

## **A BRIEF EXAMINATION OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS** by Carolyn De Gregory Towart

Apologetics is derived from the Greek word 'apologia', or 'defense', and so Christian apologetics has to do with giving a rational defense of our faith. What is the need for a Christian apologetic?

- 1) God commands us to be ready to give an answer for our hope (I Peter 3:15), we are here for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:7), and we are to contend for the faith (Jude 3), among other reasons.
- 2) Reason demands it. We reason because we are created in His image (Gen. 1:27/ Col. 3:10). We must use reason to discern truth from error and right from wrong and we are commanded to love God with all our heart, soul, and MIND (Matt. 22:36-37).
- 3) The world needs it. Our job is to direct others to the Master of knowledge so they can be His disciples.

### **THE TWELVE PROPOSITIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**

#### **1. Truth About Reality is Knowable**

We are commanded to defend and confirm the gospel in Philippians 1:7 and Christian apologetics is just that, an 'apologia', or a defense of our faith. This command extends to giving a reason for the hope in us (I Peter 3:15) and to demolish arguments against the knowledge of God (I Cor. 10:5). The question of whether there is truth and if it is knowable has been a basic question throughout history. Christians believe that 'truth corresponds with the reality it represents'. According to St. Augustine, "The truth is that which is."

#### **2. Opposites Cannot Both be True**

The Law of Non-Contradiction states that opposites cannot both be true at the same time and in the same way. This is in opposition with today's view of 'religious pluralism'—the belief that all religions are equal and true at the same time. But—all religions have some opposing belief systems, and so this is impossible. If truth about reality is knowable, then the 12 First Principles of Reality are undeniable and also reinforce the Law of Non-Contradiction. These are the principles of: 1) existence; 2) identity; 3) non-contradiction; 4) excluded middle; 5) causality; 6) contingency; 7) positive modality; 8) negative modality; 9) existential causality; 10) existential necessity; 11) existential contingency; and 12) analogy.

#### **3. The Theistic God Exists**

If truth about reality is knowable and opposites cannot both be true, then the door is open to state that the theistic God exists. This proposition involves an understanding of the 7 major worldviews. 1) theism; 2) deism; 3) atheism; 4) polytheism; 5) pantheism; 6) panentheism; and 7) finite godism. The strongest argument to show that the theistic God exists is the Vertical Form of the Cosmological Argument, which is supported by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics. The basic premise states: a) every contingent (dependent) being has a cause; b) the universe is contingent; c) therefore, the universe has a cause and d) contingent (dependent) beings in a contingent universe need a sustaining cause since contingent beings cannot sustain what has been caused.

#### **4. Miracles are Possible**

If the theistic God exists then miracles are possible. A miracle is a special act of God that interrupts the natural course of events and depends on the existence of a theistic God. Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with examples of miracles. A true miracle: 1) never fails; 2) is immediate; 3) always brings good to the world; 4) always brings glory to God; 5) and is an exception to natural laws.

5. **A Miracle in Connection With a Truth Claim is an Act of God to Proclaim a Message of God Through a Messenger of God**

Since a miracle is a special act of God that transcends natural laws and depends on the existence of a theistic God, then all 3 monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—believe in, expect, and require the presence of miracles.

6. **The New Testament Documents are Historically Reliable**

If we accept that miracles come through an act of God to proclaim a message of God through a messenger of God, then it reinforces acceptance of the historical reliability of the New Testament documents. Matt., Mark, Luke, John, and I Cor. were all written by 70 AD. The N.T. has 27 books written by 9 different authors who never contradicted each other. There are about 6,000 copies of N.T. documents, 10,000 O.T. manuscripts, BUT only 643 copies of Homer's *Illiad*. The N.T. documents are 99.9% accurate.

7. **According to the New Testament, Jesus Claimed to be God**

There were 7 claims of Jesus to be God: 1) to be YHWH or Jehovah Lord; 2) to be the I AM of the O.T.; 3) to be Messiah God of prophecy; 4) to be worthy of worship; 5) He requested us to pray IN HIS NAME; 6) He accepted worship-but taught that only God should be worshiped; 7) to have equal authority with God. Christ's sinless life & perfect character were never disputed in any secular or biblical records of His time. His death was verified by many people and his resurrection was verified by 500 witnesses in 40 days on 12 occasions. These events have never been duplicated by any other person in history.

8. **Jesus Claim to be God was Affirmed by a Unique Convergence of Miracles**

There were 100 messianic prophecies in the O.T. and all were fulfilled 100% by Jesus during His life on earth. Secular historians of the time also recorded many of the miraculous events of Jesus' life, along with the N.T. record. His miraculous resurrection from the dead can be verified by 12 accepted facts: 1) Jesus was tortured & crucified & died due to these wounds; 2) Jesus was buried in a tomb; 3) His authenticity was doubted by his disciples at this time; 4) Jesus rose from the dead on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day; 5) the disciples fear changed to boldness; 6) they were with Him for 40 days; 7) the Christian church was begun by these people; 8) they preached the gospel; 9) the gospel was preached in Jerusalem; 10) Sunday became the Christian day of worship; 11) James, Jesus' brother, was converted at the resurrection; 12) Paul was converted when he saw the resurrected Jesus.

9. **Therefore, Jesus was God in Human Flesh**

According to testimony of witnesses and the facts above, Jesus was God in human flesh.

10. **Whatever Jesus, as God, Affirmed as True was True**

Jesus, as God, said that He was the truth. If God cannot lie (Titus 1;2; Heb. 6:18), and Jesus is God, then He could not lie during his life on earth either. Jesus made 8 affirmations of truth about the Word of God (and so, about Himself, as the living Word): 1) it is inerrant; 2) it is infallible; 3) it is unbreakable; 4) it has divine authority; 5) it has divine inspiration; 6) it is scientifically accurate; 7) it is historically reliable; and 8) it is supreme.

11. **Jesus Affirmed that the Bible was the Word of God**

As God, Jesus affirmed that the Bible was the true Word of God and affirmed the first foundational belief in the Word of God—the creation account ex- nihilo—out of nothing.

12. **Therefore, it is True that the Bible is the Word of God and all Opposed to Biblical Truth is False**

Therefore, according to the Law of Non-Contradiction, all opposing world religions are false and Christianity is the one true religion. Apologetics seeks to capture the heart by convincing the mind that it is reasonable to believe and allow our will to be persuaded that the Christ of Christianity is the one true way since He is Truth.