

Has Christianity Done More Harm Than Good?

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Preacher: Rev. Dr. John Dickson

[0 : 0 0] Hello. Good evening. Hello, everyone. Please, if you haven't already done so, find a seat for yourself, and we're about to begin.

My name is Jim Tucker, and I'd like to welcome you on behalf of University Chapel and on behalf of St. John's Vancouver to this evening's event entitled, Has Christianity Done More Harm Than Good?

I'll just give you a brief outline for the evening. In just a few minutes, I will introduce our speaker, John Dixon, and he will speak for approximately 45 minutes.

After John's talk, there will be a time for questions and answers. Now, as you came in, you should have received three things. You should have received a pencil.

You should have received a feedback card, a large card like this, and you should have received a smaller card for questions for the Q&A.;

[1 : 0 5] If you haven't already received those items, would you please hold up your hand? I think one down here. Some of the Ecclesia folks, could we scout around and hand out some cards for those who haven't already got them?

Any others who are missing the response cards or the question cards? People are coming down the aisles to distribute those. So, we're giving you lots of things to do tonight.

We'd ask that at the end of the evening, everyone fill out one of these response cards. We'd like your feedback, regardless of whether you are already affiliated with a church or any other reason why you're here tonight.

We'd like everyone to fill out a response card. And for the question card, if you want, we invite you to, as you're listening to John's talk and thinking things over, write down some questions that you might want asked.

And then people will gather these cards and bring them to me at the front, and I will read them on your behalf. If, on the other hand, you prefer to address your question yourself, there are two microphones in each aisle where you can stand and ask your own questions at the appropriate time.

[2 : 2 3] So, I do welcome John Dixon, and I would like to just introduce him to you briefly. John is an Australian writer, historian, and minister.

And this week, he is teaching at Regent College, so we've had the good fortune to have him join us here tonight. He is senior research fellow in the Department of Ancient History at Macquarie University in Sydney.

And he's also co-founder and director of the Centre for Public Christianity, a media company seeking to promote public understanding of Christian faith.

He's also senior minister at St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Roseville, Australia. And among his many books, he has won the Australian Christian Book of the Year Award in 2000 and in 2005.

He has a PhD in ancient history from Macquarie University. And in his work, he often addresses the arguments of atheists, such as Richard Dawkins and Michael Onfray.

- [3 : 25] So, I'd like to introduce to you and welcome on your behalf, John Dixon. Well, thank you very much.
- I hope the accent works for you. Thank you. I've been teaching at Regent, and I've had some very lovely students come up to me afterwards, after each lecture, unfortunately, saying, Would you please slow down?
- I don't think of the Australian speech as particularly rapid, but apparently it needs to be slow to be understood. Do you understand me now?
- And the problem with the question, of course, is if you don't, you wouldn't say anything, right? There's no way around it. I said to someone just before I came up here that the answer to the question, in case you're wondering, is sort of.
- Okay. If you feel like leaving now, then by all means. It's a very important question to answer. It's a very potent debate.
- [4 : 43] In fact, our Sydney Morning Herald, which is the major broadsheet in Australia, ran a debate a few years ago.
- Would we be better off without religion? And three people were arguing for the affirmative. We would be better off without religion.
- And three opposing. And it was really fascinating. This auditorium of 2,000 people. It was televised via the ABC, our national broadcaster.
- And they took a poll of people as they entered to find out what people's views were before they heard the intellectually stimulating material.
- And then they took a poll exiting to see what sort of change there might have been. Overwhelmingly, both the entrance and exit poll was with the affirmative.
- [5 : 50] We would be better off without religion. And as someone who was behind the scenes for this debate, I wasn't one of the arguers.
- It was a really telling time. It seems to me 20 years ago, perhaps right up until about five years ago, a much more common criticism of Christianity was that it is self-righteous, moralistic, holier than thou.
- And in a very short space of time, people have come to believe that Christianity is actually wicked and violent.
- And this microphone is falling off my head. It's obviously fitted for Canadians. By which I mean Australians have big heads or something polite like that.
- Now, Christianity is thought not to be overly moral, but overly immoral.
- [7 : 10] And I'm quite sure those of you who have watched Canadian Society over the last 20 years would agree that that has been a huge shift in our mentality. Sure, there have always been a few people who said, we'd be better off without religion.
- Religion started all the wars and so on. But it seems to have become a dominant criticism and has easily replaced the holier than thou criticism.
- I suspect that 9-11 was part of the reason for the increase in this criticism that religion inevitably leads to acts of violence.
- And certainly the new atheists, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Michel Onfray, have been over the years quite open that 9-11 galvanized them because 9-11 for them was not an Islamic activity.
- It was a religious activity. And that's what religion inevitably leads toward. It leads toward acts of violence.
- [8 : 25] And so they have actually said this brought them together and fueled their desire to rid the world of that kind of religion.

