

II. Pathways to the Gospel in a Post-Christian World

A. Linking Apologetics and Evangelism (Practical Apologetics)

* The Church needs this kind a
training!

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"1 out of every 3 Christians who shares his or her faith enters the discussion with concerns about a personal lack of knowledge and skill in answering the questions these people might ask regarding Christianity."

"4 out of 10 evangelizers are usually concerned that they will not do a good job of clearly explaining their beliefs."

George Barna, *Evangelism that Works*, 1995, p.77

The Church needs this kind of training!

85% of people who share the gospel said they would like to have been better prepared.

George Barna, *Evangelism that Works*, 1995, 75

The Need to Link Apologetics & Evangelism!

"Apologetics is an absolutely essential ingredient to Biblical evangelism. And it is easy to see why. An emphasis on reasoning in evangelism makes the truthfulness of the gospel the main issue, not the self-interested 'fulfillment' of the listener. Felt needs are important, but if they are made the issue, Christianity will be seen as just another means of helping the convert overcome his problems, along with his therapist and workout routine."

J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, p.122

Counting the Cost of Preparation!

"Will this approach to evangelism take work? You bet it will. We'll have to do a lot of reading, studying, and thinking. But if someone can spend several hours a day learning to swing a golf club, at least the same effort would not be inappropriate for someone who wants to be a more effective witness for Christ."

J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, p.133.

Understand the Goal of apologetics in Evangelism

We want to use it to provide the motivation for helping people to take steps away from their current distorted worldview perspective and towards Theism and Christianity
Acts 17:31-32

What is the Goal of Apologetics in Evangelism?

“Apologetics should be viewed not as a wrestling contest whose goal is to metaphorically twist our non-Christian friend's logical arm to get them to cry, "Uncle!" Our goal is rather to help them to see the truth about God that has been clearly revealed to them so that they will cry out 'Abba' Father.” (Romans 1:20; 8:15)

Dave Geisler

Why the need for an Apologetics Approach in Evangelism?

“By shunning the role of reason in evangelism, and substituting in its place an overemphasis on a simple gospel appeal directed at felt needs, short-term gains are to be expected in a culture of empty selves. But who can deny that while our numbers have grown, our impact has not been proportionate to our numbers? There is too much at stake for this situation to continue. What is needed is a rethinking of the very nature of evangelism, more specifically, of the role of reasoning and argument in the way we do evangelism.”

J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, 130

The Bottom Line about Evangelism!

“It is no accident that the flourishing of evangelistic activity in the 1960's and 1970's was woven around the writings of C.S. Lewis, Josh McDowell, and Francis Schaeffer. Today we need a revival of evangelistic fervor and spiritual power. And an absolutely crucial element that must take place before we will see this revival is a renaissance of apologetics and intellectual activity in the evangelical church.”

J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, 154

Clarifying Biblical terms and concepts that can hinder our witness

1. Evangelism
2. Pre-evangelism
3. Being Ready to Give an answer
4. Practical Apologetics
5. Faith and Reason
6. Implications of Revelation in the area of Apologetics and Evangelism
7. What Apologetics Alone Can't Do
8. Understanding God and Logic
9. Misunderstood verses that affect our witness

What is Evangelism?

The process of proclaiming the Good News and inviting others trust Christ.

What else should be added to this definition according to 1 Cor. 3:6?

Evangelism is a Process!

“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”

1 Corinthians 3:6



Definition of Evangelism

“Every day and in every way helping your pre-believing friends to take one step closer to Jesus Christ.”

Dr. Dave Geisler

Evangelism is a Process!

“We have come to believe that there are only two kinds of Christians: the harvesters and the disobedient. We must begin to teach, with great urgency, that every laborer should learn to reap and that God will call some to exercise this role exclusively--but everyone can learn to sow right now, right where they are.”

Tim Downs, *Finding Common Ground*, p.32.

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What Is Pre-Evangelism?

If evangelism is planting seeds of the Gospel, pre-evangelism is **tilling the soil of their mind and heart, preparing** them to at least be willing to listen to the Truth.
(Mark 2:22, 4:8)



“Pre-evangelism” is the emphasis of Conversational Evangelism.

“... other seeds fell into the good soil and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.” (Mark 4:8)



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What Does It Mean to be Ready?

