

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

1. Refute the critics by your GOOD BEHAVIOR

John 13:35, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 John 3:17, If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

*Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your **good deeds** and glorify God on the day he visits us. – 1 Peter 2:12*

*1 Peter 3:8 & 9, ⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because **to this you were called** so that you may inherit a blessing.*

*Proverbs 3:3 & 4 – ³ Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴ Then you will win favor and **a good name** in the sight of God and man.*

2. Stay THANKFUL

If there is a God, then every breath, every moment, every sight and sound, is sheer, unadulterated gift. (Doug Wilson, *Is Christianity Good for the World?*, p. 17 & 18)

*Romans 1:21, For although they knew God, they neither glorified him **as God**] nor **gave thanks** to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.*



CRITICS' VIEW

Philip Sampson: "For many people, missionary exploits prove that the Christian claim to have a monopoly on the truth inevitably leads to the **oppression** of other people and their culture. Meanwhile, the modern mind, enlightened by reason and science, is portrayed as **tolerant and humane**." (*Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization*, p. 92)

Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970): "The Spaniards in Mexico and Peru used to baptize Indian infants, and then immediately dash their brains out: by this means they secured that these infants went to Heaven." (Bertrand Russell, "Has Religion Made Useful Contributions to Civilization?", in *Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization*, p. 92 – 93)

The Aborigines: "The Europeans regarded the Aborigines as a heathen people who needed to be converted to Christianity, and put to work for the benefit of Europeans . . . Aboriginal lands were confiscated, their children taken away and put in Christian mission stations, their water holes poisoned, and many of their people massacred." (Book written by Pamela Odijk, *Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization*, p. 93)

Norman Lewis (British travel writer, 1908 – 2003): "In reality, those in control [of the areas where the majority of the atrocities in Brazil had occurred] are North American Missionaries . . . they disfigure the original Indian culture and enforce the acceptance of Protestantism . . . It was missionary policy to ignore what was going on." (*Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization*, p. 93)

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

The first mistake these critics make is to identify WESTERN CIVILIZATION with CHRISTIANITY

The Gospel did **NOT** originate in the *West*.

- No biblical author was FROM WESTERN EUROPE
- Most biblical events took place in ASIA and AFRICA
- The cultures in the Bible are PRE-INDUSTRIAL and often NOMADIC
- For 200-years the strongest churches were in NORTH AFRICA and present-day TURKEY
- Early missionary journeys were TO, not FROM Western Europe
- The “centers of gravity” of Christianity moved from Jerusalem, Asia Minor, Europe, and now presently, to Latin America, Asia, & Africa. Some of the churches of Latin America, Asia, & Africa now send more missionaries to the West than they receive. (*Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization*, p. 95)

The Enlightenment gave rise to the idea that a “civilized man” was RATIONAL, PROGRESSIVE, and SECULAR.

EVOLUTIONARY IDEAS were also instrumental in the exploitation of native peoples.

On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life,

WHAT CHRISTIANITY **REALLY** DID

One of the basic beliefs of Christianity is that all people . . . including “uncivilized races” are CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

Genesis 1:26 & 27 – ²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Dr. John Philip of the London Missionary Society to support native rights in South Africa in the early 1800’s

Lancelot Threlkeld to demand equal protection under the law for Awabakal people of Australia

John Eliot to convince the Massachusetts courts to find in favor of native people against settlers trying to take their land.

Quaker and **Puritan** states were among the first states in North America to reform slavery laws.

William Wilberforce, in England, formed the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787 and spent much of his life and health fighting it.

William Burns (April 1815 – April 1868), Scottish Evangelist and Missionary to China with the English Presbyterian Mission, opposed the “coolie” slave trade in China.

Christianity does what the Enlightenment & Evolution cannot do. It provides a FIXED STANDARD that APPLIES TO EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE by which we can MEASURE BEHAVIOR and declare some “good” and others “bad.”