

APOLOGETICS

AN INTEGRAL PERSPECTIVE

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MIAMI INTERNATIONAL SEMINARY

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PREFACE

The faculty of Miami International Seminary (MINTS) decided in 2000 that the Systematic Theology courses of the seminary would be taught from an apologetically perspective, that is, from the point of view of knowing and defending the Christian faith. Our first courses, both in English and Spanish, were in the field of apologetics. The manuscript which you are about to read serves as a course syllabus. Supplemental materials are made available to the students in order to meet their reading and other academic requirements.

This course does not represent the official position of MINTS. MINTS does not have an official position as far as apologetics is concerned. The only requirements that MINTS has is that one's apologetical teachings be Biblical and not in contradiction to the theological position of the seminary, which is the Westminster Standards.¹ Not all of the teachers are from the Presbyterian doctrinal tradition and compatible theological statements are acceptable.²

As a former missionary in the Dominican Republic (1981-1993) and Spanish speaker and teacher, I am grateful that this course is also written in Spanish and has been taught by the author in more than 15 countries. It is encouraging to see how master level students are teaching the course, under the author's supervision, to students at the bachelor level.

I am very grateful for the God given opportunity to work with Ligonier Ministries of Canada from 1995-1998. The ministry of R.C. Sproul continues to serve as a model for doing apologetics in the church context and outside of the ecclesiastical boundaries of one's own church.

It is the author's prayer that this course will serve as a spring board for the student to grasp the urgency of having to be equipped to defend the Christian faith.

¹ Ordained leaders in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) are allowed to state their disagreement with the Westminster Standards at the time of the ordination. The presbytery then decides whether or not the stated difference is essential to the Biblical and Reformed system of doctrine. Each denomination has its own policy as to differences with church standards.

² Compatible doctrinal standards, as recognized by MINTS include: Belgic Confession, Genevan Confession, Canons of Dordrecht, Heidelberg Catechism, London Confession, Cambridge Declaration and others. If a church does not subscribe to a historical creedal document, they are encouraged to submit their own.

HOW TO STUDY THIS COURSE

INTRODUCTION

In order to study this course it is important to have the following tools

1. The student manual, *Apologetics: An Integral Perspective*.
2. Access to the internet. See bibliography for web sites.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

1. Class attendance (15%). If course is taken by correspondence, the student will read an extra 200 pages on apologetics and write a 4 page reflection paper.
2. Questions and answers (15%). The student will write the questions and the answers for the lessons in his/her own notebook.
3. Survey (30%). The students will prepare a 10 question theological survey in order to find out what an equal number of Christians and non-Christians believe. Minimal number of people surveyed is 25. The survey questions will be reviewed prior to the giving of the survey. The students will make a one page evaluation of the results of the survey.
4. Reading (20%). Bachelor level students will read 300 pages and write a 3 page report and Master level students will read 500 pages and write a 5 page report about apologetical literature.
5. Final Exam (20%). A written exam, reviewing the questions and answers of the lessons in the student manual, will be given.

TIME LINE

The course can have a 5 week time line or an 8 week format.

The course requires 80 hours of study: 15 hours in class, 15 hours of homework, 30 hours of readings/reporting and 20 hours to prepare, conduct and analyze the survey.

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CLASS SCHEDULE FOR 8 WEEK FORMAT. Each class is 2 hours.

CLASS 1	Orientation	Take apologetic survey and discuss
CLASS 2	Orientation	Work on own apologetical survey, review chapter 1
CLASS 3	Review Chapter 1	Report on answers to questions for chapter 1, student reports on appendix 3
CLASS 4	Review Chapter 2	Report on answers to questions for chapter 2, student reports on appendix 4
CLASS 5	Review Chapter 3	Report on answers to questions for chapter 3, student reports on appendix 5
CLASS 6	Review Chapter 4	Report on answers to questions for chapter 4, student reports on appendix 6
CLASS 7	Review Chapter 5	Student reports on appendix 7-8
CLASS 8	Take exam	Hand in exam, hand in own survey results, hand in reading reports

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS

PRIOR TO STARTING LESSON ONE, PLEASE HAVE EACH STUDENT RESPOND TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. **What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ mean to you?**
 - a. I believe that Jesus Christ arose from the dead both in spirit but not in body
 - b. I believe that Jesus Christ arose from the dead in body and spirit.
 - c. I believe that the resurrection of Jesus is a religious myth which teaches us about eternal hope.
 - d. I believe that there is no resurrection from the dead.
2. **What do you believe about eternal salvation?**
 - a. I believe that the believer is saved through faith in Jesus Christ and by doing good.
 - b. I believe that the believer is saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - c. I believe that the believer is saved through faith in Jesus Christ and by accepting the doctrines of the church.
 - d. I believe that the believer is saved through faith in Jesus Christ and that those who do not believe will not live eternally.
3. **What do you believe about the deity of Christ (that Jesus is God)**
 - a. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the first creature of the the Father's creation.
 - b. I believe that Jesus Christ is a perfect man whose example we should follow.
 - c. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and in essence He is God
 - d. I believe that Jesus Christ is God and that we too can become gods.
4. **What do you believe about the personhood of Jesus Christ?**
 - a. Jesus Christ is one person with a divine nature and a human nature.
 - b. Jesus Christ is one person with a human nature.
 - c. Jesus Christ is two persons, one divine and the other human.
 - d. Jesus Christ was born as a human person and during his life he became a divine person.
5. **What is your view about the origins of homosexuality in a person?**
 - a. I believe that homosexuals are biological born in this condition.
 - b. I do not believe that homosexuals are biological born in this condition, but rather sexual disorientation is learned and therefore can be repented from.
 - c. We do not know the origins of homosexuality but the best way for a homosexual person to deal with this is to limit his sexual activity to one partner.
 - d. I believe that our sexual orientation and practice is a personal matter so the church should restrict judgment on the matter.
6. **The Ten Commandments**

Please write the 10 commandments in the order that they appear in Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5 (you may paraphrase)
7. **What do you believe about the devil?**
 - a. The devil is a fallen angel who tempted Adam and Eve, as well as Jesus.
 - b. The devil is a symbol of evil.
 - c. The devil represents the negative energy within us.
 - d. The devil does not exist.
8. **Do you believe that Jesus sinned?**
 - a. Jesus, as a normal man, sinned just like you and I.
 - b. Jesus, as a normal man, is like us but he never sinned.

- c. Jesus was not a normal man but a special creation of the Father.
 - d. Jesus is God; God does not sin, so Jesus could not sin.
9. **What do you believe about the original sin?**
- a. Because of Adam and Eve's original sin all of humanity is spiritually dead unless they are born again of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Because of Adam and Eve's original sin, humanity lost the grace of salvation but maintained the ability to believe in Jesus.
 - c. Adam and Eve's original sin does not affect us.
 - d. The original sin of Adam and Eve is a religious myth in order to explain the origins of evil.
10. **What is your view about speaking with the dead?**
- a. If someone wants to speak with the dead they are free to do so.
 - b. Speaking with the dead is prohibited in the Old Testament.
 - c. Speaking with the dead is prohibited in the Bible and the believer is only to pray to God.
 - d. It is important to keep in contact with one's deceased ancestors.

OBSERVATIONS

1. Unless we know the truth, how can we believe it?
2. Unless we believe the truth, how can we practice it?
3. Unless we practice the truth, how can we defend it?
4. Unless we defend the truth, how can we extend it?
5. Unless we extend the truth, how will others know the truth?

Welcome to the world of apologetics. We hope that through this course you and all who study with us will stop making apologies for Christianity and begin or be strengthened in the defense of the Christian faith.³

Evangelical Christian apologetics is the *defense of the Christian faith in obedience to the Word of God*.⁴ The word, apologetics, comes from the Greek, *apologetikos* (*apo* (all), *logos* (word) and *legein* (speak, declare boldly). Christians were exhorted to give reason (*apologia*) for the hope that was in them (I Peter 3:15). Historically, apologetics has referred to the defense of the faith once and for all given to the saints (Jude 3).

My father was a pastor for 45 years. He pastored congregations in the Netherlands, the United States and Canada. The very first year of his preaching ministry was one of the most difficult. This happened during the beginning of the Second World War in the year 1940. Dad was assigned by the Netherlands Reformed Church (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*) to work as an evangelist to work in Eindhoven, a Dutch city.

Dad worked in the local Reformed church, together with another evangelist. Since the Jewish population was being persecuted Dad and his friend gave information to the "Dutch underground" in order to find places for the Jewish families to hide from the Nazis. The Nazis found out about this and imprisoned both the Jews and their collaborators. The Jewish people were sent to the horrible concentration camps in Germany, and since this was the beginning of this terrible five year war, undoubtedly they perished. Dad, and later his friend, were detained at the police headquarters in Eindhoven. Dad was released but later his friend was shot by the Nazis. One's beliefs were tested with life and death decisions.

³ John Gerstner, *Primer in Apologetics*, p. 7.

⁴ Evangelical refers to Christianity that emphasizes the priority of the gospel of Jesus in witness, preaching and in one's relationship with God.

Dad's friend paid the ultimate price for his beliefs. Dad continued preaching, as an "underground" or person in hiding, during the long war and for 40 years after the war.

Not all Christians have the privilege to offer their life as a living sacrifice. Such a sacrifice is not something we take lightly but it is part of the Christian reality and it is something we need not fear or flee away from.

The Christian message is one of life and death. It is the victory of life over death through the finished work of Jesus Christ. When God requires that this is demonstrated by the giving of our life, we should not be surprised.

But isn't this a religious fanaticism? Is this not the same as the Muslim *jihad* where followers of Mohammed are ready to commit personal suicide in order to bomb others? The difference between a Christian witness and the Muslim *jihad* is that Christians need to die in protection of others while Muslims die to kill others.

Before his ascension, Jesus instructed his disciples to be witnesses (*martures*). They were to testify to Jesus throughout the whole world. Eleven of the twelve apostles paid with their life. They were martyred.

Our thesis is that Christian apologetics of the gospel of Jesus Christ is a matter of life and death. If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?

Why are Christians hesitant to defend the faith? Allow me to suggest 4 potential reasons.

1. Not all who say they are Christian are Christian
2. Not all Christians are convinced that absolute truth exist
3. There are Christians who do not recognize truth and are living in error
4. There are Christians who know the truth but who do not live according to it.

Not all Christian who think they are Christian are Christian (Mt. 7:21-23). A Christian is a person in whom Christ lives by His Spirit (Gal. 2:20). Christ begins to live in us through the new birth (regeneration) and Christ continues to live in us through sanctification. Those who are born again will profess Jesus and witness to him. The apostle John uses the two fold characteristic of a Christian as one who testifies to the Word and Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:2; 12:17).

If regeneration is like having a new spiritual motor (a new nature) then the infilling of the Holy Spirit is like gasoline for such a motor. It's great to have the latest model car, but even a Mercedes Benz and a BMW without gasoline will go nowhere. We are filled by the Spirit through receiving the Word and living according to it. Too many Christians doubt the content of the Word, have misconceptions about the Word or simply do not obey it. If this is the case then the Christian is doing apologetics for his own sinful and contradictory state of being rather than bearing testimony to the Word and for Jesus.

The research findings of George Barna⁵ about the views of persons who say they are born again Christians give us reason to be worried about the state of truth among Christians.

31% of the born again Christians think that if a person is good enough he will go to heaven (year 2000)

About one half of the born again Christians (47%) think that Satan is not a real being but a symbol of evil (year 2000).

⁵ www.barna.org

24% of born again Christians stated that when Jesus lived on earth he sinned like the rest of the people. 49% of non-Christians held to that statement.

26% of born again Christians hold to the opinion that it does not matter what faith one observes because they all teach the same. This was affirmed by 56% of non-Christians.⁶

The research findings of George Barna should raise the question as to the people's concept of new birth and Christian belief. The apologist's task is to apply Biblical truth to one self, to other Christians as well as to non-believers. R.C. Sproul reminds us that even the best of theologians have erred. The apostle Peter was strongly reprimanded by the apostle Paul for falling into the legalistic trap of the Judiazers (Gal. 2). Few Christian apologists would defend Martin Luther's advice to the Prince as to the Peasant Revolt; John Calvin's role as to the condemnation of Michael Servitus, the Anabaptist involvement in the Thomas Munster revolt; the Roman Catholic and Protestant's defense of slavery and a host of other inconsistencies.

It is our position that in order to defend the Christian faith, one has to believe and be absolutely sure that one's beliefs are Biblical and Christian. For that reason, prior to starting lesson one you were asked to fill our a short survey about your belief system in order to see if you were sure about what you believed. Are you able to defend your position?

Also, the truth needs to be presented in love. The message of God's love needs to be shared in love.

For thus we are we wearied with quarreling over words, thus by bickering do we lose the truth, thus by hateful wrangling do we destroy love (John Calvin, Institutes, 1.13.3).

In the next lesson we will want to give a warning, not only about our weaknesses in doing apologetics, but we also want to say something about being to fanatical about defending the faith!

Questions for Lesson One.

1. What is the author's definition for Christian apologetics?
2. What is the difference between the Muslim *jihad* and Christian martyrdom?
3. What four reasons does the author propose as to why Christians do not defend the faith?
4. How did your survey scores compare to the questions which George Barna asked? Your own answers. Discuss them in class. Seek clarification, if needed.

Assignment

1. Begin to develop a 10 question survey on basic Biblical truths about God and salvation. You will survey 50 evangelicals and 50 non-evangelicals. The purpose of the survey is to determine how these two groups differ in their believe system. Determine the type of questions you want to ask. What method are you going to use?

⁶ www.barna.org/cgibin/home.asp."Beliefs."

We recommend the multiple choice method. The multiple choices need to be consistent for each of the 10 questions. For example, if you give multiple choices, give similar options:

- a. a humanist view
 - b. a biblical view
 - c. a liberal view
 - d. a traditional religion view
2. When you have formulated the ten questions and methodology for your survey, prior to conducting it, send your information to hegjm@aol.com (if Neal Hegeman is your supervising professor) or to the e-mail address of your professor for approval.

CHAPTER TWO

APOLOGETICAL SYSTEMS OF THOUGHT

One day a pastor was walking home from a busy day at the church office and he noticed a commotion on the bridge. When he came closer, it was evident that a man had climbed to the top of the bridge arches and was ready to jump down and commit suicide. He ran over and shouted:

“Hey, don’t jump?”

“Why not?” said the distraught middle age man.

“There are just too many good things to live for,” the pastor answered.

“Name me one,” he challenged him.

“Well,” I thought, “We may be bad and people do bad things, but God is good! Do you believe in God?”

“Yes,” he said.

“Are you Christian or from another religion?”

“Christian,” he answered.

“Hey, that’s great, so am I,” he said. “Are you Roman Catholic or Protestant?”

“Protestant.”

“Incredible,” he responded, “we have so much in common!”

“Are you Anglican, Baptist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian or from some other denomination?”

“Presbyterian,” he replied.

“Wow,” he said, “Are you an evangelical or liberal Presbyterian?”

“Evangelical.”

“We have so much in common, we could be members of the same church,” the pastor observed.

“Do you believe we should defend the Christian faith?”

“Of course,” the distraught man replied.

“So you believe we should be involved in what we call apologetics?”

“Yes, I believe we should defend the faith.”

“One last question, what is your apologetic position, are you an evidentialists, a presuppositionalist or contextualist?”

“I don’t know,” he said.

“Well, then jump, you ignorant heretic!”

So what is contextualism, evidentialism and presuppositionalism? These schools of thought differ as to their starting point for argumentation.

Basically, evidentialism seeks to present evidences which the non-believer can identify with. The starting point is in general revelation, God’s revelation to all peoples through His works in creation and providence. Having established a common base with the unbeliever, the evidentialists draws logical and rational conclusions for the non-believer to consider. The evidentialist does not pretend to convert the non-believer through proper logic and rational arguments, but he seeks to remove the arguments which the non-believer has against truth. Some of the evidentialist today, besides those found in the Roman Catholic Thomastic tradition, include the Evangelical Josh McDowell and the Presbyterian R.C.

Sproul. Josh McDowell uses the perspective of the resurrection as a starting point, departing from the traditional use of evidences. R.C. Sproul, in the tradition of Old School Princeton's, B.B. Warfield and John Gerster, emphasizes the classic arguments taken from logic.⁷

Presuppositionalism starts with Christian faith statements, which if authentic and true are based on special revelation (God's revelation to His people through Scripture and Jesus). Presuppositionalists take their cue from Anselm who said: "I believe therefore I know." The Biblical world and life view and the claims of the gospel are immediately presented to the non-believer. The worldview of the non-believer is compared to the Biblical worldview, with the intent of showing the inconsistencies of the non-believers view. There is a clash of presuppositions, the motivation of the believer and the motivation of the non-believer. The presuppositionalist does not look for common ground with the non-believer, since in essence they believe that such common ground does not exist. Rather, the non-believer is challenged to consider a whole new way of thinking, of thinking God's thoughts rather than man's thoughts. Prominent presuppositionalists in the 20th century include Abraham Kuyper, Cornelius Van Til, Francis Schaeffer⁸.

The dialogue between Christian evidentialists and Christian presuppositionalist reveals the two camps differ in their starting point and methodological but the content of their argumentation can be the same. It is the conviction of the author that both methodologies are legitimate for apologetics, in as much as they are based on the absolutes of Scripture.

Contextualization presents an alternative to both evidentialism and presuppositionalism. A contextualist's argument may differ from context to context. What may be true for a middle class American consumer is not necessarily true for a Central American peasant who lives in a feudal society. Anthropology, history, political science and sociology become the sources for argumentations and ideological sources rather than the Bible or philosophy. Liberation theology seeks to interpret the Bible and the gospel from the view of the oppressed. It is said that God has a preferential option for the poor. Whether the student agrees with the ideological presuppositions of contextualization, its prominence is undeniable and its concerns need to be reckoned with. In Roman Catholic circles, the writings of Gustavo Gutierrez, and Enrique Dussel are well known for their theology of liberation. Protestant contextualists include cultural anthropologists such as represented by Eugene Nida and Charles Kraft as well as liberation theologians like Jean Pierre Bastian and Jose M. Bonino. It is impossible to put contextual theology in one category that is consistent.⁹ The relative nature of contextualism prevents that. However, they are consistent in their relativism.

In this course we wish to use the contributions of a variety of Christian apologists. We reject the absoluteness of any apologetical position and affirm only the absolute truth as revealed by Scripture. That is, the *sola Scriptura* is affirmed. The author presents an integral apologetical methodology for defending the Christian faith. Chapter 3 is dedicated to

⁷ R.C. Sproul, *Reason to Believe*; John Gerstner, R.C. Sproul and Arthur Lindsey, *Classical Apologetics*; Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; John Gerstner, *Primer in Apologetics*.

⁸ Herman Dooyeweerd, *Roots of Western Culture*; Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*; Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Theistic Evidences*; Samuel Vila, *Manual para apologética*.

⁹ J.P. Bastian, *Historia del protestantismo en América Latina*; J.M. Bonino, *Teología y Misión en América Latina*; Enrique Dussel, *History and Theology of Liberation*; Gustavo Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation*; Charles Kraft, *Christianity and Culture*; Eugene Nida, *Message and Missions*.

explaining this system. The unity of truth is affirmed according to both the general and special revelation of the triune God. In the defense of the faith the Christian needs to reflect on both the history of God’s redemption as well as the application of Christian truth to all relationships in life. The place of faith guiding reason and feelings is stressed.

APOLOGETICS USING THE DIALECTICAL SYSTEM

In this course the student will also be introduced to use a dialectical system of logic and argumentation. The dialectic is used and misused in a variety of ways,¹⁰ but our definition of its components is as follows:

- Thesis: a propositional affirmation
- Antithesis: a propositional statement opposite to and negating the thesis
- Synthesis: the response of the thesis in order to resolve the claim of the antithesis
- Syncretism: the co-existence of the thesis and antithesis, an unresolved synthesis.

The author uses the designation “evangelical dialectics” in order to highlight the role of the Christian gospel. The evangelical dialectic develops as follows:

- Thesis: a biblical absolute truth
- Antithesis: a proposition that opposes the truth (a lie)
- Synthesis: the response of the message of Jesus to the thesis and antithesis (the gospel)
- Syncretism: The dominance of the antithesis over the thesis (idolatry)

	PRESUPPOSITIONALISM	CLASSICAL-EVIDENTIALISM	CONTEXTUALIZATION	EVANGELICAL DIALECTICAL
Thesis	Presentation of God’s revealed truth	Reasonable defense of the truth	Culturally relevant presentation of truth and justice	Affirmation of truth that conforms to Biblical revelation
Antithesis	Rebellion against God’s special revelation	Rebellion shown in irrationality of sinful man	Rebellion as demonstrated in the injustices of man	Negation of Biblical truth
Synthesis	Reaffirmation of God’s truth	Show superior position of God’s revelation	Needs of the context are addressed in a Christian way	Resolution of the gospel
Syncretism	Wrong motivation in knowing	Erroneous rational in knowing	Injustice seen as justice	Idolatry, the lie comes in form of the truth

¹⁰ Evolutionary dialectics or relative dialectics identifies the thesis and antithesis in terms of interacting in order to develop the synthesis. The synthesis will be different than the thesis and antithesis. In evangelical dialectics, the thesis does not change. It is an absolute propositional truth. The evangelical synthesis comes about when the gospel message is applied to the interaction between the thesis and the antithesis. The evolutionary dialectic and the evangelical dialectic are similar in terminology and opposite in function.

