

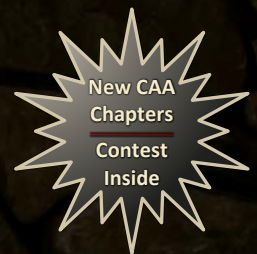
EQUIPPED

Vol. 1
No. 3

THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS ALLIANCE QUARTERLY

*Overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God,
and leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ.*

**He was buried
and He was raised
on the third day
according to
the Scriptures**



Evidence for the Resurrection

For the king knows about these things, and I am speaking freely to him, because I cannot believe that any of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner.

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS ALLIANCE

answering seekers, equipping Christians, & demonstrating the truth of the Christian worldview

Statement of Faith

We affirm that there is only one, Triune God, existing eternally in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We affirm that God is the all-powerful Creator.

We affirm that Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the only Son of God, fully God and fully man, yet one person.

He became incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary, lived a perfect and sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered death for the forgiveness of our sins, and was buried. On the third day he bodily rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead.

There is no other name by which we may be saved.¹

We affirm that the Holy Spirit is the Lord and giver of life, who is to be worshiped and glorified with the Father and the Son.

We believe the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and we affirm that they are historically trustworthy and doctrinally authoritative.²

We affirm that there is one, holy, universal, and apostolic church.³

We affirm the Christian worldview encourages a holy and joyful renewal of each individual and the whole universe. We therefore promote the biblical convictions:

- *that the love of our neighbors and the alleviation of human suffering in all its forms is integral to Christian discipleship,
- *that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman, and that marriage is the only legitimate context for sexual activity,
- *that all human beings have a right to life, including those not yet born,⁴
- *that we are called to participate in the restoration of all things, and
- *that the Christian Apologetics Alliance is ultimately meant to serve the church and our family in Christ, as one part of God's mission to evangelize and disciple all people to maturity in Christ.⁵

Four Years, New Chapters, and a Contest



Celebrate the CAA's fourth anniversary by applying to [lead a local CAA Chapter](#) and be automatically entered to win:

1st Prize

Chapter receives a free Google Hangout with the legendary, esteemed Dr. Timothy McGrew on the topic of their choosing, and five apologetics books of their choice from [B&H Academic](#).

2nd Prize

Chapter Leader chooses three apologetics books of their choice from [B&H Academic](#).



3rd Prize

Chapter Leader chooses two apologetics books of their choice from [B&H Academic](#).

Fourth prize: Two books from George Yancey, "[There Is No God](#)" and "[So Many Christians, So Few Lions](#)"

Fifth prize: One book from Joel Furches, "[Christ-Centered Apologetics](#)"

[CAA CHAPTER OVERVIEW](#) • [AN OPEN INVITATION TO CHURCH LEADERSHIP](#)

Contest ends on May 1, 2015. Winners will be randomly drawn from the list of approved CAA Chapter Leader applicants.



Saving Sarah

Meeting Sarah was like walking into a dream. Our first date was at Barnes and Noble where piles of books were laid on the table, ranging from apologetics to historical theology and classical fiction. It was fair to say I met my beautiful nerd mate (in other words- someone I could carry intellectual conversations with, yet had the timeless look of an old school movie star).



In the beginning of our courtship, Sarah was in remission from many of her chronic health symptoms she had struggled with since her youth. Her health issues escalated to two years of bed-ridden status from her

biotoxin related illness (Chronic Lyme Disease coupled with mycotoxins perpetuated by several genetic mutations). After almost dying, the family explored costly intravenous therapy that eventually saved her life.

I saw the results of her body after the lifesaving fluids were administered to her. I saw her active: driving, social, walking, and challenging me and shaping me into the man I am today from her walk with God. I saw her effervescence as she expressed the goals she

wished to achieve: publishing books, going to graduate school at Biola in Psychology, and impacting people's life through the restorative power of Christ.

Unfortunately, I did not speak up when I should have done so. Sarah was working at two work places that were detrimental to her health due to the dormant, yet very opportunistic pathogens that were within her body. Her system was unable to tag the added toxigenic elements as harmful, thereby placing her in the state she is in today. It was a slow fade from "wobbly walking," collapsing, chronic fatigue and pain, cognitive and endocrine dysfunction to the deplorable state we all see her in now.

Today, I see her inability to walk, cook, read or write (except minimally), or do the many activities most of us take for granted. In the darker moments, I see her almost never ceasing seizures. I hear the screams and witness the streams of tears as she feels

CAA MEMBER PRAYER REQUESTS

agonizing pain throughout her body. In the worst moments, I've given her mouth to mouth and prayed to God that her life would not be snuffed out at such a young age. She has had to rely on me as her full time caregiver, which causes me to rely on the Giver of Life even more so. There are many times where I find myself crying out as David did in the Psalms - vocalizing my thoughts on this precarious situation, yet still trusting in God's sovereignty when His face seems absent.

What Sarah needs is a systemic overhaul from her systemic disorder via intravenous treatments along with other medical help to save her young life. My gratitude is abundant towards the many prayers lifted on my wife's behalf, donated funds, and individuals giving in whatever capacity they can in the service of saving Sarah, even if it is simply reposting her story for more exposure.

Sarah has already undergone a month of treatment with favorable results. There are short moments when she is able to walk on the sides of her feet, she is able to converse



more, and seize and tick less. I am encouraged to see an incline in health, though I was warned her journey to wellness will be a long one considering her deteriorated state. Even still, I echo King David's words for my wife. "I am certain that I will see the LORD's goodness in the land of the living." (Psalm 27:13 HCSB)

– Michael Chardavoyne

For the images I always fail to put into words, see the following videos:

[Saving Sarah](#)

[Sarah's Hopes](#)

[Saving Sarah YouTube Channel](#)

[Caring for Sarah YouCaring Donation Page](#)



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IN NECESSARIIS UNITAS, IN DUBIIS LIBERTAS, IN OMNIBUS CARITAS. In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things charity. The Christian Apologetics Alliance (CAA) is united in our Statement of Faith. The CAA does not, as an organization, have positions on many of the doctrinal or theological debates that take place within the church. Our primary concern is to promote the gracious, rational defense of the central claims of Christianity and the critique of opposing systems of thought. The CAA community is a diverse one of many denominations. Blog entries made by individual authors reflect the views of the author and not necessarily the view of other CAA authors, or the official position of the Christian Apologetics Alliance group at large.

Vestibule

[ves-tuh-byool]: a passage, hall, or antechamber between the outer door and the interior

This is why the Father loves me - because I lay down my life, so that I may take it back again. No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down of my own free will.

John 10:17

Going a little further, he threw himself down with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if possible, let this cup pass from me! Yet not what I will, but what you will." He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will must be done."

Matthew 26:39, 42

I once had the privilege of traveling to Kenya, Africa for a summer missions trip with a group of fellow college students. Initially I was very reluctant to go - that's a total understatement!

The previous summer, a group of students traveled to Kenya to serve and share the Gospel. They brought back with them a passion for the country, a love of missions, and a desire to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the group was now the director of our college's leadership body, Christian Concerns. At the time I was the director of On-Campus Ministries, serving under his leadership. We became close friends.

My friend had shared with me his desire and intent to lead a group back to Kenya the upcoming summer, and he wanted me to go.

I will be perfectly honest, there was no part of me that desired to do this. I wanted the summer to myself. But lacking the courage to be truthful, I simply said, "I'll think about it" while knowing in my heart the answer was, "No."

It was part of my group's responsibilities to plan and host the campus' missions week. When missions week arrived, I sat in on many of the lectures and heard many famous speakers share their stories and the need to spread the Gospel. Every day my friend would ask ... and my response was always the same. I was, however, moving closer to uttering the word, "no."

I can't tell you if it was something I heard, but I do remember where I was the moment I bowed my head and prayed, "Lord, if you want me to go, make me willing." It was a simple prayer asking God for help to know, and do His will. It changed my life in more ways than one. One day I was reluctant, the next day I was willing. It turned out to be one of the best summers of my life. Imagine if I had said, "No."

Ready for an adventure? When was the last time you prayed, "Lord, make me willing to go, to serve, to do your will"?

Glen Richmond
Editor, EQUIPPED

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest."

John 4:34-35



PRIOR PROBABILITY OF THE RESURRECTION

David Marshall • christthetao.blogspot.com

People have been arguing for centuries over the evidence for, or against, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This debate seems in recent years only to have intensified.

What is often forgotten, though, is that the probability of an historical event requires relating two things: (1) the evidence for that event (which is what we usually think of), but also (2) the prior probability that such an event would occur.

For example, suppose I make the claim, "I just flipped an un-weighted coin twenty times, and got all heads!"

What is the likelihood that I am telling the truth? Some combination of two factors: (a) the odds of achieving this result, which (on exactly 20 flips) would be 2^{20} , or about one in a million, and (b) the odds that I am lying or mistaken. (Maybe I wasn't paying close attention, or maybe both coin and eyes are old, and the two sides of the coin look the same to me. Or maybe the coin is weighted, or perhaps I am suffering a drug-addled hallucination from years of playing Russian Roulette in a smoke-filled bar in Saigon.)

If I say, "I flipped a coin three times in a row, and got all heads," you would likely nod your head and go back to your Kindle. If I claim to have done so 300 times in a row, you would have every right to be extremely skeptical. At some point, the inherent improbability of the

event will tip the balance against the improbability (I hope most readers will agree) of one or another attenuations of the "liar" or "lunatic" hypothesis in reference to David Marshall. In the technical, arcane language of legal philosophy, you "smell a rat."

Prior probability is often overlooked, or under-emphasized, in popular discussion of the resurrection of Jesus. Someone like William Lane Craig, Gary Habermas, Mike Licona, or Josh McDowell (for the old school) will argue that the historical evidence for the resurrection is actually very good. Then skeptics like Crossan or Matthew McCormick will try to undermine that claim.

The Christian generally wins that argument, if he or she is good at public debating, because as historical evidence goes, the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus IS remarkably good. The main challenge may be to get the audience to grasp the value of historical evidence, with our bias for forensic or other "scientific" evidence. But given a fair appreciation of historical method, and a competent description of the evidence, this case can be made. If all that were being asserted were that St. Peter caught a very big fish that day, the event would be universally admitted as having been proven beyond any reasonable doubt.

But then the skeptic, and maybe even the Christian (even Alvin Plantinga, in some moods), will go home and ask himself, "Yeah,



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but can you really prove something so contrary to human experience as a resurrection from the dead, from any amount of historical evidence?"

Indeed, read the Book of Acts closely, and it's clear that this objection goes back at least to St. Paul's sermon before the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry that met on Mars Hill in Athens. "God did what? Go on! Get out of here!" But up to that point, they were listening carefully to Paul's more philosophical and moral arguments for theism.

But let's look for a number.

A frequent visitor to my web site, the Irish skeptic Brian Barrington, once posted a tongue-in-cheek argument against the resurrection based on a "prior probability" against it of 100 billion to one.

He didn't explain how he got that figure. But I think what he based it on, was the number of people who have lived on Planet Earth over the past two thousand years. The assumption, following Hume, seems to be that experience of an event should be deemed proportional to the frequency of similar events. If 100 billion people have died without rising, there should be a presumption against any one person rising from the dead, of 100 billion to one.

I pointed out that in fact, no one has any historical evidence about the post mortem

fate of the vast majority of human beings since Jesus. Some other resurrections HAVE been alleged – even in the pages of the New Testament. So even supposing that resurrections strike people as randomly as lightening or meteorites, still the ratio of people whom we know in a strong historical sense have not risen from the dead, to those about whom we might have some evidence to the contrary (say Lazarus), is much less than 100 billion to one.

But of course no one claims Jesus' resurrection was just a matter of luck. Christians, and even the occasional Jewish scholar who buys into the story, never suppose Jesus won the resurrection ticket in a random cosmic lottery. On any reasonable account, if God exists and acts in the world, Jesus was far more likely to rise from the dead than, say, Al Capone, or even Joe the Plumber.

"Prior to what?" The prior probability of the resurrection is the probability that Jesus would rise, considered prior to the historical evidence for or against his resurrection. My claim is that there are other facts—including some which no reasonable person denies—that vastly increase the probability that Jesus might be resurrected, as opposed to one of the billions of other people who have lived in historical times.

The prior probability of Jesus being raised would seem to be a function of three issues: (1) Does God exist? (2) How likely would He



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be, even while keeping the laws of nature generally in effect, as He obviously does—including entropy in general and human death in particular—raise one person dramatically from the dead? (3) How likely would it be that that person be Jesus?

(1) The probability that God exists will approach one for many people, zero for others, with other people falling at all spots in between. But the arguments are complicated, and it would be foolish to begin arguing about the resurrection by first trying to solve so involved an issue, that is never solved to everyone's satisfaction. Theists have arguments for the existence of God that are independent of the resurrection of Jesus. If we begin with belief in God, or the strong probability that God exists, BEFORE discussing the resurrection, we will not be begging the question for ourselves, but might be begging it for non-theist readers. And we will be leaving out one plausible reason for believing in God. That is to say, maybe strong evidence for the resurrection will give us additional reason to believe in God.

So what should we do?

One might deal with the "God question" in one of two ways. First, we might "compromise" by taking the existence of God at 50-50, just to see how the rest of the argument works. Or second, we might make the existence of God a variable in the equation, and use the resurrection of Jesus as an argument to faith in God. Both solutions are ways of bracketing this issue, and perhaps coming back to it later, better-informed.

Let's go with the first option, here. I think 50-50 is a fair number to assign, for the following reason: people are intelligent creatures, but also prone to fooling themselves at times, (including, of course, myself, and the reader.) We

may have both worked over the evidence for faith many times, and come to different conclusions. So who is really fooling himself, or herself? We can sweat over the evidence for decades, and both walk away thinking the other person is missing the point.

In this case, I think it is valid to tentatively make a sort Ad Populum argument, as a short-cut. Let us appeal to what society at large, our friends and neighbors and humanity in general, believe, as a temporary control over our own opinions.

Most people believe in God. Far fewer extremely well-educated people claim to believe in God. Maybe that's because they're more intelligent, better educated, and know more about, say, evolution or the Big Bang. On the other hand, the Bible predicts that "the wise" are liable to becoming proud and self-dependent, and fail to recognize their need for God. The Lord "opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Though of course not all believers LOOK gracious, and some intelligent skeptics seem highly sincere. Furthermore, miracles and other signs of God's reality might be more likely to occur among those who are needy, if the Bible is any guide, not among the comfortable.

So there are competing explanations for atheism (I give several others in *The Truth Behind the New Atheism*), and in some societies, Christians seem more heavily represented among the highly educated than among lower classes.

So I think a fair shortcut to reworking all the arguments, which we can't do for a premise here, is to compromise between classes and cultures, our own intuitions and arguments and Vox Populi, and call it (for the sake of the argument) a 50-50 shot.

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Again, if you don't like this figure, don't worry—the evidence of the resurrection may cause it to increase.

(2) The likelihood that God, should He exist, would act in this one particular way, by raising someone from the dead, is also hard to be sure about, since we are unable to read the mind of God. (Of course, it does not follow that He cannot tell us His own mind, which Christians claim He has, in the Bible, for instance, and perhaps in other ways.) That God would do such a thing, does not seem wildly unlikely, though, given:

- (a) God is, by hypothesis, good, and would want us to have hope;
- (b) God created nature, and therefore presumably has good reason to allow the regularities that we call "natural law" to be manifest most of the time;
- (c) Much of the offense skeptics take at miracles seems to be aesthetic; it seems to some of them inartistic, crude, etc., for the laws of nature to be set aside too easily;
- (d) Yet one can see intuitive sense in God offering some dramatic sign (as it is called throughout the Bible), some "eucatastrophe" as J. R. R. Tolkien put it, some "good disaster" by which (to cite his friend C. S. Lewis) the "laws of nature would begin to work backwards," so that entropy would not have the last word, and the "sting of death" be drawn. A sign that "Death, thou shalt die!," as John Donne put it, may seem presumptuous to some, but hardly out of character for a good God. Raising someone from the dead, at a key juncture in history, might well be part of His plan.

It seems presumptuous (aside from His revelation, which is in dispute) to put a number on "what God would do." But

by the same token, it would also be presumptuous to assume dogmatically that He would not do such a thing.

This question, too, is difficult to solve decisively in a short discussion. But it does not seem an overwhelmingly unlikely idea a priori. Only a little evidence that this might, in fact, be God's will, would seem enough to make it sufficiently credible.

Similarly, since a late spring storm just brought new snow to the Cascades, and I love to ski, even though I have work to do, and should probably stay home and do it, it is not overwhelmingly improbable that I drive up to Snoqualmie Pass today and do a bit of skiing. Given only weak arguments against that course of action, if you go to Gold Creek Basin and you think you see me there in a few hours, it will be very likely that you actually do.

Perhaps one could put the possibility that God would do such a thing, a priori, at 1 in 10. But if God expresses His will to resurrect some key servant of His, then that will improve the prior odds of His doing so, just as my vocalized expression of an intent to hit the slopes adds to the prior probability that a skier would ski when the snow falls on a given day. Isaiah hints that after dying for the sins of the people, the Suffering Servant would "see the light of life." If God exists, the most powerful prophet in history (see my recent *How Jesus Passes the Outsider Test: The Inside Story*) would seem a plausible oracle for His predictive voice. Given that the existence of God has already been factored in in (1), it seems fair, then, to bump that number up a bit higher, say 1 in 4.

So (1) and (2) yield a very rough initial prior probability of one in eight. I am not, of course, pretending to be exact.



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(3) Now we come to Brian's demographic calculation. As you may remember, one of Brian's tacit assumptions seemed to be that God would be equally likely to raise anyone who has lived over the past two thousand years. I have challenged that assumption.

To evaluate how likely a given person might prove to be the one through whom God reveals His power, let's begin with Martin Luther King. Suppose God wanted not to just show that entropy would not have the last word, and that there was hope for the human race, by raising a prominent person from the dead. Suppose He also (again, following His character as developed in the OT prophetic works) wanted to reprimand oppressors by His choice of whom to resurrect. King might be a good person to pick. His resurrection would not only give people hope for life after death, but also demonstrate that God was on the side of non-violence and human rights.

On the other hand, King's resurrection might also send mixed messages about how to treat women, for example, or force God to "pick sides" in American politics. And there are other heroic figures who might do just as well—Gandhi, say, or Socrates. So given that God exists, and He wanted to prove His power and character and the hope of eternal life by raising one man from the dead, one might suppose the chance that He would pick Martin Luther King might be, say, one in a one thousand—much higher than someone picked at random, say Otzi the Iceman.

In this scenario, would anyone be more likely to be raised than Jesus?

Consider the following facts, none of which depend on the historical accounts of Jesus' final days in the NT (and are therefore independent of the purely historical analyses that are normative to resurrection debates):

(a) As mentioned above, Isaiah spoke of a Suffering Servant dying, yet then "seeing the Light of Life." Might not this and other passages in the OT be a signal pointing to God's intention not just in general, but specifically related to Jesus? Christians, including so perceptive a man as Blaise Pascal, have traditionally found many messianic expectations in the Old Testament that seemed to come true in Jesus, more than in the life of any other man or woman. All in all, the diffuse and complex web of Messianic expectations, that seem to focus on Jesus (Pascal explains some of the reasons why), do seem to make it far more likely that he would be the one whom God raises.

(b) The ancient Hindus wrote of God (Prajapati) sacrificing himself for the world. There are parallels in China and in other cultures, and mythological "dying and rising gods."

Again, some of these show remarkable parallels to the person and story of Jesus. If God were to intend His act as a sign not just to Israel, but to the whole world—and the entire Old Testament underlines the universal character of God's redemptive plans (again, see [How Jesus Passes the Outsider Test](#))—then does not the fulfillment of such types in the life of Jesus greatly increase the chance that he would be the One prepared for all mankind—and that God might (going back to (2)) give humanity a sign of hope and redemption in one fell, miraculous deed?

(c) Lin Yutang, the great Chinese philosopher and man of letters, who compiled an anthology of Chinese and Indian literature, said that "no man has taught as Jesus taught." Many others on a similar intellectual plane concur. Is it not more likely that God would choose

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arguably the world's greatest moral teacher to make His great point?

(d) Jesus was, as I show in *The Truth Behind the New Atheism* and elsewhere, at the center of many of the greatest reforms in history—inspiring them, setting an example, more so than anyone. Is it not likely God would choose to raise such a person, to set an example for the human race, and endorse His example of how to live? (Leading to such reforms as have in fact occurred?)

(e) Jesus was murdered by tyrants, backed by the Roman Empire, in a particularly savage way. If God is (as Lao Zi said of the Dao) on the side of the weak against powerful oppressors, would not raising him from the dead be a particularly good way of showing that?

