

Introduction to Christian Apologetics

A Case for Christianity

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Bibliography

Holy Scripture

The Origin of the Bible, Philip Wesley Comfort

The Reasonableness of Faith, Dr. William Hogan

Defending the Faith, R.C. Sproul

When Critics Ask, Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe

The Unbeliever says ...

A famous psychiatrist observed so much neurotic religion among his mental patients with whom he worked that he came to the conclusion that all religion was an obsessional neurosis. He wrote several books arguing the point, the strongest of which was entitled "*The Future of An Illusion.*"

He said that when Christians talk about their heavenly Father, all they are doing is projecting into the empty skies the image of their father, because of a subconscious need for protection and comfort. Or, if they believe in the wrath and judgment of God, it is because they are projecting onto this imaginary deity some of the qualities of a harsh human parent.

Dr. Sigmund Freud believed that in psychoanalysis he had found the way to set people free from this neurosis.

From Reasonableness of Faith; Dr. William Hogan

The Believer says...

"Out of the national horror and personal tragedy of Watergate, Charles Colson built a prison ministry that has touched the lives of millions."

"As he is the first to admit, only God could make a prisoner who hated the sights and stench and brutality of prison return as a visitor within a week of his release. Only God could turn Chuck Colson, prisoner, into Chuck Colson, prison evangelist."

Author John Perry

Apologetics...

Defend or argue for a particular point
of view

And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it (give a defense [NKJV]).

But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.

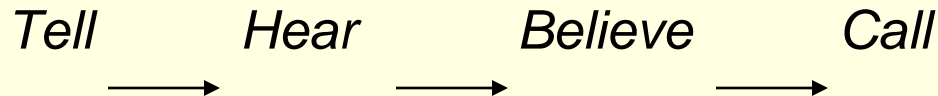
1 Peter 3:14b-16 NLT

The Purpose of Apologetics...

Apologetics can be used to help show that Christianity is true and that all non-Christian worldviews are false.

*“But how can they *call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they *believe in him if they have never *heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone *tells them?”*

Romans 10:14



Philosophy and Christianity

- The investigation of the causes and laws that underlie reality.
- Inquiry into the nature of things based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods
- Theology is philosophy....investigating God
- Plato made a distinction between philosophers and sophists:
 - Sophists Plato observed some as arrogant men who falsely hid behind fancy words and rhetoric – but were intellectual frauds.
 - Philosophers were men of integrity who honestly wrestled with issues of reason and logic.
 - Acts 17 & 18** depicts Paul as a philosopher
 - Acts 17:17,18** He reasoned with the Jews and debated the pagans

Epistemology

The division of philosophy that investigates the nature and origin of Knowledge.

Why Should believers be concerned with the nature Knowledge?

Why this philosophical exercise?

[John 18:38 Pilate asked..."what is truth"]

Because...

Apologetics aids in the planting - watering of the seed planting process.

Understanding that...

Only God can bring forth the increase.

(1 Corinth. 3:5,6)

The Early Church

- Many accusations were levied against the early church:
 - Traitors – Believers were undermining the Roman Empire
 - Atheists – They refused to worship the pantheon of Roman gods
 - Rumors – They held secret meetings
 - Love Feasts
 - The Communion
- There was a need for first-century Christian leaders to defend their belief system and the dynamics of the Christian community.
 - Justin Martyr was the first notable apologist (100-165 AD)

Apologetics & The Task of Evangelism

The Conversion Experience Is A Journey...

Step One (hearing)

Pre-evangelism – Provide data a person must process to either accept or reject:

- Understand that God exists
- Understanding of the issue of sin
- Understand that they are estranged from God

The Task of Evangelism

The Conversion Experience Is A Journey...

- Step Two (believing)

Intellectual Assent - Does your mind accept the fact of Jesus Christ and the information you know about him?

- **Example:** A minister may believe that *Eugene Weaver is the man God called for that position of GCMF leader...*
 - *However, he may be uncertain of the value of becoming a member and not willing to submit to his authority?*

The Task of Evangelism

The Conversion Experience Is A Journey...

- *Step Three* (Call Upon)

Personal Trust and Reliance - A genuine love for Jesus Christ that is a result of the Spirit's work within a person.

The road to saving faith...

(Involves: telling -- hearing – believing – calling)

*Romans 10:9,10 If you **confess** with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and **believe** in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

*For it is by **believing** in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by **confessing** with your mouth that you are saved.*

What is truth...

