

An Apology for Lutheran Apologetics

A Proposal for the Lutheran Educators' Guild

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"...always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." I Peter 3:15

Executive Summary:

Digital citizens are accessing information about their own faith traditions and those of others via online sources. The pluralism of postmodern society brings with it the danger of “mix-and-match” spirituality as netizens choose portions of many religions to construct personal worldviews. The online world is just one of many distractions that hinder careful reflection on the human condition (sinfulness and mortality) by supplanting that reflection with “empty activity.”

Though these are serious concerns for the communication of a right understanding of Christianity, the rapid spread of the atheistic worldview and an increase of active attacks against Christianity are a more serious threat. Traditionally, apologetics has defended the Christian faith, but Lutheran theologians have become hostile to it due to misconceptions about the role reason can play in faith development. These objections can be answered through careful study of the Lutheran Confessions and an orthodox Lutheran apologetic can be constructed.

Lutheran educators will increasingly encounter environments hostile to Christianity as the cutting edge of pedagogy becomes further entrenched in online activities. They may also encounter hostile situations in their own classrooms as more unbelievers begin attending Lutheran schools.

An online training program using the Lutheran Educators’ Guild’s existing resources is presented in this proposal with the overall goal the creation a group of Lutheran educators who are confident in combining the axioms of an orthodox Lutheran apologetic with the tenets of evangelism and who are powerfully active in witnessing to and defending the faith in both the real and virtual worlds.

Introduction:

Increasingly, people looking for religious information about both their own faith tradition and that of others are turning to online resources. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2004), “64% of the nation’s [America] 128 million Internet users have done things online that relate to religious or spiritual matters” (p. i). Additionally, 28% of those online who identify with a religious body have used the Internet to learn more about their own faith, while 26% of them have used it to learn more about the faith of others (p. ii). There exists a very real danger that, in our pluralistic society, people exposed multiple religious teachings might “mix-and-match” portions of each to create their own “self-styled spirituality” (Grootius, 2000).

Heinecke (as cited in Montgomery, 1978b) wrote the following in an effort to describe the philosophy of pluralism.

It doesn't . . . make too much difference whether you are Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish, or, for that matter, Hindu or Mohammedan. They are all different ways to the same goal. Basically they follow the same moral code and the religious uplift is the same. . . Probably the religion of the future will succeed in incorporating the best insights of them all. Christian missionaries, therefore, should not impose their views on others but should rather sit at a round table and pool their views for the good of all. Confucious (sic), Lao-tse, Asoka, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and then finally Jesus! These are the great leaders of mankind.

Clearly, pluralism is in conflict with the words of Christ, when He states, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:3, English Standard Version).

According to Grootius (2000), postmodern life presents another danger as well, that of diversion. At no time in human history have so many different ways existed to fill otherwise idle time. Grootius specifically refers to “CD-ROM games, various fantasy environments, video games, e-mail, chat rooms...television, at the movies, at amusement parks or any number of other means of omnipresent entertainment.” These diversions are a danger because they hinder thought about the human condition (sinfulness and mortality) and replace that thought with “empty activity that masquerades as worthwhile.”

The increasing appeal of pluralism, particularly through online environments, and the ready availability of diverting entertainment represent serious difficulties to communicating a right understanding of Christianity. However, these difficulties could be considered primarily as *passive* problems as they exist within the “background noise” of the postmodern world. Far more troubling is spread of the atheistic worldview in both online and offline settings. More and more, atheism has become an *active* threat to Christianity, no longer content to merely deny its truth claims, but seeking to attack and refute them. McGrath (2005) states that atheism itself has emerged as a faith (p. 116).

According to Sell (2007), the sophistication of attacks to Christianity have been on the rise since the 1920s (p. 134). Heen (2006) states that during the 1920s and 1930s changes in society and advances in science made it increasingly difficult

to apply the long-held Bible beliefs of the time to everyday life (p. 13-14). Chief among these difficulties were questions about the age, origin, and nature of the universe, the Earth, and life itself (p. 14). Compounding the problem was an overall decline in the acceptance of the authority of the Bible and basic knowledge of its teachings (Heen, 2006, p. 14).

Christ, in the Great Commission, commanded His followers to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). The phrase “all nations” is further elaborated on in Acts 1:8, when Christ states “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” I suggest that Christ’s command, for command it is, also extends to the “ends of the Internet”. The Gospel needs to be brought to the online “nations” as well.