One could go into a great detail on each of these points, and I have done so in [some of my books](#), and in my dissertation. But let us move back towards the point.

I haven't introduced any specifically Christian theology into this argument. Even so, these factors seem to show that, if there is a God, and if He intends our redemption through some such act, then the resurrection of Jesus is most to be looked for. If God exists, and if He wanted to do something dramatic in human history, that would change the world, give us hope, and show that He stands on the side of the righteous and oppressed, Jesus would seem to be the best possible tool through whom to express all of that. (Whether or not he was, himself, divine.)

In fact, one might say that not only is Jesus the most likely candidate, he is the only really likely candidate. Buddha and Lao Zi are almost lost in the historical mists. Mohammed was a bloody conqueror. Confucius was a cautious gentleman, whose teachings were useful, but which could

not have dramatically changed the world for the better, as the Gospel has. Gandhi and King were great men, but their movements were inextricably political, and their personal lives not always as inspiring as their ideals.

So it does not seem wildly unreasonable to suppose, prior to looking at any historical facts at all, that there is at least a one in ten chance that God (assuming Him to exist, and to be of such a mind) would have chosen to raise Jesus, of all people who have ever lived, from the dead.

One might even say rhetorically (in reading the Gospels, or in frustration at the cruelty and injustice of life) that it would be a miracle if God did NOT raise Jesus from the dead, or do something dramatic and inspiring like that.

Given all that, the prior probability of the resurrection of Jesus might be as great as, say, 1 in 80 ($2 \times 4 \times 10$), and is certainly far greater than one in 100 billion.

If there are independent reasons for believing (1) and (2) that make those odds better than even, as I think there are, then the prior probability of the resurrection, before we even begin to examine the actual historical evidence, might rise to 1 in 10, or so.

If, then, the purely historical evidence for the resurrection is strong—and I think Christian historians have shown that it is tremendously strong (see for instance [this wonderful piece by Tim & Lydia McGrew](#))—then the combined evidence that in fact Jesus DID rise from the dead, as reported, may become quite strong, even prohibitively strong. In that case, one can "flip" the resurrection equation around, and solve it for "Does God exist?" It then becomes reasonable to argue from the resurrection to the existence of God.



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Of course, this conclusion depends on the plausibility of each step of this argument, which skeptics are likely to challenge at many points. But what the argument should at least show, is that David Hume and his followers aside (and even before we look at independent evidence for miracles, as from Craig Keener or Eric Metaxas), it would be unreasonable to demand overwhelming evidence for the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Good historical evidence is probably enough.

*William Lane Craig
vs.
John Shelby Spong
The Great
Resurrection
Debate*

*Michael Licona
vs.
Richard Carrier
The Resurrection of
Jesus*

*Gary Habermas
vs.
Ken Humphreys
The Resurrection:
Invention or
Historical Fact?*

*William Lane Craig
vs.
James Crossley
Was Jesus Bodily
Raised from the
Dead?*

*Michael Licona
vs.
Bart Ehrman
Is the Resurrection
Provable?*

*Gary Habermas
vs.
Antony Flew
Jesus' Resurrection*

*The Probability of
the Resurrection of
Jesus
—Richard Swinburne*

*William Lane Craig
vs.
Marcus Borg
Did Jesus Rise from
the Dead?*

*Michael Licona
vs.
Shabir Ally
Did Jesus Rise from
the Dead?*

*Gary Habermas
vs.
Arif Ahmed
Did Jesus Rise
Bodily from the
Dead?*

*Did Jesus Really
Rise from the
Dead?
—N.T. Wright*

*The Resurrection
Argument that
Changed a
Generation of
Scholars
—Gary Habermas*

*William Lane Craig
vs.
Richard Carrier
Did Jesus Rise from
the Dead?*

*William Lane Craig
vs.
Bart Ehrman
Did Jesus Rise from
the Dead?*

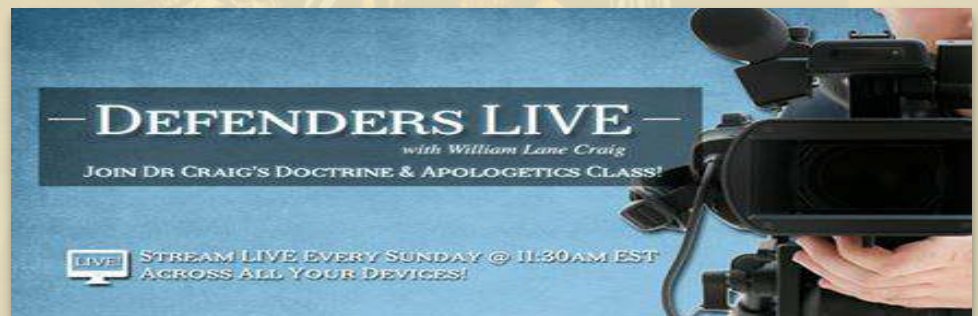
*Michael Licona
vs.
Dan Baker
Did Jesus Rise from
the Dead?*

*Teaching on the
Resurrection of
Jesus
—Gary Habermas*

Foundations of Christian Doctrine –Dr. William Lane Craig

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THE EARLIEST RECORD FOR THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-7

Eric Chabot • chab123.wordpress.com

As historians evaluate the sources available for the resurrection of Jesus, a critical question is the dating of the sources. In relation to early testimony, historian David Hackett Fisher says, "An historian must not merely provide good relevant evidence but the best relevant evidence. And the best relevant evidence, all things being equal, is evidence which is most nearly immediate to the event itself."¹ One key in examining the early sources for the life of Christ is to take into account the Jewish culture in which they were birthed. As Paul Barnett notes, "The milieu of early Christianity in which Paul's letters and the Gospels were written was 'rabbinic.'"²

Given the emphasis on education in the synagogue, the home, and the elementary school, it is not surprising that it was possible for the Jewish people to recount large quantities of material that was even far greater than the Gospels themselves.

Jesus was called a "Rabbi" (Matt. 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; Mk. 4:38; 5:35; 9:17; 10:17, 20; 12:14, 19, 32; Lk. 19:39; Jn. 1:38; 3:2), which means "master" or "teacher." There are several terms that can be seen as part of the rabbinic

terminology of that day. His disciples had "come" to him, "followed after" him, "learned from" him, "taken his yoke upon" them (Mt. 11:28-30; Mk 1).³

Therefore, it appears that the Gospel was first spread in the form of oral creeds and hymns (Luke 24:34; Acts 2:22-24, 30-32; 3:13-15; 4:10-12; 5:29-32; 10:39-41; 13:37-39; Rom. 1:3-4; 4:25; 10:9; 1 Cor. 11:23ff.; 15:3-8; Phil. 2:6-11; 1 Tim. 2:6; 3:16; 6:13; 2 Tim. 2:8; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 4:2).

There was tremendous care in 'delivering' the traditions that had been received. Jesus' use of parallelism, rhythm and rhyme, alliterations, and assonance enabled Jesus' words not only to be 'memorable' but easy to preserve.⁴ Even Paul, a very competent rabbi was trained at the rabbinic academy called the House of Hillel by 'Gamaliel,' a key rabbinic leader and member of the Sanhedrin. It can be observed that the New Testament authors employ oral tradition terminology such as "delivering," "receiving," "passing on" "learning," "guarding," the traditional teaching. Just look at the following passages:

Romans 16:17: "Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause

1 David H. Fisher, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), 62.

2 Paul W. Barnett, *Jesus and the Logic of History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 138.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.



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dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them."

1 Corinthians 11:23: "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed took bread."

Philippians 4:9: "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

2 Thessalonians 2:15: "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us."

1 Corinthians 15:3-7: The Earliest Account

Paul applies this terminology in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 which is one of the earliest records for the historical content of the Gospel—the death and resurrection of Jesus. The late Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide was so impressed by the creed of 1 Corinthians 15, that he concluded this "formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses."⁵

Paul's usage of the rabbinic terminology "passed on" and "received" is seen in the creed of 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Richard Bauckham notes in his book *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* that the Greek word for "eyewitness" (autoptai), does not have forensic meaning, and in that sense the English word "eyewitnesses" with its suggestion of a metaphor from the law courts, is a little misleading.⁶ The autoptai are simply firsthand observers of those events. Best of all was for the historian to have been himself a participant in the events (direct autopsy). Failing that (and no historian was present at all the events he need to recount, not least

⁵ Pinchas Lapide, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983), 98-99.

⁶ See Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Gospels: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006).



THE EARLIEST RECORD FOR THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-7

because some would be simultaneous), they sought informants who could speak from firsthand knowledge and whom they could interview (indirect autopsy). In other words, Byrskog defines "autopsy," as a visual means of gathering data about a certain object and can include means that are either direct (being an eyewitness) or indirect (access to eyewitnesses).⁷

Autopsy is arguably used by Paul (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:5–8; Gal. 1:16), Luke (Acts 1:21–22; 10:39–41), and John (19:35; 21:24; 1 John 1:1–4).

The word "received" παραλαμβάνω (a rabbinical term) means to receive something transmitted from someone else, which could be by an oral transmission or from others from whom the tradition proceeds. This entails that Paul received this information from someone else at an even earlier date. 1 Corinthians is dated 50-55 AD. Since Jesus was crucified in 30-33 AD, the letter is only 20-25 years after the death of Jesus. But the actual creed here in 1 Corinthians 15 was received by Paul much earlier than 55 AD.

Ulrich Wilckens declares that this creed "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."⁸ Joachim Jeremias calls it "the earliest tradition of all."⁹ Even the non-Christian scholar Gerd Ludemann says that "I do insist that the discovery of pre-Pauline confessional foundations is one of the great achievements in New Testament scholarship."¹⁰

The majority of scholars who comment, think that Paul probably received this information about three years after his conversion, which probably occurred from one to four years after the crucifixion. At that time, Paul visited Jerusalem to speak with Peter and James, each of whom are included in the list of Jesus' appearances (1 Cor. 15:5, 7; Gal. 1:18–19). This places it at roughly AD 32–38. Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:

"Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that, 'I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received.' The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30's when, according to Galatians 1:18, he 'went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days.'"¹¹

E.P. Sanders also says:

"Paul's letters were written earlier than the gospels, and so his reference to the Twelve is the earliest evidence. It comes in a passage that he repeats as 'tradition', and is thus to be traced back to the earliest days of the movement. In 1 Corinthians 15 he gives the list of resurrection appearances that had been handed down to him."¹²

This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed, Paul calls Peter by his Aramaic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two

7 Ibid.

8 Ulrich Wilckens, *Resurrection*, trans. A. M. Stewart (Edinburgh: St. Andrew, 1977), 2.

9 Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (trans. John Bowden. New York: Scribner's, 1971), 306.

10 Gerd Ludemann, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ: A Historical Inquiry* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2004), 37.

11 John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 254.

12 E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 120.

THE EARLIEST RECORD FOR THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-7

locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea. In other words, Paul supposedly went to Jerusalem to make an inquiry about something from Peter. But this has not gone without being challenged. Some scholars argue that a more neutral meaning of "historeo" is "to get to know a person." A more plausible alternative is given by Bruce Malina and Jermome Neyrey:

"Paul's decision to go to Jerusalem is not based on seeking information; he has nothing to 'inquire' of Cephas. Yet, by Mediterranean cultural standards, his claim that he was 'taught by God' needed to be acknowledged by others if it is a claim to honor and status. What seems important in Galatians 1:18-19 is Paul's positioning himself on par with Cephas and James, the Lord's brother. Paul meets only with the leaders of the group both as their peer and as a person acknowledged to have been taught by God—at least these seem to be Paul's own rhetorical claims."¹³

Why does this matter?

I was once talking to a Muslim about the dating of the Qur'an and the New Testament. Islam states Jesus was never crucified, and therefore, never risen. The Qur'an was written some six hundred years after the life of Jesus which makes it a much later source of information than the New Testament. It seems the evidence that has just been discussed tells us that the historical content of the Gospel (Jesus' death and resurrection) was circulating very early among the Christian community. As I just said, historians look for the records that are closest to the date of event. Given the early date of 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, it is quite

evident that this document is a more reliable resource than the Qur'an. Furthermore, to say the story of Jesus was something that was "made up" much later contradicts the evidence just presented.

Bart Ehrman, The Resurrection of Jesus, and The Vision Hypothesis
—Eric Chabot

Christian Origins and the Resurrection of Jesus
—N.T. Wright

Evidence for the Resurrection
—Josh.org

Why Isn't There More Compelling Evidence for God?
—Tom Gilson

Historical Evidence of Jesus Christ's Resurrection
—Jack Wellman

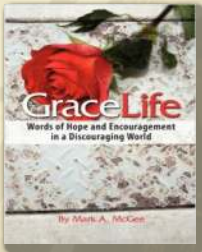
Three Things the Gospel Authors Would Never Have Invented About Jesus
—Eric Chabot

13 Bruce Malina and Jermome Neyrey, *Portraits of Paul, An Archaeology of Ancient Personality* (Louisville:Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 43.



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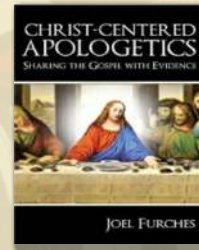
Mark A. McGee

Gracelife: Words of Encouragement in a Discouraging World

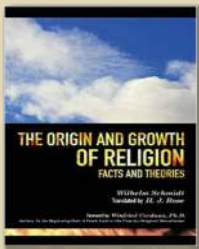
Words are powerful. They can do great good or great harm. They can impart wisdom or foolishness. They can be the truth or a lie. They can change a person's life for better or worse. The Bible is filled with words of hope and encouragement. In fact, everything God says is to give hope and encouragement to those who will listen. LOVE. GRACE. MERCY. FORGIVENESS. COMPASSION. If you need words of hope and encouragement, this book was written for you. A kind word lifts our spirits and helps us see better possibilities ahead. Even in the dark moments of life, a word of hope and encouragement can make the difference between moving forward and giving up.

Christ-Centered Apologetics: Sharing the Gospel with Evidence

In recent years, Apologetics has drifted away from the mission of the Church: sharing Christ's salvation with a needy world. This book meets a desperate need in the market of Christian resources, marrying both Christian Apologetics and Evangelism.



Joel Furches



Wilhelm Schmidt

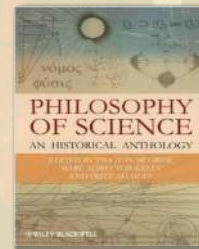
The Origin and Growth of Religion

Back in print after more than four decades, *The Origin and Growth of Religion* is a much-sought-after volume, as it provides a glimpse into philosophy of religion in the early twentieth century. Wilhelm Schmidt, based on his research and observations as an anthropologist, contends the opposite of the evolutionary theory of religion - which is, that all religions of the world originate in monotheistic worship.

(Republished by Mark S. Phillips, September, 2014)

Philosophy of Science: An Historical Anthology

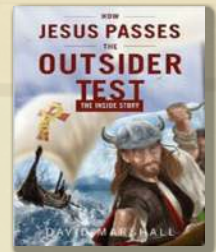
By combining excerpts from key historical writings with commentary by experts, *Philosophy of Science: An Historical Anthology* provides a comprehensive history of the philosophy of science from ancient to modern times. * Provides a comprehensive history of the philosophy of science, from antiquity up to the 20th century * Includes extensive commentary by scholars putting the selected writings in historical context and pointing out their interconnections * Covers areas rarely seen in philosophy of science texts, including the philosophical dimensions of biology, chemistry, and geology.



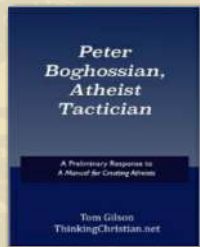
Timothy McGrew

How Jesus Passes the Outsider Test: The Inside Story

What if we look at the Christian message from "outside the box" of modern Western culture? How if we ask Viking sailors, Greek philosophers, African shamans, and Korean businessmen selling herbs in Northeast China, what they think of Jesus? Does Christ pass the so-called "Outsider Test?" Dr. David Marshall argues that the Gospel of Jesus passes the test of varied cultures and times better than any other faith or skeptical ideology, not in one, but in four ways. Marshall then takes the reader on a whirlwind tour from Palestine to Greece and on to Iceland, India, China, and Korea, telling the "inside story" of Christian expansion, as it has never been told before.



David Marshall



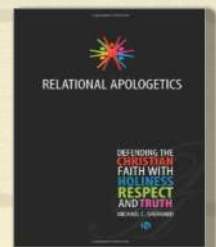
Tom Gilson

Peter Boghossian, Atheist Tactician: A Preliminary Response to "A Manual for Creating Atheists"

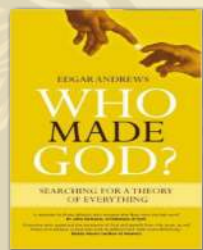
Peter Boghossian has energized atheists with his recently published Manual for Creating Atheists—and for good reason, in part. He's a master of rhetoric and persuasion theory. He outshines other contemporary atheists in his understanding of strategy and tactics. He is a force for Christians to reckon with, and believers ought to be aware of him. Other than his rhetorical and strategic skill, there's very little in him for Christians to fear. He takes direct aim at the concept of religious faith—and he misses. He wants to re-define faith as "belief without evidence," and "pretending to know what one doesn't know."

Relational Apologetics: Defending the Christian Faith with Holiness, Respect, and Truth

How do you know that there is a God? How do you answer someone who says that truth doesn't exist? What do you do when someone asks you how you know that Christianity is the right religion? If you are like many people, the only answer you can offer is, "Well... I just have faith." But to a world that wants to know if God is real, this is not a good enough answer. Christians must be ready to give a reason, a good reason, for their hope in Jesus, and their lives must be a holy reflection of their message. In Relational Apologetics, Michael C. Sherrard seeks to help Christians do just that: become holy people that defend Christianity both in word and deed.



Michael C. Sherrard



Edgar Andrews

Who Made God

Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, says Who made God? is 'written in a very lively style and conveys complex subjects in a palatable form'. Novelist Fay Weldon calls it 'thoughtful, readable, witty, wise'. The Principal of London Theological Seminary declares: 'Richard Dawkins has more than met his match.' A book by a distinguished scientist about the existence of God, with chapter headings like 'Steam engine to the stars' and 'The tidy pachyderm' has to be different. It is. Addressing profound questions of science, philosophy and faith with an amazing lightness of touch, Edgar Andrews exposes the pretensions of the 'new atheism', blending incisive arguments with gentle humour.



PAUL'S EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY TO THE RISEN CHRIST

Mark McGee • faithandselfdefense.com

One of the most powerful evidences for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the testimony of Saul of Tarsus (also known as Paul). We find Saul's testimony in the Book of Acts and several of his letters found in the New Testament. Before we look at Saul's testimony and begin the process of determining the legitimacy of his claims about Jesus Christ, let's learn a little about the man.

The name 'Saul' comes from the Hebrew name 'Sha'ul,' which means 'asked for, prayed for.' We first meet Saul in Acts 7 during the stoning of Stephen.

Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Acts 7:57-59

Saul participated in the murder of Stephen who had the position of being a 'deacon' with the early followers of Jesus of Nazareth, also known as The Way. Saul explained years later that the reason he was standing by while people stoned Stephen to death was to 'consent' to his death and to 'guard the clothes of those who were killing him' (Acts 22:20).

Saul's Life

We know a lot about Saul's life because of what he said and what he wrote. Here is some of what we know about Saul from the Book of Acts and some of his letters (e.g. Philippians, Galatians).

Saul was a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Saul was born a citizen of Rome and was brought up in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, a leading rabbi and member of the ruling Sanhedrin. Gamaliel was a leading authority in the Jewish Sanhedrin during the early part of the 1st Century AD. Based on being a student of Gamaliel and other historical information presented in the Book of Acts, many scholars believe Saul was born before 10 AD (possibly before 5 AD).

Saul said he was taught according to the 'strictness' of the Jewish Law, concerning righteousness which is in the Law he was blameless, and was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. Saul said he advanced in Judaism beyond many of his contemporaries in Israel and was 'exceedingly zealous' for the traditions of the 'fathers' of Judaism.

Saul said he was so zealous toward God that he persecuted the followers of Jesus Christ to the death, binding and delivering men and women to prison. Saul said he received his

PAUL'S EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY TO THE RISEN CHRIST

authority to carry out the arrests and deaths of followers of Jesus Christ from the High Priest of Israel and the Council of Elders. Saul said his primary purpose in carrying out the orders of the High Priest and Elders was to 'destroy' the followers of Jesus Christ.

As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.
Acts 8:3

Saul and the Resurrection of Christ

This personal history of Saul of Tarsus is important to know and understand in light of his later testimony about the 'resurrection' of Jesus Christ.

Saul's teacher Gamaliel was a member of the Sanhedrin when Peter and other apostles of Christ were arrested and brought before the Jewish Council. Gamaliel was present when Peter said these words: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree" (Acts 5:30). Saul knew what the Apostles were claiming about Jesus rising from the dead.