1 Pet. 3:15 says,

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared (ready) to give an answer to everyone who ask you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

Being Ready

"This verse (1 Pet. 3:15) tells us to be ready. We may never run across someone who asks tough questions about our faith, but we should still be ready to respond if someone does.

Being ready is not just a matter of having the right information available, it is also an attitude of readiness and eagerness to share the truth of what we believe."

Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, p. 37

Ready (Observations)

1. We should know how to answer the difficult questions people ask us concerning our faith.
 2. Being ready involves also an eagerness to share.
 3. Being ready is one way we make Christ Lord in our hearts.
- * But what if they don't ask us questions about what we believe?

Being Ready

The Greek word for ready (Hetoimos) is used in Matt 24:44 and Luke 12:40 to communicate the idea that as Christians we need to anticipate Christ's return.

Now, if we combine 1 Peter 3:15 with 2 Corinthians 10:5 and I Cor. 9:22, it is clear that our responsibility as Christians is also to eagerly anticipate the questions and objections that our non-Christian friends may raise against Christianity, whether they ask us a specific question or not!

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Practical Apologetics

1. Involves more than being ready to share information about our faith when asked.
2. It is the application of apologetics to our daily witness.
3. It concerns the integration of apologetics in one's evangelistic efforts.
4. One who practices practical apologetics looks for ways to help our not-yet Christian friends to take one step closer to Jesus Christ every day.
5. It involves choosing those evidences that will carry the most weight with those we are trying to reach.

Understanding Practical Apologetics

"Apologetics cannot present a single set of arguments and expect all persons to find them convincing....Apologetics, then, should be reconceived. It should not be understood as an attempt to develop a perfect system of assertion and argument that will prove the faith once and for all.

Rather, it is a strategy for presenting, in the course of a unique discussion **with a particular audience**, the sort of case that makes sense to those persons. In other words, apologetics is the reasoned defense of the Christian faith in the context of personal dialogue."

David Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics*, p. 99

Defining Practical Apologetics

"Practical Apologetics involves the careful selection and integration of Christian evidences into our daily witness in ways that are culturally and personally sensitive with the goal of helping our not-yet Christian friends to take one step closer to Jesus Christ each day."

Dr. Dave Geisler

(1 Cor. 3:6; 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Cor. 9:22; 2 Cor. 10:5)

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The Consequences

"...if what we believe is off center and yet so pervasive that it is seldom even brought to conscious discussion, much less debated, then this explains why our impact on the world is so paltry compared to our numbers.

I can not overemphasize the fact that this modern understanding of Christianity is neither Biblical nor consistent with the bulk of church history."

J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, p.25.

A Misunderstanding of Faith's Relationship to Reason

Student:

"I have many different objects of my faith."

Biblical Faith

(MP4 video file contained on Meekness and Truth resource CD)

What is the Relationship Between Faith and Reason?

“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.”

1 Corinthians 15:14

What Part Does Reason Play in Someone Coming to Faith in Christ?

- Important distinction between “belief that” and “belief in”

James 2:19 says that the Demons “believe that” God does exist but do not “believe in” Him.

Apologetics Bares on the Question of “Belief That” Versus “Belief In”

Apologetics can make the horse come to the water, but only the Spirit of God can make it drink!

(See John 6:65)

“Belief That” Versus “Belief In”

You can’t use apologetics to argue someone into the kingdom.

You shouldn’t give up using apologetics in your witness to others (Acts 14:1)

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Implications of Revelation in the Area of Apologetics and Evangelism

- a. God never expects us to believe in Him without evidence!
- b. God clearly revealed Himself to us because He does not want us to be in any doubt as to who it is that we should worship and follow!

The Bottom Line

- c. God has clearly revealed Himself to us, because He loves us and desires a personal relationship with us! (2 Pet. 3:9)
- d. God has revealed himself in at least five distinct ways

How has God revealed Himself to us?

1) God revealed Himself through (natural revelation)
Rom. 1:18-20; Rom. 2:14-15
Verse 20:

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

A Light for the Gentiles

- 2). God revealed Himself through the blessings on the Nation of Israel.
 - Gen 12:3 "...and all peoples on earth will be blessed."
 - Isaiah 49:6 "I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles that you should bring Salvation to the end of the earth."
 - Ps. 67:7 - God blessed Israel that other nations might fear Him

O.T. Miracles

- 3). God revealed Himself through the miracles performed by the O.T. Prophets.