Maier (1999) claimed that Christianity and its parent Judaism, are unique among world religions in resting “squarely on fact: on actual people, places and events that are genuine parts of a real past.” According to Montgomery (1978b), the teaching of the early church revolved around the fact of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. This can be seen clearly in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 14:

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me... And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians appealed to the objective, historical evidence of the resurrection by providing his readers with the identities of a number of eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ. According to Montgomery (1974), this sort of evidence "has the great merit of openness to public inquiry; it cannot easily be ignored as the product of inner wish-fulfillment." In other words, had the Corinthians so desired, they could have made their own investigation into the resurrection and located and questioned these eyewitnesses. This stands in contrast to the position of many popular atheist writers, such as Richard Dawkins who insist that faith "is blind trust, in the absence of evidence, even in the teeth of evidence" (as cited in McGrath, 2005, p. 122). According to McGrath (2005), this position on faith cannot be found in "any official declaration of faith from any Christian denomination" (p. 122).

In 1 Peter 3:15, we read the exhortation to "always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." Matzat (n.d.) asserted that this passage is "imperative in Greek, and it is not just applied to

pastors and theologians. It is for everybody. It is a command.” Matzat (n.d.) also stated that, in the “earliest preaching of the Apostles, there was a continuity between the preaching of the Gospel and the defense of the Gospel.” In other words, preaching the Gospel (evangelism) is a separate task from defending the Gospel. This defense of the Gospel is known as apologetics.

According to Snyder (1999), “apologetics is not unique to Christians” (p. 238). Other religions (including atheism, as was noted previously) engage in such defenses. Apologists were very active in the early Christian church, defending the faith from charges that the followers of Christ “were cannibalistic, licentious, opposed to government, atheistic, and generally inimical to all normal people” and in attacking “Greek and Roman polytheism, gnosticism, and philosophy as a way of discovering God” (Snyder, 1999, p. 238).

According to Snyder (1999), apologetics can be based on one of two sets of epistemic assumptions. The first of these assumptive sets could be referred to as “evidentialist”. The evidentialist assumes that the unbeliever, though fallen in sin, can still learn about God through the evidence of natural revelation. The second group, the “presuppositionalists”, holds that fallen man, because of his sin, is incapable of understanding either natural revelation or the special revelation of the Bible. This understanding must come from the work of God through the Holy Spirit. In short, the evidentialist sees argument as being able to create or bring to faith, but the presuppositionalist maintains that faith can only come from the Holy Spirit and relegates argument to a supporting role (p. 239). As we will soon discuss, the

position of the Lutheran Church with regards to apologetics is largely presuppositional.

Sell (2007) however, noted the importance of not relying solely on appeals to revelation in sharing the faith with unbelievers:

I do not see how we can in the end avoid being trapped in a ghetto of revelation which would indeed render us impervious to rational assaults from without, but this security would be bought at the high price of our being unable to commend the faith to critics whether serious or flippant (p. 150).

Indeed, according to Larson (2009):

[B]y preemptively abandoning arguments out of the fear that they might one day be weakened by scientific advance, we risk inadvertently helping to sustain the myth of a continual retreat of theistic arguments in the face of an ever-expanding naturalistic science. To the extent that large, important areas, such as the origin of life, are abandoned as dangerous grounds on which to argue for the existence of God, atheistic scientists feel increased confidence to dismiss any remaining arguments (p. 20).

However important apologetic arguments from reason or science may be, it is crucial to acknowledge that the work of the Holy Spirit creates belief and not any action of man (Larson, 2009, p. 21). Richard Feynman, Nobel laureate physicist, stated that “scientific knowledge is a body of statements of varying degree of certainty - some most unsure, some nearly sure, but none absolutely certain” (as cited in McGrath, 2005, p. 124). We must agree with Lactantius that “true wisdom and piety [can] only be attained through acceptance of Christ as saviour and the

Christian religion as his interpreter. One must open one's eyes and look at God who is the only home of truth" (as cited in Frennd, 2006, p. 11).

