment of fertilization (when the egg and sperm meet). Using this fact, we can help people recognize the individual human that is growing and developing in the womb. It may take a few more steps in the conversation for the

person to recognize the humanity of the preborn, but once they do, they realize that abortion should never happen because it always directly and intentionally kills an innocent human. Why must you get involved? In one of my street conversations, I talked with a young man whose eyes opened wide at the realization of how abortion violates the baby's right to live, and how abortion was so destructive after seeing the images. He felt called to action right away; he asked for more pamphlets so that he could give them to his friends. "More people need to know the reality of abortion," he said. He thanked me and went on his way. This man is not the only person I have talked to who had completely changed his mind. The thing is, brothers and sisters, we need to tell the world the Truth. We need to share it.

with all our family, friends, and colleagues, and it will take all of us talking about it to initiate the waves of discussion. Abortion is a violation of a human right to live – a basic human right, and it is a violation against a voiceless victim. As Christians, as anyone who is pro-life, or anyone against the bloodshed of innocent humans, we need to stand up – we need to be the VOICE for the VOICELESS! How can you get involved? With more people talking about abortion, you start little waves that grow to be the tsunami. We need to grow the tsunami of discussion surrounding abortion. To get yourself educated on abortion or to get involved, you can check out the CCBR website (endthekilling.ca), or if you would like to start a group/church training, you can contact Winnipeg Life's Vision

(lifesvision.ca) to arrange your study series. You can contact either CCBR or Life's Vision for any other questions and there will be someone happy to help. If you are someone or know someone who is struggling with a crisis, they would be happy to help. The Winnipeg Crisis Pregnancy Centre's website is: pregnancy.ca. Reaching out directly to them or to any of the aforementioned groups will provide you with the necessary help and resources to aid you through your crisis.



Cam M.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

In response to what scripture says to support the pro-life position, I am tempted to respond by asking another question: "What evidence is there that scripture supports anything but the prolife position? I raise this a little rhetorically because for myself, as a person who is a Christian and who works in the pro-life movement, I found I had a much deeper understanding of the Bible after I began working in the pro-life movement.

To read the book of Proverbs and the Gospel of John after I began to work in the pro-life movement was just amazing! After reading those books with a pro-life perspective, I came away with the question: how could anybody read this book and not be prolife? I am reminded of Luke's Gospel account. Keep

in mind that Luke's Gospel was written as a summary or recount of everything that happened. I find it very significant that Luke's Gospel really begins with the story of Zacharias, or Zechariah (like all biblical scripture it is translated, so I wouldn't get hung up on names).

He was a Priest who had no children because his wife Elizabeth was unable to conceive. The Bible States that they were both righteous people who obeyed God. Zachariah was a priest and was chosen to be the person who went into the temple to burn incense while the others were outside praying. During this time, it was revealed to Zachariah that Elizabeth would conceive a child and he was to be called John. This was an answer to prayer. In Luke 1:15, it is made clear that John would

be filled with the Holy Spirit before birth. It is stated that John will turn the hearts of parents to their children (1:17). Obviously, these verses illustrate that life begins at conception and that parents are meant to make their children a top priority. The declaration that John was filled with the Holy Spirit before birth is not unique to him. Jeremiah's first words in the book that chronicled his life were: "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:4-5). As we look at this passage, it is crucial to remember that human life does not begin in the womb. The creation of the human life begins at conception.

At the moment a female ovum unites with a male sperm, a new distinct individual human being is created.

This process naturally takes place in the fallopian tube. In light of this scientific discovery, this passage in Jeremiah 1 makes total sense. If the simple words of Jeremiah and the words found in the Gospel of Luke aren't enough for you, consider the actions of John leaping for joy in the womb when Elizabeth was greeted by Mary. This event not only caused John to leap with joy in the womb, but also caused Elizabeth to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I also want to point out that in both the case of John and Jesus, the angel of Gabriel told them not to be afraid. This is something that is especially meaningful to me because often times when people conceive

children unexpectedly, they are afraid. I think that this is a good reminder for all of us, not only to realize the anxiety that unexpected pregnancy can have, but also a reminder to be not afraid. Throughout the Bible, children have been seen as a gift—not only the miraculous conception of Jesus and John in the gospels, but also Samuel and others, who were miraculously conceived in the Old Testament as well. I specifically mention Hannah's situation because the name Hannah means "favour." Mary, Elizabeth and Hannah all reference the favour of God when speaking about the blessing of conceiving a child. Children are seen as a blessing from God. In fact, we are called to come to Jesus with childlike faith. It is the only way to get into

Heaven (Matthew 18:3). Additionally, Jesus encourages His disciples in this. "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

If none of my explanations so far are sufficient for you, I simply ask you to reflect on the spirit of the Bible. Not only about the gift of life or the culture of life. but about the culture that opposes it—the culture of death. When I think of this, I am reminded of Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is so powerful! To think that King Herod hated THE LIFE, THE GOD OF THE LIVING so much that he ordered the execution of every young boy emphasizes this point.

I know that I have illustrated many reasons so far that give evidence that the Bible and the biblical ethic are inherently pro-life and pro-child. But what about abortion in the Bible? Was there anything that speaks about it directly, if we assume that "giving a child to Molech" is not the same thing as today's Satanists aborting babies as an offering to Satan? The closest thing that I can find to abortion in the Bible is in Exodus 1. In this passage the Egyptians try to oppress the Israelites, but God continues to bless the Israelites with children in response. As a result of this, Pharaoh tells the midwives "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him." In this situation, when the midwives are asked to

kill the babies immediately after birth, they however feared God and let the boys live. "And because the midwives feared God, He gave them families of their own." (Exodus 1:21). Based on this passage and all of the other evidence I have shared, it seems obvious that the Bible does support a life affirming ethic.

My final argument for the sake of this article would be the argument that God calls us to radically sacrifice ourselves. He states that people will know that you are my disciples by the way you love each other. We are supposed to care for the widow and orphan. Who is more of a widow than a young girl when either her family or the child's father is pressuring her to have an abortion? 73% of post-abortive women surveyed in a Study done by the Journal

of American Physicians and Surgeons stated that they felt pressured to abort. And who is a greater orphan than a child whose parents allow him/her to be sucked up, ripped apart or injected with drugs that will end their life before they are even born? The Bible is clear. Those who are last on Earth will be first in the kingdom of Heaven. I am reminded of the least of these parables in Matthew 25, where the king said: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me." The moral of this story is this: He will reply Truly I tell you, whatever you did not

do for me."

Therefore, I end by saying this. There were approximately 100,000 abortions in Canada in 2019 and over 40 million worldwide. What are we doing to help the least of these?



Kyle C. Winnipeg, Manitoba

"Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter."

- Prov 24:11

I want to turn your attention to an upcoming pro-life Crash Course, hosted by CCBR, in Winnipeg. Here our experienced speakers, having had thousands

of conversations on abortion, will equip you with the conversation skills you need to be the ambassador that preborn children deserve, whether at activism or in your daily life. For more information see our website:

https://www.endthekilling.ca/crash-course/

In Canada, a country with no abortion laws and where 100,000 preborn children lose their lives to this evil practice each year, the situation is dire. The injustice preborn children face *demands* the response of every Christian. Christians need to engage the culture with tried-and-true apologetics and be compelling but compassionate ambassadors for preborn rights. Why should this educational approach be taken up? Because



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in Canada, mothers and fathers in a crisis pregnancy are far more likely to have an abortion than seek out the available help they need. Therefore, what Canada needs is a change of mind and heart on abortion. Until Canadians believe that abortion is evil, that it unjustly kills an innocent human being, abortion will continue to happen and will continue to be seen as a "reset button" on an unplanned pregnancy. If we change what people believe and how they feel about abortion, then we will change how people behave around abortion so that abortion is completely rejected.

At CCBR we are transforming, bit by bit, our country into one where abortion is unthinkable. Because so many Canadians are simply ignorant about the abortion conversation, we see that when shown the evidence of abortion and offered a charitable case for pre-born human rights, people change their minds, time and again.

At CCBR we offer numerous opportunities for people to join us for public outreach bringing the truth to a culture that so desperately needs it. Join us at the Crash Course and then join us on the streets. You can also sign up to volunteer by filling out an application here and receive one on one training: https://www.endthek illing.ca/volunteer/

New volunteers and Crash Course attendees learn conversation skills such as conflict management, finding common ground with those who disagree, making analogies to illustrate a point, and asking important questions. They will also learn scientific and philosophical facts and reasoning that conclusively prove the pro-life position and how these truths can be lovingly shared in conversation.

Together, you and I, through persistent and strategic efforts, and most essentially, with the Lord's blessing, will contribute towards making abortion unthinkable in Canada.

Warm regards, Kyle Coffey

Manitoba Outreach Director

The Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform







Ibn A. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Child Evangelism Fellowship is a Biblecentered organization composed of bornagain believers whose purpose is to evangelize boys and girls with the Gospel of Christ, disciple them in the Word of God, and establish them in the local church for Christian living. The primary ministries of CEF Manitoba are: Discovery Time (Religious Instruction) in schools, Mailbox Club, and 5-Day Club (Summer VBS). Through these programs, staff and volunteers who are fully trained and screened teach the children and help to shape their character.



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Reaching children worldwide





Kendra L.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Thank you for asking this question. Yes, children need guidance from the Bible. Where else are they going to get it? The Bible contains all of the wisdom they will ever need. Other skills are useful, too. But without God and His word, nothing matters. It will all fail. God has power.

The Bible has great role models. If everyone lived like Jesus, the world would be a better place. So why not teach our children this information? It is every parent's job to make sure they know who Jesus was and why He died. Why did Jesus come and die? What is the purpose? This is what I mean.

Every day, a child should read some of the Holy scriptures. It doesn't matter if it's only twenty minutes. It's so important: But Jesus called the children to him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

-Luke 18:16

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

-Mark. 9:37

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

-Matthew 18:10

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

-Proverbs 22:6

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

-Exodus 20:12

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. -1 John 4:7

Dale S.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

If it's one thing that the recent tragedy has taught us, it's that all children matter. Children are precious to God and they should be to all Christians. The Bible teaches that we must try to save children who are being harmed. It doesn't matter who they are. A lot of people don't know that there is still lots of child trafficking that goes on. Slavery still exists in the world. Children are exploited in the media and on the internet. There are many children who suffer from trauma related to abuse. I have done lots of research. Here is some of what I've found:

"In 2005, UNICEF estimated that between 133–275 million children worldwide are exposed to violence in the family. Among the types of emotional maltreatment, verbal abuse in the form of name-calling is the most commonly experienced." -Canadian Red Cross

"A study in Ontario found that 31 per cent of males and 21 per cent of females experienced physical abuse during childhood."
-Canadian Red Cross

"In 2003, neglect was the most common form of child maltreatment reported to social workers in Canada." -Canadian Red Cross

"Eighty-five per cent of child sexual abuse victims know their sexual abusers." -Canadian Red Cross

31

"In British Columbia, more than one in three street or marginalized youth had been sexually exploited by men and women; males were as likely as females to be sexually exploited; 60 per cent of sexually exploited youth are Aboriginal."
-Canadian Red Cross

"In a study with Toronto street youth, one-third of these youth had experienced severe physical or sexual abuse or both." -Canadian Red Cross

"Young women who had not participated in a school abuse prevention program in childhood were about twice as likely to have experienced child sexual abuse as those who had participated in a prevention program."

