

Sociological/Psychological Argument

If God does exist and does interact with His creation, you would expect Him to have a positive effect on people. While I'm aware that some people have had a bad 'church' experience and that some don't like the moral restraints God has put on humanity, the positive effects He has had far outweigh the negative ones. Let's examine some... Be aware that I will be summarizing a lot of material from our class "How Christianity Changed the World". So for more in-depth detail, please take that class.

Psychological Argument:

1...**the transformed lives of the disciples**...at their leader's crucifixion, they were cowards. When the message of the resurrection came, they had to be convinced. But once convinced, they never doubted again. **These simple men & women gave the world the highest ethical teaching it has ever known. They believed and preached it, even to their deaths.** Think of the absurdity of a little band of cowards in an upper room one day and a few days later, transformed into a group that no persecution could silence. And then attempting to attribute this change to nothing more than these people trying to start their own religion. Who would die for a lie? Their lives had been transformed by Jesus living in them.

2...**the transformed lives of the early, persecuted Christians**...Roman Emperors who violently persecuted these early Christians were Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Antonius Pius, Marcus Aurelius (yes, the one in the movie 'Gladiator'), Decius, Valerian, Diocletian, Maximian & Galerian. Fed to the lions, lighted as torches for Nero's orgy garden parties, legs cut off, broken, torn apart and ripped apart by beasts in the arena, women thrown into brothels to suffer shame before being executed, etc. **In spite of three centuries of persecutions, Christians did not attack their pagan enemies. They shed no blood but their own.**



3...the transformed lives of 2,000 years of history...Ever since the crucifixion & resurrection of Jesus, people (who have been separated by time & place) have claimed that their lives changed by one man...Jesus Christ. Other religions don't claim that their messiah is still living, is coming back and has changed their lives. People like James Clerk Maxwell (discoverer of the laws of electro-magnetism), Mitsuo Fuchida (Japanese pilot who lead the attack on Pearl Harbor), Nicky Cruz (gang leader), literary giants C.S. Lewis, JRR Tolkien, Charles Dickens, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow & George MacDonald, skeptics like Lew Wallace (author of Ben-Hur, the best selling novel of the 19th century), Harriet Stowe (author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, the 2nd best selling novel of the 19th century)...and the list goes on and on. The French Emperor Napoleon said he could not imagine having his soldiers die for him AFTER he was dead, yet that is what he observed with Christians. And Christians are still being raped, tortured, maimed and killed for their faith. There were more Christian martyrs in the 20th century than in all 19 centuries before. Half (some 35 million) of all Christian who have died for their faith did so in the 20th century alone. 2015 is the worst year EVER for Christian martyrs. No other world religion has had such transformative power in people's lives. Please refer to the books "Jesus Freaks" and "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" for specific accounts of persecutions.

Interesting note...there were 10 1st century messianic movements in Palestine. Christ's was the only one that succeeded.

How Christianity has changed Education:



Christianity was the first world religion to educate male & female children alike, despite their economic or social status. They saw all people as equals (Galatians 3:28). No other country or religion before that did this. Usually only the rich, elite boys got educated. Universities started out in monasteries. 92% of all American universities before the Civil War were founded by Christian denominations. Colleges like Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Princeton, Northwestern, Columbia, Univ. of Cal. at Berkeley, Univ. of Kentucky, Univ. of Tennessee, Oxford, Cambridge, etc. all started out as Christian institutions. Louis Braille,

influenced by his Christian father, started the Braille system of raised dots, so blind people could 'read'. The first thing missionaries do is teach people to read.

How Christianity has changed Science:



Alfred North Whitehead, the renowned British philosopher & mathematician of the early 1900's, said the origins of modern science required Christianity's insistence on the rationality of God. If God is a rational being, then may not humans being made in His image, also employ rational processes to study & investigate the world in which He created. The Christian Francis Bacon is credited with starting the modern scientific approach by using inductive reasoning. Up to this point, most scientists used deductive reasoning. The ancients believed that the gods were part of the creation. Figuring out how the world worked was seen as useless as it was invading the gods realm. And their gods were not always rational. For example, planets were seen as having an intelligence & feelings, hence this is what made them move. Christians saw themselves as having dominion over the world God had created (Genesis 1:28). Since God was rational and humans were rational (some were anyway), then the laws God set up to run the universe should be rational also. Unfortunately, some Christians held to the Aristotelian method of deductive science. It took the Protestant Reformation to really blow the doors off of scientific investigation. From the 1400-mid 1800's, every major scientist explained his motivations in religious terms. The most prestigious scientific society in history, the Royal Society of London, was founded by Calvinist Christians in 1645 with 7 of its 10 founding members being Puritans. The founder of Scientific American magazine was a Christian...isn't that a hoot? Christian scientists include Nicholas Copernicus, Johann Kepler, Blaise Pascal, Isaac Newton, Alessandro Volta, Andre Ampere, Georg Ohm, Michael Faraday, Gregor Mendel, Lord Kelvin, Joseph Lister and many, many modern Nobel prize winners of today. Christians make up about 1/3 of the world's population but make up over 65% of its Nobel prize winners.

How Christianity has changed Charity and Compassion:

We need to transfer ourselves back to the Greco-Roman culture. This will be hard, as we have grown up in a Christian culture. **Human compassion among the ancients was rare.** Plato said that a poor man (usually a slave) who was no longer able to work because of sickness should be left to die. Roman philosopher Plautus said that “You do a beggar bad service by giving him food and drink; you lose what you give and prolong his life for more misery.” Remember that Roman spectators took great delight in seeing gladiators mauled or stabbed to death in the arenas; a practice that took place for over 600 years. In its extreme form, these cultures could easily practice human sacrifice, especially in the land of Canaan. Into this callous, compassionless culture, Christians entered. See **Matthew 25:35,36,45 John 15:13**

Charity to orphans...Child abandonment was common in the ancient world. Christians established orphanages for homeless children. No other culture or religion did this. Christians did this because they saw biblical teachings that said every human life was precious in the sight of God.

Charity to the aged... There is no historical evidence of homes for the aged in the years preceding Christianity. Christians established homes for the aged by the 5th century. Before that, many Christians took them into their homes and cared for them. While some cultures did esteem their elders, it didn't translate into caring for them when they were old, frail and alone. For example, in the Eskimo culture, many years ago, it was a common practice to let their aged slowly freeze to death.

Charity by American voluntary associations... In the 1940's, Gunnar Myrday (a foreign observer) noted, “No country has so many cheerful givers as America.” He attributed this to “influence from the churches.” The following organizations were largely influenced by Christians and Christian churches:

Fraternal Benefit Societies

Lutheran Brotherhood, Ukrainian National Association, etc.

Service Clubs

Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist, Rotary, etc.

YMCA, YWCA



Soup kitchens, rescue missions, Habitat for Humanity, homeless shelters, etc.