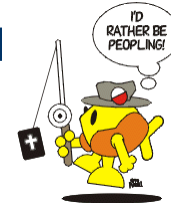
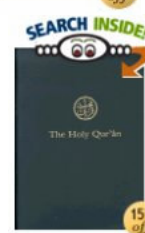
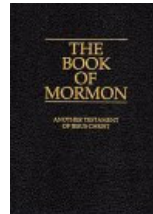
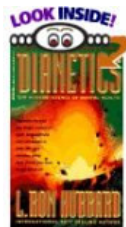
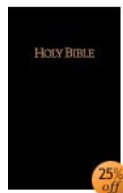
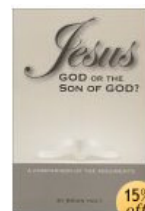
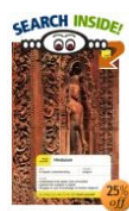


Christian Apologetics

Jim Yates
Mike Salzgeber
Christ Presbyterian
Church



Who do you trust?



Objectives for Today:

- To define apologetics and its use in the Christian life;
- To understand why a Christian should be ready to engage in apologetics;
- To discuss worldviews and presuppositions;
- To review the two differences in non-Christian thought (Max and Ruby)
- To answer some common objections to apologetics in American culture (the “Big Six”);
- Look at the keys to being a “peopler”.



What is Apologetics?

- The discipline that deals with a rational defense of the Christian Faith.
 - “...in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an **answer** to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...” – 1 Peter 3:15
- Greek word *apologia*
 - Verbal defense, speech in defense
 - A reasoned statement or argument

“But defending the faith isn’t for me!”

- Death / illness of a spouse / parent / loved one
- Doorbells – Jehovah’s Witnesses / Mormons
- “That’s your opinion”
- “How do I know I’m saved”
- “The skulls”



Why do we do apologetics? - Scripture commands it.

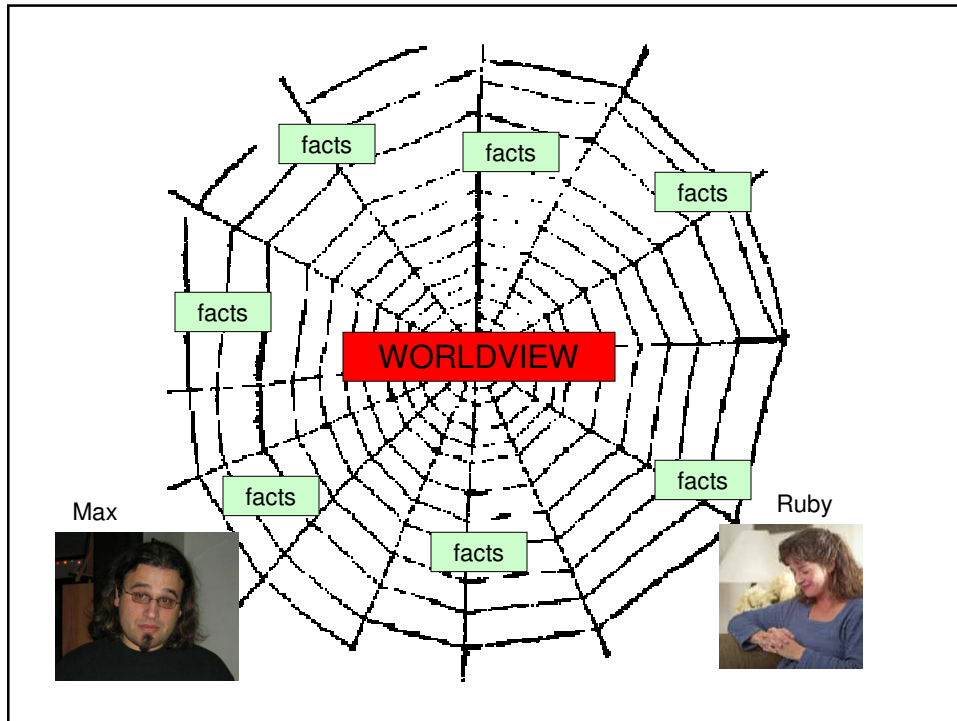
- Be “ready to give an answer” (1 Peter 3:15)
- Jude 3: “Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend for the faith** that was once for all entrusted to the saints.”
- 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We **demolish arguments** and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
- Mathew 28:18-20: “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

Why do we do apologetics? – It builds up believers.

- Reason enhances our faith. Faith will lead us to Christ and make us more reasonable.
 - *[Christ prepares] God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith **and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and **blown here and there by every wind of teaching** and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. -- (Ephesians 4:12-14)*
- Assurance of salvation
 - **Surely God is my salvation;**
*I will trust and not be afraid.
The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.* – Isaiah 12:2
- Matrix story – “He is the One”

Why do we do apologetics? – The world needs it!

- Apologetics is “pre-evangelism”
 - If God doesn't exist, then the gospel message is meaningless
 - If the bible isn't the word of God, then the story of Jesus is just a fairy tale or myth
- America has strayed from the notion of absolute truth
 - 91% of American evangelical high school graduates do not believe that absolute truth exists
- We are living in a post-Christian culture
- The world wants evidence! No one steps into an elevator shaft without an elevator being there
- The belief **that** something is true vs. believing **in** something.





