

Douglas Groothuis, Ph.D., Denver Seminary, August 31, 2004  
Defending the Christian Faith

## THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF APOLOGETICS

### *part 1*

“Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it may be true. The cure for this is first to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect. Next make it attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is. Worthy of reverence because it really understands human nature. Attractive because it promises true good.”

—Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, #12/187.

### **I. The Definition of Apologetics**

- A. The rational defense of the Christian worldview as objectively true and existentially or subjectively engaging. More generally, to commendation of Christianity in the face of unbelief or doubt.
- B. Concerns defining Christian truth-claims that one must believe in order to be a Christian
  - 1. Essentials of orthodoxy: Trinity, Incarnation, biblical authority, justification by faith, etc.
  - 2. Truth-claim: propositions affirming the existence or nonexistence of certain states of affairs
    - a. Different than a sentence; many sentences affirm or declare the same proposition (More on this in D. Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, chapter four)
    - b. Truth-claims are different than questions, emotive utterances, commands, etc.

### **II. Relation of Apologetics to Theology**

- A. Apologetics is dependent on theology for its content (essential doctrines), which are defended as true
- B. Theology's ideal is to systematically and coherently articulate what Scripture teaches
- C. We need a theology of apologetics
  - Theological truths (such as human depravity, general revelation, divine transcendence and immanence) guide one's understanding and application of apologetics

### **III. Relation of Apologetics to Philosophy**

- A. Comes under one category of philosophy—philosophy of religion: the rational investigation of religious truth-claims
  - But not all philosophy of religion is Christian apologetics; may be done in service of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, atheism, etc.
- B. Attempts to rationally justify theological statements through philosophical means (theistic arguments, defending the coherence of doctrines, such as the Trinity or Incarnation, etc.)
  - Need not be propaganda or proselytizing, but may be
- C. Resurgence of Christians in philosophy in the last two-three decades. See James Kelly Clark, ed., *Philosophers Who Believe* (InterVarsity Press, 1993); Thomas Morris, *God and the Philosophers*, ed. (Oxford, 1995). Academic journals: *Faith and Philosophy*; *Philosophia Christi*

#### IV. Relation of Apologetics to Evangelism

- A. Apologetics used when necessary to remove obstacles to evangelism: doubts, misunderstandings (Matthew 28:18 – 20)
- B. Evangelism declares Christian truth and invites unbelievers to embrace it; apologetics defends Christian truth and clarifies its meaning
- C. Apologetics as pre-evangelism (Francis A. Schaeffer)

Douglas Groothuis, Ph.D., Denver Seminary, August 31, 2004  
Defending the Christian Faith

## THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF APOLOGETICS

### *part 2*

#### V. Two Types of Apologetics

- A. Negative apologetics (two senses)
  - 1. Find intellectual weaknesses in non-Christian world-views—naturalism, pantheism, deism, etc.
  - 2. Respond to anti-Christian intellectual assaults on Christian truth made by Muslims, Freudians, pagan feminists, postmodernists, pantheists, etc.
- B. Positive apologetics
  - 1. Give constructive reasons and evidences for defining Christian truth-claims
    - Arguments for objective truth and morality, the existence of God, reliability of the Bible, supremacy of Jesus, etc.
  - 2. Give a cumulative case of various rational arguments for Christian truth
- C. Whether something is deemed positive or negative apologetics may depend on the angle at which you look at it
- D. A full-orbed Christian apologetic combines positive and negative apologetics

#### VI. Reasons or Justifications for Christian Apologetics

- A. The glory of the one true God (Exodus 20:1 – 7; Matthew 22:37 – 40; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17)
- B. The defense of the Christian faith in order to reach the lost for Christ
  - 1. Give a reason for our hope in the gospel (1 Peter 3:15 – 17)
  - 2. Contend for the once-for-all revealed truth of God (Jude 3)
  - 3. Refute false philosophies (Colossians 2:8 – 9; 2 Corinthians 10:3 – 5; 1 John 4:1 – 4)
  - 4. Build up *believers* who doubt (Matthew 11:1 – 11; Jude 22 – 23). See Douglas Groothuis “Growing Through Doubt” sermon available though Hope for Today ([www.hopefortoday.com](http://www.hopefortoday.com))

5. Encourage holiness in knowing and defending God's truth (Matthews 22:37 – 40)
6. Apologetic example: Paul at Athens (Acts 17:16 – 33)
  - a. On this see, D. A. Carson, "Athens Revisited," in D. A. Carson, ed. *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 384-398.
  - b. Douglas Groothuis, "Christianity in the Marketplace" (Acts 17:16 – 34) parts I and II, sermons available from Hope for Today: ([www.hopefortoday.org](http://www.hopefortoday.org))
7. Apologetic example, exemplar: Jesus (throughout the Gospels)
  - a. On this see Douglas Groothuis, *On Jesus* (Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 2003), chapters one and three, especially
  - b. Douglas Groothuis, "Jesus and the Life of the Mind" sermon available from: ([www.homefortoday.org](http://www.homefortoday.org))

## VII. The Spirituality of the Apologist: Truthful Humility

- A. Humility (see D. Groothuis, "Apologetics, Truth, and Humility" in syllabus hot link)
  1. Humility by creation: total dependence (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1 – 3)
    - See Andrew Murray, *Humility: The Heart of Righteousness*. Devotional classic.
  2. Humility by redemption: you are not your own, you were bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20)
  3. Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23)
  4. Hold the truth firmly and humbly (1 Timothy 2:24 – 26)
  5. We know in part and are in process (1 Corinthians 13:12)
  6. Be courageous, but meek; don't offend unnecessarily (Matthew 5:5; 2 Corinthians 4:7)
- B. Have a spirit of committed dialogue (Paul throughout Acts)
- C. Glory in the gospel, not apologetic prowess; win people to Christ, not just win arguments (Matthew 28:18 – 20)
- D. Passionate, but patient, yearning for the salvation of others (Romans 9:1 – 3; 10:1)
- E. Importance of moral/spiritual character in ministry: watch your life and doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16)

- F. Reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth (Acts 1:4 – 5; John 16:13)
- G. Importance of individual and corporate prayer for apologetic integrity (Ephesians 6:10 – 18; Colossians 4:2 – 4)
- H. Openness to God's supernatural work in opening the eyes of unbelievers (Acts 26:17 – 18; Acts 13:1 – 12)

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending the Christian Faith, September 7, 2004

## **DEVELOPING AN APOLOGETIC MIND FOR THE POSTMODERN WORLD**

*part 1*

### **I. Six Enemies of Apologetic Engagement**

- A. If apologetics is biblical and logical, why does it flounder? Why so ignored in the church?
- B. “Six enemies of apologetic engagement” (D. Groothuis article on syllabus hot link)
  - 1. Indifference
  - 2. Irrationalism
  - 3. Ignorance
  - 4. Cowardice
  - 5. Arrogance and intellectual vanity
  - 6. Superficial techniques or schlock apologetics

### **II. Jesus as a Philosopher and Apologist (D. Groothuis, *On Jesus*, Chapters 1, 3)**

- A. What is a philosopher?
- B. Was Jesus a philosopher?
- C. Did Jesus disparage rationality (Michael Martin)?
- D. Jesus’ use of argument: our model *intellectually*
  - 1. Escaping horns of dilemma (Matthew 22:15 – 22)
  - 2. *A fortiori* arguments (John 7:14 – 24)
  - 3. Jesus’ use of evidence (Matthew 11:1 – 11)
  - 4. *Reductio ad absurdum* arguments (Matthew 22:41 – 46)
  - 5. Jesus defended truth rationally; lived it out existentially
    - Had a well integrated worldview; didn’t duck rational arguments

### III. Worldviews and Christian Faith

- A. Three kinds of (or aspects of) faith (W. Corduan, *No Doubt*; see also J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind*)
  1. Saving faith: justification—either/or (Ephesians 2:8 – 9)
  2. Growing faith: moral sanctification—incremental (Ephesians 2:10)
  3. Knowing faith: epistemological sanctification (Colossians 2:2 – 3)
    - a. Relationship of faith and reason: not antithetical (Isaiah 1:18)
    - b. Reasoning in Scripture (Romans 12:1 – 2; Matthew 22:37 – 40)
    - c. Some texts used against reasoning: (1 Corinthians 1 – 2; Colossians 2:8; Isaiah 55:9)
    - d. Biblical value placed on knowledge outside Scripture (Amos 1 – 2; Daniel; Romans 1 – 2; Acts 17:16 – 34)
- B. The nature of genuine Christian faith, subjective believing
  1. Assent (*fides*): belief that “P” (essential gospel truths) is true (Romans 10:9 – 10)
  2. Trust (*fiducia*): belief in “P” as true and trustworthy (Romans 10:11; John 1:12)
  3. Disposition, orientation (action-producing): believe “P” is true and trustworthy, therefore act in a faithful way (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:14 – 26)
- C. The unity of truth (Corduan) and a well-integrated worldview
  1. “All truth is God’s truth”—general and special revelation (Psalm 19:1 – 11)
  2. Know “P” through authority (but must identify a *qualified* authority)
  3. Know “P” through argumentation, reasoning, evidence
  4. No dichotomy of religious and secular truth: a unified, integrated, worldview
  5. Developing a well-integrated worldview
    - a. What is a worldview and why is it important? (James Sire, chapter 1)
    - b. What is a Christian worldview? Touchstone proposition (William Halverson, *A Concise Introduction to Philosophy*)

The universe (originally good, now fallen, and awaiting its divine judgment and

restoration) is created and sustained by the Triune God, who has revealed himself in nature, humanity, conscience, Scripture, and supremely through the Incarnation.



Douglas Groothuis  
Defending the Christian Faith, September 7, 2004

## DEVELOPING AN APOLOGETIC MIND FOR THE POSTMODERN WORLD *part 2*

- IV. Truth Decay: Understanding the Problem (D. Groothuis *Truth Decay*, introduction, chapter one)**
- A. The importance of truth
    - 1. Truth: desired and feared by mortals east of Eden
    - 2. Truth and integrity
    - 3. People of truth; truth in jeopardy
    - 4. Screwtape's ploy: remove the very category of truth from the mind
  - B. The seven acids of truth decay
    - 1. The end of the enlightenment vision/project
    - 2. A unified world view is impossible today because of our cosmopolitan, media-saturated environment
    - 3. A unified world-view is impossible today because of the great diversity of religious viewpoints available
    - 4. Postmodernity does not allow for a fixed sense of personal identity
    - 5. Language is contingent on human beings and cannot communicate objective truth
    - 6. Written texts have no objective, determinative meaning or truth value (deconstruction)
    - 7. "Truth" is a function of power relationships, not an objective reality
- V. The Eighth Acid of Truth Decay: Television (See D. Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, appendix)**
- A. Understanding the nature of television and how it contributes to truth decay "The medium is the message" (Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*)
    - 1. *Moving image trumps or humiliates the written and spoken word* (Exodus 20:1 – 4; John 1:1)

- a. Images are limited in their power to communicate truth: second commandment (Exodus 20). Jesus' appearance is never described in the Gospels
  - b. Power of deception through image manipulation: my TV interview about channeling. Malcolm Muggerridge: "The camera always lies." See his *Christ and the Media*
  - c. Prefabricated presentations: shrink events into sound bites and memorable images that may be false or misleading
  - d. Cannot watch the Bible on video. You must learn to master the written texts. Church librarian in Denver laments that parents check out "Christian videos" instead of books for children
2. *Discontinuity, fragmentation: "a peek-a-boo world" (Neil Postman) (Luke 1:1 – 4)*
- a. No continuity, coherence, development of ideas: "And now this..."
  - b. Leads to intellectual impatience, recklessness, distraction
  - c. ADD/ADHD: a national problem. Medical warnings about TV and infants. *Pediatrics*, Vol. 113 No. 4 (April 2004)
- Conclusions: Early television exposure is associated with attentional problem at age 7. Efforts to limit television viewing in early childhood may be warranted..."*
- d. Biblically, the primacy of a coherent, orderly view of reality (Luke 1:1 – 4)
3. *Hypervelocities: video equivalent of caffeine (Psalm 46:10)—jump cuts, scene changes, special effects*
- a. Out of sync with God-given natures: pathology of velocity, plague of rapidity
  - b. Stimulation, agitation—not edification instruction (usually). Ken Burns programs are somewhat different, though
  - c. Decrease in attention spans: sermons, classes, conversations; but this may be challenged—*through good preaching*
  - d. Biblical importance of pacing, stillness. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10)
4. *Entertainment orientation—amusement dominates all other values (2 Timothy 3:4)*
- a. The demand of all areas of life: religion, politics, news, education; amuse means "no thought." "Laugh track is always running" (Jean Baudrillard, *America*)
  - b. Amusement is not appropriate for many things; loss of gravity, sobriety,

rectitude; orienting our subjective response to the objective nature of what we experience

- c. Biblically: don't be a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God (2 Timothy 3:4). Get serious.

