



HOPE PROJECT CHRISTMAS

2025 ONLINE MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Summary of comments

Topic: Christianity is the great coloniser

So it sounds like you are saying that "give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's" means to take over the government and impose your beliefs on everybody, then enslave most of the world and destroy their beliefs and languages. I mean, you are endorsing the colonial project, the transatlantic slave trade and the eradication of all other festivals. In favour of a religion that requires you to believe that Genocide, Child Sex Slavery and the Collective Punishment of the Innocent are not only morally justifiable but also Perfect Love!

Be aware that you absolutely will defend that position the moment you challenge what I say, because of the Bibbleverse!

Please challenge it!

4w Like Reply Hide

Hope Project

The words 'give unto Caesar' come from a comment made by Jesus. It was a trap. Caesar claimed to be a god. This was idolatry to a Jew. If Jesus agreed with the taxes - which necessitated use of coins with the 'god' Caesar on them - the Jewish leaders would have condemned him. If he'd disagreed - the Romans would have killed him. Jesus dodged the trap with a profound but simple statement - which affirmed one of the most fundamental and foundational principles of our modern freedoms and democratic systems: "the limitation of Government powers." We were gifted this thinking from Christianity. It worked its way through our history - giving us the freedoms we now have (on a comparative scale - globally speaking, and in contrast to most places in most of history). This isn't to be misunderstood with saying our systems or nation are perfect. Regarding other comments there, it's hard to know where to start. Cultures globally throughout history have practiced slavery; the only really challenge to it, and the only one to succeed, came expressly from Christianity. Similar could be said of other comments there. Our national values (which you echo) are Christian values.

4w Like Reply

Hope Project derp! It wasn't even Caesar at that point, if he actually existed then he was talking about the government, you know, as a parable. You have no idea of what the Romans would have done, especially if you think it likely they'd have let him be taken down and buried within a day or two. The whole point of crucifixion was the public display and humiliation of the corpse. Maybe if you learned anything about anything you wouldn't sound ignorant about everything.

Topic: Hurt by an experience of Christians seeming uncaring

Get Stuffed - "SO Called Christians" associated with the HOPE Project have SO LET ME DOWN - TIME and TIME again - here in [REDACTED]

3w Like Reply Hide

Hope Project

In what way?

3w Like Reply

Hope Project Please Respect my Privacy ' Christians here in [REDACTED] DON'T invite Mature Single Women home or invite them out. I am a Respected Retired Nurse who will AGAIN Spend Christmas on my own. "They say that Christmas is for Families". I answer - Well how come Jesus was Born in a Strangers Stable. They DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY I do know a couple associated with the Hope Project who have basically "GHOSTED" ME. If You want to know who then PM me Please

3w Like Reply Hide

Hope Project

We are very sorry to hear about the bad behaviour you have endured. Certainly as a cultural festival, like with all cultural festivals, Christmas is a time when people gather. There are sadly gaps in all communities, where people feel left out. It is difficult to know what to say other than that we hope you can find comfort in a Saviour who was - as you say - born poor in a stable, who endured rejection and suffering - and yet who lived with all hope, to bring us all hope. Without question, there are challenges in life. Not easy!

Topic: Christianity is the great oppressor of women

And anyway, before you try to think of something in the Bible that's testable and true, do you really think you should be questioning a MAN about something??? Have you read 1Timothy 2:12-12? It clearly says that women should STFU!

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Hope Project

(The Bible didn't edict silence for women. It did in the stated instance given above - where men had been educated and women hadn't. There was a context. Divisions were relating due to the new freedoms - Christians having just declared, on the basis of Jesus teachings, that a God-given equality existed for all people before God irrespective of race, social status of gender. [Society almost everywhere in the world disagreed with this at that time.] Those themes worked then through history to give us our current thinking as a culture on these matters. Elsewhere in the New Testament the same author [Paul] says women should have head coverings when prophesying - which means they were speaking! Elsewhere church leaders are named by Paul who were women. It's incorrect / wrong to take one verse and turn that into a rule like this. So many have been guilty of this in history - most-certainly including many Christians! The body of scripture instead needs considering - and certainly [as above] where a starting 3 examples of the same person making statements related to women can easily be found. [To note it, women had almost no status in society until Christianity. The historian Rodney Stark, who recently passed away, in considering why Christianity exploded in the first few centuries despite violent opposition from Rome concluded that one of the key factors was the way it made life so much better for women. He quipped that it was surprising every woman didn't become a Christian.])



Topic: Our response to someone mocking Christians and Christian prayer

If others do not make reasonable comments to unfair criticisms of Christians, we sometimes engage so there is accountability for words spoken.