For the Lutheran, apologetics has often been seen in a negative light because of the supposed attitudes of Martin Luther and the authors of the Lutheran Confessions toward reason. As cited in House (1981), Martin Luther held that "reason is the devil's whore and an enemy of the true knowledge of God" (p. 65). According to House (1981), Luther did use the word "reason" in several ways, but most often to refer to "the faculty of the mind which makes judgments" (p. 65). Lest all hope for a Lutheran apologetic be lost, House wrote that Luther at times saw reason as a "handmaid of theology and revelation" (p. 65). To illustrate the hostility of many Lutherans to apologetics, though, Dulles as cited by House (1981) saw that "apologetics, then, as a natural preparation for faith, stood condemned by *sola fide* and *sola gratia*" (p. 66).

Therefore, two problems have been defined. First, the Word of God in the Person of Christ must be taken to the world, both "real and virtual". The evangelistic task is hindered by many factors, including the pluralism of modern culture, the spread of the atheistic worldview, and actual attacks on Christianity's truth claims by atheists and others. Second, apologetics, the long-time partner of evangelism, has come under attack by theologians (including within the Lutheran Church) for attempting to replace the work of the Holy Spirit in creating faith with sinful man's reason. What is needed is a way to reconcile the apologetic task with a proper Lutheran understanding of evangelism and reason.

According to Montgomery (1978a), there are four basic Lutheran objections to apologetics or “proving the faith”: (1) reason is given a place in salvation, leading to works-righteousness; (2) historical knowledge takes the place of saving faith and the work of the Holy Spirit is ignored; (3) the total depravity of man and the effects of original sin are disregarded; and (4) neglects that Scripture only makes sense through the illumination of the Holy Spirit and not through argumentation (p. 261).

Montgomery (1978b) states:

If this is indeed the viewpoint of the Confessions, a positive Lutheran apologetic would admittedly be excluded on principle: at best the confessional Lutheran could only defend his position by attempting to remove misconceptions concerning it or by endeavoring to point out fallacies in his opponents' reasoning (p. 261).

According to Montgomery (1978a), the Lutheran Confessions do not condemn all uses of reason. Instead, they reject “not the *ministerial*, but the *magisterial* use of reason” or that use of reason which seeks self-salvation (p263). The *Formula of Concord* (as cited by Montgomery, 1978a) states, ““We take our intellect captive in obedience to Christ” (p. 263). Thus, if reason is “not allowed to usurp a self-justifying role in the salvatory operation, the Confessions in no way exclude its apologetic use” (Montgomery, 1978a, p. 263).

Montgomery (1978a) addressed the problem of “historic knowledge” (*fides historica*) by saying

In virtually every instance where the *Book of Concord* speaks negatively of the *fides historica*, it carefully qualifies the condemnation (generally by the

words "merely" or "only"), as in the following typical examples from the *Apology*: "Our opponents imagine that faith is only historical knowledge"; "The faith of which the apostles speak is not idle knowledge, but a thing that receives the Holy Spirit and justifies us"; "As we have often said, faith is not merely knowledge but rather a desire to accept and grasp what is offered in the promise of Christ"; "We are not talking about idle knowledge, such as even the demons have"; "Faith is not merely knowledge in the intellect but also trust in the will"; "The scholastics . . . interpret faith as merely a knowledge of history or of dogmas, not as the power that grasps the promise of grace and righteousness, quickening the heart amid the terrors of sin and death." (p. 264).

The *Augsburg Confession* (as cited by Montgomery, 1978a) states "The term 'faith' does not signify merely knowledge of the history (such as is in the ungodly and the devil), but it signifies faith which believes not only the history but also the effect of the history (p. 264).

The Confessions do not condemn historical knowledge, but instead recognize its limits. Montgomery (1978a) wrote

Such knowledge could go only so far: it could not justify or save; only the Holy Spirit imparting faith to the heart could do that. But since the Spirit works through the Word, and since the Word sets forth accurate historical knowledge of Christ's life and saving work, the Confessions hardly preclude the apologetic use of such evidence. Historical knowledge, like reason, can be misused by sinful man; but it—again like reason—can be brought into

obedience to Christ and employed ministerially to persuade men to accept the historical Christ as Lord of their personal history (p. 264).

With regard to the depravity of man and the effect of the fall on his natural knowledge of God, Montgomery (1978a) wrote

The Confessions deal with this issue to make clear beyond all doubt that no natural knowledge on the part of fallen man is capable of bringing him to salvation. Natural knowledge has precisely the same limitations as reason or historical knowledge: not one of them or all of them in combination can form a ladder reaching to heaven (p. 266).