-Canadian Red Cross

"Trafficking within Canada for the purpose of sexual exploitation, primarily involving Canadian citizens as victims, is reported to be the most common form of modern slavery detected by authorities. In fact, 93 percent of identified sex trafficking victims are Canadian citizens, not foreign citizens. It must be emphasized that these figures do not necessarily reflect the small numbers of foreign nationals being subject to exploitation in Canada, but rather, they are a reflection of the numerous reasons foreign victims do not report to authorities, such as being tied to their employer through their visa while trying to get permanent residence, or fear of deportation. This is in addition to the many reasons victims in general do not come forward, such as threats or a dependent relationship with their exploiters, among others. Therefore, true estimates are difficult

to attain. The majority of forced sexual exploitation cases in Canada are reported in the densely populated Greater Toronto Area. In 2015, Peel Regional Police, which services the greater Toronto area, brought 244 charges related to sex trafficking and in the first half of 2016 alone they brought 149 charges. In 2016, a Calgary woman was sentenced to eight years of prison for trafficking two young women and forcing them into sex work. In April 2018, a 16-year-old boy was charged with sex trafficking of a girl in Edmonton. He allegedly lured the girl with gifts, held her against her will, and forced her into the sex trade."

-Global Slavery Index

"According to data on identified cases, modern slavery takes place largely for the purpose of forced sexual exploitation in

Canada; women represent the majority of identified victims. The majority of sex trafficking victims are reportedly Canadian-born teenage girls, some as young as 13, who are recruited in various ways, including at school, through social media, and at shopping malls. Techniques used by traffickers include building dependence by buying gifts and posing as boyfriends. Younger male members of street gangs simulate affection as a tool to recruit young women. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) also identify young people and individuals already working in sex industries to be most vulnerable to modern slavery." -Global Slavery Index

"Marginalized and disadvantaged communities are reportedly more vulnerable to forced sexual exploitation, including women from Indigenous communities, young women and girls, migrants, and children in protection services. According to a 2014 survey of 266 Canadian front-line response organizations conducted by the Canadian Women's Foundation, 51 percent of trafficked girls had been in the child welfare system and 51 percent of trafficked women and girls were Indigenous. Children in care are at increased risk of being targeted by traffickers due to prior neglect and limited oversight in the child welfare system, which may also result in children running away from care. Indigenous women and girls are particularly vulnerable due to a range of factors, including family violence, childhood abuse, poverty, education,

and substance addictions, combined with the remote living conditions of many Indigenous communities." -Global Slavery Index

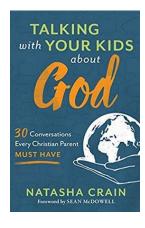
As you can see, many children are suffering. All children matter. It's our job to protect them. Christians must stand up against slavery.

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea." -Mark 9:43

Carey S.

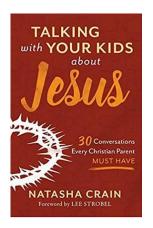
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Hello! I am answering the question you asked about apologetics resources for kids. Thank you for showing an interest in this. I have four children. Here are some



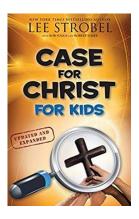
of the books I have used.

Natasha Crain writes excellent books for talking to your kids about our religion. Her books are a great place to start. She really understands what it's like to have kids. They have so many questions. There are good answers, but we need to be aware of

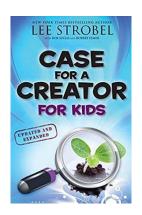


of them. These books are called "Talking to Your Kids About God" and "Talking to Your Kids About Jesus."

My wife and I have been using Lee Strobel's apologetics series for kids. He wrote "The Case for Christ." He wrote versions for children as well. I think there are four or five.



These books get into the evidence for the existence of God for the truth of Christianity. It helps prepare them for some of the objections they'll hear when talking with their friends. They go into the history and



the science. "The Case for Faith" is interesting because it teaches about what to trust and not to trust. There is so much false information on the internet. Kids should be equipped to deal with that.



Chris D. Winnipeg, Manitoba

As a Christian parent and educator, I would be happy to recommend Tree of Life homeschooling materials. This can be

found at Treeoflifeathome.ca: I also believe they may offer 'online schooling'. Saxon Math is a great program for homeschooling math skills - it has stood the test of time. I am also quite impressed with the work done by Bob Jones University Press. A lot of their resources would be accessible to parents for homeschooling. I was also asked to comment on postsecondary options for Christians in Canada. I think I would start with recommending Redeemer University in Ancaster, ON. King's University in Edmonton, AB would also be a good choice. After that, I am less confident because I do not know the institutions as well. I believe Trinity Western in BC. Briercrest in Saskatchewan, and Providence in Manitoba all have something good to

offer. I'm sure there are more, but I dare not comment on them as I know very little about them. May the Lord bless all of our efforts to educate our children well!

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

-2 Timothy 3:16

"Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life." -Proverbs 4:13

"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have

-Romans 15:4

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

hope."

-Proverbs 9:10



Albert A. Winnipeg, Manitoba

I was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1989. Life with my family was tough. We never had any rights at all. We were treated like slaves and everything they did was to force us to be brainwashed into Islam. At a young age, with harassment and pain. I came to the realization that life is suffering. Suffering sometimes makes us feel like God has either abandoned us or never existed. I was Christian, but there was no church to go to. As a result, I fell into nihilism. All I had was hatred for life and the people around me as it dragged me to the abyss of my psyche. I had no one

to talk to or understand until I saw a video of Dr. Jordan B. Peterson.

I don't remember how I stumbled on his videos, but I remember seeing a lecture about Nihilism and how it is categorized, as well as what to do about it. I had been trying to escape Saudi Arabia with my family for a long time. Canada and the US have best forms of freedom. which includes the freedom of religion. I applied for a legal immigration to Canada. However, our application took seven years. I had already lost hope by then, but by the grace of God, my aunt who was in Canada told me that they were asking about us and that we needed to talk to the Canadian embassy in Saudi Arabia, After that, we were processed and I arrived in this wonderful country three years ago!

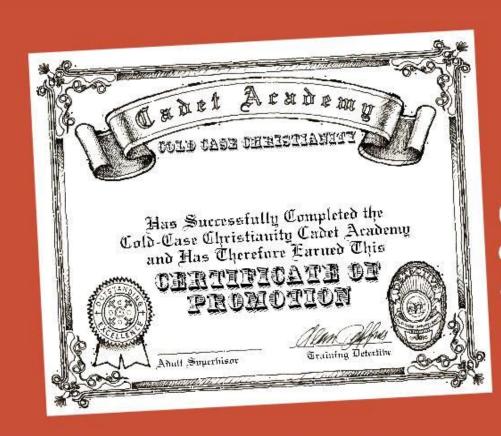
I was told that racism was a problem in Canada and that the white people there were racist. But the funny thing is that nothing like that has ever happened to me. Rather, I found them to be the least racist of all. I have never had anything racist happen to me since I came here. Speaking from my own experience, I found almost everyone in those parts of the Middle East to be racist. The Saudis I met looked at everyone as their inferior and as though they were nothing but slaves. If they didn't know our names, they would call us based on our race.

Last year, a friend took me to Alpha. It was an eye-opening experience and had more to do with actual Christianity than I ever imagined. It showed me that the path of the Lord is indeed worth it after all. There are some

problems in parts of the black community today, like fatherlessness and a victim mentality. But Christianity has the solution. Christ and Christianity helps correct the sinful nature of men. This makes it so that men are obligated to stay with their children and marry the mothers. It creates the bestknown environment for raising children. If boys don't have a father as a positive role model, it increases their chances of becoming violent criminals. The same can be said about of girls. Girls need fathers to show them the kind of men they should marry.







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Julie H.

As a teenager raised in a nonreligious although nominally Christian home, I rejected the Christian message as far-fetched exaggeration and wishful thinking. In my twenties, I was inspired by French existentialism (Satre and Camus in particular) as it seemed brave and mature to accept that there is no transcendental meaning to life, and in order to live authentically we should each create our own morality and accept the consequence of our actions.

Then in my late thirties, I felt driven to investigate more earnestly the possible significance of human life, which I did in two main directions: the findings of modern science and the teachings of various faiths. So for roughly a decade, I explored cosmology, relativity theory, and quantum physics, studied scriptures such as the Islamic Qur'an, the Hindu Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads, and writings related to Taoism, Buddhism, Sufism, and Kabbalah, attended some Hare Krishna meetings, practiced meditation, and read the work of various Eastern gurus.

On the science side, it became increasingly apparent that reductionist materialism is a totally inadequate worldview in the light of post-Newtonian physics. On the spiritual side, each faith seemed to provide flashes of

promising insights (except the Qur'an, which I find to have a strangely dark energy), but nothing seemed ultimately coherent or fully satisfying.

Then at one point in this extensive search. I encountered references to the "Cosmic Christ" by writers such as Teilhard de Chardin and Paramahansa Yogananda, and I decided that to be truly objective, I would have to investigate Christian Scripture. As a result, I somewhat reluctantly listened to the New Testament as I drove to university to deliver mathematics lectures. That is when my exploration took a completely unexpected turn. I had set out with the deliberate intention of briefly identifying weaknesses in the Christian faith and then moving on. But instead of hearing moralistic injunctions interspersed with

implausible stories, I experienced something very different: through the Gospels, I heard a consistent voice of authentic authority that was totally unlike anything I had encountered so far. I had to agree with Albert Einstein, who never accepted the concept of the Judeo-Christian God but reached this conclusion: "No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life" (Quoted by George Viereck, in "What Life Means to Einstein." Saturday Evening Post, October 26, 1929).

