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APOLOGIST

The Inaugural Issue

What is apologetics? Why do we do it? How does it fit with ministry? How can we be prepared as apologists?

Always Prepared

What lessons can we learn from Daniel, Paul, and Peter about being prepared to do apologetics?

Raising Critical Thinkers

In a world of smart phones, search engines, and AI, how do we raise our children to be critical thinkers?

Choose the Good Portion

How can Christian women be more intellectually engaged when they are not typically driven by a logical faith system?



START WHERE THEY ARE

I was thrilled to facilitate a class on Technology and Ministry for ministers recently. As one of the presenters I had invited spoke, he flashed useful resources on the screen for those of us in ministry. My heart thrilled to see The Daily Apologist included. Seeing it, my mind did a mental flashback to about 20 years ago. In a cabin in West Tennessee, I had invited elder, teacher, and preacher, John Parker, to talk with preachers about evangelism. Little did I know that I would be the one to learn the most that night.

John said: “Often we are answering questions C and D when a lot of people today are asking questions A and B.” As Dr. Parker expanded on this he said: “Questions C and D are questions about scriptural worship, about the essentiality of baptism for the remission of sins, about the non-denominational nature of the Lord’s church. And fifty years or so ago our neighbors and our schools were filled with people who needed those teachings. They still do, but today they are asking questions A and B. Questions A and B are questions about the existence of God, about how the world came to be, about dinosaurs, about the reliability of the Bible. And, until we answer those questions our non-religious friends, our atheist coworkers, and our postmodernist neighbors, won’t care about questions C and D. So, if we are going to reach the lost today, we’d better equip ourselves to answer questions A and B.”

Brother Parker died a couple of months ago, but his impact lives on in this. And that, dear readers of The Daily Apologist and Apologist Magazine, is why apologetics goes hand-in-hand with ministry today. God’s men have said for years that we need to start where people are and bring them to Jesus. Jesus, Himself, modeled this this evangelistic approach with the woman at the well (John 4), Nicodemus (John 3), the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-31), and even the Apostles (Matthew 13:3, 10-11, 13-17).

Dale Jenkins
MINISTER

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WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! (Psalm 127:3-5a, ESV)

Dear Reader,

On December 9th, 2004, my world changed forever. My first and only child, Mia Catherine, was born. As I held Mia in my hands for the first time, I began to understand the words of Solomon in a different way. Our children truly are precious blessings! They are a rich heritage from the Lord.

I still remember how I felt holding Mia. She was so little, I was afraid to hold her. I feared that somehow I would hurt her. This, of

course, was just the beginning of this concern!

I still laugh thinking about taking Mia home from the hospital. It was a cold December day in Denver. There was snow on the ground and I could hardly imagine taking Mia out of the hospital, putting her in a car on a snowy road, and exposing her to all those dangers. So, as I carried her out of the hospital, she was wrapped in a new coat, strapped into a car seat, and placed in the car seat holder in the four-wheel-drive SUV that was nice and warm. I drove under the speed limit all the way home. I knew, whatever I did, I had to protect my child.

As I grew as a father, I began to recognize the great spiritual duty God had given

me to bring my little girl to Jesus (Matthew 19:14), to bring her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), and to protect her from the spiritual dangers of this world—all the fiery darts of the evil one (Ephesians 6:16).

At times, I almost despaired thinking about this great task. How could I possibly protect this sweet child God had given me?! This desire to protect my kiddo led me to the study of apologetics. In this changing world, I knew that I needed new ways of thinking and talking about God, the Bible, and Christianity. I needed to learn how to reason more effectively about the Christian faith. I needed to find answers for the questions Mia would ask:

“Daddy, why did God make sharks and mosquitoes?”

“Is God the biggest thing or is there something bigger than God?”

“What will we do in heaven?”

As Mia got bigger, the questions got bigger and my need for apologetics training became more urgent. So, here I am along with my team at The Daily Apologist hoping to help you find good answers for the questions you, your children, grandchildren, and loved ones will ask. This is our mission at TDA. This is why we do what we do.