IN SEARCH OF THE ABSOLUTES

What are absolutes? Absolutes are unchanging truths that reflect the action, being and character of an unchanging God. The Webster Dictionary reminds us that absolute comes from the Latin *absolutus*, with the connotation of being unlimited and loosened from any bonds. Absolute is opposite to that which is relative. So how are absolutes determined? Only God can determine absolutes. God is absolute and God is truth. What He determines are revealed to us in a general way and a special way. Scriptures record for us God's revealed absolutes. Creational law, providence, history, human condition manifest God's absolute work.

The story is told of a Christian student who took Philosophy 101 at a secular university. The professor of Philosophy announced to the class that there are no absolute truths. The Christian student asked the professor: "Are you absolutely sure?"

CONCLUSION

If you are confused about all these "isms" and are ready to jump off the bridge, now would be the time to do it. Be assured that when you jump you will go down, rather than up, that the water is wet rather than dry. That upon impact you will either go to heaven or hell or to the hospital where you will be evangelized by an Evangelical nurse. How can we be so sure? There are absolutes, even if you are jumping to get away from them.

Questions for Lesson Two

1. What is classical-evidentialism?
2. What is presuppositionalism?
3. What is contextualism?
4. What do you see as the strength of classical-evidentialism?
5. What do you see as the strength of presuppositionalism?
6. What is the strength of contextualism?
7. What are some of the weaknesses of evidentialism?
8. What are some of the weaknesses of presuppositionalism?
9. What are some of the weaknesses of contextualism?
10. What approach does the author recommend?
11. What would be the strength of the integral approach?
12. What would be the weakness of the integral approach?

Assignment for Lesson Two

1. Read an article (s) written by a classical-evidentialist, presuppositionalists and contextualist. Compare these perspectives. This is part of the course requirement to read 300-500 pages.

Classical-evidentialist friendly sites

www.thirdmill.org

www.ligonier.org

Presuppositional friendly sites

www.kuyper.org

www.modernreformation.org

Contextualist friendly sites

www.wcc

www.warc

General sites

www.ccel.org/index/classic

www.carm.org

www.markers.com

www.markers.com/ink/contemp

www.reformed.org

CHAPTER THREE

EXAMINING THE DIMENSIONS OF AN INTEGRAL APOLOGETIC

In this lesson we will present a five-step paradigm in order to speak about all of the essential elements of truth. This simple five step method can be applied to any of the apologetical systems. The five steps are:

1. *Recognize the unity of absolutes.* There is one God, one gospel and one truth
2. *Acknowledge the revelation of God.* God reveals Himself in two major ways.
3. *Relate to the three persons of the Trinity.* The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are involved in the defense of truth.
4. *Evaluate history and human relationships.* Be aware that there are four pivotal historical events to take into account, plus four basic relationships of life.
5. *Use logic from the starting point of faith.* Understand the role of the five senses and the function of the mental faculties that interact with truth and faith.

1. RECOGNIZE THE UNITY OF ABSOLUTES: THERE IS ONE GOD, TRUTH IS ONE AND GOSPEL IS ONE

“A fool says in his heart, “there is no God” (Ps. 14:1).

The true God exists and true atheism does not exist

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness” (Rom. 1:18).

In apologetics our dialogue is not with the truth searching atheists but with the rebellious idolater who defines himself as an atheist. True atheism does not exist. Man has been created in the image of God. Part of the image of God is an insuppressible knowledge of the divine. A litmus test for an atheist is to monitor his cursing patterns.¹¹ Atheists use God’s name in vain without thinking of the contradiction that such thought and actions present. When an atheist hits his thumb with a hammer and curses in God’s name then he is subconsciously appealing to a god idea he is seeking to suppress. When the atheist feels true emotion of being wronged by God and accuses God of not being fair in light of human tragedy, he is responding to his sense of God and manifests his sin in rejecting that sense of God.

Apologetics has to do with unmasking a false view of God. We are not dealing with true atheists but rebellious idolaters.

On the other hand, God exists. 75 affirmations are stated on the previous pages. The most important proof is the coming of Jesus Christ. He is Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus reveals to us that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19-20). He teaches that to reject him is to reject the one who sent him (John 12:48).

¹¹ Argument of negation. The way in which people negate the truth shows that the truth exists. A variety of arguments can be used to show the reality of the existence of God (see Peter Kreeft, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, pp. 48-86). The author has chosen several arguments that expose the idolater’s folly.

The absolute exists because God exists

For those who think that the concept of the absolute is solely a theological concern, the following words are found in a secular dictionary available at the public library.

Absolute, almighty, aseity, eternal, immeasurable, immense, immutable, inalterable, incalculable, incessant, indecomposable, indefatigable, indefectible, independent, indestructible, indissoluble, indubitable, ineffable, inerrant, infallible, infinite, insurmountable, omnipotent, omnipresent, omnipresence, self-existent, self-sustaining, sovereign, superior, transcendent, unabated, unabridged, unavoidable, unbounded, uncaused, unchangeable, unchecked, unconditional, uncreated, undeniable, unhesitating, unique, universal, unlimited, unparalleled, unquestionable, unshakeable and untiring.

There may be more descriptions about the being of God in the secular dictionary than in the classical Reformed systematic theology textbook of Louis Berkhof.¹² If the concept of absolutes does not exist the dictionary of the relativists will have to strike these words from the list and think of alternative readings. Human conceptualization, linguistics and grammar point to the existence of absolutes.¹³

God has to be absolute as an omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient Being.¹⁴ There can be no place in the universe where He does not exist. God cannot be absent. In order for the laws of nature to function there has to be an omnipresent God to keep all things together. If the operation of the laws of nature depended on itself, they would not be coordinated with other dimensions of the universe which they do not have control or association with. God cannot be weak and fail to accomplish his purpose. For the functioning of the universe there has to be an omnipotent God. If God is omniscient, He has to know all the possibilities and impossibilities. God cannot be surprised or ignorant. When we have a concept of God in which He is absent, fails and is caught off guard, then we are worshiping a relativistic idol, a god which does not exist in theory or reality.

The relativist denies the existence of the reality of the 3 omnis. If the omnis do not exist, why are the concepts of the omnis in our vocabulary? If there is no such thing as omniscience, why is it that we are able to define it, depend on it and even erroneously strive for it? Even the atheist wants to know the past, presence and future. He strives to approximate knowing all things but he cannot reach that goal because only God is omniscient. The communist atheists strive to be omnipotent. The communists establish military states in order to control all human beings and all of society. They are not able to accomplish their goal because only God can control every detail of life. The humanistic space program seeks to go everywhere, throughout space and to the stars. The human fascination with the concept of omnipresence is expressed in mass communication's fascination with the supernatural, the unknown and unseen world. However, we can only approximate omnipresence, for only God is omnipresent. Idolatry seeks to be like God without worshiping God.

¹² Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 1996.

¹³ Linguistic argument. Our use of the words associated with the truth show that it exists.

¹⁴ Argument of necessity. The need for God is seen in that the universe needs someone to make it, control it and give purpose to it.

The absoluteness of God is clearly revealed in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵ He is the great "I am." In Him we exist, live, act and find our purpose and meaning. Jesus Christ is how God reveals Himself to us.

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word" (Hebrews 1:3).

In Christ we witness the representation of God's being, God's word and God's action. God's existence does not get any more personal and more powerful than in Jesus Christ. Believers who accept the revelation of Jesus Christ do not principally have problems in believing in Biblical absolutes. They have met the Absolute One. Because they know Jesus, they can believe in the absolutes that he reveals.

The true God is an absolute for all areas of life

It is impossible at this time to give a comprehensive statement on the nature of the false gods. It is helpful to see if we are being consistent in the application of truths about God.

Are we being consistent in our view of the eternal God? God has always existed. He is the God "*in the beginning*" (Gen. 1:1). The Christian believes that God the Father is eternal, God the Son is eternal and God the Holy Spirit is eternal. In order for the Father to be eternal he needs to have an eternal son. A father, in order to be a father, needs to have offspring. It is erroneous to believe that the Son is created and uphold that the Father is eternally Father. To deny the eternal Son is to deny the eternal Father. Since the Son is eternal his salvation has meaning for eternity. Jesus cannot save us for eternity if he is not eternal. Jesus is not able to give us something (eternal life) if he does not possess it (eternity). Those who do not believe in the eternal son have a temporal savior, a savior who can only help them in the here and now. The Holy Spirit is eternal. Only an eternal Holy Spirit is able to bring eternity into our hearts. If the Holy Spirit is a creature, made in time and space, how can he bring eternity to us? Christians believe that the eternal God is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Savior and the Lord of all of life. Christians believe that in order to be with the eternal God one has to believe in Him as He is. Temporal Christ's and non-personal spirits cannot be associated with the true God.

Are we sure about our origins? Even for the atheistic evolutionist, the origin of life traces itself back to a simple state. For the evolutionist, the origin of all things traces itself back to a materialistic simple being. For the Christian, the simple being is God.¹⁶ God is the creator of all things. Apologetics does not shy away from scientific facts, to the contrary, true science affirms the truth about God. Academia in the Western world is in a denial stage about the flimsy evidence for their theory of evolution. The fact that public schools in America are forced to teach the theory of evolution shows that this ideology cannot stand on its own in the marketplace of ideas. In order for evolution to flourish, it has to be "forced down the young student's throat", whether that be in a totalitarian education system or in the free world.

What world view do we express in our thinking and actions? In our knowledge of our origins and human existence, the Christian or non-Christian thinker has to make a principal

¹⁵ Christological argument

¹⁶ Article 1 of the Westminster Confession.

decision between two conflicting world views: one is the materialistic world view and the other is theocentric world view. Some Christians seek to blend the two worldviews together. They cannot mix. They are fundamentally different and will go in different directions. Within the theocratic world view systems the quest to identify the true God is central to its legitimacy.

Where do we go for our answers? The Christian world view is based on how God reveals Himself rather than how man thinks about God. Christian apologists must therefore carefully interpret the Bible, God's written revelation. Apologetics requires a consistent hermeneutic¹⁷ that applies to interpreting the Bible as well as interpreting all of reality.

For the Christian or the non-Christian mathematician, our number system starts with 0 and proceeds to 1 and in grammar, our English alphabet starts with A and proceeds to B. There are realities which believers and non-believers hold in common. However, how we use the number system and how we use our vocabulary, show our distinct origins and purpose. For example, the Christian using his knowledge of mathematics in order to become a God pleasing businessman or a God pleasing banker. The Christian worker has a different attitude and goals for his work. He works for the Lord! Every thought and action of the Christian worker is to conform to his commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ in which he seeks to honor God and live by the presence of the Holy Spirit. This transformational exercise is absent in the non-Christian worker.

The Gospel is one

The gospel message is in harmony with God, His work and His word.

The gospel does not contradict the attributes of God, rather, the gospel reveals the grace, justice, mercy, love and any of the attributes of God. For example, when Jesus died on the cross as an atonement for the sins of God's people, the unconditional love of God was shown as He gave His only Son to take the place and die for God's people.

The gospel message does not negate natural law, moral law or the work of God in creation. God's miraculous work does not contradict natural law, it supersedes it. When Jesus healed a lame man, he did not give him a third leg but he healed the lame leg.

The gospel message is based on the promises of salvation in the Old Testament and affirmed by the apostolic teachings of the New Testament. God's salvation for His people in the Old Testament times was the same as the salvation for His people after the resurrection of Jesus. The salvation plan had to be worked out in history, but it's the same salvation plan.

The transformation power of the gospel is the pivotal point in apologetics. All the evidences and argumentation depend on how the gospel is interpreted and applied. The kingdom of God comes through gospel implementation.

The bad news is that we cannot act truthfully on our own. Mankind needs the intervention of God. Left to his own devices, he lives the lie and participates in the culture of death.¹⁸ The good news is that God graciously intervenes in our lives so that we can know, believe and live in truth. The gospel requires that people believe in God and His kingdom and that they repent of their own rebellion and sin.

¹⁷ Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation.

¹⁸ The culture of death is seen its deadly results: abortion, infanticide, domestic violence, jihad, starvation, contamination of water sources, murder, violence, suicide, euthanasia. It is most dramatically seen in the rejection of the God of life who reveals Himself in Jesus Christ.

“The time has come,” he said, “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15).

When the kingdom of God comes through the application of the gospel, personal lives, social structures and cosmic dynamics are transformed to the glory of God.

God and truth are one.

God is truth. All reality that corresponds faithfully to God and His revelation is true (John 14:6;17:17). Propositional truth corresponds to God and His revelation.

God does not simply reflect truth nor have truth, He is truth. All truth corresponds to Him.

God is truth.

God defines truth.

God reveals the truth.

God lives by the truth.

God demands truth.

God will judge according to the truth.

God is glorified in the truth.

All truth comes from God and therefore all truth is one

God is truth. All truth comes from him. Since truth comes from God and God is not contradictory, we can be reassured that truth will be one and not contradict itself. We uphold the law of non-contradiction. If A and B are opposites they cannot both be true. In this way we reject relativism. Relativism holds that if A and B are opposite, both can be true if that is what you decide or perceive. Rather, we hold relativism as self-contradictory. Relativism cannot be absolutely true, since its relative.

If the truth loving theologian and the truth loving scientist know the truth they will be able to agree. However, we live in a world where both theologians and scientists do not have all the facts. There has to be room for the unknown (Dt. 29:29). There are times when the absolute truth is that we do not know.

Truth is non-contradictory if truth comes from and God is holy. The holy God is incapable of sinning. He is perfectly separated from sin. He is the only being in the universe who is perfectly holy (Isaiah 6:3). We can be reassured that all that God reveals is true and corresponds to Himself.

We can know God since we are made in the image of God. God has made us so that we can respond to Him.

God speaks to us and He expects a response. We are able to respond to God since we are made in His image. The image of God in us is our spiritual identity and is reflected in every dimension of our being, actions and relationships.

The fact that rational and sensible people pray to God is another evidence of His existence.

Fallen man has a distorted spirituality. It is directed to anything but the true God. It is satanic, worldly and selfish. Fallen man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. It is our apologetic task to show fallen man that he is suppressing truth in unrighteousness.

The fact that fallen mankind seeks to communicate with a true God shows that such a God exists who is capable of relating with mankind.

Atheists say they don't believe in God but as soon as they hit their thumb with a hammer they loudly profess (curse) his name! Even if it takes a hammer to get it out of them, the innate knowledge of God is in every person (Romans 1:20). Whether or not people affirm God is secondary to the fact that an innate knowledge of God exists in their soul. Both the prayer to the true God and man's sinful attempts to pray to idols, are evidences of the existence of God.

If the true God exists then He will not leave us to ourselves. We need and can expect Him to intervene in our life and world. Jesus is not a human invention but a divine intervention that involves God coming in incarnate form to earth. Once you get to know him you cannot live, think or worship without him. The true God is always, Emmanuel, God with us.

2. THE DOUBLE REVELATION

God makes Himself known through *revelation*. God is not deaf, blind or dumb; he is able and willing to communicate with us. The revelation of God comes in two ways. General revelation comes to all people through creation, history and personal experiences. Special revelation comes to the people of God through the Bible and Jesus Christ.¹⁹

Truth is revealed from God. This is an absolute presupposition. We cannot say that truth is revealed in part and intuitive to man in part. All truth corresponds to the revelation of God. Man is responsible to be faithful to truth. God's revelation does not contradict man's ability to respond. Man was made in God's image and before the fall had the ability to respond to God according to God's will. Now, due to sin, man's ability to respond to God's revelation is distorted. Man's sinful distortion of God's revelation does not negate the revelation of God but affirms the sinfulness of man. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the people of God are given the capability to respond in faith to the revelation of God. The unfaithfulness of the people of God does not negate the revelation of God but shown the effects of sin on God's people. The revealed truth of God will be totally confirmed as the Lord taught (Mt. 5:18).

General revelation comes to us through God's work in creation, in his creatures and in culture. We discover the truths about creation through popular or technical science. We know about God's revelation in his creatures, through the human condition and experience. Our cultural knowledge includes all human activities as recorded in history and acted out our communal life. General revelation is radically affected by sin. Sinners will distort the truths of general revelation. Special revelation from God in order to put general revelation in its proper perspective.

God's special revelation comes to His people through the written Word, the Bible, and the incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. Such revelation is given through the presence of the Holy Spirit, in the context of the community of God's people, through the Scriptures

¹⁹ *Belgic Confession, Art. 2.*

and in knowing the person of Jesus Christ. Special revelation communicates to God's people. The regenerated human spirit and renewed mind need to test all things in order to affirm God's will (Romans 12: 1-2).

In apologetics we need to affirm that God has His own opinion, means of communication and ability to accomplish His will! Believers need to be consistent in their knowledge of the true God and show others that there is no contradiction in God's revelations.

3. THE THREE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY

It is not sufficient to believe that God exists and that all truth flows from Him. Even the Devil believes that God exists and that truth comes from Him. In the original temptation, Satan quoted God but misrepresented God Word. In order to do justice to truth we speak of the true God we must believe that God exists and faithfully obey Him.

Genesis 1:1 reveals the mystery of the plurality of God. Elohim is a plural rendering of God's name. Jesus revealed the true God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19,20). God is one in three persons. Each person has a role to play in apologetics.

Christian apologetics defends the eternal Fatherhood of God. Scripture does not give us the license to speak of God as Mother. Jesus instructed his disciples to pray to, "Our Father." Nor may we transform Mary, the mother of Jesus, into the Mother of God. If God is eternal than He does not need to have a mother. Jesus has an earthly mother according to his birth as a human being. It is helpful, therefore, to say that Mary is the mother of Jesus, according to his humanity.

Christian apologetics defends the truth about the eternal Son of God. The early church addressed the heresies about Jesus by means of several universally accepted early creeds (Apostolic, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds). Jesus is defined as God and man. He is the second person of the trinity. He is one person with two natures: one human and the other divine. All of these truths affirmed by the aforementioned creeds are found in Scripture.

Christian apologetics defends the truth about the eternal Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity. He is God and represents the finished work of Jesus Christ in the live of the believer and in the unfolding of God the Father's plan in history.

Christian apologetics emphatically defends the existence of the one true God who we know as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All other gods are pseudo gods. We are not to recognize other gods as God (Exodus 20:3).

For example, we do not consider Allah of the Muslims as a true God. First of all, Allah is not the Father because Allah does not have a divine Son. Allah is not the Son either and he never identifies himself as such. Allah is not the Holy Spirit because according to the Koran the Holy Spirit is not God. According to the Bible, as well as by self-admission through the Koran, Allah is not the Biblical God.

North American Christians and evangelicalism in general are suffering from a theological identity crisis. George Barna points out that 26% of born again Christians hold to the opinion that it does not matter what faith one observes because they all teach the same truths. This compares to 56% of non-Christians who hold to the same. It is the contention of this author that unless we are absolutely convinced of the true God, we will have no Great Commission power or success in building the true church.

4. THE FOUR RELATIONSHIPS OF LIFE AND THE FOUR STAGES IN HISTORY

Apologetics needs to take into consideration the type of human relationship we are speaking about and to what historical and personal historical context we are referring to. The four basic relationships of life are represented in the “gold rule” that we are to love God above all else and our neighbor as yourself (Mt. 22:37-39).

1. The relationship between God and a person
2. The relationship between a person and himself
3. The relationship between a person and society
4. (Implied) The relationship between a person and the creation

God initiates the relationship between God and people. The definition of the relationship between God and human beings is defined in covenants. The covenant of God with Adam before the fall applies to the whole human race. The covenant of grace with Adam after the fall also applies to the whole human race and includes the definition of those who are in the covenant and those who are outside of the covenant. The descendants of the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15; Gal. 3:16) are in the covenant of grace and the descendants of the seed of the Evil One (Genesis 3:15; John 8:43-45). The members of the covenant enter through faith in Jesus and submission to the promises of God (Acts 2:37-39; Romans 4:13-25; 9:8).

God relates to people by His grace. Since God is superior and transcendent to His created creatures, His relationship with people is not one of equals but one of master and subjects. The relationship of people with God should be characterized by gratitude. This gratitude is expressed through recognizing the source of God’s grace; honoring Him as He has revealed Himself, properly speaking about Him; taking time to communally worship Him and to glorifying God in all matters of life (First table of the Law: commandments 1-4). In the covenant of grace God defines the relationship He has with His people through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

All people are called to praise the Lord! (Ps. 150). The relationship, which a human being is to have with God, is to be characterized by grateful worship and obedience. Due to humanities sinful nature, we do not praise and serve God as we ought, rather, we seek to glorify other things or ourselves (Romans 1:25). Unregenerate man will be ultimately condemned for not worshipping the true God. There will be plenty of evidence to condemn him. Natural man is destitute of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23) and requires a radical rebirth, regeneration, to spiritually relate with God (John 3:3, 5).

Only God can restore the relationship between Himself and us. This is the gospel. Jesus invites us to follow Him in repentance and faith (Mt. 4:17-19).