As a result of actually reading Christian Scripture for the first time—a new adventure had begun for me. The process was actually quite gradual, mainly I suspect because I had

arrived at this point carrying numerous negative assumptions about Christianity. Like many Westerners, I was quite open-minded about various Eastern teachings and practices, but I was confidently and smugly skeptical in my rejection of Christianity, and I had no desire to fall into the simple-minded thinking that I associated with this religion. I now admit with embarrassment that my assessment was not based on any in-depth knowledge at all but was like judging the entire culture of a country by looking at someone else's holiday snaps! It is easy to reject teachings when you only know them in a trivialized and distorted fashion.

So, having experienced the eye-opening realization that there might be more to Christianity than I had arrogantly thought, I embarked

on systematic and extensive research into this faith, which included reading works by a range of believers as well as atheist critics. I was still prepared (even hopeful perhaps?) to find fundamental flaws in the Christian message. Here is a very rough outline of my next few years:

- 1. I listened to the New Testament a few times and noted my doubts. In particular, it seemed important to establish whether Jesus had ever existed at all, and if so, if his memory could have become overlaid with exaggerations until he was transformed into a divinized legend.
- 2. To answer these and related questions, I sought out evidence related to references of Jesus in non-biblical sources, the transmission of tradition in first-century Judaism, and the history of the early

Church. It became increasingly clear that the claim of a Jesus-mythology that spiralled out of control is far less plausible than one would think. The popular Jesus-aspagan-myth was also quickly revealed as speculative nonsense.

- 3. Frequent NT references to the OT indicated the need to become familiar with the background. So, I read these canonical books, and once again, was struck by the consistent voice of God that resonates here, particularly through His prophets.
- 4. I read some Judaic claims that OT messianic prophecies could not have applied to Jesus, but I found that I could not agree. It also seemed clear that no random process of mythologizing could have invented the startling consistency between these

prophecies, Jesus's work, death, and resurrection, and also details of the seven ancient feasts of Judaism.

5. It was then time to tackle the tricky questions of Christian theology (such as suffering under an omnipotent, loving God, and the illogicality of one man dying for the sins of of others).

So, I read commentaries by biblical scholars such as Karl Barth, and I found that while the message of sinatonement-redemption is difficult for us to accept, it is consistent and intellectually satisfying.

Meanwhile, two other things were ticking along in the background.

1. The findings of various sciences indicated to me that we cannot guarantee

that a transcendent Creator does not exist, or that He cannot intervene in ways that appear miraculous to us.

2. God's Holy Spirit was working on me in some interesting although subtle ways.

In retrospect, I cannot identify a particular "tipping point" in my conversion to faith. As logic is very important to me, I explored many challenges and atheist explanations and found myself fluctuating for a long period between confidence and uncertainty in the Christian message. However, after carefully considering the evidence that was gradually accumulating, I finally had no doubt about its truth. But other people who read the same evidence often reach a different conclusion. I therefore believe

that my conversion was not merely the result of intellectual inquiry but indicates the work of God's Holy Spirit in bringing conviction to the heart of the seeker. Although I have not had a dramatic indwelling of the Spirit, I have sensed a higher guiding presence in my life, and here are three of the main ways in which I experienced this.

1. Startling coincidences

I would frequently encounter really striking coincidences. For example, if I framed a thought or question about a particular aspect of a religious teaching, this same idea would very often appear in almost the same words when I randomly opened a book later that same day. And many coincidences arose in events around me. For example, one morning

after my young niece had slept over for a night, she randomly asked if we could have curry for breakfast. I laughed at the bizarre request and made the usual French-fried toast. But that afternoon when I was reading the Sufi poet Rumi, one of his poems included a recipe for breakfast curry!

On another occasion, I visited a friend whose father had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and whose daughter had just acquired a pet rabbit, and while I was there I received a message about a car accident on a bridge near my home. As I was leaving, I asked to borrow a book that suddenly caught my eye; when I read it later that day I found that it included these details: a person with terminal cancer, a child with a pet rabbit, and a car accident on a bridge. One obviously cannot develop faith merely

on the basis of many such strange incidents, but I increasingly felt that some Being wanted me to sense its active presence in my life. As an aside, I find it interesting that the physicist Paul Davies has made this related comment: Incidents will happen to me in daily life that seem to me like 'Ah! There's someone pulling the strings there!' You know, this is a cosmic joke or something. But then when I get a little more sober I think, well, this is the path to madness."

2. An internal voice

This experience occurred while I was studying Ibn Arabi's Sufi teaching about perfecting your character through the growth of loving patience. I sincerely aspired to this goal, but despite my earnest focus and regular meditation, I still struggled to control my irritation at certain

things. One day, my neighbor's two young children engaged in an extended screaming match in their garden, as they often did. I tried to remain calm but grew increasingly exasperated until I finally confronted the neighbor with some fierce words. Then I stormed back into my house, fuming with frustration at my inability to master my emotions. I threw up my hands in despair at improving myself, and I said aloud: "I give up! I'm done with all of this! I cannot do it!" Then a voice in my consciousness that was quite distinct from my own thoughts said quietly, "Of course you can't." I vividly

I vividly remember the profound effect of those surprising words—I laughed out loud and felt the joyous sense of release from a burden, as if someone had just pointed out that I had been desperately

straining to pull myself up by my bootstraps! I suddenly felt that I didn't have to strive to achieve personal perfection and that there was another way to live a better life. At the time I didn't know what this alternative might be, but I felt absolutely certain that it existed.

3. A profound sense of sinfulness

Sometime before my commitment and baptism, I was dissatisfied with the Christian teaching that each of us is fundamentally sinful. I have to admit that I had quite a high opinion of myself and thought it was false modesty to classify myself as a sinner, so I instinctively rebelled against this concept. In fact, when I read that Jesus only came for sinners, I wondered what relevance this could have for me!

Then one day when I was deeply

contemplating this issue, a strange, unwelcome thought arose: the accusation that in truth all of my plans and actions had always been motivated by the desire to satisfy my own needs first. This awareness continued to grow until it became a powerful sense of my unworthiness in the eves of God. This awful comprehension was far more than merely self-criticism, and it finally brought me sobbing to my knees. My complacent self-satisfaction evaporated, I had no words to excuse myself, and I was overwhelmed by the shattering, devastating realization that I had absolutely nothing to be proud of.

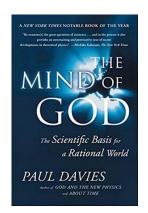
I think it's important to mention that I had a very happy childhood and was reasonably successful in most of my adult undertakings, so I was not suffering from the effects of

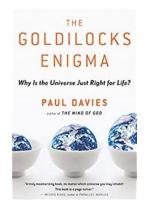
repressed guilt or failure. I have no doubt that the Holy Spirit was bringing me to a place where I could understand that when we choose to stand outside God's grace, we have no innate worth.

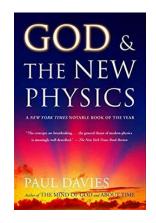
Thankfully, this breaking down into humble submission was only part of the process. I confessed wholeheartedly that I am indeed sinful, I asked for God's forgiveness, and I was immediately blessed by a profound sense of His peace that passes all understanding. It is clear to me that while we are unworthy in ourselves, we are not worthless to God but are much beloved.

I now fully believe Jesus's words: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them" (John 6:44). And I thank God every day for His grace in drawing this arrogant skeptic to Him.

A battle is being waged for hearts and minds in our Western society, with deliberate programs being pushed that entrench atheist views and disparage all forms of faith. Believers and openminded seekers are continually bombarded by dogmatic anti-theist claims. While the church's focus is on biblical teaching, it should consider responding to false claims related to Iesus-mythology, the unreliability of Scripture, the conflict between faith and science, and so on. The church could prepare short pamphlets on specific challenges so that members can pass them on to family and friends who raise these issues, both to strengthen the faith of believers and to engage others at a factual level.





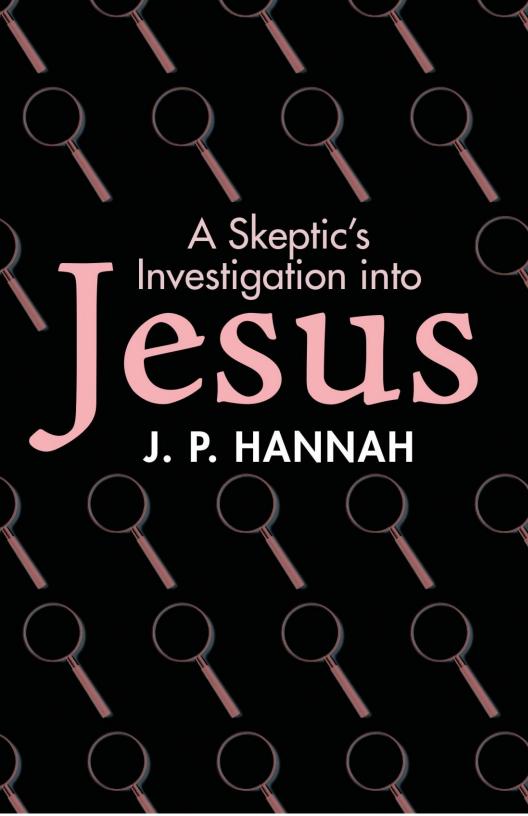


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John F. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Christianity is a teaching religion. From its inception, it has been a religion centered on God and his *message*. Indeed, even the supreme object of our worship, God himself in the Person of his beloved Son, is called the Word of God incarnate (John 1:1,14). The Son of God is the Father's ultimate selfdisclosure (John 1:18). Christ is both the message and the Messenger, the goal and the direction. His Gospel (the good news) is centered on him, what he has done, and what he promises yet to do.

Christ and his redemptive work are prefigured throughout Israel's redemptive history under God as documented in the Old Testament; every page of Scripture speaks of Jesus in some way (John 5:39). Of course these things come to clearest. expression in the New Testament, which describes the Person and work of Jesus in precise terms, first in four biographical sketches (the Gospels) then in the inspired epistles of Paul, Peter, James, John, and Jude. The Bible's unified central and foundational claim is that God was in Christ. reconciling the world to himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). That is, God in Christ was in the real world, interacting with real people and influencing real history. If this claim is not true, then Christianity is unsalvageable. The job of the Christian apologist is to

show that this claim is true, that the Bible is reliable, and that the risen Christ alone is mankind's only hope. The apologist sets himself to this task first because God commands it (Titus 1:9; 1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3), and second, because reason demands it. We. cannot expect people to accept with their hearts that which is foolish to their intellects. The apologetical task is to show that God's message is both fully satisfying to the heart and acceptable to the mind. This brings us to the thorny issue of methodology, how best to accomplish the apologetical task. In the details, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. No two encounters or challenges are exactly alike. We can say that the successful apologist is one who allows his theology to determine his strategy. He is one who does not pretend

neutrality, but stays true to the Good Shepherd and asks him for guidance and direction. He is one who speaks the truth in love always, and leaves the rest in God's capable hands.