Worldviews

- Our worldview is the core set of ***presuppositions*** by which we interpret facts and information
- It is the “lens” by which we see and interact with the world
- The closer one comes to discussing one’s worldview, the less factual, and more emotional, the debate becomes
- “Dead men don’t bleed”

The Response of the Religious and the Pagan

- “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. **Jews demand miraculous signs** and **Greeks look for wisdom**, but we preach Christ crucified: a **stumbling block to Jews** and **foolishness to Gentiles**, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God**. For the **foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength**.” – 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Max and Ruby – Different Worldviews

	Max the Pagan (GVP)	Ruby the Righteous
Analogy to First Corinthians	Gentile 	Jew 
Approach to spiritual matters	Looking for wisdom & knowledge – smokescreen for a worldview of self	Looking for evidence
Biblical counterparts	Epicurean & Stoic philosophers (Acts 17); Samaritan woman (John 5)	Apollos (Acts 18), Nicodemus (John 3), Pharisees (Matthew 12)
Salvation	Irrelevant – live for today	I'm saved by what I do / how I live
Apologetic approach	Presuppositional – show that their worldview is inconsistent	Classical – demonstrate the facts of the faith
Biblical examples	Paul at Athens (Acts 17)	Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2)

The “Big Six” objections to Christianity in modern American culture

- There can't just be one true religion
- The problem of evil and suffering
- The “sacredness of choice” – institutional religions aren't valid; I must decide for myself; “you're putting me in an ethical straightjacket!”
- The record of Christians throughout history (Crusades, etc)
- The “problem of anger” – human anger is a sign of authenticity, but divine anger is obscene
- The Bible is socially regressive (promotes blood sacrifice, speaks against homosexuality, etc.)

Objection #1 – “there can't just be one true religion”

- Presupposition – Religious truth is *relative*, not universal
- All religions cannot be equally valid
- Western inclusivism is tantamount to covert exclusivism – and a relatively new concept
- This view can only be true if God either doesn't exist or care about how we live
 - This is a single view of religion exclusive to most others
- “If you were born in Madagascar, you wouldn't be a Christian”
 - “...and if *you* were born in Madagascar, you wouldn't be a religious relativist”

Objection #2: Evil and Suffering

- How can God be all-powerful and all-loving at the same time?
- Presupposition – My comfort is the objective / reason of my existence
- We live in a society whose objective is to completely removing suffering – or even delayed gratification – as part of everyday life
- The “designer society”
- If God is powerful enough to stop evil, then God is big enough to have reasons to *not* stop it
- Christianity is the only religion who’s God has suffered with us

Objection #3: “The Sacredness of Choice”

- This rules out the institutional religion / government
- “You’re putting me in an ethical straightjacket!” – compulsion to believe is evil
- Presupposition: *I am my own God*
- Can we both agree that *somewhere*, a group of folks are doing evil that they believe in their heart is right?
 - 1960’s White Power movement, Nazi Germany in the 1930’s-1940’s

Objection #4: The record of Christians throughout history (Crusades, Inquisition, etc.)

- Presupposition: ***Actions define truth***
- Christians have pulled the culture back to morals and ethics by appealing to a return to Christianity!
- William Wilberforce, Martin Luther King
- The record of non-Christians isn't any better
 - Every 20th-century war was started by a government hostile to religion

Objection #5: “The Problem of Anger”

- Presupposition – ***Let's just all get along***
- Human anger is a sign of authenticity and sincerity, but divine anger is obscene
 - If someone has really wronged you, you can't just forgive and forget
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer – “every form of forgiveness is a form of suffering”
 - God isn't demanding our blood on the cross – He's demanding His own!

Objection #6: The Bible is socially regressive

- The Bible promotes blood sacrifice, speaks against homosexuality, forbids women to preach, etc.
- Presupposition: ***Cultural norms are absolute***
- The cultural norms that clash with our understanding of the Bible will be obsolete in 10 years
- It is not unreasonable to assume that God's morals and standards will be different from our own – perhaps even incomprehensible to us
- *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*
– Isaiah 55:9
- We don't serve a "Stepford God" who will never contradict us!

The Keys

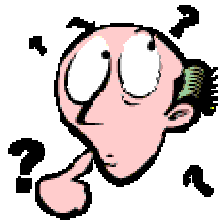
- Be Prepared: understand the facts and the objections / presuppositions of non-Christians before the conversation comes up
- "Excuse me, is your name Max, or Ruby?"
- Put ourselves in situations with friends / acquaintances where we will have the opportunity to share the gospel
- "Preach the gospel always, and when all else fails, use words" – Francis of Assisi
- "Don't Panic" – the results are up to God (1 Corinthians 3:6)

Course Outline

- Relativism - can we really know anything?
- Proving the existence of God pt. I
- Proving the existence of God pt. II
- Bible I - Where did the bible come from?
- Bible II - Why do we consider the New Testament to be reliable?
- Jesus I - Did Jesus really rise from the dead?
- Jesus II - Is Jesus God?
- Bible III - Is the Bible really the word of God?
- DaVinci Code - Fact or fiction
- Evolution - Is God really dead?
- Tough Subjects - God and evil, crusades/Christian hypocrisy, Old Testament brutality

For next week...

Relativism:



Can we really
know *anything*?