Saul was a devout Jew and highly-trained Pharisee who dedicated his life to the destruction of the early Church. Saul was present when Stephen shared his eloquent defense of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with his accusers. Stephen was answering questions from the High Priest of Israel, who had employed Saul to persecute the early Church.

Stephen again made the famous claim that Jesus had risen from the dead after being betrayed and murdered by Israel's rulers.

Because of his personal and religious background and experience, Saul would not have been an easy person to 'turn' from being a persecutor of people who believed in the resurrection of Jesus, into a believer in the resurrection of Jesus. So, what caused Saul to change his beliefs about Jesus?

Jesus 'revealed' Himself to Saul. Here's how Saul (Paul) explained it to King Agrippa.

Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to



PAUL'S EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY TO THE RISEN CHRIST

kick against the goads.' So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.
Acts 26:9-20

Paul's testimony about his conversion 'from' believing Jesus was crucified and still dead 'to' believing Jesus was raised from the dead and alive in Heaven was based on his personal experience of being knocked to the ground by a light from heaven brighter than the sun and hearing the voice of Jesus Christ speak to him and tell him what He wanted Paul to do with his life.

The change in Paul's life was immediate and dramatic. He did what Jesus called him to do on that amazing day on the road to Damascus and never turned back.

Paul as Defender of the Resurrection

The Apostle Paul became one of the most powerful defenders of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He declared the truth of the resurrection to both Gentiles (Acts 17:16-33) and Jews (Acts 23:6-9). Paul believed that the resurrection from the dead declared Jesus "to be the Son of God with

power according to the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4). Paul went so far as to claim that Jesus, "having been raised from the dead, dies no more." Paul believed in the resurrection to such a high degree that he said a person's spiritual salvation was dependent on believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10). Paul also believed that the resurrection of Christ was so vital to Christianity that if Jesus had not been raised from the dead, his (Paul's) preaching was in vain, Christians' faith was futile, they were all still in their sins, and that if "in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

Paul believed in the importance of presenting evidence for one's beliefs and was one of Christianity's earliest and best apologists (Acts 22; 24; 26; Phil. 1; 2 Tim. 4). Here is the evidence Paul shared to support the claim of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

1 Cor. 15:3-11

PAUL'S EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY TO THE RISEN CHRIST

Notice how Paul presented his apologetic for Jesus' resurrection. He started by reminding them that he had presented this same apologetic to them previously and it was an apologetic that he had 'received.' This was not something Paul had made up. He had 'received' (parelabon—from para, close beside, and lambano, take or receive by showing aggressive personal initiative) it from others.

It's a reminder to us that Paul visited Jerusalem about three years after his conversion and spent 15 days with Peter and also visited with James, the brother of Jesus. That may be where Paul 'received' the resurrection apologetic used by the earliest followers of Christ:

- Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
- Christ was buried.
- Christ rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.
- Christ was seen by Cephas.
- Christ was seen by 'the twelve'.
- Christ was seen by more than 500 'brethren' at the same time, the greater number who were still alive, though some had died.
- Christ was seen by James.
- Christ was seen by all the apostles.
- Christ was seen by Paul.

Paul appealed to both evidential and historical apologetics as he addressed what some were saying in the Corinthian church—that there was no resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:12). He appealed to Jesus' fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the death, burial and resurrection of

God's promised Anointed One. Paul also appealed to the eyewitness testimony of Christ's apostles and hundreds of 'brethren' who 'saw' Jesus alive after His crucifixion. Paul's appeal included the apologetic of verifiable evidence—most of the eyewitnesses were still alive and could answer questions about what they saw.

Saul had been as convinced as he could be through his Jewish upbringing, education, training and experience that the story about Jesus' resurrection was bad for Judaism and had to be destroyed. As he testified many times, there was only one thing that could have convinced him Jesus had been raised from the dead and that was to meet the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ in person—and he did.

The Apostle Paul was an eyewitness to the resurrected Christ and that transformed his life and gave him a new passion and vision for the rest of his life. Paul's personal testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most powerful evidences of the reality of the resurrection.

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*Should We Expect
More Eyewitness
Accounts of the
Resurrection?
—Dr. Craig*

*Did Jesus Rise from
the Dead?
An Outline
—Ryan Turner*

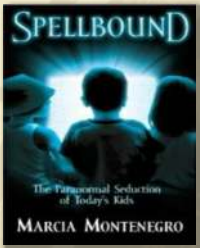
*If I Had Faked the
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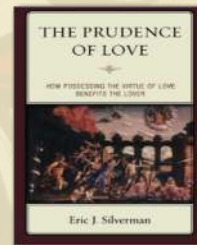
Marcia Montenegro

Spellbound: The Paranormal Seduction of Today's Kids

Our culture is saturated with the supernatural. TV shows such as Medium, Charmed, and Lost all have an "other-worldly" theme. Most of them blur the lines between good and evil. This past year was a "record" year for Hollywood in the production of films that dealt with the supernatural/paranormal. While we choose our entertainment, our kids don't often have the luxury of choosing whether to be exposed to these things at school. This book seeks to present a lucid and comprehensive examination of the paranormal and occult by breaking down the principles of paranormal practices, giving key points about the practices so that parents can readily identify them.

The Prudence of Love: How Possessing the Virtue of Love Benefits the Lover

The Prudence of Love focuses upon the intersection of philosophical, theological, and psychological issues concerning love. Eric Silverman advocates an account of the virtue of love derived from Thomas Aquinas's account of charity and makes three claims concerning love's effect on a person's happiness. First, he argues that there are at least five distinct ways that possessing the virtue of love contributes to the lover's happiness. Surprisingly, only one of these benefits is primarily relational, while the other benefits are largely psychological. Second, Silverman argues that the combination of love's benefits typically increases the lover's overall level of happiness. Finally, he argues that possessing a loving disposition is a more reliable strategy for increasing one's overall happiness than possessing an unloving disposition.



Eric J. Silverman



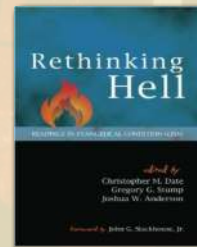
Albert McIlhenny

Neither New Nor Strange: How Jesus Mythicists Misrepresent the Church Fathers

Through films such as Zeitgeist and books by Earl Doherty, Tom Harpur, Richard Carrier, D. M. Murdock (aka "Acharya S"), and many others, the thesis that Jesus never existed has entered mainstream popular thought. While this view is not taken seriously by scholars, it has established itself as standard fare among internet atheists, conspiracy theorists, and anti-Christian polemicists of all sorts and the "Jesus mythicist" movement associated with it is a source of misinformation within the popular culture at large. In a series of e-books titled A Christian Response to Jesus Mythicism, Albert McIlhenny addresses the arguments raised by proponents of Jesus mythicism and gives a thorough critique of the movement.

Rethinking Hell: Readings in Evangelical Conditionalism

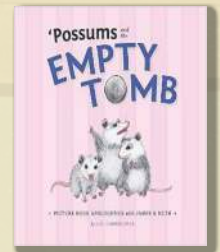
Most evangelical Christians believe that those people who are not saved before they die will be punished in hell forever. But is this what the Bible truly teaches? Do Christians need to rethink their understanding of hell? In the late twentieth century, a growing number of evangelical theologians, biblical scholars, and philosophers began to reject the traditional doctrine of eternal conscious torment in hell in favor of a minority theological perspective called conditional immortality. This view contends that the unsaved are resurrected to face divine judgment, just as Christians have always believed, but due to the fact that immortality is only given to those who are in Christ, the unsaved do not exist forever in hell. Instead, they face the punishment of the "second death"-an end to their conscious existence.



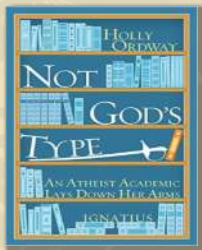
Christopher M. Date

Possums and the Empty Tomb: Picture Book Apologetics with James and Ruth

While James and Ruth are playing outside, they meet a trio of 'possums that challenge their belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Join them as they think carefully about what they believe and why they believe it as they defend what they know to be true. This colorful story will encourage deep conversations, help you equip your children with faith-strengthening tools, and embolden them to defend their Christian beliefs from an early age.



J.D. Camorlinga



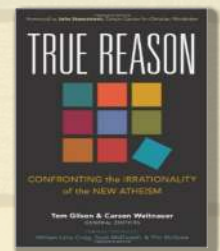
Holly Ordway

Not God's Type: An Atheist Academic Lays Down Her Arms

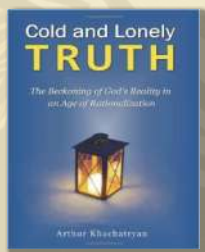
This is the story of a glorious defeat. Ordway, an atheist academic, was convinced that faith was superstitious nonsense. As a well-educated college English professor, she saw no need for just-so stories about God. Secure in her fortress of atheism, she was safe (or so she thought) from any assault by irrational faith. But then something happened . . . How did she come to "lay down her arms" in surrender to Christ—and then, a few years later, enter into the Catholic Church? This is the moving account of her unusual journey. It is the story of an academic becoming convinced of the truth of Christianity on rational grounds—but also the account of God's grace acting in and through her imagination.

True Reason: Confronting the Irrationality of the New Atheism

Today's New Atheists proclaim themselves our culture's party of reason. It is a claim they cannot sustain. Reason is the New Atheists' weakness, not their strength and in fact, the Christian faith is a far better place to look for True Reason. In sixteen carefully constructed essays by more than a dozen Christian thinkers including William Lane Craig, Sean McDowell, Timothy McGrew, and Peter Grice, True Reason unmask the frequent irrationality displayed by leading atheists like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens. The authors go on to show the great extent to which the Christian faith has historically supported sound reasoning, and that Christian thinkers, past and present, have demonstrated real excellence in reasoned, rational thinking.



Various Authors



Arthur Khachatryan

Cold and Lonely Truth: The Beckoning of God's Reality in an Age of Rationalization

Is reality made up of only things we can see or experience? Should we depend on science alone to tell us what is real? And what about the deeper things in life? Has science replaced religion? These and other questions are dealt with in this thought-provoking and thorough examination of the nature of truth, the psychology of belief, the substance of faith, the purpose of existence, scientific evidence for the existence of God, the archaeological consistency with Christianity and its historical validity. Why would a good and loving God allow people to suffer? Why is there so much evil in this world? Why doesn't God simply reveal Himself and allow us to simply experience Him in a tangible way? In this profound investigation into the nature of truth, Arthur Khachatryan answers these and other questions.



THE RESURRECTION AND HONOR AND SHAME

Nick Peters • deeperwaters.ddns.net

Reading the Bible is a cross-cultural experience. As Werner Mischke says in his book *The Global Gospel*, “Culturally speaking, the Bible does not “belong” to you; it’s not your book.” What does he mean? He means that the Bible comes from an area called the majority world and most people in this area do not live in a culture that is individualistic like those of us do in the West. We live in what is called a “guilt-innocence” culture.

To show how different our world is, we think so much about Jesus taking away our guilt. I just did a search through the ESV. The word “guilt” shows up eighteen times in the NT. In all of the cases, it refers not to an internal feeling, but a legal reality. Not once does it show up in Romans. In fact, it shows up only in 1 Corinthians in the epistles. “Shame” meanwhile, shows up thirty times and it is what we are supposed to avoid in our personal experience. “Innocent” shows up ten times in the NT, while “honor” shows up sixty-nine times.

Could we be missing something here when we focus on guilt and innocence while the Bible focuses on honor and shame? Guilt and innocence are surely important, but they are not seen as important as honor and shame.

In the ancient world, honor was to be valued above all and shame avoided above all. It was also a world where there was perceived to be limited good. If you got honor, you got it

because someone else lost it. Hence, when King Saul hears that he has killed thousands and David has killed tens of thousands, he sees David has acquired some of his honor so he sees him as a threat. Honor is a good social standing amongst the people in your society. Shame is being an outcast by the people of your society. Most people in this culture would rather die honorably than live with shame.

Okay. So what does this have to do with the resurrection?

Many of us are already familiar with the minimal facts approach of Gary Habermas and Mike Licona. I have no problem with this approach. I use it myself. I am arguing this approach also as an addendum to it, though it can be an argument entirely on its own. I am in large debt to J.P. Holding for bringing out the reality of this, especially with books of his like *The Impossible Faith* and *Defending The Resurrection*.

Let’s start with some basic facts about Jesus. These would not be controversial amongst NT scholars on all sides.

Aside from his trip to Egypt as an infant, Jesus never traveled out of Palestine.

- Jesus never wrote a book.
- Jesus never led an army.
- Jesus came from Nazareth, a town that was despised with a low honor rating.



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- Jesus never went to battle.
- Jesus never held political office or even ran for office.
- Jesus was said to have been a miracle worker.

Jesus was crucified.

One claim we find from those on the fringe of the fringe known as Christ-mythers is that if Jesus was so great, people should have mentioned Him. Reality is that based on what I've just said, Jesus was not seen as great. "What about the miracles?" In Jesus's day, He would have been seen as a televangelist type mainly. Miracles were often seen as cons that people did to fool the gullible.

But above all, crucifixion was the worst. You did not talk about crucifixion in polite conversation. Crucifixion was a shame and it was designed to shame someone entirely. Deuteronomy 21:23 tells us that "cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree." The Jews at the time of Jesus saw crucifixion as the death of being hung on a tree. No righteous man would be crucified. No one who was the Messiah and was supposed to deliver Israel would be crucified.

Believe it or not, this is something Muslims get. They know that the prophets did indeed suffer, but surely no righteous prophet would ever undergo such radical dishonor. It's an understandable argument and it is in fact one that the people in Paul's time would make.

Paul's message in 1 Corinthians 1 is an example of this. Greeks saw it as a stumbling block because no king would be crucified. Jews saw it as one because no Messiah would be crucified.

By the way, if you put your trust in this Messiah figure, you were staking your whole identity on Him. Everyone who was following Jesus was meant to be in it for the long haul. Jesus was to be for them their whole identity. This is what we find in statements like "Deny yourself and follow me." "If you do not hate your family or even your very life more than me, you are not worthy of me." Everything centered around Him.

So if your Messiah dies as being under the curse of YHWH and He dies as being seen as a traitor to Rome, how are you seen?

You got it.

No one will want to follow Jesus if you're a Jew and you realize that to follow Jesus means you are going to be eternally cursed by YHWH. No one will want to follow Jesus if you're a Gentile and you know that to follow Him is to be seen as a traitor to Rome. So why did anyone follow Him?

The reason is they must have had a strong reason to believe that His claims had been vindicated. What could vindicate someone who died a shameful death? Only one thing. A glorious resurrection.



THE RESURRECTION AND HONOR AND SHAME

You see, the point is that Christianity started in a culture of honor and shame. It started in a world where Jesus's social status would have been looked at immediately. There was nothing impressive about where He came from. A person's birth and death were seen as most important. Jesus's birth, even with claims of a virgin birth, would have been shameful. After all, this is Judaism where you don't get pregnant out of wedlock, such could even result in death. Giving any hint that Jesus was an illegitimate child would not go well. So why do it? Because as someone like David Instone-Brewer would say in *The Jesus Scandals*, you had to say something. His birth was a circumstance people would talk about.

Naturally, his death was shameful as we have seen. If you were in polite conversation with people, you did not talk about crucifixion. It would be like talking about pedophilia around the dinner table today. It just wasn't done. Crucifixion was reserved for the worst of the worst. It was so awful that Roman citizens were made exempt from it.

That anyone gave Jesus the time of day must mean that something remarkable happened. That would be a resurrection. In order to explain how Jesus was received in such a society, there has to be some belief that He was vindicated. The earliest Christians said this was because He was resurrected. (Again, information about appearances and such is found in the minimal facts argument.)

But okay, He was resurrected. We get that. Yet couldn't that be enough appeal on its own? I mean, everyone wants to live again. Right? Everyone wants to have the hope of resurrection. Who wouldn't be for that?

Practically every Gentile in the Roman world wouldn't.

You see, to return to the body was to return to the shackles of prison, as Crossan and Reed state in *In Search of Paul*.

Kevin Anderson in his book *But God Raised Him From The Dead* has a chapter devoted to this topic. You can also consider that when Socrates dies in Plato's *Phaedo*, he asks that a cock be sent as a gift to the god of healing. Escaping the body is the ultimate healing. This is why Gnosticism would have been so much more popular than Christianity. Who wants that clunky old body of matter?

Here's something else to consider. Christianity was new. A new belief system would be looked on with suspicion. Robert Louis Wilken in his book *The Christians As The Romans Saw Them* tells us that the ancients saw those who came before them as being closer to God. The way to live a good life then was to heed their wisdom. This is why the Romans gave Jews a pass on not worshiping pagan gods. Their beliefs were old and thus worthy of respect. The Christians were not. When they were seen as separate from Judaism, then they were innovators and thus viewed with suspicion.

Christianity also did not live in a live and let-live culture. Tolerance was good so long as you accepted the majority opinion. You could worship other gods if you at least made sure to include the Roman Pantheon and the emperor in your worship. (Aren't you all glad we moved past this view of tolerance where the majority decides what should and shouldn't be tolerated?)

Christianity also had a high moral standard that was to be followed. In the mystery religions, you could go out and have an orgy and be just fine. The Christians held to the highest, especially in the areas of sexual morality with strong views on divorce and abortion. All of these were views running counter-culturally to the Roman Empire.

To be a Christian was to set yourself out from society as a deviant. When your identity came from your society, you

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would in some sense not be seen as a person. Oh you could have your Christian community, but this is simply outcasts gathering with other outcasts. Now some might think that would mean the poor and others who were looked down on would want to join the movement. No. They have enough shame as it is. Why add more?

Some people will say that a religion like Islam is a disproof of this. After all, if you want to say that Christianity succeeded because it was true, well what's the reason for the success of Islam? There is no doubt that Muhammad as well challenged the culture that he lived in with some radical ideas, but we must look at how the practices were different rather than how they were similar.

In the case of Islam, one thing that drastically makes it different is the sword. Going forward with a sword in your hand to do evangelism is quite an effective strategy. This was one the Christians would not have immediate access to and when used, they would not use it for several centuries to come. You could also then gain great personal bonuses such as getting a lot of wealth and women from going on raids with Muhammad.

What about Mormonism? Mormonism started in the New England area with the vision of a boy named Joseph Smith and it spread and grew and has lasted to this day. The Mormon Church is one of the richest organizations in the world and some people think that Mormonism could soon be listed as the fourth major monotheistic faith. (Although on a side note, Mormonism is hardly monotheistic)

Why doesn't Mormonism qualify? Simple. Smith did not bring about his religion in an honor-shame context. It was an American context where innovation was not looked down on and where tolerance was more valued. Americans had more of a live and let live idea. In the Roman world, if you

went against the gods, you were being deviant, and if society suffered, then that meant the gods were angry. Why would they be angry? Obviously because of the deviants! That wasn't the case in America.

Did some people persecute the Mormons? Yes. For that, the Mormons had many places they could flee. They could go to wide open spaces and make their settlements there. There were plenty of them. The Christians did not have this luxury. This gave the Mormons enough time to get situated and become the people that they are today.

Someone could also object that surely someone would hear the story of Jesus and they could think that this was a great heroic example worthy of being followed and that would make them want to be followers. This is also false. Let's suppose we did meet this strange individual who said it was a great story. What would they say about that? That's it. That doesn't mean that they believe it's true. Saying Christianity is a great story is not the same as giving reasons why anyone should put their life and identity on the line by saying that that story is true?

Yet we know that people did put their life on the line. People did come to believe the story. In fact, the interesting part is that a lot of middle and upper-class people believed the story. These were in fact the people who had the most to lose. They also had the best means to do fact-checking. You have the money and you send someone off and say "Okay. Go to the area of Palestine. Interact with the people and find out what you can. Talk to the ones who are supposedly eyewitnesses. See what happened." That people who were rich and powerful and had everything to lose accepted the position is incredibly revealing.

One other aspect that could be mentioned in all of this is that if the reports in Acts are true, there were miracles being



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done. Those who saw these and could not explain them away would have extra reason to think the Christian view was true. Of course, if miracles were being done, then that is further sign that God is behind the movement and has reversed the judgment of the Sanhedrin on Jesus and chosen to honor Him instead.

None of this goes against a Minimal Facts approach, but I think it adds a special touch to the argument. It really brings out the wonder that not only did Christianity survive, it thrived. It thrived so much that it conquered the Roman Empire without the sword eventually. In reality, it should not have even got off the ground, unless it was persuasive enough to convince others that it was true.

Many of you reading might be surprised at the idea of an honor-shame context and have never heard about it before. For that, I want to present some resources for your understanding in addition to the books mentioned specifically in this article.