Personal attitude and self-consciousness characterize the relationship between a person and himself. Some speak of self-concept; others use a series of “auto” descriptions. People are called to know themselves and be responsible for their own thoughts, words and actions.

The relationship which a person has with him (her) self is broken by sin. Our human nature is sin-centered rather than God-centered. The apostle Paul, in Romans 7, describes the inner struggle of the Christian (Romans 7:21-25). Paul instructs us that Christians are freed from the bondage of the human nature by receiving the Spirit of life (Romans 8:1-2). Paul

writes: “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God” (Gal. 2:20). In Ephesians, Paul speaks of the old and the new nature. In summary, the believer’s relationship with the old Adamic human nature is a sinful relationship. That relationship must die and spiritually crucified or mortified. By faith, the believer is to live according to the new nature which operates by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-17; Eph. 4:20-24)

The relationship between a person and other persons can be described as a social relationship. Each person has social responsibilities such as those described in the second table of the Law (commandments 5-10).

A person must also relate to the creation and environment in which he exists. The key word here is stewardship. People are called to be godly stewards of the creation which God has made.

It is important in apologetics to identify the proper relationships of life and not confuse them. For example, Christians may be accused of being too tolerant with criminals because the gospel of salvation is freely offered to the worst of sinners. Christians also believe that a forgiven sinner criminal should be punished for his crime, in accordance to the social laws of the land. The relationship in which God graciously forgives the sinner’s sin is a reflection of God’s relationship with a person while societies demand for retribution is an expression of societies relationship with a person. A murderer on death row may be saved from eternal condemnation for his sin of murdering another human being, but society may require his life in retribution.

In the theology of ecology, the distinctions between God and His creatures and God and His creation are confused. The presence of God in all creation is distinct from the presence of God in a person. These distinctions need to be Biblically defined, that is, defined according to God’s perspective. The failure to do so implies a rapid descent into pantheism, as is so prevalent in New Age.

It is also important to identify the stages of human history. Not all stages are the same. We speak of:

1. Creation
2. Fall
3. Redemption
4. Consummation

The creation stage of history is described in the first two chapters of Genesis. God is the Creator. The creation of man and woman is described with sufficient detail. Adam was made from the earth and did not evolve from the animal world. Adam cannot be described as a “primitive man” who still needed to evolve. He and his wife were created with the entire range of spiritual, mental, moral and physical capabilities in order to be totally responsible for their actions. God gave Adam and Eve responsibilities that correspond to a mature and morally capable human being. God held them responsible for their intentions and actions. If the first Adam was a primitive man, a subdeveloped homosapien, then the second Adam, Jesus Christ, would have to be defined in similar terms (Romans 5:12-21).

The fall of Adam and Eve, like their creation, is an historical event with drastic consequences. Since Adam was the patriarch and head of the whole human race, his sinful actions affected all of his offspring (Romans 5:12) The punishment for sin prescribed by God

previous to the fall is being carried out. All of the relationships of man were affected by sin and judgment. Man relationship with God, himself, with others and even with creation was broken. Rather than serving God in all areas of life mankind would universally rebel against Him with his whole being and in every area of life. The only solution would be for God to intervene and provide judgment and redemption.

The redemption provided by God is prophesied in Genesis 3:15. God declared war on the Evil One and all of his descendents. God promised that “the seed” (singular, referring to Jesus, Galatians 3:16) and its descendants would be victorious. God’s redemption was promised and foreshadowed throughout the whole Old Testament and provided in the New Testament. Jesus, who is God made human, took on human nature and became the substitute for all of God’s people. After living a perfectly obedient life and paying for the perfect price for sin, Jesus rose again in order to establish a new humanity, preparing them to bear witness to Him throughout the world (Acts 1:8) and preparing them to live in the new heavens and the new earth.

The consummation stage will come to its fullness in the new heavens and the new earth. This is the completion stage of God’s eternal plan. However, glorification is not only a future stage. The hope and anticipation of the “not yet” has a profound effect on the believer. Since Jesus Christ has already ascended and is reigning in glory, the believer prays through him to the Father. The believers do not see heaven as simply a future reward but as a present reality and reign which directs him to the future.

5. THE FIVE SENSES AND OUR MENTAL FACULTIES

Apologetics takes into account how truth is received and communicated. This involves the senses of people as well as their mental faculties and inclination of the heart.

The principal senses of people are sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. The senses are used in order to respond to truth. For example, faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit uses the sense of hearing in order to introduce the Word of God into the human mind. Obviously, our senses are not enough. Our senses and experiences are to be related to our heart and mind.

We can speak of a variety of mental faculties. We do not pretend to be absolute or exhaustive when we mention the following. We only want to point out that there are distinctions in our mental activity. The mental faculties we wish to mention are:

1. ability to trust (faith)
2. ability to know (intellect, memory)
3. ability to logically think (reason)
4. ability to discern (conscience)
5. ability to decide (will)
6. ability to feel (emotions)

In apologetics there has been a lot of argumentative heat generated over the role of the human will in relationship to salvation. Is faith a product of the power of man to will or is the human will empowered by faith? Is faith a fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit or is it the product of the human will? Do we believe and therefore understand or do we understand and therefore believe?

In order to help answer that question it would be helpful to return to the 4 stages of our human history. In the creation stage, prior to the fall of humanity into sin, all of the mental faculties of Adam were operational and directionally sound. Sin introduced the antithesis. All mental faculties

misfired. Adam did not trust, did not want to know, did not reason, did not discern and did not make the right decision. In every way he sinned. None of the faculties survived the fall. They were all damaged so bad that they now function exactly opposite to how they were suppose to function. Instead of trusting God, man distrusts God. Instead of knowing God's Word, he ignores it. Instead of naturally desiring to do God's will, man's naturally desire is to sin. His spiritual deadness affected every faculty of his being. The faculties continued to function but not as they were designed to function. Does fallen man still have the ability to trust, know, reason, discern and decide? Yes. Does fallen man use such abilities to love God above all else and his neighbor as himself? No. In redemption, through the regeneration of the human heart, the believer is able to use his mental faculties in order to serve God (Romans 12:1). The believer still has the natural capability to sin but he now has the supernatural gift and capability to believe and walk according to the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-17).

CONCLUSION

In this lesson we have sought to describe the basic dimensions of truth and life so that when we do apologetics we may know in what area of the ballpark the ball has been hit, how it can be fielded and where to throw the rebellious runner out. In the following lesson we will explore the usage of a Christian argumentation system which will be of help to defend the truth.

Questions for Lesson Three

1. How is God related to truth?
2. How does God share truth with us?
3. What is special revelation and how is that related to apologetics?
4. What is general revelation and how is that related to apologetics?
5. What are the four stages of human history and how does that relate to apologetics?
6. What are the four dimensions of human relationships and why would such distinctions be important for apologetics?
7. What are the five senses? How are our senses related to apologetics?
8. What are the mental faculties mentioned by the author? How are they related to apologetics?

CHAPTER FOUR

EVANGELICAL DIALECTICS: THE TRUTH, THE LIE, THE GOSPEL AND IDOLATRY

In order to further organize our thoughts and arguments we will use a dialectical system of logic. Biblical truth is identified as the thesis. The antithesis is the unbiblical position that negates Biblical truth. The synthesis is the response of the gospel to affirm the thesis and contradict the antithesis. Syncretism, the dominance of the antithesis over the thesis, which in religious terms is called idolatry.

THESIS	ANTITHESIS	SYNTHESIS	SYNCRETISM
Biblical truth	falsehood, lie	the good news of the kingdom of God	idolatry
That which is to be affirmed	That which negates the truth and needs to be exposed	Application of the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ	The dominance of the lie over the truth

In using the dialectical system of logic we need to present a disclaimer. Dialectics has been used throughout the history of mankind in a variety of ways. In the twentieth century atheistic Marxism used this system of thought in order to promote evolution and materialism. In theological circles, Karl Barth is known for his dialectical theology and theological relativism. The dialect system used in this study does not affirm or follow Marx or Barth but rather repudiates their presuppositions.

The author’s intention is to reclaim the dialectical system of logic and transform it so that it can be used to the glory of God.

In this lesson a variety of examples will be given in order to familiarize the students with apologetical argumentation. For each of them an introduction, a list of Biblical absolute truths, a dialectical analysis, an explanation and a conclusion will be given.

GOD’S LOVE

Question. Is God really a God of love when hatred is so rampant all around us?

1. *Recognize the unity of the absolutes.* God is love (I John 4:8) and yet hates sin (Ps. 5:5). Both the love of God and the hatred of God are absolutes and do not contradict. The love and hate of God have different objectives. The love of God is directed to the accomplishment of His will, work and word. The hatred of God is directed towards all things that rebel against God’s ways.

This is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (I John 4:10).

You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell. The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong (Ps. 5:5).

Jacob I loved but Esau I hated (Romans 9:13)

2. *Acknowledge God's Revelation.* Love and hatred is defined by God in His Word (John 3:16; 14:15; I Cor. 13:). God declares Himself to be a God of love and He calls us to love Him, to love others and to love ourselves (Ex. 20:6; Ps. 25:6; Mt. 22:37-39; I John 4:8). God is capable of hating (Ps. 45:7; Mal. 1:3; Rom. 9:13; Heb. 1:9) and calls us to hate our sins and repent from them.

Hate evil, love good (Amos 5:15).

Do good to them that hate you (Mt. 5:44)

You hate the practices of the Nicolaitians, which I also hate" (Rev. 2:6).

3. *Relationship to the triune God.* The love between the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit is most clearly revealed on the cross of Calvary (Mt. 3:17; John 15:13). The Father shows His love for His people by giving His only Son as a sacrifice for their sins. The Son shows His love for His people by being the sacrifice for their sins. The Holy Spirit shows His love for God's people by cleansing them from sin. Only the sovereign God of love is capable of absolutely overcoming hatred. This is seen at the cross where the Son of God bears the wrath of the Father on sin, and Jesus bears that for His people.

Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:36-37)

4. *Evaluate history and human relationships.* God's love directs human history and human relationships (Mt. 5:43-46; Eph. 1:4; Jn. 13:34-35).

Great examples of Christian love overcoming the worst of evils continue to occur. For example, Manuelito Fonseca, a Pentecostal pastor in Cuba, was imprisoned for preaching the gospel for two years in the 1960's. The experience was so difficult that he still not speak about it. Several years ago, however, Fidel Castro appeared at a pastor's meeting and publically apologized for imprisoning the pastors for their faith. The love of God will prevail, where on earth or in eternity.

5. Use logic. Only a God of love can absolutely overcome hatred (Dt. 6:5; Mt. 22:37-39).

The dialectical argumentation: God is love and God hates evil (thesis). The hatred of God and the love of evil also exists (antithesis). God's love overcomes man's hatred as shown by the sacrifice of Jesus (synthesis). To say that you love God and yet hate His commands is idolatry.

Conclusion: Only the God of love can overcome hatred.

Considerations:

-Can the love of God and the love of the world co-exist? (I John 2:15-17). Why or why not?

GOD'S JUSTICE

Question. Is it fair that innocent people suffer unjustly?

1. *Recognize the unity of absolutes.* God is just. Because a just God exists justice exists. God perfectly defines and upholds the standards of right and wrong (Gen. 2: 17; Ex. 20:1-17; Romans 1:18f-2:23). God cannot violate his own standards of justice and he must punish evil.
The only innocent person, the only person who never sinned is Jesus. Scripture says that no one is righteous and no one does good and that only God is good (Rom. 3:10-23).
2. *Acknowledge God's Revelation.* Innocent people do suffer. The only absolutely innocent person in the world was condemned by religious, killed in the most gruesome manner by the ruling authorities and rejected by even his own disciples. The Bible does not recognize human beings as innocent, that is, without sin (Romans 3:10-23). People may be innocent in other ways, such as in obeying the law, but in their relationship to God their relationship is described as spiritually dead and children of wrath (Eph. 2:1-4).
3. *Relationship to the triune God.* If there are some people who are absolutely innocent, that is, without sin, then they do not need a Savior nor the leading of the Holy Spirit in conviction of sin, separation from sin and sanctification. When Jesus died on the cross, he took the place and paid the price for the guilty and not the innocent.
4. *Evaluate history and human relationship.* God's justice is realized throughout human history and in human relationships.
Injustices exist. "Life is not fair" the child says. He is right. Only God is fair and just. When our actions correspond to God's justice, human justice will be accomplished. With that in mind, in the societies where Christians live according to the justice of Christ, there should be a higher degree of human justice.
5. *Logical response.* God is just (thesis). Injustice exists (antithesis). Justice overcomes injustice through justice accomplished by Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit (synthesis).

Conclusion: Only through the justice of Christ given to believers can a believer be just before a holy God.

Considerations:

-If children are born innocent and without sin, do they need a Savior? At what age do they need a Savior?

CHRISTIANS AND SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT

Question: What is the role of Christians in government that is anti-Christian?

1. *Recognition of the absolutes.* There are Christian ethics that are absolute. These are defined by the Ten Commandments and activated through the Great Commission. For that reason, murder, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia are rejected by Christians. Yet, the Christian seeks to evangelize and love all peoples. Systems of government, such as monarchies, military rule and democracies are not absolute. Christians find themselves in all of these systems of government.
2. *Acknowledge God's Revelation.* Christians are instructed to pray for their government and submit to their rule in all that is lawful. Governments are to preserve civic order, defend the social good and punish social evil (Romans 13:1-4). Christians are not to practice anything that is against Christian ethics. Christians obey the law of God and the laws of man that correspond to the law of God. Christians will disobey the laws of man that do not correspond to the law of God.
3. *Relationship to the triune God.* God, as the Creator and Provider, orders human society. The Son of God has brought redemption and reconciliation in a fallen world. The Holy Spirit restrains sin and brings inspiration, courage, reconciliation and conformity to God's will.
4. *Evaluate history and human relationships.* Contemporary Christians living in military dictatorship are able to balance a respect for their unwanted government with obedience to God. Christians in China continue to meet in homes and fields, despite the disapproval of the communist government. Usually the government will permit house gatherings if they are not used for anti-government politics. When the Christian has to choose between worshipping the true God or worship idols, he chooses the worship of the true God, even if it may cost him his life.
5. *Logical considerations.* Social order is absolutely necessary for human existence (thesis). Social dysfunction occurs when people rebel against God's order (antithesis). Christian ethics bring restoration in the midst of any human government system (synthesis). Christians are called to obey God's law and Gospel in democratic as well as non-democratic systems.

Conclusion: Christians first obey the law of God and then the laws of the government.

Considerations:

-Is it better to vote for a pro-life Christian in a pro-choice Democratic party than vote for a pro-choice non-Christian in a pro-life Republic party?

Questions for Lesson Four

1. What are the components of the dialectic?
2. How does the author use dialects for the sake of apologetics?
3. In your own words, give an example of how the dialectic could be used for apologetics.
4. What is the relationship between the truth and the lie?
5. How does the gospel relate to the truth and the lie?

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS ON APOLOGETICAL THEMES

This introductory course in apologetics is an attempt to defend the point of view that in order to do apologetics we need to be absolutely convinced about the truth of God, His revelation, and His relationship to all areas of life in light of the gospel. At the end of the day and at the end of time, it will be God's will that counts and not ours. The ultimate purpose of apologetics is doxological: to pray, think and do all to the glory of God.

We have sought to briefly explain the role of different apologetical schools of thought in the doing of apologetics. The proposed integral approach seeks to learn from each apologetical system.

The student of apologetics is encouraged to examine all of the dimensions of defending the faith. We have proposed a simple five step method. At the heart of this method is the evangelical message for transformation. The application of the gospel in all areas of life brings forth the kingdom of God.

MINTS students will be asked to conduct a survey of evangelicals and non-evangelicals in order to observe what they believe. Before effective apologetics can take place, the Christian needs to understand his Biblical beliefs as well as comprehend the opposing positions. Students will be answering questions that are placed at the end of each lesson. They will self-correct their answers and come to class prepared to discuss the questions. MINTS students will be asked to read and report on 300 pages of reading at the Bachelor level and 500 pages at the Master level. The annotated bibliography may be helpful to that end. If the student has access to other literature, they are encouraged to read in the area of their personal interest. The students will be reading the articles in the appendix. Issues that face the Christian community world-wide are addressed. The author has included several of his lectures and writings that were developed during this time with Ligonier Ministries of Canada (1995-1998).

Appendix # 3 is a collection of an assortment of affirmations about the existence of God.

Christian churches are faced with homosexual issues. In Appendix #4, "Vriend vs. Alberta" lawsuit, a variety of questions are asked and answered according to the Word of God. The Church not only ministers to the homosexuals but also need to be aware of the laws of the land.

The teachings of Islam have their practical implications, especially for those who live in Muslim communities. North Americans became more aware of Islam after the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. The author of Appendix #5 is Helmy Girgis, an Egyptian Christian who migrated to Canada. His article helps us to look at the implications of Islam for Muslims and non-Muslims in the Far East as well as North America.

Christian transformation is at the heart of the Christian world view and apologetical endeavour. Apologetics is not evangelism but leads into or follows up on evangelism. In Appendix #6, the James Engle's scale of conversion is reviewed.

The belief in the deity of Christ is fundamental to Christian apologetics. Appendix #7 gives a list of over 100 Bible verses that explicitly or implicitly refer to the deity of Jesus. The author originally put this list together in order to speak with people associated with the Jehovah Witnesses.

Appendix #8 is a copy of The Cambridge Declaration. Contemporary theologians reflect on the five *Solas* doctrines of the Protestant Reformation.

Finally, this course will hopefully motivate the students to prepare their own apologetical approach, materials and courses. This has happened in several study centers, especially with the Spanish translation of these materials. Jaime Morales, of San José, Costa Rica has developed an extensive youth ministry training, cooperating with Youth For Christ and mentoring on-line courses in that area. .Alexander Leon in San Jose, Costa Rica, continues to develop the web page www.abaptist.org/Peniel. Dr. Roger Smalling, the first doctoral graduate from MINTS, continues to write in the areas of Christian leadership, systematic theology and addresses a variety of issues as shown on his web side, smallings.com. Norma Alicea of the Toronto developed a power point version of this course and has conducted a variety of conferences in Argentina and South America. Francisco Limon elaborated a similar presentation for his Mexican students. The students in Matanza, Cuba, developed their own course in apologetics entitled, *Apologetica Dialectica* (www.mints.edu/download). Hopefully, your writings, teachings and training in Christian apologetics will be the next contribution.

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APPENDICES

- 1. ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS FOR THE SURVEY OF LESSON ONE**
- 2. ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS FROM LESSONS ONE –FIVE**
- 3. A HANDFULL OF AFFIRMATIONS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD**
- 4. VRIEND VS ALBERTA: POLITICAL AND LEGAL PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIAN VALUES**
- 5. ISLAM: AN EGYPTIAN CHRISTIAN VIEW**
- 6. GOSPEL ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION: THE ROLE OF CONVERSION**
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- 8. THE CAMBRIDGE DECLARATION**

APPENDIX #1

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS FOR THE SURVEY OF LESSON ONE

Correct answers to the survey questions (the correct answer is italicized)

1. **What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ mean to you?**
 - a. I believe that Jesus Christ arose from the dead both in spirit but not in body. (The denial of the bodily resurrection of Jesus is the position of the Jehovah Witnesses. To deny the bodily resurrection is to deny the incarnation of Christ (Luke 24:37-39; I John 4:3; I Cor. 15:14))
 - b. *I believe that Jesus Christ arose from the dead in body and spirit.* (The corporal resurrection shows that Jesus completely overcame the enemy of death. What God began in the incarnation of Jesus is now fulfilled in the resurrection. Luke 24:39 clearly teaches the bodily resurrection.)
 - c. I believe that the resurrection of Jesus is a religious myth which teaches us about eternal hope. (A liberal, deconstructionist view)
 - d. I believe that there is no resurrection from the dead. (Atheism).
2. **What do you believe about eternal salvation?**
 - a. I believe that the believer is saved through faith in Jesus Christ and by doing good. (A Humanistic view of salvation in which human works are added to the conditions for salvation. Martin Luther reminded us that if anyone adds any human works to their salvation they will never be saved for our human works are sinful.)
 - b. *I believe that the believer is saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.* (Hab. 2:8; Rom. 1:17; Ephesians 2:8)
 - c. I believe that the believer is saved through faith in Jesus Christ and by accepting the doctrines of the church. (This is a common ecclesiastical [church centered] view in which church acceptance is added on to salvation.)
 - d. I believe that the believer is saved through faith in Jesus Christ and that those who do not believe will not live eternally. (The annihilation of the wicked is taught by a variety of groups, including the Jehovah Witnesses, the Mormons and the Seventh Day Adventists. Annihilationism denies the teachings of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 24:51; 25:41,46.)
3. **What do you believe about the deity of Christ (that Jesus is God)**
 - a. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the first creature of the the Father's creation. (The Arrian or Jehovah Witness' view is that Jesus a special created creature and not eternal.)
 - b. I believe that Jesus Christ is a perfect man whose example we should follow. (Humanist's view)
 - c. *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and in essence He is God.* (Matthew 28:19-20; John 1:1,14, Col. 2:9; Hebrew 1:3)
 - d. I believe that Jesus Christ is God and that we too can become gods. (The Mormon view that Adam became God, Jesus became God and that we can become gods.)
4. **What do you believe about the personhood of Jesus Christ?**
 - a. *Jesus Christ is one person with a divine nature and a human nature.* (Isaiah 9:6; Fil. 2:6-11; Hebrews 4:15).
 - b. Jesus Christ is one person with a human nature. (Humanism)
 - c. Jesus Christ is two persons, one divine and the other human. (Nestorianism)
 - d. Jesus Christ was born as a human person and during his life he became a divine person. (Mormonism, Adoptionism)
5. **What is your view about the origins of homosexuality in a person?**
 - a. I believe that homosexuals are biological born in this condition. (Biological determinism)
 - b. *I do not believe that homosexuals are biological born in this condition, but rather, this sexual orientation is learned and therefore can be repented from.* (Mt. 4:17; Romans 1:24-27; I Cor. 6:9-11).

