

Towards Belief

Five implications of the research

1. Many of the issues we see in this research are about the credibility of organised religion, not arguments about the credibility of belief.
2. It's helpful to remember that many responses are actually a smokescreen for people's real reasons for not being open to Christian faith.
3. We need to be aware that in the wider community, what we hear on faith are the noisy and passionate extremes.
4. Tone matters. How you communicate is as important as what you say.
5. It's not about being popular.

Religious Violence

1. Christianity is often used to motivate violence rather than creating violence.
2. Many so-called incidents of Christians acting violently are actually due to wider issues (Northern Ireland, Spanish Inquisition).
3. Jesus stood for non-violence, so those acting in violence are disobeying, not following, Jesus.
4. Christian leaders have, on most occasions, stood against the violence perpetrated in the name of Christian faith.
5. The Bible does not universally endorse the violence contained in its pages.
6. There is much that the church must own up to as poor behaviour.

Exclusive faith

1. All religions are not the same. They teach very different truths about God, the world and humanity.
2. Those who claim Christians are either arrogant or ignorant for suggesting one religion is right and the other is wrong, are themselves making arrogant claims.
3. Christian faith is not alone in claiming exclusivity.
4. It is reasonable to suggest that in the arena of belief that truth still matters.
5. Christian faith is not built on blind belief but history and logical argument.
6. Christian faith unique, God come in human form, the person of Jesus, offering grace and forgiveness.

Abuse in the church

1. There is no denying that the church must recognise that it has let down many people in its failure to deal with the issue of abuse.
2. The Catholic Church has six times the number of cases of abuse than all other denominations combined.
3. The Catholic Church is dealing with very unique circumstances – priests joining young, celibacy, access to children via schools and other institutions and their internal approach to handling the cases.
4. Church has often accepted remorse as repentance or real change.
5. The church has failed when it has not involved the police.
6. The abusers are not representing God, Jesus or the church. Their actions are an abomination.

Homosexuality

1. Key question is not an argument about morals but a discussion about where you get your morals.
2. The Bible is clear that homosexuality is outside of God's plan for humanity.
3. Love is not an excuse for any behaviour. It's not that we love that is important, but what we love.
4. Homosexuality is not new. It was evident in OT times, it was widely practiced in Paul's time and Paul writes against it.
5. Paul is not just writing against abusive relationships but any homosexual relationships.
6. While there are some laws and rules that we don't take from the OT, the NT affirms the OT position on homosexuality. It's outside God's standards.
7. Jesus did not speak directly to the issue of homosexuality but was very clear about acceptable human sexual relationships (Matt 19:1-12).
8. Tolerance in our community is usually moral indifference
9. There is much that the Bible speaks against. Same-sex relationships is just one of many. It's not homophobic - it gives boundaries to behaviour.

10. The argument about being “born that way” is a smokescreen; there are many conditions people are born with (emotional & physical). That doesn’t mean we accept that they are right and therefore not to be changed or challenged.

Extra Reading**Apologetics**

The Reason for God – Tim Keller

Gunning for God – John Lennox

What’s so great about Christianity – Dinesh D’Souza

Same Sex Marriage and homosexuality

Sex and the iWorld – Dale Kuehne

Is God anti-gay? – Sam Allberry

Same Sex Marriage – Sean McDowell & John Stonestreet

The Plausibility Problem – E