[MissionONE](#)
[HonorShame](#)

[Tekton Education and Apologetics Ministries](#)

[The Global Gospel](#) by Werner Mischke

[Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes](#) by E. Randolph Richards and Brandon O'Brien

[Honor, Patronage, Kinship, Purity](#) by David DeSilva

[Most any book](#) by Ben Witherington

[The New Testament World](#) by Bruce Malina

[Handbook of Biblical Social Values](#) by Bruce Malina and John Pilch

This is all just meant to be a start. Getting into this world is a fascinating look at the NT and will greatly improve your understanding of the text.

Does science make it impossible that Jesus rose from the dead?
—godnewevidence

Why it matters whether Jesus rose from the dead
—godnewevidence

Did Jesus rise from the dead, or were these claims legends?
—godnewevidence

Did Jesus rise from the dead? Can we know about history so long ago?
—godnewevidence

Did Jesus rise from the dead, or was it a hoax by His followers?
—godnewevidence

Was Jesus raised from the dead? Did he really die, or only pass out?
—godnewevidence

Was Jesus raised from the dead? Did they find Jesus' empty tomb?
—godnewevidence

Did Jesus rise from the dead, or was it hallucinations by His followers?
—godnewevidence

Contradictions in the Bible accounts of Jesus rising from the dead?
—godnewevidence

What difference does believing Jesus rose from the dead make?
—godnewevidence

CAA Members Gather After #GodScience Event



On January 30, [Biola University](#) hosted a phenomenal event titled: [God, Science & The Big Questions](#). Moderated by Hugh Hewitt, the panel consisted of world renowned Christian Thinkers: Dr. William Lane Craig, Dr. John Lennox, and Dr. JP Moreland. The promotion for the event promised "Nothing is off the table as they discuss science vs. Christianity, arguments for God, the decline of Darwinism, radical Islam and the Gospel, responding to skeptics, the problem of consciousness, mathematics and the cosmos, the nature of knowledge, and much, much more." The two hour event started at 7:30 PM and, regrettably, ended as promised. We invite you to [watch the event](#). After watching, connect with the [Christian Apologetics Alliance](#) Facebook group and join the discussion.

Following the event, some of the members of the Christian Apologetics Alliance who were in attendance gathered at a member's house local to Biola University for fellowship and lively discussion: Clinton Wilcox, Phil Jeske, Karen Gerharter-Goodman, Jojo Alva, Adrian Urias, Tyson James, Glen Richmond, and Jennifer Richmond.





The Family Room

[fam-uh-lee room]: a center for family activities

THE MINIMAL FACTS ARGUMENT: A CHILD'S PRESENTATION

Bonita Jewel • positiveparentingblog.wordpress.com

For weeks, I had been meaning to sit with my children and have a discussion about Easter, specifically on the facts surrounding the resurrection of Jesus. For one, I needed to write an article about it. More than that, it had been such a busy semester, I had barely managed to read a chapter here and there with them.

Realizing that the perfect moment would never carve itself out of my schedule, I determined that I needed to fit it in somehow. Our family sat down to dinner.

"Let's talk about arguments for Christianity," I offered.

My two older kids sat up straight. "Can you give us quiz questions?" My ten-year-old daughter, Jessica, asked.

"Ask me a question first," eight-year-old Allen chimed in.

"If you were an atheist ..." I began.

Jessica made a face. "But I'm not."

My five-year-old son, Aiden, piped up, "Atheists are people who pretend not to believe in God." I asked him if I could quote

him on that.

"Hear me out while I ask this question," I said. "Don't worry. You'll all get a chance to say something." They settled down and listened.

"If you did not believe in God and were trying to get others to believe that too, what would you try hard to disprove?"

"The Bible!" Jessica said.

"That God exists?" Allen offered.

"Those are good guesses," I said, "but some non-Christians also believe in parts of the Bible, and others' beliefs say that God exists. If you were an 'evangelistic atheist,' what specific event would you try to argue never happened?"

The table was silent. Time for a hint.

"This event is central to Christian belief. It's one of the most important things that happened in the Bible."

"That Jesus died ..." Allen began.

"The resurrection!" Jessica exclaimed.

"You're both right." I didn't want Allen to think that his answer hadn't been heard. "If

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THE MINIMAL FACTS ARGUMENT: A CHILD'S PRESENTATION

someone wanted to disprove Christianity, they would try to disprove that Jesus rose again after He was killed. Now think about the Bible story of the resurrection. What are some things that make the accounts believable?"

Blank stares returned to me from around the table.

"What I mean is, what parts of the resurrection story make it difficult to call it made up? From another perspective, if you were Jesus' disciples making up a story about Him rising from the dead, what wouldn't you have added?"

"The disciples didn't believe at first," Allen volunteered. "If I was making up the story, I would say that I believed right away. I wouldn't write about myself doubting."

"Good point." I wanted them to go a little farther with that thought. "And what were the disciples ultimately willing to do? What eventually happened because of their testimony?"

"They died," Jessica answered. "They wouldn't die for a lie."

"That's right." Now we were getting somewhere. "Why do you think these things are important?"

"Because they help people believe?" One of the kids asked.

I nodded. "I think so. Sometimes a well-written or well-researched argument can help people to believe."

I recalled a video I had been watching earlier in the day, and decided to use it as an example. I told the kids, "There is a man, whose name is Gary Habermas. He was a skeptic. He grew up going to church but by the time he was in university, he didn't really believe the truth of the Bible about Jesus' death and resurrection. This man began doing research for an important paper, called his doctrinal dissertation. He began looking into all kinds of sources to figure out what the truth of the resurrection was, and you know what?"

"He became a Christian?" Allen offered.

"Yes," I said, "and he also created a set of facts that he used as an approach to the resurrection. These facts were what helped to convince him, and it convinced others as well, because it's such a good argument. He wrote about it and speaks about it. He even created a name for this approach. It's called the Minimal Facts Argument."

By then, the kids had finished dinner, and I could tell their focus was wandering. You can only keep the interest of 10-and-unders for so long.

The next evening, again over our evening meal, I revisited the topic. "You remember



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that we were talking about this man named Gary Habermas and his argument for the resurrection?"

"Yeah," my daughter said. "Why are you talking about it again?"

She was on to me. I decided to tell the whole truth. "I'm actually writing an article about it. The article is for Easter, and it's about the Minimal Facts Argument."

"You mean you're doing research on us?" Jessica shrieked.

"We're your guinea pigs?" Allen added.

"Pretty much," I laughed.

"But why would adults want to know what kids have to say about it anyway?" Jessica asked.

"Well, the thing is, my article is more for parents who have kids, maybe kids your age."

Her eyes lit up. "Can I explain it in my own words then?"

"Explain what?" Now I was drawing blanks.

"The minimal facts something-or-another."

That might actually be a good idea, I thought. "You'll have to get the name right," I teased her. After dinner, I read her an article about the Minimal Facts Argument, and she came up with her own "article" about what it is, and why it is important for a Christian to know. Something tells me she explains it more clearly than I could, so I would like to present to you:

The Minimal Facts Argument, by Jessica, for parents with children:

Introduction:

Basically, the minimal facts approach is based upon historic facts agreed upon by people who believe in God and people who don't believe in God. There are five because some of the facts were not agreed upon by skeptics.

The minimal facts approach is things that both very strong believers and very strong atheists and even people in between agree on because they are facts that all those groups agree are true.

Minimal Fact #1 – Jesus Was Crucified

Both skeptics and very biblical people believe that Jesus was crucified. Some early people from history [Josephus, Tacitus], and one who was a skeptic [John Dominick Crossan], wrote that Jesus was crucified, and every single one of the Gospels say it also.

It's obvious that it's true. The disciples weren't lying or making up a story because if you were making up a story, you would want yourself to look good. It said that the disciples themselves did not believe until they had personally seen the Lord. Some of the disciples that were in there had written the books, and you would want yourself to look good if you were making up a story.

You would also want people who could testify by law, not women who were not as important in those days [Matt. 28:1-10]. You would want that testimony to be counted, so it's pretty obvious that they didn't make it up.

Minimal Fact #2 – The Disciples Saw Jesus After He Rose from the Dead

A man who personally knew the disciples and was a strong Christian [Clement of Rome] said the disciples truly believed

THE MINIMAL FACTS ARGUMENT: A CHILD'S PRESENTATION

that they had seen Christ after His resurrection.

You wouldn't die for a lie, so they truly believed themselves; they knew that they had seen Jesus after He had died and risen again. That's what the Gospel is: he died, he was buried, and he rose again from the grave to prepare us a place in heaven so the disciples told a lot of people about him and so we should too [1 Cor. 15:3-8].

Minimal Fact #3 – Jesus' Brother Became a Believer

James and the other siblings of Jesus didn't believe Jesus at first. James didn't believe that Jesus was a son of God; he was like a skeptic [John 7:5]. After Jesus' death, he saw Jesus and he became a strong believer and leader of the early church [1 Cor. 15:7]. He was later martyred for his faith.

Minimal Fact #4 – Paul Became an Apostle

Paul was a very strong Jew. He put Christian in jail and watched Stephen's martyrdom, which pretty much started his going against Christians [Acts 7:58]. It is obvious that he really did see Jesus because if you were a super strong Pharisee you wouldn't go from being against to a leader for Christian.

He established a lot of churches and wrote a lot of letters to those churches so it's obvious that He saw Jesus after His death and resurrection.

Minimal Fact #5 – The Tomb Was Empty

A lot of people agree about the tomb being empty. It is obvious that the tomb was empty; some people thought that the disciples robbed it, but as I said earlier, the disciples wouldn't have died for a lie, so they couldn't have robbed the tomb.

They also wouldn't write a story that makes themselves look bad. They would want to make themselves look like the hero. They would want to look like, "I knew it. I knew he was going to come alive again. I knew it all the time."

Summary:

The minimal facts approach can be used to tell not-so-smart atheists, or people who might just say, "Well Jesus didn't die by crucifixion." You can tell them about these facts that even skeptical scholars believe and know that He was crucified. That's just an example. The minimal facts make it obvious that if even skeptics believe in these parts of the resurrection, then the best argument is that Jesus rose from the dead, like He said He would, and like His disciples said He did.

I could not agree more. If you, on your own or with your children, would like to learn more about the Minimal Facts Approach, the website of Dr. Gary Habermas is full of great information: [audio](#), [books](#), and [educational games](#).

After reading up on the topic, you can even challenge your kids to a quiz on the [Historical Resurrection of Jesus](#).

And if your children win, try not to be too disappointed. After all, it is a sign that you are raising them with the knowledge and conviction they need to contend for the faith for their generation.

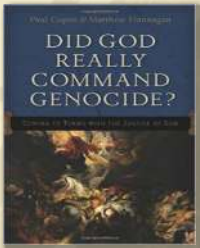
*Debunking the
Claim of
"Development" in
the Crucifixion
Narratives
-Lydia McGrew*

*Minimal Facts
vs.
Maximal Data
-Lydia McGrew*



CAA Member Published Books

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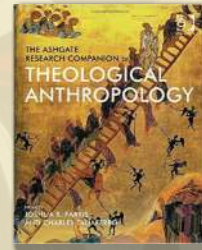
Matthew Flannagan

Did God Really Command Genocide?: Coming to Terms with the Justice of God

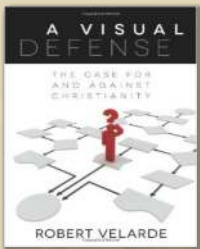
Leading apologetics author helps readers understand how the violent commands of the Old Testament God can be reconciled with the New Testament's ethic of love as taught by Jesus. Would a good, kind, and loving deity ever command the wholesale slaughter of nations? We often avoid reading difficult Old Testament passages that make us squeamish and quickly jump to the enemy-loving, forgiving Jesus of the New Testament. And yet, the question remains. In the tradition of his popular *Is God a Moral Monster?*, Paul Copan teams up with Matthew Flannagan to tackle some of the most confusing and uncomfortable passages of Scripture. Together they help the Christian and nonbeliever alike understand the biblical, theological, philosophical, and ethical implications of Old Testament warfare passages.

The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology

In recent scholarship there is an emerging interest in the integration of philosophy and theology. Philosophers and theologians address the relationship between body and soul and its implications for theological anthropology. In so doing, philosopher-theologians interact with cognitive science, biological evolution, psychology, and sociology. Reflecting these exciting new developments, The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology is a resource for philosophers and theologians, students and scholars, interested in the constructive, critical exploration of a theology of human persons. Throughout this collection of newly authored contributions, key themes are addressed: human agency and grace, the soul, sin and salvation, Christology, glory, feminism, the theology of human nature, and other major themes.



Glenn Andrew Peoples



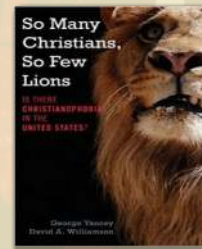
Robert Velarde

A Visual Defense: The Case for and Against Christianity

A logical argument contains premises, objections, conclusions, and rebuttals. Yet when it comes to arguments defending the Bible and faith—the field of Christian apologetics—too often people defer to assumptions rather than logical analysis. It may be that they don't fully understand what they believe or that they have never been shown how to explain their beliefs. In order to provide Christians with a means for analyzing arguments so they can understand and defend their faith, Robert Velarde has developed an accessible means for visually mapping Apologetics. In *A Visual Defense*, he shows that visual representations of arguments are not only useful critical thinking tools, but also can help Christians understand how arguments flow.

So Many Christians, So Few Lions: Is There Christianophobia in the United States?

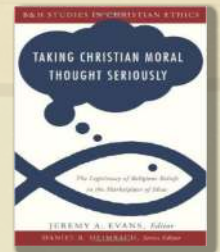
So Many Christians, So Few Lions is a provocative look at anti-Christian sentiments in America. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative research, authors George Yancey and David A. Williamson show that even though (or perhaps because) Christianity is the dominant religion in the United States, bias against Christians also exists—particularly against conservative Christians—and that this bias is worth understanding. The book does not attempt to show the prevalence of anti-Christian sentiments—called Christianophobia—but rather to document it, to dig into where and how it exists, to explore who harbors these attitudes, and to examine how this bias plays itself out in everyday life. Excerpts from the authors' interviews highlight the fear and hatred that some people harbor towards Christians, especially the Christian right, and the ways these people exhibit elements of bigotry, prejudice, and dehumanization.



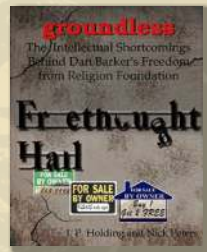
George Yancey

Taking Christian Moral Thought Seriously: The Legitimacy of Religious Beliefs in the Marketplace of Ideas

The Death Penalty, Environmentalism, Public Reason, Voting, Abortion. Where does Christian faith belong in discussions about these issues? In *Taking Christian Moral Thought Seriously*, editor Jeremy A. Evans establishes that separation of church and state is not a principle of the United States Constitution (or any other founding document). Thus, there should be a social interest in not hindering any religious person's full participation in the American marketplace of ideas. As such, Evans addresses readers from both the Christian and non-Christian communities through the related scholarship here, knowing either side's failure to consider one's well-prepared thoughts in science, politics, and education undermines the very idea of seeking the truth.



John DePoe



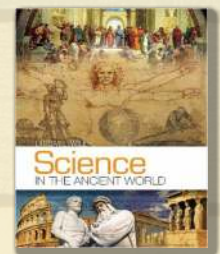
Nick Peters

Groundless: The Intellectual Shortcomings Behind Dan Barker's Freedom From Religion Foundation

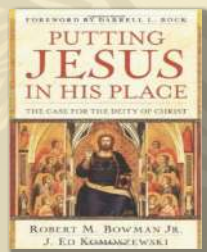
The Freedom From Religion Foundation has become a legal thorn in the side of many religious people, especially Christians. But the intellectual foundations for the Foundation's legal goals -- their critiques of the religion they wish to see reduced to obscurity in the public square -- are rotten and crumbling. In this volume, Internet apologists James Patrick Holding and Nick Peters explore the grave deficiencies in Dan Barker's intellectual case against Christianity, ranging from Barker's spectacularly embarrassing endorsement of the theory that Jesus did not exist, to his outlandish interpretation of the Golden Rule as an implicit endorsement of sadomasochism. You will never see the Freedom from Religion Foundation in quite the same light after reading *Groundless!*

Science in the Ancient World: Homeschool Science Textbook

Science in the Ancient World is the second book in a hands-on, multilevel elementary science series that introduces scientific concepts using history as its guide. Because each lesson is built around an activity or experiment, it is engaging for all K-6 students. In addition, there are three levels of review for each lesson, so the parent/teacher can choose the depth at which each student is expected to grasp the material. The course contains roughly 90 hours of instruction, 35 of which are composed of hands-on activities. The course covers the scientific work of natural philosophers who lived from about 600 BC to the early AD 1500s. It concentrates mostly on what these ancient scientists got right, but it does spend some time discussing what they got wrong, because even the mistakes that scientists make can sometimes advance our understanding of the natural world.



Jay L. Wile



Robert Bowman

Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ

The central theological distinctive of Christianity--that Jesus is God incarnate--has repeatedly come under fire from adherents to other religions and scholars who interpret Jesus as a prophet, angel, or guru. *Putting Jesus in His Place* is designed to introduce Christians to the wealth of biblical teaching on the deity of Christ. Using evidence from the New Testament, this book helps readers appreciate the significance of Christ's deity in a personal relationship with Him, and gives them the confidence to share the truth about Jesus with others. The book is divided into five sections, each corresponding to an aspect of the New Testament's revelation of Jesus as God, and using an acronym based on the letters in the word HANDS: [H]onors, [A]ttributes, [N]ames, [D]eeds, [S]eat.



THE LORD OF DEATH

JC Lamont • jclamont.com

Gehenna was rising.

Mounted atop a skeletal horse, a black-cloaked figure stared at the molten river flowing into the chasm that separated him from the botanical paradise growing in the midst of Sheol. The light from that ephemeral Eden shone like a beacon in the darkness. From within the cloak, a black, nebulous hand emerged and pulled the cowl lower over his eyes.

As lord of death, Abaddon had resided in Sheol almost since the time when the first eruption of lava had pooled down the slopes of the black mountain and snaked its way across the barren landscape. Four millennia had passed since then, and Sheol was full of the souls of mortals, who had been forced to make this wasteland their home.

But Abaddon loved the dead.

And he alone held the key to death.

A voice shouted from across the chasm, the voice of a soul Abaddon had never before heard. It echoed across the inferno, reverberating off the mountain behind him. He covered his ears with his hands, but still he heard the thunderous sound. His horse shied and kicked, forcing him to grab the reins. Shrieking in pain, Abaddon wheeled his frantic mount around, and galloped away from the chasm.

Away from the voice.

The horse's hooves pounded over the desolate terrain, past swarms of souls who, even in the partial dream state in which they existed, were bent over as though racked with pain, clasping their hands over their ears, screaming for the voice to cease. Ignoring them, Abaddon rode on, traveling leagues toward the black mountain until at last he reached the caves of Tartarus.

Yet still he heard the voice.

Seeking escape, he raced through the darkened passages. Chained to the cavern walls, demons from the days of Noah screeched and pulled against their manacles. Their ethereal bodies convulsed as they fought to break free of the chains, their heads thrashing, their eyes clenched shut. "Be rid of it!" they cried out as he passed. "Release it!"

Paying them no heed, he rode deeper and deeper into Tartarus, until the tunnel emptied into a large chamber within the heart of the black mountain. In the center of the floor loomed the massive door to the Abyss. From beneath the cavern floor, he heard the faint sound of beating wings and muffled screams crying out to him, "Abaddon! Abaddon!"

The lord of death dismounted his skeletal steed, but the creature, agitated at being trapped in the cavern, reared up on its hind legs, then tore back down the tunnels, abandoning its master.

THE LORD OF DEATH

Cursing, Abaddon looked for a place to hide. But even here, the thunderous voice from far across the chasm reached him, echoing about the cavern.

Disregarding the pleas of the demons still calling to him from below, Abaddon, lord of death, guardian of Sheol, king of the Abyss cowered in the farthest corner of the cavern.

The ceiling cracked, and a thin rain of rock and dirt fell across the chamber floor. A rift opened above, and large chunks of rock fell. And still the voice rang out. Covering his ears, Abaddon pressed himself against the cavern wall.

There was only one voice—only one soul—that could bring down the black mountain. Abaddon had never before surrendered a soul. And he never would. Once a soul entered Sheol, it belonged to him, destined to be his slave. He would not release even one. No matter how the demons or spirits of the mortals screamed at him to do so, no matter how much the mountain fell down around him.

The voice rose in pitch, and the cavern shook violently. Boulders fell from the ceiling and the air filled with dirt and dust as debris fell in torrents.