—Nathan

ALWAYS PREPARED

APOLOGETICS LESSONS FROM THREE HEROES OF FAITH

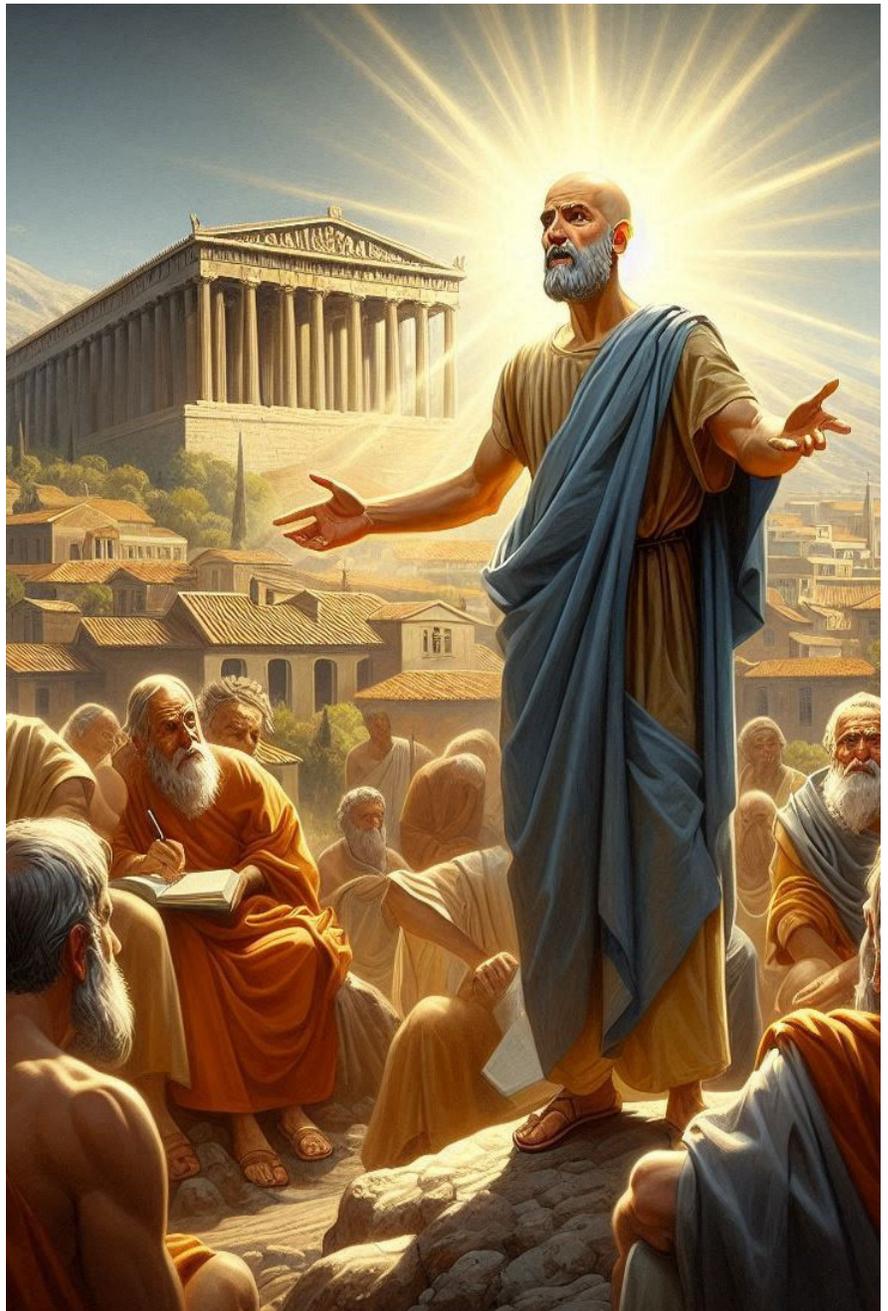
by Dewayne Bryant

The world is a diverse place. In our interconnected global society, we encounter a variety of other cultures, beliefs, and worldviews daily. They could be as far away as the other side of the planet or as near as a co-worker or next-door neighbor. Some may share many of the same perspectives, while others may be radically different.

The diversity we see in our world presents opportunities and challenges, especially for Christians who take Christ's charge seriously to spread the gospel to the world (Matthew 28:18-20). Given this enormous task, looking at concrete examples of believers who interacted with contemporaries holding divergent views of the world is helpful.

Daniel and the Importance of Spiritual Resolve

The late seventh and early sixth centuries were a time of turmoil for the southern kingdom of Judah. Instead of trusting in God, its rulers had often sought military alliances with neighboring empires. Under Nebuchadnezzar II, Babylonian forces invaded Judah in 605, 597, and 586 BC. During this time, Daniel, his three friends, and other Judeans with valuable skills were taken into exile. While in captivity, Daniel discovered how profoundly Israel and Babylon differed in terms of culture and beliefs about the Divine.



As part of their Babylonian re-education program, Daniel and his friends were pressured to adopt the culture of their new home. Their Hebrew names—all of which contained some name of God—were replaced with Babylonian versions featuring foreign deities. The young men learned the language, literature, and customs of their new masters. The authorities tried transforming the men by changing their identities and pushing them to embrace Babylonian culture.

Daniel and his friends successfully resisted all efforts to indoctrinate them with a new worldview. They spurned Babylonian delicacies and refused to bow down to an image Nebuchadnezzar had made, even though he threatened three of them with execution. Daniel never stopped praying, even when his enemies tricked the king into making his religious observances illegal. These men were made of sterner stuff.

Like Daniel and his friends, Christians are called to embrace a distinctive spiritual identity resistant to outside influences (see Galatians 2:20). Although it may be uncomfortable at times—and certainly makes us very unpopular with at least some people—we are given the task of imitating God (Ephesians 5:1) and being like Christ (1 John 2:6). We must master the skill of cooperating without compromising.

Paul and the Need for Graceful Perseverance

Despite his early role as one of the church's greatest enemies, Paul transformed into its most unflinching and impassioned defender after his visit with Christ on the road to Damascus. He weathered storms, survived beatings and attempts on his life, and held his

opposition. He sent the last of his letters from prison.

In his visit to Athens (Acts 17), Paul engages the philosophers gathered at Mars Hill. Few places can be as intellectually hostile to the Christian faith as the rarified air of academia, and Paul's experience proves no exception. He boldly presents the gospel with grace and reason, but the reception is mixed. Some of the philosophers there ridicule him. Others are intrigued by Paul's message. The latter decide they will give him a second hearing. The apostle no doubt faced many similar situations in his long career as an evangelist.

One of the biggest challenges when promoting the Christian worldview is managing the inevitably negative response from some people. The gospel will not be popular with everyone, but some will listen. Like Paul, Christians should not be discouraged by the fact that some will not listen but instead encouraged that others will. No believer can change the world for everyone, but any of us can change it for someone.

Peter and the Need for Intellectual Preparedness

The apostle Peter provides the golden text for apologetics in his first epistle. He says, "in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame" (1 Peter 3:15-16). Peter's use of the term *apologia*—from which we derive the word "apologetics"—indicates that

Christians should be prepared to receive questions about their faith at any time. Biblical authors typically use the word *apologia* to describe a courtroom defense; it appears in this context often in the book of Acts. The apostle instructs believers to be ready to explain why they chose to become Christians in the same way that a lawyer prepares to argue a case before a judge and jury. This means that simply living a good life will not do; believers must be able to communicate their reasons for faith thoroughly and articulately.

Peter is one of many biblical figures highlighting the importance of preparedness. The New Testament includes examples of intellectually accomplished individuals such as Paul, Luke, and Apollos, who played a massive role in equipping the church and defending the faith. Others like Priscilla and Aquilla may have had less formal training than Paul or Daniel, but they communicated biblical truth deeply and meaningfully.

Our three examples give us different facets of Christian apologetics for Christians to consider making part of their engagement strategy. Daniel lived a resolute life of uncompromising influence; Paul tirelessly engaged others respectfully; and Peter offers a reminder that every believer should prepare both heart and mind when interacting with others curious about the Christian life. These timeless strategies remain as relevant today in a tired world as they were in the first century when Christianity was fresh and new.

CHOOSE THE GOOD PORTION

by *Christa Bryant*

"How can we as women be more mentally engaged with the text, especially when we as women are typically not driven by a logical faith system?"

I've often wondered what it would have felt like to be the Mary described in Luke 10. Did she feel guilty each time a dish clanked thinking she ought to have been the one setting the table? Was she embarrassed when Martha called her out for not doing as much as Martha was doing around the house? Did she worry what the Messiah was thinking of her as she listened to him? Did she feel lonely as possibly the only woman sitting at the feet of Jesus in that moment?

And yet, when her presence became an issue, Jesus reassured her saying, "only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion. It will not be taken away." The Son of God looked with approval at this woman who had put aside the worries of her home and mentally engaged with him to learn.

So often as women we choose not to engage mentally, but to put all our efforts into our homes, our work, and our relationships just as Martha did. This causes our faith to be tethered, not to the truths of the Bible, but to the experiences of our faith. In 2016, Anessa Westbrook of Harding University wrote a paper entitled *The Perceived Need for Spiritual Development Among Female Church of Christ Students at Harding University*. The Conclusion of this paper revealed that overwhelmingly, female students enjoyed theological discussions that were not abstract or analytical. And the opportunities for growth were often based on experiences rather than facts. While Christian women today may look down on Martha for criticizing Mary, this study showed that Christian women today are not much different.

A far more practical example is a typical ladies' day, a day in which women come together for the sole purpose of Bible study. The focus is often on the decorations made, the relationships formed, the food cooked, or the planning of the event. Often, the actual study of the bible is lost in all the concern over these other things. And yet, Jesus said to Martha, only one thing is necessary. When our faith becomes relational or experientially based, we



SCRIPTURE

MARY OF

CUMBERED with serving," genial, warm of heart,
Officious Martha strove the home to bless,
And gift her every guest with happiness ;

VOL. VIII.



