



# AREOPAGUS PROCLAMATION

Volume 25 • No. 6 • Nov—Dec 2015

## What Most Convinces Me That Christianity Is True?

by Robert T. Pardon

*Bob Pardon, MDiv, ThM, and his wife Judy are Executive and Associate Directors of MeadowHaven in Lakeville MA, a refuge and caring healing facility for former members of high control and destructive groups —and of the New England Institute for Religious Research. See more at: <http://www.meadowhaven.org>. Bob has been an AIIA Ministry Associate for over 20 years, specializing in cults and aberrational religions. The following is an original article.*

I have had the privilege of being a Christian for 45 years through a profound conversion experience while in college. I majored in Eastern Religions and Philosophy, and would like to say it happened because of the sheer logic of Christianity and my willing surrender. However, the truth is that I came to believe in Christ only as a last resort and on the verge of suicide. In my desperation I prayed to a God (uncertain of His existence, and antagonistic) who heard my weak prayer and transformed my life in a moment.

However, after that initial transformative moment, I knew I could not embrace in my heart what my mind could not accept. I had had profound mystical experiences via drugs and the occult. Therefore, what set the claims of Christ apart? What made Christianity true? These are my reasons:

A bimonthly thoughtletter published by the AIIA Institute PO Box 262 Monson, Maine 04464

**1. Philosophically**, it is the only “system” that makes sense out of life and answers the big questions: *Does God exist and, if so, what is He like? What is evil, its origins and essence? What is man, his origin, moral condition, and purpose in the universe?* These are all answered within a Christian worldview. This is not to imply that Christian answers to these questions are exhaustive, as if all were definitive. However, the answers given are logical, comprehensive, and coherent with reality. This cannot be said about any other worldview.



**2. Historically**, the claims of Christianity can be tested. All but three of the major world religions are based on mere philosophical propositions. Of the three that are based on personalities rather than a philosophical system (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity), only Christianity claims an empty tomb for the founder. It owes its life and character to Jesus Christ, and Jesus purposively made His identity the central question of His ministry and Christianity, “*But whom do you say that I am?*” If He came out of that grave alive He did something no other man in history has ever done.

This is the most critical issue in Christianity and, for that matter, in all human history. Therefore, it is more than just an ethical system to live by, no matter how grand. The whole foundation for its exclusive claims (Jesus is God incarnate, John 1:1,14; 14:6; Acts 4:12; etc.) are based upon the historical fact of a physical resurrection, and these facts can be tested. They include an empty tomb guarded by Roman

soldiers charged to prevent such “grave robbery,” a massive stone enclosure being removed (requiring several men) from the tomb opening while guarded by the Romans, numerous eyewitness accounts of the risen Christ over forty days, the Apostle Paul’s appeal in his defense to King Agrippa that “*this has not been done in a corner*” (Acts 26:26), and his statement in 1 Corinthians 15:6 that the risen Christ “*appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now...*” These historical references, while denied by unbelievers, are not refuted by any contemporary writers.

Then also, the early Church Fathers all asserted the resurrection. Bernard Ramm concludes: “*Unbelief has to deny all the testimony of the Fathers... It must assume these men either did not have the motivation or the historical standards to really investigate the resurrection of Christ.*”

Then the Apostles who were all eyewitnesses experienced radically changed lives. These men went from cowards, in fear for their lives after the resurrection, to men now unafraid to die for their belief in His resurrection. There must be some explanation for why they would all die for a lie — if it was a lie.

**3. Scientifically**, the origin of the universe in the “Big Bang” is amazingly consistent with God’s creation of space/time instantaneously in Genesis 1:1. Also, the complexity of microbiology and cellular function demands an intelligent designer. This is increasingly evident as biological research advances.

**4. Lastly, my subjective experience** of the living Christ has only increased over the years. Christianity is supremely not *what* you know but *who* you know. It is a relationship. No other worldview / religion can say this. The risen Christ has transformed my life, my marriage, my parenting, and struggles. He has given a certainty and purpose that transcends words. But this He predicted for all His followers, “*If anyone is willing to do His (God’s) will, he will know of the (Jesus’) teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself*” (John 7:17).

**More Evidence in Defense and Confirmation of the Christian Faith**