“You belong to me!” Abaddon shouted amidst the falling rock, his voice deep and throaty. “I will not release you!” But his ears felt as though they would burst, and every fiber in his vaporous being felt aflame. Forcing himself to his feet, Abaddon staggered across the chasm and stood at the entrance to the tunnel. A violent wind whipped through the cave and tore at his cloak. “You will

not defeat me. I am Death, the last enemy, the unconquered!”

The voice responded, accompanied by a wave of heat in the wind that slammed into Abaddon’s chest and threw him back against the cavern wall. From behind the door of the Abyss, he heard the demons within cry, “Give it to him, or he will be the death of us all!”

“No!” Abaddon shouted back. “Sheol is mine!”

From his cloak, Abaddon retrieved the black key to the gate of death and clenched it in his fist as he shouted down the tunnel towards the voice. “The key is mine, do you hear me? Mine!”

A spasm of pain overtook him and he fell, writhing on the floor of the cavern. The voice clutched at his being, tearing at him like talons.

Minutes turned to hours that bled in a haze of tortured anguish as he fought against the voice. The chamber continued to crumble around him, and his own screams mingled with those of the demons and the souls of the mortals.

After what seemed like an eternity, wrought with dread, Abaddon surrendered.

He’d held out for barely three days.

“I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”

—Rev. 1:18

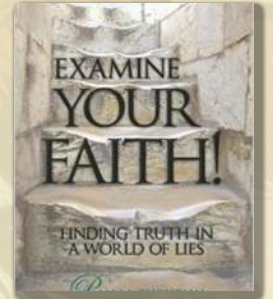


Book Review

[ri-vyoo]: a general survey, especially in words; a report or account of something

EXAMINE YOUR FAITH!

Joel Furches • examiner.com/christianity-in-baltimore/joel-furches



Pamela Christian spent most of her life thinking she was a believer. Having attended Sunday School at an early age, and accepted Christ into her heart, she had lived her life in the comfort of calling herself a Christian.

However, when she was around 30, a series of heartaches left her destitute, and she realized that she had been riding on the credit of Christianity without really taking stock of her beliefs. Remembering what she had been taught as a child, she began seeking after the Jesus of compassion she remembered.

Pamela's search became a hunger, and she eagerly devoured everything she could find on Christianity, leading her into contact with Christian Apologetics. As she pursued local Bible Study courses, she then began her own Bible Studies using the wealth of knowledge she had gained in her pursuits, including a course in Apologetics at Biola University.

Pamela has since founded Pamela Christian Ministries, and now travels the country holding conferences, especially encouraging women to involve themselves in the field of Apologetics.

Pamela's book, *Examine Your Faith! Finding Truth in a World of Lies* compares Christianity as a worldview to the other major belief systems, including Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Secularism, and Islam.

One of the major findings her book establishes is the uniqueness of the resurrection in Christian belief.

In Chapter 16 of her book, Pamela strings together the events of the gospels to establish a working timeline of Christ's resurrection.

The first point Christian addresses is the apparent differences in the resurrection accounts. Christian points out that, as eyewitness testimonies go, it would be more suspicious if the accounts were identical. She states that there are no differences in the accounts that cannot be reconciled through closer examination, and that, taken together, they form a comprehensive timeline.

Pamela's timeline looks like this:

John 20:1 – *On Sunday, Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb and finds the stone rolled away.*

Luke 24:10 – *Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women were with here.*

Luke 24:1 – *The women had gone to the tomb with spices for the purposes of embalming Jesus' body.*

Matthew 28:2 – *There had been an earthquake, the stone was rolled back by an angel, the Roman guards at the tomb were afraid and collapsed.*

John 20:1-18 – *The women discovered that Jesus' body was gone, and wept for fear that he had been stolen.*

EXAMINE YOUR FAITH!

Mary Magdalene saw two angels sitting at the head and foot of where Jesus' body had been.

Luke 24:5-7 – *One of the angels asks why the women are looking for Jesus, seeing as how he had risen, just as he had told them he would.*

Matthew 28:5 – *One of the angels told them not to be afraid, and showed them the empty place from which Jesus had risen.*

Luke 20:11 – *An angel asks Mary why she is crying, and Mary answers that it is because they have taken away her Lord.*

Matthew 28:7-9 – *The angels tell the women to run and tell the disciples what they have seen.*

John 20:14-18 – *Mary meets Jesus and mistakes him for a gardener.*

Matthew 28:9 – *Jesus tells the women to rejoice, and they worship at his feet.*

John 20:17 – *Jesus tells the women not to cling to him.*

Matthew 28:10 – *Jesus tells the women not to fear, and to go tell the disciples.*

Luke 24:9 – *The women told the disciples, who were skeptical.*

John 20:2-11 – *Peter and John investigate and witness the empty tomb.*

Pamela Christian has this to say about her book:

“Examine Your Faith! has an entire chapter devoted to the resurrection of Jesus. But in order to properly make the

claims I do, using extra-biblical evidence (historical, archeological and more), I defend the uniqueness of the Bible in contrast to all other documents of religious authority. With that having been sufficiently proven, I then use Bible pointing out the many eye-witness accounts that fully support the bodily resurrection of Jesus. There is of course extra-biblical evidence for Christ's resurrection as well, recorded by highly respected historians who were contemporaries in Jesus' day.

“For anyone who wants to discover and live in life-giving truth, God has supplied ample evidence to convince any open mind. Not everyone is searching for truth—they are content with their lives as they are. As I first mentioned, so was I for the first nearly thirty years of my life. I was deceived and didn't know it because that's the very nature of deception—the victim is unaware. To reach people with truth they aren't interested in is a difficult task. This is why I inquire of people with respect and compassion, asking them this simple question: “Do you want to live your life on the basis of a lie?” No one has ever said “yes” to that question. That one question is really quite profound as it reveals that universally people prefer truth over deception, which means that we each one have an inner moral compass. That one question opens the door for me to help them consider the inquiry I bring.”

For those seeking to compare the claims of other worldviews with those of Christianity—including the most ambitious claim that Christ rose again—Examine Your Faith! makes for a handy guide and an inspiring read.

(My personal interview conducted with the author, January 16, 2015)



Significance

[sig-nif-i-kuhns]: importance; consequence; meaningful



MaryJo Sharp



Judy Salisbury



Julie Miller



Jane Pantig

Meet the Women Apologists



Melissa Travis



Letitia Wong



Maryann Spikes



Kristen Davis



Natasha Crain



Holly Ordway



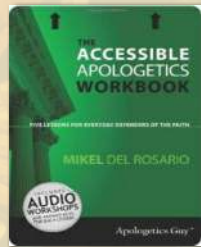
Pamela Christian



Lori Peters

CAA Member Published Books

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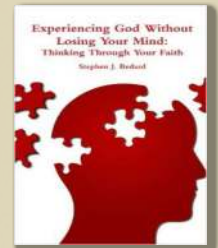
Mikel Del Rosario

The Accessible Apologetics Workbook: Five Lessons for Everyday Defenders of the Faith

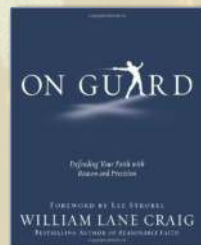
The Accessible Apologetics Workbook is a companion to Mikel Del Rosario's Accessible Apologetics Curriculum—a street-level series of five lessons for everyday defenders of the Christian faith. This workbook is the perfect tool for learning and discussing the material Del Rosario presents in his Accessible Apologetics Curriculum, online courses and live workshops. It prepares the reader with an introduction to each lesson and includes outlines, definitions, works cited for further study, and detailed notes. This workbook includes online access to all of the answers to the fill-in sections and full-length audio workshops for each lesson. Great for youth and adult study groups!

Experiencing God Without Losing Your Mind

This book is a small group or individual study guide that seeks to help Christians understand how wrestling with the hard questions is compatible with experiencing God. The book takes the reader through issues such as the existence of God, the nature of truth, the nature of the Bible, the problem of suffering, the problem of other religions and many others. Each chapter ends with discussion questions.



Stephen J. Bedard



William Lane Craig

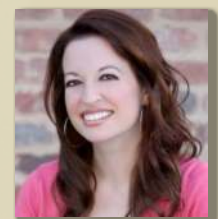
On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision

This concise guide is filled with illustrations, sidebars, and memorable steps to help Christians stand their ground and defend their faith with reason and precision. In his engaging style, Dr. Craig offers four arguments for God's existence, defends the historicity of Jesus' personal claims and resurrection, addresses the problem of suffering, and shows why religious relativism doesn't work. Along the way, he shares his story of following God's call in his own life. This one-stop, how-to-defend-your-faith manual will equip Christians to advance faith conversations deliberately, applying straightforward, cool-headed arguments. They will discover not just what they believe, but why they believe—and how being on guard with the truth has the power to change lives forever.

Keeping Your Kids on God's Side: 40 Conversations to Help Them Build a Lasting Faith (Due February 2016)

Today I want to give you a sneak peek at what you can look forward to! Here's what I've packed into 256 pages, written specifically for parents:

- Conversations About God
- Conversations About Truth and Worldviews
- Conversations About Jesus
- Conversations About the Bible
- Conversations About Science



Natasha Crain



The Apologetics of Empathy: Christina Rossetti's "A Better Resurrection"

Pain has different textures: the acute suffering of being torn apart by grief, the turmoil of anxiety. Paradoxically, perhaps the most frightening and misunderstood form of suffering is that of depression, precisely because this form of suffering often feels hopeless. Depression can be even more agonizing for Christians who think, mistakenly, that it shows an inadequate or failing faith. But as Psalms, Lamentations, Job, and Ecclesiastes show, mental and emotional suffering, as well as physical suffering and loss, is part of what it means to be human—and we follow a crucified and risen Lord. In every way Christ has suffered as we have, including in the total helplessness of lying dead in the tomb.

A reader who has never felt the weight of depression can learn from Christina Rossetti's powerful imagery something of what it feels like to be emptied, shattered, dry. And, having caught a glimpse of that experience, the Christian can then extend empathy to the sufferer, and "weep with those who weep," rather than offering a superficial quick-fix encouragement. In deepening our compassion for our brothers and sisters in Christ who struggle with grief and depression, we also become a better witness to those who do not yet believe. An important aspect of literary apologetics involves dealing with the problem of pain: showing that our faith does not dismiss suffering or trivialize it, whether that suffering is physical, mental, or emotional.

Here, in "A Better Resurrection," the devout Anglican poet Christina Rossetti takes us through suffering into the experience of transformation by Our Lord.

Holly Ordway is the author of *Not God's Type: An Atheist Academic Lays Down Her Arms* (Ignatius Press, 2014), and is Professor of English and Director of the [MA in Apologetics](#), Cultural Apologetics Track, at Houston Baptist University, where she teaches cultural and imaginative apologetics (including creative writing) in a 'mere Christian' setting.

“A Better Resurrection” by Christina Rossetti

*I have no wit, no words, no tears;
My heart within me like a stone
Is numb'd too much for hopes or fears;
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimm'd with grief
No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
O Jesus, quicken me.*

*My life is like a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindled to a husk:
Truly my life is void and brief
And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud nor greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall--the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.*

*My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
Or cordial in the searching cold;
Cast in the fire the perish'd thing;
Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him, my King:
O Jesus, drink of me.*



RAISING SOME QUESTIONS: JESUS AND PAGAN RESURRECTIONS

Stephen J. Bedard • stephenjbedard.com

“After his death Jesus descends to hell, then on the third day resurrects before his disciples and ascends into heaven, where he is enthroned by God and waits to reappear at the end of time as a divine judge, as does Osiris-Dionysus.” – Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy

“Like Jesus, the Egyptian saviour (Horus) shared the experience of human suffering and death. However, as we have seen, later Christianity took this story literally instead of spiritually or mythically.” – Tom Harpur

There is an increasing number of people preaching a message known as the Jesus myth theory. The basic idea is that there was no historical Jesus and all of the events found in the Gospel are from earlier pagan myths. A number of parallels are given between Jesus and various god-men. One is the resurrection.

It is claimed that there is a long history of dying and rising gods and that Jesus is just more of the same tradition. What people need to realize is that Jesus mythicists are anticipating that readers are not going to look up the actual myths. If their footnotes are checked, most often they are citing other mythicist authors instead of primary sources. If there is a reference to a primary source, it does not say what the author is claiming. The best antidote for the Jesus myth is the study

of pagan myths. Once one reads the myths, the supposed pagan parallels quickly disappear.

I had heard from a number of sources that Mithras was a dying and rising god. Mithras, while having ties to eastern religions, had become a popular figure among Roman mystery religions. Reading the few narratives about Mithras we have demonstrates that, not only did Mithras never rise from the dead, he never actually died! Mithras completed his mission and then ascended to be with the rest of the gods.

Dionysus is also offered as a dying and rising god. Dionysus is an attractive parallel to Jesus because he was the god of wine and Jesus used wine in the last supper. That tie is as strong as pointing out that they both had beards. Reading the Dionysus myths reveals that Dionysus does not die. One of the themes of his story is that his enemies pursue him but he always escapes. The closest to death Dionysus experiences takes place before his birth. Dionysus' pregnant mother is destroyed and the fetus is attached to Zeus. Even then, it is not clear that Dionysus dies before being attached to Zeus.

One of the reasons that mythicists claim that Dionysus was a dying and rising god is that the Greek Dionysus is sometimes identified with the Egyptian Osiris, who did die. Mutual



RAISING SOME QUESTIONS: JESUS AND PAGAN RESURRECTIONS

identification of gods was used to build bridges across cultures, but it was not a systematic sharing of mythical events. Even so, while Osiris did die, he was not resurrected. Osiris was murdered by his brother. Osiris' son, Horus, presented his case to the gods and Osiris was rewarded by being given authority over the underworld. Osiris received a new job, but he did not get to come back to life.

Horus is also another candidate as a parallel. He is the closest, as he did die and come back to life. As a child, Horus was stung by a scorpion, dies (this is sometimes offered as a parallel to the cross!) His mother, Isis, prays to the gods, and Horus is brought back to life. This return to life (more of resuscitation than a resurrection), plays no major role in the story of Horus unlike that of Jesus.

Another parallel that is sometimes offered is that of Attis. Attis was a man who was so good looking that he was thought to be god-like. He fell in love with Cybele and they were about to be married when he went crazy and castrated himself. Don't ask. He died under a tree. A favour from the gods allowed his body to not decay. The closest to his resurrection was that, in some myths, his little finger moved.

One last thing needs to be said about the supposed resurrection parallels. All of the pagan versions take place in the mythical past, that is, they are disconnected from

history. None of these stories were written near the time when these things supposedly took place. The story of Jesus' resurrection is rooted in history. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, Paul writes about witnesses of the resurrection that his readers could interview about the truth of the event. There is nothing close to this in the pagan myths.

Was the resurrection of Jesus in the Gospels based on earlier pagan myths? Not at all. When confronted by such claims, point people to the actual myths and demonstrate the differences. Truth always wins.

What About Pre-Christ Resurrection Myths?
—Dr. Craig

A Challenge for the Jesus Myths
—Eric Chabot

Was the Story of Jesus Rising from the Dead Borrowed from Pagan Myths?
—godnewevidence



UNDERSTANDING ATHEISTS' SOCIAL IDENTITY

George Yancey • patheos.com/blogs/blackwhiteandgray

From Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* to public signs stating "You Know it's a Myth" we have seen in recent years atheists having a presence greater than their still small numbers.¹ They altered the nature of debate between Christians and others through their rational assertions for non-belief. Atheists present themselves as individuals who are too smart for the foolishness of religion. However, investigation into the social identity of atheists and examination of how they construct their intellectual arguments betrays the myth of this image. Learning how atheists frame arguments to protect their social image and identity helps Christians understand the challenges of discussing our faith with them.

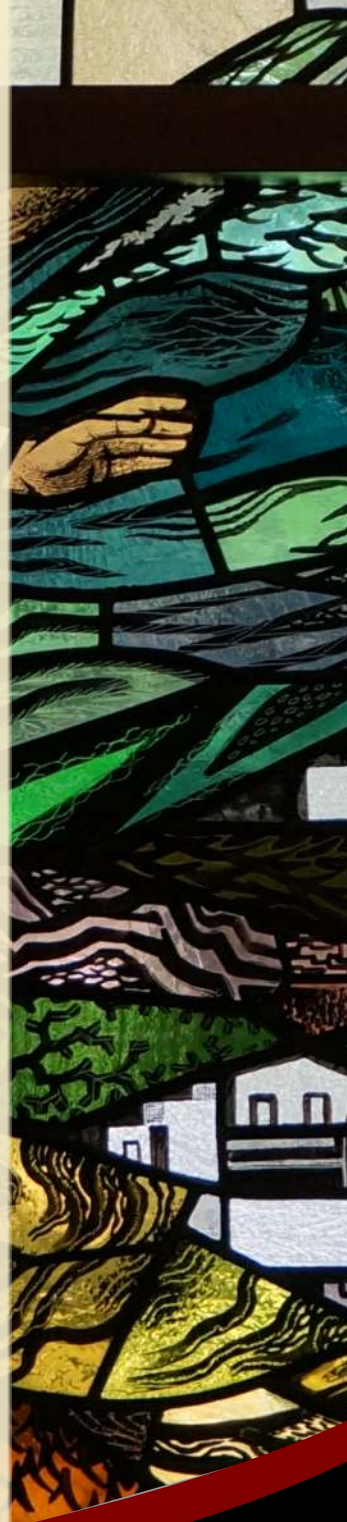
Over the past few years I have conducted research on atheists which can be seen in my co-authored book—*There is No God: Atheists in America*. We collected responses to open-ended questions from an online survey and conducted a series of face-to-face interviews with atheists. While conducting this research, I was careful to not influence the answers of my respondents and thus did not divulge my Christian faith. This allowed atheists to be totally honest and to provide me with their best answers for why they rejected religion.

The social identity adopted by atheists is one where they perceive themselves as rational

and too smart for religion while people of faith are emotional. Many see religion as harmful, although some perceive limited benefits to religious belief. But almost all atheists perceive religion as illogical. When asked about why they became an atheist almost all of them talk about a cognitive realization that there is no deity. Few talked about an emotional or personal experience with Christians that opened them up to atheism. Thus, atheists have a social identity where they justify their unwillingness to believe in God, with claims of objective rationality. They believe that non-atheists have not thought intellectually about religious issues or are unable to engage in critical thinking, presupposing a materialist reality.

Another important feature of the social identity of atheists is their understanding of the relationship of science to religion. Atheists perceive science as the opposite of religion. They envision themselves as scientific individuals because they do not rely on the opposite of science which is religion. Science has been connected to the notion of rationality and objectivity, reinforcing atheists' social identity of themselves as rational, objective humans. Their vision of themselves as individuals of science helps them believe that they have insights non-

¹ According to Kosmin and Keysar (2008), atheists were still less than 1 percent of the United States population in 2008.



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atheists fail to possess. They see their personal moral decisions and political ideals as decisions based on science, critical thinking, and rationality. The social identity of atheists as being rational legitimates their assertion of knowing what is best for themselves and the larger society.

Their belief in their objectivity and rationality helps explain the frustration atheists often have because atheism is still not well accepted. They see themselves as the rational subculture in society, and yet their rationality is not accepted. Recent research has indicated that people are less willing to vote an atheist for president than to vote for a Muslim or homosexual (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006). My own work has shown that there is more animosity towards atheists than towards any religious groups (Yancey 2010). This frustration may be exacerbated by the fact that atheists are more likely to be white, male and highly educated. Atheists gain a great deal of respect from their racial, gender and educational status. This is in contrast to the rejection they face when they present atheism. This type of frustration can lead to some of the vitriol Christians encounter in online forums and the hostile new atheist literature. Atheists are individuals respected, and looked to for leadership, in many different areas of society but not in their religious perspective.

Given what is at stake in their social identity maintenance, challenging atheists' perception of rationality is not merely challenging their ability to win a particular argument but also their perception of being mistreated intellectuals in a land of irrational emotional individuals. Social science research (Brewer 1991, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 2002) indicates that individuals are cognitively willing to do almost anything to maintain their social identity since it helps them answer questions of worth, purpose and meaning. Individuals will illogically distort their ideas, overlook contradictory evidence and play logical "tricks" to maintain assertions supporting their social identity. Christians should not be surprised when atheists are exceptionally defensive in debates since their perception of themselves as rational is so deeply ingrained and is used to justify their personal and social desires. This has led to rhetoric designed to make sure that atheists can never truly lose an argument since they set up the terrain in such a way where they can feel justified with their non-belief even if facing William Lane Craig.