Loralee E. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Did Jesus really exist? If so, how could anyone believe the biblical account? After all, isn't it riddled with impossible miracles, far-fetched resurrection stories. and clear exaggerations? It's obvious the church accepted and passed on legendary and superstitious dogma that lacks any realworld evidence.

This is what Lee Strobel, a forensic journalist, used to believe about Christianity, and these are the objections that he sets out to tackle in his popular apologetics book entitled "The Case for Christ." Strobel was himself a hard-headed skeptic regarding the claims of Christianity, but when his wife became a Christian in 1979, he witnessed first-hand a change in her character and lifestyle—a surprisingly positive one! This encounter started him on a journey to use his Yale law degree and experience as an investigative journalist to dig deep into the historical, archaeological, and philosophical evidence for Jesus.

"The Case for Christ" (1998) is the result of his findings. In it, Strobel crossexamines thirteen leading experts in philosophy, apologetics, history, theology, and science. As the book unfolds, so does the forensic case for the reliability of the claims of the Christian Church.

Although Strobel's book cannot be read as a comprehensive examination of all the possible objections, arguments, and counter-arguments that skeptics and defenders of the faith might raise, it does serve as a kind of "survey" on the material. The reader is introduced, through everyday language, to evidence-based arguments for such topics as why the biographies of Jesus are reliable, what archaeological and historical findings have to say, whether Jesus truly claimed he was God, and whether there's any believable evidence for the resurrection of Christ. The reader is invited—almost

dared—to maintain an open mind and allow the evidence to speak for itself.

One such example is Strobel's investigation of the reliability of the biographies of Jesus, namely, the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). For this topic, he interviews Dr. Craig Blomberg of the Denver Seminary, whose renowned career in research and analysis has led to several books on the topic. Can we trust the gospels? How do we know these records haven't been falsified, altered, or corrupted, and how do we know the accounts weren't pieced together from unreliable hearsay?

As Strobel peppers Blomberg with skeptical objections, the evidence unfolds. Contrary to popular belief that the gospels are "late" accounts, Blomberg demonstrates that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are all written within the lifetimes of eve-witnesses and are based themselves upon the eyewitness testimonies of those closest to Jesus. For instance, we can infer that the book of Acts was written before the death of Paul (since it ends abruptly during Paul's lifetime), and thus the gospel of Luke (written previously by the same author) would date prior to A.D. 62. That's only about thirty years after the death of Christ which in historical reckoning is as contemporary as you can get. Blomberg contrasts this with the biographies of Alexander the Great. which were written 400 years after his death, yet are still considered reliable by historians. Furthermore, there's good evidence to conclude that Christian creeds attesting to the divinity and resurrection of Christ date back even

further, such as can be found in the epistles of Paul, written during the 40s and 50s, and received by Paul as early as A.D. 35.

This is just a

sampling of the evidence that Blomberg puts forward. There are other arguments. No one who was "inventing" the accounts of Jesus would do so during the lifetime of those who could contradict the stories. And even if they did, why would they use the names of Matthew, a taxcollector (a detested "traitor" to the Jewish people), or John-Mark, who wasn't even a disciple, but rather a companion of Peter's? Furthermore, there are numerous "embarrassing" stories in the gospels. Why would the disciples who were the early church leaders—invent stories that would cast doubt on their own character and integrity

Blomberg goes on,

unless they were true?

and he is just the first of Strobel's interviews. By the end of the book, the reader is left with a plethora of arguments and evidence that, while they do not "prove" Christianity, nevertheless build an undeniable case for the accuracy of the Christian worldview. In other words, there is enough evidence that the beliefs of Christians cannot simply be disregarded as superstition and wishful thinking. The evidence must either be wilfully ignored, or its compels further research, further examination, and perhaps, the final experiential test: asking Jesus himself if he is alive and true. In the closing chapter, philosopher and theologian J. P. Moreland puts it this way: "First, I'm not saying, Just trust your experience.' I'm saying, 'Use your mind calmly and weigh the evidence,

and then let experience be the confirming piece of evidence.' Second, if what this evidence points to is true—that is, if all these lines of evidence really do point to the resurrection of Jesus—the evidence itself begs for an experiential test...[that] is, 'He's still alive, and I can find out by relating to him."

Ultimately, this is the purpose of Strobel's "Case for Christ." It's not meant to be a definitive test of Christianity. Rather, it's meant to help a willing skeptic examine their own assumptions and weigh the evidence for themselves. It encourages good questions and shows where popular assumptions have been formed without substantiation. It offers numerous scholars and experts whose in-depth books can be consulted for further discussion. And finally, it gives weight to the historical truth of the

life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In closing, one might wonder why such a book is important in the first place. After all, isn't faith just a matter of personal choice? Why all the fuss over historical evidence? Significantly and stubbornly, Christians refuse to submit to this postmodern conclusion. As notable author C. S. Lewis states, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance." Christians insist on the objective truth of Christianity because our faith in the power of Jesus relies on a demonstrable event in history. It is the real historicity of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus that allows for the life-changing truth of redemption. If it really happened, then our claims are truth—if it didn't happen, then they are false. It's as simple as that. Strobel's

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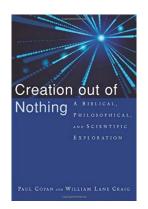
book is an invitation to begin that investigation.

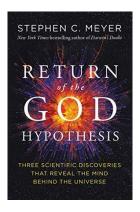
Michael H.

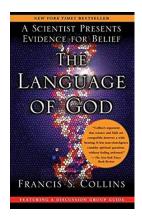
Winnipeg, Manitoba

This is in answer to your question about evidence for the existence of God. A lot of people don't know that there is actually scientific evidence that God exists. It's been documented in books by people like Paul Copen, Stephen Meyer and Francis Collins.

These scholars show that there is tons of evidence for an intelligent mind behind the universe. It's evident in both cosmology and biology. Personal relationship is how we can know God is real. But science helps, too. It's pretty awesome that Christianity is basically proven by the science.



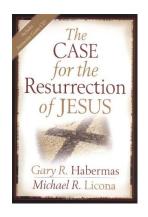


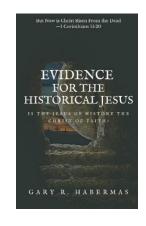


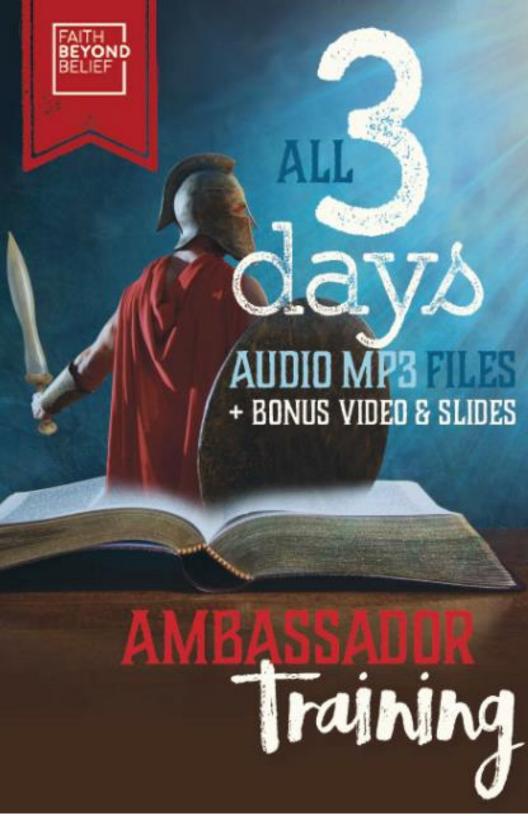
Geoff T.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

I hope this finds you well. The best books that show the evidence of the resurrection are by a scholar named Gary Habermas. Please pass them on in your publication.





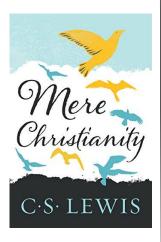


"Truth, goodness and beauty will hold the attention of a soul."

-Christopher Perrin

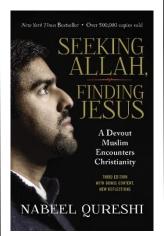
Ryan S. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Mere Christianity is a good apologetics book for beginners. Lewis was an atheist and a scholar. He became a Christian when he realized it was true. Everyone should read about the amazing journey of this man and the books he wrote about it. This one explains the basics of Christianity. It's not long or very technical. Very highly recommended!



Amir K. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Please give this book to any Muslim you know. It's about a man who learns that Islam isn't the truth way. The only way to God is through Jesus Christ. I love Muslims, but they really need to know. Jesus rose from the dead. That proves He was God. The Koran says he was not God. Jesus was no just a prophet. He was the son of God. Nabeel Qureshi explains it better than I can. I just want to tell you about this! It is such an amazing testimony to Godly truth. Pass it on please! Thank you!





Arlo L.British Columbia

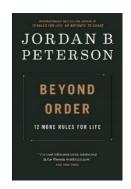
Jordan Peterson is a world-renowned Canadian psychologist and author of the best-selling book, 12 Rules For Life: An Antidote To Chaos, which as of January 2019 had sold over three million copies worldwide. Dr. Peterson has been on the forefront of the intellectual landscape because of his widely accessible lectures on free speech, responsibility, and religion. In May of 2016 Dr. Peterson began a 12-part lecture series on the "Psychological Significance of the Biblical Stories", in which he analyzed the stories of Genesis as

they apply to our typical patterns of behaviour, and how we as modern people, even atheists, embody these stories, even if we are not aware we are doing so. These lectures have gained monumentous success with the first part of the lecture series gaining nearly 6.5 million views on Youtube alone. Dr. Peterson's approach to the biblical stories is very refreshing to a young audience. His approach is not that of blind dogmatism, nor is it overly scientifically critical. Instead, Dr. Peterson manages to carefully walk the line between religion and science, giving credence to both fields of study.

Dr. Peterson may be analyzing the stories in Genesis from a psychologist's point of view, and Dr. Peterson never claims to be a theologian, but there is a genuine and profound appreciation of the biblical stories

made plain in his speech. Dr. Peterson compares the stories within Genesis to other creation stories found throughout the world: such as one of the earliest known creation myths, the Babylonian Enuma Elish and the later Ancient Egyptian religion. He references these myths to showcase the evolution of human thought and values throughout the millennia. Showing how themes found in the Enuma Elish were also found in the later Ancient Egyptian religion, and how Ancient Egyptian religious thinking had influenced Ancient Jewish cultures, and how that influenced not only the Old Testament, but also modern Judeo-Christian cultures as a whole. Dr. Peterson's analysis of the stories of Genesis through a psychologist's frame of reference comes as an interesting new

frame on how these stories may be interpreted. It is this writer's opinion that everyone, no matter their level of familiarity with the biblical stories, will find his analysis not only interesting in the scientific sense, but also in a spiritual sense. Anyone who follows religion knows that science is sometimes slow to prove what religion has already solved. Through his incredible amount of dedication and research Dr. Peterson shows that these stories have great utility for modern people. By understanding them, one is able to embody the spirit of our culture.