However, Montgomery (1978a) also asserted that

[T]he authors of the Confessions allow the natural man knowledge that there is a God; and their overwhelming emphasis on the reality of the incarnation-the personal union of the divine and human natures-makes them the strongest possible supporters of the biblical affirmation that God submitted to the "empirical observation of human reality" by becoming true Man in Jesus Christ.

Thus there is nothing in the Confessions which would in principle militate against the use of apologetic arguments for God's existence from nature, or for the deity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ from empirical observation of His resurrection appearances, or for the inspiration of Scripture from fulfilled prophecy and other external proofs-as long as such arguments do not purport to substitute for the Spirit's converting work in the heart (p. 266).

The argument on spiritual illumination and the clarity of Scripture does not hold up well in the light of the Confessions, with the following caveat. Montgomery (1978a) made it clear that no work of man can lead to his own salvation, be it “rational, cognitive-or even biblical” (p. 267). Only the Holy Spirit can impart salvation through the Bible. Yet, according to Montgomery (1978a),

[T]he *Book of Concord* never suggests...the modern Neo-Orthodox teaching that the Bible possesses no inherent clarity, but somehow waits for the Spirit's work on the heart to acquire the meaning God intended for it. After discussing a number of biblical passages and their relationship to justification by grace through faith, the *Apology* bluntly says: "No sane man can judge otherwise" (p. 267).

Such passages from the *Concordia* show beyond question that the confessional authors believed that Scripture is inherently perspicuous- that it speaks clearly and ought to say exactly the same thing to their opponents as it did to them. If it did not, the reason was simply that the opposition twisted it by sinful sophistry. Indeed, it should be obvious that had the confessional writers not been convinced that the Bible could speak clearly and persuasively to their opponents, they would not have gone to the trouble of continually presenting and arguing from Scriptural texts! (p. 268).

Having thus addressed the chief “Lutheran” objections to apologetics, the issue of what a Lutheran apologetic might look like can now be addressed.

According to Montgomery (1978a), the following apologetic axioms may be derived from the Lutheran Confessions:

1. Fallen man retains the ability to reason deductively – to employ logic (p. 269).
2. Fallen man retains the ability to reason inductively – to draw correct factual inferences from empirical data (p. 270).
3. A common ground of logic and fact unites believer and unbeliever, so that the believer can persuasively employ the unbeliever's own reasoning against him (p. 270).
4. The common ground of logic and fact uniting believer and unbeliever permits the effective use of analogy-reasoning to convince the unbeliever (p. 270).
5. [F]allen man is capable of acquiring natural knowledge of God's existence, historical knowledge...of Biblical events, and understanding as to the meaning of the perspicuous Scriptural text (p. 271).
6. However...none of the above capacities of the unregenerate man...are such as to permit him to mend his broken God-relationship: the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone, converts men to Christ (p. 271).

Montgomery (1978a) urged that confessional Lutherans not “fall into the trap of presuppositionalism” because it ultimately “destroys the divinely created common ground between believer and unbeliever” (p. 271). Rather, Montgomery (1978a) suggested

The *Book of Concord* much more wisely perceived that the unbeliever, living in the same universe with the Christian and using the same inferential faculties of mind, should respond to reasoning that proceeds by analogy from

ordinary decision-making in secular affairs to the meaning and significance of biblical evidence. If the unbeliever refuses to do so, he acts irrationally by analogy with his ordinary experience and displays his real reason for rejecting the truth; not intellectual dissatisfaction but willful egocentricity (p. 271).

Finally, Montgomery (1978a), in stating his vision of orthodox Lutheran apologetics, stressed that “the confessional apologist will see himself not as a Holy-Spirit-substitute but as a John the Baptist in the wilderness of a secular age” (p. 272). Clearly, modern-day “John the Bapstists” are needed to go out into the online and offline world to make “the paths intellectually straight which lead to the Lamb of God – to the only One who can take away the sins of the world” (p. 272).

The Lutheran Educators’ Guild (n.d.) was created “to develop and provide high quality educational resources, to create a community of fellowship and encouragement for Lutheran educators, and to engage the world in Christ-centered dialogue.” As a way to engage the world in Christ-centered dialog, to provide high quality educational resources, and to address the critical need for a distinctly Lutheran apologetic to both the real and virtual worlds, it is proposed that the Guild undertake the creation of a training program in apologetics for Lutheran educators. Such a training program would be of great benefit to Lutheran educators encountering hostility toward Christianity as they enter in to the digital world to consume and create content. It would also be of benefit to Lutheran educators whose classrooms contain unbelieving students.