Since atheists claim to be more logical, rational and scientific than those with religious beliefs, we thought it would be interesting to ask them what logical argument convinced them of atheism. As a Christian I basically sat there, let the atheists make their most appealing case for atheism and said nothing to counter their assertions. Doing so



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helped me understand the “logic” so many atheists used to maintain their image as a scientific, rational individual. To my surprise, their most common response was that a lack of evidence for God was the most powerful argument for atheism. Instead of positive evidence for atheism, atheists rely on an argument of a lack of positive evidence for theism.² Indeed, some atheists do not seem to seek out positive evidence for atheism, being satisfied that theism cannot be proven.

Given their lack of positive evidence, it is notable that the vast majority of atheists we interviewed stated that they never doubted their atheism. Since atheists envision themselves as scientific individuals open to where evidence leads them; I thought many of them would talk of times questioning previous convictions. They tended to characterize themselves as skeptical of everything. Several like the term “freethinker” implying that a person is open to any potential idea. Evidently, this freethinking did not enable them to challenge atheism. For some atheists, atheism is not based on an open search for truth but a protection of a social identity used to justify their personal and social perspectives. Atheists like to think of themselves as open minded; however, they hold to a certain epistemological perspective as tightly as the religious individuals they disdain. They cannot allow doubt to rob them of their social image as exceptionally rational individuals.

I observed the intensity to which atheists defended their social identity when I did a blog on my book. I discussed atheism as believing that there is no God. Some atheists quickly came on the blog and argued that they did not have

a belief. Rather they stated that they had a lack of belief in God. Despite my pointing out that they are making assertions about a supernatural reality they cannot prove, and thus it is a belief, they stubbornly held to their assertion that they had no belief. There is an identificational, but not rational, reason for that stubbornness. Atheists do not want their “beliefs” to be evaluated by the same criteria religious beliefs are evaluated. By stating that they lack a belief in God, they had no responsibility to provide evidence for their lack of belief. They merely had to assert that there is not enough evidence to believe in a deity. In an argument with a theist these atheists (to be fair one atheist did come to the blog and agreed with me that atheism is a belief so this is not true of all atheists) do not require the same level of evidence they require of theists, ensuring that the debate is on unequal grounds.

Any Christian who deals with apologetical issues knows that Christianity cannot be logically proven. Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek (2004) in *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* point out that there is overwhelming evidence against atheism and for Christianity, but admit that Christianity cannot be proven nor atheism disproven. The best a Christian can do in a debate with an atheist is to show overwhelming evidence for Christianity. But no matter how badly an atheist does, he or she can always state that the Christian has not proven the existence of God or the accuracy of Christianity. This provides atheists a fallback assertion of a lack of evidence for Christianity to hold onto their “lack of belief” in theism.

This fallback assertion is vitally important given the atheist's social identity of rationality and scientism. To maintain their

² Some admitted that technically they were agnostic, but used a social identity of atheism for political reasons.

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social identity, they set up a cognitive framework by which they can always maintain their argument of insufficient evidence for the supernatural. One may wonder how atheists deal with public debates when their particular champion does not do well. Even in those situations, atheists can use public debates to focus on the points relevant to their assertions. It is a social event by which they can reinforce their arguments against theism. And if the debate goes badly, they still have the fallback position that the Christian debater did not PROVE Christianity, so that they can maintain their social identity of rationality. Atheists have inoculated themselves from the danger of thinking deeply about questions of theism, but they happily pay the price of this lack of self-introspection since they can protect their social identity of rationality and scientism. It is a debate trick and not an accurate assessment of reality, but tricks like this are what humans use to maintain their social identity.

As noted above, half of the time the most logical argument for atheists in our sample was the lack of evidence for the supernatural. But that means that the other half of the time, atheists did offer a positive defense of atheism. Looking at these arguments provides more insight into the nature of atheist social identity. Of course a positive assertion of atheism generally means a negative argument against religion. Positive arguments for atheism tended to be that God was cruel/mean or God allows horrible tragedies or that there are too many religions for one to be true. It is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with all these arguments, and they have been dismantled by Christians better versed in those issues than I. But one common theme among these arguments is, they are based on emotional, and not rational appeal. It is not rational to assert that because a person perceives God as cruel, God does not exist. A cruel God would still be a God even if we do not like that God. Likewise

horrible events may cast doubt on whether God is good (although many Christian theologians/philosophers have addressed such arguments), but they say nothing about whether God exists. Finally, the existence of many religions does not prove that one of them is not accurate. After all there are several NFL teams, but one of them will be the “right” team to win the championship in a given year. These arguments are not logical reasons to avoid belief but rather are emotional appeals. The best arguments for atheism are emotional, and not rational, in nature.

This is quite a paradox. Atheists have developed a social identity where they perceive themselves as the most rational group in our society. Yet to defend their atheism, they either use debate tactics that avoid assessment of their atheism or emotional appeals to tragedy or perception of God. It is a grasping at rhetoric straws allowing atheists to avoid challenges to their social identity. This helps explain why it is difficult to convince atheists of the logical weaknesses of atheism. They have a social identity of rationality to desperately defend. Despite their assertions to the contrary, atheists are not rational individuals open to all possibilities. They are heavily invested in a social identity which makes it difficult for them admit when they do not make logical assertions. Such admissions would challenge the heart of their identity as scientific rational individuals. It is not enough for Christians to indicate the weaknesses of the arguments of atheists. Christians also have to know that atheists have a fallback position based on the lack of ability of Christians to definitely prove Christianity and the emotional/social motivations to dismiss any evidence contrary to their beliefs about the supernatural.

Given this research, how should Christians deal with atheists in person or online? I do not have a wide range of experience



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debating atheists as I have chosen to focus my public discussion in areas more pertinent to my scholarly expertise. But my work on studying atheists does indicate valuable principles. **First**, understand that despite the claim of atheists about rationality, there are social, emotional and identificational reasons for their non-belief. The atheist facing the reality that he or she is going to lose a particular debate may change the subject or flee the conversation altogether rather than to admit intellectual defeat. There is too much at stake for him/her. An atheist can admit to being wrong in discussions about sports, fashion or other issues, but that atheist will struggle to admit being incorrect when his/her social identity is being challenged. It is ultimately possible that no argument will win over someone who has so much at stake with his/her social identity. This makes building a relationship with an atheist before attempting to enter into a discussion with him/her very important since in the context of that relationship,³ a Christian can learn about what type of social identity issues motivates the atheist.

Second, this research suggests that in a debate with an atheist, it is vital to get at the core of how they defend their atheism. Atheists want to frame the debate as one in which Christianity cannot be proven. Instead, it is vital to frame the debate as one in which we are looking for the theological reality supported by the greatest level of evidence. I earlier suggested Christians have to admit that Christianity cannot be technically proven. But a truly rational approach is not to ask for absolute proof, but rather to find the outcome that is most logically likely to occur. There is quite little we can absolutely prove, but we take actions based upon what is most logical to occur. I could not logically prove that

attending college would make my life better, and I still cannot prove that I have been better off for going to college. But attending college was still a logical decision for me as there was greater evidence that going to college was better for me than not attending college. Likewise, while I cannot prove theism or Christianity, the positive evidence for my faith is stronger than the negative evidence against it. It is important to set the terms of a debate with an atheist, and if that atheist only demands absolute proof, then you have sufficient evidence that this is not a person who is open to changing his/her ideas.

Third, given the assertions of rationality atheists prefer to make, there is value in pointing out the emotional nature of their arguments against religion. Of course, it is also important to provide arguments that God is not cruel, or that God can be good despite the presence of tragedies. It may also be valuable to point out the emotional nature of the atheist arguments. Doing so exposes the reality that atheists are not relying on pure rational considerations. Given the importance atheists place on their perception of being rational, such a tactic would put atheists on the defensive even if one does not directly counter atheists' contention about the nature of God or tragedy or existence of multiple religions. Knowing that atheists pride themselves on being rational can help a Christian to frame arguments in a way that make the atheists uncomfortable with holding onto his/her presuppositions.

Finally, my findings reinforce just how much we need the Lord's help to reach out to atheists. I observed how doggedly atheists hold onto their ideas about theism. In a country based on freedom of religious beliefs, they have the right

3 Of course how one does that is an important question beyond the scope of this work. It is a subject that deserves more consideration from those in apologetics.

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to reject belief in God. No matter how convinced we are in the rationality of our faith, we still have to recognize that atheists are highly unlikely to accept Christianity unless God intervenes. In the natural world, atheists have strong sociological and psychological incentive to reject theism. Ultimately, apologetics is not just about arguments and reason, but about prayer and reliance upon our Lord. If we forget about the importance of the supernatural aid God has made available to us, then we remove the most vital resource we could ever want in our outreach to atheists.

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"The New Atheists"
–Tim Keller

*Worldviews
Shaping Culture*
–Apologetics Guy

*Does Morality
Depend on God?*
–Edward Feser

*Understanding
New Atheism*
–Dinesh D'Souza

*Evangelism in a
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–Reasons to Believe



TO BE SURE GOD LOVES US: A TESTIMONY

Brad Cooper • 2besure.blogspot.com

Sitting down to write my testimony is a difficult task. Not because I don't have much to say about how God has been at work in my life, but because He has done so much that it's difficult to know where to start. And besides, my story is not the dramatic testimony of a drug addict whose life was turned around 180 degrees in an instant by the amazing grace and saving power of a loving God as he found forgiveness at the foot of the cross nor is it the story of an angry atheist whom God patiently revealed himself to through a series of encounters and an unveiling of the evidence. Neither was I a Muslim deep in the heart of a region where it is difficult for missionaries to reach but to whom God revealed himself through visions and other miraculous events until she came to know Jesus Christ as much more than a prophet but as the Sovereign Lord of the Universe who laid down his life for her.

These are the kinds of stories I love to hear. They truly move me and fill me with joy. And I imagine that others look forward to these kinds of testimonies as well. By comparison, my testimony sometimes seems rather boring to me. But that is not how I should see it--because God has truly done some amazing things in my life. And He deserves all the praise and the glory for all of it. Perhaps the most significant is how I have seen His unfailing faithfulness to me during the nearly

50 years that I have known that He loves me and that I have tried to follow Him.

So where do I start? I could tell how He provided for me and my family through decades of financial hardship (and there are some pretty dramatic and even humorous stories that could be told and heartwarming stories of the genuine love shown to us through God's people). Or I could tell of the way He rescued me from a deadly cancer (but you can [read that on my blog.](#))

Since I am writing this testimony for an apologetics journal and as a means to introduce myself as a member of the Christian Apologetics Alliance's leadership team, I have decided to focus on how God has used apologetics in my life. And though apologetics was not the means by which I was persuaded to become a Christian, God has used apologetics in quite significant ways in my life--which is why I have such a passion for apologetics.

THE FAITH OF A LITTLE CHILD

Let me start with a brief retelling of how I came to Christ and then I will reflect on how God has used apologetics to keep me from stumbling. I grew up in a Christian home, the son of a "PK." My dad's father was an Assemblies of God pastor and my mom and dad were both leaders in the Assemblies of God church I grew up in as a small child. So I



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was surrounded by those who believe. From the time I knew anything, I knew that God loved me. I still have a relatively vivid memory of when I was four years old and our pastor came to our house and gave me a children's Bible or storybook. (I know I was no older than four because we moved from that house when I was four.) I still vividly remember that I knew that Jesus was God's Son and that He loved me and that I loved Him. Within a few years of that time, I responded twice to commitments to give my life to Christ. So at a very young age I understood that God loved me and that such love demanded my complete commitment--though undoubtedly I could not have comprehended all that that entailed (and I am sure that I still do not and yet I willingly surrender it all to Him).

While I was in second or third grade, there was a lot of tension in our church over plans for a new building. So my mom and dad made a decision to begin attending a different church in the area--part of a small and very conservative evangelical denomination, The Missionary Church. (I remained in the Missionary Church until I became a full-time pastor in a mainline denomination in 1989.) There was a lot of emphasis on knowing and memorizing the Bible even while I was in the elementary grades. And in junior high and high school, I became heavily involved in Bible Quizzing. By the time I graduated from high school, I knew the Bible well and had memorized about half the New Testament

and small parts of the Old Testament. Whatever other shortcomings that church may have had, I am very thankful for that grounding in God's Word. It became foundational in facing the onslaught of questions I would face later.

I was in about 5th grade when I began to understand the importance of being able to give an answer to unbelievers. I was on our front porch talking with a friend and he asked me how I could know that God was real if I could not see Him. I responded that I could not see the wind either but I could see what the wind does. I began then to understand that I needed to be able to answer these kinds of questions. Throughout my junior high and high school years my interest in apologetics grew into a passion, thanks to my youth pastors, a couple of volunteer youth leaders, and several authors--especially Josh McDowell and C.S. Lewis. By my senior year, I was teaching apologetics to a small discipleship group of fellow high schoolers.

THE CRUCIBLE THAT FORGED MY PASSION FOR APOLOGETICS

But it was a specific point of crisis in my life that solidified my passion for apologetics. I can still remember sitting in biology class in high school (back in the late 70s) and beginning to ask questions that led to a full-blown heart-wrenching crisis in which I found myself out in our woods crying out to God to help me. Arguments that life had



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arisen and evolved by natural causes had been presented in our biology textbook; but ironically, that was not what shook me. I had studied those issues already and did not find any of the arguments to be at all compelling. (You can find all of them thoroughly refuted in the book *Icons of Evolution* by Jonathan Wells, 2002). But as I was sitting there pondering all of that, a series of questions began to occur to me that fell like dominoes. They went something like this: "It may be clear to me that God created the world, but how do I know who that God is? How do I know that what the Bible says is true? What if Islam is true? Or some other religion? Are any of them true? Do I just believe all of this because it is what I was taught from the time I was a child? I believe I know God and have experienced His forgiveness, presence and answers to prayer. But what if all of that is just my imagination? My subjective experience? Am I delusional? Do I believe this just because I want to? And most importantly, even if there is a God, how do I know that He even cares about me?"

As I poured out my heart to God in the woods behind our house, I began to find the answer to those questions. It was during that time that God began to reveal a very simple cumulative argument, a coherent line of reasoning, that gave me confidence that God is real and that He does indeed love me. It was during that time that Romans 5 became one of my favorite passages in the Scripture, especially verse 8: "But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

I don't have the space to spell that cumulative argument out here. I am trying to develop that on my blog (though I have yet to satisfactorily accomplish that). But since that time, I have continually been brought back to that cumulative argument whenever I face the storms of life that

threaten to shake my faith. And I have found that it kept me strong when I faced the attacks that come to those who are in pastoral ministry. It kept me strong while attending a liberal seminary where every day the Gospel was attacked and the truth of the Scriptures undermined. And it has kept me strong and unwavering in my faith in the midst of the kinds of difficulties that come to all of us: financial crises, failing relationships, and the quest to understand the meaning of our lives.

Furthermore, it has often helped me to cut through the torrent of emotions that tend to fill my mind during such storms and to recognize that my struggles are very often related to my own relationship with God more than intellectual challenges.

So this is a brief glimpse of how God has used apologetics in my life. I could say much more if I had the time. But I hope it is enough to encourage you to develop a cumulative argument for your faith--a reasonable defense against the onslaughts of doubt--and to stand strong, knowing that in the midst of it all, God truly does love you.

EXCITING NEWS!

—Brad Cooper

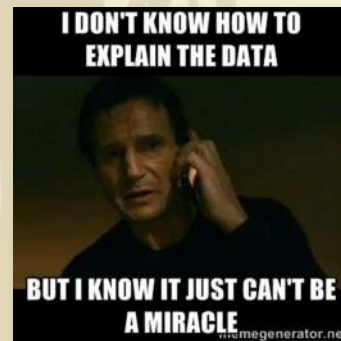
[Dr. Tim McGrew's Database of Public Domain Apologetic Works](#)

If you are interested in obtaining Dr. McGrew's database, we are acquiring USB flash drives to store and ship his database, for a modest cost. Our initial program will be for U.S. CAA members only, but we have plans to set this up for CAA members around the world. If you live outside the U.S., and are interested, please message Brad Cooper of the CAA so we can gauge the interest. The database contains over 100 GB of public domain books and some of Dr. McGrew's personal works. It is beautifully organized to make finding material easy. Many of the documents are searchable which makes this database even more useful.

Click on this notice to find out more about this opportunity.

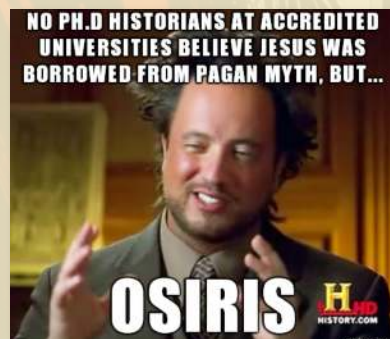
Satire

[sat-ahyuh-r]: irony, sarcasm, in exposing, or deriding vice...



At times, apologetics can be a droll affair. The same dozen or so objections to Christianity repeated ad nauseam. Charity? An epithet (and not just among atheists). Progress? Rarely ever visible in day-to-day interactions. It can all be extremely tiresome for those without the titanium constitution of the professionals. Humor, when used appropriately, can be both energizing and incisive. Memes, while so often used to simply ridicule and misrepresent, can nevertheless be effective at humorously pointing out an absurdity or inconsistency in an opponent's objection, or the strength of one's own. Recently, we asked CAA members to contribute their own memes on the resurrection. The results: hilarious.

—Tyson James



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answering seekers, equipping Christians, & demonstrating the truth of the Christian worldview



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CAA Co-Founder and Director of Partnerships: CHRIS REESE

The Christian Apologetics Alliance is currently the primary 'network of networks' for the global apologetics community. The membership of the CAA encompasses every continent. It includes high school students who are just learning to defend their faith with reason and senior leaders of respected apologetics organizations. It includes both men and women, from a wide variety of vocations, from hundreds of denominations.

We are in the process of developing more formal partnerships with a variety of other institutions and organizations. Our goal is to find mutually beneficial ways of connecting with other groups for the advance of the gospel.

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Partner Spotlight

An Interview with Koert Verhagen, Sales Manager, InterVarsity Press

– Chris Reese, CAA Director of Partnerships

1. ***Please tell us a little about yourself and your role with InterVarsity Press.***

Having received my BA in philosophy from Taylor University and my MA in Theology from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, much of my adult life has been spent with thoughtful books in my hands, examining matters of life, faith, and God. When I realized that my love for those books extended beyond my academic responsibilities I began to wonder how that might work itself out vocationally. That led me to my current position as sales manager for academic and general titles at InterVarsity Press. Since IVP produced many of the titles I was absorbed by during my education, excitement for our mission and the books we publish came quite naturally. However, much of my job involves moving beyond my own appreciation of the books in order to understand how they can and should function as tools, resources, and encouragement in the kingdom of God. That, at least in my mind, is the natural intersection of sales and ministry that motivates me and frames the role I play in the larger body of Christ.

2. ***As an apologist, I've always appreciated that IVP consistently publishes good books in this area. How does apologetics fit with the overall mission or goals of IVP?***

Well, as far back as Jim Sire's *Universe Next Door* (and probably farther!), apologetics has been a big part of our publishing program. We see apologetics as one important avenue through which Christians are taught to fruitfully and actively engage their world on behalf of the gospel. Although the word "apologetics" often carries academic connotations for people, we believe being ready to give a defense for one's faith is important for all Christians. That's why we put out books in our general line like last year's *True Paradox* by David Skeel and *Christianity on Trial* by W. Mark Lanier, as well as more academic titles like Paul Copan and Kenneth D. Litwak's *The Gospel in the Marketplace of Ideas* and Michael J. Kruger's *The Question of Canon*.

3. ***Can you tell us about any new or forthcoming books in apologetics on your schedule?***

One apologetics title that I'm excited about on the academic side, which was just released, is *Mapping Apologetics* by Brian K. Morley. He's been teaching this material for years at The Master's College in California and has finally gotten around to drawing it together into a book. I think a lot of people are going to be glad he did because it offers a wonderfully comprehensive look at different apologetic approaches delivered with the depth and precision of a seasoned scholar. However, having honed this material with his students it's also remarkably clear, which can sometimes be hard to come by in the world of academic apologetics!

On a more generally accessible level, we're really looking forward to the release of Os Guinness' magnum opus, *Fool's Talk*, in July. In it Os dials in the essential apologetic importance of persuasion in a post-Christian context. Tim Keller highlights its uniqueness saying, "Unlike most books on apologetics, it addresses the actual dynamics of conversation and persuasion—as well as providing an unusually comprehensive range of accessible and useful arguments and appeals for the truth of Christianity. I highly recommend it." Ravi Zacharias also gives it high praise, calling it "a must-read for anyone interested in engaging the skeptic or seeker."

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CAA CATECHISM is a collaboration of the CAA to break the essentials of apologetics up into bite size pieces (400 words or less), catechism-style. **CONTACT CATECHISM TEAM.**

C.A.S.E. The Christian Apologetics Search Engine by CAA member, **MARK DEVINY.**

APOLOGETICS EVENTS CALENDAR by CAA partner, Ratio Christi.