HEROINES.

BETHANY.

"all not be taken away from her."—Luke x. 42.

But quiet Mary chose the better part.

There, in that hamlet-home, she learned the art
The mansion misses oft. In Jesu's love

are far more likely to leave the truth for a more convenient and self-affirming faith. Our experiences and our relationships become the driving factor in our obedience to God, not the truths of the Bible.

So how can we as women be more mentally engaged with the text, especially when we as women are typically not driven by a logical faith system?

1. We can make sure that the words of Jesus are the foundation of our faith, and not the teachings of men or women.

When someone shows genuine care and concern for our spiritual lives, we can easily put our trust in them. Because that care and concern is tangible, we tend to follow their decisions rather than doing a deep, rigorous study of the Bible for ourselves.

2. Understand that emotions are tools alerting us to how we feel, but they should not be our decision makers.

Our world teaches us to follow our hearts, to placate our wants and desires. But the Bible says "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6). Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" If we are making spiritual decisions based on how we feel, then we are not putting our trust in God. Only the Bible can truly guide us in spiritual matters.

3. Remember that experiences may confirm our faith, but they should not determine our faith.

We can walk away from a worship service feeling inspired or ready to do the will of God only to be discouraged greatly when the work becomes hard and not fulfilling. When that happens, we must ask ourselves, was I doing it for my own emotional needs or attention or for God? We will find other experiences that are more gratifying. Jesus warned us in the Sermon on the Mount that doing things for others to see will only get us earthly gain. But when we do hard, sacrificial things for God, our Father who sees in secret will reward us openly. The experiences we often long for are not meant for personal gain, but for God.

When Mary sat at Jesus's feet, she defied the culture of her time. We also should be women who defy the desires of our time and who sit at Jesus's feet. Like Mary, we should encourage other Christian women to do the same!

APOLOGETICS?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

by Nathan Liddell



A friend and homeschooling mom Asks: "What do you mean by Apologetics? When I think of apologetics I think of like science, and creationism, and those kinds of things. So, what do you mean when you say you do apologetics?"

1. *What does apologetics mean?*

This is a great question! The word apologetics comes from the Greek word *apologia* -- the word translated "defense" in 1 Peter 3:15: "[B]ut in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect." [1] House and Jowers note that *apologia* is a "Greek legal term" that was used "to describe a rational defense of one's position in a court of law." [2] They continue, "In the Greek court system, 'Apologia originally referred to a defendant's reply to the speech of the prosecution, as in Plato's record of Socrates' Apology.'" [3] They conclude:

Apologetics, then, is a defense (apologia) of one's position or worldview as a means of establishing its validity and integrity. It is an attempt to establish the truth of the matter and to present a convincing argument in support of it. [4]

2. *What do apologists do?* Pincock writes, "An apologist is one who is prepared to defend the message against criticism and distortion, and to give evidences of its credibility." [5] So, we might say a good apologist does 3 things. [6] First, a good apologist makes a defense of the truth of Christianity (see

1 Peter 3:15). Second, a good apologist will go on the offensive and show that claims against Christianity are false as described in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5:

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Third, a good apologist will give support to other Christians. Paul encouraged Timothy to teach patiently and to help

627 / apología ("reasoned defense") is the term for making a legal defense in an ancient court. Today 627 / apología ("biblical apologetics") is used for supplying evidences for the Christian faith.

(<https://biblehub.com/greek/627.htm>)

others know the truth from error (2 Timothy 2:24-26):

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of

the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

House and Jowers note that the apologist seeks to show that "Christianity is a reasonable faith and as such may be articulated in careful and provable arguments." [7] Among other subjects, Apologetics involves defending creation, the Trinity, the deity and humanity of Christ, the resurrection of Jesus, etc. [8] To do this, apologetics calls on the fields of science, archaeology, textual criticism, history, philosophy, comparative religion, and others.

3. *What attacks do apologists defend against?*

The attack on Christianity today commonly comes from three sources: 1. Scientific Dogma--not science, but the theory of knowledge which says that the only things we can know are those things discovered through the scientific process; 2. Contemporary Humanism--a variety of secularism which seeks either to eliminate Christianity altogether from the public square or to so ridicule it that it is reduced in public perception to a mere myth and is stripped of its cultural authority; and, 3. Contemporary Liberal Theology--a form of theology which seeks to read into Scripture the many unbiblical beliefs and moral norms of modern society. [9]

4. *Jesus and the Apostles were apologists.*

Of course, we should be too. For a Bible picture of apologetics, see Jesus' example in Matthew 22:34-45 or John 5:31-46. Or, see Paul's example before Agrippa and Festus in Acts 26:1-32.



*WHAT DID JESUS
SAY ABOUT
HOMOSEXUALITY?*

By Jack Lipsey

Supporters of same-sex marriage sometimes make the argument that Jesus never said anything about homosexuality or same-sex marriage and, therefore, Christians shouldn't either. They claim the writings of Paul represent teachings Jesus never endorsed or taught himself. In a way, they are right. Jesus never explicitly said anything regarding homosexuality or same-sex marriage, but that is not the whole story. Looking more closely at the Bible, we can find evidence to support how Jesus felt about these now very sensitive issues.

First, Jesus agreed with the Law of Moses. Jesus endorsed the Law in Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." The word "abolish" should be better translated as "destroy." Jesus did not come to "destroy" the Law, but to fulfill it. Jesus taught the Law in synagogues and on street corners. He corrected wrong thinking about the Law in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus completed every command called for by the Law. If Jesus did not agree with what the Law said about homosexuality, he had plenty of time to correct it. But He did not correct

it. Instead, because he agreed with and endorsed the Law, He implicitly endorsed what the Law said about homosexuality.

Second, Jesus explained marriage. If we want to know what Jesus thought about marriage, we need but go to Matthew 19:4-5: "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?" It is an incomplete story to say that Jesus never said anything about same-sex marriage because by identifying what marriage was according to the Law and agreeing with it, he stood on one foundation regarding marriage. Marriage is to be between a male and a female. If Jesus wanted to indicate otherwise, He could have easily said, "hold fast to his partner" and a lot of arguing would be over. However, Jesus recognized God-appointed marriage as the joining together of one man and one woman. To say Jesus approved of homosexuality because he never said anything about it is false. By mentioning God's design for marriage and nothing more, Jesus showed how He viewed marriage and who was qualified to be joined in it.

If there is one thing I agree with, it is that Jesus loves the LGBTQ community the same way he loves liars, murderers, adulterers, cheaters, etc. And we should too. We need to remember that Jesus died for their sins as well as ours. Without Jesus, we are no better off than the people we often look down on. With Jesus, we have been made new, which means that Jesus gives us a new life and he wants to do the same for everyone else. Let's not end these arguments with "We are right, and they are wrong." Instead, let's end them with the love of God for all mankind through his Son, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

“We need to remember that Jesus died for their sins as well as ours. Without Jesus, we are no better off than the people we often look down on.”