Goals:

After completion of the training program, participants will be able to:

1. Construct and defend a Lutheran apologetical standpoint for the digital age.
2. Identify atheistic/anti-Christian online communities and analyze their lines of argumentation against the Christian faith.
3. Create a Christian apologetic response to those arguments.
4. Propose a scenario to engage in Christian apologetics either online or offline.
5. Compose responses to the “standard” attacks of modern-day atheists, including, but not limited to: the problem of suffering, the problem of evil, the historicity of Jesus and the resurrection, age and origin of the Earth.

Proposed Project:

This training program would primarily be delivered online through the Lutheran Educators’ Guild’s existing Moodle installation (<http://learn.lutheraneducators.com>). Currently, The Guild offers a similar, though smaller in scope, training program for Lutheran educators seeking to learn more about personal learning networks.

The proposed apologetics training program would be divided into the following 8 units each lasting one week:

1. History of Apologetics/Toward a Lutheran Apologetic
2. Epistemology

3. Is there a God?/What is the nature of God?
4. Science: Friend, Foe, or Neutral Party?
5. What does history say about Christianity?
6. Atheism: A world without God
7. Putting it all together, Part I: What is Truth?
8. Putting it all together, Part II: Conclusion

Each unit would consist of a written or multimedia introduction to that week's topic (see **Appendix A** for the proposed outline of Unit 2's introduction), with several assigned readings (online and offline), one or more discussion boards for participants to interact with each other and the instructors, and one or more written assignments.

Participants would access the Moodle several times during the week to retrieve the unit's introductory material, note the week's readings, and to receive and post assignments, as well as to participate in the program's discussion boards. A member of the Guild's leadership team or another designated party would facilitate the course. Guest presenters may be included as opportunity permits.

The proposed timeline for this project is four months.

Action Steps and Timeline:

- Month One:**
- Create lesson plans for Units 1-4
 - Develop reading lists for Units 1-4
 - Add course framework to Moodle
 - Begin seeking guest presenters

Month Two:

- Create lesson plans for Units 5-8
- Develop reading lists for Units 5-8
- Add course content for Units 1-4 to Moodle
- Contact potential guest presenters

Month Three:

- Enter Unit 5-8 course content into Moodle
- Initiate PR campaign to alert potential participants to the new training program. This could be done through existing Twitter, Facebook, and discussion board contacts
- Determine method for guest presenters to interact with participants and begin training

Month Four:

- Final tuning to course content
- Check that required reading materials remain available
- Open enrollment to participants
- Distribute reading lists to

participants

- Determine times for guest presenters to interact with participants
- Deploy training program
- Interact with participants through discussion boards and assignments
- Refine program based on feedback and experiences
- Update introductory materials and reading lists based on feedback, experiences, and new developments in apologetic thought

Month Five and Beyond:

Resources:

The completion of this project requires Web hosting and a learning management system such as Moodle. The Lutheran Educators' Guild already has both. Additionally, one or more instructor/facilitators are needed to create and manage the training program. Likely, these would be existing members of the Guild's leadership team. Guest presenters would be a welcome addition but not required and could even be added to a later section of the training program.

Compilation of required readings forms the most difficult aspect of this training program, beyond creating the actual course content. The readings are intended to form a key component of the program as a whole. The challenge is to locate resources that are in print, easily procured, accessible to non-theologians, and inexpensive. Online resources will be used in many cases, but there are several traditional books of use to learning about apologetics. Lee Strobel's popular *The Case for Christ* presents a useful overview of the worth of evidence-based investigation. Craig Parton's *The Defense Never Rests: A Lawyer's Quest for the Gospel* provides an excellent treatment of the Lutheran apologetic. Additionally, the included annotated bibliography of apologetical and theological literature identifies many additional sources for further investigation. Finally, Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli's *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* details many typical apologetical questions and answers in a classical *summa* format. However, this book is written from a Roman Catholic perspective, so it may be unsuited for inexperienced Lutheran apologists.

Deliverables:

The expected result of this program is the creation a group of Lutheran educators who are confident in combining the axioms of an orthodox Lutheran apologetic with the tenets of evangelism and who are powerfully active in witnessing to and defending the faith in both the real and virtual worlds. This group of Lutheran educators, as they encounter opposition to Christianity, will be able to confront the objections, misconceptions, and attacks of the unbelieving world and witness to the hope that is within us because of Christ.

