

# The Crossroads of Life

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The Intersecting of Worldviews

How Do  
You...

- Respectfully Answer Honest Questions? (**Offensive**)

Can You...

- Defend Your Faith (**Defensive**)

Where Is God  
In All This?

- Keep Your Eye On the Prize... Jesus (**The "Game"**)

Where Do I  
Begin?

- Find & Define a Starting Point (**Training Camp**)

# Pre-Evangelism

It is explaining to the non-believing friend, co-worker, or family member the reasons behind your collection of beliefs about life and the universe and why they are coherent. The non-believer is not expected to interpret the data of history, psychology, and morality (let alone theology and miracles), as does the Christian. However, he must be given such data as the Christian interprets it... Otherwise he is not being witnessed to by a Christian.

## APOLOGETICS

Defending the  
faith since  
Genesis 1:1



# Good Definition

Apologetics attempts to render the Christian faith persuasive to the contemporary individual. For unbelievers, it is belief forming; it helps to defuse attacks upon Christianity, and to establish Christianity as credible by giving intellectual support to the explanatory value of a biblical world view. For believers, it is belief sustaining; it nurtures Christian faith by calling believers to love their Lord with their minds (Matt. 22:37).

Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books/Academic, 2001), cf. Apologetics.

# Worldview

## Defined

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The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines it this way:

- 1) The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world;
- 2) A collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group.

## Exemplified

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- People perceive the world differently because they make different assumptions about reality. For example, most Westerners assume that external to themselves is a real world made of lifeless matter. People in South and Southwest Asia, however, believe that this external world does not really exist; it is an illusion of the mind. And tribal peoples around the world see the earth as a living organism to which they must relate.
- Paul G. Hierbert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1985), 45.

# Analogous To Glasses



The right eyeglasses can put the world into clearer focus, and the correct worldview can function in much the same way. When someone looks at the world from the perspective of the wrong worldview, the world won't make much sense to him. Or what he thinks makes sense will, in fact, be wrong in important respects. Putting on the right conceptual scheme, that is, viewing the world through the correct worldview, can have important repercussions for the rest of the person's understanding of events and ideas.

Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 17-18.

# The Bell Tower & Clockmaker

There's a story of a man who used to go to work at a factory and every day would stop outside a clockmaker's store to synchronize his watch with the clock outside. Seeing this routine, the clockmaker finally asked the gentleman, "Excuse me, sir, I see that every day you stop and adjust your watch with my clock. What kind of work do you do?"

The man replied, "I'm embarrassed to tell you this, but, I keep the time at the factory nearby, and I have to ring the bell at *four o'clock* every afternoon when it is time for the people to go home. My watch doesn't work very well, so I synchronize it with your clock."

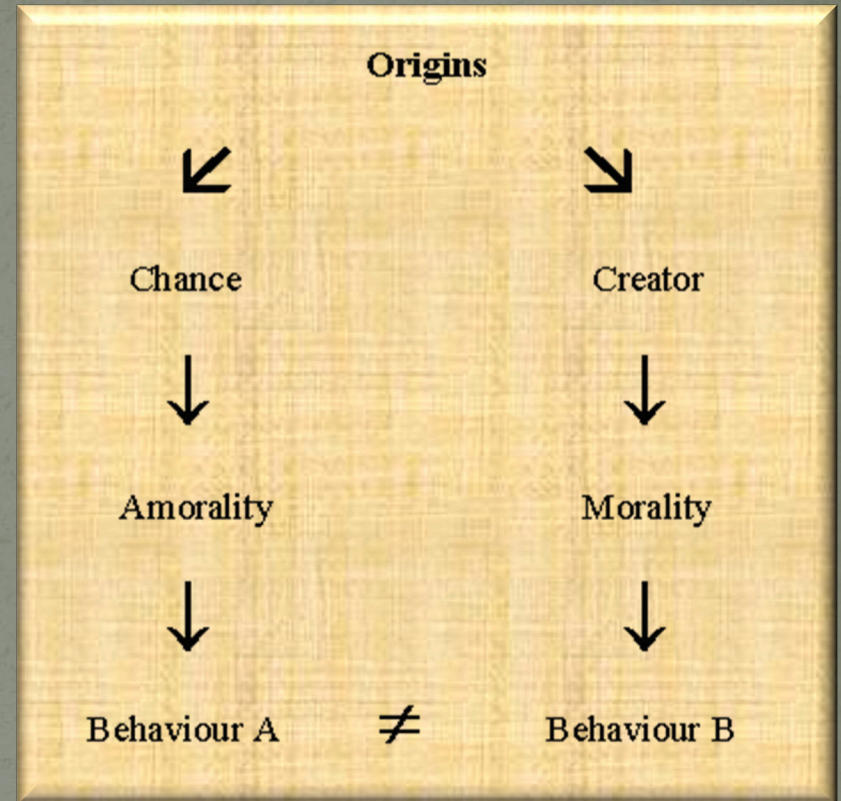
The clockmaker sheepishly responded, "I've got bad news for you. My clock doesn't work very well either, so I synchronize it with the bell that I hear from the factory at 4:00 every afternoon."

.... Even a clock that doesn't work may show you the right time twice a day...but it's not because it's keeping time.

Ravi Zacharias, "Address to the United Nations' Prayer Breakfast."

# Four Questions Must Be Answered By Any Worldview

1. Origin: How Did It All Start?
2. Meaning: Why Are We Here?  
Why Is Anything Here?
3. Morality: Do Right And Wrong  
Exist? If So, What Standard  
Should We Use?
4. Destiny: How Does It All End? Is  
There Afterlife?