Author

Hope Project

If God exists, prayer makes sense. But prayer isn't to be confused with a wish-granting magic genie in a bottle or a shop assistant. There is suffering and evil. There is life and death. The Bible explains the nature of all of this - concurrently existing in the present time - while also explaining why there can yet be a greater hope. The problem of evil and suffering don't disappear with the denial of a spiritual world. The uniqueness of the Christian explanation is the perspective of hope it yet enables (actually inspiring the dynamics that most-define our culture, resulting in our cultural freedoms, prosperity, equality and charity.) Even if untrue - have been blessed!

Topic: Jesus never existed



No, it reminds us of the con job that Jesus lived.

2w Like Reply Hide



Author

Hope Project

There is no credible historian who questions Jesus' existence. There are, however, many who question Jesus' claims. These two points are distinct. To note one more thing, even if Jesus wasn't who he claimed, we are still greatly blessed by him - and hence the CULTURAL festival of Christmas, with a public holiday. His influence in our history explains our high levels of freedom, prosperity, equality and charity. But - as above - whether he was who he claimed to be is another question. Christians are those who have concluded for their various reasons that he was.

Topic: Christians stole Christmas from prior pagan festivals

Wider audiences / Christians online have generally been insufficiently equipped to engage with these types of accusations – and hence our eventual specialisation in them.



Absolute garbage. You christ believers had to move the birth, so as to make Christianity more palatable to pagans. What with this being the season of solstice. So piss off.

2w Like Reply Hide



Author

Hope Project

The birth was never moved. No one seems to have known when Jesus was born - so a date was selected for different reasons. The date wasn't, however, about making things palatable to pagans. Remember, Christians were being persecuted - while challenging the authority of an empire through their love. This showed up the authorities. They'd buy slaves to set them free. They gave charity by way of food for the poor, they cared for orphans and abandoned babies ('exposure'). Their religions didn't require them to celebrate Jesus' birth either. That was never mandated. The faith didn't need this festival to be attractive to anyone either - and was celebrated 'underground' (they were persecuted - so it was a PRIVATE thing, not public. It wasn't about attracting anyone). They celebrated instead because they wanted to. Jesus had changed their lives. They believed his values of love and charity. They felt he was worth celebrating - so they did. The date and tradition was cemented early on, within the persecution period.

Topic: There is no evidence for God

They went on to reject our response, and we let them have the last word as we had already said what we wanted to say.



In 200,000 years of our existence, no human has produced one single piece of evidence for any god.

2w Like Reply Hide



Author

Hope Project

By this measure of 'evidence' could it be said there is no evidence that any historical figure before the existence of the camera (or even after that) existed also. (You can't test history in a laboratory). However, the 'inference to the best explanation' is a part of science - and there is clear evidence of design, information, engineering and immense complexity within the creation. Science is a very blunt instrument in that it is so limited. Many things are a part of our reality that science has no tools to measure or explain. This doesn't mean those things aren't real. A wider consideration of things that are real, to then consider a wider scope of evidence, is the topic here.

2w Like Reply



Hope Project There is no evidence that a god created anything or ever existed, ever. Do you have actual evidence that a god created anything? Do you have actual evidence that a god exists? If this god interacts in reality it would be detectable and it is not and never has been. Science can only measure what is in reality. Gods are supernatural in nature and science does not measure the supernatural, this is not the fault of science but the claim itself. One would need to develop an alternative and reliable methodology other than science to measure the supernatural and to date this has not occurred. Gods are not fallible. There have been thousands of proposed gods over the centuries. Currently humans believe in 3000 to 4000 named gods, many with different properties and mostly incompatible with each other. You just believe in the one god you have been indoctrinated into. Gods and spirits were invented by ancient people to explain natural phenomenon like lightning, fire, eclipses, life and death etc. now with critical thinking and science we now know better and we have no need for gods anymore. Christians claim to have detected the undetectable which is irrational.

Topic: The date for Christmas came from a pagan festival



Author

Hope Project

Of note, the Bible never gives a date for Jesus' birth. However, 25th December was well cemented as the date on which Christians celebrated it by about AD 200. Of equal note, the Bible never required that Jesus' followers celebrate his birth with a festival - or even his death and resurrection with one. Jesus instead gave the traditions of baptism and communion. The festivals we call Christmas and Easter are therefore the result of early Christians WANTING to celebrate. The date for Christmas (we can only presume with no known date for Jesus' birth existing) therefore came from a tradition / superstition in which a great prophet was believed to die on the date they were conceived. When Greek Christians took the known dates of Jesus death and resurrection from the Jewish to their own calendars they got 25th March. From this, 25th December (9 months later) was chosen as a suitable day for their desired celebration of his birth. An evidence supporting this as the origins of the date is the fact that the Eastern Christians, by a different means, ended up dating Jesus' death/resurrection on their calendars as 6th April - and to this day celebrate Christmas on 6th January. For a related bit of history, our own CULTURE however, did different. Recognising the significance of Christianity to our cultural values (systems of law, limitation of powers, culture of charity, equality, education, healthcare etc...) public holidays were established for Christmas and Easter to aid storytelling regarding this wider history. The same thinking is the purpose of the public holidays connected with Waitangi Day, Kings Birthday, Labour Day etc... (Things that were deemed relevant to WHO we are as a culture were given a 'protection' by way of the establishing of cultural traditions with public holidays, the purpose of which was storytelling so we remember the history - which I think we all could admit we don't do very well at as a culture these days).



