

A Christian Evangelism Manifesto

Why We Need Apologetics to Win the Postmodernism Culture War

In 2019 the Barna Group research has unpacked faith trends in the United States including a general reluctance to engage in spiritual conversations, and the erosion of religious belief and practice. These stories and more continued to point to an increase in secularized nation made up of increasingly secularized cities and the Northeast is the hot bed of Post Christian culture.

Lead by Springfield/Holyoke area, six of the top seven city/areas in the United States are located in New England. And two of the other top eight are located in New York!

On March 31,2021 The Journal Inquirer (local newspaper), on page 2 had an article from a Washington Post writer titled “Church membership in the U.S. Falls below 50 %”a drop of 25 % from the last century. This statistic is strongly correlated by age. 66 % of Americans born before 1946 belong to a church, compared to 36 % of the millennials. If this continues by 2050 America will no longer have one dominant religion.

Another study shows that 70 % of Christian youth who attend colleges and universities within five years have lost their faith. This should come as no surprise considering that this is the agenda of many professors at different universities. Consider Prof. Bart Ehrman, who walked into an auditorium of nearly 500 students who signed up for his class “Introduction to the New Testament”and immediately started by saying “I like to see a show of hands. How many Bible believing Christians do we have in the auditorium today? Come on. Don't be bashful”. After about a half dozen raised their hands, Ehrman said 'That's good. It looks like we have a few Christians here today. Welcome to “Introduction to the New Testament. My goal this semester will be to change everything you Christians think you know about the Bible and about Jesus.” Far to many people are persuaded by arguments against Christianity that are actually not that good but they have never been trained to respond or exposed to the questions to be prepared. Then the questions trouble them.

If you ask the average secular non-Christian what they think of Christians the most common answers are one they are anti-intellectual and that they are intolerant.

Another study covered common excuses on why more Christians do not evangelize and attempt to share their faith. Four of the top answers were

“They they may ask the question that I cannot answer”, “I'm scared”

“I don't know how to witness” , “I Don't know how to start a conversation”

4 REASONS WHY CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS IS VITAL TO HAVE ANY CHANCE TO REVERSE THESE TRENDS

It's a Different World and Culture

There was a time in the majority of people in America held at least somewhat of a similar foundation of beliefs. They believed in absolute truth, in God, and often at least respected the Bible. That is not the case anymore! It's hard to talk about the gospel of Jesus Christ to somebody who doesn't even believe God exists and there is no such thing as sin. In Acts chapter 2, Peter preaches in Jerusalem using the Old Testament and converts many to Christianity because his audience was Jewish and believed in the Old Testament .

However in Acts chapter 17, Paul takes an entirely different approach in Athens on Mars Hill when speaking to the Greek philosophers. He build's on common ground and even quotes some of their own poets in building his case for Christ. Paul later has his most successful evangelism impact using a secular Greek lecture hall, the Hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:8-10). We are no longer in a culture like Jerusalem where the Bible is respected, we are in a completely different culture now much more like Athens where we may need to use some of their own material (science, logic, philosophy, history) to point to Christ. And I am convinced that all of these DO lead to God and his revelation!

Evangelism

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (II Cor. 4:3,4)

“....other seeds fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked them.” Matthew 13:7 (The Parable of the Sower)

For us to be more successful in fulfilling the great commission, we need to be able to answer questions, and refute arguments against Christianity. We need to show that every worldview opposed to Christ is built on sand. (Matthew 7:24-27) It's foundation will not hold. I would like to make one point -that simply winning debates in an age of skepticism won't necessarily instantly convert folks. However for most people the heart follows the head. If we can show good reasons for the belief in God and a reason to follow Jesus, it will at least get people pause to consider what we are saying has merit. With some stumbling blocks out of the way this allows the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and in future meetings with Christians the seeds we plant can be watered and grow. I would also point out that a Christian with some training in apologetics would eliminate, or at least lighten the four reasons why many Christians do not witness listed on page 1.

The Anti-Christian Media & Entertainment Industry

As many in the media and Hollywood do not believe in absolute truths, they have no problem bending it to suit their argument. Consequently Christianity is constantly portrayed in a negative light. Fabricated claims that Christians borrow from other cultures, that the Bible is full of contradictions, that there hidden books not included in the Bible, that Christians have only blind faith, and many other false arguments against God and his word are portrayed on the News and in television shows and movies.

FORTIFYING OUR OWN FAITH AND THOSE AROUND US

Doubt can creep into the minds of even the strongest, longest tenured Christians. Difficult life circumstances can make us ask tough questions, worldly pressure can cause us to be unsure of who God is or if he really exists. If we don't have a solid foundation of truth and know how to find the answers to these questions our faith can slowly be eroded away. But when we see the boldness (Acts 18:27-28) of other Christians and their ability to give an answer (I Peter 3:15) and to contend for the faith (Jude 3), (Acts 19:8-10) it strengthens our faith to!

“When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scripture that Jesus was the Messiah” (Acts 18:27-28 NIV)

Conrad McIntire Jr., has studied Christian Apologetics, cults, world religions and cultural issues for 35 years. He has studied christian apologetics & christian counseling in Liberty University's master degree program. He is a member of The Evangelical Philosophical Society, Society of Christian Philosophers, and International Society of Christian Apologetics. He owns one of the largest Christian Apologetics libraries in New England with approx. 2000+ books. He is co-director of the Christian Apologetics Research & Education Service. He has written “Let us Reason Together-”Christianity vs Atheism: Which has the evidence of science, logic and history?” He has written numerous articles and papers including:

“56 Questions for Jehovah's Witnesses”, “Letters to a Mormon”, “Who is Jesus?- An Old Testament/New Testament Comparison”, “Questioning Reincarnation”, “A Rational Defense -Why I am Pro-Life”and “The Dawkins Delusion-a response to the “God Delusion”.

He is trained to do a number of presentations to built up the faith of Christians:

“The Resurrection of Jesus – Fact or Hoax”, “Atheism-let us reason together”, “How to Witness to a Jehovah's Witness”, “Mormonism-the Christian view”, “Tactics-A Game Plan for discussing your Christian Convictions”, “Islam – the Christian view”, etc.

Please send questions, ideas or thoughts to : caresipeter315@aol.com