B. Conclusion (more on this in "Christian Ethics and Modern Culture" class)

- 1. Engage in television fasting
- 2. Decrease drastically television watching
- 3. Replace with thoughtful reading

**Resources for growth and discernment**

- 1. Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay* (InterVarsity, 2000). The appendix addresses the nature and effects television in the context of postmodernism.
- 2. Os Guinness, *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds* (Baker Books, 1994). Excellent Christian critique of anti-intellectualism in the church, which addresses television and other truth-decaying agents.
- 3. Arthur Hunt, III, *The Vanishing Word: The Veneration of Imagery in the Postmodern World* (Crossway, 2003). Christian perspective on a pervasive but often ignored problem.
- 4. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (Penguin, 1985). The best secular critique of the nature and effects of television; it is more insightful than most Christian books.
- 5. Douglas and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis web page: [www.ivpress.com/groothuis/doug](http://www.ivpress.com/groothuis/doug)

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, September 14, 2004

## WORLDVIEWS, TRUTH, AND KNOWLEDGE

### *part 1*

#### I. What is an Argument (Anthony Weston, *Rulebook for Arguments*)?

- A. Philosophical argument: means of rational persuasion
- B. Premises
- C. Logical form
- D. Conclusion
- E. Validity and soundness
- F. Clear language, consistent terms
- G. Goal of good arguments: knowledge: justified, true belief

#### II. From Modernism to Postmodernism (*Truth Decay*, chapter two). See also Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism* (InterVarsity, 2001), chapter two.

- A. Distinguishing *social conditions* (-itys) from *philosophies* (-isms)
- B. The premodern era (premodernity) - premodernist worldview
- C. The modern era (modernity) - modernist worldview
- D. The postmodern (postmodernity) era - postmodernist worldview
- E. *Postmodernism* as a philosophy
  - 1. No objective, universal, absolute truth; embrace of relative, pragmatic truths
  - 2. Rejection of metanarratives; embrace of micro/mini-narratives
  - 3. Rejection of essences, foundations; embrace of shifting surfaces
  - 4. Language creates reality, does not reflect objective facts; self-enclosed, non referential, “prison-house of language”
  - 5. Truth as “the new obscenity” (Os Guinness, *The Journey*)
- F. Postmodernity as a social condition

1. The continuity with modernity regarding broad social forces
2. Breakdown of religious consensus; emergence of greater pluralism
3. The saturation of the self through communication technologies
4. Loss of cultural authority; Christianity loses its public face and voice
5. Surface over depth; image all the way down; factoids all the way down; etc.

### III. The Christian View of (A) Truth and (B) What is True

- A. Clarify the concept of truth, before getting to content of truth (Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who is There*)
- B. General concept and Christian: correspondence view of truth (more in *Truth Decay*, chapter four)
- C. Biblical words for truth
  1. Hebrew
  2. Greek
- D. Biblical Concept of truth: radical monotheism (Deuteronomy 6:4)
  1. *Revealed*—not constructed, created by us (Hebrews 4:12)
    - a. Supernatural and personal source of knowledge
    - b. Not all is constructed; some is revealed, received, discovered
    - c. Language as God's vehicle to convey truth
      - God as Logos (John 1:1 – 3), human in the image of God (Genesis 1:26)
  2. *Objective*—not only merely subjective (Romans 3:4)
    - a. Truth above cultures; truth as judging all cultures equally
    - b. Some things can be known as they are in themselves
    - c. Not based on preference only—comfortable, uncomfortable
    - d. We are entitled to our own opinions, not our own truths
  3. *Absolute*—not relative (John 14:1 – 6)

- a. Invariant, noncontingent, nonnegotiable
  - b. No exceptions, exemptions, exclusions
4. *Universal*—not situational (Matthew 28:18 – 20; Acts 4:12)
  - Cross-cultural realities: reconciliation with God and others
5. *Eternal*—not trendy or trivial (Isaiah 40:8; Malachi 3:6)
  - Not ephemeral, fragile, conventional
6. *Antithetical*—not synthetic (Matthew 12:30)
  - a. Law of identity
  - b. Noncontradiction
  - c. Law of excluded middle
  - d. Law of bivalence
  - e. Not a matter of taste but of truth
7. Systematic, not fragmentary, ad hoc, arbitrary, piecemeal

All Scripture inspired; God cannot lie (2 Timothy 3:16 – 17; Hebrews 6:18)
8. Truth is not completely knowable by fallen mortals (Deuteronomy 29:29; 1 Corinthians 13:9 – 12)

## WORLDVIEWS, TRUTH, AND KNOWLEDGE

### *part 2*

#### IV. Relativism: Roots and Refutations (Corduan, chapter two)

##### A. Four laws of logic/thought/communication

1. Law of identity: “A” is identical to “A”
2. Law of contradiction (sometimes called the law of noncontradiction): “A” is not identical to “non-A”
3. Law of excluded middle: Not both “A” and “non-A”; not third option
4. Law of bivalence: any unambiguous proposition “A” is either true or false; not neither true nor false, not both true and false
5. Logic and God (see also, Geisler and Brooks, *Come Let us Reason: An Introduction to Logical Thinking*, chapter one)
  - a. God is logical; does not break the rules (Isaiah 1:18: John 1:1
  - b. This is no limit on God, but a virtue. God cannot deny or contradict himself or tell a lie.
  - c. Omnipotence does not and can not entail actualizing logical contradictions

##### B. The challenge of relativism

1. Denies law of contradiction for statements
2. Or: makes truth relative to individuals or cultures
3. Conceptual relativism: every concept is relative
4. Moral relativism: only moral concepts are relative
  - a. Normative relativism
  - b. Individualist relativism

##### C. Six roots of relativism

1. The information explosion makes objective, absolute, universal knowledge impossible

2. The claim to objective, absolute, universal knowledge leads to totalitarianism and intolerance
3. The sincerity of religious believers means they cannot be wrong
4. “Buddhist logic” allows for contradictions to be true; only “Western logic” disallows this
5. Having individual rights means I can determine my own truth
6. Humility requires relativism; otherwise dogmatism
  - Tolerance requires relativism

D. Moreland against relativism

1. Descriptive relativism a weak thesis concerning principles
2. Against normative relativism
  - a. What is the morally relevant culture? Indeterminacy problem
  - b. May belong to more than one culture. Indeterminacy problem
  - c. Reformer’s dilemma; *reductio ad absurdum*
  - d. Some acts are clearly wrong whatever society you are in: we have knowledge of particular moral truths
  - e. One society could not blame another morally, given this theory; *reductio ad absurdum*

V. **The Christian World View—Objectively: The Faith (Sire, chapter two; Groothuis, *On Jesus*, chapters 4 – 7)**

- A. World-view: assumptions about the basic make up of the world (James Sire, *Universe*, 16). See also David Nagle, *Worldview: The History of Concept* (Eerdmans, 2002)
- B. Importance of world views, meta-narratives—for individuals and cultures
- C. The Christian world view (J. Sire, chapter two)
  1. God is infinite and personal (triune), transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign and good.
    - Jesus’ worldview...
  2. God created the cosmos ex nihilo with a uniformity of cause and effect in an open system.



- Jesus' worldview...
- 3. Human beings are created in the image of God [Genesis 1:27] and thus possess personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, gregariousness and creativity.
  - Jesus' worldview...
- 4. Human beings can know both the world around them and God himself because God has built into them the capacity to do so and because he takes an active role in communicating with them.
  - Jesus' worldview...
- 5. Human beings were created good, but through the Fall the image of God became defaced, though not so ruined as not to be capable of restoration; through the work of Christ, God redeemed humanity and began the process of restoring people to goodness, though any given person may chose to reject that redemption.
  - Jesus' worldview...
- 6. For each person death is either the gate to life with God and his people or the gate to eternal separation [hell] from the only thing that will ultimately fulfill human aspirations.
  - Jesus' worldview...
- 7. Ethics is transcendent and is based on the character of God as good (holy and loving).
  - Jesus' worldview...
- 8. History is linear, a meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfillment of God's purposes in history.
  - Jesus' worldview...
- 9. Touchstone proposition: *"The universe (originally good, now fallen and awaiting its divine restoration) is created by the Triune God, who has revealed himself in nature, conscience, Scripture, and through the Incarnation."* (D. Groothuis revision of Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason*)

## TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE

*Truth is what my colleagues will let me get away with—Richard Rorty*

*We...need to realize that it is now bad tactics  
to major on the truth question  
—Alister McGrath*

*No!—D. Groothuis*

### I. Components of Knowledge (Corduan, chapter 3)

- A. Need for an epistemology
- B. Self evidence and epistemology
  - 1. Analytic, necessary truths
  - 2. Basic beliefs, religious experience
  - 3. J.P. Moreland on religious experience (*Scaling*, 231 – 240)
    - a. Causal argument: explaining a changed life
    - b. Direct perception argument: sensory perception and numinous experience: seven common features
  - 4. Immediate sensory awareness
  - 5. Self-evidence is a necessary but not sufficient test for the truth of a world view; need more than self-evidence and religious experience
- C. Rationality and epistemology
  - 1. Logical deduction
  - 2. Rationalism: Plato, Anselm, Descartes, Gordon Clark
  - 3. The ontological argument: a priori argument extraordinaire. See Stephen Davis's chapter in *God, Reason, and Theistic Proofs* (Eerdmans, 1997).
  - 4. Rational deduction is a necessary, but not sufficient test for a true world view; need more than deduction

D. Sensory information and epistemology

1. Empiricism: open and closed
2. Teleological argument, naïve version (J.P. Moreland's in *Scaling* is far better)
3. Sensory information is a necessary, but not sufficient test for the truth of a world view: need more than sensory information

E. Workability and epistemology

1. Pragmatism: it's true if it works
2. Pragmatism and religious truth: conflicts
3. Evaluation of pragmatism; cannot be the meaning or definition of truth. Is one element of testing truth claims.
4. Workability a necessary, but not a sufficient test for the truth of a world view: working doesn't make a belief true

F. A combination of criteria are needed to test the truth of a worldview

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, September 21, 2004

## CONVENTIONALISM: THE IRON WEB OF BELIEF

- I. World Views, Conceptual Systems, etc. as Webs**
- II. Gained Through Enculturation (non-epistemic/intellectual)**
- III. Incommensurate with Other Webs; No Objective Tests for Truth (as correspondence); All Are Web-Dependent; Leslie Newbigen (See D. Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, chapter six)**
- IV. Consequences:**
  - A. Destroys apologetics: Karl Barth, William Willimon (See D. Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, chapter six): fideism—faith without evidence, argument
  - B. Destroys understanding of truth as correspondence (realism)
    - 1. Incompatible truth claims (contraries or contradictories) cannot both be true
    - 2. Leaves us with relativism (and all its problems, moral and epistemological)
    - 3. Cannot explain why people change world views (web defection)
    - 4. A (coherent) web of belief is one necessary aspect of a logical worldview; it is not sufficient to determine truth.
    - 5. Presuppositions of a worldview are more like glasses than eyes (see David Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics* [Baker, 1994], p. 94)

## TESTING WORLDVIEWS

### I. Hypothesis Testing and Worldviews

- A. Cornelius Van Til similar to conventionalists (On Van Til, see Gordon Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims*)
  - 1. No epistemological common ground; chance or God as presuppositions
  - 2. Apologetics is limited to negative apologetics (logically destroying other world views)
  - 3. However, Van Til held to truth to be objective
  - 4. However, Van Til assumes epistemological common ground: common grace, borrowed concepts, elementary rationality
- B. Superior approach: *hypothesis testing: a belief system is to be considered true if it proves to be superior to all other belief systems in all relevant tests.*
- C. Understanding common ground between world views
  - Family resemblance between world views

### II. Logical Criteria for Evaluating Worldviews

- A. Relevancy or pertinence: “live options” (William James). But don’t accept his pragmatic view of truth! See Bertrand Russell’s criticism in *A History of Western Philosophy*.
- B. Logical consistency (within itself and with objective reality)
  - 1. Contraries (A or B, not both)
  - 2. Contradictories (A or B, not both, not neither)
- C. Coherence (not mentioned by Corduan): truth-claims should be interdependent and intermeshed; not merely consistent logically
- D. Viability (existentially livable): negative test
  - 1. Cannot be lived out: philosophical hypocrisy
  - 2. Do not live out: moral hypocrisy (or inconsistency)

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, September 21, 2004

## THE PROJECT OF NATURAL THEOLOGY

(section skipped in lecture is below)

### I. Can We Rationally Establish the Existence of God?

- A. Objections to natural theology (arguing for God from nature). See Douglas Groothuis, *On Pascal*, chapter 6.
  1. The Bible gives no such argument; therefore, we should not. See D. Groothuis, "The Biblical Omission Argument," *Asbury Theological Journal* (Fall 1997). The Bible's authority does not rule out these kinds of arguments under some conditions.
  2. Finite beings cannot prove an infinite God. Confuses metaphysics and epistemology.
  3. Theistic arguments cannot *compel* belief in God, so they are pointless
    - a. What is an argument and what is "proof"?
    - b. Rationality (Moreland, 13)
      1. Rationally permissible (within epistemic rights): weak rationality
      2. Rationally compelling (believe or be irrational): strong rationality
    - c. Deductive and cumulative case arguments for God
    - d. Good arguments—logically and existentially. Person-relativity of arguments.
    - e. Why natural theology may not compel belief
      1. May be a bad argument in itself (or a bad version of a good argument)
      2. Truth of premises is not understood by S
      3. Force of the reasoning is not understood by S
      4. Argument may be understood but rejected for moral reasons. "I don't want to believe it."
    - f. The problem of skepticism (*Pascal*). Skepticism indicates the noetic effects of sin; it does not undermine natural theology, but gives impetus to it and to the search for God. See D. Groothuis, *On Pascal*, chapter seven.
  4. No need for natural theology because we can believe in God as "properly basic" (Alvin

Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*). Still may be needed for doubters or unbelievers who do not believe in this way.

5. It is not the God of the Bible, but an abstract, philosophical deity. The argument would establish several necessary attributes of the biblical deity.
6. Because God is, by definition, invisible; there is no good reason to believe in God (Moreland, *Scaling*, 226 – 228)
  - a. The claim is self-refuting: You cannot see propositions
  - b. Counterexamples of things that exist but cannot be seen: values, subatomic particles, propositions, minds, numbers, etc.
  - c. Category mistake: God is not knowable in this sense
  - d. There are other ways to perceive realities than by the senses: intuition, inference, etc.