- c. We do not know the origins of homosexuality but the best way for a homosexual person to deal with this is to limit his sexual activity with one partner. (Liberalism)
 - d. I believe that our sexual orientation and practice is a personal matter so the church should restrict judgment on the matter. (Individualism)
6. **The Ten Commandments**
Please write the 10 commandments in the order that they appear in Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5 (you may paraphrase)
1. *You shall have no other gods before me*
 2. *You shall not make any graven images*
 3. *You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain*
 4. *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy*
 5. *Honor your father and your mother*
 6. *You shall not kill*
 7. *You shall not commit adultery*
 8. *You shall not steal*
 9. *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor*
 10. *You shall not covet*
7. **What do you believe about the devil?**
- a. *The devil is a fallen angel who tempted Adam and Eve, as well as Jesus* (Genesis 3:1-7; Mt. 4:1-11)
 - b. The devil is a symbol of evil (Roman Catholic view, Pope Juan Paul II)
 - c. The devil represents the negative energy within us. (Christian Science, New Age)
 - d. The devil does not exist (Atheism).
8. **Do you believe that Jesus sinned?**
- a. Jesus, as a normal man, sinned just like you and I (Humanism)
 - b. *Jesus, as a normal man, is like us but he never sinned.* (Isaiah 53:5; Hebrews 4:15).
 - c. Jesus was not a normal man but a special creation of the Father. (Jehovah Witness)
 - d. Jesus is God; God does not sin, so Jesus could not sin. (Docetism, deny the humanity of Jesus)
9. **What do you believe about the original sin?**
- a. *Because of Adam and Eve's original sin all of humanity is spiritually dead unless they are born again of the Holy Spirit.* (Luke 18:19; John 3:3, 5; I John 1:8-9).
 - b. Because of Adam and Eve's original sin, humanity lost the grace of salvation but maintained the ability to believe in Jesus. (Roman Catholic and Arminian view)
 - c. Adam and Eve's original sin does not affect us. (Humanism)
 - d. The original sin of Adam and Eve is a religious myth in order to explain the origins of evil. (Liberalism)
10. **What is your view about speaking with the dead?**
- a. If someone wants to speak with the dead they are free to do so. (Individualism)
 - b. Speaking with the dead is prohibited in the Old Testament. (Judaism, Dt. 18:11).
 - c. *Speaking with the dead is prohibited in the Bible and the believer is only to pray to God.* (Dt. 18:11; Mt. 6:9-11; Rev. 22: 15)
 - d. It is important to keep in contact with one's deceased ancestors. (Animist, Ancestorism)

APPENDIX #2

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS FROM LESSONS ONE –FIVE

Questions and Answers for Lesson One.

1. What is the author's definition for Christian apologetics? *It is the defense of the Christian faith according to the Great Commission.*
2. What is the difference between the Muslim *jihad* and Christian martyrdom? *In the Muslim jihad the believer dies in killing the infidel while in Christian martyrdom, the non-Christian kills the believer as he seeks to witness to him.*
3. What four reasons does the author propose as to why Christians do not defend the faith?
 1. *Not all who say they are Christian are Christian*
 2. *Not all Christians are convinced that absolute truth exist*
 3. *There are Christians who do not recognize truth and are living in error*
 4. *There are Christians who know the truth but who do not live according to it.*
4. How did your test scores compare to the questions which George Barna asked? *Your own answers. Discuss them in class.*

Questions and Answers for Lesson Two

1. What is classical-evidentialism? *Doing apologetics starting with evidences and appealing to logic.*
2. What is presuppositionalism? *Doing apologetics by starting with a Biblical position.*
3. What is contextualism? *Doing apologetics by starting from one's situation.*
4. What do you see as the strength of classical-evidentialism? *Taking serious the evidences that exist and demanding the rational usage of logic.*
5. What do you see as the strength of presuppositionalism? *Clarity of Biblical truth.*
6. What is the strength of contextualism? *Taking into account personal experience, cultural values, historical events and taking serious the social sciences.*
7. What are some of the weaknesses of evidentialism? *Exaltation of reason over faith.*
8. What are some of the weaknesses of presuppositionalism? *Exaltation of faith over reason.*
9. What are some of the weaknesses of contextualism? *Making one's contextual experience the measure of all things.*
10. What approach does the author recommend? *An integral approach: use the strength of the major positions and avoid their weaknesses.*
11. What would be the strength of the integral approach? *Flexibility and adaptability.*
12. What would be the weakness of the integral approach? *Your own answer.*

Questions and Answers for Lesson Three

1. How is God related to truth? *God is truth.*
2. How does God share truth with us? *He reveals truth.*

3. What is special revelation and how is that related to apologetics? *Special revelation is how God communicates to His people. The Bible is the standard by which truth is measured.*
4. What is general revelation and how is that related to apologetics? *In general revelation God communicates to all peoples. God's actions in creation, history and people's lives.*
5. What are the four stages of human history and how does that relate to apologetics? *Creation, fall, redemption and glorification. History is progressive and each stage needs to be properly understood.*
6. What are the four dimensions of human relationships and why would such distinctions be important for apologetics? *The relationships of man with God, himself, others and creation. All of the relationship are related but have its distinctions which have to be respected.*
7. What are the five senses? How are our senses related to apologetics? *Sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Each of our senses are involved in knowing.*
8. What are the mental faculties mentioned by the author? How are they related to apologetics? *The mental faculties mentioned are faith, intellect, reason, conscience, will and emotions. There are apologetical systems which prioritizes will, emotions or any of the faculties.*

Questions and Answers for Lesson Four

1. What are the components of the dialectic? *Thesis (the truth); antithesis (lie); synthesis (gospel) and syncretism (idolatry).*
2. How does the author use dialects for the sake of apologetics? *The dialectical system is used for the gospel to assert the truth and expose the contradiction of the lie.*
3. In your own words, give an example of how the dialectic could be used for apologetics. *Give your own example.*
4. What is the relationship between the truth and the lie? *The lie is the opposite to the truth.*
5. How does the gospel relate to the truth and the lie? *The gospel affirms the truth and exposes the lie.*

APPENDIX #3

A HANDFUL OF AFFIRMATIONS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

A	<p><u>Absolutes</u>: If absolutes exist, there must be a source for absoluteness. Only an absolute God could be such a source. Anything less than an absolute being as source, definer and guardian for absolutes would destroy the concept of absoluteness (Job 40:2; Ja. 1:17; Tit. 1:2).</p> <p><u>Atheists</u>. The atheists has to define himself (a-no, theist-god) in terms of what he is trying to negate. His name is as absurd as his position.</p>
B	<p><u>Beauty</u>. If Handle’s music, the Messiah, is real then the subject matter that inspired Handle must be seriously considered as real.</p> <p><u>Being</u>: If the reality of being exists (I am) and such a reality has origin, continuity and purpose, then there must be a supreme being from which beings derive their existence (Exodus 3:14; Jn. 8:58, Acts 17:28).</p> <p><u>Birth of Jesus</u>. The historical facts surrounding the birth of Jesus affirm that Immanuel, God with us, is a reality.</p>
C	<p><u>Cause</u>: There cannot be an infinite regress of finite causes. Therefore, there must be an uncaused cause or necessary being. This being is God (Aquinas).</p> <p><u>Cause and effect</u>: If the cause cannot precede the effect, as heat does not precede fire, then where does the first cause originate (Gen. 1:1)?</p> <p><u>Creation</u>: If there is a creation and the creation exists in an orderly fashion then there must be an orderly creator who created and sustains such a creation (Ps. 19: 1-4).</p> <p><u>Contradictions</u>: The atheist says: “Thank God I’m an atheist” (Ps. 14:1).</p> <p><u>Cross</u>. History shows that the death and resurrection of the Son of God was not the death of Christian faith but the foundation upon which sinners are saved, the church grew and the grace of God is glorified.</p>
D	<p><u>Deity</u>: If the idea of divinity exists, there must be an absolute and ultimate expression of divinity and hence a divine being (Ps 139:7).</p> <p><u>Design</u>: Reality has designs and patterns which cannot be attributed to themselves so there must be an intelligent being who can make designs according to his will (Ps. 19:1b)</p> <p><u>Devil</u>: Even the Devil believes that God exists (Mt. 4:10).</p> <p><u>Demons</u>: Even the demons believe that God exists (Ja. 2:19).</p>
E	<p><u>Existence</u>: For existence to exist, there must be one who has existed forever, or else existence did not exist at the beginning (Ps. 90:2).</p> <p><u>Eternity</u>: For eternity to exist there must be one who has eternally existed or else eternity is not eternal (Rev. 1:8).</p> <p><u>Evil</u>: If evil is absolutely wrong, then there must be that which is opposite to evil, namely, the absolute good. Only good can overcome evil. Only an ultimate expression of goodness will overcome the worst expression of evil (Rom.12:9, 17, 21).</p> <p><u>Experience</u>: In order for our experiences to have value, there must exist Someone who evaluates such experiences (Ps. 94:11).</p>
F	<p><u>Faith</u>: Faith exists. By faith we understand that which we have not seen (Heb.</p>

	<p>11:1).</p> <p><u>Failure.</u> Governments and people who have tried to stamp out the knowledge of God have failed.</p> <p><u>Foolishness:</u> “The fool says in his heart, there is no God” (Ps. 14:1).</p> <p><u>Forgiveness:</u> The fact that forgiveness is necessary and exists implies there is an absolute standard of right, wrong and reconciliation. If such a standard did not exist there would be no reason to forgive (2 Tim. 2:13).</p>
G	<p><u>God.</u> God doesn’t go away.</p> <p><u>Goodness:</u> In order for goodness to exist and overcome evil there must be an absolute source for goodness that is able to overcome evil. The good news is that God has overcome evil through the death and resurrection of His son (Lk. 18: 19).</p> <p><u>Glory:</u> The human being is capable of experiencing moments of glory. In order for glory (the most excellent manifestation of reality) to exist, there must be One who is perfectly glorified (Jn. 17:1).</p> <p><u>Guilt:</u> If we have a secret conviction that we deserve punishment, who but God will punish our secret sins? (Rom. 2:15-16)</p>
H	<p><u>Harmony.</u> The ability of unrelated parts of the universe to cooperate necessitates a Designer and Provider.</p> <p><u>History</u> attests that Jesus, who claimed to be God, lived, died and rose again some 2000 years ago (Lk. 1:1-4)</p> <p><u>Humanity:</u> The welfare of man requires accountability to a just and loving God.</p>
I	<p><u>Idea.</u> God himself must be the cause of the idea we have of him (Descartes)</p> <p><u>Intuition:</u> Each human being has an intuitive knowledge of the concept of God which is suppressed but which cannot be eradicated by man or society (Rom. 1:20)</p>
J	<p><u>Jesus Christ:</u> what is wrong with idea that sinners need divine salvation?</p> <p><u>Justice:</u> In order for true justice to be accomplished, there has to be an ultimate standard of justice and a judge who perfectly deals with evil (Gen. 18:25)</p>
K	<p><u>Kingship:</u> If human kingdoms are real, then there must be an absolute monarch and kingdom. Jesus is king over the kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33).</p>
L	<p><u>Law:</u> If there is law, there must be an absolute Lawgiver (Mt. 5:17).</p> <p><u>Leadership:</u> If leadership is necessary for society to exist, then there must be an ultimate leader for the universe to exist. There is no reason to separate the sociological reality from the universal reality (I Pe. 5:4).</p> <p><u>Linguistics.</u> The existence of terminology for divine attributes point to the reality of God.</p> <p><u>Love:</u> If enduring love is the highest expression of human personality, then there must be an absolute and ultimate expression of love. God is love (I Jn. 4:8).</p>
M	<p><u>Mercy:</u> In order for mercy, that is not receiving the condemnation we justly deserve; to exist there has to be an ultimate moral reason as to why mercy is offered (Rom. 9:15).</p> <p><u>Miracles.</u> If miracles happen for the good of man then there must be a supreme miracle worker who is absolutely good.</p> <p><u>Miracles of Jesus.</u> The civil, military and religious authorities could not ignore the results of the miracles of Jesus.</p> <p><u>Movement:</u> If movement exists and movement causes movement then there must be a first mover (Heb. 3:4) (Aquinas)</p>

N	<p><u>Negation.</u> The inability to logically prove the non-existence of God affirms his existence.</p> <p><u>Necessity.</u> The need for God can be shown.</p> <p><u>Non-contradiction:</u> In order for the law of non-contradiction to exist, that is that A is always A and that A cannot be B, then a non-contradictory Being needs to exist who is unchangeable and cannot lie (Heb. 6:18).</p> <p><u>Non-existence:</u> Non-existence cannot exist because we exist. If non-existence cannot exist then there must be an absolute existence that exists. This absolute existence is found in the eternal God (Acts 17:28).</p>
O	<p><u>Omnipotence:</u> There can only be one being who is perfectly all-powerful. Two equally all-powerful beings cannot exist (Ps. 139:14, 15).</p> <p><u>Omnipresent:</u> There can only be one being who can be in every place at one time (Ps. 139:7).</p> <p><u>Omniscience:</u> There can only be one being who knows all things (Ps. 139:4).</p> <p><u>Omni sapience:</u> There can only be one being who is all wise (Ps. 139: 23, 24).</p>
P	<p><u>Perfection:</u> If perfection exists, then there must be all perfect being who shows such perfection (Mt. 5:48).</p> <p><u>Pyramid of Perfection:</u> There is a pyramid of beings (e.g. animal to man) in an ever-increasing degree of perfection. There must be a being who is absolutely perfect, the source of all perfection (Aquinas).</p> <p><u>Power:</u> In order for power to exist, there has to be an all-powerful source, cause, continuity and purpose.</p> <p><u>Proof:</u> No proof can be given that God does not exist while with little effort, it can be shown that God exists.</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> There is purpose in life that has to have an origin, continuity and results. For a purpose to exist there has to be an absolute purpose (Job 42.2).</p>
Q	<p><u>Quantitative.</u> Who determines the limits of measurements? Who designed the day, the ton, the mile, etc? (Job 38:4,5)</p> <p><u>Questions:</u> If God gives us the ability to ask meaningful questions, He will also reveal His meaningful answers (I Cor. 2:10-12).</p>
R	<p><u>Religious experience.</u> There are sane people who testify to the truth of God. If God does not exist then all believers are lunatics (C.S. Lewis).</p> <p><u>Restlessness:</u> Man is restless, looking for something better. Man does not rest until he rests in God alone (Augustine).</p> <p><u>Resurrection:</u> Jesus rose from the grave to overcome death, sin and Satan. Only God can accomplish that. (I Cor. 15).</p> <p><u>Revelation:</u> God is able and willing to reveal Himself, and He does so in a general way to all people and in a special way to His covenant people (Rom. 3:2).</p> <p><u>Rights:</u> In order for rights (including human rights) to exist, there has to be an Eternal Righteous One who has an absolute standard of right and wrong (Jer. 23:5-6; Mt. 5:17; Rom. 9:14).</p>
S	<p><u>Salvation.</u> There are real people who claim to have been saved from real sin by a real God.</p> <p><u>Scripture:</u> Both the Old and New Testament attest to the existence of an absolute God who has revealed Himself (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 1:1-4).</p> <p><u>Simplicity of God:</u> Simplicity exists. There is only one Simple Being who is God.</p>

	<p>He is not a composite of different parts or part of a whole, but truly one (Dt. 6:4).</p> <p><u>Sin</u>. The existence of sin, the rebellion against universal moral standards, implies that the author of the moral standards has been offended.</p> <p><u>Sovereignty</u>: There can only be one being who is totally sovereign over all things (Rom. 8:28).</p> <p><u>Spirituality</u>: If spirituality exists, then there must an all powerful and perfect Spirit who inspires that (Rom. 8:11).</p>
T	<p><u>Traditional societies</u>. There are no-atheistic traditional societies without knowledge of God, even though this knowledge may be distorted.</p> <p><u>Tri-unity</u>: Jesus revealed the true God as one God in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the godhead there is perfect unity in diversity and diversity in unity (Mt. 28:19-20).</p> <p><u>Truth</u>: Truth is the correspondence of reality to the revelation of God. For truth to correspond to anything but an absolute standard and being would be to jeopardize truth (Jn. 17:17).</p> <p><u>Truth and truth</u>. The existence of truth implies the existence of Truth which implies the existence of God (Augustine).</p>
U	<p><u>Unity</u>: We believe that God is one in three persons, the perfect manifestation of unity in diversity (Col. 2:9)</p> <p><u>Universe</u>. The fact that the universe exists and continues implies that there is a God who controls the universe.</p>
V	<p><u>Victory</u>: In order for the ultimate victory to exist, there must be One who is totally victorious over all forms of evil and who exists eternally (Rom. 8:37; Col.2:15)</p>
W	<p><u>Wager</u>. You have more to loose if you deny God, if he does exist, than to believe in God if he does not exist (Pascal).</p> <p><u>Worship</u>: For worship to exist there must be One who is worthy of total worship and the One whom we can worship (Jn. 4:24)</p>

APPENDIX # 4

VRIEND VS ALBERTA: POLITICAL AND LEGAL PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIAN VALUES

INTRODUCTION

As an instructor at Kings College in Edmonton, Delwin Vriend was dismissed because he was a practicing homosexual. He filed a complaint to the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench. The court's interpretation was that sexual orientation should be read into the Individual Rights Protection Acts (IRPA) as a prohibited ground of discrimination. This was challenged by the Alberta Court of Appeal who argued that homosexuals are equally protected. The instructor of the Court asked the Supreme Court to hear the case, which is slated for the end of 1997 (News letter of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, December, 1996).

King's College is not a denominational college; however, many of the professors, including the fired lab assistant, and many students, are members of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). Vriend retains his membership in the Fellowship CRC congregation which is meeting in the rented facilities of King's College in Edmonton. At first glance, this is an intramural CRC scenario, of CRC members and teachers meeting in the same locality at 9125-50th St., Edmonton. Yet, as this matter has not been resolved within the CRC and has been brought up in civil courts, it has implications for all Canadian Christians, all Canadian denominations, and all Canadian Christian schools and ministries. Such a scenario could potentially take place in any Christian denomination, including my own. Therefore, in solidarity with Biblically faithful Christians in the CRC and everywhere, this is called "our dilemma(s)."

OUR DILEMMAS

Dilemma #1. Are Christians legally allowed to personally and communally uphold Biblical moral standards without being legally prosecuted?

Will Christian schools, like King's college, and Christian churches be forced by law to accept practicing homosexuals as members, Sunday School teachers and leaders?

The precedent is already set in the public schools. What makes the churches and Christian organizations exempt from Canadian law and Church law? If the Church receives tax exemption privileges from the government, doesn't the government have a say as to the conditions for such an exemption?

However, what the civil courts force Christians to do is a secondary consideration. Throughout the history of the church Christians have been told by public authorities to obey anti-Christian laws. Christians have historically shown they are able to not obey non-Christian laws and continue to survive. Bible smuggling into closed countries, Christian missionaries masquerade as tourists in Mexico, Chinese Christians giving birth to children (more than two) in secret, and a host of counter-cultural Christian activities take place every day. Counter cultural Christianity is normative in church history.

2. Are Canadian Christians, at a personal and communal level, upholding Biblical moral standards?

Option 1. The World Council of Churches, of which many Canadian mainline Protestant churches are members of, asked the Zaire government to temporarily suspend the law prosecuting homosexual activity, while WCC meetings were being held in Zaire. This was done so that WCC homosexual members would not be prosecuted while they were in Zaire. There are WCC related and non-WCC churches who have ordained homosexual leaders.

Option 1 is non-biblical and it is a contradiction for Christians who say they are biblical to be part a church that champions such an ethic. Historically, Christians who uphold biblical ethics voluntarily leave such churches or are prohibited from verbally and communally maintaining their ethic.

Option 2. On the other hand, Kings College has dismissed the homosexually active employee. In order for a church or Christian college to do so their Articles of Incorporation need to clearly identify the moral stance of the institution.

As of 1997, the non-ecclesiastically bound, yet inter-denominational Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), has been able to speak clearly on the issue. They are actively joined by the lawyers of the Christian Legal Fellowship (CLF), Focus on the Family (FF) and a significant number of evangelical ministries, including Ligonier Ministries of Canada, in upholding Biblical standards about homosexuality.

Option 3. The third option is to express disagreement over homosexual behavior and remain selective in disciplining homosexuals.