John F. Winnipeg, Manitoba

The subject of worship is huge. Minimally, and in general terms, we may say that worship entails profound love and respect for its object. Furthermore, a person's worship is the practical expression of their chosen values; we worship what we value most. Virtually everyone understands, if only dimly, that God requires our worship. Some have wondered why God should be entitled to it. Here are some thoughts.

Humans are designed and programmed to

worship. People routinely worship celebrities such as movie stars. musicians, athletes, academicians, politicians or statesmen. Whatever these people may have that makes them special objects of worship, it is not original with them. Their impressive and valued attributes. abilities, character, and capacities were granted to them by God in whom such things are not only original, but maximal. A creature may possess many things that makes it an object of worship, but it cannot possess all such things, and none to an infinite degree. If a creature may be legitimately worshipped for its finite and derivative properties, then surely the God who has all such properties originally and infinitely must be worthy of greater worship.

The God of the Bible is by definition the greatest conceivable being (Hebrews 6:13). Among his greatmaking properties he has unrivalled sovereignty, omnipotence, omniscience, and moral perfection (omni-benevolence). God has ultimate authority, which means he has the supreme right to be believed and obeyed. It stands to reason we are not only obligated to worship and obey God, but that it is in our best interest to do SO.

He seeks our worship (John4:24), and he has done everything possible to make himself maximally lovely to us. At the cross, God showed himself perfectly righteous and just, while at the same time maximally merciful and wise. God demonstrated his own love toward us in that while we were still

sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). With hearts overflowing with admiration and gratitude for our saviour-God, we may say with the great apostle John, "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). It is not only our obligation to worship the God of the Bible, it ought to be our chief joy to do so.

David W.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

What does the Resurrection mean to us? One of the less frequently asked questions in religious discussions is: what do we do with our guilt? A surprising question, to be sure, but most human experience and history testify that we all have guilt and try to find ways to deal with it. We all seem to instinctively know we are guilty, even if we don't know

why or for what.

In a way, the history of most religions can be summed up as an attempt to answer the question of what we do with our guilt. That is, most religions are looking for how to answer the reality that we all inherently know we have done wrong and need to make amends. Everything from religious purification ceremonies to specific acts of service is laid out and explained for how to get to a better place in the afterlife, a better life in reincarnation, or even just have the right to say we've lived a good life

And that is where Christianity differs via the Resurrection of Jesus, who is God incarnate. Out of all the religions I am familiar with, Christianity is the only religion where the deity, higher power, judge, karma, etc., reached down to us to

answer that guilt question, and Christianity did so via the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

Only in Christianity do we find a real explanation for our guilt, that we have all sinned, and a real answer to our guilt, that God has offered a sacrifice to pay our sin-debt. We intuitively know that we cannot make up for what we have done, but God, in His grace and mercy, reached down and offered us a solution. The Holy Scriptures tell us that we owe blood for our sins. and that is precisely what Jesus shed for us as the perfect sacrifice on our behalf. We cannot absolve our sins; we cannot repay them; we cannot remove our guilt. But Iesus, the judge, can and did. As a gift freely offered and available, He took our guilt.



Randy S. Winnipeg, Manitoba

My name is Randy. I have been involved in a number of charitable ministries in this city. I've seen all of the good it does first hand and have witnessed genuine transformation. I've seen it in others and felt it in myself. A lot of people don't realize that giving makes you richer. I've walked with people who had hardened hearts and saw them change. Sometimes it takes years. A few times it happened overnight. I have seen this more than once.

When I was twenty-six or so, I knew a man named John. He was homeless and had no family or friends to turn to. One of his brothers died of a drug overdose. The other brother died in a tragic accident. Neither of his parents were in contact with him.

He came in and I went and sat with him in the waiting room. I had a Bible in my hand and asked him if he had ever read it. He told me that one of his brothers had been religious, but that he didn't remember a lot. We got him some of the things he needed, and believe me this man needed a lot. Then I invited him to my Bible study.

He didn't come the first or second time. I thought maybe he just decided not to. However, on the third week he came. He looked a lot better and he brought the Bible I gave him. He said he did not understand most of it. By the grace of God, we helped him all the way through adult

education. He had dropped out of school early. We helped support him until he got his grade twelve diploma. During that time, he continued to deepen his relationship with the Lord. We taught him about Jesus. He gave his life to the Lord very suddenly. I think he just needed to understand. I don't think it's good when people just come through the doors and then continue on by themselves. People too easily give up or change their mind. We need to walk with them when we can. We need to be mentors and guides. Anyone who wants to make a change can if they accept Jesus. He was baptized right after he gave his life over. He moved away a few years ago, but I still know him. We keep in contact still. He's married and has his own family now. I believe he is unrecognizable from

the way he was when we found him. Anyone can change if they really want to. This man had addictions that he overcame. We just need Jesus to do it.

Another transformation I saw was in a young man I met just at the supermarket. He recently arrived from Africa, but he was alone and supporting his family overseas. He worked three different jobs to support them. I was amazed! However, he unfortunately fell into alcoholism. He was an alcoholic for several years and it made it difficult for him to hold onto a job. He lost a lot of his income and was depressed beyond belief. But we really managed to help him out. There are groups for alcoholics throughout the city. Many are for Christians. That's the kind he went to. It was held at a church.

For several years, we helped this gentleman. We found him work and made sure he lived in a decent home. I have never seen such determination in a man. He was so prayerful and obedient in his walk with the Lord. It wasn't that long before he was able to save up enough to even go visit his family. Since those days, the family has come over to Canada. What can we learn from this? Anything is possible with God. Through God, we can overcome any obstacle. If we rely on ourselves, it won't work. Why? It's just the way it is. But with God anything is possible. I believe this man was changed and transformed forever by God.

We aren't really stuck in life if we know the Lord and know how to pray to Him. If we live in obedience, God will be responsive.

I have one more story for you. It's about another man from my church. This man didn't have addictions or suffer from anything, but he got a divorce. This isn't really supposed to happen except in extreme circumstances, but he ended up leaving his whole family. I learned later that it was related to depression, but it was all very sudden and everyone involved felt abandoned. I suppose we could call it a kind of mid-life crises. This man ended up going on a spiritual journey that transformed him. But it took people reaching out to him. He probably wanted to be left alone, but some brothers in Christ got a hold of him.

Reluctantly, he agreed to come on a men's retreat that we had actually been planning for about a year and a half prior

to all of this. I believe that God truly was with us on that retreat. We dug into scripture deeper than most of us ever had. One of the men there who I didn't actually know very well had a deliverance. For anyone who doesn't know what this is, it essentially means being delivered or saved from spiritual attack by demons. That was quite something to see. But our troubled friend was delivered in a way too. There may have been some demonic influences. The way he put it was like this. He called it being delivered from himself and his own selfishness. What I learned was thar Jesus rescues us from ourselves sometimes. Of course, there is the spiritual realm and that is what most of all this is about. But we can play a role in that too, which is why surrendering is so important. We can

be held captive by rebellion. This story has a happy ending. Our friend went back to his family. They welcomed him back. I remain in contact with these people. They are just a few stories. I have a lot more, but I would like to answer the other question asked about where people can go in the city who need to experience God's goodness.

As I mentioned, there are a lot of great charities in this city. There is Siloam Mission and the Salvation Army. Both do great work. Union Gospel Mission is another place people can go. On top of that, many churches have programs designed for helping anyone in need. I've shared a few stories, but there are many more. Here is where the above are located. I'll send the address in case you or anyone you know is in need:

Siloam Mission 300 Princess Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-956-4344

Salvation Army 180 Henry Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-946-9400

Union Gospel Mission 320 Princess Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-943-9904

Hands of Hope 429 Dufferin Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-261-8607

Hope Centre 83 Henderson Hwy Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-479-4893

Give the Word 333 King St. Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-803-5773

Family Life Centre 240 Pritchard Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-586-7790

Inner City Youth Alive 418 Aberdeen Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-582-8779

Knights of Columbus 1311 Portage Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-663-8022

Missionaries of Charity 167 Aikins St. Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-582-2773

AIM 235 Princess St. Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-957-8784

Youth For Christ 333 King St. Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-669-4205

Agape Table 364 Furby St. Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada 204-783-6369



Drew E. Winnipeg, Manitoba

I took to the streets of Winnipeg to ask people what God has done for them. I met a lot of friendly people and heard some amazing stories!

"Jesus healed me last year. I had a very bad shoulder. I prayed and that was it. It was better the next day. It was God, I know it."

-Jim R.

"Well, I was broke and didn't have a home. Does that count? Yes, the good Lord has looked over me. He watches over all His children. Be thankful. God is real. He'll help you."

-Geoff D.

"Yes, of course. God is always doing something. We don't know what it is, but God's doing it even if we can't see. God heals and gets all the glory. Amen, brother."

-Carl C.

"Yes, God healed me when I was seventeen. God heals. It's true." -Lauren S.

"Absolutely. Let me tell you something. God is everywhere. God is called the Heavenly Father. He loves us like a father. If you have kids then you know. God loves. God is love. That's the God I worship."

-Catherine R.

"I think so. I don't know. Sometimes I think it's God and sometimes I think it's luck. I have been lucky sometimes. Sometimes I haven't been so lucky. I think so, yeah. It's possible."

-Janine L,

FROM THE CREATORS OF FIREPROF



COURAGEOUS L E G A C Y IN THEATERS OCTOBER 15

"If you mean Jesus, then yes. Are you a Christian? A Christian has got to believe. If you believe then you can get saved. If you don't believe, then you might have some trouble. But love will do many things. I know it."

-John T.

"Yes. Yes, He does lots. Let me tell you. I was poor. I had nothing. I didn't have food. I slept outside. Do you hear what I'm saying? There wasn't anything. I went to church. I prayed. I pray every day. I'm a taxpayer now. I have a job. Things are good. But God is good. God is the best. He comes through. Don't even worry about it. Don't be a fool. The fool's way is the wrong way. The way I went, that's the wrong wayuntil I found God. Never forget God can do anything."