Return to the issue Pilate raised to Jesus...

If someone believes something, he or she thinks that it is the truth. Of course, it might turn out that he or she was mistaken, and what was thought to be true was actually false.

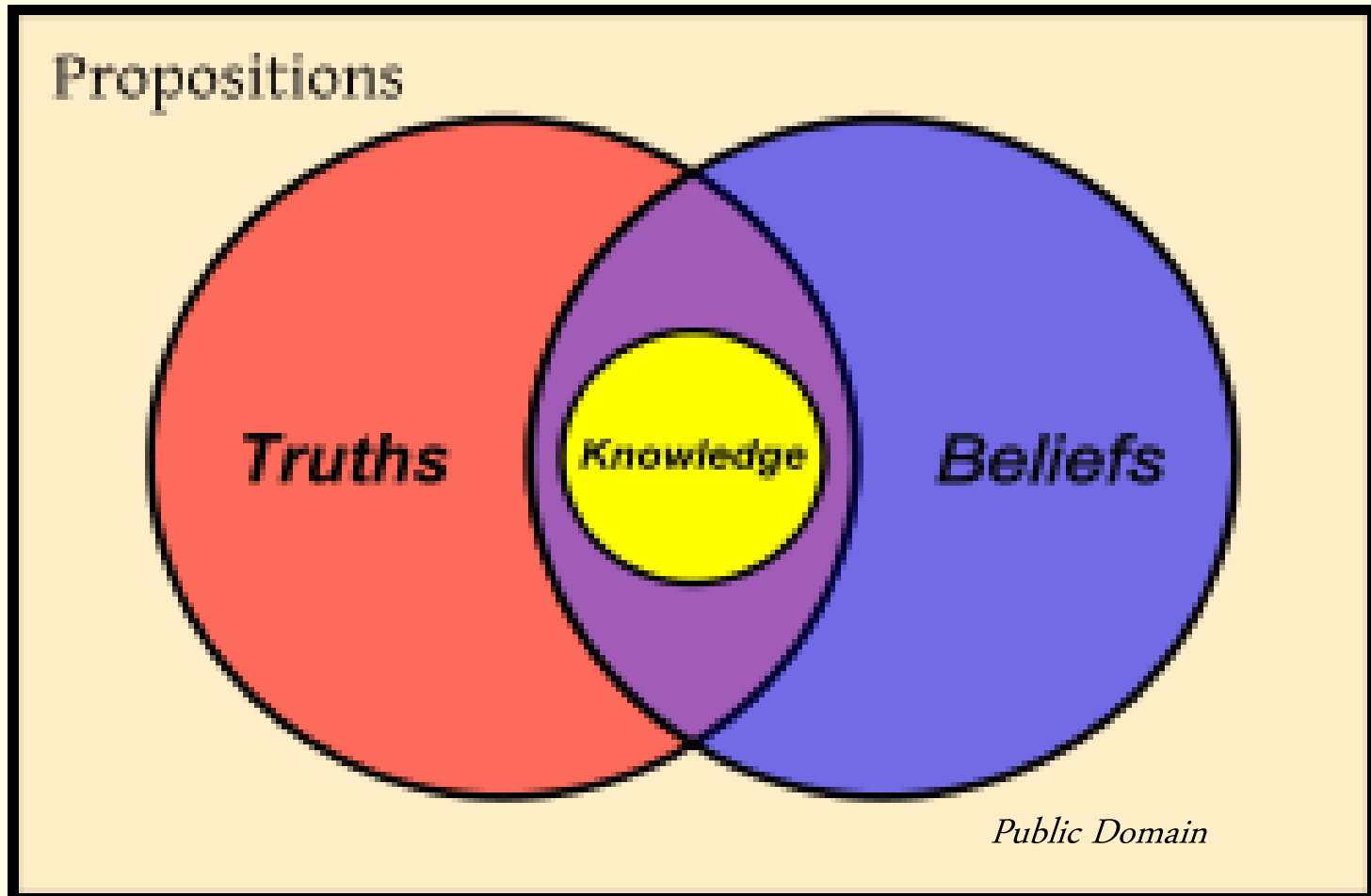
This is not the case with knowledge.

Example:

What if Jim thinks that a certain bridge is safe, and attempts to cross it; unfortunately, the bridge collapses under his weight. We could say that Jim believed that the bridge was safe, but that his belief was mistaken.

We would not accurately say that he knew that the bridge was safe, because plainly it was not. For something to count as knowledge, it must actually be true.

