

APOLOGETICS - DEFENDING OUR FAITH AGAINST ALL OPPOSITION

LESSON 10 : Wrapping up - The Role of Evidence

REVIEW

- +We have to “always be prepared” to defend our faith (1 Pet 3:14b-16 Acts 22:1 etc.)
- + The unbeliever is not neutral and (Rom 1:18) we must not be (Prov.26:4).
- +Everybody has a worldview = elementary presuppositions **NO NEUTRALITY!**
- +Our worldview must be Christian in all we say, think and do!! (Mk 12:30 etc.)
- +Our standard for all this is Scripture and **NOTHING** else! **SOLA SCRIPTURA!**
- +First key issue of a worldview: Metaphysics-what accounts for the physical world?
- +Second key issue: Epistemology - how and what do we know?
- +Third key issue: Ethics - what is right and wrong (*moral philosophy*)?
- +4 popular worldview-schemes impact our society today:
 1. Hinduism / 2. Behaviorism / 3. Marxism / 4. Existentialism
- +Most basic building blocks for unbelievers’ worldviews:
 - 1.Monism 2.Dualism 3.Atomism 4.Pragmatism 5.Scepticism
- +In Acts 17:16-34 Paul:
 - uses the presuppositional method
 - did not use the Athenians’ presuppositions
 - dealt with worldviews as a whole (didn’t separate theology from worldview)
 - he is showing the internal contradictions of their worldviews
 - he didn’t pile up evidence but **DECLARED** the truth

The **starting point** then for effective apologetics is not the myth of a supposed neutral human reason, or the impartiality of the unregenerate mind. Instead, **to be consistent, and Reformed, we must say the starting point** is the Triune God of the Bible, who from all eternity knows and loves Himself and enjoys true communion within the godhead. This God is the ground of all being, and all men have both an inner witness, and the witness of the created order that tells them these things to be true. **Yet sinful men willingly and knowingly suppress this knowledge to hide themselves from the truth because their wicked hearts are in rebellion to God.**

Is there no place then for the traditional Christian evidences? I would argue that yes, there is a place and a role for both reason and evidence in apologetics. They are **the tools which strip away the self deceptive smoke screens by which men hide from the truth.** While this cannot and will not bring about conversion, it does leave the unregenerate man without excuse.

The success of apologetics is not determined by how many people we are able to manipulate into making a decision, but rather by **how faithfully we preach the Word of God.** For two millennia, the Church has used an evidentiary approach, and Christendom could not withstand the assault of humanism. When a Christian consensus was maintained, then the Christian evidences were sufficient, because men were **thinking in**

Christian categories and terms. But that is no longer true, and the evidence is now rejected out of hand because the presuppositions are firmly in place.

The unregenerate man is like the neurotic who was under the delusion that he was dead. A doctor tried to reason him out of his misbelief. He began by trying to show him dead men don't bleed. He explained the wonders of the circulatory system, the intricacies of the heart, the fragile life span of human blood. He even took the poor man to the morgue, showed him a cadaver and cut the arm with a knife. "There," said the doctor, "You now have indisputable proof that dead men don't bleed." The neurotic enthusiastically agreed. The doctor then pricked the man's finger with a pin and squeezed out a small drop of blood. "Now what," the doctor asked, "do you conclude from this?"

The man replied, "Well, what do you know! Dead men bleed after all!"

Christians cannot reason pagans to correct conclusions about God because we begin with completely different basic assumptions (presuppositions) about the basic nature of reality. We can prove our assumptions to our own satisfaction, but never to his, for his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. **But we can expose the intellectual and moral contradictions of his life.** We can make him stare into the miserable abyss to which his god hating presuppositions inevitably lead. We can encourage the faithful, while exposing the rot of humanism.

"But," some will argue, "if all these things are true, what good does it do to speak to spiritually dead, deaf and blind men who suppress the truth?" The answer is straightforward; **evangelism is our responsibility, but conversion is always a sovereign act of God's grace.** It is through preaching that God is pleased to convict men of their sin, regenerate their callused hearts and call them into His kingdom. **Apologetics is simply one more tool in the evangelist's kit that God has commanded us to use.**

We have **two distinct motivations for using apologetics.** The first and foremost is the motivation to please God. We make it our ambition to please Him. And it pleases our heavenly father when we are obedient to Him. Since God has told us to preach the gospel, to give a word for the hope that is within us, we therefore do so gladly! We do not compromise the truth in order to make "converts." We seek to please God and not men.

Secondly, in light of the above, we recognize that as finite men we can never know the state of another man's heart because we can only judge the things we see on the outside. Thus when we share with someone about Jesus, we cannot know and we must not judge that man's spiritual status. We do not know what is really going on inside as we share the truths of the Christian faith. We know that God is pleased to call men into His kingdom through the preaching of the gospel and thus we are responsible before him to do so whenever and where ever we have the opportunity. While we may bear witness of whether or not a man gives evidence of a regenerate heart, we must never take to ourselves what only belongs to God. Only God knows the heart (e.g. Psalm 44:21).

Hence, as we preach, God may well be working within the heart, using our words to convict them of their sin. The apologetics blast away at the smoke screens, at it just may be that God will convert that wicked heart.

The Christian faith need never retreat to intellectual fox holes fearful of the noises of the secular academic big guns. To the contrary, Christ silenced their pop guns at Calvary and the truth of His gospel will blast the enemy from their fortresses (2 Cor 10:4-5).

(taken from <http://christian-civilization.org/highlands-reformed/presuppositional.html>-
some minor changes made by teacher)

CHRISTIANITY IS A COMPLETE WORLDVIEW - A REASONABLE FAITH!

“And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15)

Project “Renewing our minds 2008”
RECOMMENDED BOOK- (AND MEDIA) LIST
 (you can get all materials online or give your order to Louise Todd)

Stage 1: Basic Worldview Package

Myths, lies & half truths	Gary DeMar
Conference CD’s: Creation to Revelation	www.americanvision.org
Conference CD’s: Worldview Training for the 21 st Century	www.americanvision.org
The Consequences of Ideas (very understandable introduction to philosophy)	R. C. Sproul
Basic Training for Defending the Faith (DVD-Set) (available at www.americanvision.org)	Dr. Greg Bahnsen
Always Ready (apologetics)	Dr. Greg Bahnsen
Everyday Talk (excellent little book about child training)	John A. Younts
Christian Living in the Home (about marriage and family)	Jay E. Adams
The Messianic Character of American Education	Rousas J. Rushdoony

Stage 2: The quest goes on...

Idols for Destruction (Christian analysis of American culture)	Herbert Schlossberg
America’s Christian History	Gary DeMar
Theological Interpretation of American History (available at www.gpts.edu [bookstore])	Gregg Singer
Unknown History of the 20th Century (3-DVD’)	American Vision
The Thinking Tool Box (logic - also great for children!) The Fallacy Detectives (logic - also great for children!)	Bluedorn and Bluedorn Bluedorn and Bluedorn
The Soul of Science	Pearcey and Thaxton
Family Driven Faith	Voddie Baucham Jr.
Biblical Economics	R. C. Sproul Jr.