ASK THE ALLIANCE a question and we will post it in our Facebook group for discussion, and summarize our best answers in a post on this blog.

MEDIA – CAA banner, logos, and wallpaper by alliance member, **LAUREN KIMBALL.**

APOLOGETICS BLOGGERS ALLIANCE group has been created for those with blogs so we may support each other, share blog posts, promote one another, share ideas for blogging, SEO, promotion; and raise the awareness of the need for apologetics in the church, university, and the community; to pray for one another, and lift up Jesus Christ. **CONTACT.**

APOLOGETICS FOR PARENTS is a group of parents committed to teaching our kids apologetics (a "defense" or case for Christianity) and exchanging what works, what doesn't, and maybe starting a website to share the best of what works with the world. **FIND US ON TWITTER. CONTACT.**

DONATIONS: The Christian Apologetics Alliance has many expenses; primarily website hosting. We also plan to expand in the following ways:

1. Develop a training course for "Grassroots Apologists."
2. Promote the CAA at apologetics conferences.
3. Obtain 501(c)3 status.

General Contact Email: [CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS ALLIANCE](#)

*Apologetics
Events
Calendar
–Hope's Reason
Ministries*

*Apologetics
Events
Calendar
–Ratio Christi*

*NATIONAL
DAY
of
PRAYER
MAY 7, 2015*

*Coherence of Theism
with
William Lane Craig
April 17-18, 2015
Marietta, GA*

Upcoming CAA Member Events

Judy Salisbury

Date: April 14, 2015

Title: Gideon Pastors Banquet (open to pastors) (RSVP)

Location: Heidi's of Gresham, 1230 NW Cleveland Ave., Gresham, OR, 97030

Date: May 30, 2015

Title: A Path to Joy ... Sharing our Faith Women's Conference (RSVP to lynmart58@aol.com)

Location: Calvary Chapel Woodland, 206 Davidson Ave., Woodland, WA, 98674

Mikel Del Rosario

Date: May 1-3, 2015

Title: [Reasons Conference](#) (\$ RSVP)

Location: Faith Bible Church, 5505 Research Forest, The Woodlands, TX, 77381

Marcia Montenegro

Date: April 17-18, 2015

Title: New Age and the Occult

Location: Newington Baptist Church, Gloucester, VA

Date: April 29, 2015

Title: New Age and the Occult

Location: Geneseo University Ratio Christi Club, Geneseo, NY

Ray Ciervo

Date: June 26-27, 2015

Title: No Pat Answers

Location: Long Branch Covenant Church, 355 Joline Ave., Long Branch, NJ

Tim McGrew

Date: May 11 - July 1, 2015

Title: The Deist Controversy. The Course Reference Number (CRN) is 22412. This course is grad-level PHIL 5700 for Summer I, 2015, and is open to upper-level undergraduates.

Location: WMU. Students not at WMU who want to take this course need to [fill out this form](#), then take the form to your institution's Registrar's office which they will then forward to WMU.

Additional Information can be found at the [Christian Apologetics Alliance](#).



CAA Speaking Team

The Christian Apologetics Alliance Speaking Team Members listed below are available for public and private events. You can invite a speaker to present by clicking on their name and send them an email. After a speaker has presented, we request that you [fill out this evaluation form](#). If you are an established member of the CAA and would like to join our speaking team, please [submit this application](#). Thank you!

Lenny Esposito

Riverside, CA • [Come Reason Ministries](#)

Specializing In: Existence of God. Philosophy of Religion. Divinity of Christ. Cultural Apologetics. Worldview. Evolution/Creation. Faith and Film. Social Media.

Ministry Focus: Apologetics.

Bio: Lenny Esposito is president and founder of Come Reason Ministries. He is a contributor to the popular "Apologetics Study Bible for Students" and most recently contributed to the book "True Reason: Confronting the Irrationality of the New Atheism" (Kregel, 2014). His articles have appeared in the Los Angeles Times and the Southern California Christian Times. He has debated many topics on faith and reason and the rationality of the Christian worldview, including Richard Carrier on the question "Does God Exist?"

Multimedia:

- [The Free Will Defense](#)
 - [Why Doesn't God Heal Amputees?](#)
 - [Christianity in Super Hero Movies](#)
-

Neil Mammen

San Jose, CA • [No Blind Faith](#)

Specializing In:

Ministry Focus: Evangelism through Apologetics and Apologetics Training to be able to Evangelize.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [List of talks for speaking](#)
-

Clinton Wilcox

Fresno, CA • [Life Training Institute](#)

Specializing In: Pro-Life Apologetics, Bioethics.

Ministry Focus: Educate pro-life people on making the pro-life case more persuasively and effectively.

Bio:

Multimedia:

Kenny Rhodes

Modesto, CA • [Reason for Hope](#)

Specializing In: Existence of God. Cosmology. Biblical Reliability. Science and Faith. Evil and Suffering. Aquinas.

Ministry Focus: Systematic theology, pastoral ministry.

Bio: Kenny Rhodes is an ordained Southern Baptist pastor with 24 plus years in the ministry. He serves as President and Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics at Scofield Graduate School and Seminary, Modesto, CA. Pastor Kenny has two earned doctorates in religious education and theology/apologetics and loves to study physics and cosmology to supplement his theological understanding. He truly believes that God is the author of Scripture and Science, as well as Faith and Reason, and that the grace of God touches them both. Kenny has been married to Tami since 1994 and they have three wonderful children who all serve the Lord: Tajiana, Micaela, and Kent.

Multimedia:

- [The Decay of Truth and Doctrine](#)
 - [Understanding the Trinity: unity in diversity](#)
 - [“Who Created God?” – the dumbest question asked by atheists!](#)
 - [Aquinas and the Existence of God](#)
-

Cynthia Hampton

Downey, CA • [Ex JWs Los Angeles](#)

Specializing In: Refuting the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ doctrines. Cult mind control.

Understanding the mindset of Jehovah’s Witnesses before you can successfully reach them.

Ministry Focus: Cynthia runs a support group for ex Jehovah’s Witnesses to help them “decompress” and unlearn the Watchtower doctrines. Each month she prepares a presentation that helps with healing from the cult experience to prepare them for a relationship with Christ. She also make herself available to churches for speaking to groups who want to know how to reach the cults.



Bio:

Multimedia:

- [Refuting Jehovah's Witnesses with Love](#)
-

Judy Salisbury

Woodland, WA • [Logos Presentations](#)

Specializing In: Communication/Presentation Training. General Apologetics. Moral Issues. Youth Talks. Women's Events/Retreats. Parenting. Christian Living.

Ministry Focus: Judy Salisbury founded Logos Presentations in 1994 with the purpose of equipping believers to share the Gospel with passion and persuasion and to help individuals communicate their concerns on moral issues of our day with competence and confidence. Judy has a heart for drawing people to the love of God and, through Logos Presentations, she helps believers become more grounded in their faith and to live a vibrant life in Christ. As one of the most versatile Christian speakers in the United States today, Judy bases her training and unique materials upon sound biblical principles and examples for immediate life application.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [The Challenges of Equipping the Next Generation](#)
 - [How to Reach Antagonists](#)
 - [Interview regarding her book, "The Conversation" \(incl. testimony\)](#)
-

Shandon L. Guthrie

Las Vegas, NV • [Welcome to the Office of...](#)

Specializing In: The "God-of-the-Gaps" Objection: Are Christians Just Masking Their Ignorance? The Existence of God and the Problem of Evil, Pain, and Suffering. The Moral Argument for God's Existence. Angels & Demons: A 21st Century Philosophical Assessment. Demonology and Spiritual Warfare. Christianity and Paranormal Activity. Theism and Contemporary Cosmology. Christian-Nurturing. The Meaning of Life As a Philosophical Tool for Evangelism. Holiness and Christian Ethics. The Temptation of Jesus and Christian Living.

Ministry Focus: Philosophy of Religion; Demonology; Ethics; Existentialism; and Apologetics.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [Question of God's Existence](#)
- [Question of Ancient Genocide](#)
- [Question of Origins](#)

- On a panel answering apologetics questions
 - Debate with atheist Daniel Schalit
-

Sarah Geis

Denver, CO • **Justified Faith**

Specializing In: The State of Contemporary Apologetics. Early Church Apologetics. Preparing for College. Evangelicalism: Successes, Failures, and its Future. Intellectual Virtue. Biblical Spiritual Formation. Epistemology and Apologetic Method. Christians in the Public Square. The Case for the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus. World Religions. Evaluating Worldviews. Counterfeit Christianities. Rene Descartes: Skeptic or Apologist? Foundationalism Is Not Dead. The Popularity of Reformed Epistemology. Postmodernism: A Philosophy that Demands a Verdict. Art and the Bible. Christianity and Philosophy. The Intersection of Faith and Knowledge. Christianity and the Enlightenment.

Ministry Focus: Philosophy, theology, spiritual formation, and apologetics.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [Addressing Claims of Contradictions in the Bible](#)
 - [Critical Thinking for the Glory of God](#)
-

John Ferrer

Dallas, TX • **Intelligent Christian Faith**

Specializing In: Problem of Evil. Pro-life Apologetics. Moral Argument/Critiques of Naturalistic Ethics. General Apologetics - (I teach apologetics at a high school in Arlington and have prepared lectures and presentations on most every major topic in apologetics).

Ministry Focus: Cultivate an Intelligent Christian Faith, that is, not just a knowledgeable argumentative theology but rather a winsome and wise demeanor of Christian living which is fit to give an effective defense of Christ whether verbally (in questions, answers and discussion) or non-verbally (through demonstrated truths).

Bio: Dr. John D. Ferrer has degrees in religion, apologetics, and philosophy of religion. He's taught and debated in dozens of schools and churches spanning several countries on subjects like Christian worldviews, critical thinking, the problem of evil, world religions, and general apologetics. He currently teaches Bible at Pantego Christian Academy in Arlington Texas.

Multimedia:

- [Is God Good?: A Debate \(John Ferrer vs Zachary Moore\)](#)
- [Arguing for the Sake of Arguing](#)



- Debate: Problem of Evil w/ Dr. Zach Moore
 - Debate: Does God Exist? Panel w/ Dr. Sloan Lee, Matt Dillahunty, and J.T. Eberhard
-

Mikel Del Rosario

Dallas, TX • **Apologetics Guy**

Specializing In: Does Evil Disprove God? The New Atheism and the Problem of Evil. When Christ is the Question: Engaging Historical Challenges to the Biblical Jesus. Everyday Apologetics: Using Stories, Objects and Illustrations to Explain Your Faith. Introduction to Apologetics: Why Defend My Faith? Faith and Reason: How Do I Know Christianity is True? Evidence for God: Is God Real? Fact or Fiction: Can I Trust My Bible? Dead or Alive: Did Jesus Rise From The Dead?

Ministry Focus: Apologetics training for youth, college students, parents of teenagers, and ministry leaders.

Bio: Mikel Del Rosario is an Adjunct Professor of Apologetics at William Jessup University and the Cultural Engagement Assistant in the Hendricks Center at Dallas Theological Seminary. He holds an M.A. In Christian Apologetics from Biola University and is pursuing a Master of Theology (Th.M.) at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Multimedia:

- Reasonable Faith Christian Apologetics Conference
 - Reasonable Faith Apologetics Conference - Clip 2
 - Defending the Resurrection in Everyday Conversations
 - Apologetics Panel on the Problem of Evil
 - Using Stories Objects and Illustrations to Defend the Faith
 - Intelligent Design & DNA - Apologetics Conference Clip
 - Mikel Del Rosario Interviews Dr. Darrell Bock
-

Tyler Taber

Dallas, TX • **The Things Above**

Specializing In: General Apologetics. The Problem of Evil. The Problem of Divine Hiddenness. The Moral Argument. Religious Diversity. Defending General Christian Doctrine (e.g., Trinity, Incarnation.) A Christian View of Sexuality.

Ministry Focus: Reach non-Christians and train lay Christians in the great things of the Gospel.

Bio:

Multimedia:

Josh Fults

Beaumont, TX

Specializing In: General Apologetics. Foundations in Christian Doctrine. God's Sovereignty. Foundations of Truth. The Truth about Hell. Evidence for God. Worldviews. World Religions. Ethics (Specifically Gay Marriage.) Problem of Evil.

Ministry Focus: Give people a foundation on truth and Christian doctrine that will bolster their confidence in the claims of Christ, challenge them to grow deeper in their faith and not be content with the Americanized brand of self-help Christianity that many churches promote, and help them defend the faith.

Bio:

Multimedia:

Keith Walker

San Antonio, TX • Evidence Ministries

Specializing In: Keith has extensive experience in personal witnessing to both Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. Keith understands their doctrine, mindset and hindrances that each group faces when being confronted with the gospel. He specializes in teaching Christians how to effectively communicate (without arguing!) the gospel in a way that Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons will understand it.

Ministry Focus: The Walkers founded Evidence Ministries in 1995 as a missionary outreach to the San Antonio, TX Area. Its threefold purpose is to REACH Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons for Christ, to TEACH Christians the differences between these two cults and Biblical Christianity, and to WARN the community about the dangers of these groups. Evidence Ministries is active in REACHING these cults through personal witnessing and mission trips. Evidence Ministries TEACHES Christians about these cults through various speaking engagements at churches and 'coaching' sessions (personal witness training). Evidence Ministries also WARNS the community of the dangers of these two groups through their monthly newsletter Backpacks & Briefcases, their Website, Blog, YouTube Channel, Facebook, as guests on various radio programs, and through Mormon temple outreaches. Keith has been full time with Evidence Ministries since September of 1999.

Bio: Keith and Becky Walker founded Evidence Ministries in 1995 as a missionary outreach to the San Antonio, TX Area. Its threefold purpose is to REACH Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons for Christ, to TEACH Christians the differences between these two cults and Biblical Christianity, and to WARN the community about the dangers of these groups. Keith has been a full-time missionary since 1999. The Walkers have three children and were married in 1992.



Multimedia:

- [Jesus 2.0 – how the Watchtower redefines the resurrection of Jesus Christ](#) (four part playlist)
 - [Mormonism’s Impossible Gospel](#)
 - [What’s in a name? Pronunciation or Reputation?](#) (on “Jehovah”)
 - [Quick Questions for JW’s](#) (playlist)
 - [Quick Questions for Mormons](#) (playlist)
-

Jeremy R. Smith

Saint Louis, MO • [Faith Ascent Ministries](#)

Specializing In: Evangelism: Does our postmodern and post-Christian culture require a different strategy? The Gospel: What it is, what it is not. The Problem of Evil & Suffering.

Ministry Focus: Train Christian teenagers in apologetics and evangelism before they leave home. Faith Ascent envisions a world where all Christian teenagers leave home equipped with good reasons for their hope in Christ and good answers for those who ask about their hope in Christ (1 Peter 3:15).

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [Do You Share Your Faith Like a Robot?](#)
 - [Faith Ascent Ministries Promotional Video](#)
-

Kurt Jaros

West Chicago, IL • [Apologetics.com](#)

Specializing In: General Apologetics. Internet Apologetics. Introduction to Apologetics. Biblical Apologetics. Arguments for the Existence for God. Arguments for the Truth of Christianity. How to Engage the Culture. The Doctrine of God (5 2-hr talks.) Theological issues.

Ministry Focus: The primary focus of Apologetics.com is to challenge believers to think and thinkers to believe. Also, as the Director of Operations, Kurt oversees various administrative aspects to the ministry.

Bio: Kurt Jaros is the Director of Operations at Apologetics.com, a charitable organization that challenges believers to think and thinkers to believe. He is currently a Ph.D. student at Highland Theological College in Dingwall, Scotland. His doctoral dissertation will look at the doctrine of Original Sin in the writings of monks from southern France in the 5th and 6th century. He holds two Masters degrees in Christian Apologetics from Biola University, and Systematic Theology, from King’s College London. He also blogs at Values & Capitalism a

project of the American Enterprise Institute.

Multimedia:

- [Online Apologetics: How do I present the case for faith online?](#)
-
-

Brad Cooper

Ligonier, IN • [To Be Sure](#)

Specializing In: Integrity of the New Testament Canon. The Cumulative Case for Christianity. Messianic Prophecy. Brad has read and taught fairly widely concerning apologetics over the last 35 years and may be able to speak on different apologetics topics if given enough advance notice.

Ministry Focus: Apologetics, Biblical Teaching.

Bio:

Multimedia:

Robert Vroom

Chattanooga, TN • [Jesus Proofs](#)

(CANNOT TRAVEL)

Specializing In: Cosmological/Teleological Arguments. Moral Argument. Pro-Life Arguments. Evidence from Prophecy. Undesigned Coincidences/Biblical Reliability. General Apologetics.

Ministry Focus: Apologetics.

Bio:

Multimedia:

Nick Peters

Corryton, TN • [Deeper Waters](#)

Specializing In: The Historical Jesus, with an emphasis on the Resurrection.

Ministry Focus: Answer questions, provide discipleship, promote personal holiness. Deeper Waters is an apologetics ministry focused on answering the hard questions and ministering to the disabled community, especially those on the autism spectrum, as both Nick and his wife Allie are diagnosed with Aspergers. They also wish to do their part to restore marriage and disciple an up-and-coming generation of apologists.

Bio: Nick Peters is a Christian apologist living in the Corryton, Tennessee area just outside of Knoxville in the USA. He and his wife Allie, who are both diagnosed with Aspergers, have been married for four years and live with their cat Shiro. Nick is currently working on a Master's degree in New Testament Studies at North West University in South Africa, with an



emphasis on the historical Jesus and the Resurrection. Deeper Waters Christian Ministries, which he and Allie founded, currently features a blog and a weekly podcast where Nick interviews the best in Christian scholarship and apologetics.

Multimedia:

- [Deeper Waters Podcasts](#)
-

Rob Bowman

Grand Rapids, MI • [Institute for Religious Research](#)

Specializing In: Apologetic methods. Biblical reliability (both OT and NT). Historical Jesus (including the Resurrection). Jehovah's Witnesses (any and all areas of doctrine). Mormonism (history, doctrine, scriptures, etc.). Deity of Christ, Trinity.

Ministry Focus: IRR's primary focus is Mormonism.

Bio:

Multimedia:

Tim McGrew

Kalamazoo, MI • [Library of Historical Apologetics](#)

(CANNOT TRAVEL)

Specializing In:

MIRACLES, HISTORICAL RELIABILITY OF THE GOSPELS

- Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels ([MP3](#))
- Apologetics 315 Interview ([page](#) • [MP3](#))
- Interview with Frank Turek ([page](#) • [MP3](#))
- Interview with Frank Turek – second interview ([page](#) • [MP3](#)) NEW
- Interview on Evidence4Faith ([page](#) • [MP3](#))
- Gems in Old Apologetics Literature ([page](#) • [MP3](#))
- Practical Apologetics (Tactical Faith Lecture) [page](#) • [MP3](#) • [PDF](#)

RELIABILITY OF THE GOSPELS SERIES

- The Gospels and Acts as History ([page](#) • [MP3](#) • [Vid](#) • [PPT](#))
- Who Wrote the Gospels? ([page](#) • [MP3](#) • [Vid](#) • [PDF](#) • [PPT](#))
- External Evidence for the Gospels ([page](#) • [MP3](#) • [Vid](#) • [PDF](#) • [PPT](#))
- Internal Evidence for the Gospels ([page](#) • [MP3](#) • [Vid](#) • [PDF](#) • [PPT](#))
- Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels (Matt. & Mark) ([page](#) • [MP3](#) • [Vid](#) • [PDF](#) • [PPT](#))
- Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels (Luke & John) ([page](#) • [MP3](#) • [Vid](#) • [PDF](#) • [PPT](#))
- Alleged Contradictions in the Gospels (part 1) ([page](#) • [MP3](#) • [Vid](#) • [PDF](#) • [PPT](#))
- Alleged Contradictions in the Gospels (part 2) ([page](#) • [MP3](#) • [Vid](#) • [PDF](#) • [PPT](#))

- The Resurrection of Jesus ([page](#) • [MP3](#) • [Vid](#) • [PDF](#) • [PPT](#))

Ministry Focus: Speaking to Christian groups (churches, conferences), writing on apologetics issues

Bio: Dr. McGrew is Professor of Philosophy at Western Michigan University, where he has taught since 1995. His areas of specialization include Epistemology, History and Philosophy of Science, Probability Theory, Formal Logic, and Philosophy of Religion. His work in apologetics focuses on the Gospels, miracles, the Resurrection of Jesus, and the history of apologetics.