Project goals will be measured through the assignments and discussion board comments of program participants.

1. *Construct and defend a Lutheran apologetic standpoint for the digital age.* Participants will, after reflection on the Lutheran Confessions and assigned readings, write or otherwise relate a personal understanding of the nature of the Lutheran apologetic and share it with the other participants for discussion.
2. *Identify atheistic/anti-Christian online communities and analyze their lines of argumentation against the Christian faith.* Participants will locate online communities hostile to Christianity and dissect the argumentation of those communities. Arguments will be carefully checked to see if they match any of the “classic” objections to Christianity. These findings will be shared with the other program participants for discussion.
3. *Create a Christian apologetic response to those arguments.* Building on the previous result, participants will craft a Christian response to the objections raised. These responses will be shared and critiqued by the other program participants.
4. *Propose a scenario to engage in Christian apologetics either online or offline.* Completion of this goal will be demonstrated through an informal proposal wherein the participant will identify a specific need for a Christian apologetical response and then outline how that response could be given.

5. *Compose responses to the “standard” attacks of modern-day atheists, including, but not limited to: the problem of suffering, the problem of evil, the historicity of Jesus and the resurrection, age and origin of the Earth.* The end result of this goal will be a shared group document (perhaps a wiki, Google Doc, or other digital form) that contains a list of common objections, misconceptions, and attacks to the Christian faith and details responses to each. Over time, this document will become quite extensive as new objections are raised and as responses are further refined.

Summary:

- Online resources are becoming primary means for individuals to learn about religion
- Society’s pluralistic nature could lead to an increase of “mix-and-match” spirituality composed of portions of many faith traditions discovered through online research
- Ready availability of online and offline diversions hinder reflection on the human condition
- Atheistic worldview is becoming more prevalent and hostile to Christianity
- Apologetics, the traditional defender of the Christian faith, is received with hostility by many Lutherans based on flawed perceptions of the Lutheran Confessions
- Those objections can be confessionally addressed

- The proposed online training program targeted toward Lutheran educators would combine online discussions, required readings, guest presenters, and assignments to meet project goals using the Lutheran Educators' Guild Moodle
- Participants will address the poor perception of apologetics in Lutheran circles
- Participants would be prepared to answer the Great Commission of Christ and to provide a defense of the hope that is within us

Appendix A: Proposed Outline for Unit 2 Introduction

- I. Can we know anything?
 - a. If not we can go no farther.
 - b. If so, what does that say about our Universe?
 - i. Universe follows some sort of system of rules
 - ii. Those rules are at least somewhat constant
 - iii. Forms the basis of logic/Reason
 - iv. Bottom line...there is a sensibility to the Universe and we believe we can discover it.
- II. How can we know things?
 - a. Observation
 - i. Self
 - 1. Eyewitness
 - 2. Deduction/Induction
 - 3. Emotion/Instinct
 - ii. Others
 - 1. Eyewitness
 - 2. History
 - 3. Deduction/Induction
 - 4. Emotion/Instinct
 - b. Reason
 - i. Can Reason be trusted?
 - 1. Not in a universe founded on randomness
 - ii. Types of Reasoning
 - 1. Deduction
 - 2. Induction
 - c. Revelation
 - i. Source
 - 1. Outside the Self
 - 2. Transcendent
 - ii. Types
 - 1. Private
 - a. Least reliable
 - b. Forced to trust the report of the receiver
 - i. Trustworthiness of receiver
 - ii. Difficult to distinguish from hallucination/falsehood
 - 2. Public
 - a. Can be investigated using the tools of history and science
 - d. Definition
- III. How do we investigate evidence?
 - a. History
 - i. Archeology
 - 1. Artifacts

- 2. Places
 - ii. Documents
 - 1. Primary Sources
 - 2. Secondary Sources
 - iii. Oral Tradition
- b. Science
- i. Empirical Method
 - 1. Based on experience of naturally occurring data
 - ii. Experimental Method
 - 1. Based on carefully constructed and controlled experimentation
- c. Theology
- i. Scripture
 - 1. Is the evidence consistent with the Bible?
 - ii. Church Fathers/Confessions
 - 1. Is it consistent with an orthodox interpretation of the Scriptures?
- d. Reason
- i. Logic
 - 1. Does the evidence make sense:
 - a. Internally?
 - b. Externally?

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