According to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church (1974) homosexual ministers who do not practice homosexuality are allowed to be ordained and minister. A distinction is made by the synodical report of 1974 between being born homosexual and the practice of homosexuality. Some CRC churches and church related institutions have disciplined active homosexuals (i.e. Kings College) while others have not (First CRC, Toronto; First CRC, London). The justification of pro-homosexual rights groups for tolerating homosexuality is based on the notion that the homosexual is created with such an orientation and that he is living out how God created to be. Minority opposition voices have pointed out the inherent contradiction between the claims about God's creation and God's moral standards, however, the synodical decision of 1974 remains as stated.

Dilemma #3. All anti-Christian persecution ultimately seeks to destroy the truth of the gospel. The gospel of justification by faith alone is under attack when homosexuality is justified.

The current pro-homosexual support or strange silence of mainline spokespersons adds up to what I label "homosexual justification."

Homosexual justification is manifested in at least five ways: 1) justifying the orientation of homosexuality, 2) justifying practicing homosexuality; 3) tolerating practicing homosexuals in the church and Christian agencies; 4) not practicing homosexuality but promoting it for others, and 5) maintaining silence in the face of unbiblical homosexual claims.

Homosexual justification is to explain away the sin character of homosexuality and homosexuality and ultimately to deny the need for God's justification. If one perceives that homosexuals are born that way, then who is to challenge God's providential design? If one argues that this is not God's created design but the result of the general state of sin in the world combined with our actual sinfulness, then the sin-solution of being justified by Christ

alone is applicable. Being justified in Christ means I have to renounce all types of self justification of sin. It implies a lifestyle of constant dying to my sin and living in the righteousness of Christ.

3.1. What is the Biblical teaching about homosexuality?

3.1.1. GOD AS CREATOR AND GOVERNOR OF HIS CREATION AND ALL PEOPLE HAS CLEARLY REVEALED HIS WILL ABOUT THE ROLE OF MARITAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE AND WHICH ARE CONFIRMED BY THE SCRIPTURE

- A. God created both male and female in His image and as persons capable and responsible to Him (Genesis 1:26). God covenant relationship with His people required faith and obedience. His people are to marry believers (Gen. 6:1-5; II Cor. 6:14).
- B. The mandate was given to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28). This implies that it was God's expressed will that the world be populated through the marriage institution (Gen. 2:20-25).
- C. Marriage was created as heterosexual and monogamous (Gen. 2:24; Dt. 17:17; Mt. 19:4-6; I Tim. 3:2).
- D. Consummation is practised within marriage (Gen. 2:24-25; Leviticus 18). It is an expression of procreational and communal responsibility as well as personal and private intimacy and unity.
- E. Sin has distorted the maleness, femaleness, heterosexual, and monogamous nature of people (Gen. 4; 19). Homosexuality is not a created condition, but in Biblical and theological terms, a manifestation of disorientation created by sin in the sexual thoughts and life of people. Homosexuality is not the only sinful sexual disorientation, but Scripture speaks likewise of adultery, fornication, lustful thoughts and actions (Mt. 5:28). Due to the contemporary discussion about sexual "orientation," it is important to note the Biblical perspective on homosexuality is expressed in terms of sin, disorientation, and degeneration (Romans 1:18-32). If homosexuality was a created orientation, then Scripture would give normative guidelines on how to live it out. Scripture does not speak about homosexual orientation. The human DNA shows that there are two genders, male and female. There is no DNA that is both male and female.
- F. Genesis 3:15 offers the first promise of deliverance from the deception of the Evil One and the power of sin. Jesus Christ the Lord will crush the authority and power of evil in all areas of life. This fills us with tremendous hope. The Father has offered His gracious pardon and restoration. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we receive a new nature and power over the old nature. All God's children are called to live by the new nature and crucify the lust and deceptions of the old human nature. By faith and submission to the Lord, marriage and physical intercourse take on its proper perspective. We joyful offer the good news of grace to all sinners in hope of their restoration in Christ.

3.1.2. THE RADICAL POWER OF SIN HAS DISTORTED OUR SEXUAL LIFE AND MARRIAGE SO THAT IT STANDS IN NEED OF TOTAL TRANSFORMATION

- A. Genesis 3 narrates the effect sin would have on marriage and the human family. These include separation from God, painful spiritual separation within the family, pain in childbearing and work, increased tension between husband and wife, and expulsion from their first home. Scripture also shows how marriage was abused and distorted right from the beginning of the human civilization.
- B. Jesus Christ came to save persons and also restore marriage and our life to its godly and creational intent (Genesis 1:28; Matthew 19:4; John 2). The Christians have the most positive good news imaginable for sinners. God will not hold our sins against us and offers transformation. This applies to homosexual sins as well as other sins.
- C. All persons have a sexual dimension to their life. This is expressed in single persons as well as married persons. The single person is called to live a celibate life. It is honourable and good to be single, as the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul were. It is honourable and good to marry, as seen with Joseph, Mary and Peter.
- D. Christians and none Christians alike are called to live according to the Creator's will. Whether we acknowledge God's existence or His claim on our life is secondary to the fact that He does exist, He has clearly revealed His will for human sexuality, and we are held accountable to Him. The Lordship of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit is needed to live a fulfilling life as a single or married to God the Father's glory.
- E. The expression of our sexuality is related to a person's voluntary will. One can choose to have or not to have physical intercourse. This is not obligatory whether one is male or female.
- F. Since one's intimate thoughts and activities are controlled by the will, and not simply emotions or predetermined dispositions, homosexual thoughts and actions are voluntary. The same applies to heterosexual activity. Since it is a voluntary act, we are held by God's law responsible for our behaviour. Improper behaviour can be repented from and proper behaviour can be restored if our actions obey our will.

3.1.3. THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE CONCERNING PHYSICAL INTERCOURSE IS IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE HETEROSEXUAL MARRIAGE

- A. All physical intercourse outside of the heterosexual marriage and the marriage institution is considered abnormal (Gen. 2:24; Dt. 17:17; Mt. 19: 4-6).
- B. The norms of Scripture for physical intercourse are based on God's creation, His law, the gospel, as they are revealed and interpreted in Scripture (Matthew 45:17; II Tim. 3:16-17).
- C. All sexual deviance is considered as foreign to the presence of the kingdom of God in the now and hereafter (I Cor. 6:9; Revelation 22:15).
- D. In the eternal kingdom there will be no marriage since marriage will have fulfilled its procreation, communal, and fellowship purposes.

3.1.4.. LUST, WHETHER IT BE HETEROSEXUAL OR HOMOSEXUAL, IS IDENTIFIED AS THE ROOT OF SEXUAL ABNORMALITY

- A. Lust is a misplaced erotic attraction and the root of all sexual abnormalities (Matthew 5:27-30).

- B. Since both heterosexual and homosexual lust is abnormal therefore they should equally be shunned. The Christian community must not tolerate lusting in any form.
- C. The unbiblical and non-scientific claim that persons are born homosexual undermines the voluntary, moral, and responsible dimensions of our sexuality. Rather than justifying homosexuality in terms of questions of orientation it is healthier to identify one's gender and deal with ones thought life and behaviour, which are changeable.
- D. Christians are called to live by the fruit of the Spirit rather than the lust of the flesh. In order to live by the Spirit of God one must be a regenerated Christian (Galatians 5:22-23).
- E. The sin of unregenerate man is limited by the law (I Tim. 1 Tim. 1:9-10). However, regeneration only comes through faith in Jesus Christ (I Tim. 1:12-15).

3.1.5. THE SCRIPTURE SPEAKS SPECIFICALLY ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY IN NEGATIVE TERMS

- A. Scripture speaks of homosexuality in negative terms. This is seen in both the Old and New Testament. Genesis 18-19, in reference to Sodom and Gomorra, point out the extent of sexual degeneration and God's punishment of it. The Law of Moses specifically prohibits homosexual activity (Lev. 18:22; Duet. 23:18). Romans 1: 18-32 to 2:16 traces the process of degeneration as:
 - a. suppression of the revealed truth about God and His norms (vs. 18-20);
 - b. exchange of the truth about God for idolatry (vs. 23);
 - c. being given up by God over to natural lust (vs. 24-26);
 - d. degrading of their bodies with one another (vs. 24);
 - e. receiving the penalty of their actions in their body (vs. 27);
 - f. approval of those who practice sin (vs. 32);
 - g. condemning others for practising such sins while in secret doing the same (2:1-3).
 - h. rejecting the gospel as God's gracious solution (2:4-16).
- B. The apostles place homosexual activity outside of the kingdom of God, both here and in the here-after (I Cor. 6:9; Rev. 22:15).
- C. The positive Biblical message for homosexuals is that homosexuality can be confessed, repented from, forgiven, and that one can be restored to God's intended purpose for living.

3.1.6. HOMOSEXUAL THOUGHT AND ACTION IS A FORGIVABLE SIN IF REPENTED FROM IN RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

- A. The apostle Paul reminds the Corinthians "and such were some of you." (I Cor. 6:11).
- B. Only the sin against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable.
- C. Forgiveness implies turning away from sin (repentance), believing in the pardon that Jesus offers, and living in reconciliation and restoration with God, man, and self.

3.1.7. HOMOSEXUALITY IS A CHANGEABLE CONDITION AS THE HOLY SPIRIT IMPARTS A NEW NATURE AND IS ABLE TO PURIFY OUR THOUGHTS, SPEECH, AND ACTIONS

- A. Scripture teaches that we are born and conceived in sin. All sins, with the exception of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, are pardonable. If man can be pardon, he can be restored.
- B. All change from a sinful condition or action requires conscious repentance (turning away) and belief in God's saving intervention and reign. God's reign is infinitely greater than the power of sin (I John 5:4-5).
- C. The Christian is to live according to the new nature by the power of the Holy Spirit. This involves putting away or putting to death the desires of the old human nature and living in the new (Ephesians 4:17-24).
- D. All Christians struggle with their old nature and lusts. Whether one is addicted to drugs, food, nicotine, alcohol, or sex, the lusts of the flesh have to be daily crucified. Our fallen human nature causes us to be inclined to sin, but law and conscience restrains it, and regeneration changes us.
- E. Once a person has become an alcoholic, addict, glutton, or homosexual, his human nature is permanently damaged. However, for the Christian, the human nature is not determinative. "Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic" is true in terms of permanent scars but not of permanent orientation, thought, behaviour, and responsibilities.
- F. Some persons seek a sex change through medical means. That in itself seems to indicate that sex is a changeable condition. However, the sinful actions by man are not normative proofs for morality; rather, we follow the clear directives of Scriptures.
- G. Some Christians have argued that homosexuality is a sickness and not a sin. If it were true that it is a sickness then a cure should be found. If it were an inherited sickness, perhaps parents could be cured. However, Scripture does not speak about homosexuality as a physical or mental illness, but rather a spiritual sickness.
- H. The good news for the homosexual is that homosexuality is not a predetermined biological condition but a sinful spiritual manifestation. That means homosexuality is changeable in dealing with sin. All sin, in whatever form it appears, is to be dealt with through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3.1.8. FURTHER IMPLICATIONS OF THE BIBLICAL TEACHINGS ABOUT THE DIMENSIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

- A. Orientation
 - A.1. Birth considerations
 - a. All persons are born and conceived in sin. Scripture consigns all persons outside of Christ as unrighteous (Romans 3:10) and spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-3). Only by grace can our relationship to God be restored.
 - 1. By original sin all persons face the spiritual dilemma of having to be reconciled to God. This is the foremost issue in any ethical question. Also, due to the presence of sin in our being as well as in others and throughout the world, we are susceptible to human brokenness, handicaps, incompleteness and abnormalities. Jesus response to why such brokenness exists was to point to the grace of God in restoration (John 9:3).
The brokenness of our human condition is seen with hermaphrodites, who are born with the sex organs of both male and female. This condition will require orientation toward either the male or femaleness. The physical abnormality is not a moral abnormality. Corrective surgery and personal development is to be orientated toward maleness or

femaleness at the earliest possible age. Although hermaphrodites are not morally responsible for the physical condition they are born in, full moral responsibility must be taken in how they respond to their condition.

Sin is transmitted from generation to generation. Recognition of sin, repentance, and restoration is to be sought by parents and children alike. The affects of sin transmitted from generation may come in a variety of forms. It could be through physical limitations, such as addictions being passed from mother to child. It can be expressed through faulty behaviours. The most prevalent sin is for parents not to seek the grace of God through faith in Jesus and dependency upon the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11).

Nevertheless, all persons are born with a conscience and moral responsibility, in order to cope with the affects of sin.

The argument that one has physical inherited one's homosexuality condition from two heterosexual parents does not make logical or biological sense.

2. By actual sin God's norm are broken and produce personal and social chaos. Sexual sins such as lusting, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, indiscriminate insemination practices, all produce the destructive effects of sin.

3. The sin of omission, whereby we fail to glorify God according to His Biblical norms for spirituality, family, and marriage, is the root of all our sins (John 16:8-11).

4. Due to the presence and result of sin, difficult limitations have to be considered. Scripture speaks favourably of eunuchs. Whether by choice or due to abnormal development of sexual organs, men were emasculated.

5. Scripture places a strong emphasis on the restraining power of the law and the intervention of the Holy Spirit. We are to pray for God's intervention in history.

6. In conclusion, Scripture points to God's grace, through faith in Jesus and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit as the solution to sin. Sin is never justified but rather we are pointed to the justification to be found in Christ alone.

B. Environment

1. Scripture stresses the moral development, responsibility, and accountability of all of mankind. People are born with an internal conscience as well as with external laws.

2. The 5th commandment stresses parental-child relationships. Old Testament law and New Testament teaching speak about education and the moral formation of the child.

3. Incest, child molestation, paedophilia, prostitution, indecent exposure, child pornography, or any form of sexual corruption of the child (pederasty) which may lead to homosexual activity, are explicitly and implicitly condemned in Scripture (Lev. 18).

C. Homosexual Relationships

Homosexual activity expresses itself through a variety of acts and relationships. In our contemporary world there are many scientific and popular ways to describe the following.

1. Auto-homo activity is expressed through masturbation, auto-oral sex, pornography, and other personal sexual activities.

2. Paedophilia involves sexual relationship between an adult and child. A homo-paedophilic practices homosexual activities with children.

3. Homosexuality refers to consenting male or female adults (lesbian) having a sexual relationship.

4. A bi-sexual is a person who is active as a homosexual and a heterosexual.

5. Homo-bestiality is a homosexual's relationship with an animal.

6. Celibacy in the Biblical view is to refrain from lustful sexual thought, words, acts, and active or passive advocacy. Celibacy requires conformity to Scriptural norms for sexual and marital life.
- D. Homosexual advocacy
Scripture does not allow for homosexual advocacy, that is, the active or passive promotion of homosexual lust, thought, and acts. In the current political debate about sexual orientation rights Christians are not to promote homosexuality. In a pluralistic society, a certain degree of tolerance is required, not only on matters of sexuality, but also concerning religion. However, it appears that the homosexual community do not only want equal rights as human beings and citizens in society but preferential treatment. Gender is already protected in the Canadian Bill of Rights. Thus we see an inherent discrimination towards a certain sexual "orientation" in our society. Human history has always been dominated by special interest groups. Jesus Christ our Lord has always liberated God's people from their claims. We look to the Messiah, the anointed liberator of God's people, to liberate us from the draconian conclusions of liberal and nihilistic culture.
- E. Christian and Homosexual Co-existence.
How then are Christians to co-exist with non-repentant homosexuals in a society which not only protects homosexual activity and life style but promotes it?
1. The Old Testament community of the people of God where ruled by theocracy laws which considered homosexuality as a crime worthy of capital punishment. The New Testament community of Christians were not given the sword to exercise capital punishment. Nevertheless, in principle, the New Testament church stands firmly against homosexuality and its practice is not to be tolerated in the church.
 2. Biblically, the distinction between the homosexual condition is homosexual practice is not taught. The Bible is clear that Christians are not supposed to be homosexuals. Even though a formerly practising homosexual will be tempted by homosexual thought, as a Christian he is not to live according to his true identity but an identity that has been developed.
 3. Christians are to seek to limit the influence of homosexual thought and action in society. Laws and legislation to protect children from both hetero and homo-paedophilia and pornography need to be formed and enforced. The Biblical perspective salvation, holiness, sexuality and marriage need to be taught at home, and when appropriate, at church and school. Scientific research and accurate reporting of their findings are needed.
 4. The church is called to evangelize, counsel, and love homosexuals. We are called to love the sinner while we hate the sin (Romans 12:9). God the Father loved us enough to send His Son to die for our sins (Romans 5:10). He reminds us that vengeance belongs Him alone and that we are to love our enemies (Romans 12:20-21). The apostle Paul reminds us "and such were some of you."
 5. While non-Christian homosexuals are evangelized, special attention must be given to Christians who struggle against homosexuality. It is not helpful to attribute greater importance to homosexual temptations than other conflicts with sin. All Christians strive with sin and are to daily crucify the lust of the flesh. When special counsel and prayer are needed, certainly the leaders of the church and Christian friends are to be consulted.

If a Christian lives a homosexual lifestyle, then the church is to begin a process of discipline. Discipline is intended to be a means of grace in order to restore the Christian to God's express will as given in Scripture.

6. The church is not to use violent or coercive means to fulfil its part of the mission of God. God has given the prophetic Word, priestly intercession, and the leadership offices of the church, for the people of God to be a witnessing nation within the nations (II Peter 2:5-9).

7. The churches and Christians relationship to society at large is through the government, law, community service, and personal witness and worship. We are to be active at all levels of life expressing the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Mt. 22:21; Romans 13:1-4).

8. Social tolerance is not to be seen as social acceptance or compromise. Vengeance belongs to God, while it is our task to evangelize and serve all in the name of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to the glory of God.

May God liberate our nation, churches, homes, and hearts by His transforming Word and Spirit. May the Father have mercy on us.

We encourage the Christians and Christian churches to preach and practice the Biblical teachings on spirituality and marriage. One of reasons why our nation is beset by relativism in moral legislation is the weak Biblical witness and outright error within Protestantism and Catholicism.

CONCLUSION

The Christian church needs to be prepared for ongoing political and legal persecution. In the United States, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in San Francisco has continually been harassed by homosexual protesters. In Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, the Presbyterian Church in North America assembly passed strong biblical statements against homosexuality and they too are beset by picket lines outside their assembly halls.

Canadian persecution has gone beyond the picket lines. Vriend vs. Alberta is at the Supreme Court level. When the church is not consistent in their ethical views, they deserve to be judged by the world.

APPENDIX # 5

ISLAM: AN EGYPTIAN CHRISTIAN VIEW

by:

Helmy Girgis

edited by:

Johan D. Tangelder

PREFACE

Helmy and Didi Girgis came to Canada from their native land, Egypt, in November of 1964. Helmy dedicated himself to his teaching profession, practicing his vocation with the Middlesex Board of Education, until his retirement in 1987. Currently, the Girgises live in London, Ontario.

As a Christian who has lived in both an Islamic nation and a democratic country like Canada, Helmy as well as many others, feel obligated to critique both the claims of Islam, as well as the Canadian Protestant response.

Dr. Neal Hegeman

INTRODUCTION

Canadian immigrants, in no time at all, will undoubtedly realize the privileges associated with their new-found freedom. All will soon come to know, with the privilege of being able to exercise and express one's belief or faith, that others have the same rights too, whether he or she be a Christian, Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, or any other.

With such a privilege comes responsibility. Immigrants acquiring such a privilege have the responsibility to express their concerns about activities or actions that inhibit a citizen's right in his country of origin.

Moslems or Christians from Islamic countries, have the obligation, in their new-found freedom, to express concern as to the treatment of minorities in their country of origin. Such expressions should be within the laws of the country or the United Nations charter. In their new-found freedom, immigrants of different beliefs, who worship different gods, have the right and the responsibility to declare and defend their faith and moreover answer to claims against their faith.

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

As a Christian from an Islamic country, whose freedom was and is usurped in his country of origin, I feel obligated to stand up and be counted regardless of expressions of intolerance, hate-mongering, divisiveness experienced on two occasions, March 1996 in Waterloo and May 1996 in London, Ontario, Canada. One of the objections to the seminar held in Waterloo expressed by the Moslem community is that the seminar was held during the holy month of Ramadan. Amazingly, it was the Moslems themselves who turned the month of Ramadan into a bloody month two years in a row, 1996 and 1997, and to celebrate, 5,000

Christians were massacred in Pakistan in February 1997, and churches were burnt in Egypt (*Toronto Star*, February 13, 1997).

For an evangelical Christian, it is not a matter of “live and let live,” when Moslems in both communities use every occasion to question the deity of my Savior and to refer to the Gospels as corrupt. To me, that raises an important question. Where does my salvation come from? Does it come from the living Christ, or from a prophet who admitted to be a sinner, dead and buried? If a Moslem, in his new-found freedom, feels free to question my faith, I too as a Christian in my new-found freedom, will feel free, not only to respond to his surmises, but also to question his faith.

My feelings expressed above are not without precedent. Canadian Moslem women from African Moslem countries including Egypt have been outspoken about female circumcision, or as described by some as female genital mutilation. If we become outspoken about one issue, why are we not outspoken about all issues? If Moslems from Saudi Arabia, who are by law given permission to erect their mosques in this country, why do they not stand up and support the Christians’ desire to build their churches in Saudi Arabia? What is good for the gander should be good for the goose.