# Linear Thinking



- Instead of thinking of Christianity as a collection of theological bits and pieces to be believed or debated, we should approach our faith as a conceptual system, as a total world-and-life view.

- Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 19.

# Turning Tables

*“When a man ceases to believe in God he does not believe in nothing, he believes almost in anything.” ~ G. K. Chesterton*

“All truth is relative!”

(Is that a relative truth?)

“There are no absolutes!”

(Are you absolutely sure?)

“It’s true for you but not for me!”

(Is that statement true just for you, or is it for everyone?)

When a statement fails to satisfy itself (i.e., to conform to *its own* criteria of validity or acceptability), it is self-refuting.... Consider some examples. “*I cannot say a word in English*” is self-refuting when uttered in English. “*I do not exist*” is self-refuting, for one must exist to utter it. The claim “*there are no truths*” is self-refuting. If it is false, then it is false. But is it true, then it is false as well, for in that case there would be no truths, including the statement itself.

*Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1987), 92.

# Applied to Agnostics

To say that we cannot know or comprehend God, as do the agnostics, *is to say that we know God*. How?

To say that we cannot know anything about God is to say something about God; it is to say that if there is a God, *he* is unknowable. But in that case, he is not *entirely* unknowable, for the agnostic certainly thinks that we can know one thing about him: *That nothing else can be known about him*. Unfortunately, the position that we can know exactly one thing about God – his unknowability in all respects except this – is equally unsupportable, for why should this one thing be an exception? How could we *know* that any possible God would be of such a nature that nothing else could be known about him? On what basis could we rule out his knowability in all other respects but this one? The very attempt to justify the claim confutes it, for the agnostic would have to know a great many things about God in order to know he that couldn't know anything else about him.

Norman Geisler & Paul Hoffman, eds., *Why I Am a Christian: Leading Thinkers Explain Why They Believe*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 58.

# Applied to Taoist and Freud

“As an example of the strong sense of this incoherency, take the claim sometimes made by *Taoists* that ‘Nothing can be said of the Tao.’ Taken without qualification ... this is self-referentially incoherent since to say ‘Nothing can be said of the Tao’ is to say something of the Tao. Thus, when taken in reference to itself, the statement cancels its own truth. As an example of the weak version of self-referential incoherency, take the claim once made by *Freud* that every belief is a product of the believer's unconscious emotional needs. If this claim were true, it would have to be true of itself since it is a belief of Freud's. It therefore requires itself to be nothing more than the product of Freud's unconscious emotional needs. This would not necessarily make the claim false, but it would mean that even if it were true neither Freud nor anyone else could ever know that it is. The most it would allow anyone to say is that he or she couldn't help but believe it.”

Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 84-85.

**1 Peter 3:15** - "... and always be ready to give a **defense** to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you."



- **Defense/Answer:** is the Greek *apologia*, from which we get our word "apologetics," meaning the careful, logical defense of the Christian faith showing its validity as the true saving gospel of God, our Creator and Savior. In effect Peter is admonishing believers to be always prepared to give an apologetic for the faith, especially when confronted by those who deny it and would destroy it if they could.

**Jude 3** - "although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend** for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."



- **Contend:** Should be "earnestly contend." The Greek, *epagonizomai*, refers to athletes intensely agonizing in the grueling training for a coming contest. Thus Jude graphically stresses the urgency of defending the faith. The defense of the gospel is no indifferent matter to be left to a few specialists, but one to which all believers should be trained and committed.

**Philippians 1:7** - "...whether I am in chains or **defending** and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me."



- A legal term referring to a formal defense as in a courtroom. Many modern evangelicals think the gospel does not need to be defended -- just preached. Paul and Timothy are saying different here.

# Why Apologetics – Point 1

There are three important aspects of apologetics that help the Christian in his or her walk, they are:

- *Correct belief (truth) is important.*

Believers may not fully comprehend or may have genuine misunderstandings or even limited exposure to and about Christian truth, but there are doctrinal parameters outside of which a person cannot cross without suffering apostasy and divine judgment. Embracing a false Christ and/or a false gospel leads to dire consequences. Paul's warning to the Galatian church concerning a different gospel dramatically underscores the importance of sound (biblical) doctrine:

- "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! (Gal. 1:8)

# Why Apologetics – Point 2

- *Christianity necessitates an apologetic response*

Christian apologists must take the religions of the world seriously. The effective apologist will come to know other religions and their adherents with an insider's mastery. Only then can he or she graciously expose a given religion's flaws in light of essential Christian truth. Not an easy task for the apologist for sure, however, a well-done expose can have a powerful effect. This endeavor seems to be what Scripture calls for in terms of the apologetics enterprise.

- "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

# Why Apologetics – Point 3

- *People deserve proper respect*

As creatures of God, all people bear the **imago Dei** and therefore have inherent dignity and moral worth. Every person consequently deserves respectful treatment regardless of race, sex, social class, political, or religious belief. Christians are called by God to guard the individual right of others to believe what they choose, whether their particular beliefs are wrong, absurd, or contrary to Christian truth. This regard basically amounts to respecting human personhood, volition, and individual moral responsibility. Christians should even tolerate the practices (religious and otherwise) of others, so long as those practices are legal, moral, and prudential. However, respecting another person's beliefs must not be misconstrued as approving those beliefs. Christians are responsible to use their powers of persuasion to convince others of truth, especially the ultimate truth of, Jesus Christ. While being socially tolerant, Christians must at the same time be intellectually intolerant of conflicting truth claims.



# Two Books to Get Started