And some would argue any kind of religion. I want to try and address this problem in three parts. So my lecture, if that is indeed the right word, comes in three parts.

Firstly, I want to stress how serious a problem I believe this is. How strong the criticism is.

And this may make some of my fellow Christians a little bit awkward tonight because I'm going to let the team down a little bit. Because there's no hiding from this.

Christianity has been behind some awful things. So I want to stress how serious it is. And then I want to try and turn, and if you will permit me, I want to try and point out what I think is basically wrong with the criticism that Christianity leads inevitably to harm.

[9 : 45] And then in the third section of the talk, the home straight. It will be over before 45 minutes, I'll have you know. I heard some groans when you said that. So I was actually planning to speak for an hour.

But now, about half an hour will do. The third part of my talk, I want to offer what I think Jesus' solution is to the problem of religious violence and bigotry and monopoly.

Sound all right? Firstly then, the seriousness of this problem. I guess the claim that Christianity has done more harm than good has always been somewhere in the top 10 or 15 criticisms of Christianity.

But it seems to me in the last few years, as I say, it's shot to about number two. I'd say about number two, with a bullet, as they say in the music world. I had a lunch recently with a whole bunch of friends, and I was introduced to this man I'd never met before, and he asked what I did, which is always really interesting, because it's either the end of the conversation or the beginning of very fun things.

And it was the latter in this case. He said, when he heard what I did, oh, I don't like religion at all, et cetera, especially Christianity. And I asked him why that was.

[11 : 15] And he said, well, Christianity started most of the wars of history. And I was taken aback a little bit, and I said, well, could you name some of these, most of the wars of history?

And he spoke a little about the Crusades and Northern Ireland. That was about it. And I said that's not most of the wars, but he was adamant that religion really is to blame for the major conflicts of history.

I noticed that, or in fact someone noticed for me and handed this to me today, that the National Post here in Canada had an article on Sunday, right, where there was an atheist talking about how tragic religion is for society.

And the letters yesterday were really interesting. A couple of letters. The first one, thank God for atheists. Which is kind of cool, right?

The copy editor was very pleased with himself when he came up with that. But it's interesting. He says, without going into detail about the pros and cons of religious belief, I do think that if people want to believe in fairy tales, which is hardly not going into the pros and cons, but anyway, if people want to believe in fairy tales, they should be allowed to do so in private, but not in public or in organizations.

[12 : 48] We do live in a multicultural and multi-religious society. That fact cannot be denied. The problem is the pervasiveness of religion in the public space and the dissemination of religious propaganda in our schools.

It seems we are living in a world of religious polarization and fanaticism. Christians and Muslims are having it again, continuing the crusades in words and sometimes deeds.

When I survey the horrors done in the name of God, I thank God for atheists. Very cool. I think the best writer on this theme, sadly, he's passed away, is Christopher Hitchens.

And I want you to listen to the potency of this pen. We believe with certainty that an ethical life can be lived without religion.

And we know for a fact that the corollary holds true, that religion has caused innumerable people not just to conduct themselves no better than others, but to award themselves permission to behave in ways that would make a brothel keeper or an ethnic cleanser to raise an eyebrow.

[14 : 01] Isn't it great writing? I think Christopher Hitchens was God's favorite atheist. In Belfast, he goes on, I have seen whole streets burned out by sectarian warfare between different sects of Christianity and interviewed people whose relatives and friends have been kidnapped and killed or tortured by rival religious death squads, often for no other reason than membership of another confession.

I want to say, as a good Protestant, that this is not just a Roman Catholic problem with their inquisitions and crusades.

It is also a Protestant problem. There's no hiding this. I've heard some Christian speakers get up and say, well, of course, the Roman Catholics, well, what would you expect? And then sort of say that Protestants are squeaky clean.

Oh, no, they are not. Here are two of my intellectual heroes of the Protestant movement. Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant Reformation, wrote the most despicable things about European Jews in his 1543 tract, *The Jews and Their Lies*.