Moslems coming to North America tend to deny or downplay some aspects of their faith. Women in particular try to present themselves in a manner more acceptable to the North American mind-set. That will pose the question, “Do Moslems have two versions of the Qur’an, one tailored to North America and another to the rest of the world?” Printed are some paragraphs from an article published by *The Economist*, dated August 10, 1996.

They were and are happily married. No matter, Egypt’s highest court has instructed the husband to divorce his wife.

Nasr Abu Zeid is a professor of Arabic literature at Cairo University. He is also, his enemies say, an apostate from Islam. The court agrees, and on August 5th declared he could no longer remain married to his Muslim wife, since Egyptian law forbids a Muslim woman to “marry out.”

As religious conservatives infiltrate the universities, professional bodies and the like, secularists have been turning to the judiciary to protect liberal values. That trust has now been shaken. “A setback for civilization,” mourned the head of Cairo’s bar association.

It was to generate debate on Islam, that Mr. Abu Zeid wrote the 12 books now banned - that have landed him into trouble. Muslims hold the text of the Koran as the word of God transmitted by the prophet Muhammad. Mr. Abu Zeid-who considers himself a loyal Muslim-argues that nearly 14 centuries of theological accretion have obscured original meanings, and that some passages should be understood as metaphors. To another Egyptian scholar, his ideas echo those the 19th century reformers: “What he says is that the Koran is godly inspiration, but human in interpretation. His attackers fear this kind of logic, so they have contracted his words to make him say that the Koran is human.”

Earlier this year, the court published an outline of the case against Mr. Abu Zeid. The Egyptian constitution enshrines freedom of belief. But there is a difference, the outline argued, between belief in the mind and belief that is spoken. Mr. Abu Zeid’s words represented apostasy. He had denied the literal existence of things mentioned in the Koran, such as the throne of God,

angels, devils and djinns. He had also challenged tenets of Islamic law from the Koran, such as the half measure granted to women as compared with men, both in their rights of inheritance and in the weight to be accorded to their testimony in court.

If in Egypt, the hub of Islamic culture, thought and teaching such tenets still prevail, I wonder in what manner the application of such tenets of Islamic law are in the rest of the third world countries. The Qur'an in such areas, where illiteracy is high, is being memorized and becomes oral history and the true path. If the Qur'an cannot be humanized, then North American Moslem women should have a close look at their status as stated in the Qur'an. If Moslem women believe that all are equal in the eyes of Allah, then they are to read what was revealed to the prophet Mohammed.

STATUS OF WOMEN

It was revealed to the prophet Mohammed.

You are still irrational and lack self-control.

Sura 2:282: "And call in to witness two witnesses, men; or if the two be not men, then one man and two women, such witnesses as you approve of, that if one of the women errs the other will remind her."

You are considered equal to one half of the male species because you are inferior.

Sura 4:11: "God charges you, concerning your children: to the male the like portion of two females."

You are considered a "what." What, you say? Yes, and it infers to the lack of mental capabilities, and a man can outwit four of you.

Sura 4:3: "If you fear that you will not act justly towards the orphans, marry such women as seem good to you, two, three, four, but if you fear you will not be equitable, then only one, or "what" your right hand owns."

If you ever think to be his equal, woe unto you, as stated:

Sura 4:34: "And those you fear may be rebellious admonish; banish them to their couches, and beat them."

If your rebellion persists:

Sura 2:230: "If he divorces her finally, she shall not be lawful to him after that."

If these are the words of Allah, through the prophet Mohammed, why do the jurisprudent allow their women a different status in North America? Have they ceased to be zealots?

It is a known fact that a Moslem woman's life is controlled from birth to death.

In Nebraska, a Moslem immigrant arranged to have his two daughters, aged 13 and 14, marry two adult Moslems, aged 34 and 38 years (*Time*, December 16, 1996). In Kirgizstan, a woman is now labeled as a good Moslem, with her parents' consent, if she

allows herself to be abducted, or as is known, bride-stealing (*The Economist*, November 23, 1996).

In Malaysia, Moslem women have been warned not to wear excessive lipstick. It was determined that there is a direct relationship between cosmetic wear and unwanted offspring (*The Economist*, October 26, 1996).

As for Moslem widows, that is a long story.

Westerners should familiarize themselves with the topic of apostasy, of which Mr. Abu Zeid has been accused. Though there are Moslems in the West who are aware and supportive of Islam's law of apostasy, it is hardly surprising that they talk little about it. On the other hand, many Moslems concerned with Islam's image in the West vehemently insist that Islam proclaims religious tolerance and freedom, as if the law of apostasy never existed or is now obsolete.

APOSTACY

A significant difference between the United Nations' Charter and the Islamic declaration of Human Rights is that the former is based on the dignity of the individual being, while the latter is founded on the Islamic holy book and interpretation. I would like to refer to the article in *The London Free Press*, dated June 8, 1996, where a former Pentecostal pastor, who converted to Islam, emphatically stated that any Moslem in Canada who converts to Christianity should be killed, as now occurs in Saudi Arabia under Islamic law. I am sure the contract he signed in his new-found faith is far more worthwhile than the covenant he broke with a living God! What is the nature of the being who would rather live under the threat of death and knowing that his freedom of will is no more an option? He embraced a faith where none of the sheep can get lost. I can assure him that the God of the faith he rejected will still seek him as a lost sheep. What a comparison. A staff that is used for discipline as opposed to a staff used for comfort! A recent report from Kuwait, that has a constitution declaring the freedom of religion, stated that the penalty of death was passed on a Moslem who declared his conversion to Christianity.

If the prophet Mohammed has stated that the killing of an apostate is lawful, what truth is there in the statement that there is no compulsion in Islam? People from the Middle East, Moslem and non-Moslem, are aware of this law of apostasy, Sura 9:11, 12. "But if they break their oaths after their covenant and thrust at your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief; they have no sacred oaths; haply they will give over. Will you not fight a people who broke their oaths and purposed to expel the Messenger, beginning the first time against you? Are you afraid of them?" The Moslem community, privileged to live in this democracy, who extols the virtues of Islam, including its freedoms, should publicly refute the law of apostasy to the rest of the world. Then converts of Islam in the West, who boldly and fearlessly announce their conversion privately and publicly, will meet their match.

But can a Moslem be a free thinker in his community, if the law is a statement in the Qu'ran? In all references, it is declared that the messenger of God has approved the killing of:

1. a Moslem who becomes a Kafir (atheist);
2. one, who after marriage, commits adultery; and
3. one who commits murder without authorization.

Islam established itself as the only true source of salvation for mankind. It is the authentic way and all other ways are false and lead mankind to hell. This thought is well established. Sura 8:39: "Fight them till there is no persecution and the religion is Allah's entirely." Sura 9:33: "It is He who has sent His messengers with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may uplift it above every religion, though the unbelievers may be averse." But for the peace of mind of those in North America, Islam has adopted a contradictory stance on this issue: "there is no compulsion in religion," Sura 2:256, and "whosoever will, let him believe and whosoever will, let his disbelieve," Sura 18:30.

Religion, as understood today, is considered to be a belief or thought which a person selects with reference to metaphysical concerns. A person then should be free to choose to follow a way on which he fixes his hopes for salvation, even if that demands a change of faiths. Then, if Islam is simply a faith or religion, and more on that later, nothing could be more mind-boggling than Islam's keeping its doors open for those who wish, but stationing an executioner at the door for those departing.

I did ponder if a Moslem can be a free thinker in his community, if the law of apostasy is a statement of the Qur'an. This naturally can be concluded from the court statement related to Professor Abu Zeid, where it said: "The Egyptian constitution enshrines freedom of belief. But there is a difference between belief in the mind and belief that is spoken." If a society denies the freedom of will, the freedom of thought, the freedom of speech, what is the nature of the freedom? One member of Cairo's Bar Association said it best, when he described this incident "as a setback for civilization." If I assume total Islamization of Egypt, "will there be any civilization left?" Enough said about no compulsion in Islam.

If reason and argument underline a democracy, will Islamic Law allow the propagation of a democracy within its boundaries?

True if:

1. There is freedom of speech
2. The Qu'ran is somewhat humanized and not thought of as infallible. (Making reference of the above-mentioned case, that "14 centuries of theological accretion have obscured original meaning, and that some passages should be understood as metaphors.")
3. Human rights as defined by the United Nations can be applied
4. Minorities within the boundaries of Islamic countries are allowed to freely propagate their faith
5. A person is able to declare his faith as truth within reason and intelligent argument
6. The statement "there is no compulsion in Islam" is the rule in all Islamic countries, and is understood as stated

What has been attracting my attention lately is the intellectual interest of the Islamic community in Christ and Christianity here and elsewhere. A statement that is rarely questioned by Westerners, or that is accepted at face value, is that we worship the same God. Consequently, it will be assumed by the unsuspecting Westerner that our God is their Allah. A Christian Westerner will assume that there are no contradictions in the Qu'ran or in the Moslem's mind to his Christian belief. Such a statement, said by a Moslem, is no more than a prelude to a host of ifs and buts.

God in the literary sense is defined as a person or thing highly exalted or deified and honored as the chief good. For a Westerner in a pluralistic society, God is what he perceives in his mind, and so the statement that we worship the same God is true. For a Christian, God has come to earth in the form of man, was crucified, buried and rose again. For a Moslem, Allah is what he perceives in his mind, a perception that can be puzzlement to a thinking person in the West. Knowing the origin, that statement needs to be analyzed.

But before we look into the implications of such a statement, let us put things into perspective. To start, Moslems hold the Qu'ran as the word of Allah, Allah speaking to man not merely in seventh-century Arabia to Mohammad, but from all eternity to every Moslem and to every man and woman throughout the world. The content of the book is the source not only of the religion of Islam but the whole life of a community. The prophet has been regarded as essentially a commentary on and exposition of the Qu'ran. Moslems attempt to work out in practice the meaning of the divine words either through the Law or through the commentary. Whether the Qu'ran originated in the mind of Allah or Mohammad is a guessing game for any Westerner. The question will always be asked, "Is the Qu'ran infallible?"

Secondly, Islam is thought of as cumulative. It is a surging movement which began in Arabia. Islam in the 20th century is not the same as in the 14th, and is not the same as that of the 10th, and consequently, it can be said that the meaning of the Qu'ran or the Hadith is the cumulative history of their meanings. Professor Abu Zeid, mentioned that as an observation. Also, if we go back in history, to the end of the 9th century in particular, Islam was enjoying relative peace with itself and with its neighbors. At that time, Islam possessed immense resources of the conquered lands, and a fresh exchange of ideas, whether these are Christian, Jewish or Greek.

The introduction of philosophy and logic put the Qu'ran and the Hadith into question. It was about the turn of the 9th century that El Bukhari laid down elaborate canons of authenticity to the known traditions. Some 600,000 traditions have been collected but about 7,000 were thought of as genuine. The existing Hadith has been rejected by some prominent Islamic countries, such as Malaysia, and Sunni and Shiia do not seem to agree. Can it be said then that Bukhari's genuine collection is not that genuine after all?

This forces us to conclude that the meaning of the Qu'ran is not any one meaning but is a dynamic process of meanings. Still, for a devout Moslem, the true meaning is what Allah means by it, and the various meanings given to it by the historians are no more than an approximation.

A worshipping Moslem is a sincere Moslem who serves his Allah with dedication within the limitation of his religion. This does not absolve us, as Christians, from seeking the truth about Islam. In so doing, a comparison of the Qu'ran with the New Testament is for us the only standard of truth. If we compare the 99 names of Allah, the generic name for god, one will immediately realize that Allah is not in harmony with our God. Therefore, if a Moslem says we worship the same God, either he does not understand who Allah and Christ really are, or he intentionally glosses over the deep-rooted differences. Allah is not a trinity, or father, or son, or Holy Spirit, or love.

Those who go around claiming that they have converted to Islam from Christianity and still claim that we worship the same God do not realize that they have gone through a revolving door, and I can assume the following conversation taking place.

“Oops we meet again,” God said
 “Yes we do,” said the faithful
 And God said:
 “Now you are here to stay.”
 “Yes, there is no other way.”
 And the faithful added:
 “You see, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were all educated folk,
 And surely came up with some talk,
 All they wrote was according to,
 But only 20% was signed by you.”
 And the faithful added:
 “But for Mohammad, through sweat and perspiration,
 114 revelations without any deliberation
 Or even self-motivation.”
 “Dear God, and may I call you Allah,” said the faithful:
 “Now I know, I have time to work out my salvation,
 Because I pray upon invitation,
 And on inclination give some donation,
 And for a month every year go through the deprivation,
 And alter the times of my consummation,
 Of all that food in adoration.”
 And the faithful further added:
 “And once in a lifetime go for a pilgrimage,
 For that will improve my image.”
 And the faithful added further:
 “And then I’ll be
 Ready for eternity,
 Be that heaven or paradise,
 For there you say everything is nice.”

The Christian God as a trinity has been an issue of debate for decades. In the Arabic language, the name Allah is a study in itself. Allah in Islam, is always only one and never a unity of three, even if such a unity was complete in itself. Moslems repudiate the Christian claims that the trinity does not mean three different separate persons, but a unity in a trinity. Moslem argument has come down to some mathematical operation $1+1+1=3$ and it is really too bad that though the Arabs who are known to be mathematicians, ignore an operation such as $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$. Following such a mathematical operation, Christianity to a Moslem is a polytheistic religion.

Moslems have never approached their surmise of Islam as a monotheistic religion as a mathematical operation. In the pre-Islamic period, Allah was one of 360 pagan deities worshipped in Arabia. To unify the Arabs, Allah, the high god of the pagan Arabs, was selected as the unifying god. He alone is to be worshipped. Therefore $360-359=1$ and consequently Islam is a monotheistic religion.

THE CROSS, STAR OF DAVID, AND THE CRESCENT MOON

We all try to symbolize our faith. The Jews symbolize it by the star of David, a light to all nations; the Christians by the cross, symbolizing Christ's sacrifice, and the Moslems by the crescent moon.

In a debate on July 14, 1996, between Shabir Ally (Islamic Information and Da'wah Centre International) and Dr. Robert Morey, entitled "Is Allah the Moon God of pre-Islamic Arabia?", a topic on which many books have been written, 25 propositions as "true or false" were distributed by Dr. Morey mid-way during the debate session and way before the question-answer period.

1. The Qu'ran refers to people, place, things, and events which are nowhere explained or defined within the Qu'ran itself.
2. They were not explained because it was assumed that people *already* knew of these things.
3. All Islamic scholars use pre-Islamic history to explain parts of the Qu'ran.
4. This is even done by Muslim scholars when it comes to the she-camel, the elephant army, the twelve springs, the youths in the cave, the blind man, and many other things found in the Qu'ran.
5. The Kabah was a pagan temple filled with 360 idols.
6. They made a pilgrimage to Mecca.
7. They held their public meetings on Friday instead of Saturday or Sunday.
8. They performed ritual washings before prayers and even snorted water up and then out of the nose.
9. In the pre-Islamic Arabian genealogies, Ishmael is nowhere mentioned as the father of the Arabs.
10. Ishmael was not the father of the Arabs.
11. The Kabah was built by Kosia, the pagan great-grandfather of Muhammad.
12. Al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat were called "the daughters of Allah."
13. The rituals associated with the worship of the pagan Allah were put into the Qu'ran.
14. While Islam adopts the name, rituals, and crescent moon symbol of the pagan Allah, it rejected his wife and daughters. Thus, Allah remains essentially the same pagan deity minus his wife and daughters.

Though some of the propositions assumed that certain pillars of Islam were pre-Islamic traditions, not one Moslem commented on the contents, including the speaker. This was expected, as the jurisprudent were not available for comment. Mr. Ally in the conclusion of his debate made the following comments on the alleged worship of the moon-god Allah by Moslems.

"The farthest thing from the Moslem's mind is to worship anything or anyone other than the God of Abraham. It is another question as to how the crescent became the symbol of Islam. The Qu'ran and the Hadith do not give this significance to the crescent moon. And for the first several centuries of Islam the crescent was not a symbol of Islam."

If we worship the same God, and Moslems were advised by Mohammad to consult the people of the Gospels if they are in doubt, then I as a Christian will advise them to use the

star of David or the Cross as a symbol, till they really define the symbolic significance of the crescent moon.

We still did not identify who Allah is. He is not a trinity, he is not a father, he is not a son, he is not a holy spirit, he is not the moon-god regardless of the use of the crescent moon as symbol, but we are told that he is the God of Abraham.

Whether the Qu'ran is infallible or not, or that Allah inspired Mohammad and revealed his words and commands to him, every sentence in the Qu'ran is supposedly the pure word of Allah, infallibly dictated by the Almighty.

I will refute the statement, as a Christian, that we worship the same God, because I have the responsibility of pointing to the truth as I believe it. If the truth of any faith is only based on surmise, the truth will vary with time.

Notwithstanding that Allah is the moon god, and also allegedly the God of Abraham, why has it recently been legislated in certain Islamic countries that the generic name for God, Allah, is only to be used by those of the Islamic faith? Every faith must be able to stand on its own merits. If Allah is who the Moslems claim he is, so be it. If Allah is or is not the God of Abraham, if he is or is not the moon-god, not to mention the Agha Khan, has Allah all of a sudden shown up as Louis Farrakhan? Then surely your Allah is not my God!

I will accept their assumption of who God is, hoping that when I say the statement, "My God is your God," they will accept my God at face value and, let it be known, they are always welcome to the fold with no strings attached. But I will not accept the surmise that their God is my God and the Qu'ran is the last and true revelation and that I should accept the fact that Jesus is also a prophet and that His crucifixion is imaginary. This means that my hope for salvation, as I understand it, is obsolete.

But as a Christian with my freedom of will still intact, I can freely ask the question: "What do they have to offer?" The God of Abraham as I know Him is a close, caring, protecting, jealous God. The God of Abraham as described by the prophet is a distant, unapproachable God. The God of Abraham as I know Him offered Himself as a sacrifice and offered me salvation by grace. The God of Abraham as described by the prophet is a self-effacing God, who requires man to work out his own salvation. Maybe the crescent moon is not there by coincidence. It partly reflects the truth of some other star.

FAITH AND CULTURE

Throughout, I did consider that both Christianity and Islam to be a religion or faith, with a specific reference to a God. From an evangelistic perspective, faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1). If the Qu'ran which is the final expression of God's will and purpose for man entertains such a belief, then Islam can be thought of as a religion or a faith.

Faith concerns the mind—a conviction of things not seen. It also concerns the heart—the centre of one's emotion, desires and affections. Last but not least, faith concerns the will—an act of commitment and with commitment comes accountability. Can a Moslem, who solely bases his salvation on works and whose life is directed by jurisprudent, assume that Islam is a faith or a religion?

Evangelical Christianity today is a personal religion, even within the boundaries of so-called Christian nations. The propagation of this faith is within the family sphere and as a religion it lacks the corporate element which might serve as a base for a social order and a

state structure. The children or descendants of this faith have a choice either to remain in the faith or to leave the faith.

Islam is a state (umma), a society which has the power and zest for life and carefully arranges to transmit its traditions, its culture, the principles and its loyalties to the new generation born within its borders and to make them as reliable as possible on its own behalf. Islam has a genuine interest in the spiritual and ethical prosperity of Allah's servants and for the sake of this prosperity puts the management of the nation into the hands of the Moslem jurispudent.

The God of Abraham promised them a literal, sensual paradise, not a heaven. What is good for the gander is not good for the goose. Paradise as revealed to Mohammad by Allah is, and I quote:

- a place beneath which rivers flow (Sura 13:35)
- a place with uplifted couches, upon which believers shall be "gazing" (Sura 83:23)
- a place where apparel shall be of silk (Sura 22:23)
- they shall be adorned with bracelets of gold and with pearls (Sura 22:23)
- a place full of fruits, palm trees and pomegranates (Sura 55:68)
- lofty chambers (Sura 39:20)
- they will have wide-eyed huris (beautiful companions with large and lustrous eyes, like pearls well guarded) as wives (Sura 52:70), untouched by any man or Jinn (Sura 55:56)
- immortal youth who will bring them delicious and dainty food (Sura 56:17,18)
- immortal youth seen as scattered pearls (Sura 76:19)
- they are promised rivers of water unstaling, rivers of milk unchanging in flavor, rivers of milk and honey a delight to the drinker (Sura 47:15)

According to Al-Ghazzali (Ihya "Ulum al-Din), the messenger of God, the prophet Mohammad summed up paradise as follows: "They are palaces of pearls; in each palace there are seventy houses of ruby, and in each house there are seventy homes of emerald, and in each home there is a bed, and upon each bed there are seventy spreads of every color, and upon every bed there is one espoused of a wide-eyed huris. In each home there are seventy tables, and upon each table there are seventy kinds of foods. And in each home there are seventy maids. Each morning, the believer will be given the power for all of these." He added, "The man among the inhabitants of paradise will marry five hundred huris, four thousand virgins, and eight thousand women."!

Are there any references in the Qu'ran to the spiritual happiness believers will have in the love and praise of their Creator? Finally, can Allah be the God of Abraham? The Kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rm 14:17). A Moslem's life is a journey during which he pursues the true spirit which Moslems call Jihad bil nafr, or greater Jihad - striving within the self to improve, to become more spiritual. The lesser Jihad - Jihad fisabil Allah - is the much represented striving in the path of God, part of which concerns holy war.