THE KALIFAN



BY DEAN MEADOWS

Multiple studies show that Gen Z is the most skeptical generation in American history when it comes to the existence of God. Given this pervasive skepticism, it is no longer enough to open the text of scripture, cite John 3:16, Acts 2:38, or Genesis 1:1 and expect a high school or college student to repent and turn to Jesus. Rather, theological and philosophical groundwork must now be done to show that God exists, the Bible is historically reliable, and Jesus' resurrection is a historical fact. Today we must use arguments and evidence to establish God's existence.



Many arguments for the existence of God arise from natural theology, the practice of inferring truths about God from the data of the natural world. David referred to this kind of inference from nature about God when he wrote, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge" (Psalm 19:1-2). Job alluded to knowledge of God from nature when he said, "But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; And the birds of the heavens and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; And let the fish of the sea declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this" (Job 12:7-9). And Paul spoke of the knowledge of God that can be acquired from nature when he said, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Romans 1:20-21).

The Kalam Cosmological Argument is an argument from natural theology. It is about the existence of all of nature. And it is one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, argument for the existence of God being made today.

The Kalam Cosmological Argument

The question of the origin of the universe is age-old, extending as far back as the ancient Greeks, Hebrews, and Romans. Because it has such profound implications, it is still being asked today. Given its importance, it is no wonder that this question still dominates classrooms, debate stages, and church services. Today, we should ask do reason and scientific data point to God as the most plausible explanation for the origin of the universe.

The Kalam Cosmological Argument is an attempt to show that the most plausible explanation for the existence of the universe is God. This argument originated with the Muslim philosopher Al-Ghazali in the twelfth century. The Christian philosopher William Lane Craig refined Al-Ghazali's argument and popularized it in the nineteen-eighties.

The Kalam is formatted as a logical syllogism:

- 1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.**
- 2. The universe began to exist.**
- 3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.**

Since this argument is arranged as a valid syllogism (modus ponens), if premises one and two are true, premise three, the conclusion, must also be true. If we can show that all premises are true, we can conclude that the Kalam Cosmological Argument is sound—that is, that it is a good argument for the existence of God. So, let's look at the premises together.

Premise 1

The first premise of the Kalam states, "Everything that begins to exist has a cause." This principle is grounded in the fact that something cannot come into being from nothing. As William Lane Craig notes, "To suggest that things could just pop into being uncaused out of nothing is to quit doing serious metaphysics and to resort to magic." This raises the question, if the universe popped into being out of nothing, why doesn't everything? If things really can come into being out of nothing, without a cause, then there is no reason to think that anything and everything could not come into existence from nothing. This premise just makes good sense.

But some critics have attacked the Kalam's first premise by suggesting that the universe could have come into being without a cause. One supposed example that supports this claim is the formation of virtual particles within the Quantum Vacuum. These particles are said to come into existence out of nothing. In his work *A Universe from Nothing*, famed atheist and cosmologist, Lawrence Kraus writes,

Just as Darwin, albeit reluctantly, removed the need for divine intervention in the evolution of the modern world, teeming with diverse life throughout the planet (though he left the door open to the possibility that God helped breathe life into the first forms), our current understanding of the universe, its past, and its future make it more plausible that 'something' can arise out of nothing without the need for divine guidance... Empty space is complicated. It is a boiling brew of virtual particles that pop in and out of existence in a time so short we cannot see them directly... These 'quantum fluctuations' imply something essential...nothing always produces something, if only for an instant.

Does Kraus' assessment prove the universe came into existence from nothing? The Quantum Vacuum (hereafter QV) is the lowest point of energy in the universe. Here resides a sea of fluctuating energy which allegedly produces virtual particles. Kraus notes, it is within this sea of "nothing" that virtual particles spring into existence and then suddenly disappear. Thus, because of the virtual particles, which are produced within the QV, the universe could have sprung into being out of nothing.

As fantastically interesting as it is, Kraus' conclusion is mistaken. "Nothing," by definition, has no properties whatsoever; it is literally no thing. Nothing has no agency. It cannot create, fluctuate, move, metabolize, replicate, or energize. Given the fact that the QV has its own structure and the fact that virtual particles are formed within it, the QV must be "something" and not "nothing." To argue for the origin of the universe from the QV is not to argue that something can come from nothing, but to argue that something can come from something, a point which neither theist nor atheist contests.

While experts are free to postulate how these virtual particles come into being through the fluctuating of energy within the QV, to state that the QV is "nothing" is to incorrectly define nothing. Without a physical or logical reason to deny the causal claim of premise one, a principle that is always verified and never falsified, the first premise of the Kalam should be accepted as true.

Premise 2

Given that the first premise is true, we can now turn our attention to the second premise. Did the universe begin to exist? Modern science gives us two ways to answer this question. The first answer comes from the expansion of the universe. In 1915 Albert Einstein introduced his theory of General Relativity. Initially, Einstein believed that the universe was static, meaning it was neither expanding nor contracting. However, Einstein realized General Relativity predicted that the universe was in the process of either expanding or contracting. Therefore, Einstein introduced a "fudge factor" to negate such conclusions. In the 1920's Russian mathematician Alexander Friedmann and Belgian astronomer Georges Lemaitre, took Einstein's equation, removed the "fudge factor" and predicted an

expanding universe. Edwin Hubble verified Friedmann and Lemaitre's predictions in 1929. As Hubble looked through his telescope, he noticed that all galaxies were moving away from earth in every direction. He concluded that because the universe is expanding now, the universe must have had a beginning in the past from which it is expanding.

In 2003, Alan Guth, Arvind Borde, and Alexander Vilenkin, proved that any universe, which has a history of cosmic expansion, must have an absolute beginning point at some finite time in the past. Vilenkin wrote,

It is said that an argument is what convinces reasonable men and a proof is what it takes to convince even an unreasonable man. With the proof now in place, cosmologists can no longer hide behind the possibility of a past-eternal universe. There is no escape; they have to face the problem of a cosmic beginning. With the cumulative scientific predictions and observations, we are warranted in concluding that the universe had a beginning.

A second way that modern science answers our question is through the Second Law of Thermodynamics which states that processes taking place in a closed system tend toward a state of equilibrium. Another way to say this is that a closed system which cannot receive energy from outside of itself runs out of usable energy. The universe is such a closed system. Thus, it is running out of usable energy. Given enough time, the universe and all its processes will run down. It will run out of energy the same way a closed gas tank will run out of gas. Were this to happen, the entire universe would experience a "heat death." But, if the universe is eternal in the past as some would claim, why hasn't it already experienced heat death? The only explanation is that the universe is not eternal in the past, but has an absolute beginning point at some finite time in the past. This means that the second premise must also be accepted as true.