Example: Moses Elijah at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:21, 36 – 39), Verse 39

"And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and they said "the Lord, He is God."

Jesus' Miracles

- 4). God revealed Himself through the miracles performed by Jesus and the Apostles

"Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed...but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

John 20: 30-31

Miracles of the Apostles

- The Apostle performed miracles to authenticate the message of the gospel which Jesus preached.

"The signs of an Apostle were performed among you by signs and wonders and miracles." 2 Cor. 12:12

Special Revelation

5). God revealed Himself through Special Revelation

Heb. 1:1 says, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."

(See also John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 1:21-22)

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a. Objective Evidence Is Not Enough!

...and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. "And some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe."

Acts 28:24

Objective Evidence Alone is Insufficient

➤ Remember that people don't reject Christ because there is not enough evidence!

"Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of their hardness of heart."

Ephesians 4:18

b. Satan Has Blinded Their Minds!

"In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

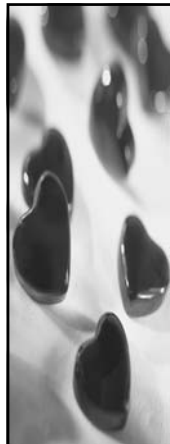
2 Corinthians 4:4

c. The Holy Spirit Must Work

The Holy Spirit must work in their heart if they are to embrace Christ.

"No one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father."

John 6:65



What Apologetics Alone Can't Do (Review)

1. Having objective evidence is not enough!
(evidence can never force one to believe in Christ)
2. Remember that Satan has blinded their minds!
3. The Holy Spirit must work in one's heart if they are to embrace Christ.

They must believe in Christ.

Remember that we need to determine what might be appropriate and inappropriate use of evidence!

▪ Implication:

- * Sometimes it is more helpful in our witness to others to stop giving evidence.

“...If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.”

Luke 16:31

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Understanding God and Logic

- a. The laws of logic are fundamental to all thought.

- Logic makes rational thought possible.
- Without logic there is no rational thought!

Logic is like a computer operating system that runs your computer programs. Without it you could not run any of your programs. Without logic, you could not function in life.

Without logic you could not understand any of the truth claims in scripture. Without logic you also could not rule out any statement as being contrary to scripture!

God is the Source...

- b. The Bible teaches us that God is the source of all reason and logic.

Statement Defended:

- 1). Man is made in God's image and has His likeness (Gen. 1:26).

For example:

Man has finite goodness whereas God has infinite goodness. Man has goodness because it was given to him by God.

God is the Source...

- b. The Bible teaches us God is the source of all reason and logic.

- 2). If we are a moral effect then we must have come from a moral cause (God)

- * If God created everything, and if every effect must have a cause, and we are a moral effect, then our morality must come from God (Romans 2:14-15).

Understanding God and Logic

3. If we as God's creation are rational beings, then our rationality must have come from God also.

For example, the Bible teaches us in Rom. 1 that man has knowledge about God because he can look at what God has made (His creation) and infer that God must have created it.

Therefore the Bible assumes that man is a rational being and can reason correctly from effect to cause.

So whether man has a moral nature or logical nature, it must have been given to him from God.

4. Therefore God must be the source of all reason and logic.

God is the Source...

- c. Scripture teaches us the importance of logic & reasoning

Is. 1:18 "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord.

The Bible says that we are to love God with our mind (Matt 22:37).

Christians are exhorted to "destroy speculation" (2 Cor 10:5).

The word speculation can be translated as "imagination."

God is the Source...

- c. Scripture teaches us the importance of logic & reasoning

Theology is systematic reasoning "Logos" about God "Theos".

* The concept of the Trinity was derived from logic. Nowhere is the word Trinity used in the Bible!

"In the beginning was the Word" (Logos) John 1:1

The most fundamental law of logic is the Law of non-contradiction.

Not Yes & No

- d. The Bible teaches that theological truths about God cannot be contradictory.

"The Apostle Paul said, "But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not yes and no." (2 Cor. 1:18 NIV)

"Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." Titus 1:9 (NASB)

* For something to be true it can not be a contradiction!