GOD'S WILL

If we as Christians worship the God of Abraham, it is because we as Christians know that:

God's wisdom stands behind God's will;
God's will stands behind God's way; and
God's way stands behind our well-being.

His will for all, whether Jew or Gentile, is expressed in the Ten Commandments. We should "live a life" in obedience to the Ten Commandments or Paul's letter as they should be understood by the Christians in that we are set apart or sanctified. Our relationship with God is an accountable relationship. The sexual dimension of our personality is woven into our very fabric (1 Thess 4). It is capable of being used for either good or evil purposes, and we are free to choose.

God's will for His people, whether Jew or Gentile, as expressed in Exodus, Isaiah, Deuteronomy or 1 Peter 2, is that they should realize that they are strangers in this world, whose home is in heaven and that they are His. His will is that they be an influence on the unbeliever. His people should submit to every authority instituted, as God ordained the system of human government.

His will for us as Christians is to live such a life that He may be glorified. He suffered for us, leaving us an example to follow. What is important is that we live as free people, with a freedom to serve Him, exercised under law.

Last but not least, God's will for the Christian is that he be "joyful always, giving thanks in all circumstances." Such joy comes from what Christ has done. Paul's expression of joy or "rejoice" in 1 Thessalonians 5 is a paradox. It does not mean a constant euphoria. Our emotions fluctuate and a Christian's joy can be found in the midst of sadness, affliction and care for others. God's will for us to rejoice involves more than human emotions. It is an expression that is continuous, defiant and an on-going confidence in God. The God of Abraham, as Jesus Christ stated emphatically, that He came to do God's will - a renewal of a covenant. The Holy Spirit, God's Spirit, is our guiding light in that renewal.

Summing it all up, and as I mentioned before, God's wisdom, will and way lead to our well-being. Our well-being is to live a life, walk a way, following His commandments. We are to live His life after making the choice, as strangers but submitting to every authority instituted.

A Christian's objective during his lifetime is victory over this world achieved by a relationship with God built on His Word. He builds a character which is a true reflection of his inner self. He lives by the Spirit, walks by the Spirit and is directed by the Spirit, a consistent way of life.

If that is the case with the Christian, and a Moslem assumes we worship the same God, what is Allah's will for his people?

ALLAH'S WILL

Allah's will is not for the Jew and Gentile, but only for a Moslem.

"He that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the world to come he will be one of the lost." (3:85) Those who have guessed and chose this present life will find themselves in Hell; but those who feared to stand before their Lord and curbed their souls' desires shall dwell in Paradise (79:37).

Without exception, every Moslem is asked to listen to the words of Allah and his messenger. At this point, I would like to quote from the text introduction to Islam series titled, "The Good Life,"

"Be they men or women, those who believe and do what is right, we shall surely endow with a good life. We shall reward them according to their noblest action."

The writer, Maulana Khan, adds that the meaning that the companions of the Prophet and their followers generally inferred is that a good life is a life of good actions; being content with an honest living and serving God in one's life. Those who did well on earth will be rewarded with Paradise, but those who were unfortunate will be sent to hell.

What then are the noblest actions? Let us read the words of Allah:

Mankind, eats of what is in the earth lawful and wholesome, and follow not in the steps of Satan (2:164-169).

Perform the prayer at sunset, at nightfall and at dawn. Good deeds make amends for sins (11:114-115).

Recite what has been revealed to you of the book, and perform the prayer; prayer prevents indecency and the dishonor (29:45).

Believers, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may ward off evil (2:183-186).

Believers, spend of that with which we have provided you (2:261-269).

Believers, give in alms of the wealth you have lawfully carved (2:261-269).

Perform the pilgrimage and visit the Sacred house for his sake (2:196-203).

Do not sell the covenant of God for a trifling price. We shall reward the steadfast according to their noblest deeds (16:90-97).

Believers, let your hearts be filled with awe at the mention of God, and whose faith grows stronger as they listen to his revelations (8:1-4).

Believers, do not devour usury doubling your wealth many times over (3:130-136).

Let evil be rewarded with like evil. But he who forgives and seeks reconciliation shall be rewarded by God (42:36-43).

Believers, "shall we tell you who will lose most through their labors? Those whose endeavors in this world are misguided and who yet think that what they do is right (18:102-110).

Summing it all: whatever you do you will always be in doubt.

To a Christian, salvation is by grace alone through faith in the risen and reigning Jesus Christ, but to a Moslem, salvation is by a life of good actions, and yet always in doubt if what they have done is right. The Moslem is correct in his doubt. If sinful man can add anything to his salvation, it will always be less than perfect, for all that we do is sinful and only God is perfect. Only God Himself can give us absolute eternal security. God sent His Son to prepare the way. Will we submit to the Son of God, or will we submit to others?

The God of Abraham promised an assurance by which we acquire a steady state. In no way does His will for us keep us in a state of randomness. Other religions may sound the same as Christianity, but they are essentially different. Christianity provides a God who is a

constant and an assured message, and Christians are not to lose track of this significant difference.

If we for a moment assume that acquiring a little bit of every religion we might hit the jackpot, we also in terms of probability can go spiritually bankrupt, the same state of randomness, a spiritual void.

For a Christian, truth is to abide in Christ's word. How can a Christian do that by a religious practice that revolves around the five pillars, whose expression of love can be achieved only through Islamization, a process that varies; talk about randomness.

How can a Christian abide by Christ's word, through spirit worship, unseen spirits who hold power, who are seen as deities, horoscopes, crystal balls and other similar practices. Well, if you don't drink coffee or tea, we will read the palm; talk about variables.

How can a Christian abide by Christ's word, through the prophet Bahauallah, who created a religion, out of all others, through revelations? Talk about wishful thinking.

There is no randomness in Christianity, truth is defined. *"If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8:31,32). This applies to Jew, Gentile, Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, Bahai or anyone else. If we obey His word, we grow in spiritual knowledge, we grow in freedom from sin and that leads to liberty, liberty from the bondage of sin; talk about a steady state.

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APPENDIX # 6

GOSPEL ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION: THE ROLE OF CONVERSION

By: Neal Hegeman

INTRODUCTION

The Christian's heart desire and mission is that others too may enter the kingdom of heaven. How can we best promote the truth about entering the kingdom?

When Jesus wanted to teach his disciples about entering the kingdom of heaven, he did not speak about Adam, Eve, Moses, or the great prophets. He used a child as his key witness to illustrate on what basis we may enter the kingdom.

To Nicodemus, the leader-theologian, Jesus used child development language, he said: "You must be born from above" (John 3:7). Mark reports Jesus as saying: "whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it" (Mark 10:15). Luke affirms what Mark said. Matthew reports that Jesus said: "Unless you are converted (changed) and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 18:3)

This child-like theology includes receiving the gospel message, being born again or from above (regeneration), and being changed (converted: turned to). Such a theology implies that God's people need to live according to their true and eternal identity as children of God, trusting, depending on, being provided for, and submitting to the heaven Father, whose Son is the way, the truth, and the life, and who works by the power of the Holy Spirit.

To receive (*dechomai*) the kingdom of God as a child implies that what is given is a gift which is meant to be taken when offered. We understand that to mean that God gives us the offer of salvation through the preaching of the Word of God. Entering the kingdom of God is by a child-like reception (1).

To be born (*gennaō*) from above implies that new birth comes from God in heaven. New birth is theo-centric effectuated by the Spirit energized Word of God (2).

To be converted (*epistrephō*) or to be changed refers to a turning activity which regeneration causes. Conversion includes turning away from sin and turning towards God (3).

Conversion is to be continual. We are to be transformed day by day, until we are totally conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 12:1-2).

All four dimensions are important for entrance and existence in the kingdom of God: receiving the promises, being born anew, being changed, and being continually transformed. If one of the four is ignored or omitted, our theology will begin to manifest undesirable contradictions such as ungodly means, non-Christian conversions, man glorifying religious experiences, and becoming more man and world centred rather than having a God initiated, God made and God glorifying transformation.

When we do evangelism and ministry in the name of the Lord and in the name of truth we want to be absolutely sure we are accurately and spiritually properly representing God.

On the other hand, the rejection of the gospel is not done in child like trust in God's Word but in Satan inspired denial of the same. Listen to the explanation which Jesus gives to the Old Testament covenant people:

"If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded from and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me, why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is not truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God" (John 8:42-47).

Notice that Jesus speaks in terms of Satan also being a father of a certain type of children. They receive Satan's deceptive version of the truth, they are not born again, and they turn against God.

It is crucial for Christians to be clear about their "child of God" status. If we are, live, and grow up as children of God, if we are conscious of who we are, then we will find true unity and the proper kingdom focus. Let us consider, then, the role of conversion in the accepting and rejection of the gospel.

CONVERSION IS A RESPONSE TO THE GRACIOUS WORK OF A SOVEREIGN GOD

When we read about the conversion transformation of the great saints, we come to an overwhelming consensus that they received the gospel as a free gift of grace through encountering God's Word which caused them to believe, change, and continually be renewed into the glorious image of Christ. In all of these examples we will see the child-likeness, a complete dependency on God.

At Pentecost all of the disciples and would be apostles were gathered together in prayer. When the Holy Spirit came, their regenerated hearts were filled with the Spirit. They began to babble in tongues like little children. They received power from above, they were born again from above, and they spoke in the language from above. So the Christian family, the Church of the Lord Jesus was started.

Paul was transformed in a dramatic and quick way. As the last of the apostles, he saw the vision of Christ and personally heard the voice of Christ. He had been persecuting, not only the Christians, but Christ himself. Now Christ intervenes. When Paul was convicted and converted, Ananias found him, praying like a child to His heavenly father.

Timothy was transformed in a gradual, non-dramatic, and progressive way. He learned the Scriptures from his grandmother and mother. He was a disciple of Paul. He was transformed in a less dramatic yet equally real way. The resulting faith was the same.

Fifth century Augustine, living in sin, was overcome with self-condemnation, walked into a garden and heard the voice of a child from a neighbour's house, saying: "Take up and read (Tolle lege)." He reached for a copy of the epistles that he had been reading, and his eyes fell on the words:

"Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and lewdness, not in strife and envy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts (Rom. 13:13-14)."

Then he goes on to say: "by a light as it were of severity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away" (4).

Upon reading these words of Scripture, he was transformed. By faith he put on the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

Martin Luther, the legalistic monk, who sought to please St. Anne, his monastery superiors and a God of wrath and terror, tried hours of confession, self-denial, even standing in the cold winter snow, to get rid of sin, but he could not find peace with God. Then by God's grace, he read Romans 1:16-17, which he had read many times before, and this time God opened his eyes to see and believe that salvation is through faith alone in Christ alone and only to God's glory.

Several centuries later, the Wesley brothers, John and Charles, were in the mission service of the gospel in the Anglican Church, and upon coming home in disappointment from the Americas, met some Moravians on board of the ship. The Moravians preached and witnessed about the assurance of salvation. Charles continued to search and after reading Luther's commentary on Galatians, he found peace with God. Three days later, John experienced a similar occurrence at Aldersgate Street chapel.

"I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given to me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death" (5).

Charles Wesley became the great hymn writer, exalting the sovereign grace and life in conversion.

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night. Your sun-rise turned that night to day: I woke - the dungeon flamed with light! My chains fell off, your voice I knew, I rose, went out, and followed you. Amazing love! How can it be that you, my Lord, should die for me?" (6)

D.L. Moody, the powerful American 19th century evangelist, not noted for his theological consistency, yet reflecting on his coming to faith testifies coherently:

"I prayed for faith and thought that some day faith would come down and strike me like lightening. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had up to this time closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible and began to study and faith has been growing ever since" (7).

Receiving grace in such an undeniable way led the puritan, Thomas Watson, to say:

"When God calls a man. He does not repent of it. God does not, as many friends do, love one day, and hate another; or as princes, who make their subjects favourites, and afterwards throw them into prison. This is the blessedness of a saint; his condition admits of no alteration. God's call is founded upon His decree, and His decree is immutable. Acts of grace cannot be reversed. God blots out His people's sins, but not their names."

Is it not interesting that many of us will differ on a variety of theological points, but that there was no doubt in the mind of Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Zwingli, Knox, Cromwell, Latimer, Ridley, Andrew Fuller, the Wesley brothers, Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, Dwight Moody, Abraham Kuyper, T.T. Shields, Martyn Lloyd Jones, Francis Schaeffer, Carl Henry, and many others who have passed before us that salvation is received through sovereign grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to God's glory alone and taught in Scripture alone.

A true theology (theology proper: the doctrine and actions of God) of conversion is directly based on Christ. In Christ we are converted. In Christ we are turned from sin and turned toward God. This is displayed for us in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The cross of Christ is the redemptive basis for our turning away from sin. On the cross, Jesus Christ took our sinful human nature, received the accumulation of the temptations of the world—the principalities and powers, and challenged the deceptive accusations of the evil one. In dying, Jesus dealt with all the opponents of God, including you and me. By dying with His human nature, He received the just punishment of the Father for all our rebellions. By resisting the principalities and powers and their deceptive lure, He overcame their power. By perfectly fulfilling the just demand of the Father, Satan's accusations were silenced.

Therefore, we can turn away from sin, temptation, and deception. Our "old nature" is crucified with Christ in His death (Romans 6:6). We are crucified to the world and the world to us (Gal. 6:14) and the accusations against us have been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:15). Sin no longer is the victor, the controller, or the spoiler. Christ has made peace for us, with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Martin Luther expressed the wonder of the cross in this way: "Learn to know Christ and Him crucified. Learn to sing to Him and say: "Lord Jesus, You are my righteousness. I am Your sin. You took on You what was mine; yet set on me what was Yours. You became what You were not, that I might become what I was not."

In the resurrection of Jesus the power of the turning toward God is unleashed. Satan, the principalities and power, human nature, or any opponent of God could stop Jesus from rising again, ascending to glory, reigning at the right hand of the Father, and sending the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ to dwell in God's people and in God's community. All those who look upon the risen Christ in faith are healed from the spiritual poison of the evil one. In the Old Testament the serpent was lifted up in the desert. All who looked were healed. Now, Christ has been lifted up on the cross, in the resurrection, and to the right hand of God. The more we look at the risen Christ in faith, the more we are converted and transformed into His image. Truly seeing Christ puts to death the lingering sin and brings forth the fruit of the Spirit. This is the glorious vision of Christ which brings constant conversion. He makes us more than conquerors. In the words of the hymn, "See, the Conqueror Mounts in Triumph," by Christopher Wordsworth:

"He who on the cross did suffer, he who from the grave arose, he has vanquished sin and Satan, he by death has spoiled his foes. While he lifts his hands in blessing, he is parted from his friends. While their eager eyes behold him, in the cloud the Lord ascends."

"You have raised our human nature on the clouds to God's right hand; there we sit in heavenly places, there with you in glory stand. Jesus reigns, adored by angels; man with God is on the throne! Mighty Lord, in your ascension we by faith can see our own."

CONVERSION MEANS GOING BEYOND WHAT IS NOT CONVERSION

We shall see in receiving the gospel we must come to conversion and not stop short of that. This can be seen in the James Engle's scale (8). To be sure, there are things in that which are good and true, but they simple are not the gospel and therefore are not to be trusted as the gospel. Let's look at Engel's Scale:

-7 No Awareness of Christianity

Do people who are not aware of the exclusive salvation claims of Jesus need conversion to Christ? Some would say "no." They reason that God, and even Christ, can be found in all world religions and in the human heart. This is a half truth. The half that is true is that Romans 1 teaches us that no one is without excuse, for God's deity and power has been revealed to them through creation and in their conscience. The other half of the truth is natural man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. We are by nature suppressers of the truth, rebels. Christian conversion goes beyond religiosity and humanism because we realize that there is no salvation in religion or in humans. In fact, Jesus was crucified by the religious and he died on behalf of sinful humans.

-6 Awareness of the existence of Christianity

Christianity is publicly expressed through the Church and the Christian community. The seeker will come into contact with the means, which God uses to reach people. The communal (church) means are: the exercise of mission work, the preaching and teaching of God's Word, the use of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline. The personal means include: personal evangelism, witnessing to the truth and Bible study, submission to worship services and the sacraments, and exercising repentance.

Being in contact with Christianity is not the gospel but a means towards the gospel. Persons who stay at this level can be called seekers but they are not yet Christian. Conversion goes beyond seeking to find Christ as the sufficient transformer of oneself and others.

-5 Some knowledge of the gospel.

Many people know that Jesus exists and He came to save people. Remember, the Devil believes that God is one and he trembles. Knowledge is necessary but it is not enough. Being a knower, a gnostic, of the word and not a doer is incomplete. James writes about transformation as: "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourself" (1:22). Conversion goes beyond knowing to being known in Christ as one who lives according to the perfect righteousness of Him who died for us and now reigns victoriously.

-4 Understanding of the fundamentals of the gospel

There are people who can explain to you the fundamental doctrines of the gospel such as the Trinity, Jesus as Lord and Saviour, the inerrancy of the Bible, Bible history, and the way of salvation, but the cognitive has not become transformational. This can be called religious fundamentalism. Jesus reminds us that not all who say "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom. There will be "lordship Christians" outside the kingdom. Not all who preached, taught or performed miracles will enter. Pastors, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, and all who wish to enter the kingdom must enter the same way, as converted children of God. Conversion goes beyond doctrinal fundamentalism to spiritual conversion.

-3 Grasp of the personal implications

Seekers may understand that being a Christian requires personal change. They will come to the understanding that they cannot justify their personal or communal sin any more. They will have to stop sinning, or in other words, repent. Yet, when repentance without true faith in Jesus Christ is manifest, we fall prey to moralism. Christianity is not about being good and moral, that is not good enough, but it is about being perfect in Christ, through whose Spirit perfect goodness is produced.

-2 Recognition of the personal needs

To admit that you need Christ and to live in Christ who meets your needs are two different worlds. Conversion goes beyond the wanting Christ to meet needs, to Christ actually meeting your needs. It goes beyond wanting to receive to needing to give. In conversion one does not think of one's own need but what God requires.

-1 Challenge and decision to receive Christ

Many evangelicals perceive that "making a decision to receive Christ" is the same as being converted. However, many people who have made decisions have not shown the fruits of conversion. To express in prayer the desire to receive Christ is an essential step towards conversion, but it is not conversion itself (Romans 10:9).

Decisionism is when conversion is identified with people making decisions. It is said that if you decide...then you are converted. If this is true, then your decision determines your salvation and not God's decision. Conversion goes beyond human decisions to knowing that God has chosen you.

-0 Conversion.

To be converted means to be continually converting. The word literally means, to turn around. Christians are always confessing their sins and always professing faith in Christ. To grow in grace is to grow in humility. The more the Christian sees of a holy God the less he thinks of his own holiness and the more he will need the imputed holiness of Christ.

The Christian who stops converting is in deep danger. Either he or she was never truly converted in the first place or he is giving place to unconverted powers. True conversion is truly converting in repentance and faith.

+1 Evaluation of Decision

Jesus taught his disciples: "By their fruits you shall know them." A true Christian will produce the fruit of the Spirit and exercise spiritual gifts for the up building of the church. As we evaluate conversion, we do so on the basis of God's Word. God's Word prohibits and instructs. God has His own standard of evaluation.

+2 Incorporation into a Fellowship of Christians

Jesus instructed his disciples to baptize (Mt. 28:19-20). Baptism in the name of the triune God signifies submitting to the claims of the gospel and becoming a member of the church of Christ. However, baptism alone is not enough (sacramentalism) but is to be joined by the teaching of "all that Jesus has commanded." Christians are to submit to the preaching, teaching, and practice of God's Word as conversion continues.

+3 *Active Propagators of the Gospel*

Christians are to make disciples. Disciples are followers of Christ. Each disciple will be at a different place in his walk with the Lord. Discipleship generally takes place through evangelism, educating, and fellowship in the church as well as on a personal basis.

True conversion leads to missions. The gospel is to be preached to all-everywhere. We are to obey, not knowing who will receive, be born again, and be translated into the kingdom of God. All we know is that those who accept, and not reject Jesus, are children of God.

CONVERSION REJECTED MEANS WE ARE ON OUR OWN BEFORE A HOLY GOD

There is a rejection of those who have never heard the gospel.

R.C. Sproul asks the question in his series on "Objections Answered" whether or not an innocent person in Africa will be saved even though he or she has never heard the gospel (9). The answer is: "yes, God is just and he will not punish an innocent person, unless it is His Son who took the place of a guilty person. However, other than Jesus are there persons who are truly innocent?" Are there any innocent people in the world? Scripture says, both in the Old and New Testament, "none is righteous, no not one, none seek after God." "You must be born again. Are there any persons who are not suppressing the truth in unrighteousness? The non-Christian must seek God's salvation, there is no hope in his human constitution or world situation, unless, of course, he can prove to the Father that it was not necessary to punish His Son for his sins.

Our response to the people who have never heard is missions: preach the gospel to all people and live in love. Amy Carmichael writes:

"If souls can suffer alongside, and I hardly know it because the spirit of discernment is not in me, then I know nothing of Calvary love" (10).