### Skipped:

- I. **Apologetics for Postmoderns (D. Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, chapter 7. See also James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, chapter 9)**
  - A. “Postmodernist Christians” on Mars Hill (161 – 162)
  - B. Truth in the marketplace
  - C. The hidden dangers of “relevance” See the prophetic book by Os Guinness, *Prophetic Untimeliness* (Baker, 1993). See review by D. Groothuis on *Denver Journal*.
  - D. True spirituality: truth for the soul and community. See Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* and J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind*
  - E. Exposing postmodernist nihilism
  - F. Postmodern diversions and the testimony of human need. Blaise Pascal.
  - G. Rudiments of apologetic method
    1. Essential truths of logic (soft foundationalism)
    2. Basic forms of reasoning are universal
      - Propositions affirmed at Mars Hill
  - H. Appeal to the best explanation in apologetics concerning postmodernism
    1. Postmodernist worldview is self-refuting, unlivable, and so on.

2. Universe is contingent/created, not eternal; it is designed, not accidental
3. God is the basis of objective moral law
4. Christianity best explains the human condition
5. Christian experiences best explained by the Christian God
6. Christianity is historically grounded

*All religions must have their founders, teachers and prophets, and it does not matter if some of these are anonymous or if the historian proves that one or another name amongst them was legendary. Traditional Christianity, however, claims to be an historical religion in a more technical sense; for certain historical events are held to be part of the religion itself—the are consider to have a spiritual content and to represent the divine breaking in upon history. To a mind which accepts this a revelation—as giving an authentic insight into the real nature of things—there can be no doubt that the whole character of religion itself is seriously affected by the fact. In Christian belief the scriptural revelation, the Incarnation, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection are events which happen in time but it is claimed that they have an extra dimension, so to speak, and they carry a fullness of meaning calculated almost to break the vessel that contains it. To the limit that is possible with finite things we regard them as capturing into time a portion of eternity.*

7. Jesus is without peer and paramount in human and cosmic affairs
  8. Christianity is the highest stakes proposition: heaven or hell
  9. Christianity gives meaning and satisfaction to life
- I. Two apologetic models: William Lane Craig, Phillip Johnson
  - J. Subjective engagement and objective truth
  - K. Egalitarianism and postmodernism (see D. Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, chapter 9; Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Women Caught in the Conflict* [Wipf and Stock reprint, 1997] and *Good News for Women* [Baker, 1997], R. Groothuis, R. Pierce, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality*)
    1. Traditionalism/patriarchalism (women restricted from certain leadership roles in the home and church solely because of their gender) is rejected by most contemporary people. An apologetic obstacle.
    2. Traditionalism is logically and exegetically suspect
      - a. Women leaders appear in the Bible as positive models (Judges 4 – 5; Acts 2:17)
      - b. The traditionalist idea that women are “equal in being, but permanently different (that is, inferior) in function” is illogical.
      - c. Therefore, egalitarianism is more rational than traditionalism and also a better



apologetic approach than traditionalism

## ATHEISM

### I. Can We Rationally Establish the Existence of God?

- A. Objections to natural theology (arguing for God from nature). See Douglas Groothuis, *On Pascal*, chapter 6.
  - 1. The Bible gives no such argument; therefore, we should not. See D. Groothuis, “The Biblical Omission Argument,” *Asbury Theological Journal* (Fall 1997). The Bible’s authority does not rule out these kinds of arguments under some conditions.
  - 2. Finite beings cannot prove an infinite God. Confuses metaphysics and epistemology.
  - 3. Theistic arguments cannot *compel* belief in God, so they are pointless
    - a. What is an argument and what is “proof”?
    - b. Rationality (Moreland, 13)
      - 1. Rationally permissible (within epistemic rights): weak rationality
      - 2. Rationally compelling (believe or be irrational): strong rationality
    - c. Deductive and cumulative case arguments for God
    - d. Good arguments—logically and existentially. Person-relativity of arguments.
    - e. Why natural theology may not compel belief
      - 1. May be a bad argument in itself (or a bad version of a good argument)
      - 2. Truth of premises is not understood by S
      - 3. Force of the reasoning is not understood by S
      - 4. Argument may be understood but rejected for moral reasons. “I don’t want to believe it.”
    - f. The problem of skepticism (Pascal). Skepticism indicates the noetic effects of sin; it does not undermine natural theology, but gives impetus to it and to the search for God. See D. Groothuis, *On Pascal*, chapter seven.
  - 4. No need for natural theology because we can believe in God as “properly basic” (Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*). Still may be needed for doubters or unbelievers who do not believe in this way.

5. It is not the God of the Bible, but an abstract, philosophical deity. The argument would establish several necessary attributes of the biblical deity.
  6. Because God is, by definition, invisible; there is no good reason to believe in God (Moreland, *Scaling*, 226 – 228)
    - a. The claim is self-refuting: You cannot see propositions
    - b. Counterexamples of things that exist but cannot be seen: values, subatomic particles, propositions, minds, numbers, etc.
    - c. Category mistake: God is not knowable in this sense
    - d. There are other ways to perceive realities than by the senses: intuition, inference, etc.
  7. God is a protection of the religious imagination (Feuerbach, Marx, Freud, Russell)
    - a. Turning the tables (1): Atheists deny God because they hate their fathers; they have a cosmic authority problems; need therapy, etc. See Paul Vitz, *Faith of the Fatherless*
    - b. Distinguish (1) psychology of discovery from (2) epistemology of justification
    - c. We would not project the biblical God because he is terrifying in many ways: final judgment, hell, stringent moral standards (Sermon on the Mount)
    - d. Turning the tables (2): Our need for God may be evidence that God exists. The argument from desire. See C.S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory” in *The Weight of Glory and Other Essays*. More later.
- B. What successful theistic arguments can do
1. Find strong clues in creation leading to the Creator
  2. Verify a worldview hypothesis in various ways (cumulative case argument)
  3. Give a better explanation for the nature and meaning of the universe than rival views
  4. Provide incentive for the seeker to look further into Christianity. Is it the true theism?

## II. Problems with Atheism and Agnosticism (Corduan, 80 – 89)

- A. Definition of theism (82)
- B. Atheism is unprovable: unicorn example. This is a bad argument
- C. Is idea of God logically impossible? K. Nielsen: begging the question fallacy (84). See his

debate with J.P. Moreland, *Does God Exist?*

- D. Atheism is contrary to human nature: most people naturally believe in God (see Romans 1 – 2)
- E. Atheism lives on borrowed capital: the problem of morality and meaning. More later in Moreland, chapter 4.

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, September 28 2004

## COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

### *part 1*

#### I. Cosmological Arguments

- A. Distinguish from other theistic arguments
  - 1. Ontological (*a priori*)
  - 2. Design (*a posteriori*)
  - 3. Moral (*a posteriori*)
  - 4. Religious experience (*a posteriori*)
- B. There are various forms of the cosmological argument (*a posteriori* arguments)
  - 1. Leibniz/Richard Taylor: principle of sufficient reason/explanation
  - 2. Thomistic or neo-Thomistic arguments: contingency and necessity (see Winfried Corduan, *No Doubt About It* and elements from Nash, *Faith and Reason*)
    - a. Something exists
    - b. It is either contingent (caused, dependent, determined) or necessary (self-existent); not both
    - c. The universe is contingent, not necessary
    - d. An infinitely long series of contingent states is impossible, Or; unless there is a necessary being, there can be no contingent beings
    - e. Therefore, a First Cause is required to begin the series
    - f. Therefore, there is a Necessary/non-contingent Being (NB)
    - g. There is one NB, contra Hume/Nash (explanatory simplicity; metaphysical coherence)
    - h. The NB cannot cease to exist (contra Hume/Nash)
    - i. This NB is God (possesses attributes necessary for deity and unique to deity—whatever others it may possess), contra Hume/Nash

## COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

### *part 2*

#### II. Kalam Cosmological Argument

(Moreland, *Scaling*; see also William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith* [Crossway, 1994]; Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation from Nothing* [Baker, 2004]; William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, *God: A Debate Between a Christian and an Atheist* [Oxford, 2004])

- Preliminary: concepts of (a) the actual infinite and (b) the potential infinite

##### A. *The universe had a beginning*

1. The impossibility of the *actual infinite* (distinguish from *potential infinite*)
  - a. Library example/puzzle
  - b. Numbers: even and odd
  - c. Lunar and solar revolutions example/puzzle (St. Bonaventure)
  - d. Three objections to the puzzles (Will consider only one)
    - i. Infinite sets are real (Cantor), so infinite number of events or moments is acceptable
    - ii. Response: philosophy of mathematics. What are numbers?
      - (1) Not possible even in mathematics, or
      - (2) Possible in mathematics, but not in reality, or
      - (3) Possible in reality, but cannot be traversed
2. The impossibility of *traversing an actual infinite* (even if it exists); forming an actual infinite through successive addition, piece by piece...
  - a. Causal regress problem (related to contingency argument above)
  - b. No counting to infinity—forward or backward

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, September 28 2004

## COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

### *part 3*

## II. Kalam Cosmological Argument

(Moreland, *Scaling*; see also William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith* [Crossway, 1994]; Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation from Nothing* [Baker, 2004]; William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, *God: A Debate Between a Christian and an Atheist* [Oxford, 2004])

- Preliminary: concepts of (a) the actual infinite and (b) the potential infinite

### A. *The universe had a beginning* (continued)

3. Scientific confirmation from Big Bang cosmology (absolute origination). See also John Jefferson Davis, "Genesis 1:1 and Big Bang Cosmology," in *The Frontiers of Science and Faith* (InterVarsity, 2002), 11 – 36; and Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (revised ed., 1992).
4. Scientific confirmation from second law of thermodynamics.
  - a. If the universe is infinitely old, the universe would have run down by now
  - b. The universe has not run down by now
  - c. Therefore, the universe is not infinitely old
  - d. Therefore, the universe had a beginning
  - e. Therefore, the universe was caused by something outside itself
  - f. Therefore, the universe was cause by a being who willed to bring it about
5. Astronomer Fred Hoyle (who once advanced the steady state cosmology) argues against the universe being infinitely old in virtue of its hydrogen consumption. The argument can be stated as a *modus tollens* deduction (denying the consequent).
  - a. If the universe were infinitely old, then there would be no hydrogen left since hydrogen is only used up and not replaced by any known cosmic process.
  - b. There is hydrogen left in the universe.
  - c. Therefore, the universe is not infinitely old.

- d. Therefore, the universe had a beginning <sup>[1]</sup>. To this, the theist would add:
- e. Therefore, the universe was created by God.

B. *The beginning of the universe was caused*

- 1. Can everything come from nothing without a cause? The “pop theory” (biting the metaphysical bullet)
  - a. Isaac Assimov, Paul Davies (Moreland, 139)
  - b. Christopher Jencks (D. Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, 137)
- 2. Philosophical critique of everything from nothing...
  - a. The ontologizing of nothingness fallacy; granting covert properties to nothing, which can have no properties
  - b. The actualizing from nothingness fallacy: a-causal origination—counter-intuitive if not contradictory

C. *The beginning of the universe was caused by a personal being (God)*

- 1. God and time (see Greg Gansell, editor, *God and Time: Four Views* [InterVarsity, 2001])
  - a. Three options if kalam is correct
    - i. God is timeless/atemporal *simpliciter* (Traditional view, Paul Helm)
    - ii. God sans creation is timeless/atemporal; God with creation is temporal (William Lane Craig)
    - iii. God sans creation is “relatively timeless”; God with creation interacts temporally (Alan Padgett, Doug Groothuis)
  - b. But God cannot be in “clock time”—that would entail an actual infinite of moments, which the kalam rules out (Moreland, 36, 41)
- 2. Argument against an impersonal cause
  - a. A creating being is either personal or impersonal
  - b. Impersonal necessary and sufficient conditions for causing the universe would always obtain.
  - c. If so, universe would be infinitely old
  - d. Universe is not infinitely old (from the kalam and other cosmological factors)



- e. Therefore, the universe was not created by an impersonal cause
- f. Therefore, there must be a personal being who actualized the universe through agency, will, intention
- 3. Argument against God needing a cause (Bertrand Russell)
  - a. God does not begin to exist, so the kalam cosmological argument does not posit a need to account for God's existence.
  - b. The concept of God is that of a necessary, noncontingent being, a being who is self-existent, not caused.
  - c. No cosmological argument claims that every state of affairs requires an antecedent cause outside itself.
- 4. Quentin Smith's acceptance of Big Bang cosmology and denial of God's existence

### III. The Rational Worth of These Arguments (Contingency and Kalam, Scientific Evidence)

- A. Gives a rational argument; does not beg the question; ask for a "leap of faith"; or make God "properly basic" (necessarily)
- B. Gives a complete argument for certain divine attributes (see Douglas Groothuis, "Metaphysical Implications of Cosmological Argument,"—on the class web page and forthcoming in *In Defense of Natural Theology* (InterVarsity Press, 2005).
  - 1. Unitary: Ockham's razor
  - 2. Incorrigible, inextinguishable (having existed, God cannot fail to exist)
  - 3. Personal, volitional ("personal explanation"—R. Swinburne)
  - 4. Omnipotent: nothing is a greater expenditure of power than exnihilitating the entire cosmos. This is rational to hold, given the argument.
  - 5. Supplies the necessary conditions for impeccable and omnipotent goodness: (1) - (4). Need (5) moral argument and (6) the Incarnation for the final necessary condition, which, with (1) - (4), make for necessary and sufficient conditions.
- C. Explains the origin of universe, which leads to God as the explanation. This may incite the seeker to look for more—revelation, incarnation, salvation.
- D. Haven't proven everything crucial about the existence of the *Christian* God (Trinity, Incarnation); need more argumentation—other theistic arguments, Christian evidences, etc.
- E. For an updated reflection on the kalam argument in relation to the design argument, see William Lane Craig, "Design and the Cosmological Argument," in William Dembski, ed.,

*Mere Creation* (InterVarsity, 1998), 332 – 359; and William Lane Craig, “The Kalam Cosmological Argument” in William Lane Craig, ed., *Philosophy of Religion: A Reader and Guide* (Rutgers University Press, 2002), 2002.