"How much time do you have? Okay, I'll tell you five things in one year alone. Last year, my niece got pregnant. It was a very good thing. But there were complications. Something inside. The doctor was a good doctor, but you know how some things are hard to fix. Well, they couldn't do much. I prayed every day. Every night I asked God, and God answered my prayer. It worked. No doctors. It was gone and it was fast. No pain. Can you believe that?"

-Jason H.

"God always listens.
You can depend on
God when you can't
depend on others.
You can talk to God
when you're angry. It
doesn't matter. You
can just be yourself.
Not everyone agrees
about these things.
But I believe it."
-Alexa D.

"Yes. I don't know. I think so. I guess it depends on what you believe."

-Richard R.

"Well, the other day I was helped by God. He helps me with my problems. I don't really want to talk about those, but I can feel the presence of God when I pray. I became a Christian because of an experience like that. I've been a Christian for eleven years."

-Ben D.

"I'm not really that spiritual, but I guess it's possible. If God is real, he probably helps. I don't know. I have to look into it more. I like religion. I have some religious friends and some Christian friends. I don't really know what I believe. But I do feel like there is a higher power out there. It makes sense.

--Kelly S.

"Oh, yeah, for sure! For sure! Alright, so there are a few things. First, I was born with a lot of illnesses. God cured me from those. I'm not even kidding. Also, there is the way my life has gone. I've been all over. Sometimes I meet people and things happen. I can't explain it, but something is going on from above. Because that just doesn't happen. Even the fact that I am alive today partly has to do with that. Okay, so, there have actually been a few instances of this. I was driving and I got this sudden feeling to change into the other lane. It didn't even really make sense, but I was like "okay." There was an accident about a minute later in that lane. It wasn't that big. Maybe I wouldn't have died. But you never know. I did almost die another time though. I was on my bike. I bike a lot.

I was riding in a perfectly safe part of the road. Really close to the side. Some guy hit me though. I didn't really see. But when I got up it was fine. And it was a really bad one too, apparently. I don't know because I didn't see it. But my friend saw it, and she said it was kind of crazy. I wasn't even hurt at all. I am pretty sure God was there when that happened. It doesn't make sense that I would be okay. I've got other stories too.

This one isn't really related to my experience with God. But I was in a place where some very weird stuff was happening. And by that I mean supernatural. Not in a good way. The bad kind. My friend was there. We both felt like something wasn't right. I don't even really want to think about it. That wasn't really an experience of God. But it is the opposite. I think that's almost the same though because if one is real the other is too. Good and bad. So, I've experienced both. You should talk to my mom because, actually, she would really like telling you some of her stories."

-Steven W.

"God does lots for me because God does everything. God did everything, too. So, how can we say He doesn't do things for us? If you're alive, you can be thankful for that. Here is another thing. God is Jesus. You know that? You know why He died? Jesus died as a way to save His lost sheep. So I don't think God can help more than that. I know people who have been healed. I have friends who have had dreams that came true. My father was a pastor."

-John G.

"God listens to my prayers. He knows what we need. If we trust in God, I think we will be okay."

-Leslie F.

"I would say that God has been present in lots of ways. It's hard to think of what the best example is. One example would be just the feeling that He is with me. The Holy Spirit lives inside us. If you're a Christian, then you know. God helps us first in that way. He also can guide us, I think. If we are spiritual and we listen to God, then we can hear Him. God's told me to do lots of things. Mostly just good deeds and things like that. I don't hear a voice or anything. It's hard to explain. But it is definitely communication. I don't always listen. My pastor talks a lot about that. I don't know what else. For me, it's mostly just His

guidance, I think. Other ways might be with music. I listen to a lot and I guess you could say I relate to God through that way. When we worship God, it opens us to Him. God wants to do things for us, but He wants us to come to Him in prayer and worship. I know lots of people who've been changed just by a song or something."

-Mary A.

"Well, I suffer from depression. God's been with me through that. I'm very grateful. I don't know if that answers your question."

-Jessi D.

"Yikes, let me think. Yeah, I have seen some interesting things. A lot of people don't believe me, but that's okay. I've had dreams before that have come true. I've friends who are in them, and then what I say has come true. Does that count? It's actually kind of funny. Last year, I predicted two of my friends would get pregnant. That came true and I think it was from God because they were both from those kinds of dreams I had. Not long ago, just got the feeling while praying that a friend needed help. I called them and sure enough they did. And they were actually thinking of calling me about it to ask. So, it's lots of things like that. It's a good question. I know lots of people who'd like to talk to you. There are lots of stories like that. I could tell you about some things that happened to me when I was a kid. I saw two people get healed miraculously. I saw someone almost drown. They said they felt something lift them up."



Jamie M. Winnipeg, Manitoba

I grew up in a house where music was a constant. There was a piano and guitar in the living room that anyone could pick up and play at any time. My first memories of listening to music are with my dad in my parents old 1997 Dodge Grand Caravan. We would listen to 92.1 FM which had all the classics like Led Zeppelin, Queen, and The Who. When I was eleven, I wanted to play drums in my junior high band class, but my mom said I had to learn an instrument that could make melodies as well

if I wanted to play drums. I reluctantly started playing guitar so I could play drums in class. Over a decade later I still cannot play the drums and I've been playing guitar ever since. I played in front of people for the first time when I was fourteen or so at my church's youth group. A few days before I played at youth group the worship leader asked if I needed an amp (which I did) and so he got me one from the church. At the time I didn't know how to use the Power On and Standby switches. The amp did not make any sound at all when I played, and it continued to not make sound the entire set. After the set another guitar player who was playing that night explained to me how the switches worked. He also gave me one of his pedals, a Boss FS-5U, which I

still have to this day. I continued playing in church for a few more years and joined my first band (Hearing Trees) when I was eighteen. I played in Hearing Trees for two years and played my first gigs and did my first tours. From a sonic perspective church has influenced my creative outlook quite a lot. Church music has a very heavy emphasis on gear and understanding how equipment works to its maximum capabilities. Personally, I've come to understand this as a negative thing but regardless it has given me an incredibly good understanding of how to create a sonic portrait. I personally try to separate what I do in church as a worship leader from what I do as an artist. Writing is an unfiltered reflection of my inner thoughts in

"Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord."

-Ephesians 5:19





an unfiltered and brutally honest way. Faith is something that is a part of who I am and so I think it is a part of everything I write. Art is just an extension of the artist. Given the pressures of church it can often be hard to be completely honest with the art I share within the sanctuary. I think having an outlet outside of church service is very important for myself and other artists because it provides an honest space to explore the more uncomfortable side of being human with God.



Shailyn S. Winnipeg, Manitoba

I've been singing for as long as I can remember - it's like music has always been a part of me! As I continued growing up I loved music, sang all the time, grew in my giftings, and really felt that it was part of the calling that God had for my life. My faith inspires the majority of my music to be uplifting and to touch the hearts of the people who hear it. I don't only write worship songs, but a lot of my originals are about the Lord and what He's done for the world and myself. God is the one who gave me these gifts and it's only right that I use them to give Him glory! You can find my music (and covers) through my Facebook page Shailyn Michelle, or through my YouTube channel under the same name.

Matt K.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Hello there! Thanks for letting me share my story. I'm not very academic so please feel free to edit this. I'm a musician from Winnipeg. I am not in a band at the moment, but I have been in a few. I have been playing music for my whole life. I've played guitar since I was seven and piano even earlier. My mom paid for lots of singing lessons. I was on course for a musical life from the start. But my journey changed big time when I became a Christian. So, no one is perfect. I am not perfect at all. When I was in high school, I drank and did drugs. I listened to a lot of music I probably shouldn't have, now that I think about it.

I got saved when I was twenty. It basically happened

this way. I was at a party. In those days I guess you could say I was depressed. But I didn't really express it to people. I don't think I understood why either. Looking back, I can see that it was because I didn't have Jesus. But at the time I was just lost in lots of messed up stuff. I went to a show pretty late at night. My friend was in a metal band. It was a pretty crazy night. I can't say I remember all that. much. But it's the next day that was interesting. Someone at the show was actually a Christian and he actually called me. We ended up talking about religion. We became friends shortly after. I think we probably had ten or eleven conversations. I was pretty stressed out about my life then, too. I read some of the Bible but didn't really get it. I didn't really understand what it was saying. I

dropped out of grade ten and never really read much after that. But he explained a lot of it to me and he sent me videos.

I learned that Jesus was actually a real person who lived. That's actually been proven. I learned that it was basically proven that he rose from the dead. You can search it up and see for yourself. There are professors and historians who say so. Not only that, Jesus was a good guy. I heard some bad things about him. I think those were lies, to be honest. He was against bigotry and living a fake life.

I saw that my life was fake and empty and I gave my life to him as my Lord and King. I have not looked back. But the effect on my music has been interesting.

So, I lost interest in everything I had been listening to. Anything to do with hate or partying just didn't do it for me anymore. It just reminded me of my past life in sin. I didn't even like the beats really either. I think God changed the way I heard things or something. But I did change a lot.

My friends are another story. Some thought I was crazy. A few friends didn't care. I have some spiritual friends and they supported my decision. But I did have to make some new friends because I couldn't really do the things most of my friends were doing. But the new friends I made were great. They helped me live a pure life for the Lord.

God also changed how I created music. I'd say that I was thinking more clearly, definitely. I write songs and they were about positive mindsets instead of negativity. I am basically a whole new person. Now I try to

just live a pure and holy life. By the grace of God, He will continue to transform me and my music.

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

-Ephesians 2:10

"You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you." -Song of Songs 4:7

speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, -Ephesians 5:19

"My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you— I whom you have delivered."

-Palm 71:23

"He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him."

Psalm 40:3

"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

-Colossians 3:16

"The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD.
Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." Then the temple of the LORD was filled with the cloud,
-2 Chronicles 5:13

"Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea."

-Exodus 15:1

"I will turn my ear to a proverb; with the harp I will expound my riddle."

