

Church is boring...

- The New Testament gives a picture of church life that is anything but boring.
- If there are faults about particular church services, this does not discredit Christianity (any more than the demise of a cinema proves that the film industry is dead).
- Some who say that worship is boring are basing their judgement on past memories, not on what actually happens in many churches nowadays.
- Worship is not boring for people who appreciate the gospel message and have a real desire to worship God.
(Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 122:1; Revelation 1:10; Colossians 3:16-17)

You can be a Christian without going to church...

- It is clearly true that you can. Many Christians have been denied the opportunity of attending a place of worship because of illness, disability, persecution, etc.
- Normally, however, Christian commitment involves a share in the corporate life of the church. It is like being part of a team.
- When people come to be part of God's family, they *want* to join with other members of the family.
- God's plan is that followers should be encouraged and strengthened by fellowship with one another.
(Luke 4:16; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 10:33; Galatians 3:28)

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

The following books and websites give fuller treatment to the kind of subjects raised here:

T Keller *The Reason for God* (Hodder & Stoughton) N Gumbel *Searching Issues* (Kingsway)

C S Lewis *Mere Christianity* (Fount) S McQuoid & A Noble *And is it True?* (Authentic Media)

Amy Orr-Ewing *But is it real?* (IVP) D O'Leary *By Design or by Chance?* (Augsburg Books)

Websites:
www.godsearchscotland.org.uk www.bethinking.org
www.damaris.org www.culturewatch.org
www.rejesus.co.uk www.testoffaith.com
www.zactrust.org

'Facing the Issues' CD
Short talks of issues raised in this leaflet available from:
Mission & Discipleship, The Church of Scotland, 121 George Street,
Edinburgh EH2 4YN

Scottish Charity No SC011353

'Why Believe?' is an interdenominational group of Christians who resource the Scottish churches, providing information about how best to present credible Christianity.



What can I say?

Brief responses to some things that people say about Christianity

When responding, it is important that Christians should seek to do so

Honestly – not claiming to know all the answers

Confidently – because Christianity is not afraid of honest enquiry

Graciously – after the manner of Christ himself

Lovingly – because we are not simply seeking to win arguments but to lead people to faith in Jesus

Prayerfully – asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance



How do we know there is a God in the first place?

- Through the order and beauty of the world around us. Christians believe it makes more sense to see this as the work of a Creator than to see it as the result of chance.
- Through the nature of human beings. Something in us (a kind of 'homing instinct') seems to tell us that there is more to life than the things of everyday existence.
- Through the life and work of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that God came into the world in Jesus. This is the explanation of his life, teaching, death, resurrection and continuing influence in the world.
- Through the continuing and transforming effect of Christian faith in the lives of many people.

(Psalm 19:1; Acts 17:28; John 1:14; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

Christianity isn't credible in a world of so much suffering...

- Much of the world's suffering is caused by human folly, ignorance and sin. We have free will, and sometimes make choices which bring about suffering.
- Christians do not claim to know all the answers, and sometimes suffering is undeserved and unexplainable. But we believe that the world makes more sense when we trust in God than when we see it as a meaningless product of chance forces.
- Sometimes good comes from evil, and we even tolerate a degree of suffering for the sake of a greater good (eg 'allowing' a child to fall when learning to ride a bike).
- God, we believe, has come into this suffering world and won our salvation through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. God understands our troubles and promises help. God also promises that a time will come when our questions will be answered.

(Isaiah 59:1-2; Genesis 50:20; Job 42:5; Romans 8:28; Isaiah 43:2; Psalm 46:1; 1 Corinthians 13:12)

Today's world is a secular world...

- There is plenty of evidence to suggest that materialistic secularism is not bringing people happiness or fulfilment in life.
- The 'religion' which many have rejected is not real Christianity but a caricature of it.
- Many so-called secular attitudes are still based on inherited Christian values.
- Modern interest in alternative spiritualities and New Age beliefs gives a further indication that 'man cannot live on bread alone'.

(Ecclesiastes 3:11; Proverbs 1:7; Luke 12:16-21)

I don't feel any need for Christianity...

- The *sense* of need may be absent, but the need may still be very real (cf. children's vaccinations).
- A time may come when you do feel a need. The experience of personal illness, bereavement, betrayal, etc can suddenly cause people to wonder about the meaning of their lives.
- Talk of not needing Christianity becomes irrelevant if the gospel is what it claims to be – exciting good news. How many people would talk about not 'needing' a fortune which had been left to them?

- Christianity deserves serious consideration because it makes claims about truth. It is not simply a made-up story for people who like that sort of thing, or a crutch for the inadequate.

(John 10:10; Colossians 2:3; Ephesians 1:3-10; 1 Corinthians 1:5)

Science has disproved Christianity...

- Science owes its origins to Christian beliefs about the world, and many scientists have been and are Christians.
- The Bible is not mainly about 'how' questions, but 'why' questions. The accounts given by science and the Bible are not so much contradictory as complementary.
- Science is not the same as scientism – an attitude which seeks to 'explain' everything in terms of our scientific knowledge. This tends to overlook the limitations of science (eg in explaining why the universe goes to the bother of existing in the first place).
- A truly scientific approach to any subject uses the appropriate means, and to talk about 'scientific' proofs (in the popular sense) in relation to God is unscientific.

(Psalm 19:1; Hebrews 11:1; Hebrews 11:27; Deuteronomy 8:3)

You can live a good life without being a Christian...

- Christians rejoice in the moral efforts of all who seek to live a good life.
- Christians believe that we recognise goodness because we are made by a good God.

- Even the best of good people fail to meet God's standard of perfect love and righteousness.
- Christianity is good news about a God who wants to help us through the Holy Spirit to live better lives.

(Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23; Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 2:20)

Christianity is too exclusive for this pluralistic age...

- Christian belief in the uniqueness of Jesus does not involve believing that all others are totally wrong about everything.
- The world in which Christianity began was a pluralistic world. Pluralism is not a new phenomenon.
- Christians recognise the sincerity of others' beliefs, but also recognise the fact that such sincerity is no indication of the truth or falsity of the belief. Sincerity can even be dangerous if it involves belief in something that is not true.
- Christianity is ultimately concerned not with what we would like to believe but with the question of truth.

(John 14:6; John 14:9; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 8:5-6; Romans 1:20)

Christianity has not been very Christian...

- We admit that many mistakes have been made by Christians, but the Christian church is made up of ordinary, fallible human beings. Christians do not claim to be perfect but believe in Christ's forgiving and renewing power.
- Even if mistakes have been made, Christianity has had an enormous influence for good in human history. There are many examples of people devoting their lives to others in love and making the world a better place.
- Christianity is not in favour of hypocrisy. Jesus condemned it.
- The Church's past and present failings do not affect the question of the truth or otherwise of Christianity. The challenge is to respond not to the imperfect lives of Christ's followers, but to Christ himself.

(2 Corinthians 4:7; Matthew 23:23; Psalm 51:6)

