

UCI Focus Group on “Is Christianity True?” by Ron Cram
Held November 6, 2013

Description of Focus Group

Participants were mainly attracted through posted flyers around campus promising payment of \$20 for participating in a two-hour focus group. The focus group began on time at 6 pm with 22 participants, 20 students and two graduates.

Participants were asked to complete an 11 question survey titled “A Survey on Truth, Purpose and the Big Questions of Life.” They then were given the booklet “Is Christianity True?” and a page titled Notation Symbols which was divided into five sections – Interesting, Boring, Wrong, Persuasive and Unpersuasive. Students were asked to read the booklet and to note on Notation Symbols both the page and paragraph to identify information that met those descriptions. After reading the booklet, they were given the same survey again but this time the page had six questions on the back asking them to write out what they thought of the booklet and if they would recommend it to a friend or professor. Survey answers are given point values: Y=4 points, LY=3, NoO=2, LN=1 and N=0. The maximum score is 44.

Quantitative Analysis of Pre- and Post-Surveys by Participant

Before	After	Change	Religion
20	32	+12	No church – Q8 was N, now Y
23	31	+8	Catholic, rarely – Q9 was LN, now LY
24	29	+5	No church – Q11 was NoO, now LY
23	27	+4	No church – Q11 was NoO, now LY
19	23	+4	No church
23	27	+4	Christian, 4x/year – Q5 was NoO, now LY
37	41	+4	Protestant, 1x/week – now LY Q7
30	34	+4	Catholic, rarely – Q3, Q6 from NoO to Y
18	21	+3	No church, Q7 now Y, Q11 now LY
32	35	+3	Sikhism, rarely – Q7 now Y, Q10 now LY
19	22	+3	No church, Q4 now LY
40	42	+2	Presbyterian, 1x/week – Q7 now Y
39	40	+1	Non-denom, 1x/week – Q6 and Q7 now Y
44	44	0	Pentecostal, weekly
44	44	0	Reformed, weekly
43	43	0	Mariners, 3x/weekly
39	39	0	Catholic, 1x/month
18	17	-1	No church
26	25	-1	Unknown, rarely
33	31	-2	Catholic, once in a while
19	14	-5	No church – was Y on Q11, now N on Q11
34	29	-5	Catholic, weekly – was Y Q10, now blank

Analysis of Data

It is important to know the composition of the focus group. The key question is Question 9 "Are you a Jesus follower?" Prior to reading the booklet, Question 9 received these answers:

Yes=7, Leans Yes=2, No Opinion=5, Leans No=2, No=8.

For change to be considered statistically significant, the change must be at least three points. Eleven participants showed significant and positive movement in their opinions. Nine participants showed no statistically significant change. Three of these nine were Christians who were maxed out. Two participants showed a reduction. The main reduction in both participants involved a change in one question from Yes to No or blank on Question 10 or Question 11. Both of these participants made positive comments about the booklet and said they would recommend it to a friend.

Subjective analysis of student's statements

Of the 15 students who did not identify as full followers of Christ, all made at least some positive comments about the booklet and all are at least somewhat more open to the gospel message after reading the booklet. Of the 15 non-Christians, one student changed her opinion regarding the resurrection of Jesus and now believes Jesus rose from the dead bodily. Also, three non-Christian students made statements that they will be checking in Christianity more closely. At least one of these was a member of the atheist club on campus. Stated statistically, 100% of non-Christian readers are now more open to the gospel and 20% of non-Christian readers are now on their own spiritual quest to seek the truth about Jesus.

Positive statements after reading the booklet

"The booklet was interesting and wonderful."

"I thought the booklet was highly convincing and put God and Christianity into a light I've never seen them displayed in before."

"I'm going to the library to find "Mere Christianity" as soon as I can."

"An interesting and insightful look into the anecdotes of the converted men..."

"I will restart my investigation of Christianity's claims after reading this..."

"... very informative concrete information..."

"I thought it was a very interesting take on the question 'Is God real?' I believe it was highly relatable and dove into serious scientific theories and showed that

Christianity and science can be compatible. I thought it was very educational, easy to read and I would definitely use it for research.”

“It was incredible to read about their conversions to Christianity and the processes behind them.”

“Coming from a semi-conservative church, I was taught that science and religion do not intertwine; that you put your faith in one or the other, but this booklet helped me understand they both can work together in ways.”

“I would recommend the booklet to both Christian and atheist friends.”

“This booklet puts several reasons to why you should believe in God through three different biographies.”

“I like the mixing of scientific information with religious belief.”

“I thought it was very interesting and had a lot of interesting facts that I didn’t know before. The life journey of these three people mentioned in the booklet was a good read too.”

“I would say that it is a good read and it would actually not be such a bad idea to read it because it’s a very informative and practical book and might very well make you want to take a deeper peek insight to help understand life.”

“It doesn’t hurt to read this. It gives insight into a lot of things.”

“I think it is compelling that credible, intelligent, well-educated scholars and scientists can be open-minded enough to consider the claims of Christianity and be led to the truth.”

“It was very interesting to read three different approaches of conversion to Christianity after living as an atheist.”

“I was surprised at how much effort the men put into researching and gaining more knowledge about God, even though they either did not believe in Him or put much emphasis on religion.”

“Certainly not your typical ‘how to get saved’ booklet.”

“The booklet made me reconsider the idea that a person believes what they believe mostly because of upbringing. It is possible after all to be brought up one way only to believe something totally different.”

“There are some interesting points about scientific theories and that there is a way to believe in BOTH religion AND God (Jesus too!) You don’t have to choose one over the other!!!!”

“It was definitely worth examining. The section on cosmology was especially appealing.”

“I would say that it is worth the read. Regardless of one’s spiritual convictions, the booklet was very interesting.”

“It was interesting and factual, a lot of info one wouldn’t expect on the matter.”

“The information provided in this booklet is indeed compelling...”

“This book showed Christianity and God in a way a cold scientific mind would have an easier time accepting.”

“The science behind the stories is highly appealing.”

“I will do some looking into the big bang.”

“I plan to order a bunch.”

“Jesus, if you are real, reveal yourself to me. Open my eyes to see truth. I want my life to be based on truth. Amen’ – I love the prayer.”

Less than positive statements by students

“It had a few inconsistency errors, but otherwise it wasn’t bad.”

“I probably would not recommend it. I don’t like to push information on people unless they ask for it – religious or not.”

“I would say it is one author’s editorialized compilation of several people’s educated conversions to Christianity, and that my friend should look through the underlying arguments.”

“Slightly opinionated at times.”

“It was not as boring as I thought it would be.”

“It didn’t necessarily change my thinking but gave me a reason to maybe think more deeply about God, life and the universe and the purpose of all this.”

“It was interesting. Persuasive enough to convert me? Not so much. Most of the book felt as though the author is trying really hard to convince the audience of the existence of Jesus as a God.... The booklet didn’t exactly change anything I already believed, but it sure did open up to more ideas and possibilities that are out there.”

“Although it didn’t change my way of thinking, the booklet did lead me to ask myself several questions about the relationship between God and science.”

“Assuming that the information given is for the most part accurate, I’d have to admit that the idea that individuals such as scientists tend to debate the existence of a God within themselves shows that even those who possess enough knowledge to disregard the possible existence of a god may be driven to think otherwise.”