- F. For William Lane Craig’s transcripts of debates in which he uses the kalam argument for popular audiences, see: <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/>

---

[1] Cited in Anthony Weston, *Rulebook for Arguments*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 44.

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 5, 2004

## **DESIGN ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD**

### ***part 1***

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands  
(Psalm 19:1)

#### **I. Design and Cosmological Arguments Compared**

- A. Both are empirical arguments (a posteriori)
- B. Design appeals to more involved aspects of nature; delivers divine intelligence
- C. Cosmological appeals to causation, contingency, explanation; delivers divine power

#### **II. The Basic Form of Design Arguments**

- A. The universe and the objects in it show signs of intelligent design
- B. These signs are better explained by (1) actual design (intelligence) than by (2) merely natural factors

#### **III. Types of Design to Which to Appeal**

- A. Order
- B. Purpose
- C. Simplicity
- D. Complexity
- E. Beauty: nonliving, animal, human
- F. Sensation and Cognition

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 5, 2004

## DESIGN ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

### part 2

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands  
(Psalm 19:1)

### III. Types of Design to Which to Appeal (continued)

- G. Design as information: DNA as language best explained by an author
- H. Cosmic constants: the anthropic principle (fine-tuning argument). For an updated version of the design argument (based on cosmological factors), see also Hugh Ross, "The Big Bang Model Refined by Fire" in William Dembski, ed., *Mere Creation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 363 – 384 (especially 371 – 384 where he gives 45 cosmic constants!)
- I. Proper use of the data (Moreland, 54 – 55)
  - 1. Not, "It is amazing that elements that  $p - x$  (human knowers) came together here, and we know it. This requires a designer." We couldn't know it unless it came together here.
  - 2. Or; "It is amazing that elements  $p - x$  came about and not some other series." For  $x$  to occur,  $p - x$  must occur, not another series.
  - 3. Not "Isn't it amazing that  $x$  obtains when the necessary and sufficient conditions for  $x$  obtain?" No. That is a *tautology*, not an *argument*.
  - 4. Rather: "It is amazing that  $p - x$  came about at all, given the vast odds against it occurring by merely natural means." See Richard Swinburne, *Is There a God?* (Oxford, 1996), 66 – 67.

### IV. Forms of Design Argument

- A. Synthetic *a priori* (strongest view rationally)
- B. Argument from analogy (only form Nash mentions)
  - 1. Possibility view
  - 2. Frequency view

### 3. Evidential view

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 5, 2004

## DESIGN ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

### part 3

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands  
(Psalm 19:1)

#### V. Eight Criticisms of the Design Argument

- A. Singularity of the universe—analogy fails
- B. Infinite regress of designers, not one
- C. Why not many deities instead of one?
- D. Why not a material/corporeal deity instead of an immaterial one?
- E. The universe is not a machine—analogy fails
- F. Evolution refutes the design argument (more later)
- G. The problem of defective or sub-optimal design; the problem of evil (more later)
- H. The “many-worlds hypothesis” (atheistic). See Robin Collins, “Design and the Many-Worlds Hypothesis,” in William Lane Craig, ed. *Philosophy of Religion: A Reader and Guide* (Rutgers University Press, 2002), 130 – 148; for a simpler treatment, see Patrick Glynn, *God: The Evidence* (Prima Publishing, 1997), chapter 1, “A Not-So-Random Universe.”
  - On-line video lectures related to the argument from design from the Discovery Institute conference, “Cosmos and Creator”:

<http://www.meta-library.net/cosmcrea/newcosm-frame.html>

#### VI. The Argument for God From the Existence of the Mind. For more on the arguments for dualism, see J.P. Moreland and Scott Rae, *Body and Soul* (InterVarsity Press, 2000), Part 1.

- A. A kind of design argument: God best explains the existence of the mind
- B. The challenge of physicalism/naturalism/materialism
- C. Defeating physicalism (negative apologetics) and using the reality of mind as positive apologetics (God created the mind as best explanation)

- D. The alternative: dualism (This is the biblical view; see D. Groothuis, *On Jesus*, “Jesus’ Metaphysics,” John Cooper, *Body, Soul, and the Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* [Eerdmans, 1989].)
- E. Problems with physicalism as a worldview:
  - 1. Cosmological and design arguments defeat it (not to mention other arguments from natural theology).
  - 2. The veridicality of near-death experiences involving out-of-body experiences. See Douglas Groothuis, *Deceived by the Light* (Wipf and Stock reprint, 2002), appendix, “Is it all in the Mind?” Gary Habermas and J.P. Moreland, *Beyond Death: Exploring the Evidence for Immortality* (Crossway Books, 1998), chapters 7 – 9.

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 12, 2004

## DESIGN ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

### part 4

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands  
(Psalm 19:1)

#### VI. The Argument for God From the Existence of the Mind. For more on the arguments for dualism, see J.P. Moreland and Scott Rae, *Body and Soul* (InterVarsity Press, 2000), Part 1. (continued)

- F. Problems with mind/body physicalism particularly
  - 1. Distinctiveness of mental and physical properties (discrepant properties)
  - 2. Private access and incorrigibility
  - 3. The experience of first-person subjectivity (qualia)
  - 4. Secondary qualities
  - 5. Intentionality
  - 6. Personal identity
  - 7. Morality, responsibility, and punishment
- G. Mind/body physicalism as self-refuting because it cannot support rationality
  - 1. Intentionality is required for rationality
  - 2. Immaterial mental realities (propositions, laws of logic, reasons, etc.) must exist and affect the mind
  - 3. We need rational insight (not just have material processes) for rationality
  - 4. Need a continuity of personal identity for rationality
  - 5. Need libertarian freedom (power of contrary choice) for rationality
    - Alternative: Need moral agency to be grounded in a personal, theistic worldview (which maybe compatibilist, not libertarian)
- H. The emergence of mind (since it exists and physicalism is false)



1. Naturalistic/emergent accounts (epiphenomenal): something comes from nothing without a designing intelligence. Blood from a stone.
2. Theistic/dualistic accounts: the divine mind creates human minds in his image (Genesis 1:26). Like comes from like.
  - For other treatments of design arguments see, Stephen T. Davis, *God, Reason, and Theistic Proofs* (Eerdmans, 1997); C. Stephen Evans, *Philosophy of Religion* (InterVarsity, 1985); Richard Swinburne, *Is There a God?* (Oxford, 1996); Robin Collins, “A Scientific Argument for the Existence of God: The Fine-Tuning Design Argument,” in Michael Murray, ed., *Reason for the Hope Within* (Eerdmans, 1999), 47 – 75.

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 12, 2004

## **GOD AND MORAL MEANING**

### ***part 1***

#### **I. The Meaning of Life and Morality**

- A. Meaning and suicide (Albert Camus)
- B. Ultimate questions of meaning, significance, value
- C. Aldous Huxley's revealing confession (Os Guinness, *The Journey*, 214 – 15)

#### **II. The Meaning of Moral Statements**

- A. Meta-ethics: the justification of moral statements within a worldview
- B. Noncognitive theories
  - 1. Emotivism: Bo, Hurray theory
  - 2. Imperativism: Just do it
- C. Cognitive theories of meta-ethics
  - 1. Private subjectivism
  - 2. Cultural relativism
- D. Objectivist theories
  - 1. Ethical naturalism
  - 2. Ethical non-naturalism

#### **III. Four Defective Views of Meaning and Morality**

- A. Four naturalist views
  - 1. Temporal purpose and optimistic humanism
    - Secular humanist version: Paul Kurtz

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 12, 2004

## **GOD AND MORAL MEANING**

### *part 2*

### **III. Four Defective Views of Meaning and Morality**

#### A. Four naturalist views (continued)

2. From naturalism to nihilism (James Sire, *Universe Next Door*, 4<sup>rd</sup> ed. (InterVarsity Press, 1997)).
  - a. Chance and necessity dehumanizes and impersonalizes
  - b. The great cloud of unknowing: epistemology
  - c. Is and ought problem
  - d. Nihilism and objective value (Moreland)
    - The argument from damnation (Peter Berger, *A Rumor of Angels*)
  - e. Nihilism and science
  - f. Nihilism and persuasion
  - g. Nihilism and livability

## GOD AND MORAL MEANING

### *part 3*

### III. Four Defective Views of Meaning and Morality

#### A. Four naturalist views (continued)

#### 3. Existentialism (escape from the void): Sartre, Camus (James Sire)

##### a. Individual “creation” of value

Meaning, value, purpose, significance (subjective)

---

World of science and facts (objective)

##### b. The unstable metaphysics of freedom: Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate* (2002)

##### c. Value has no objective roots

##### d. Reduces to anarchism, chaos

For more on this topic, see also William Lane Craig, “The Absurdity of Life Without God” in *Reasonable Faith* (Crossway, 1994)

#### 4. Immanent purpose and transcendentalism

##### a. Objective values as brute facts

##### b. Objections to this odd metaphysic

#### 5. Postmodernist ethics (without objective reality)

##### a. Richard Rorty on ethics: a freeloading atheist

##### b. Reification: true and false

##### c. William Wilberforce: against the world, for the world

##### d. Value creation: Richard Rorty and Friedrich Nietzsche

- e. Michel Foucault on human nature as constructed
- f. Coming to terms with the divine Lawgiver and Judge

B. Cosmic purpose and Christian theism (The Moral Argument)

- 1. The logic of Christian metaphysics on ethics
  - a. God and the good. Good based on God's character and the structure of creation.
  - b. Anthropology: *imago dei* (image of God). Conscience of the moral law explained by this.
  - c. Meaning, morality, and eschatology
- 2. Objections to Christian meta-ethics
  - a. Arbitrariness of the good based on God
  - b. Destroys human autonomy
  - c. God and eternal life don't give meaning
  - d. Collapses into theological egoism

For more on God and morality, see C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, part 1; C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*; C.S. Lewis, "The Poison of Subjectivism," in *Christian Reflections*

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 19, 2004

## THE ARGUMENT FROM RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

### IV. The Argument from Religious Experience

#### A. Types of religious experiences

1. Relational, personal, theistic
  - a. Ordinary (Ron Nash, *Faith and Reason*)
  - b. Extraordinary, numinous (Moreland)
    - i. Causal (God as best explanation for radical, spiritual change)
    - ii. Direct perception (numinous experience)
2. Monistic/nondualistic, pantheistic, impersonal, enlightenment (only touched on by Nash and Moreland)
3. Religious yearning/desire (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, Blaise Pascal “the infinite vacuum.” See D. Groothuis, *On Pascal*, 93 – 94); not primarily experience of God or the sacred, but desire for this.
  - a. Reverse of the projection argument against religion (Freud, et al)
  - b. Humans yearn for the transcendent beyond the natural (“joy”)
  - c. Natural means cannot satisfy this yearning
  - d. Basic human yearnings—hunger, etc.—can be fulfilled
  - e. Therefore, the yearning for the transcendent is fulfilled by the transcendent (but how understood?)

#### B. The argument from positive religious experience (not yearning/desire)

1. Types of religious experience: theistic, monistic (nondualistic)
2. A critique of monistic/nondualistic experience
  - a. Phenomenology breaks down evidentially
  - b. No subject/consciousness/object structure
  - c. Beyond language, logic, personality

- d. Ineffability claims: self-refuting or incoherent
  - e. Therefore: there no evidence in support of monism/nondualism
3. Relational, theistic experiences
- a. The phenomenology of theistic experiences
    - i. Numinous (Moreland). See Exodus 3; Isaiah 6:1 – 8; Revelation 1:12 – 17.
    - ii. Ordinary (Nash)
  - b. The principle of credulity. Unless there is good evidence to the contrary, if person S seems to experience E, S should believe that E probably exists.
  - c. Vast numbers or different kinds of people have had theistic experiences (whether they are salvific or not)
  - d. It is more likely that some of these experiences are veridical than all are delusory or deceptive
  - e. Objections:
    - i. No way to check for false religious experiences (Rowe, Martin)
    - ii. Response: Ways of checking for false religious experiences
    - iii. Other religious experiences cancel out theistic ones
    - iv. Response: monistic experience fails evidentially
- C. Worth of the argument from religious experiences
- 1. Evidence for the person who has the experience: first-person unbeliever
  - 2. Evidence for one who does not have the experience: third-person
  - 3. Evidence for one who is already a believer (partial confirmation): first-person believer
  - 4. Argument should be given in a comparative fashion (don't bias the case toward theism)
  - 5. Should be part of a cumulative case argument; it cannot stand alone

For more on the argument from religious experience argument, see Keith Yandell, *Philosophy of Religion* (Routledge, 1999), chapter 11; Norman Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion* (Baker, 1974; out in a revised ed.), part 1; Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, revised ed. (Oxford, 1991), chapter 13; Swinburne, *Is There a God?* (Oxford, 1996), 130 – 139.





Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 19, 2004

## **DEPOSED ROYALTY: PASCAL'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENT AND THE WAGER**

*If he exalts himself, I humble him.  
If he humbles himself, I exalt him.  
And I go on contradicting him  
Until he understands  
That he is a monster that passes all understanding—Pascal.*

- I. Pascal: Misunderstood Genius (*On Pascal*, chapter one)**
  - A. Pascal as fideist and existentialist: wrong
  - B. The “wager-only” Pascal (Alan Carter, numerous philosophy of religion anthologies): wrong
- II. Pascal's Life and thought (*On Pascal*, chapters two and four)**
  - A. Scientific achievements
  - B. Religious controversy
  - C. Pascal's apologetic project: *Pensées*
- III. Building the Christian Apologetic on Basic Theism**
  - A. Concepts of truth and rationality
  - B. Theistic arguments: cosmological, design, moral, etc. (contra Pascal)
  - C. Critiquing other worldviews: naturalism, pantheism, polytheism
- IV. Argument from Christian Revelation to Explain Human Condition (*On Pascal*, chapter eight)**
  - A. Explanatory range of a worldview: human condition essential component of explanation
  - B. Argument appeals to sense of personal identity and meaning: self-understanding, exploration
- V. Human Greatness and Misery**
  - A. Greatness in intellect, artistry, etc.
  - B. Misery in intellect gone wrong, weakness, etc.

- C. Mystery of the human condition

## **VI. No Consolation From (Merely Human) Philosophy (Colossians 2:8)**

- A. Two errors of philosophy
  - 1. Misery without greatness
  - 2. Greatness without dignity
  - 3. Need for a *tertium quid*

## **VII. Transcending Merely Human Philosophy**

- A. Explaining misery and greatness
  - 1. Created in God's image (Genesis 1:26)
  - 2. Fallen (Genesis 3; Mark 7:21 – 23; Romans 3)
  - 3. Remnants of greatness in misery (“rumors of glory”—Bruce Cockburn)

## **VIII. Pursuing the Best Explanation**

- A. The dual nature as intellectually cogent
- B. That human condition needs to be explained, not just accepted
- C. Doctrines of original creation and subsequent sin are convincing

## **IX. The Abductive Argument Form**

- A. Neither deductive, nor inductive—best inference to the explanation (IBE)
- B. Confirming instances of hypothesis (dual nature)
- C. Not affirming the consequent fallacy (If p, then q; q; therefore, p)

## **X. The Apologetic Worth of this Argument**

- A. Part of a larger cumulative case for Christian hypothesis
- B. Illuminates human condition uniquely
- C. Offers hope for human restoration through Christ
- D. Initial treatment for unbelief

- See also: Douglas Groothuis, “Deposed Royalty: Pascal's Anthropological Argument,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 2 (June 1998)

## **XI. Pascal's Wager (*On Pascal*, chapter nine)**

- A. Prologue: agnosticism and God
- B. The wager proper
- C. The wager: risks and rewards
- D. If many gods, why one wager? Evidential considerations
- E. Is it religious brainwashing? Cognitive elements
- F. Is it true faith? A beginning

### **For more on the proper interpretation and philosophical force of Pascal's wager.**

- 1. Douglas Groothuis, "Pascal Speaks from the Grave," *Think* (Autumn, 2004), #8. For the wager.
- 2. Alan Carter, "On Pascal's Wager: Or All Bets Are Off," *Philosophia Christi*, series 2, 3, no. 2 (2001): 511-516. Against the wager.
- 3. Douglas Groothuis, "Are All Bets Off? A Defense of Pascal's Wager," *Philosophia Christi*, series 2, 3, no. 2 (2001): 517-524. For the wager.
- 4. Alan Carter, "Is Pascal's Wager Back On? A Response to Groothuis," *Philosophia Christi*, series 2, 4, no. 2 (2002): 493-500. Against the wager.
- 5. Douglas Groothuis, "An Unwanted Farewell to Pascal's Wager: Reply to Carter," *Philosophia Christi*, series 2, 4, no. 2 (2002): 501-508. For the wager.

## MIRACLES

### part 1

#### I. Miracles and Christian Apologetics

- A. Miracles in the Bible: a necessary feature of biblical Christianity
  - 1. Apologetic asset: confirming signs of God's action
  - 2. Apologetic liability: skepticism
- B. Miracles in church history and today. See Craig Keener, *Gift Giver* (Baker Books, 2001), chapters 3-5, especially
- C. Miracle claims in other religions

#### II. What is a Miracle?

- A. Edward John Carnell's definition of miracle, "An extraordinary visible act of divine power, wrought by the effective agency of the will of God, through secondary means accompanied by valid, covenantal revelation, and having as its final cause the vindication of the righteousness of the triune God" (*Christian Apologetics*). Any problems?
- B. Biblical: sign or mighty act of God
- C. Miracles and the laws of nature
  - 1. The regularities of nature and God's providence
  - 2. Miracles as supernatural agency involving the natural world
  - 3. Are miracles a "violation" of natural law?
  - 4. Miracles that do not require direct supernatural agency: "special providences" or "constellation miracles" (W. Corduan)
- D. Miracles and worldviews
  - 1. Theism: miracles are possible
  - 2. Agnosticism: miracles are possible
  - 3. Naturalism: miracles are impossible
  - 4. Pantheism: miracles are impossible: No personal God to work them in God's creation.

Nevertheless, pantheists claims extraordinary spiritual phenomena (“the paranormal”)

## MIRACLES

### part 2

### III. David Hume's Objection to Miracles (See Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason*, chapter 16)

- A. The in-principle objection to miracles
  - 1. Laws of nature are regular and certain
  - 2. Miracles violate laws of nature
  - 3. Claim of miracle (based on testimony) always less certain than law of nature
  - 4. Hume did not claim that miracles were metaphysically impossible
- B. Responding to Hume's objections
  - 1. One could directly observe a miracle and not be dependent on testimony
  - 2. Direct testimony may oppose established regularities; otherwise, new discoveries and novelties are ruled out a priori
  - 3. Miracles not supported only by direct testimony, but by indirect evidence as well (circumstantial evidence)
  - 4. Hume's defective view of probability: distinguish science from history
  - 5. Miracles and the existence of God. God's existence makes miracles possible. But one may believe in God because of miracles
- C. The objections to particular miracle claims (subsidiary arguments)
  - 1. Witnesses are never epistemically credible: superstition, overstatement and gossip
    - a. Some miracles claims may dismissed on this basis, but not all
    - b. Hume makes standards too strict; assumes too much credulity for too many
  - 2. Miracle claims in several religions cancel each other out and have no evidential value. See David Clark, "Miracles in the World's Religions," in R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas, eds. *In Defense of Miracles* (InterVarsity, 1997), 199-213.
    - a. Miracles would establish incompatible and essential claims
    - b. Miracles may not have this function

- c. Evidence for miracles is not epistemically equal
- d. Some religions do not allow for the category of miracle
  - i. Buddhism
  - ii. Nondualistic Hinduism

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 26, 2004

## THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

### part 1

#### I. The Bible as Inspired Scripture

- A. Plenary, verbal-rational, propositional inspiration (2 Tim. 3:15 – 17; 2 Pet. 1:20 – 21)
- B. The Bible is true on every matter it touches on
- C. Need for appropriate standards, given nature of ancient literature
- D. The human dimension of Scripture (unlike the Qur'an, supposedly entirely divine)
- E. The most thorough and philosophically astute presentation of biblical inerrancy is found in Carl F. H. Henry's magisterial six volumes, *God, Revelation, and Authority* (Word, 1976-1982; reprinted by Crossway).

#### II. The Bible and Historical Apologetics

- A. Establish historical *reliability* of NT as starting point, especially the Gospels
- B. The piety and propriety of arguing for biblical reliability; contra fideism
- C. Argue against metaphysical naturalism/physicalism and methodological naturalism, such as the Jesus Seminar, etc. See Douglas Groothuis, *Jesus in an Age of Controversy* (Wipf and Stock reprint, 2002), chapter two
- D. Since the NT is an historical account, use historiographical criteria as long as it doesn't prejudice the case against Christianity (such as methodological naturalism)



Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, October 26, 2004

## THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT part 2

- III. The Reliability of the New Testament (Moreland, *Scaling*, chapter 5; Groothuis, *On Jesus*, chapter 2; W. Corduan, *No Doubt About It*, chapters 8 – 9. See also Douglas Groothuis, *Jesus in An Age of Controversy*, chapter 2 – 3)**
- A. Back to the past: problems with ancient, historical documents (Corduan, chapter 9)
    - 1. Prejudiced
    - 2. Incomplete
    - 3. Removed in time
    - 4. Male-oriented
  - B. Evaluating ancient, historical documents
    - 1. Hermeneutical circle
    - 2. Appropriate tests for truth
  - C. The manuscript test; textual criticism (integrity). Note Anthony Weston's error in *A Practical Companion to Ethics* (Oxford, 1997), 16 – 17
    - Muslims claim the Bible has been corrupted where it contradicts the Qur'an. But extant manuscripts contradict this. Qur'an itself may not make this claim. See Chawkat Moucarry, *The Prophet and the Messiah* (InterVarsity, 2002), Part I.
  - D. External corroboration (D. Groothuis, *On Jesus*). (See also, for much more depth, Robert E. Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.)
    - 1. Extra-biblical literature: Josephus, Tacitus, Thallus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius. Existence of Jesus, beliefs of his followers
    - 2. Archaeological artifacts: pool of Bethesda; existence of Pontius Pilate; etc.
  - E. The internal test; the nature of the documents
    - 1. Eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1 – 4; 2 Peter 1:16; John 19:35; 21:24; Galatians 1; Hebrews 2:3)
    - 2. Arguments against eyewitnesses: ongoing revelation of Jesus

### 3. Jewish oral tradition and Jesus

For more on the reliability of the Gospels, see Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (InterVarsity Press, 1987); *The Historical Reliability of John* (InterVarsity, 2002)

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, November 2, 2004

## THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

### part 3

### III. The Reliability of the New Testament (Moreland, *Scaling*, chapter 5; Groothuis, *On Jesus*, chapter 2; W. Corduan, *No Doubt About It*, chapters 8 – 9. See also Douglas Groothuis, *Jesus in An Age of Controversy*, chapter 2 – 3)

#### E. The internal test; the nature of the documents

##### 4. Marks of historicity in Gospel material

- a. The traditional authors argument
- b. The form of Jesus' sayings
- c. Other distinctive features
- d. Presence of irrelevant material
- e. Seemingly counterproductive features (Durant quote in Groothuis, *On Jesus*, 16)

##### 5. The time factor

- a. The expansion of Christianity
- b. Paul's letters (50s AD)
- c. The outer limits of Gospel dating (late first century), known by NT citations in other literature
- d. The Synoptic Gospels and dating Acts
  - i. Luke precedes Acts (Acts 1:1)
  - ii. Luke used Mark (probably not Matthew, contra Moreland)
  - iii. If we can date Acts/Luke, we can date Mark as earlier than Acts/Luke
  - iv. Six arguments for dating Acts 62 – 64 AD
    - (1). Does not mention of the fall of Jerusalem (would apply to all other NT books). See John A.T. Robinson, "The Significance of 70" in *Redating the New Testament* (Westminster Press, 1976), 13 – 30.

- (2). No mention of Nero's persecution in mid-60s
  - (3). Martyrdom of James (61), Paul (64), Peter (65) not mentioned
  - (4). Acts addresses subject matter of pre-70 AD; not post
  - (5). Terms used in acts very primitive: "Son of Man," "Servant of God" (Jesus) "first day of the week," "the people" (Jews)
  - (6). Jewish war against Romans (66) not mentioned
- v. Not an argument from ignorance; an argument from conspicuous absence
- vi. Argument form: denial of the consequent (*modus tollens*)
  - If p, then q; not-q; therefore: not-p
  - (1). If a later date than 70 AD for Acts, then (likely): facts (1) – (6)
  - (2). Not facts: (1) – (6)
  - (3). Therefore, (likely) Acts not written later than 70 AD
- 6. The Historical Jesus of Radical Critics
- 7. The speeches of Acts 1 – 12
- F. The Gnostic materials (not really "gospels"). See Elaine Pagel's bestseller, *Beyond Belief*.
  - 1. Theological differences
  - 2. Far removed from Gospel events, except Thomas
    - a. Problems with the Gospel of Thomas: derivative, no early attribution, etc.
    - b. On the reasons behind the interest in exotic materials about Jesus, which are historically suspect, see Phillip Jenkins, *Hidden Gospels* (Oxford, 2001)
- G. Buddhist Scriptures and the NT: no comparison historically

For more on the reliability of the Gospels, see Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (InterVarsity Press, 1987); *The Historical Reliability of John* (InterVarsity, 2002)

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, November 9, 2004

## THE IDENTITY AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, CHRISTIANITY, AND PROPHECY

I am the resurrection and the life—Jesus Christ.