What is Knowledge?



The Agnostics and Atheists:

Whenever people attack the existence of God or the credibility of scripture they reject four foundational assumptions about God... His Word... and His Creation...

The presuppositions that the Bible makes about itself in communicating God's message to mankind applies also to ...

- God himself – the author
- God's creation – we are made in His likeness

Four Epistemological Principles of Scripture...

- They are essential & foundational to human knowledge
 - The Principle of Non-contradiction
 - The Principle of Causality
 - The Principle that affirms the basic reliability of man's "sense" perception
 - The Principle that affirms the analogical use of language

Non-Contradiction...

■ The Principle of Non-contradiction

This principle states that it is impossible for contrary attributes to belong at the same time to the same subject.

- If “A” is true then “non-A” cannot be true.
- When the principle of non-contradiction is denied during a discussion, it is the escape-hatch for those that refuse the demands logic brings to an issue.
- The Bible cannot be contradictory and inspired

Causality...

■ The Principle of Causality

- Every effect must have a cause
- Whenever a miracle is presented in scripture, the principle of causality is evident – the understanding that every effect must have a cause is assumed.
- If the argument is that an event can happen in scripture without a cause – then no miracle would have any instructive or illustrative value.
- A person's testimony of a radical personal transformation illustrates one example of causality
- Looking at our universe... we see an effect. There must be a cause (God)

[Example of Causality - John 3:2]

Reliability of Sense Perception...

- **The Principle that affirms the basic reliability of man's sense perception.**
 - Human Senses are legitimate in determining knowledge.
 - We may not be able to sense the cause of all effects, but empirical evidence must be accepted as a means to convey a persuasive argument
 - This is true in the science lab as well as our quest for evidence for the existence of God.

[Examples of the principle of causality 2 Peter 1:16-18; 1Corith. 15:3-6]

Analogical Use of Language...

- **This Principle affirms the analogical use of language in describing God.**

- Doubters - Logical Positivism - only those statement that can be empirically verified have any meaning.
- Resulted in the “**God is Dead**” statements of the 1960’s
- Premise: Language about God can not be verified – such language is emotional – very subjective and personal.
- Premise: Human language can not say anything meaningful about an objective God.

However: The Orthodox view is that God exists outside ourselves.

However: Because man is created in God’s image we share a unique relationship – one that establishes the validity of “analogical language.”

However: There is common-ground between God and man. In the light of our creation we are “**analogous in being.**”

[*Genesis 1:26*]

The Authority of the Bible

- Self-authenticating – But not in this sense:

The Bible is the word of God. The Bible, being the word of God says it is the word of God. Therefore, the Bible is the word of God.

- Self-authenticating – In this sense:

- Coherency over centuries of compilation, fulfilled prophecies, its power and majesty for touching hearts and changing lives. (NT. Completed within 60 yrs of crucifixion)
- Many of the authors claim their messages are the word of God.
- The Miracles recorded in the Bible attest to the existence of God and they validate the bible text.

[Example: 2 Timothy 3:16,17]

The Authority of the Bible

Jesus Taught About Scripture:

The Word of God and the Word made flesh are inextricably linked together.

- Is it possible to believe in the Jesus of the Bible and not believe in Bible of Jesus?
- Jesus quoted from many Old Testament sources and recounted Old Testament stories as he taught.
- He highlighted prophecies about himself in the Old Testament.

[Example: Isaiah 61:1,2; Matthew 12:40]

Notes about Scripture

- **Canon of scripture** — Canon means rule or standard of measurement – those writings that met the standard for inclusion.
- **Apocrypha** — the word refers to writing that are of questionable authorship or authenticity.

The Reformation brought a dividing line into the debate about the authority of certain books from Israel's History. The Church in Rome said, yes – the protestants said no. They are fourteen books that were not part of the Hebrew scripture.

- **New Testament** -- Jesus anticipated the New Testament Canon (John 14:26; 16:13)

Notes about Scripture...

- **The New Testament** – The books of the N.T. were completed over an approximate 50 year period.
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- **English Bible Translations...**

- Literal Translation (*Translation that attempts word for word*)

KJV, NRSV, NASB, NKJV

- Dynamic Equivalent (Translation that is thought for thought)

NIV, NLT, GNT

- Paraphrase (Communicate Ideas)

The Living Bible, Message

Literal Version to study – Dynamic Equivalent to read publicly

Paraphrase for private reading