+ Pastoral + Epistle +

He is risen! Three simple words, but how profound they are! In fact, those words have impacted the world like no other. It was the reality of the resurrection of Christ that established Christianity with the first century Apostles. Had Christ not risen from the dead the Christian church would not exist today as the largest religion in the world.

Because Christianity was established by followers of Jesus His teachings and example have directed the church's work through the centuries. That work, especially in the area of human rights, has changed man's understanding and treatment of his fellow man. In a recent book, written by one of my seminary professors Alvin Schmidt, entitled *How Christianity Changed the World*, he points out the impact the Christian faith has had on people around the world. One reviewer writes, "This impact can be seen in many places, but none more evident than in the value we put on human life. Our modern-day value of human life was rooted in teachings of Christ and the actions of early Christians in rescuing newborn babies abandoned on the trash heaps of Rome. Whether through infanticide, gladiatorial games, glorification of suicide or human sacrifice there was an almost global attitude that human life was cheap before Christianity.

"The most beneficial institutions of our society find their roots in the influence of Jesus Christ. Early Christians founded the first hospitals, orphanages, and feeding programs combating the pervading view of the time than it would be better to just let the sick, the poor, and the orphans die. Monastic libraries provided the inspiration for the first universities in the twelfth and thirteenth century.

"Even government institutions and our concepts of liberty, justice, and equality are rooted in the law of God and biblical patterns. The list goes on and on." (Jason Benedict, Regent University website)

More importantly, the resurrection of Christ from the dead has impacted our eternity. St. Paul writes, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied." (1 Cor. 15:17-19) The ultimate humanitarian work was done by Christ, whose forgiveness, through the cross and resurrection, means that we will not die in our sin, but live eternally.

He is risen! He is risen, indeed!