### I. The Identity of Jesus

- A. Importance of question (Matthew 16:13 – 18; 1 John 4:1 – 4)
- B. Reliability of the NT as a background or “minimal facts approach.” See contributions by Gary Habermas in Steven Cowan, ed. *Five Views of Apologetics* (Zondervan, 2000) and James Sire, *Why Should Anyone Believe Anything at All?* (InterVarsity, 1994), chapter 10
- C. Jesus on Jesus (See also Millard Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh: An Incarnational Christology* (Baker, 1992), chapter 17)
  - 1. Uniqueness of Jesus’ knowledge of God and mediatorial work
    - a. Jesus’ statements: Matthew 11:27; John 14:1 – 6
    - b. Apostolic confirmation: Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5
  - 2. Jesus unique relationship to the Father (John 5:17 – 47)
  - 3. Jesus sense of mission and authority throughout the Gospels
  - 4. Jesus claims to forgive sin; only God can forgive sin; Jesus is God
    - a. Mark 2:5 – 11
    - b. Luke 7:36-50
  - 5. Jesus, “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27 – 28)
  - 6. “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). See Exodus 3:14
- D. Evaluating Jesus’ statements (Stephen T. Davis; see also R. Nash’s argument in *Faith and Reason* [Zondervan, 1988])
  - 1. Jesus claimed, either explicitly or implicitly, to be divine (not merely a good teacher, prophet, etc.)
  - 2. Jesus was either right or wrong in claiming to be divine
  - 3. If Jesus was wrong in claiming to be divine, Jesus was either mad or bad

4. Jesus was not bad
5. Jesus was not mad
6. Therefore, Jesus was not wrong in claiming to be divine
7. Therefore, Jesus was right in claiming to be divine
8. Therefore, Jesus was divine. Strongly or weakly rational?

E. Understanding the claims of the Incarnation

1. Jesus as truly human (John 1:14)
2. Jesus as divine (John 1:1 – 2)
3. Jesus is one person
4. Jesus has a divine nature (as the Second Person—*Logos*—of the Trinity)
5. Jesus has a human nature
6. Jesus has two natures in one person (hypostatic union)

F. Understanding the logic of the Incarnation

1. Not a hopeless paradox or contradiction (contra Kierkegaard, others)
2. Strategies for attaining logical coherence. See also Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh*, chapters 20 – 22
  - a. Avoiding assigning contradictory properties in one subject
  - b. Possession of divine and human attributes, like a person possessing mind and body. Jesus *qua* deity; Jesus *qua* humanity
  - c. Kenotic aspect: suspended use of some divine prerogatives while still possessing them (2 Corinthians 8:9; Phil. 2:5 – 11)

## II. The Significance and Meaning of the Resurrection of Jesus

- A. Theism as background belief makes the resurrection possible, conceivable
- B. Jesus a liberator, victor over sin, Satan, death; harbinger of eternal life (John 11). Compare with Buddha
- C. Jesus as source of new life in Christians throughout world history (I Corinthians 15)

## III. Evidence for the Resurrection (See Also Douglas Groothuis, *Jesus in an Age of Controversy*, 272

## – 282)

- A. The Empty Tomb: necessary, not sufficient for resurrection; must be explained adequately
  - 1. Based on several NT sources
  - 2. Not mentioned directly in early preaching in Acts—mutually assumed
  - 3. Jewish polemic assumed empty tomb (Matthew 28:11 – 15): bad argument, anyway. Tomb was secured, theft neither possible nor desirable
  - 4. Part of pre-Markan accounts (derived from Mark and 1 Cor. 15)
  - 5. Women as witnesses of empty tomb (and resurrected Jesus)
  - 6. No other burial story exists (J.D. Crosson has invented one: Jesus was buried in a shallow tomb and eaten by dogs)—archeological evidence against this
  - 7. Jewish view of resurrection is bodily: Jesus could not be in a tomb and resurrected
  - 8. Burial by the rich man Joseph is historically sound
  - 9. No tomb veneration, which was common in that day
- B. Appearances of Jesus
  - 1. Multiple appearances over 40 days to many people, not isolated
  - 2. Appearances are bodily and historical
  - 3. 1 Corinthians 15 as strong evidence for resurrection
  - 4. Apostolic preaching of a resurrected Jesus in Jerusalem shortly after Jesus' crucifixion and death (Acts)
  - 5. Alternative views
    - a. Conscious deception: no rational motive for it (Pascal, Charles Colson)
      - i. Goes against messianic expectations
      - ii. Goes against extant Judaism
    - b. Hallucination: no mass hallucination over that much time for that many different people
- C. Four features of the early church that confirm the resurrection (indirect evidence)
  - 1. Transformation of the disciples requisite to spread the gospel in a hostile setting

2. Change in key social structures (Lord's day, belief in the deity of Jesus)
3. Sacraments (ordinances) of the early church: baptism, Lord's supper
4. The very existence of the early church begs for a sufficient explanation

D. Ancient mystery religions and the resurrection of Jesus (2 Peter 1:16)

1. Mystery religions not based on history
2. No significant parallels between mystery saviors and Jesus
3. Sources on mystery religions probably come after Jesus and the NT

See also Murray J. Harris, *Three Questions About Jesus* (Baker, 1994). Addresses the evidence for Jesus' existence, his resurrection, and his deity.

For more on the resurrection of Jesus see, Richard Swinburne, *The Resurrection of God Incarnate* (Oxford, 2003). See D. Groothuis review of this book and a much worse book in *Books and Culture*:

<http://kedesh.christianitytoday.com/cgi/texis/webinator/search4/redir.html?query=Dougla>

See also the magisterial, N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Fortress, 2003).

#### IV. From Christ to Christianity

A. Bible as the inspired and flawless (inerrant) Word of God

1. Establish general reliability of NT
2. Jesus authority and the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17 – 18; John 10:35)
3. New Testament rests on Jesus' authority through the Apostles (John 14:26; 15:26 – 27)
4. NT is the apostle's teaching or an extension of it (2 Peter 3:16)
5. New Testament test for canonicity
  - a. Continuity: read in churches consistently
  - b. Apostolicity
  - c. Consistent doctrine

See also Doug Groothuis, "The New Testament Canon" in *Jesus in an Age of Controversy*, and Bruce Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Development*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (Abingdon, 2003), 309-19.



- B. Sin (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21 – 23; Romans 3)
- C. The Cross of Christ (see John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (InterVarsity Press, 1987))
- D. Faith in Christ as Lord and Savior (Eph. 2:8 – 9; Titus 3:5 – 6)
- E. Righteousness from God; righteousness in our lives: justification and sanctification

## V. The Argument from Biblical Prophecy

- A. Prophetic fulfillment within the OT: harder case to make apologetically, not a lost cause. Different from the Qur'an. No internal fulfillment in Qur'an, nor does it fulfill any biblical prophecy (except concerning false teachings)
- B. On reliability of the OT, see Jeff Sheler, *Is the Bible True?* (Zondervan, 1999), Walter Kaiser, *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?* (InterVarsity Press, 2001). Kenneth Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, December 2003). And see Dr. Richard Hess of Denver Seminary
  - 1. Short argument from the New Testament and Jesus
    - a. NT is historically reliable
    - b. Jesus is authoritative on what he addresses
    - c. Jesus endorses what we know as the OT (Matthew 5:17-20; John 10:35; multiple references)
    - d. Therefore, the OT is reliable
  - 2. Short argument from the NT and Paul
    - a. Paul's writings are historically reliable
    - b. Paul, as the Apostle of Christ, is authoritative on what he addresses
    - c. Paul endorses the OT (Romans 15:4; multiple references), along with Jesus
    - d. Therefore, the OT is reliable
- C. Prophetic fulfillment from the OT to the NT
  - 1. End of the world prophecies—dubious apologetic value. The distraction of End times fiction.
  - 2. Messianic prophecies—strong apologetic value (see Walter Kaiser, *The Messiah of the Old Testament*)
    - a. First hope (Genesis 3:15)

- b. Suffering servant (Isaiah 53). See Barry Leventhal, “Why I Believe Jesus is the Promised Messiah,” Norman Geisler, Paul Hoffman, eds. *Why I am a Christian* (Baker, 2001), 209-213
  - c. The Lord our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:5 – 6)
- 3. Structure of argument from prophecy
  - a. Detailed, clear *predictions* made long before events
  - b. Events could not be manipulated by human means, could not be lucky guesses
  - c. Prophecies have been fulfilled in reliable documents
- 4. Demonstrates uniqueness of Jesus as the Messiah
- 5. Evidences the supernatural character of Scripture, OT and NT
- 6. Indicates (does not prove) the omniscience of God; demonstrates the prescience of God

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, November 9, 2004

## EASTERN PANTHEISTIC MONISM AND THE NEW AGE WORLDVIEW part 1

### I. Why the West Turned East and Inward and Downward

- A. Disillusionment with Western rationalism
- B. Disillusionment with American Christianity
- C. Increased religious exposure, spiritual others
- D. “Encircling Eyes” (Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death*)

### II. Spiritual Warfare and Alien Worldviews (D. Groothuis, *Confronting*, chapter 2)

- A. Angels and demons
- B. Satan: the Father of lies
- C. Signs and wonders: good and evil
- D. Spiritual warfare principles from Acts 13:1 – 12 (see also Ephesians 6:10 – 18)
  - 1. A God-ward orientation is needed to discern your calling in ministry and to receive power over error (vs. 1 – 3)
  - 2. We need the wisdom of the church to discern God’s call in our life and power over error (vs. 1 – 3)
  - 3. We need to know and proclaim God’s word for power over error (vs. 4 – 5)
  - 4. The power of error opposes the truth of the Gospel (vs. 6 – 8)
  - 5. God’s work in God’s way will find God’s power over error (vs. 9 – 12)

#### · Books on the New Age

- 1. Douglas Groothuis, *Unmasking the New Age* (IVP, 1986).
- 2. Douglas Groothuis, *Confronting the New Age* (IVP, 1988)
- 3. Douglas Groothuis, *Deceived by the Light* (Wipf and Stock reprint, 2002). Focuses on near-death experiences and their New Age connections.
- 4. Douglas Groothuis, *The Soul in Cyberspace* (Wipf and Stock reprint). One chapter looks at

technoshamanism, which is related to New Age theology.

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, November 30, 2004

## RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, SALVATION, AND APOLOGETICS

### I. Religious Pluralism and Christian Apologetics

- A. Uniqueness, supremacy, and finality of Jesus
- B. Exclusivity of restricted access; scandal of particularism
- C. Problem of hell in Christianity (and Islam)
- D. Diversity of religious teachings; incompatible worldviews
  - 1. Religious ultimate
  - 2. Human condition
  - 3. Spiritual liberation

### II. Options for Addressing the Issue

- A. Normative Pluralism (John Hick). See Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism* (IVP, 2001).
- B. Christocentric universalism (Karl Barth, Jacques Ellul)
- C. Annihilationism. See Clark Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, (Zondervan, 1992), Seventh Day Adventists
- D. Post-mortem evangelism (1 Pet. 4:6)
- E. Inclusivism: salvation through Christ, but possible to receive outside of the knowledge of the Gospel. See Millard Erickson, *How Shall They be Saved?* (Baker 1996); Terrance Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?* (IVP, 2004); he calls his position "accessibilism."
- F. Exclusivism/particularism: salvation for responsible agents not possible outside of Gospel proclamation and explicit belief. See Ronald Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* (Zondervan, 1994)
- G. The problem of exclusivity in light of the overall apologetic enterprise
  - 1. Other evidence for Christianity still obtains
  - 2. One may be agnostic on this question, but within Scriptural limits
    - a. No one can save herself

- b. All salvation is through Jesus Christ (somehow)
- c. Other religions are not salvific, even though they may contain some truths
- d. One who has not heard the gospel might cast himself on God's mercy, not trusting in himself, not trusting in a false religion, in hopes of redemption

### III. A Brief Defense of Exclusivism

- A. Pluralism, universalism, annihilationism, and post-mortem evangelism are unbiblical
  - 1. See Matthew 25:31 – 46 on eternal punishment
  - 2. See Hebrews 9:27 on judgment after death
- B. General revelation makes all accountable to God (Romans 1 – 2)
- C. General revelation is insufficient to save (Romans 1 – 2; Ephesians 2:11 – 12)
- D. Salvation requires knowledge of the Gospel (Acts 17:30; Matthew 28:18 – 20; Luke 24:45 – 49; Romans 10:9 – 19; Ephesians 2:8)
- E. What is the number of the redeemed?
  - 1. Absolute number may be great (Revelation 7:9; Hebrews 2:10)
  - 2. Percentage of saved against lost (Matthew 7:13; Luke 13:22 – 30)
- F. The justice of God and the unreached (Romans 9)

### Recommended Books Related to Religious Pluralism and World Religions

The letters following the entries mean the following: (B)=Beginning; (I)=intermediate (A)=Advanced.