Multimedia: (see above)

Tom Gilson

Southwest Ohio (near Cincinnati) • [Tom Gilson, Ratio Christi](#)

Specializing In: General ministry - Leading the national campus ministry of Ratio Christi as National Field Director. Serving the broader apologetics community through promoting strategic networking and consulting (as time allows). Writing and Blogging. Guiding parents in how to help children understand and deal with homosexual activism. New Atheism. Faith is Not Belief Without Evidence (Answering Boghossian etc.) Faith vs. Science (and how “vs.” is the wrong word.) Naturalism.

Ministry Focus: Apologetics on college campuses. Tom’s role focuses on leading the chapter directors and participating in RC’s national leadership.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [The Spiritual Life of an Apologist, Tom Gilson and Tim McGrew](#)
 - [Gilson and McGrew on Boghossian](#)
 - [Jesus is Too Good to be False](#)
 - [The Gospel of Grace](#)
-

Jason Moore

Cleveland, OH • [Gospel Urgency](#)

Specializing In: Hindrances to Evangelism (and how to overcome them) Dialoguing with Muslims. Creationism vs. Evolution. How to Start Conversations that Lead to the Gospel. How to Share the Gospel with Jehovah’s Witnesses. The “Do’s and Don’ts” of Evangelism. Discussing God with Atheists. The Role of Apologetics in Evangelism.

Ministry Focus: Evangelism Training.

Bio:



Multimedia:

William Dyer

Severn, MD • [DyerThoughts](#)

Specializing In: General Apologetics. Resurrection of Jesus. Formation of the Canon. Problem of Pain/Evil. God & Moral Atrocities in the OT.

Ministry Focus: Preacher at Severn Christian Church.

Bio:

Multimedia:

Defenders: Defending the Christian World View:

- [Lesson 1 - Defining the term "Canon"](#)
 - [Lesson 2 - The Origins of the Canon](#)
 - [Lesson 3 - New Testament Authors Claim Authority Pt 1](#)
 - [Lesson 4 - New Testament Authors Claim Authority Pt 2](#)
 - [Lesson 5 - The Date of the Canon](#)
 - [Lesson 6 - Did God command genocide in the Old Testament? Part 1](#)
 - [Lesson 7 - Did God command genocide in the Old Testament? Part 2](#)
 - [Lesson 8 - Is it always wrong to kill innocent people?](#)
 - [Lesson 9 - Objections that God Commanded the Killing of Innocent Children](#)
-

John Mays

Scott Depot, WV • [John Mays, Ratio Christi](#)

Specializing In: Bible. Resurrection. Existence of God. Problem of Evil. Worldviews.

Ministry Focus: Apologetics.

Bio:

Multimedia:

Marcia Montenegro

Northern VA/Washington, D.C. • [Christian Answers for the New Age](#)

Specializing In: New Age and the occult: how it's in the culture, how to recognize it, and how to respond to it.

Ministry Focus: Educating Christians about the New Age and the occult, equipping them to respond and how to witness; and reaching out to those in the New Age and the occult with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bio: Marcia Montenegro, a former New Ager and professional astrologer, works through her

ministry, Christian Answers for the New Age, to inform Christians about the new spirituality and to reach those involved in it with the love and truth of Christ. She is involved in public speaking and radio, and writes for Christian publications. She has a Masters in Religion from Southern Evangelical Seminary and is the author of *SpellBound: The Paranormal Seduction of Today's Kids*.

Multimedia:

- [The Occult](#)
 - [Astrology and Spirituality, Peter Jones Conference, 2008](#)
 - [Apologetics 315 Interview on the New Age and the Occult](#)
 - [Issues, Etc. Radio Program on Feng Shui, 2012](#)
 - [On the Janet Mefferd Show on the Occult, 2011](#)
-

John DePoe

Scranton, PA

Specializing In: General Apologetics. Philosophical Apologetics. Arguments for the Existence of God. The Reliability of the New Testament. Responding to the Problem of Evil. How to Make a Case for the Resurrection of Jesus. What Is Truth and Why Does it Matter? Faith & Reason.

Ministry Focus: Sharing and equipping others to share the truth of Christianity in love.

Bio: John lives in northeast Pennsylvania with his wife and two daughters. In addition to apologetics, philosophy, and theology, he enjoys sci-fi entertainment, playing chess, and making good conversation over a cup of (decaf) coffee. His academic work includes teaching and researching topics such as epistemology, philosophy of mind, metaphysics, and philosophy of religion.

Multimedia:

- [Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom](#)
 - [Ex-Hume-ing Miracles](#)
-

Ray Ciervo

Eatontown, NJ • **No Pat Answers**

Specializing In: General Apologetics. Classical Apologetics. The Resurrection. Reliability of the New Testament. Building a Christian Worldview. God's Existence. Naturalism. Relativism. Pluralism.

Ministry Focus: Training people in apologetics, holding seminars, conferences, traveling with TEAM from Southern Evangelical Seminary.

Bio:



Multimedia:

Tony Arsenal

Upper Valley region of New Hampshire • **The Reformed Arsenal**

Specializing In: Trinitarian Theology. Christology. Systematic Theology. Reformed Theology. Christian History. Patristic Theology. Protestant Soteriology.

Ministry Focus: Theological education for lay Christians.

Bio: Tony Arsenal was raised in the Minneapolis / St. Paul area where he came to faith at the age of fifteen. After graduating from a local Christian School he moved to New England to pursue graduate studies in the areas of Church History and Theology. He met his wife while in seminary, and after graduation they moved to the Upper Valley region of New Hampshire where they now work and do ministry.

Multimedia:

- [Trinitarian Theology](#)
 - [The nature of the law, its three uses, and preaching Law and Gospel](#)
 - [400 Years of Silence? – The intertestamental period](#)
-

Lori Peters

Merrimack, NH • **Lori Peters, Ratio Christi**

Specializing In: Evidence for the Resurrection. Reliability of Scripture. Development of the Canon. Personhood. Why We Need Apologetics. Intersection of Science and Christianity. Euthanasia. Islam. Baha'i. What Is Truth? Worship and Apologetics. Primary specializations – bioethics, problem of evil.

Ministry Focus: Equipping, training and teaching students and adults to use logic, reason, science, history, archeology and the Bible to defend the Christian worldview and to reach the world for Christ.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [Problem of Evil and Suffering](#)
 - [The Need for Apologetics in Student Ministry](#)
 - [Being a Living Sacrifice \(How We Live\)](#)
-

Chris Lee

Braintree, MA • REVEAL.org

Specializing In: General Apologetics. The Gospel. Evidential Apologetics including the Arguments for God's Existence (the Cosmological Argument, Ontological Argument, Teleological Argument). Some presuppositional apologetics. Cults. Biblical criticism (although not as much as OT/NT scholars). Theology of Work / engaging the marketplace of ideas at work. Some limited work on other types of apologetics including persuasion, rhetoric, oratory (communication), existentialist apologetics, etc.

Ministry Focus: Cults and abusive churches (for REVEAL.org).

Bio:

Multimedia:

Mark McGee

Huntsville, AL • [Faith and Self Defense](#)

Specializing In: Atheism and Agnosticism (former atheist). Evidential Apologetics. Biblical Archaeology & History. Eastern Philosophy (former student). Community Apologetics. Faith & Self Defense.

Ministry Focus: Engaging Atheists and Agnostics with evidence concerning the Christian worldview. Equipping Christian families to deal with spiritual and physical bullies (Faith and Self Defense). Equipping Christian children and teens to find answers to spiritual questions before going to college. Equipping college students to reach their unsaved friends for Christ. Training Christians how to use apologetics in their community (family, friends, neighborhood, work, school). Training church leaders to equip Christians for spiritual service (Ephesians 4).

Bio: Mark McGee is a career journalist and former atheist. He became a Christian in 1971 after months of investigating the claims of Christianity. He studied Bible and Theology at Luther Rice College and received a Certificate in Christian Apologetics from Biola University.

Multimedia:

- [Why Faith Defense?](#)
 - [Gentle Art of Faith Defense](#)
 - [Seekers, Skeptics and Scoffers 1](#)
-

David H. Leonard

Atlanta, GA • [Calling & Culture](#)

Specializing In: Worldviews. Science and Faith. Vocation. Cultural Engagement.

Ministry Focus: Connecting the Christian Faith to Contemporary Society.



Bio:

Multimedia:

- Integrating Philosophy and Faith Lecture One
 - Integrating Philosophy and Faith Lecture Two
 - Integrating Philosophy and Faith Lecture Three
-

Jorge Gil Calderon

Clinton, NC • **Warrior of the Light Ministries**

Specializing In: Cross Examined Instructor Academy Alumni & RZIM Academy Alumni. What is Apologetics and why your church needs it. What every Christian should know about Islam and the Qur'an. The Bible as the record of the word of God: A six point defense. I don't have enough faith to be an Atheist: Curriculum. Christianity & Cults. General Apologetics.

Ministry Focus: To share God's love, word, truth and saving knowledge with others. Apologetics, Theology & Evangelism. Teaching and public speaking.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- Lección 1: Introducción al Curso de Apologética
 - The Bible As The Word Of God – A six point defense
 - Puede el Mal refutar a Dios?
-

Miguel Benitez Jr.

Orlando, FL • **Doubtless Faith Ministries**

(ABROAD)

Specializing In: Christianity and Culture. Homosexuality and the Christian Worldview. The Bible's Influence on Western Civilization. The Christian Roots of Science. Arguments for God's Existence. The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus. The Reliability of the New Testament. Biblical Archaeology.

Ministry Focus: The vision of Doubtless Faith Ministries is to enable people to have confidence in the Word of God, in order that they might come to saving faith in Christ Jesus, and grow deeper in their relationship with Christ, our Savior and Lord, by teaching people to defend their faith. Kristen Davis, the founder and director of the ministry, has specialized in Biblical Archaeology and has a passion to see people's confidence in the Bible grow. In serving this ministry Miguel tries, when appropriate, to gear his areas of study toward this end as well.

Bio:

Multimedia:

Robert L. Lawrence

Hermosillo, Sonora Mexico • **Banah de Cristo Ministries**

Specializing In: Apologetics and Evangelism in Mexico. Defending the Historical Texts of the Bible. Misinterpretations of the Scriptures. Systematic Theology.

Ministry Focus: Building up the churches in Mexico in ways that are not being provided by other organizations and establishing the first Christian university that is government-recognized in the history of Mexico.

Bio: Robert Lawrence is the founder of Banah de Cristo Ministries which is a para-church ministry that seeks to provide to churches of any Orthodox denomination or non-denominations, essential needs that are not being met by other ministries. Currently Robert is the President of "the Advanced School of Theology" which will be, Lord willing, the first Accredited Christian University in Mexico. He is married to his wife of 14 years, Alicia, with 4 step daughters and 10 grandchildren. He holds 2 Masters (MAR/MDiv Biblical Studies) from LBS, one Post Grad ThM from LBS, and is currently in the DMin/PhD program at Veritas Evangelical Seminary in Calif.

Multimedia:

- [Natural and Special Revelation](#)
 - [Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus](#)
 - [Mormons, Jews, and Cult Characteristics](#)
-

David Haines

Bécancour, Québec, Canada • **Association Axiome**

Specializing In: Philosophy (Ontology, Epistemology, Aristotelian Logic.) Natural Theology. Thomistic Philosophy. Aristotelian Philosophy. Philosophical Apologetics. Philosophical Theology.

Ministry Focus: Providing apologetics resources for local churches in Québec.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [Becoming Divine](#)
 - [Evangelism: Jehovah's Witnesses](#)
 - [Christians & The Law of Moses](#)
-



Brian Auten

Belfast, Northern Ireland • **Apologetics 315**

Specializing In: Tactics in Defending the Faith. Evidence for Christianity. Arguments for the Existence of God. The Case for the Resurrection. The Moral Arguments for God. Logic and Critical Thinking. The Reliability of the Bible.

Ministry Focus: Equipping Christians apologetically.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [Brian Auten Interview on EIERadio](#)
-

Jonathan McLatchie

Newcastle Upon Tyne, England, UK

Specializing In: Intelligent Design. New Testament historiography. Resurrection of Jesus. Divine self-understanding of Jesus. Trinity. Islam.

Ministry Focus: Apologetics

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [Intelligent Design 101](#)
 - [Can We Trust the New Testament?](#)
 - [Evidence for the Resurrection?](#)
 - [Islam \(Why I Am Not A Muslim\)](#)
-

Calum Miller

England • **Apologetics.com: UK**

Specializing In: General Apologetics. Science and Religion. The Resurrection. Natural Theology. Philosophy of Religion. Philosophy of Science. Ethics.

Ministry Focus: General Apologetics.

Bio:

Multimedia:

- [Jesus, Paul and Freedom](#)
 - [Calum Miller vs Peter Atkins debate – Does God Exist?](#)
 - [Can Science Increase Our Faith in God?](#)
-

Robert Martin

Melbourne, Australia • City Bible Forum

Specializing In: General Apologetics. The Reason for God/Apologetics. Engaging Atheists. Historical Jesus and Resurrection of Jesus. Biblical Questions e.g. Bible and slavery, etc. Problem of Evil. Argument from Morality. Evangelism. 'Post Modern' Apologetics e.g. Materialism, Hedonism (i.e. Existential Longings), Science and Rationality. Debated atheist on: Impact of Christianity on the World (i.e. Christianity as a force for good in the world).

Ministry Focus: Workplace evangelism. This involves thinking about training people in apologetics and engaging people in the big questions of life.

Bio:

Multimedia:





CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS ALLIANCE

Answering non-believers, equipping believers, and demonstrating the truth of the Christian worldview.

www.christianapologeticsalliance.com



CAA Chapters Overview

As the Christian Apologetics Alliance (CAA) celebrates our fourth anniversary on March 27, 2015, we are so thankful for the way the CAA Community discusses a wide variety of important apologetics topics; offers mentorship, encouragement, and support to one another as we grow together in our understanding of apologetics; provides a platform for sharing about a wide variety of apologetics resources, conferences, educational opportunities, debates, and so on; and develops friendships and collaborations within the kingdom of God.

We want to commemorate these four years of being in community online by implementing a new pilot program for in-person CAA Chapters.

CAA Chapters are communities for CAA members local to each other to meet regularly and collaborate together and with other local ministries. CAA Chapter members enjoy all the same benefits of interacting in our online environment, as well as developing relationships on an authentic, in-person level. These groups are founded in and built on prayer and dependence on God, and they are fundamentally intended to be a means by which we love our neighbors. Love of God and others is the spiritual core and founding principle of these communities; it isn't about an apologetics junkies club.

Leaders: The CAA Admin Team will select a handful of CAA Chapter Leaders from among those who [apply during the pilot phase](#). A CAA Chapter Leader sets the direction, organizes the meetings, trains up new leadership for future growth, etc. The CAA Admin Team will provide support for the pilot group of CAA Chapter Leaders in a dedicated Facebook group, and the pilot group itself will provide valuable feedback that will shape the future of CAA Chapters. We ask our pilot leaders to make a one year commitment. After the pilot phase, state and regional directors will be put in place between the chapter leaders and the admin team.

Areas: Each CAA Chapter will be limited to one city, or one section of the city if located in a larger city. The groups need to be self-funded.

Members: Membership in CAA chapters is contingent on affirming the [CAA Statement of Faith \(SoF\)](#) and following the [CAA Discussion Guidelines](#). A member shares in the vision of the group with the CAA Leader and helps to grow the group to the next level. It is our vision that each member will take an eventual leadership role. In the case of members choosing not to follow the SoF or Discussion Guidelines, the admin team (during the pilot phase) will work with the Chapter Leader to work with those members to determine the best course of action for each member and chapter.

Participants: Participation in CAA chapters is not necessarily contingent on CAA membership. Each chapter will determine the focus of their meetings, and that focus will determine the demographic of the attendees. The CAA Admin Team encourages the inclusion of participants that are non-Christians. A participant attends with some regularity, but is not considered a member until they affirm the CAA's Statement of Faith. It is our vision that each participant eventually becomes a member.

CAA Chapters operate under the authority of the CAA Admin Team and independently of a local church. However, we encourage participation in and of the local church, who are more than welcome to host CAA Chapter meetings, conferences, and so on. We gladly promote CAA Chapter activities on our website and social media accounts, and just as gladly promote, applaud, and appreciate local churches who host or support CAA Chapters in any way. We are thrilled to be of service to the local church. Please see our [Open Invitation to Church Leadership](#).

CAA Chapters and Leaders are reviewed annually and remain in good standing if they meet these criteria, or become disaffiliated if they don't:

- *CAA members of the chapter affirm the Statement of Faith and discussion guidelines.
- *CAA chapter leaders are approved by the CAA Admin Team through the application process and interact in the leaders Facebook group at least once a month to share lesson and organizational plan updates, meeting progress, and feedback.
- *CAA chapter meets at least once a month.
- *CAA chapter and leader are a blessing locally and do not provoke complaints.

Note: CAA Chapter Leaders and/or Members may be removed immediately if, in the view of the CAA Admins, they engage in un-Christian behavior or contradict the CAA Statement of Faith.



An Open Invitation to Church Leadership: Host a CAA Chapter as One of Your Community Groups

Christian Apologetics Alliance (CAA) Chapters have been established to meet regularly and collaborate together and with other local ministries to discuss a wide variety of important apologetics topics; offer mentorship, encouragement, and support to one another as we grow together in our understanding of apologetics; provide a platform for sharing about a wide variety of apologetics resources, conferences, educational opportunities, debates, and so on; and develop friendships and collaborations within the kingdom of God. [**Apologetics:** The study of evidence for the truth of Christianity, and of answers to common objections and doubts.]

We encourage participation in and of the local church, who are more than welcome to host CAA Chapter meetings, conferences, and so on. We gladly promote CAA Chapter activities on our website and social media accounts, and just as gladly promote, applaud, and appreciate local churches who host or support CAA Chapters in any way. We are thrilled to be of service to the local church.

In response to a call to help local churches equip the body of believers with apologetics, the CAA would like to offer our local CAA Chapter Leader to guide one of your church's community groups in the study of Gospel-centered apologetics. The main goal of this offer is to help you adequately equip your church to be a pillar and support of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). Moreover, training is structured to progress at the pace of the community group and will bolster confidence in sharing the reason for our hope (1 Peter 3:15). This is a free offer with only a required commitment from your leadership team to promote the community group along with the rest of your community

groups, and for community group members to attend and participate.

Each of our CAA Chapter Leaders has been thoroughly vetted by the CAA Admin Team, and is qualified to guide a small group in the study of Biblical apologetics. Many of our leaders have experience teaching in church and classroom settings, while some have dedicated years to teaching apologetics exclusively. The CAA also affirms, to the best of our ability, the character of our CAA Chapter Leaders to be of high moral standards. Furthermore, the CAA ensures that the CAA Chapter Leader of your community group affirms the major doctrinal tenets of Christianity. [Review our Statement of Faith.](#)

We also want to reassure you that our CAA Chapter Leaders come prepared with detailed lesson plans, housing clear objectives for every block of instruction, in addition to outlines, handouts, and activities. This activity would not require any additional burden upon your preaching staff and should be a completely transparent process to their weekly workflow.

If you would like to explore the possibility of hosting a CAA Chapter as one of your church's community groups, please contact us. [If we don't have a CAA Chapter established in your area](#) and you can recommend someone from your congregation, [please share this application form](#) with them and contact us, as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for making the equipping of the saints a priority in your church!

Publication Notes

*I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*
Psalms 121:1

CAA President . . . Maryann Spikes
Group Advisor . . . Mark McGee
Editor . . . Glen Richmond
Design Consultant . . . Zackary Earl Kendall

Join the EQUIPPED team:

Get Started Here: [Christian Apologetics Alliance](#)

If you have any comments, or if you would like to
write for the next issue of EQUIPPED

email us at: caanewsletter@christianapologeticsalliance.com

COVER SCRIPTURE: Right-side: 1 Corinthians 15:4, Bottom: Acts 26:26.

BACKGROUND PHOTOS:

Our deepest love and heartfelt gratitude to our brothers and sisters at Plymouth Congregational Church, Whittier, CA for allowing us to photograph and use their beautiful stained glass windows as the backdrop for this issue. And a special thanks to lifetime friend, and sister in the Lord, Jan Hussey.

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EQUIPPED

Volume 1, Number 3

March 2015

CHRISTIAN
APOLOGETICS
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EQUIPPED

THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS ALLIANCE QUARTERLY

Overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ.

101 I ^dhold back my feet from every evil way,
in order to keep your word. Coming in Summer 2015 . . .
102 I do not turn aside from your rules,
for you have taught me.
103 How ^esweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
104 Through your precepts I get understanding;
therefore ^fI hate every false way.

*All Scripture is given by
inspiration of God, and
is profitable for
doctrine, for reproof, for
correction, for instruction
in righteousness, that
the man of God may be
complete, thoroughly
equipped for
every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Evidence for the Reliability of the Bible

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answering seekers, equipping Christians, & demonstrating the truth of the Christian worldview