

Despite Opposition
The Difference – Part 6 of 6
Pastor Randy Lanthripe
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Is the world BETTER or WORSE because of Christianity?

There have been many attempts in history to stop the Christian movement

- Jesus' crucifixion was the first attempt

Acts 2:22–24 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: This Jesus the Nazarene was a man pointed out to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through Him, just as you yourselves know.²³ Though He was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him. ²⁴ God raised Him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it. (HCSB)

- The early Christians faced opposition by persecution

- *Plots against them (Acts 14:5-6)*
- *Attacked by an angry mob (Acts 14:19)*
- *Beaten and jailed (Acts 16:22)*
- *Harboring missionaries put them in harm's way (Acts 17:6-9)*

Acts 17:6–9 When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city officials, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too, ⁷ and Jason has received them as guests! They are all acting contrary to Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king—Jesus!” ⁸ The Jews stirred up the crowd and the city officials who heard these things. ⁹ So taking a security bond from Jason and the others, they released them. (HCSB)

If Christianity has done so much good, why have there been so many attempts to stop it?

1. God's enemy is behind the opposition

Revelation 13:7 And he was permitted to wage war against the saints and to conquer them. He was also given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. (HCSB)

Colossians 2:15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them by Him. (HCSB)

2. Most people resist change

"The Christian movement has not been stopped by tanks or swords or dictators. When the Soviet Union outlawed Christianity, Christians kept meeting, even when many were killed or sentenced to freeze in the icy Gulag camps.

"And when Nero and other ancient Roman emperors began feeding Christians to the lions in coliseums and when Nero lit Christians on fire to illuminate his garden parties at night, the movement kept growing.

"When men used swords to slaughter whole villages of Jesus followers, or when devout Christians peacefully living in mountain monasteries were run through, the movement still continued to advance around the world.

"The crescendo of Jesus's influence hasn't been stopped by fashion trends or language barriers. It hasn't been stopped by continental divides, cultural divides, or the implosion of civilizations.

"Ever since Jesus lived and claimed to be God, his movement has been growing, and no power on earth or in hell has been able to silence, stifle, or stop it."

-John Dickerson, Jesus Skeptic

My next step today is to...

- ☐ Decide now that I will trust God, come what may
- ☐ Ask God for courage to keep spreading the message here
- ☐ Pray for those in the hostile regions

Will you entrust your life to Jesus Christ?

Will you make your life about God's kingdom, not yours?