Premise 3

Since premises 1 and 2 are true, the conclusion "The universe has a cause" is also true. It follows necessarily from premises 1 and 2. But notice, we have not identified the actual cause of the universe. We have only proved its existence. This raises the question, what is the nature of the first cause? To answer this question, we must consider the nature of the universe itself. Given that all of time, space, and matter make up the universe, the cause of the universe must be timeless, spaceless, and immaterial. Given that the first cause created the universe from nothing, the first cause must be a very powerful creative agent or person. Thus, the creator of the universe must be timeless, spaceless, immaterial, incredibly powerful, and personal. This description, of course, sounds a lot like the one whom Christians call "God." And the message of the Kalam Cosmological Argument sounds a lot like the first verse of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).



WOULD YOU DIE FOR ALL

BY FREDRICK KLEIN

Men such as the Apostles John and Peter claimed to have witnessed the resurrection and our faith is built on their claims. [1] But many today wonder whether they actually witnessed anything? Sometimes skeptics will suggest that the so-called eyewitness accounts are nothing more than lies and carefully fabricated stories. One way to respond to this question is by asking why the Apostles and others died for their confession of the resurrected Christ.

It stands to reason that no one would die for a confession of faith that they knew was a lie. No one would even live a difficult life for a faith they knew was not true. We know, of course, from sources hostile to the blossoming Christian faith, that the life of the follower of Christ was not easy.[2] Early Christians were persecuted, tortured, and killed for the faith they professed. If this was all a lie, if Christ had not really been resurrected, what did they have to gain by remaining faithful unto death?

This question is monumental because we all act and live in such a way as to gain something.

But these believers did not gain anything earthly from their faith. They gained neither power, nor prestige, nor popularity, nor lovers along the way. People lie for reasons like these. But people do not endure pain and death if they can avoid it.[3] The truth is that people do not knowingly die for a lie. There was nothing earthly to gain from perpetuating the lie of the resurrected Christ. If they had nothing physically to gain by continuing to live for this confession, then what they were teaching must have been the truth and they must have known that their heavenly reward would be worth gaining even at the cost of their lives.

Some might argue, people die for lies all the time. They might point to the religious suicide bomber. It is true that this person dies but no suicide bomber knowingly dies for a lie. In fact, their conviction of the truth of their religion has caused them to act in such a way. They believe they are dying for the truth. What about the secret agent for example, who is compromised. He is killed perpetuating a lie, that is, he states that he did not know anything more than what he told his captors when he

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actually did. This is an example of dying for a lie, but not of dying for a lie with nothing to gain. In this case, his dying might lead to the saving of his family and country. He died for a lie but he had something to gain by keeping that lie to his death.

Those who had seen the risen Christ spread the word about the truth of the resurrection. They had nothing to gain physically by spreading this confession. For if Christ had never been raised then those who professed this lie had no hope (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). Surely, someone within the vast number of those who claimed to have witness the Christ in his resurrected form would have recanted this position. (Remember there were more than 500 who witness Christ's resurrection at one time). At least one would have changed their mind under fear of persecution. But, in fact, we have no such account.

The two options we are left with are as follows: either, the resurrection account was a fabrication agreed upon by numerous individuals, all of whom never recanted the lie, even under the



most severe punishments all while gaining no power or riches along the way, or, these individuals actually witnessed the resurrected Christ, left the faith and traditions of their forefathers overnight, accepted being ostracized by their communities and kinsmen, and held to this view even through some of the most horrendous torture imaginable.

The evidence points to the truth of their account since no-one knowingly dies for a lie. Given this line of reasoning we can have confidence that the Apostles Peter and John and others were telling the truth when they testified to the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day. God be thanked!

HOW TO RAISE CRITICAL THINKERS

BY MARY CAROLE JACKSON

DELIBERATE. That was the word used to describe our method of parenting. I'm not certain it was meant as a compliment, but it was accurate. We had been very deliberate. Before we had children, we sat down with a professional counselor to make sure we were on the same page as parents. We knew we wanted to raise our children to be critical thinkers and to teach a Biblical worldview in our home, but we also knew we had to be deliberate to accomplish these goals.

We believed that the first five years of life laid a foundation for everything that was to follow. We practiced first-time obedience--I shouldn't have to ask you more than once to obey me. This was especially important because we lived seventy feet from a main highway. We introduced the understanding of cause and effect with games and lots of hands-on learning. We spent much of our time outdoors. Messes were allowed and accepted as part of life because we didn't watch cartoons or play on tablets, we were active. We talked about expectations

before we went places. The children were told what would take place at new events (e.g., their first funeral). We didn't ask them open questions but gave them choices so they felt they were making decisions for themselves, but their options were choices that we could live with. We didn't "set the kids up for failure". We tried not to let them get exhausted and tired at times when difficulty regulating their emotions would produce grave consequences. But most of all, we spent time every day DELIBERATELY teaching them life skills, Godly truths, and parental love and filling their little sponge-like brains with understanding that would make life easier as they matured.

Even at this young age, we had a list of lessons we believed were necessary for them to learn for their own sake and for the sake of their maturity and independence. These were not earth-shattering ideas: fifteen minutes of Bible study daily, repetitive study, memorizing the books of the Bible, memorizing Psalm 23, learning the song of the twelve tribes, or

reading a bible story. We took twenty minutes to read aloud and tried to leave every reading at a cliffhanger to foster a love for books. Our girls begged to read each night.

At this age, we also waited as patiently as possible while they fixed their own snack, got themselves dressed, fed themselves, fixed their own plate, made their own bed, picked up their own toys, and went to bed without needing Momma to be there until they fell asleep. We let them work through situations on their own. We hiked and let them discover how to get up and over obstacles by themselves. They learned to share, and help, and learned to ask a million questions without ever feeling that Momma was annoyed. Looking back, I may have thought it was for their sake but the level of independence and curiosity these daily activities bred by age six benefited us in ways we didn't understand until years down the road.

Have you ever prayed that the Lord would close every other avenue available to you and make His will abundantly clear? I mean "Lord, you know me. I don't have a clue what I'm supposed to do with this situation. I beg that you close all the other doors and just make my decision perfectly apparent." That kind of prayer is exactly how we ended up homeschooling. I went down every avenue to try to escape it, but each road had a bridge out or a tree crossing the path. After trying to start my own private school, I ended up homeschooling my children, not because I couldn't bear the thought of being apart from them but because our district school was not a feasible option. Our girls are now seventeen and fifteen years old and have been homeschooled from

the ages of six and four. Though I do not have an Early Childhood Education degree or training, I do have a degree in Biology with Chemistry and Psychology minors. This training provided me with an understanding of how to do research and it convinced me of the value of asking questions. These skills were applied heartily as I began to delve into different styles of education. We chose a Classical education style with a foundation in literature. The classical education model is explained in *The Well-Trained Mind* by Bauer and Wise in this way: "Classical education depends on a three-part process of training the mind. The early years of school are spent in absorbing facts, systematically laying the foundations for advanced study. In the middle grades, students learn to think through arguments. In the high school years, they learn to express themselves. This classical pattern is called the trivium." We saw the wisdom behind the trivium for our children in their school studies and decided to incorporate that same model in our home Bible study and eventually into the Bible study program at our home congregation. We were DELIBERATE in their education.