- 1. Adler, Mortimer. *Truth In Religion*. New York: MacMillan, 1990. Argues that religions teach different things and thus cannot all be true. (I)
- 2. Aldridge, Alan. *Religion in the Contemporary World: A Sociological Introduction*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2000. (I)
- 3. Anderson, Norman. *Christianity and World Religions: The Challenge of Pluralism*. Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity, 1985. (I)
- 4. Berger, Peter L., ed. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999. Challenges the idea that the modern world is becoming increasingly secular in accordance with sociological forces. (I)
- 5. Clark, Andrew and Bruce Winter. *One God, One Lord: Christianity in a World of Religious Pluralism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992. Essays by Richard Hess and Bruce

Demarest, of Denver Seminary. (I)

6. Corduan, Winfried. *Mysticism: An Evangelical Option?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991. (I)
7. Cox, Harvey. *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century*. Reading, M: Addison-Wesley, 1995. Cox changes his tune from hailing the “secular city” to appreciating global Pentecostalism (but still from a theologically liberal mindset). Compare this book to Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*. (I)
8. Crockett, William and James Sigountos, eds. *Through No Fault of Their Own: The Fate of Those Who Have Never Heard*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991. (I)
9. Edwards, Paul. *Reincarnation: A Critical Examination*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1996. Edwards is an atheist, so some of his arguments against reincarnation (such as, the mind cannot exist apart from the body) also cut against Christian beliefs in the afterlife. Nevertheless, the arguments specifically against karma and previous lives are applicable to Christian apologetics. (I)
10. Erickson, Millard. *How Shall They Be Saved? The Destiny of Those Who Do Not Hear of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996. (I)
11. Fernando, Ajith. *The Supremacy of Christ*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1995. (B)/(I) Excellent defense of Jesus as Lord, based on John 14:6.
12. Fernando, Ajith. *Sharing the Truth in Love*. Discovery House, 2001. Helpful update of his earlier book, *The Christian Attitude Towards World Religions* (Tyndale, 1987). (B)/(I)
13. Griffiths, Paul, ed. *Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes*. Orbis, 1990. (I)
14. Griffiths, Paul. *An Apology for Apologetics*. Orbis, 1991. (I) Argues that inter-religious apologetics is proper and fruitful—an unpopular view in the world of Religious Studies.
15. Groothuis, Douglas. *Unmasking the New Age* InterVarsity Press, 1986. (I)
16. Groothuis, Douglas. *Are All Religions One?* InterVarsity Press, 1996. Booklet comparing Christianity, Islam, and nondualistic Hinduism. (I)
17. Groothuis, Douglas. *Confronting the New Age*. InterVarsity Press, 1988. (I)
18. Gruzalski, Bart. *On The Buddha*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2000. By a Buddhist who approaches the subject philosophically. (I)
19. Halverson, Dean, ed. *Compact Guide to World Religions*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996. Excellent introductory exposition and apologetic engagement on major religions. (B)
20. Hackett, Stuart. *Oriental Philosophy: A Westerner's Guide to Eastern Thought*. Madison, WI: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1979. Excellent philosophical treatment. (A)

21. Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Argues that Christianity is growing most rapidly in third world contexts, and is taking on new non-Western forms. Also refutes the notion that Christian growth outside of the West has usually been imposed upon unwilling cultures. Compare this book to the earlier *Fire From Heaven* by Harvey Cox. (I)
22. Johnson, David L. *A Reasoned Look at Asian Religions*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1985. Good expository and apologetic material. (I)
23. Kaufmann, Walter. *Religion in Four Dimensions: Existential, Aesthetic, Historical, Comparative*. New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976. A fascinating book filled with Kaufmann's photographs, poems, and atheistic musings on religion. (I)
24. Mangalwadi, Vishal. *The World of Gurus*. Chicago: Cornerstone Press, 1992. (I)
25. Netland, Harold. *Dissonant Voices*. Regent Press, 1998; orig. pub. Eerdmans, 1991. Probably the best and most thorough evangelical treatment of the subject of religious pluralism. Moderately difficult but well-written and lucid. (I)
26. Netland, Harold. *Encountering Religious Pluralism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. Elaborates and further develops themes from *Dissonant Voices*, but also contains new material on modernity, postmodernity, and other issues. Clearly written and penetrating. (I)
27. Nash, Ronald. *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994. Good critique of John Hick and a defense of exclusivism. (I)
28. Okholm, Dennis L. and Timothy Phillips, editors, *Salvation: Four Views*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995. Four authors debate the proper approach to non-Christian religions. (I)
29. Smart, Ninian. *Worldviews: Cross-cultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1995. Explores the various dimensions of religions with a philosophical awareness.
30. Stackhouse, John Jr., ed. *No Other Gods Before Me? Evangelicals and the Challenge of World Religions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001. Hexam and Mouw essays are particularly good.
31. Yandell, Keith. *The Epistemology of Religious Experience*. Cambridge, 1993. Philosophical assessment of religious experience claims. (A)
32. Yandell, Keith, *Philosophy of Religion*. Routledge, 1999. Strong analytic approach with an equally strong emphasis on comparative religious philosophy. (I)/(A)



Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, November 30, 2004

## **ISLAM AND CHRISTIAN TRUTH**

### **part 1**

#### **I. The Demand for Discernment in Crisis**

- A. Islam and the West: conquest, retreat, frustration
- B. Islam and Christian truth: 1400 years of controversy, little evangelistic success, present challenge
- C. Islam and terrorism
  - 1. Fact: the vast majority of terrorists are Muslim and commit atrocities in the name of Allah
  - 2. What significance does this have?

#### **II. Truth in Postmodern Times**

- A. Christian truth and other religions (John 3:16 – 18; 1 Corinthians 8:4 – 6)
  - 1. Revealed, not created/constructed (2 Timothy 3:14 – 17; Hebrews 4:12)
  - 2. Objective, not merely subjective (Romans 3:4)
  - 3. Universal, not parochial (Acts 4:12)
  - 4. Absolute, not relative (John 14:1 – 6)
  - 5. Antithetical, either/or, not synthetic (Matthew 12:30)
- B. Defending Christian truth (1 Peter 3:15 – 17; Jude 3)
  - 1. Know the truth of God (John 17:17; Acts 17:11)
  - 2. Be fair in assessing and analyzing others—golden rule (Matthew 7:12)
- C. Unlike Postmodernists, Muslims believe in objective truth and universal revelation
  - See Irving Hexham, “Evangelical Illusions: Postmodern Christianity and the Growth of Muslim Communities in Europe and North America,” in John Stackhouse, ed. *No Other Gods Before Me?* (Baker, 2001), 137 – 160

#### **III. The Religion of Islam**

- A. Islam in America and the world: 1.2 billion globally—souls and in our cities
- B. Origins of Islam in Arabia
  - 1. Mohammed (ca. 570 – 623)
  - 2. The *Koran* (or Qur'an); recitation from Allah to Mohammed through the angel Gabriel; secondarily, the *Haddith* (traditions concerning Mohammed)
- C. Brief history of Islam
  - 1. Early expansion and present day situation: the word and the sword
  - 2. Major Schools of Islam: Sunnis (majority) and Shiites (minority)
- D. Six key doctrines of Islam (*Koran*, Surah 2:177)
  - 1. Ultimate reality: Allah, “the God” (unitarian monotheism)
    - “The 99 names of Allah”
  - 2. Angels: good and evil
  - 3. Prophets and the Last Prophet (Mohammed)
  - 4. The Holy Books: Torah (*Taurat*), Psalms (*Zabur*), Gospel (*Injil*) and *Koran* (the ultimate and final authority)
  - 5. Last judgment: paradise and hell based on works and mercy of Allah (*Koran*, Surahs 36:54; 53:38), not by faith in Jesus Christ
  - 6. Divine decrees, predestination
- E. Practices of Islam: The Five Pillars
  - 1. Confession of Allah and Prophet Mohammed. *Shahada*
  - 2. Five daily prayers, facing Mecca. *Salat*
  - 3. Almsgiving: 2.5% to an Islamic charity. *Zakat*
  - 4. Yearly (lunar calendar) month-long fast during daylight. *Ramadan*
  - 5. One pilgrimage to Mecca. *Hajj*

## ISLAM AND CHRISTIAN TRUTH

### part 2

#### IV. Islam and Christianity

- A. Claim of abrogation/replacement: Mohammed, “the seal of the prophets,” the last and greatest of the prophets of Allah (*Koran*, Surah 48:27 – 28)
- B. Christians are “People of the Book” (along with Jews and Zoroastrians, as opposed to polytheists, animists); mentioned often in *Koran*
- C. Six major claims against Christianity by Muslims
  - 1. Christian Scriptures have been corrupted; *Koran* has not
    - a. Koran endorses authority of OT and NT (*Koran*, Surahs 4:48, 136; 5:47 – 51, 68 – 71; 10:94)
    - b. New Testament is textually certain and historically verified (Luke 1:1 – 4; I John 1:1 – 3; 2 Peter 1:16)
    - c. Jesus endorsed Old Testament as authoritative (Matthew 5:17 – 20; John 10:35); OT has been preserved authentically
  - 2. Jesus (Issa or Isa) was not crucified (*Koran*, Surah 4:155 – 59)—text seems ambiguous, but many Muslim deny Jesus’ crucifixion
    - a. All the Gospels claim Jesus predicted his crucifixion and was crucified (Matthew 12:39 – 40; John 10:11; Matthew 27); ancient historians agree
    - b. Jesus’ crucifixion was predicted ahead of time in OT (Isaiah 53)
  - 3. Jesus not divine, but merely a prophet of Allah (*Koran*, Surah 5:115 – 118)
    - a. Jesus’ own divine claims: Mark 2; John 5:16 – 18; 8:58
    - b. Colossians 2:8: Apostle Paul’s claims about Jesus deity
    - c. John 1:1 – 3, 14: Apostle John’s claims about Jesus deity
  - 4. The Trinity is illogical and ungodly: say not “three” (*Koran*, Surah 4:171)
    - a. Koranic misunderstanding of the Trinity: God, Mary, Jesus (*Koran*, Surah 5:116)

- b. God is one *God* (Deuteronomy 6:4) in three *persons*: Father, Son (John 1:1 – 3), and Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3 – 4)—co-equal and co-eternal. Not three gods. Three *in* one; not three *equals* one
- 5. Jesus’ “gospel” (*injil*) was no different from the Old Testament prophets: worship Allah and obey his law
  - a. Jesus message was crucially about himself as God’s Son, Savior, and Lord (John 14:1 – 6; Matthew 11:27)
  - b. The cross of Christ is necessary and crucial to salvation (Luke 19:10; Matthew 20:18 – 19, 28; I Peter 2:24)
  - c. Humans are sinful, not merely weak (Mark 7:21 – 23; Romans 3)
  - d. We are forgiven, adopted into His family, assured of heaven through faith alone in the work of Jesus Christ alone through the grace of God alone (Acts 16:31; Romans 4 – 8; Ephesians 2:1 – 10; Titus 3:5 – 6)
- 6. Islam has abrogated Christianity (*Koran*, Surah 48:27 – 28)
  - a. In light of 1 – 5 above: Response: Jesus’ lordship is perpetual and universal (Matthew 28:18 – 20; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 1:15 – 23)
  - b. *Koran* contradicts basic biblical teachings on God, Christ, and salvation (Galatians 1:6 – 9; 1 John 5:11 – 12); it cannot complete Christianity

## V. Christian Truth and the Islamic Challenge

- A. Learn to defend Christian truth (apologetics): 1 Peter 3:15 – 17; Jude 3; Acts 17
- B. Pray for discernment and wisdom in addressing Islam (Ephesians 6:10 – 18)
- C. Become conversant on Islam: its doctrines, history, and present manifestations. Don’t bear false witness against it (Exodus 20:16)
- D. Look for opportunities to love Muslims and present the Gospel (Acts 1:8)

## Resources on Islam and Christianity

- 1. Gleason Archer, “Confronting the Challenge of Islam in 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” in *Contend for the Faith*, ed., Eric Pement. Evangelicals Ministries to New Religions, 1992. See Evangelical Ministries to New Religions web page: [www.emnr.org](http://www.emnr.org)
- 2. Kevin Bywater, “Islam as the ‘End’ of Christianity,” at: <http://www.answering-islam.org/Intro/replacing.html>
- 3. Norman Geisler and Abduhl Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.. Baker Books, 2001. In-depth apologetic response

4. Douglas Groothuis, *Are All Religions One* (booklet). InterVarsity Press, 1996. Compares Christianity with Islam and Hinduism
5. Douglas Groothuis and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis web page: [www.gospelcom.net/ivpress/groothuis](http://www.gospelcom.net/ivpress/groothuis). Information on philosophy, ethics, and apologetics in general
6. Dean Halverson, ed., *Compact Guide to World Religions*. NavPress, 1996. Excellent chapter on Islam by Halverson. Good material on other religions also
7. Answering Islam web site: [www.Answering-Islam.org](http://www.Answering-Islam.org). Comprehensive and scholarly resources on nearly every aspect of Islam in relation to Christianity
8. Bernard Lewis, "The Revolt of Islam," in *The New Yorker*, November 19, 2001. Lewis is a leading scholar of Islam. He explores its history and present attitude toward the West in a readable and profound way. See also his book, *What Went Wrong?* (2002)
9. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam* (2002). Short, but insightful
10. William M. Miller, *A Christian Critique of Islam*. Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976. Written by a long-term missionary to Muslims with broad experience
11. Chawkat Moucarry, *The Prophet and the Messiah: An Arab Christian's Perspective on Islam and Christianity* (InterVarsity Press, 2001). Very thorough and well-versed
12. Daniel Pipes, "The Danger Within: Militant Islam in America," in *Commentary*, November 2001. An incisive look at some Muslim groups' goal to make the US into an Islamic state. Sobering assessment. See also his book *Radical Islam Comes to America* (2002)
13. "Tolerance and the Qur'an" at: <http://answering-islam.org/Quran/Themes/tolerance.html>. Superb article written by a friend of mine, who must keep his or her identity secret for fear of persecution by Muslims

## CHRISTIANITY, INTELLIGENT DESIGN, AND SCIENCE

### I. Christianity and Scientific Claims: Warfare or Reconciliation?

- A. Rival sources of authority
- B. Naturalism and macro-evolution. Evolution as the only game in town. See Phillip Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (IVP, 1993), etc.
- C. Rhetorical situation between Darwinism and its rivals. See Thomas Woodward, *Doubts About Darwin* (Brazos, 2003)
- D. Models of relationship between science and Christianity
- E. The emergence of the intelligent design movement (or ID). See The Discovery Institute: <http://www.discovery.org/csc/>

### II. Theories of the Nature of Science

- A. Philosophy of science and science proper
- B. Debates on the nature of science (epistemology)
  - 1. Realism: science can know (or approximate) objective truth about the part of the universe it addresses
  - 2. Nonrealism: science may be “successful” without discovering truth
- C. The limits of science (illogic of scientism)
- D. Pascal on the human limits of science (Groothuis, *On Pascal*, chapter 3)
- E. The philosophical presuppositions of science