Topic: Our engagement to bring balance in a conversation about why God allows suffering.

While the conversation included both accusatory and good 'defensive' comments, there were notable gaps in the comments made by Christians. We therefore engaged briefly to contribute, while then leaving the conversation to play out by itself.

After personal loss I struggled with this question for a long time, to learn that God is not the cause or origin of our sickness or suffering. A resource that really helped me was from a man called Andrew Wommack and I have included a link to his website below. All the resources are available for free and I pray that it will bring you comfort.

<https://www.awmi.net/browse-teaching/god-wants-you-well-2/?mode=video>

2w Like Reply Hide Edited

Author
Hope Project

Great stories! re 'Why doesn't God heal kids with cancer?' - the question presupposes a good God exists. To ask the question and then criticise answers as 'dumb' is unfair and unreasonable. To note it, there could also be a God who isn't good - in which case the question is also redundant. The question is specific. However, if we do believe in a God who is also good, the question is significant and important. One of the best answers to it is given in the book of Job - found in the Old Testament of the Bible. It's 50 chapters relay an unjust tragedy suffered by a man named Job - for which God gave permission. It then tracks the conversations Job has with his friends and then also with God himself about his injustice. Why did God allow his sufferings? (It's about 50 chapters long, and is mostly in an ancient poetry form - while telling a story that makes some intriguing point.)

Topic: Christianity brings more harm than good

Should be the reason why we don't need him

2w Like Reply Hide

Author
Hope Project

If there is no God, logically power counts - not love. History demonstrates this in clear form. For example, there are essentially only two types of government - top down, and bottom up. Top down is natural. This is 'survival of the fittest' (Darwinism), also fitting the religious beliefs of many cultures. 'Bottom up' is different. This type of government (which we have) came from a cultural (religious) assumption in the value of every individual, 'created in the image of God' (Genesis 1:27). If this 'human value' really is true, governmental power is not to be used to rule over people - but instead to create and protect the environment within which they can be most free. (Leaders are 'public servants', not 'rulers'). The point is, all of this, and much more (charity, education, healthcare, equality etc.), came from the teachings of Jesus and the way they worked through our cultural history. 'The servant is the greatest'. It is more blessed to give than to receive*. The greatest commands are to love God and to love others. Etc... This faith didn't hinder our culture of love and charity; it gave them to us.

Topic: Our gentle engagement to someone feeling we (Hope Project) were forcing 'Maori things' upon them

While some others who responded spoke wisely, others weren't so gracious. We responded to the very-real topic at hand – rather than reacting to potential first impressions.

What is annually pointed out by our marketing advisors is that the audience to these conversations is much wider than those participating. The manner of our responses matters.

so why are the Maoris trying to insert their language into it?

1w Like Reply Hide

Author
Hope Project

Dave here. I'll make a comment to engage authentically here. Many would consider Te Reo a legitimate language in New Zealand, just like sign language also is. However, because it is common courtesy to speak in a manner that can be understood, most Māori have always spoken in English within the public square - even when speaking Te Reo at home. Over time, with increasing understanding across our culture regarding how their culture (including language) was unjustly and unfairly sidelined, there is increasing grace to recognise the legitimacy and importance of the preserving of the Māori language - while no expectation that all NZers would fully learn and speak it. Permissions a few decades ago to the Kura Kaupapa schools are one example of this. Over time it is to be expected that a growing number of words from Te Reo will 'slip' into common culture and language. I lived many years in Singapore where similar has happened. 'Singlish' is a combination-language based around English but with words from various Chinese languages, some Tamil, Malay and Bahasa Indonesian integrated- forming a common popular 'street language' - which is spoken with amusement amongst locals, noting their cultural diversity. However, the pace of this is organic. If pushed too fast there will be misunderstand - or even resentment. Certainly this is the case for some here - which is only to say this is organic. We have to feel our way together, and mistakes will be made. Our own assessment was that the word 'Aroha' is understood by most. Furthermore, 90% of Māori in the 1840s / 1850s had embraced the faith, so there is strong relevance here. (By percentage, Māori have been more Christian than non-Māori through most of our history). Furthermore again, the first Christmas in NZ with Māori resulted from a Ngā Puhi (Northland) Chief inviting missionaries to teach various things to his people. Their first Sunday just happened to be Sunday 25th December - the congregation being a gathering of as many as 300 local Māori, gathered by that chief (Ruatara). Christianity is also quite uniquely a belief-system that is globally embraced. Buddhism is not far off 99% based in Asia; Hinduism likewise. Christianity is - in round figures - about 20% Europe, 20% the Americas, 20% Asia, 20% Africa, with the remainder mostly in the Australia-Pacific area, with the lesser portion in the Middle East. Christmas greetings are therefore most-legitimately stated in all languages. In short, our inclusion of Te Reo language within things is a small inference to an important aspect of our own history as a nation in a diverse world. The diversity is to be celebrated - and even more-so the Christian hope that is made equally available to all.