The trivium starts with what is called the Grammar stage from first grade to fourth grade. This is the stage when the foundation is laid. This is your Bible memorization stage, the stage when children enjoy memorization and learning facts. We used this stage to memorize scripture, the names of the Judges, and the names of the tribes, where they can read about various topics as compiled on KidSing Cards, and we taught rules as well. We came up with our own "catechism" by determining what we thought the children needed to know. We had them memorize verses

and concepts. For example: What is the purpose of the Old Law? To teach God's people how terrible sin is and the need for a savior. What is the fruit of the spirit? Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." We also taught expectations at this time, especially the understanding of family over the individual. We worked to impart to them an understanding that your poor attitude can steal someone else's joy. A child is still very much expected to adhere to first-time obedience. You are still teaching them WHAT to think at this stage.

The next stage builds on the first stage and is arguably the most important. From fifth grade to eighth grade, we enter the Logic Phase. If you have ever taught a middle school child, their favorite question is, "Why?". Their thirst and love for memorizing facts wanes and their brain matures to understand abstract thought. They start to pick up on cause and effect and how different facts from different fields relate to one another. This stage is focused on teaching HOW to think. Facts give way to the study of logic, analysis, and apologetics. We use *The Tuttle Twins Guide to Logical Fallacies*. We played Logic games, word association games, and storytelling games. We took classes in robotics to think systematically. We watched Jordan Peterson, William Lane Craig, and used *The Daily Apologist* video series on World Views. We did all of this to teach our kids HOW to think deliberately.

The children could now pull understanding from multiple facets of their learning. Why might Peter have denied Christ? Why is Jesus referred to as the pro-

phitiation? What does the Mercy Seat have to do with Christ's sacrifice? How do I know that there is a God without using my Bible?

This is also the stage when the child learns that they can ask me as their parent why they can or cannot do a thing and I will not say, "Because I said so." I will have a solid or at least an honest reason for my rules. But the child must also answer for their behavior without saying, "I don't know" or "Just because." We are also deliberate in this stage in pushing the child outside of their comfort zone and into independent thought and behavior. In the home and outside of the home, they are learning to recognize and point out logical fallacies in a respectful manner. Ideally, by the eighth grade, the child should be able to think through an argument or situation and determine the best course of action. They should be capable of thinking and functioning without looking to their parents to make decisions for them.

Unfortunately, many parents fear losing control of the child, so they "helicopter parent" or even worse, the parent stays so close it's as if the child has those tiny gnats in their face all the time. If the parent refuses to allow the child to respectfully question a rule, the child cannot learn the value and wisdom of the rules. Even more detrimental, the child, now an adolescent, isn't permitted to spend time away from the parent at a church event or summer camp, club meeting, co-op, teen event, or go with friends to a restaurant to live out the family rules on their own in safe environments.

The child is held in childhood at the grammar stage because they are not pushed to think

The Inaugural Issue



critically. This is more and more common post-covid. Some parents also view any questioning or clarification as disrespectful. What they fail to realize is that without this skill set, the child is left unable to question authority or even peers. The child cannot recognize logical fallacies or even more seriously, their naivete leaves them rife for abuse when they leave the home. Imagine a husband not being able to respectfully disagree with a wife or her family. What does a home look like when a wife can't respectfully disagree with her husband? Imagine a boss asking their employee to do something unethical but the employee has never had to discern ethical or moral values or question authority. Finally, imagine your college student's new atheist friends all having a friendly discussion while your child has never been taught to question. The child has never experienced the stress of being pushed outside their comfort zone to explain their worldview.

Without the maturity cultivated in the Logic stage, the child is sent into the world without critical thinking skills and a worldview of their own. What does this stage look like in the home? Your fifteen-minute Bible study each day has turned into an ongoing discussion and conversation. You begin incorporating current events, history, science, and literature and building your Biblical Worldview. You are questioning your adolescent on these subjects and what the world around them would look like without a powerful, personal, immaterial, omnipresent, and omniscient God. Why is your Biblical worldview better than a postmodern worldview or a scientific worldview? By the eighth grade, this should be thoroughly understood.

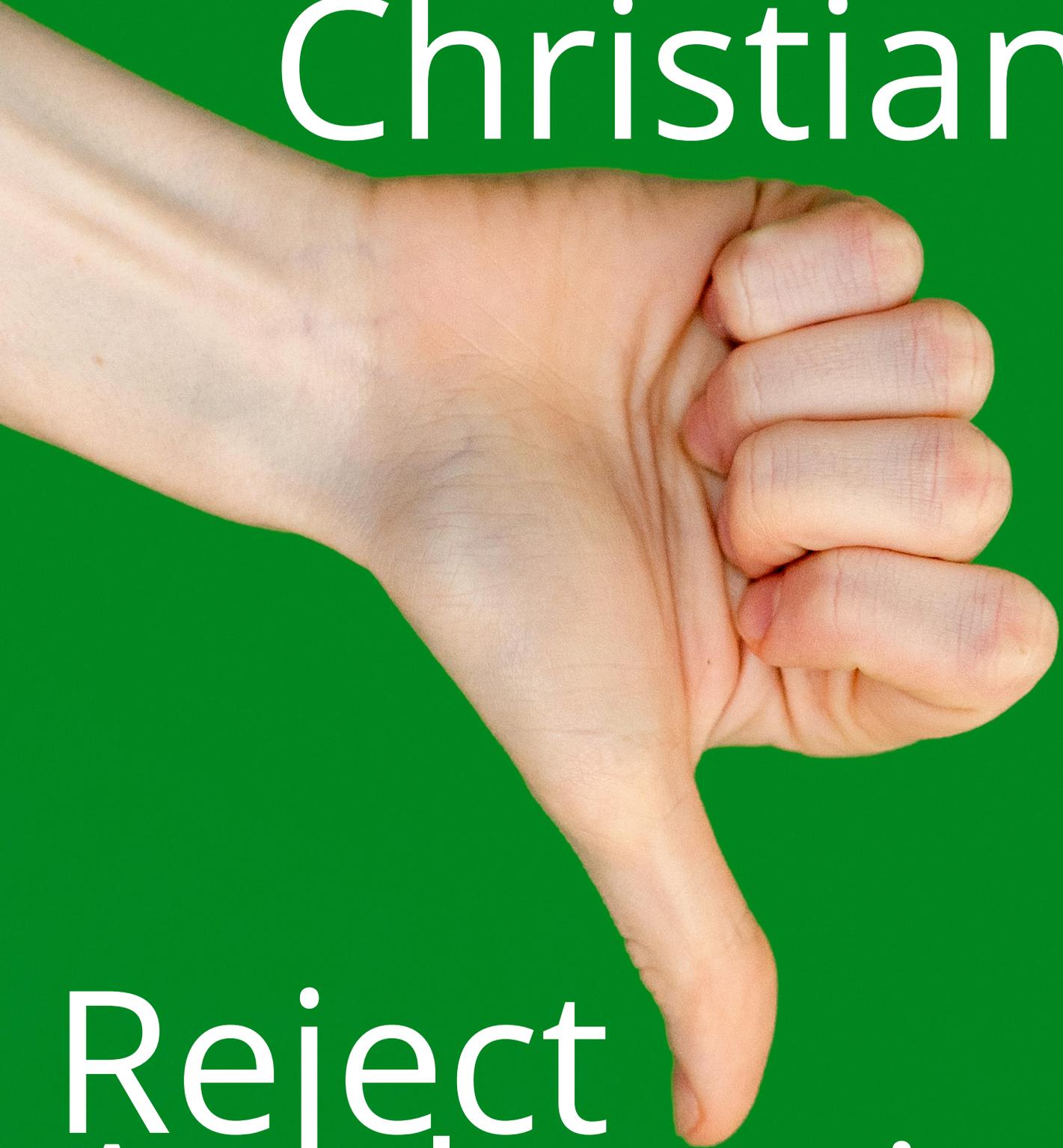
The final stage is the Rhetoric Stage. This is where their faith becomes their own. This is where you all grow together. From ninth through twelfth grades, your child learns how to share and defend the Biblical Worldview. In the Logic stage and Grammar stage, your child has already memorized and developed an understanding of the Kalam Cosmological Argument, Moral Argument, Christian Evidences, Evidence for Christ's Resurrection and Diety. Now those same topics are studied in greater depth by listening to people like William Lane Craig debate the subject matter. We delve into Mike Licona's *The Resurrection of Jesus* and look at the Bible objectively.