And I would recommend Christians go and read it. If you're a fan of Luther, as I am, it is very, very sobering. It would be unfair to draw a straight line from Luther's writing about the Jews to Nazi Germany, but it did add to a kind of anti-Semitism in the Reformation period that is despicable.

[15 : 47] John Calvin, also one of my intellectual heroes of the period, founder of the Reformed tradition within Protestantism, was, I think it's fair to say, harsh, incredibly harsh toward Michael Servetus, who was a heretic whom Calvin had executed in 1553.

Now there is debate about the degree to which the decision to execute Servetus was the council's decision or Calvin's decision. I get that, but I think there is no way around the fact that Calvin could have stopped the execution of Servetus and didn't and thought it was proper.

A theological hero thought it was proper to kill someone for spreading views that disagreed with the doctrine of the Trinity. I don't know how to cope with this and part of this lecture is me just saying to you I honestly feel the problem and because I'm a student of history, I probably feel the problem more than most because I'm just well aware of the long and torturous history of the church.

But then I reflect, real Christians should have no problem at all admitting this. After all, it's Christians who have given up the fantasy that we are all good through and through.

Christians with their absolutely radical subversive doctrine of the sinfulness of human beings should be the first people to be able to say even my theological hero was a deeply profoundly fallen human being.

[17 : 51] Christians should be able to admit that. We shouldn't be trying to avoid it. So, this is not just cover. This is not just introductory humility.

I feel this problem. It is a problem for me. But let me unpack in the interests of balance what I think is also inadequate about the claim that Christianity has done more harm than good, about the claim that it leads inevitably to violence, monopolizing people, imperialism, and so on.

Firstly, retellings of the evils of Christendom very frequently involve gross rhetorical exaggerations in order to make the point.

There's a very interesting reality when you study history that emerges. Just about every new era tends to retell the story of the past, the era that the new era replaced, in a way that exaggerates the inadequacies of the former era and elevates the glories of the current era.

We do this in simple ways when we talk about how backward the 1950s were, at least in Australia, I won't comment on Canada, or when we talk about the prudishness of Victorian England.

[19 : 25] Well, this happened on a macro scale in the 18th century when Enlightenment philosophers began to popularize the expression the dark ages.

The dark ages has entered into our popular vocabulary as the period when the church ran things until the enlightenment, dark light, the enlightenment.

And there are studies that showed how there was an actual propaganda campaign in the 18th century to use this phrase, dark ages, to contrast the violence and ignorance and cultural stagnation of the middle ages and the bright lights and reason and science of the 18th century.

The centuries that gave us freedom and peace and secular reason. But I regard this as an exaggeration and propaganda.

In fact, here's an interesting thing. I don't think you will find a medieval historian who thinks of the medieval period as a dark ages.

[20 : 50] That has dropped out of academic literature. Because the more we know about the middle ages, the more we see that actually this is where so much of philosophy was recovered, art was booming, it's where science really began.

Well, it didn't begin in the 18th century. And so it's just improper to use what really is a propaganda term to describe the era of the church.

But I want to give you two examples of how exaggeration has helped make Christianity look even worse than the historical reality.

The Spanish Inquisition. The Spanish Inquisition is proverbial for the church at its most bloodthirsty, right? Any Monty Python fans here? Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition.

It is the church at its cruelest. And you regularly find articles referring to the Spanish Inquisition as having killed millions.

[21 : 59] In fact, just recently, Elizabeth Farrelly, a senior journalist in Australia, ended an article, a scathing article about religion by talking about the millions of martyrs during the Spanish Inquisition.

And this was published in our major broadsheet newspaper. The reality is quite different. Now, please don't misunderstand what I'm saying.

I'm not saying the Spanish Inquisition was actually a lovely party and you should have all been there. But the reality is very different. Over its 350-year history, the Spanish Inquisition killed 6,000 people.

That is a blasphemy, of course. That's 18 a year. This I have on the authority of the leading Inquisition scholar in the world, in the University of Pennsylvania Department of History, Edward Peters.

Now, of course, 18 a year, 6,000 over 350 years is unthinkable. I just can't imagine how one person killed by the Spanish Inquisition made any sense to them.

[23 : 26] I don't get it. But I do ask myself how on earth did the Spanish Inquisition come to represent the blood thirstiness of religion?

How did our society come to talk about millions of people killed by the Spanish Inquisition? Another example is, of course, the troubles of Northern Ireland, the 30 years conflict in Northern Ireland.

