Here is Lecture 3 (out of 4) that I came at the Smithsonian Associates in Washington DC on Feb. 10, 2018, based, again, on my book *The Triumph of Christianity*. This lecture deals with the key aspects of the early Christian movement to try to explain its success. What was it about Christianity that allowed it to take over the entire Christian empire? People have all sorts of “common sense” answers to the question — as did I for many years, even as a professional scholar — which are probably wrong (e.g., Christianity was naturally superior to all the other religions, because of its strict monotheism and strong ethical stance, so naturally people were inclined to convert).

The first time I realized the actual answer to the question was when, long ago, I read Roman social historian and Yale professor Ramsay MacMullen’s brilliant analysis *The Christianization of the Roman Empire*. I pondered the matter for years, read massively on it, and here is what I ended up concluding (very much in line with MacMullen, but with some different slants).

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