While they are in high school, they must learn to eloquently, respectfully, and coherently express their beliefs. They learn that there is no place for a debate on the Bible to become snarky or heated or dismissive. Your dining room table or living room is now a safe haven for deep discussion and loving and spirited debate. As their abilities to debate increase, you may find yourself saying, "I haven't thought about it that way", or "I need to get back with you on that". As their friends join in the debate, you can watch their friend group mature in their understanding and knowledge of the Biblical Worldview. They know how to study their Bible and defend their worldview. They can think critically about a multitude of topics. These children are allowed to respectfully question rules. They aren't naïve or sheltered because you have allowed them the space to be challenged and the independence to interact with the world. They truly are in the world without being of the world.

However, at this stage, they must stand and defend their point of view with logic and rhetoric, not tears and yelling. They are soldiers of Christ girded in Truth. They can conduct their own Bible study. They can give an answer for their belief in God without using the Bible because they have studied philosophy and apologetics sufficiently. They can meet their atheistic peers on that battlefield. They can also answer for their own beliefs using their own Biblical Worldview. Their faith is independent of yours. Their doubts have been challenged and deconstructed in the home to help prevent catastrophic failure later. They are on this Earth to love God and do his will and they are now prepared to do this.

In the end, critical thinking and the Biblical Worldview aren't just about being right in a debate. They are about teaching the magnitude of God's love for man and cultivating a love so deep for God that it impacts everything in your child's life from birth until the day they leave your home. Critical thinking and the Biblical Worldview aren't just a part of your curriculum. Instead, they are a way of life and a code of ethics to approach every decision, every question, every triumph, every sorrow. Your deliberate teaching leads to such a deep understanding and love for the almighty God that it is seen in the strength of the family of God where your adult child attends and in your adult child's home. Teaching your children to be critical thinkers and to have a biblical worldview will have a huge impact in your own home will influence the church of the future for good. May God bless you and your home as you **DELIBERATELY** pursue this wonderful purpose.

Five Reasons Christians



Reject
Apologetics

In their helpful book *Reason for Our Hope: An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, H. Wayne House and Dennis W. Jowers offer five reasons some Christians reject apologetics: [1]

First, some Christians believe that neither God nor the Bible need to be defended.[2] The reasoning of these Christians in essence is that no successful attack can be brought against God or the word of God. Surely, this point is true. But this does not mean that apologetics is unnecessary, because it is also true that many are mistaken in their understanding of God and Scriptures. Jesus told the Sadducees, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God." [3] The Bible needs to be defended simply because there are so many who have incorrect views of it.

Second, some Christians Believe that Christianity is a matter of faith, not reason.[4] House and Jowers note that "some people believe that faith is merely believing something without any facts." [5] But, as we have noted elsewhere [6] this is not the Bible picture of faith. Rather, Bible faith is a conviction based on evidence. When asked by the disciples of John the Baptist whether He was the Christ, Jesus responded by offering evidence and then saying, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them." [7] Similarly, when Paul defended his faith, he always offered evidence (see Acts 17:22-31 and Acts 26:2-29).

Third, some Christians fear confrontation.[8] To do apologetics is to accept that confrontation is necessary. This should be no surprise to Christians as Christianity has always involved confrontation. J. Gresham Machen said, "Certainly a Christianity that

avoids argument is not the Christianity of the New Testament." [9] How can we read the lives of Jesus, Peter, Paul, or John and believe that confrontation can be excluded from Christianity? Instead, we must learn to do as Paul said and "know how to answer each person." [10]

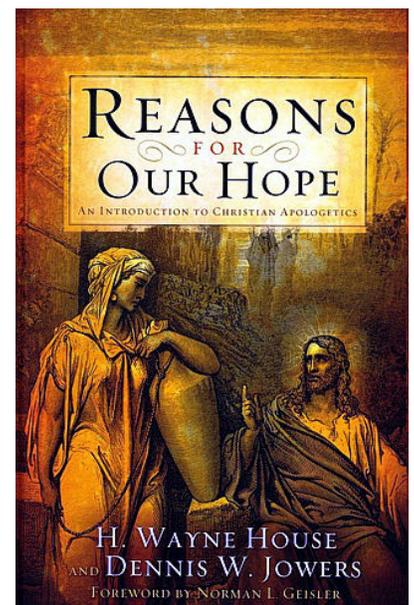
Fourth, some Christians don't want to face the negatives. [11] Christianity is a religion of positives! It is built on the good news of the gospel of Christ. Because Jesus died for us and rose again on the third day, we can be forgiven, reconciled to God, blessed every day, and heaven-bound. These are only a few of the wonderful positives of Christianity. But, each of these positives is built on a contested truth claim. Forgiveness depends on the metaethical claim that God is the source of moral law and that man is accountable to Him. Reconciliation is founded on the claim that God exists so that we may be reconciled to Him. Being blessed by God every day requires that God, a spirit, have the power and will to interact with this world on a daily basis. To claim to be heaven-bound is to claim that there is a realm of existence outside the physical and that man will outlive the death of his body. Each of these truth claims is hotly contested today. A defense of the faith forces the Christian to face the criticisms that the secular world levels against his beliefs. In other words, apologetics forces a Christian to face the negatives and many Christians just don't want to do that.