Let's concede for the sake of this argument that it was a religious conflict. There's still debate about that. Some say it was not really a religious conflict, but a land conflict.

But I will, for the sake of tonight, concede it was a religious conflict. The official figures are 3,500 people killed over a 30-year period in Northern Ireland as a direct result of the troubles, of the sectarian conflict.

3,500. You can go and do the checking as you like. Now, one person killed in a Christian conflict is a blasphemy.

[24 : 42] Don't mishear me, please. But how did Northern Ireland come to represent, at least for that man I had lunch with recently, the kind of epitome of the bloodthirstiness of religion?

How did that happen? I think it happened because of this process I mentioned earlier, where in order to describe our era as the era of joy and reason and peace, we have to exaggerate the past from which we've come.

See, when you compare Northern Ireland conflict with an entirely secular dispute, like the French Revolution, which was fought over liberty.

Did you know that as many people were killed in one year of the French Revolution as were killed in the entire Northern Ireland conflict? Three and a half thousand people in the 1793, 94, the terror.

But we don't blame liberty. we don't hold a grudge against politics. Well, we do, but not particularly for this event.

[26 : 01] But it does, I think, put it in perspective. Now, please don't hear me trying to say that the Christian bloodshed is okay or that it was small. It was horrific.

But we have inherited a view that is not historical, that works as a parable, because it's exaggerated beyond the recognition of reality.

And this introduces my second problem with the complaint that Christianity leads inevitably to such things. I hope you can take this in the spirit in which I offer it.

The violence of Christendom is, frankly, dwarfed by the violence of non-religious conflict. and decidedly irreligious conflict.

Eight million people killed in World War I. I don't think anyone seriously regards World War I as a religious conflict. 35 million people in World War II.

[27 : 09] Again, I don't think anyone seriously thinks of that conflict as religious. religious. And then if I were to introduce three great atheist regimes in the 20th century, the figures become more extraordinary.

Stalin's openly, famously atheistic project killed 20 million people conservatively.

That is 6,000 a week. And I just want you to hold those figures in mind. 6,000 a week. That's as many each week as the Spanish Inquisition killed in 350 years.

Mao is responsible for between 10 and 50 million deaths. the figures are very difficult to know but most would agree at least 10 could be as high as 50.

And it was an openly, decidedly atheistic project. Pol Pot killed 2 million out of 8 million in his country.

[28 : 23] Again, a decidedly, openly atheistic regime. What's my point? point is not that when you do the maths, atheism is worse than Christianity.

Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah. Please don't hear me saying that. My point is that religion or irreligion is not the problem.

The problem is the human heart. The problem is the capacity of human beings in possession, of a dream, of an ideology, of a passion, of a desire for land and money and power.

It's capable of extraordinary evil. The problem is not religion or irreligion, but the human heart. And I was really grateful for the National Post publishing a second letter in response to this article on the weekend.

that was kind of balanced. And it says, please don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. Faith without reason is fanaticism, which is exemplified by terrorism.

[29 : 41] However, reason without faith is equally dangerous. They are on the opposite ends of the spectrum of truth. Both deny and abuse the dignity of humanity.

We are quick to point out the abuses of the faithful, but are seemingly blind to the fanaticism of those motivated by reason. How quickly we forget the atrocities committed against humanity by atheists, which have been committed over the last century and continue to this day.

I was actually impressed that your national post is so balanced. Is it usually like that? One letter for, one letter against? We don't get that much in Oz, but well done to you.

My point is, and I hope it's clear, the evils of Christendom are real, but they've been exaggerated, and when you compare them to the evils of irreligion or just non-religion, it becomes crystal clear it isn't a case of religion or irreligion, but the human heart in possession of a goal without restraint.

My third and final point tonight has to do with Jesus' answer to the problem of religious violence and imperialism. I think anyone can tell you that Jesus was relentless in his rejection of violence, monopoly, power, and in his call to humility and compassion.

[31 : 24] I'm sure that there are atheists here tonight, but I know that you know Jesus was against violence and imperialism.

You know it. In fact, in a strange sort of way, it's Jesus that makes this such a stunning problem for Christianity. Christianity. It's because you know the ideals he taught and then you look at the church and you say, hypocrites.

Think of this famous statement from what scholars regard as very early source, known as Q, but recorded in Luke chapter 6 for us.

what all my historical Jesus scholar colleagues, whether they're Christians, Jews, or atheists, would agree is at the core of Jesus' ethical teaching.

Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also.

[32 : 39] Do to others as you would have them do to you. The famous golden rule. It's true that other religious perspectives and philosophers have a form of the golden rule that historians normally call the silver rule.

What you find in Hillel and Confucius is what is hateful to you, do not do to others. The silver rule.

In other words, don't harm if you don't want to be harmed. But this is the golden rule that is actually without parallel in the history of ethical teaching. Not just don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you, do to others what you would like them to do to you.

This is the difference between not going to war and building a hospital. Not punching someone in the head and starting a charity. Jesus we know went to a cross.

I think it's fair to say you wouldn't find a professor of ancient history in any university in the world who thinks this Jesus who taught about love and non-violence ended up on a Roman cross.

[34 : 01] and I've searched for a professor of ancient history who doesn't think that I've failed. This being the case at best the criticisms of Christopher Hitchens and Michel Onfray and Mr.

Roseth only prove that Christians haven't lived Christianly enough. Isn't that the case? At best that's all they've shown.

It is crystal clear to I think anyone whether you're an atheist or a Christian it doesn't matter that Christianity demands the love of enemies turning the other cheek.

That means the problem with violent Christians is not their Christianity but their lack of Christianity their departure from the Christian faith.

and I'm encouraged that this very idea was actually espoused decades ago by the smartest guy in the room. The smartest guy in most rooms.

[35 : 13] In his 1915 essay My Opinion of the War written to German nationalists who were beginning to use the language of religion to support the Reich he wrote these I think really telling words and he wrote them as a Jew of course but why so many words when I can say it in one sentence and in a sentence very appropriate for a Jew honour your master Jesus Christ not only in words and songs but rather foremost in your deeds Albert Einstein could see that the problem with monopolistic Christianity is that it's not Christian it's that it is not honouring the Jesus who gave himself for others in other words dismissing

Christianity on the basis of the very poor record of parts of the church is a bit like dismissing a beautiful piece of music after hearing a child attempt it you want to hear one of my favourite pieces of music here's Johann Sebastian Bach not personally playing it here's his cello suites played by the great Yo-Yo Ma ■■■■ umo own time for to It goes for three hours, but you get the point, right?

I know some of you would prefer I played Coldplay or something like that, but that to me is heavenly. But imagine you heard my Josephine, six years old, take up a cello and attempt the cello suites.

I'm sure you'd all be there going, next. Why? Is it because Johann Sebastian Bach didn't really know how to put notes together?

Of course not. You distinguish between the beautiful composition and the performance. You know you have to. You have to judge a composition on the basis of its correct performance, not on the basis of its failed performance.

[38 : 17] It's logical. And my point is obvious, of course. Jesus wrote a beautiful tune that he embodied.

And it is true that Christians have not sung the tune. At various points in history, they have been right out of tune.

But you mustn't judge the composition on the basis of the performance. For great periods of Christian history, the untold story is, Christians did sing the tune beautifully.

What you won't hear in the national press is that the very first international aid project was a Christian one.

First international aid project in world history. It started in the middle of the 40s, ended 10 years later. Gathering money from multiple nations to bring it to the poverty-stricken, famine-ravaged people in Palestine.

[39 : 33] By the year 250, when the church was still a persecuted minority in Rome, this is not the period when they have a Vatican, right, and treasures underneath.

This is the period when they're still being fed to lions and all that. We know from sources that the poverty role of the Roman church was 1,500 people fed daily on a food roster.

This became such a massive component of early Christianity that the 4th century pagan Emperor Julian, who hated Christianity, started writing to the pagan priests to insist they institute a welfare program just like the Christians have in order to beat the Christians at their own game.

He wrote, Why do we not observe that it is the Christians' benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead and the pretended holiness of their lives that have done most to increase this atheism?

He calls Christianity atheism because it denied the Greco-Roman gods. I believe that we ought really and truly to practice every one of these virtues. In every city, establish frequent hostels in order that strangers may profit by our benevolence.

[40 : 49] For it is disgraceful that those impious Galileans, the Christians, support not only their own poor, but ours as well. All men see that our people lack aid from us. Jumping over a lot, but moving to the modern period.

One of the best-kept secrets, of modern human rights discussion, is that human rights did not come into Western parlance in 18th century Enlightenment philosophy.

It actually is the result of 13th century canon lawyers, that is, church lawyers, working about the rights of the poor. And you know what they did?