Truth can not be contradictory

"Anyone who denies the law of non-contradiction should be beaten and burned until he admits that to be beaten is not the same as not to be beaten, and to be burned is not the same as not to be burned."

(Avicenna, Great Medieval Philosopher)

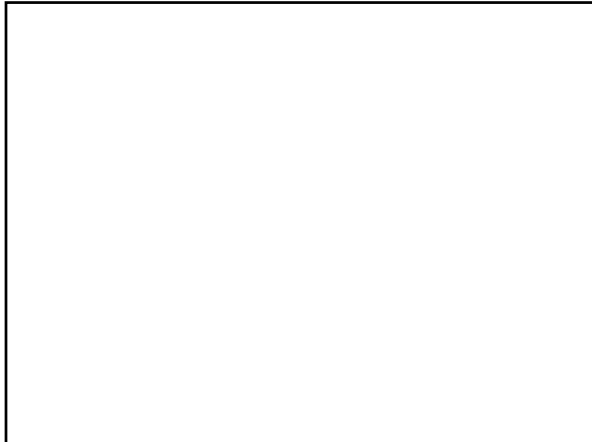
Criticism

- 1). But don't the great mysteries of the faith involve contradictions?

For example:
The Trinity
The Incarnation

Answer:

God's Truth may go beyond reason but not against it.



Criticism

2). But Logic can't tell us anything about God!

Reply:
Isn't this not a logical statement claiming that logic can not tell us anything about God?



Understanding God and Logic

Response:
"Logic is inescapable. You can't deny it with your words unless you affirm it with the very same words. It is undeniable."
Dr. Norman Geisler, B.E.C.A., p. 40

The Truth about God

What can logic tell us about God?

- If God is truth, He can not lie (Heb. 6:18)
- If God exists, then it is false that He does not exist.
- If God is a necessary being, then He cannot not exist.
- If God is infinite, and we are finite, then we are not God.

Criticism

3). The Bible says that "Nothing is impossible for God" (Matt. 19:26) so why can't God violate the laws of non-contradiction if He wished.

Reply:
When the Bible says that that God can do what is impossible it does not mean what is *actually* impossible but what is *humanly* impossible.

Omnipotence doesn't imply that God can do what is actually contradictory.

Criticism

- * Omnipotence doesn't imply that God can do what is actually contradictory.

1). God cannot do anything which contradicts His moral nature.

God cannot change, lie, be tempted, deny Himself, etc. (James 1:17; Mal. 3:6; Heb 6:18; James 1:13; 2 Tim 2:13)

Criticism

- * Omnipotence doesn't imply that God can do what is actually contradictory.
 - 2). God can not do anything which contradicts His logical nature either.
- God cannot:
- Exist and not-exist at the same time?
 - Commit suicide
 - Make a stick with one end to it.
 - Make two mountains without a valley.
 - Make a stone so heavy that He cannot lift it. (For if He can make it, then He can move it)

Reply: (cont.)

Reason flows from the very nature of God and God is subject to His own nature.

Therefore God cannot act contrary to his nature whether it involves ethics or logic.

"Scripture teaches us (Heb 6:18) that it is impossible for God to lie, but logic tells us that it is impossible for God to die."

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Misunderstood verses that affect our witness

I Cor 2:14

"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (NASB)

Reply:

The Geek word for accept is "dechomai."

The natural man can perceive *some* of the Truth but cannot receive the Truth.

Misunderstood verses that affect our witness

Objection: God can't be known by human reason

1 Cor. 1:20-21

"Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe: Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world. **For since the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God**, God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." (NASB)

Unwrapping a mystery...

- 1 Cor. Written between 55 – 60 A.D.
- Acts written between 61 and 90 A.D.
- Some believe that after the time of 1 Cor. Paul repented from his apologetic approach and from that moment focused on proclaiming alone "Christ Crucified."
- Yet if Paul wrote in 55-60 A.D. and the events recorded in Acts 17 were later, then this statement cannot be true. Remember in Acts 17 Paul used Theistic Apologetics to speak to the polytheist.

1 Cor. 1:20-21

Reply:

Remember that scripture cannot contradict other scripture. What ever Paul teaches in 1 Cor. 1:20-21 it cannot contradict what he teaches in Rom. 1:19-20

"Because that which is know about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them (Gentiles). 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." (Rom. 1:19-20 N.A.S.B.)