### III. Models of Integrating Science and Theology

- A. Different in essence
- B. Different in approach
- C. Theology as foundational for science. See work of Stanley Jaki
- D. Science delimits religion
- E. An interactive model: only apologetically fruitful method

#### IV. Objections to Creation as a Scientific Explanation

- A. What should we defend about creation? See Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (InterVarsity) and Lewis and Demarest, *Integrative Theology*
  1. *Ex nihilo* creation (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1)
  2. God's intervention to create the first life (Gen. 1)
  3. God's intervention to create species (Gen. 1)
  4. God's intervention to create first humans (Gen. 1)
  5. Age of the universe and earth question. See Francis Schaeffer, *No Final Conflict (IVP)*
    - a. "Day" sometimes used for "age" in Scripture
    - b. "Days" mentioned before the sun and earth, so not literal
    - c. Biblical genealogies not meant to be exhaustive chronologies
    - d. General revelation seems to reveal a very old earth and universe. See Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time* (NavPress, 1994)
      - Big Bang cosmology: 14-15 billion year old creation
- B. Why not theistic evolution?
  1. Exegetical/hermeneutical issues: the Bible doesn't allow it (literal first couple, literal fall)
  2. Scientific issues: problems with evolutionary theory
  3. Philosophical issues
    - a. Evolution makes Christian much theism less likely and God less involved in the universe (more like Deism)
    - b. Evolution invented to exclude God from explanation; it is still used as an alternative to theism (R. Dawkins especially)
- C. Biblical creationism (ICR) and intelligent design distinguished. See also William Dembski, *Intelligent Design* (IVP, 1999) (appendix)
- D. Creationism: literal six-day creation; global flood; negative program; theologically maximal
  - Institute for Creation Research web page: <http://www.icr.org/>

- E. Intelligent design: not necessarily six-day creation; leaves flood out of it; theological minimal
  - Attempt to introduce intelligence into science as an irreducible explanatory element; “wedge” strategy. See Phillip Johnson, *The Wedge of Truth* (IVP, 2000)
- F. Objections to concept of intelligent design in science
  1. God is a religious concept alien to science
  2. Idea of creation assumes the supernatural, which is unscientific
  3. Idea of creation derived from the Bible, therefore, not scientific
  4. Idea of creation makes no scientific predictions
  5. Idea of creation too narrow-minded to be science
  6. No positive evidence for creation; only criticisms of macro-evolution
  7. Idea is nothing but “God of the gaps” based on ignorance

## V. Problems with Macro-Evolutionary Model

- A. What is the theory of Darwinian evolution? Descent with genetic modification through natural selection accounts for all of life on earth
  - Some (such as Stephen Jay Gould) add other factors beyond what Darwin allowed, but retain descent with modification through selection
- B. “Icons of evolution” and the evidence (see Jonathon Wells, *Icons of Evolution*)
- C. Problems with naturalism outside of evolutionary theory: remember natural theology and negative apologetics against naturalism (naturalism leads to nihilism, etc.)
- D. The prebiotic soup and the origin of information. See the prolific work of Stephen Myer especially. See his referee journal article:  
<http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=2177&program=CSC>
- E. Problems with the fossil record (but this is not the only issue)
- F. Extrapolations from micro-evolution to macro-evolution: finch beaks and peppered moths (see J. Wells, *Icons*)
- G. Other sources of knowledge may contradict scientific theories

## VI. Intelligent Design as a Scientific Research Program

- A. Finding empirical evidence for design through a “design filter”



- B. Ruling out necessity (natural law) and chance as sufficient explanations
- C. “Specified complexity” (information) as the sign of intelligent design. See Dembski article in *First Things*
- D. Finding contingency, complexity, specification in “nature” (creation)
  - Irreducible complexity as evidence of design (M. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box*): springing the mousetrap

## **VII. Intelligent Design and Christian Apologetics**

- A. “The wedge” against naturalism (leading competitor to Christian theism)
- B. Opening to theistic and Christian explanations for natural phenomena
- C. Opening for non-Darwinian, non-theistic explanations of life
- D. Brings into the spotlight the problem of evil—design flaws or degenerated design?

Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, December 14, 2004

## **GOD AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL**

### **part 1**

My soul is in anguish.  
How long, O LORD, how long?—Ps. 6:3

I am the resurrection and the life.—John 11:25

#### **I. Worldview Prelude: Two Views of Evil**

- A. Buddha and death (Bart Gruzalski, *On the Buddha*, 39 – 40)
- B. Jesus against death (John 11:1 – 44)

#### **II. The Problem Evil: Perennial, Vexed, Formidable**

- A. Pastoral, existential problem: wisely coping with suffering (more later)
- B. The philosophical problem of evil
  - Testing the internal consistency of the Christian worldview
- C. Epicurus's statement of problem
- D. Harmonize four theistic propositions without inconsistency
  - 1. A personal God exists
  - 2. God is omnipotent
  - 3. God is omnibenevolent (all-good)
  - 4. There is objective evil: that which frustrates positive values (may or may not include suffering)
    - a. Natural, nonhuman evil
      - i. Natural evil affecting humans (hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, plagues)
      - ii. Natural evil affecting animals (Darwin's bane). See C. Hunter, *Darwin's God*
    - b. Human evil

- i. Intentional: murder, rape, adultery, other sexual perversions, theft, deception, gratuitous violence, bigotry, etc.
  - ii. Accidental: medical accidents, car accidents, “friendly fire”
  - iii. Ill-health (mental and physical): episodic, fatal, chronic (see: [www.whereisgod.org](http://www.whereisgod.org))
- c. Specifically Christian concepts of evil
  - i. Supernatural evil: Satan and demons (2 Peter 2:4)
  - ii. Hell: eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). See William Peterson, *Hell on Trial* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1995)

### III. Four Unsatisfactory Alternative (non-Christian) Explanations

- A. A personal God does not exist. What then of evil?
  - 1. What are the metaphysical necessary conditions for evil?
  - 2. What worldviews support (1)?
  - 3. Some form of monotheism. We have argued for Christian monotheism through natural theology (Romans 1 – 2)
  - 4. E. Stump, “The Mirror of Evil,” on the recognition of good against evil as evidence for God. Os Guinness, ed, *The Journey* (NavPress), 164 – 174.
- B. God is not omnipotent (as classically defined)
  - 1. Process theism view (Alfred North Whitehead, John Cobb, etc.)—God as finite. God is not a perfect being
  - 2. Openness theism view—God as lacking knowledge of future acts of free agents (Greg. Boyd, Clark Pinnock, John Sanders). God is a “perfect” being (on their reckoning)
  - 3. Against this, see Mark Talbot “True Freedom: The Liberty That Scripture Portrays as Worth Having,” in *Beyond the Bounds: Open Theism and the Undermining of Biblical Christianity*, ed. John Piper et al (Crossway, 2003), 77 – 110
- C. God is not omnibenevolent (all-good)
- D. Evil is not real, but illusory (Nondualism, Zen, Christian Science, New Age)
  - 1. “Only those who repent of sin, and forsake all evil can fully understand the unreality of evil”—Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and health With a Key to the Scriptures*
  - 2. Pain is real, incorrigible. Why are we all deceived, dupes, if no pain? Problem of deception emerges



Douglas Groothuis  
Defending Christian Faith, December 14, 2004

## **GOD AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL**

### **part 2**

My soul is in anguish.  
How long, O LORD, how long?—Ps. 6:3

I am the resurrection and the life.—John 11:25

#### **IV. Toward An Answer to the Problem of Evil**

- A. Two philosophical problems of evil
  - 1. Logical or deductive problem: any evil is too much for theism to be true
    - a. Handling the problem: suggest a principle to dissolve the contradiction
    - b. “God has a sufficient reason for any evil that God allows”
    - c. This is a “defense” (negative apologetics—weak rationality) not a theodicy (positive apologetics—strong rationality)
  - 2. Evidential or inductive problem: too much evil for theism to be rational

#### **V. A Response to the Problem of Evil**

- A. God did not create evil, is not the author of evil

Evil as “privation,” not a created substance (Augustine); C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, book two
- B. God would only create the “best of all possible worlds” (Leibniz, Corduan)
  - 1. Argument against this from Christian theists (R. Swinburne, R. Adams)
  - 2. What world must God create? A morally justifiable one
- C. Evil must be unavoidable condition for the highest goods. “Relative, instrumental dualism” (Bernard Ramm, *A Christian Appeal to Reason*)
  - 1. Free will defense (assumes libertarian/incompatibilist view of freedom; power of contrary choice)
  - 2. Problems with freewill defense (W. Dyrness, Ron Nash defend; Corduan, D.A. Carson critique)

- a. Philosophical: placement in garden; actions in heaven
  - b. Theological: compatibilism as Scriptural (Calvin, Jonathon Edwards, D.A. Carson, “The Mystery of Providence,” in *How Long, O Lord?*)
3. Higher human goods (“soul-making”) that require certain evils
  - a. Courage/heroism/sacrifice requires risk, danger
  - b. Patience requires obstacles, difficulties
  - c. Human triumphs require challenges, impediments, roadblocks
  - d. However, people may exhibit cowardice, despair, mediocrity, etc.
4. The present world as best way toward the best world: evil furthers greater goods (“greater good defense”)—Genesis 50:20
  - a. Appeal to Gods’ present purposes
  - b. Appeal to God’s larger purposes
  - c. Appeal to God’s final purposes (heaven and hell; new creation)
 

Hell, holiness, and human agency. See D.A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord?*, chapter 6.
5. Is there pointless or gratuitous suffering and evil? See Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:11
  - a. If God exists, there is no gratuitous evil
  - b. God exists
  - c. Therefore: there is no gratuitous evil
6. Mystery and limited explanation (Job; John 6:53 – 66; Romans 11:33 – 36)
 

Some reasons why it is hard to know why some evils exist (Craig, Sinnott-Armstrong, *God?* 116 – 119).
7. This is now the right world, given the nature of God and God’s ultimate aims (Corduan restated)
8. God’s suffering and Incarnation (missing from texts; see Millard Erickson, *The Word Made Flesh* [Baker, 1992])
9. God’s participation in the world, empathy (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 8:9)
  - a. “The Long Silence” in John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (InterVarsity, 1987)

- b. On the suffering of God, see D.A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord?* chapter 10
- 10. Christ's victory over sin, death, Satan (Romans 1:4; 1 Cor. 15)

*Main sources:*

1. Carson, D.A. *How Long, O Lord?* (Baker, 1990)
2. Corduan, Winfried, *No Doubt About It* (Broadman, Holman, 1997)
3. Dyrness, William. *Apologetics in a World Community*. (InterVarsity, 1983)
4. Nash, Ronald. *Faith and Reason*. (Zondervan, 1988)
5. Stump, Eleonore. "The Mirror of Evil," in Os Guinness, ed., *The Journey*, (NavPress, 2001), 164 – 174

*For discussions of how contemporary philosophers of religion deal with the problem of evil, see:*

1. Craig, William Lane, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, *God? A Debate Between a Christian and an Atheist* (Oxford, 2003). The second section primarily addresses the problem of evil.
2. Feinberg, John, "Why I Still Believe in Christ, in Spite of Evil and Suffering," in *Why I am a Christian*, ed., Norman Geisler, Paul Hoffman (Zondervan, 2001). Powerful personal and philosophical account of the author's struggle with intense natural evil in his family's life.
3. Feinberg, John, *The Many Faces of Evil*, revised ed., 2004
4. Moreland, J.P., William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (InterVarsity Press, 2003), chapter, "The Problem of Evil."
5. Taliaferro, Charles. *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (Blackwell, 1998). Chapter 9
6. Wainwright, William. *Philosophy of Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Wadsworth, 1999). Chapter 3

For a sophisticated defense (not a theodicy) of the Christian God in light of the problem of evil, see:

1. Plantinga, Alvin. *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford, 2000), chapter 14
2. Plantinga, Alvin. *God, Freedom, and Evil*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974)

## **VI. Notes on the Pastoral Problem of Evil**

- A. Struggle, God, Satan, and evil
  1. Submitting to God; resisting Satan (James 4:7 – 10)
  2. Submitting to God; resisting sin (Romans 6:15 – 23)

3. Submitting to God; resisting worldliness (Romans 12:1 – 2; James 4:4 – 5)
- B. The danger of false, unbiblical promises (the “faith movement”)—Jer. 8:8. See D. R. McConnell, *Another Gospel*
- C. Biblical promises to live by (2 Corinthians 1:18 – 22; 2 Peter 1:4)
- D. God’s uses of suffering gives hope
  1. Greater dependence on God, development of virtue (Romans 5:3 – 4)
  2. Greater empathy toward others through suffering (2 Corinthians 1:3 – 7)
- E. Eschatological encouragement
  1. The fate of the wicked in the end (Psalm 73; Matthew 25:46)
  2. Kingdom dynamics: the already-not yet
    - a. Wheat and the tares grow together until the end (Matthew 13:24 – 30)
    - b. Spiritual warfare is real (Acts 13:1 – 12; Ephesians 6:10 – 18). See Mark Bubeck, *Overcoming the Adversary* (Moody Press)
- F. Final judgment and the eternal state gives hope
  1. Eternal perspective on earthly life (2 Corinthians 4:7 – 11)
  2. The reality of the restored creation (Romans 8:22 – 25; Revelation 21:1 – 4)

On the pastoral problem of evil, see E. Stanley Jones, *Christ and Human Suffering*. New York: Cokesbury Press, 1933. An unsurpassed classic on dealing with evil with hope and wisdom. Jones was a Methodist missionary and devotional writer of great insight.