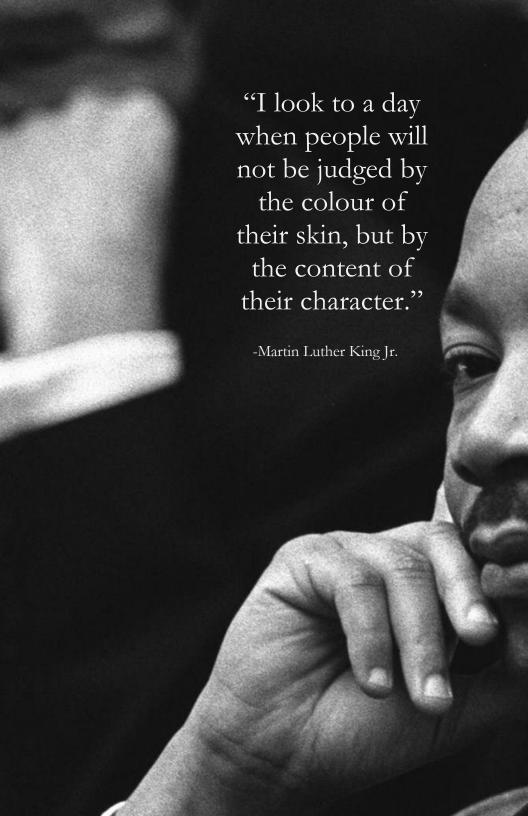
-Psalm 49:4



Alexander G. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Bread We Break is young adult multidenominational ministry based out of Winnipeg, MB, Canada, Our missions and vision is to lift high the name of Jesus in worship, remember him constantly in communion and unite His church in fellowship. As we journey together on common ground, we discover the fullness of the Father and grow in outpouring devotion.

Bread We Break has existed for 10 years and has been a common meeting places for young Christians to gather for bi-monthly worship nights.





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Joseph Y. Winnipeg, Manitoba

It needs to be appreciated that law and order is crucial for a society to exist and prevail in a peaceful and productive manner. Without law and order, it would just be a matter of time before a society becomes chaotic and see its own destruction. That is why according to the Old Testament of the Bible, God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments through Moses as part of His covenant of love with them. Only by respecting and abiding by the set of laws outlined in the Ten Commandments, the Israelites were able to prevail as a people,

loving and serving God.

In modern society the police force is a crucial and important element towards ensuring that law and order prevails. The police are usually the first to arrive at a scene where a law is being violated. Since incidents of lawbreaking can occur at any time of the day, those who work in the police force are usually required to work on shifts and, as a result, would not be able to enjoy the regular sleeping hours that many of us are able to. Moreover, the job of a police officer is truly a risky one since they are usually the first ones to be called to the scene of a crime where they may have to confront dangerous criminals who could be armed. with all sorts of harmful weapons. The requirements for being a police officer is also quite demanding since a

police officer usually needs to be in good physical and mental health, have no criminal record, reasonably qualified academically as well as have good and sound driving skills. They also would need to undergo and get through some physical and academic training before they become a police officer.

Considering the dangers, inconvenience and demanding requirements associated with the job of a police officer there are not many among us who would either like or be able to become a police officer. Thus, it is only proper for us as law abiding citizens to respect, appreciate and be grateful to the police who are actually indispensable members of any civilized and healthy society. In recent times there have been calls largely in the United States and to a lesser extent in Canada for the Government to defund the police.

These calls to defund the police are supposedly justified by the claim that the police are racists based on a number of incidents in the United States, where a black person was killed by a white police officer. However, the fact is that in almost all of these incidents, based on the investigation reports and/or bodycam videos that were presented, the white police officer was found to be justified in shooting or using force against the black victim. This is because the victim was found to be aggressively resisting arrest and sometimes dangerously armed. Common sense would tell you that anyone who is being arrested by the police and decides to resist the arrest is being extremely foolish, regardless of whether the arrest is justified or not, since the person is leaving the

the police no choice but to justifiably use force against him or her, even to the extent of shooting to kill. The wise thing for the one being arrested to do is to get his or her dispute regarding the arrest addressed in the courts through a lawyer. After all, an arrest is not conclusive evidence of one's perceived wrongdoing. Whereas resisting arrest lends itself to unpleasant circumstances which can quickly escalate into very ugly scenes.

However, this is not to deny the fact that there could be racist police officers. The fact is there are racists among every group of people regardless of what race, creed, skin colour or profession they belong to. It is not easy to control how an individual decides to behave. However, it would be truly counterproductive and unwise to penalize the whole

police force by actors in it. In fact, I feel that more investment in terms of time, money and effort should be made to recruit more qualified personnel into the police force and provide them with better training, facilities and tools so that they are able to carry out their job in a more competent, safe and accountable manner. Such an investment, I believe, will go a long way towards ensuring a more peaceful, healthy and productive society for all law-abiding citizens.

Having said that, I would like to stress that every disputed action of a police officer should be thoroughly and honestly investigated. If a police officer is found to be incompetent or guilty of wrongdoing, he or she should be made to face the consequence in a swift and just manner. Thus, towards this end, I

think equipping police officers with bodycams is an excellent idea, since evidence in the form of a video is quite impossible to dispute. In the event of a case involving the disputed action of a police officer, the full investigation report together with evidences gathered from first-hand witness testimonies as well as body-cam videos and other forms of videos related to the case should be made public. I believe that this would not only help in weeding out the bad apples within the police force, but more importantly increase public confidence in it.

Thus, to conclude, I believe that although there could be officers in a police force who are racists, just as there could be racist officers in every other department or institution, defunding the police just

because of these few bad actors would be a case of throwing out the baby with the bathwater, and thus truly unwise. The wise thing to do would be to try and minimize the existence of such officers and in turn increase public confidence in the police force by channeling more investment towards ensuring that the police are able to execute their duties in a more competent and safe manner, as well as be transparent and accountable to the society that they serve.



Laurie M.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Almighty God, You created us in your image to do good works and find purpose in our lives. Let your beacon of light shine through our Law Enforcement officers, who dutifully place themselves at great risk to protect our communities. Plant the seed of faith in their hearts to take a stand for Jesus as part of their spiritual fitness. Guide each step in their steadfast courage and determination to preserve what is right and just in times of crisis. Fill our citizens with a spirit of gratitude for all that the policing services do to keep our neighbourhoods safe. As long as we all have faith in each other and trust in you Lord, no weapon formed against us will ever prosper. We pray for these blessings, in Jesus' name. AMEN



Jane M. Winnipeg, Manitoba

When a country has a righteous government, the mandate of that government is threefold: to ensure a strong economy, to protect the citizens and to provide opportunities for the citizens. In order to provide this, the government needs to adhere to the rule of law and maintain freedom for the citizens. The police become a necessary force to deal with the criminal element which arises in society. The police are trained to protect the citizens, and to have a presence in the communities to encourage people to keep the law.

Without the police, the country becomes a lawless nation where everyone does as they see right. The nation then deteriorates into chaos and lawlessness and the decline of the nation begins.

A police officer who was interviewed for this expose, explained that every day the police go out into situations where they have no idea what they will meet. They endure viciousness against them: spitting in their faces, curses against them and even threats of death. The struggle to enforce the law becomes even more difficult when the government is not protecting them..

When the government allows violent criminals and people who want to destroy the country in, and wants to defund the police, the morale and safety of the individual officer is at risk. When the government wants to take away citizens'

guns and the right to protect themselves and chooses to defund the police, the decay of the country is at hand. When a rogue, treasonous government takes control of a country, the economy is purposely destroyed; the people lose their safety and their identity, as well as their property and freedoms. This is done over a period of time where the people are lulled into passivity by a corrupt media. The people believe all is well while the government is removing their rights and freedoms. Because they had no idea what was really happening, they have ignorantly voted into power people who are not for them but against them. The government then changes the training of the police force to one that comes against the citizens, to arrest citizens when they say anything against the government or takes a

stand for righteousness. The nation becomes a police state where every citizen is at risk of being arrested for saying anything against the government. It becomes worse and worse as the government seizes property and places people they perceive to be a risk to them, into camps where they can be controlled and then murdered. This type of police force is one that truly needs to be defunded.

Of course, even in a righteous police force there well may be some bad apples. This does not mean the whole force should be defunded. The bad apples need to be picked out and dealt with. The screening process needs to be strict and vigilant. In order for a righteous government to enforce the rule of law and freedoms, the police are necessary. It is important that the government pass bills to support the police

and to strengthen the penalties for those who endanger or kill these brave patriots who put their lives into danger every single day.

Paula K.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Does God desire justice? The answer is in the Bible:

"Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow."

-Isaiah 1:7

"He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord."

-Psalm 33:5

"Obey the government, for God is the One who has put it there. There is no government anywhere that God has not placed in power. So those who refuse to obey the law of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow."

-Romans 13 1-2

"The strength of the King loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob." -Psalm 99:4

'There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this."

-Isaiah 9:7

"Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you,
And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him."

-Isaiah 30:18

"Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you."

-Deuteronomy 16:20

Letter to the Editor

"Hi Drew! Is it true that you used to be an atheist? How did you become a Christian?"

Sara F. Winnipeg, Manitoba



Drew E. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Yes, that's very true. Perhaps I'll take this opportunity to share my testimony, Sara. It all began when I was very young. I still vaguely remember the first time I asked my parents about God and whether He was real. Both of them were products of the sixties. and were no more anti-religious than they were religious. It was simply something that was never discussed.

But when I pressed them on it, I remember being told the affirmative. "There probably is a God. I think there is." That was it. I remember I couldn't get anymore out of them, beyond that. If I asked what God was like or who God was, they just shrugged their shoulders and said they didn't know. There have been times when I've regretted not being raised a Christian and churchgoer, but when I reflect deeply on it, I can honestly say that I'm thankful my parents didn't tell me more than they did. It made me curious, and prevented me from developing too many prejudices either way. I don't think I ever thought about religion that deeply again until I was a few years older. I was pretty rough in a lot of ways, as a teenager. I started sneaking out, drinking and partying when I was way too young. I played a lot of sports,

like hockey and football. For a while, I was into martial arts. I never picked fights with anyone, but it wasn't uncommon for me to get involved in them. When I was around sixteen or seventeen, I joined the army. I can't say that I was a very deep person at the time. I was more interested in being strong. It was a combination of two things that changed that. One was falling in love for the first time (which was followed by my first experience of heartbreak), and the other was my discovery of philosophy. It's funny how those things often tend to go together. I read a book called "Siddhartha," by Hermann Hesse. It was a story about a young man who felt as though he had learned everything he could from his parents and teachers, and who decided to go out on an adventure to discover things for himself. This resonated

with me greatly, and I decided to do the same. I left the army, got rid of most of my possessions and became Buddhist, I went and lived for a few months in a Japanese mountain monastery. That's a whole story in itself. But in a nutshell, I returned to Canada dissatisfied with Buddhism's answers to life's big questions. I let it go and decided to keep on looking. This time, I sought for answers at The University of Winnipeg.