Fifth, some Christians believe apologetics is a distraction from evangelism.[12] Christians are right to want to focus on preaching the gospel and saving souls. That's what Jesus was all about and it is what we should be all about too. But, gone are the days in which preaching the gospel and saving souls can be done without apologetics. Craig Hazen notes, [13]

In years past it was not unusual that a believer could quote the Bible or 'preach the word' and have a good chance of engendering respect and perhaps deep reflection on the part of the unbeliever. This was possible because the Bible still carried significant cultural authority. An unbeliever would be likely to consider its words because there was a widespread recognition that the Bible was at the foundation of western civilization and brought wise counsel on many issues—even if the whole text was not considered true or without error by the skeptical recipient. Those days, however, are gone. There is a better than ever chance today that a person will actually consider you immoral for quoting the Bible because the Bible is often viewed, inappropriately of course, as misogynist, racist, violent, religiously exclusive and the basis for much of the conflict in our world.

In fact, to save souls today, we must first lay a foundation for faith by defending the existence of God, the inspiration of the Bible, and the messiahship of Jesus. In other words, one of the best things we can do to reach lost souls today is to defend the faith through apologetics.

Recommended Resource



GOING INTO THE AGORA WITH PAUL



by Forest Antemesaris

We have a place in our community where we can go and try to create conversations about Christianity and its claims with people who are interested. We ought to learn from Paul and take advantage of these places in our lives wherever they might be.

There's a lot that Christians can learn from the apostle Paul. Not only was Paul an apostle, but he was also an extremely successful evangelist (1 Cor. 9:19-23) and a prime example of how to keep the faith in the face of suffering (2 Cor. 11:23-28). Christians should imitate Paul as he imitated Christ (1 Cor. 11:1) and put into practice what we see in his faithful life (Phil. 4:9).

One of the areas in which Paul excels as a Christian example is in the realm of apologetics. Almost immediately after his conversion, Paul (Saul) preached to the Jews in Damascus "proving that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 9:22 ESV). It is likewise recorded that Paul spent three sabbath days in Thessalonica reasoning, explaining, and proving, that Jesus was the awaited Messiah (Acts 17:1-3).

Though Paul's ability to reason with and persuade his Jewish kinsman was admirable, his interaction with the Greek philosophers of his day is where we will find our lesson in this article. Paul's discourse on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-34 parallels our modern-day apologetics setting in a number of ways. Like many with whom we engage in apologetic discourse today, the philosophers of the Areopagus did not believe in the monotheistic God of Judaism or the Scriptures. From Paul's approach in Athens, we can learn how to better approach the skeptics and non-believers in our modern-day context.

One of the most important apologetics lessons we can gather from Paul's discourse at the Areopagus is that we need to be seeking the most opportune platforms for discussion. This lesson develops itself in the narrative of Acts 17 in two ways. First, Paul sought those who were willing to engage in discourse. Second, Paul took advantage of opportunities when they came his way.

Before Paul ever made it to the Areopagus, he was reasoning every day in the marketplace with those

who were there (Acts 17:17). This may seem like an incidental detail, but the agora (“marketplace”) in Athens was more than a grocery store. The agora was “the hub of Athenian life.” Paul wasn’t hanging out in the agora to bombard some unsuspecting shoppers with proof for Jesus’ resurrection as they browsed for grain and textiles. He was trying to speak for Christ where it was most effective. The agora was the center of social life and ideas were shared and debated there. Hence, while at the agora, Paul was able to converse with some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (Acts 17:18).

What is the agora’s equivalent today? It’s kind of hard to say as modern Western life drifts further away from certain aspects of community living. One could argue that the modern-day agora might be the internet or social media. Perhaps it’s the coffee shop or the university. Whatever the agora might be today, we have one in our context, and we should be present in it reasoning about Christ. We have a place in our community (virtual or real) where we can go and try to create conversations about Christianity and its claims with people who are interested. We ought to learn from Paul and take advantage of these places in our lives wherever they might be.

Paul’s focus was on being as effective as possible, and part of that was using some discretion and wisdom regarding where he went to proclaim Christ. The agora gave Paul the best bang for his buck, if you will. As apologists, we need to not only be present in the “agora” of our time, but we need to be ready for whatever greater opportunities the “agora” might lead to. Whether that is a discussion with somebody who is particularly interested, or an invite to some kind of event, etc., we need to be ready to defend Christianity to those who are willing to listen. To start where they are, we have to go to where they are.

“He reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day.”

IN THIS ISSUE:

Apologetics? What Does That Mean?

[1] ESV, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+peter+3%3A15&version=ESV>

[2] House, H. Wayne, and Dennis W. Jowers. Reasons for Our Hope: an Introduction to Christian Apologetics. B&H Publishing, 2011, p.2.

[3] Ibid., p. 2.

[4] Ibid., p.2.

[5] C. H. Pinnock, “Apologetics,” in New Dictionary of Theology, ed. D. F. Wright, S. B. Ferguson, and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1988), 36. In House and Jowers, p. 2.

[6] House and Jowers, p.3.

[7] House and Jowers, p. 5.

[8] Ibid., p.5.

[9] Ibid., pp. 6-16.

Would You Die for a Lie?

[1] Along with others: 1 Peter 2:16; 1 John 1:1-3; Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-4

[2] <https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/were-the-early-christians-really-persecuted>

[3] <https://credohouse.org/blog/evidence-for-the-resurrection-of-christ-in-a-nutshell>

5 Reasons Christians Reject Apologetics

[1] House, H. Wayne, and Dennis W. Jowers. Reasons for Our Hope: an Introduction to Christian Apologetics. B & H Publishing, 2011, p.17.

[2] Ibid., p.17.

[3] Matthew 22:28, NASB. <https://www.biblegateway.com/p...>

[4] House and Jowers, p.17.

[5] Ibid., p.17.

[6] See <https://thedailyapologist.com/do-christians-live-in-a-world-of-make-believe/> and <https://thedailyapologist.com/i-dont-have-enough-faith-to-believe-the-atheists-definition-of-faith/>

[7] Luke 7:22, NASB. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+7&version=NASB>

[8] House and Jowers, p.18.

[9] Ibid., p.17.

[10] Colossians 4:6, NASB. <https://www.biblegateway.com/p...>

[11] House and Jowers, p.18.

[12] Ibid., p.19.

[13] Ibid., p.19.

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APOLOGIST

The Worldview Issue

What is a worldview? How does it work in our lives? How do we respond to declining Christian worldview in culture?

Marketplace of Ideas

Why should you start with the Christian worldview in the marketplace of ideas? Forest Antemesaris makes the case.

How to Create a Worldview

What are the common components of a worldview and what makes for a strong worldview?

Three Worldviews in Conflict

What are the three major worldviews in conflict in our culture? How do we think about and respond to them as Christians?

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