There is the rejection of those who say they have accepted. John MacArthur Jr. ponders:

"Why should we assume that people who live in an unbroken pattern of adultery, fornication, homosexuality, deceit, and every conceivable kind of flagrant excess are truly born again?"

The answer to MacArthur's question is that it certainly does not appear that such persons are born again. However, his question must be placed alongside an equally important question and that is, if we sin, does that mean we were never born again? To return to MacArthur's answer we note that he says: "unbroken pattern (of sin)." This would be in reflection of I John 3:6 "Whoever abides in Him does not sin." The born again person struggles with sin, may even fall into sin, but because his or her identity involves being in Christ, he or she cannot stay in sin. There has to be repentance or there never was new birth. Conversion leads to more conversion.

However, there are those who claim new birth and Christianity but who never repent. After the gospel, there is no more good news. The only thing left for the church to do is exercise discipline, in hope that the severity of the church's rejection of the sin will help the sinner return to the gospel and repent.

There is the rejection of those who say they have rejected.

Romans 1 points to the end of the line of human depravity. The list is given in verses 29-31. They are persons "who, knowing the righteous judgement of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them." Notice the last line. They "approve of those who practice them (the vices)."

You will see rejection in the rejection of all good and the promotion of evil. Evil will be presented as good, and good as evil

There is a time when God has let go. Then there is very little what you and I can do. The angel in Revelation 22 said:

"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still...Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie" (22:11,14-15).

CONCLUSION

Is your life under continual transformation? Has your conversion continued? This will be seen in your child-like faith and obedience to God. Your heart, home, church, and society will be greatly blessed with kingdom living.

FOOTNOTES

1. Dechomai refers to receive (53 times), take up (59), take (4) and accept (2). *Strong's Concordance*.
2. See R. C. Sproul's, "Regeneration-A Sovereign Act," study manual on *The Holy Spirit*. Orlando, Ligonier Ministries.
3. Ps. 51:3; Is. 60:5; Mt. 13:15; Mt. 18:3; Mr. 4:12; Lk. 22:32; Jn. 12:40; Act. 3:19; Acts 28:27.
4. Aurelius Augustine in *Confessions*. 8:12.
5. John Woodenbridge (ed.) *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1988, p. 291.
6. "And Can It Be." stanza 3.
7. Dwight Moody.
8. James Engel, in *World Perspectives*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1983, p. 590. The interpretation given in this article may very well be different than that of Engel.
9. R.C. Sproul, *Objections Answered*. Orlando: Ligonier Ministries.
10. Amy Carmichael, *If*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.

APPENDIX # 7

MORE THAN 100 BIBLE TEXTS AND JESUS AS GOD

In our debate about God it seems reasonable to let God have His own say. Christians believe the Judeo-Christian Bible to be the authoritative, inerrant Word of God. The following are over 100 Bible verses and passages which verify for the Bible believing Christian that Jesus is God.

1. He has divine names, which are reserved for deity:
 - Mt. 1:16. Christ (Greek), Messiah (Hebrew).
 - Mt.1:23. "Immanuel, God with us."
 - Mt. 3:3. Prepare the way of the LORD (Kurios). Kurios refers to God (Ps. 110).
 - Mt. 3:1. Beloved Son (of the Father). In order for God the Father to be eternally Father, then He must eternally have a Son, or else He could not be eternally Father.
 - Mt. 26:64. Son of Man (that was enough reason for the Jews to condemn Jesus to death)
 - Mark 1:1. Son of God
 - Mark 2:28. Lord of the Sabbath

I AM statements, referring to YAHWEH (Exodus 3:14) I AM WHO I AM

- John 6:36, 48, 51. I AM the Bread of Life
- John 8:12, 9:5. I AM the Light of the World
- John 8:58. Before Abraham was, I AM
- John 10:7, 9. I AM the Door of the sheep
- John 10:11, 14. I AM the Good Shepherd
- John 11:25. I AM the Resurrection and the Life
- John 14:6. I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life
- John 15:1. I AM True Vine

He is directly associated with ELOHIM in three ways. Elohim is Creator, His name is plural, and He is eternal.

- John 1:2-3. All things were made through Him. Elohim was the Creator God.
- Mt. 28:19. Elohim is plural. Jesus commissioned His disciples to go out in the name of the three persons. This explains the mystery of the plurality of Elohim's name.
- Rev. 1:8. He is the beginning and the end.

2. He was worshipped, which is reserved for deity:
 - Mt. 2:11. The wise men worshipped Him. Only God is to be worshipped.
 - Mt. 21:15, 16. He was worshipped and praised by infants.
 - Phil 2:9-11. He is Lord, every knee shall bow to him, and this is an act of worship.
 - Rev. 4 and 5. He, together with the Father and Spirit are worshipped.
 - Rev. 19:10. Only God is to be worshipped

3. His incarnation (how he became human) is an act of the deity, which angels are not able to do. They can only influence, possess, or look like humans.
 - Luke 1:35. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. That was to preserve his deity.
 - Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15, 16; 5:2, 7-9. He was human like we were.

- John 5:30. He mission was to do the Father's will on earth.
Lk. 24:39. He was bodily resurrected.
4. His Outright claims to deity
Mt. 4:7. "You shall not tempt the LORD your God." Jesus was being tempted, not the Father.
Mt. 4:10. "You shall worship the LORD you God and Him only you shall serve."
Satan had to submit to Jesus claim.
Mt. 5:22. "But I say to you." Jesus teaches with divine authority. The prophets would say:
"Thus says the Lord."
Mt. 7:21. "Not everyone who says to Me (Jesus), "Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven..." Only God has the right to determine who goes to heaven or not.
Mt. 9:2. "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." Only God can forgive sins.
Mk. 2:1-12. He has authority to forgive sins.
John 1:1-5. He is creator; the world was made through him. Only God is creator
John 3:16. He is begotten (not made)
John 10:30 "I and the Father (plurality) are one (unity)."
John 14:1. "You believe in God, believe also in me." The object of belief is to be God, and nothing else.
John 14:11. "...believe Me for the sake of the works themselves." Jesus did the works of God.
John 14:14. "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."
John 14:23. "And We (God) will come to him and make or home with him."
5. His death was called for, first of all, by the Jewish theologians, who were convinced that Jesus claim to be divine was blasphemy. If Jesus was right, they were wrong. If Jesus is not deity, if He is not God, then we worship and follow a false prophet. **THIS IS THE SCANDAL OF THE GOSPEL.** We must either believe what Jesus claims to be true or that Jesus is a lunatic who died in vain.
Mt. 26:63. He was accused of claiming to be the Son of God, the Christ (Messiah).
Mt. 26:64. Jesus says he is the Son of Man who will come again. This was considered blasphemy
6. Great Commission is Christ's final and ultimate command to His disciples.
Mt. 28:19. Jesus commands His disciples to go in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three distinct divine persons are presented who are to be considered God. We see the Tri-unity. Tri refers to the three distinct divine persons and unity refers to their unity in essence as God. Christians are commanded to submit to the three names in baptism and in teachings.
7. Different witnesses to Him in the 4 Gospels
Apostle John: John 1:1. He is the eternal Word
John 1:14. He is begotten (not made).
John 1:18. He is begotten (not made).
Mt. 4:16-17. The Father identifies the Son of God and the Holy Spirit anoints Him as Messiah (The Anointed One).
John 20:28. Thomas said: "My Lord and my God."

8. Witness to Him in the Epistles.
 Col. 1:15. He is the image bearer, the revealer of the Godhead.
 I Peter 1:2. A triune salutation.
 II Peter 1:1. "Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." God and Saviour are connected.
 Col. 2:9. "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."
 Romans 9:5. He is "God over all."
 Titus 2:13. "Our God and Saviour."
 2 Cor. 12:8-9. Paul prays to Him personally. You are only supposed to pray to God.
 2 Cor. 13:14. He is a source of divine grace, which can only come from God. Again, he is mentioned with the other persons of the Trinity.
 Phil 2:5 "Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men."
 Hebrews 1:5. He is not an angel, but a Son.
 Hebrews 1:6. He is worshipped, which is only reserved for God.
 Hebrews 1:8-9. The Son is called God.
 Hebrews 1:10. He is called Lord.
 James 2:1. He is the Lord of glory.
 Revelation 1:8. He is the Alfa and Omega, eternal.

9. The witness to deity of Jesus in the Old Testament can only be understood in light of the New Testament revelation.
 The deity of Christ was a mystery in the Old Testament. God did not reveal the tri-unity of God until Jesus came personally. In looking back, we see the Son of God operating in the Old Testament.
 A. Foreshadowing of Son of God in names of God
 Gen. 1:1. In the beginning ELOHIM. This plural name includes the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 Gen. 1:26. "And ELOHIM said; "Let us make man in our own likeness..." God is speaking, not to angels, but to the Spirit and the Son. We are not made in the image of angels.
 B. The Angel of the Lord passages (The Angel of the Lord is pre-incarnate Jesus).
 Gen. 16:7-10. The Angel of the Lord instructed Hagar to return to Sarah.
 Gen. 22:11-13. The Angel of the Lord prevented Abraham from sacrificing his son Isaac
 Gen. 32:24-30. He wrestled with Jacob.
 Ex. 3:1-8. He spoke to Moses from the burning bush.
 Ex. 14:19, 20. He protected the children of Israel from the pursuing army.
 Ex. 23:20-23. The Angel of the Lord prepared the children of Israel to enter the Promised Land.
 Num 22:22-35. He blocked Balaam's path.
 Joshua 5:13-15. The Angel of the Lord speaks with Joshua.
 Judges 2:1-3. The Angel of the Lord announces judgement upon Israel.
 Judges 6:11-14. He tells Gideon to fight against the Midianites.
 I King 19:4-8. He provided food for Elijah in the wilderness.
 I Chr. 21:16-22. He appeared to David on the threshing floor or Ornan.
 Is. 37:36. He delivered the citizens from the Assyrian army.

Dan. 3:25. He protected the three Israelites in the fiery furnace.
Mal. 3:1. He identified as the messenger of covenant who is coming in judgement.

B. Messianic Prophecies made and fulfilled in Christ.

Gen. 3:15. He is the seed of the woman (Gal. 4:4); all those born again according to the promises of God are part of that lineage.
Genesis 12:3. He is the Son of Abraham (Mt. 1:1): Jesus is the object of faith.
Genesis 17:19. He is the descendant of Isaac (Lk. 3:34): Jesus was born according to promise.
Gen. 49:10. He is the Sceptre of Judah (Lk. 3:33): Jesus is King.
Num. 24:17. He is the Descendant of Jacob (Mt. 1:2): Jesus is the transformed one.
Dt. 18:15. He will be the greater Prophet (Acts 3:20, 22): Jesus is great prophet.
2 Sam. 7:16. He will be the greater King: Jesus is absolute ruling king.
Job 19:25. The Redeemer would come (Rom. 3:24): Jesus bought us with His blood.
Ps. 2:7. He is declared Son of God (Mt. 3:17): second person of tri-unity.
Ps. 8:2. He is worshipped by infants (Mt. 21:15, 16): only divine is worshipped.
Ps. 45:6, 7; 102:25-27. He is eternal and anointed (Heb. 1:8-12): only God is eternal.
Ps. 109:4. He is Intercessor (Lk. 23:34): He is our continual High Priest.
Ps. 110: He will be the greater High Priest (Heb. 5:5, 6).
Prov. 30:4 He is the Son of God (John 3:16).
Isa. 7:14. He is born of a Virgin (Lk. 1:26, 27, 30, 31): his divinity is preserved.
Isa. 9:7. He is the heir to throne of David (Lk. 1:32, 33): he is the coming King.
Isa. 42:1-4. He will be the suffering servant (Mt. 27:46): He carries out office in humility.
Isa. 53:5. He will be the atonement for sinners (Rom 15:6, 8): He pays the price for sinners.
Isa. 53:3. He is rejected by His own (John 1:11): He is rejected by all (Romans 3:10, 23).
Isa. 61:1, 2. He comes to bind the broken-hearted (Lk. 4:18, 19): He has a healing ministry.
Jer. 23:5-6. He will be our Righteousness (Rom. 3:22): He is right, in Him there is righteousness
Dan. 9:25. The time of His birth is foretold (Lk. 2:1-2).
Mic. 5:2. The place of birth is foretold: born in Bethlehem (Lk. 2:4, 5, 7).

10. What the Scripture say Jesus is NOT.

John 1:14. He is not the same divine person as the Father.
John 14:16-17. He is not the same divine person as the Holy Spirit.
Lk. 24:39. He is not only a spirit, but both body and spirit.
I Cor. 15:14. He is not dead, but risen.
Heb. 1:1-3. He is greater than the patriarchs and prophets.
Heb. 1:4-14. He is not an angel.
Ps. 130. He is not only divine nature, but both human and divine Jesus Christ, the Lord, is one divine person, with two natures: one divine and the other human. He is the Son of God, second person in the voluntary order of the tri-unity.

11. What I personal testify about who Jesus is.

I came to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord when I was a senior in University. Even though I had been raised in a Christian home, I did not believe in Jesus as the divine Son of God. After praying and being witnessed to, I began

reading the Bible. Through reading the Bible with a childlike faith and prayer for understanding, the Lord graciously gave me the knowledge of Himself. Sometimes I wonder about the Trinity, however, after studying what God says about Himself in Scripture, the Lord always leads me to the same conclusion: what He says about Himself is true.

I have since learned that it was necessary that God Himself would save us. This was such a precious task, that only He could accomplish it. And indeed, He has, through Jesus Christ becoming human- through his suffering, death, resurrection, and reign.

12. Who do you say Jesus is?

Either the Christians are right or the Jews were right. Either Jesus is divine, He is God, He is one with the Father and Holy Spirit, or, He was an impostor and blasphemer, as the Jewish leaders logically decided on. This is the central question of true Christianity: who do men say that Jesus is? I hope and pray that the Spirit of truth will lead you to lay hold of what the Scriptures foretell in the Old Testament, further reveal in the New Testament, and what Jesus claims about Himself. All glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Neal Hegeman

APPENDIX # 8

THE CAMBRIDGE DECLARATION

of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals

April 20, 1996

Evangelical churches today are increasingly dominated by the spirit of this age rather than by the Spirit of Christ. As evangelicals, we call ourselves to repent of this sin and to recover the historic Christian faith.

In the course of history words change. In our day this has happened to the word "evangelical." In the past it served as a bond of unity between Christians from a wide diversity of church traditions. Historic evangelicalism was confessional. It embraced the essential truths of Christianity as those were defined by the great ecumenical councils of the church. In addition, evangelicals also shared a common heritage in the "solas" of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation.

Today the light of the Reformation has been significantly dimmed. The consequence is that the word "evangelical" has become so inclusive as to have lost its meaning. We face the peril of losing the unity it has taken centuries to achieve. Because of this crisis and because of our love of Christ, his gospel and his church, we endeavor to assert anew our commitment to the central truths of the Reformation and of historic evangelicalism. These truths we affirm not because of their role in our traditions, but because we believe that they are central to the Bible.

Sola Scriptura: The Erosion Of Authority

Scripture alone is the inerrant rule of the church's life, but the evangelical church today has separated Scripture from its authoritative function. In practice, the church is guided, far too often, by the culture. Therapeutic technique, marketing strategies, and the beat of the entertainment world often have far more to say about what the church wants, how it functions and what it offers, than does the Word of God. Pastors have neglected their rightful oversight of worship, including the doctrinal content of the music. As biblical authority has been abandoned in practice, as its truths have faded from Christian consciousness, and as its doctrines have lost their saliency, the church has been increasingly emptied of its integrity, moral authority and direction.

Rather than adapting Christian faith to satisfy the felt needs of consumers, we must proclaim the law as the only measure of true righteousness and the gospel as the only announcement of saving truth. Biblical truth is indispensable to the church's understanding, nurture and discipline.

Scripture must take us beyond our perceived needs to our real needs and liberate us from seeing ourselves through the seductive images, cliché's, promises. and priorities of mass

culture. It is only in the light of God's truth that we understand ourselves aright and see God's provision for our need. The Bible, therefore, must be taught and preached in the church. Sermons must be expositions of the Bible and its teachings, not expressions of the preachers opinions or the ideas of the age. We must settle for nothing less than what God has given.

The work of the Holy Spirit in personal experience cannot be disengaged from Scripture. The Spirit does not speak in ways that are independent of Scripture. Apart from Scripture we would never have known of God's grace in Christ. The biblical Word, rather than spiritual experience, is the test of truth.

Thesis One: Sola Scriptura

We reaffirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured. We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation.

Thesis Two: Solus Christus: The Erosion Of Christ-Centered Faith

As evangelical faith becomes secularized, its interests have been blurred with those of the culture. The result is a loss of absolute values, permissive individualism, and a substitution of wholeness for holiness, recovery for repentance, intuition for truth, feeling for belief, chance for providence, and immediate gratification for enduring hope. Christ and his cross have moved from the center of our vision.

We reaffirm that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.

We deny that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and his work is not solicited.

Sola Gratia: The Erosion Of The Gospel

Unwarranted confidence in human ability is a product of fallen human nature. This false confidence now fills the evangelical world; from the self-esteem gospel, to the health and wealth gospel, from those who have transformed the gospel into a product to be sold and sinners into consumers who want to buy, to others who treat Christian faith as being true simply because it works. This silences the doctrine of justification regardless of the official commitments of our churches.

God's grace in Christ is not merely necessary but is the sole efficient cause of salvation. We confess that human beings are born spiritually dead and are incapable even of cooperating with regenerating grace.

Thesis Three: Sola Gratia

We reaffirm that in salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by his grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

We deny that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Faith is not produced by our unregenerated human nature.

Sola Fide: The Erosion Of The Chief Article

Justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. This is the article by which the church stands or falls. Today this article is often ignored, distorted or sometimes even denied by leaders, scholars and pastors who claim to be evangelical. Although fallen human nature has always recoiled from recognizing its need for Christ's imputed righteousness, modernity greatly fuels the fires of this discontent with the biblical Gospel. We have allowed this discontent to dictate the nature of our ministry and what it is we are preaching.

Many in the church growth movement believe that sociological understanding of those in the pew is as important to the success of the gospel as is the biblical truth which is proclaimed. As a result, theological convictions are frequently divorced from the work of the ministry. The marketing orientation in many churches takes this even further, erasing the distinction between the biblical Word and the world, robbing Christ's cross of its offense, and reducing Christian faith to the principles and methods which bring success to secular corporations.

While the theology of the cross may be believed, these movements are actually emptying it of its meaning. There is no gospel except that of Christ's substitution in our place whereby God imputed to him our sin and imputed to us his righteousness. Because he bore our judgment, we now walk in his grace as those who are forever pardoned, accepted and adopted as God's children. There is no basis for our acceptance before God except in Christ's saving work, not in our patriotism, churchly devotion or moral decency. The gospel declares what God has done for us in Christ. It is not about what we can do to reach him.

Thesis Four: Sola Fide

We reaffirm that justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice.

We deny that justification rests on any merit to be found in us, or upon the grounds of an infusion of Christ's righteousness in us, or that an institution claiming to be a church that denies or condemns sola fide can be recognized as a legitimate church.

Soli Deo Gloria: The Erosion Of God-Centered Worship

Wherever in the church biblical authority has been lost, Christ has been displaced, the gospel has been distorted, or faith has been perverted, it has always been for one reason: our interests have displaced God's and we are doing his work in our way. The loss of God's centrality in the life of today's church is common and lamentable. It is this loss that allows us to transform worship into entertainment, gospel preaching into marketing, believing into technique, being good into feeling good about ourselves, and faithfulness into being successful. As a result, God, Christ and the Bible have come to mean too little to us and rest too inconsequentially upon us.

God does not exist to satisfy human ambitions, cravings, the appetite for consumption, or our own private spiritual interests. We must focus on God in our worship, rather than the satisfaction of our personal needs. God is sovereign in worship; we are not. Our concern must be for God's kingdom, not our own empires, popularity or success.

Thesis Five: Soli Deo Gloria

We reaffirm that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone. We deny that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self- fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel.

Call To Repentance And Reformation

The faithfulness of the evangelical church in the past contrasts sharply with its unfaithfulness in the present. Earlier in this century, evangelical churches sustained a remarkable missionary endeavor, and built many religious institutions to serve the cause of biblical truth and Christ's kingdom. That was a time when Christian behavior and expectations were markedly different from those in the culture. Today they often are not. The evangelical world today is losing its biblical fidelity, moral compass and missionary zeal.

We repent of our worldliness. We have been influenced by the "gospels" of our secular culture, which are no gospels. We have weakened the church by our own lack of serious repentance, our blindness to the sins in ourselves which we see so clearly in others, and our inexcusable failure adequately to tell others about God's saving work in Jesus Christ.

We also earnestly call back erring professing evangelicals who have deviated from God's Word in the matters discussed in this Declaration. This includes those who declare that there is hope of eternal life apart from explicit faith in Jesus Christ, who claim that those who reject Christ in this life will be annihilated rather than endure the just judgment of God through eternal suffering, or who claim that evangelicals and Roman Catholics are one in Jesus Christ even where the biblical doctrine of justification is not believed.

The Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals asks all Christians to give consideration to implementing this Declaration in the church's worship, ministry, policies, life and evangelism. For Christ's sake. Amen.

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