The Examined Life

I primarily studied literature, education and philosophy. It was these pursuits that led me to discover the works of Plato, who I became more or less obsessed with. So much so, that I even recall writing a few platonic dialogues myself, and even trying to turn them in as

over so well with the professors, so I stopped. But I must have read Plato's Republic at least twenty times during those years. It was my Bible. He taught me how to think. He also taught me what I was. I was a philosopher. Rousseau was my next big discovery. If the Buddha and love gave me my initial desire for truth, and if Plato taught me how to think, you could say that Rousseau taught me how to feel. He made me more honest with myself, and gave me a sense of brotherly comradery that kept me going every time Plato knocked me over the head. You may notice that I'm speaking of these authors as though I knew them. I suppose that's because I felt, while reading them (and still do to this day), like they are my friends. I read many others, but these

essays. That didn't go

are the ones worth mentioning because it was them who had the most to do with turning me towards Christianity. They prepared my mind, heart and will. It happened one day when I was taking a class on Goethe's "Faust." That's the play where the phrase "making a deal with the devil" comes from. Dr. Faust sells his soul in exchange for youthfulness and love.

Truth, Beauty and Goodness

I remember that, as I was reading it, I was sure that Goethe must have been inspired by Plato. I told this to my professor, and was immediately corrected. "No," I was told, "Goethe wasn't particularly influenced by Plato. At least not directly. He was inspired by The Bible. Well, after hearing this nonsense, I decided that I was going to

prove my professor wrong by doing the research and writing a paper on it. I went to the library... I did the research... and, lo and behold, my professor turned out to be right. While it was true that Goethe had developed a taste for the ancients later in life, what inspired him for Faust was indeed The Bible. This really puzzled me. How could that be? How could The Bible contain the same wisdom I found in The Republic? Wasn't The Bible just a bunch of old stories and fairy tales? This all sent me in a very different direction. I even felt a little like the character Faust as I did so. "Alas, I have studied philosophy," these were the opening lines of the play "the law as well as medicine, and to my sorrow, theology; studied them well with ardent zeal, yet here I am, a wretched fool, no wiser than I was before." I'd been

feeling lately like I didn't know much either. Reading Plato tends to do that. The difference was that I hadn't studied theology. And, yet, it was theology that supposedly inspired this play I thought was so wise and beautiful. So, off I went in that direction. The next stop was John Milton.

Paradise Lost

Milton wrote the epic poem Paradise Lost, I had already picked it up because, after reading Faust, I developed an interest in the character of Mephistopheles (or, plainly put, the devil). Paradise Lost was about the same amusing character. Only it was an epic take on him instead of a comedic one. It was about the rebellion and fall of Satan, followed by his revenge against God by the corruption of His precious creations,

Adam and Eve. I'm still not entirely sure why, but as I was reading it, I found myself sympathizing with the character of Satan, and even cheering him on. There was something noble, I thought, about rebelling against this authoritarian father figure. Satan didn't want to just blindly obey and do as he was told, like a slave. He wanted to be free. He wanted to think for himself. He wanted to forge his own destiny and create his own meaning in life. In short, he didn't sound so different from me when I left my parents and teachers behind. I used to think it was silly how Adam and Eve fell. But when I read Paradise Lost, I realized that I wouldn't have done any better. Anyways, all of this horrified me. "You're cheering on the devil, Drew? Really?" Yes, I was. This question led me down the rabbit hole of C.S. Lewis,

who had written a famous Preface to Paradise Lost, Lewis was the famous Christian author who wrote The Chronicles of Narnia, I'm embarrassed to say that the rest of the time between then, and the time I became a Christian is something of a blur -because after reading Lewis, I became so obsessed with Christianity, philosophy, theology and religious history that I don't think I spent my time doing anything else. I read the ancients and medieval Christians. The biggest influences on me were Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Erasmus, I don't think Erasmus was ever declared a saint, but in my book he more than qualifies. He was my favorite. I also read many contemporary Christian philosophers and natural theologians, as well as the atheistic body of

literature. My dear friend, Plato, insisted on that. A true philosopher will study both sides. I watched all of the debates on the internet. This was around the time when the new atheists like Richard Dawkins were very popular. I sought out the top thinkers on either side in academia and studied them closely. Long story short, I came to believe that the arguments for theism were far superior than those of atheism. I became a deist. That is to say, I believed in God, but still wasn't sure about which God I believed in or what God was like. I wasn't even sure he was a "person" exactly. But I knew that He, or it, was something.

Taking "The Jesus Challenge"

I also didn't want to rule out other monotheistic religions, like Judaism or Islam.

So, to the best of my ability, I studied their history and theology as well. I was especially impressed by Maimonides and Averroes. But it seemed to me that both religions fell short. There didn't seem to be anything in Judaism and Islam that wasn't already in Christianity, and there seemed to be things in Christianity that were lacking in both of the others. The day eventually came when I decided that there was more than enough evidence in support of the truth claims of Christianity -especially when I compared it to alternative worldviews It was a rational and intellectually fulfilling religion. I came to believe this before converting. But there was still something missing. The Bible made certain claims about Jesus, and how certain things would happen if one invited Jesus into his or her life. And that hadn't

happened to me. So, I decided to give it an honest and wholehearted try. I decided to put The Bible and Jesus to the test, and I promised myself that I would follow the evidence wherever it led. Up until then, I'd treated Jesus merely as a philosopher. Now I was going to treat Him as the person who He claimed to be. I decided that I would do everything He said to the best of my ability. If He truly was the son of God, then if I put my faith and trust in Him, His claim would come true. God would come into my life and make Himself personally known to me. This supposedly "Holy Spirit" would "fill" my heart. If it worked, then I'd know it was true and I would become a Christian. And if it didn't work, then I'd know it. wasn't. But it had to be done honestly, and with me truly and not

just my mind. "Seek," said Jesus, "and ye shall find." That was my plan. Looking back, I've come to call it 'taking the Jesus challenge."

Well, the next two weeks of my life were spent doing this. And for those two weeks, I was basically Ned Flanders from that TV show, The Simpsons. I was extremely, and even suspiciously, nice to everyone I met. Even complete strangers on the street. I treated them like they were as important as Jesus claimed they were. And I treated my treatment of them as seriously as Jesus taught that we should. I was scrupulous in my kindness, patience and hospitality. When someone wronged me, I acted and treated them as though they had done me a favour. "No problem," I'd say, "I like it when people make mistakes. It gives me a chance to forgive them."

Alright, maybe I went a little overboard in some ways. I did get some strange looks over those few weeks. But, in my defense, I genuinely was doing my best to follow exactly what Jesus seemed to teach in The New Testament, I made peace with people I held grudges against. I helped anyone who asked me for help. I treated people the way Jesus taught in Matthew 25:40. "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." I treated people like they were the brother, sister, son or daughter of The God of the Universe. I listened closely and treated people's problems and concerns as seriously as if they were my own problems. I gave away way, way more than I was comfortable with. I even gave prayer a try. I really think this is

what sold me.

Jesus: Liar, Lunatic or Lord?

I got down on my knees and prayed the way Jesus says to pray in his sermon on the mount (Matthew 6). I didn't pray for "stuff" or anything in particular for myself. Iesus taught that God already knew what I wanted. What I prayed for was "for God's will to be done as it is in Heaven, and for the strength to face whatever that was." I trusted that he'd take care of me as that happened. I think that's what it means to ask God to "Give us today, our daily bread." I don't think it has anything to do with getting bread. I think it's about trusting that our needs will be met as we put God first, above our own needs. I asked for forgiveness, and for the strength to forgive others. Last, I asked

for protection against "the evil one." I didn't really feel anything as I prayed. What I was doing was reaching out. Aloud and boldly, I invited Jesus and The Holy Spirit into my life. And, to my utter astonishment, my prayer was answered. I felt God's presence with me that day, and throughout the time I was doing my best to follow His teachings. I got the strength I asked for. This combination of praying and walking with Jesus had a transforming effect on me, and I began to understand what Christians meant by the phrase "being born again." It was no longer a mystery to me. Everything in my life got immediately better. My relationships with people improved dramatically. I became more productive. I experienced more joy. And perhaps most remarkably, even

when things went wrong in life, I found that it didn't affect me or my mood. I was always fine. Near the end of my experiment, I returned to C.S. Lewis and his "liar, lunatic or Lord" argument for Christianity:

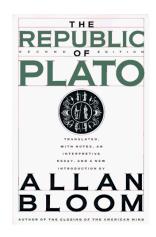
'I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at

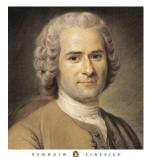
his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God."

This was an argument that didn't really impress me much when I first encountered it. But that was because I had only thought about Christianity. I hadn't actually tried it. The words "it seemed to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor fiend" didn't resonate with me because I hadn't vet had the undeniable, personal and mystical transformative experience that would make something like that "obvious." But the fact was that now,

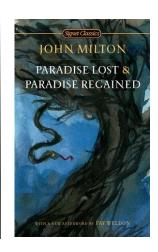
whether I wanted to admit it or not, I truly did have a conviction that Jesus was not a liar or a lunatic. He couldn't have been. It didn't make sense in light of the evidence. The only conclusion I could draw then, if I was to be honest with myself, was that Jesus was who he claimed to be. It's for this reason. that I often sav "I realized I was a Christian" instead of "I decided to become a Christian." It wasn't a decision at all. The only decision I had to make was whether to live authentically. And I had decided long ago, since my days of reading Rousseau, that I would always do that. Besides, what was I going to do -go back to how I was before? From then on, I called myself a Christian.

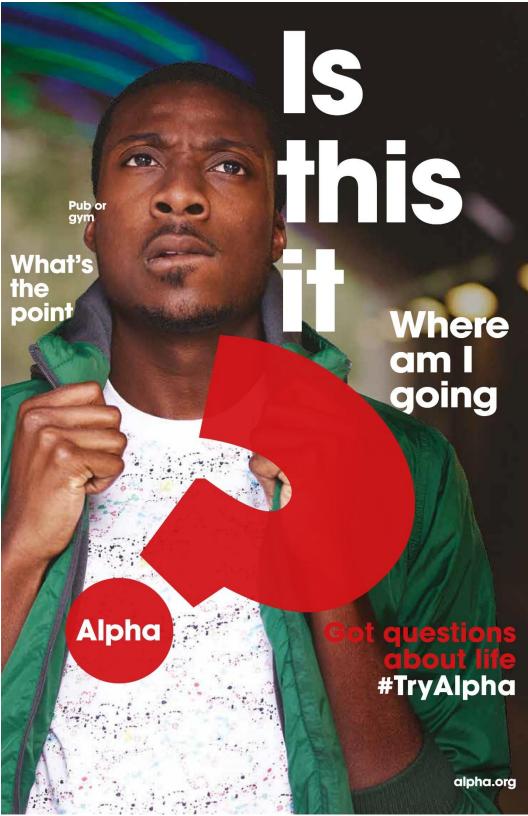
That's only the beginning of my story, Sara. But I hope it answers your question. Thank you so much for writing in!











"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven."

-Matthew 5:16

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