1w Like Reply Commented on by **Dave Mann** Edited



Topic: Christianity is the great coloniser

Having engaged accusations with gentleness they responded in a mixed manner.

They reasonably called for the Church to admit its faults – which we all do – while untruthfully denying they had said things that they had literally just said. They then reverted to the idea that any promotion of our faith was still the demonising of others (including of other religions), a self-justification when we are guilty, and therefore wrong of us to do. The below illustrates the longer-end of what a topical engagement might look like.



Author
Hope Project

You did call Christians 'the original coloniser'! This misses almost everything in the history of our cultures remarkable levels of freedom, prosperity, equality and charity – which is as good as it gets in the world as also in human history. All of our ancestors had values significantly different to what we have as a culture today. Slavery was normal in history. Children, as slaves, were possessions – used for anything. This was approved of by society far more than we'd all like to think – because power mattered, not love (because every societies ethics come from its religion. E.g. if there is not God power really is what matters, not love. Aka, the survival of the fittest). Our ancestors of all types were highly superstitious. Human sacrifice was remarkably common amongst the ancients – including some here in NZ and plenty amongst our ancient Celtic ancestors. Feudal tribalism was standard practice – until something changed that DNA. An honest look at the past 2000 years has to admit that it was Christianity that changed these things. This isn't to say those in positions of power in Church structures did no wrong – that would be to misunderstand the topic. Yet it remains that we only have Te Tiriti o Waitangi here in NZ because of the activistic efforts of Christians. As one example, it was the Clapham group and their friends who – having battled slavery – then also decided to battle colonisation leading to the Treaty we have. The cultural change they catalysed then spread to many other places globally. Note also, Christianity therefore opposed, and eventually stopped slavery. The fact that Christians in history had slaves – while many Christians also were slaves (the faith grew especially amongst slaves and those with great needs) – doesn't change this. The women's rights movement was also catalysed specifically out of Christianity. Even in the more recent stages of it – like the WCTU 100 and 130 years ago... it was called the Women's Christian Temperance Union for a reason. We also only have our democratic freedoms for the same reason – our own being premised on the value of every individual 'created in the image of God' (described with words like 'inalienable rights' where we've chosen to remove clear reference to what we're admitting – like in the NZ Bill of Rights, US Constitution, UN Declaration of Human Rights etc.). What we have is entirely different to the rare 'democracies for the ruling class' that existed among the Greeks, Athens being the only example anything even remotely close to our system (while ultimately premised on very different values). The values we have are from Christianity – which leads to the limitation of government powers specifically because of the above belief (in human value as an objective truth and reality – which makes protecting the public a governments moral-obligation before God). Even our secularism itself came from the Christian value. To research that a little, read 'Dominion' by Tom Holland – a British historian (not to be confused with the much younger actor of the same name). Believing God gave free will, which means religion cannot be forced, it was logically unavoidable that Christian societies would become 'Christian secular' societies – shaped by Christian values, while defending the individual rights of all to their own opinions, religions and more. The fact that Church powers were corrupted in times prior – or even that there are people claiming to be Christians today who abuse power – doesn't change any of this. All of that is true too – and none of that is denied by Christians. To make a point which some seem to miss – Christians feel offended at the abuses of Church power more than non-Christians ever could or would! It is our precious faith that they betrayed. We are angry about it – in case you aren't aware. Their betrayals are far more offensive to us than anyone else, because these abusers literally betrayed the good teachings of the faith which have transformed the world and our lives for good in more ways than anything else, giving fodder concurrently to those who love to divide. To attack Christianity as the cause of colonisation isn't therefore balanced – as it has literally been the primary force on the globe to be against it. (Enough said...) However – to reiterate a point in case of misunderstanding – none of this is to defend any person claiming to be Christian who has then done wrong. However, it is to say that, when we challenge wrong-doing, we need to be respectful of other people. People in the local bowls club have done terrible things too – but we don't condemn all bowls clubs or talk about them as evil. For a better illustration, people in the police force have been corrupted also – while we likewise distinguish the good purposes of the police force from those who have abused power within it.

Loving CHRISTMAS
Hope Project