1 Cor. 1:20-21

Reply:

Paul declared that the evidence of God's existence is so clear that they are without excuse, even if they have never heard the gospel (Rom. 1:19-20)

"...the context is not God's existence but His plan of salvation through the cross. This cannot be known by mere human reason, but only be divine revelation. It is foolish to the depraved human mind."

Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, p. 38

1 Cor. 1:20-21

Reply:

"So his reference to the world by wisdom not knowing God is not a reference to the inability of human beings to know God through the evidence he has revealed in creation (Rom. 1:19-20) and conscience (Rom. 2:12-15). Rather, it is a reference to human depravity and foolish rejection of the message of the cross."

Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, p. 38

Misunderstood verses that affect our witness

Heb. 11:1

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (NASB)

Criticism:

- This seems to imply that faith is defined as believing in something you have no evidence for.

Heb. 11:1

Reply:

"In the context of Hebrews 10:32-39, Hebrews 11:1 is an exhortation to confidence in the face of ambiguity. Those who have faith will continue to look forward to what has been promised but not yet been given, even when persecution causes emotional stress and cognitive uncertainty.

Those who have faith do expect to see something for which they have not yet found direct evidence. But this does not mean that this is the meaning of the word faith. This confident expectation is characteristic of those who do have faith."

David Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics*, p. 19

Misunderstood verses that affect our witness

Heb. 11:6

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (NASB)

Criticism:

- Without faith one cannot please God. This would seem to argue against asking for reasons rather than simply believing.

Heb. 11:6

Reply:

The Bible teaches in many places that evidence is an important. (1 Cor. 15:14)

"Faith is said to be 'the evidence' of things we do not see (Heb. 11:1 NKJV). Just as the evidence that a witness is reliable justifies my believing testimony of what he or she saw and I did not, even so our faith in 'things not see' (Heb. 11:1 NKJV) is justified by the evidence that God does exist.

The latter evidence is 'clearly seen being understood from what has been made' (Rom. 1:20)."

B.E.C.A. p. 39.

Heb. 11:6

Reply:

It does not say with reason you cannot please God.



Misunderstood verses that affect our witness

John 20:29

"Then Jesus told him (Thomas), Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (NIV)

Why does Jesus rebuking Thomas for needing to see evidence?

Answer: Matthew 11:3-6

"...Are you the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else? And Jesus answered and said to them, Go and report to John what you hear and see. The blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over me." (NASB)

What Did Thomas Lack?

This is what was prophesized about the coming Messiah!

The blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached.

Jesus was rebuking Thomas for needing to see more evidence than he already had?

1 Cor. 2:1 (N.A.S.B.)

"And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

1 Cor. 2:1

“And (in accordance with this principle of glory only in the Lord) when I first came to Corinth, Brothers, it was as quite an ordinary person (so far as any pre-eminence in speech or wisdom is concerned) that I proclaimed to you the testimony of God’s love for you.”

(translation by Robertson and Plummer, *The International Critical Commentary for 1 Corinthians*, p. 29)

1 Cor. 2:2

“For I did not care to know, still less to preach, anything whatever beyond Jesus Christ; and what I preached about Him was that He was crucified.”

(translation by Robertson and Plummer, *The International Critical Commentary for 1 Corinthians*, p. 29)

1 Cor. 2:2

“Some see in this a Paul chastened by his encounter with the Athenian philosophers and therefore temporarily shaken and unsure. But that was probably not so. The phrases simply describe a spirit of dependence and subjection to God’s authority (cf. Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12), which marked his ministry.”

David Lowery, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary for 1 Corinthians*, p. 509

1 Cor. 2:2

“It was also true that his manner or preaching was unimpressive from a human point of view (2 Cor. 10:10). Paul readily admitted this and even used it as a point in his argument. His preaching was not marked by eloquence or persuasive words such as characterized the sophists, the traveling teachers of that day, but was instead the unembellished message of a crucified Christ as the only means of salvation.”

David Lowery, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary for 1 Corinthians*, p. 509-510

Mark 6:11

Reply:
See Acts 13:51 and compare it with Acts 17