They reached back into the New Testament and found language there that demanded that the poor had rights. before the rich. But the rich were obliged to deal with the rights.

And it's this human rights language that entered into its secular version in the 18th century and beyond. And now it's become a hugely important thing for Western cultures.

[41 : 57] But it wasn't the invention of reason alone. It really was the product of these great 13th century minds, Godfrey Fontaine, Peter Olivier, Ioannis Menarchus, and William of Ockham, of Ockham's Razor fame.

We could talk for ages about Lord Shaftesbury's incredible programs for the poor and the marginalized and the mentally ill in England, which he did, if you read the documents, because he believed Christ demanded that of British society.

I'm aware that in Australia, and I haven't had time to look at the Canadian figures, so this may be completely irrelevant, but 19 of the largest 24 charities in Australia are Christian charities.

19 of 24. Not for a second am I saying that this makes Christians better than non-Christians.

Not for a second. But it perhaps puts the lie to the idea that they are worse. I like C.S. Lewis's comment on this when he was once asked, do you think Christians are better than non-Christians?

[43 : 24] He said, not at all. But they are better than they would be without their Christianity. Let me conclude.

This debate that I mentioned at the outset, we'd be better off without religion. We stunningly lost. The entrance and exit polls were overwhelmingly affirming we would be better off without religion.

However, there was a movement of one against the motion. Statistically, one person moved from when they walked in they thought we would be better off without religion.

They walked out thinking we wouldn't be better off without religion. Maybe it was 20 and 21 but statistically one. Here's the interesting thing. Because I was involved behind the scenes, this young man, maybe, I don't know, maybe just 18 years of age, walked up to me afterwards and knew that I was one of the organising party and he said, I think I'm that one person who changed their mind.

I mean, statistically, we don't know that it was but, I mean, he changed his mind. He said, I walked in thinking we would be better off without religion. I've walked out thinking the opposite.

[44 : 45] Of course, I said, why? He said, well, it wasn't any of that sort of really academic stuff. It was a question someone put to us all during the night.

He said, someone asked the whole audience, forget these intellectual arguments, think of the one sincerely Christian person in your life and ask yourself the question, would the world be better off without their Christianity?

And would that person's life be better off without Christianity? And this young man said, I thought of this auntie. I think she's really into that Christianity stuff.

And I thought, yeah, there's no way the world would be better off without her faith. So I changed my mind. Okay, it's not the most scientific analysis.

But I think there is a challenge here. In fact, there's a challenge here for skeptics and believers. The challenge for skeptics, of course, is, I want to put the same question to you.

[46 : 01] Think of the sincerely Christian person you know and ask yourself whether you think the world would be better off without that person's faith. death. It's a good test.

And of course, the tightening of the screws for the Christian person here is, are you the kind of person that would make someone think Christianity does more harm than good or the other way around?

Jesus wrote a beautiful composition and embodied it all the way to the cross.

And though it's true, Christians haven't always sung this tune. We all know how to distinguish between a composition and its performance.

and I just submit to you therefore, that Christianity as Christianity has not done more harm than good. Thank you very much.

[47 : 07] Thank you very much. Well, thank you very much, John.

In a few moments, we will begin taking questions and having John respond. Let me encourage you, if you haven't already done so, to form your questions either in your head or on paper.

And I'd like to ask, please, if some of the Ecclesia folks would begin to collect these cards, if you want to, pass these cards to the aisles and some fine people will be collecting them and bringing them forward and I will read them aloud for you.

If you prefer, you could, in a few moments, go to one of these two microphones and ask your questions directly and again, John will respond and we'll try to alternate between written and oral questions.

after the event this evening, you will find, as you leave the chapel, information about University Chapel and about St. John's Vancouver.

[48 : 33] If you're interested, please do pick up one of those pieces as you leave. Also, if you find this evening's event interesting, you may also want to participate in a course that St. John's Vancouver is hosting this fall.

Tuesday evenings, beginning September 25th and finishing on October 30th, we will walk through John's Life of Jesus course.

This is the DVD for that course and each week we will watch a segment, approximately 15 or 20 minutes of John's series exploring Jesus in the context of history, issues of life and faith, and the significance of Jesus to people today.

And then we will discuss those topics as a group over the course of those six weeks. If you think this course might be of interest to you, then please, on your response card, which you will drop in the box at the end of the evening, please indicate that you will drop in the box at the end of the evening.

Thank you.