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TEACHING WORLDVIEW APOLOGETICS TO INCREASE
EVANGELISTIC CONFIDENCE AT PIPERTON BAPTIST
CHURCH, COLLIERVILLE, TENNESSEE

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TEACHING WORLDVIEW APOLOGETICS TO INCREASE
EVANGELISTIC CONFIDENCE AT PIPERTON BAPTIST
CHURCH, COLLIERVILLE, TENNESSEE

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To Leslie,
my loving and devoted wife;
to Bryant,
you are a gift from God;
and to Piperton Baptist Church,
my family in Christ.

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PREFACE

The completion of this work would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many. First, I want to thank Southern Seminary for its unwavering commitment to God's Word. The faculty and staff of Southern Seminary have cultivated within me a passion for higher education I never dreamed I would possess.

I want to thank Piperton Baptist Church for allowing me the privilege to serve as their pastor. They have provided me with the necessary time and encouragement to finish this project. Their love and support for me and my family means more than words can express.

Many others have provided support throughout the course of this project. My parents and in-laws have served as tremendous sources of encouragement. Lauren Moore has been an invaluable editor. My colleagues within the D.Ed.Min. program have challenged, sharpened, and encouraged me both professionally and personally. I am a better pastor today because of their influence.

I especially want to thank my wife, Leslie, for her sacrificial commitment and unwavering support throughout this project. I would not be the man I am today if it were not for her. She has served as my editor, encourager, and motivator throughout this journey. This project would never have been completed if it were not for her help.

Jeremy N. Todd

Collierville, Tennessee

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to train church members in worldview apologetics to increase the evangelistic confidence of Piperton Baptist Church in Collierville, Tennessee.

Goals

Three goals served as means in fulfilling the project's purpose. The first goal was for church members to obtain an increased confidence in evangelism. The survey instrument measured the confidence level of the congregation as it pertained to evangelism, comparing confidence levels at the beginning of this project to those at the end. It was the thesis of the project that one of the primary reasons people do not evangelize faithfully is because they lack confidence in their ability to do so.

The second goal was for church members to be equipped to use apologetics in evangelism in everyday life. Members were taught how to answer questions regarding three common apologetic issues: (1) what is the purpose and meaning of life, (2) how can I have faith when I still have so much doubt, and (3) how can someone believe in a God who allows pain and suffering? Individuals were taught not only how to answer appropriately, but also how to ask appropriate questions to engage those with whom they shared. A survey was used to compare each participant's confidence level using apologetics in evangelism at the beginning of this project and its conclusion.

The third goal was for church members to gain an increased understanding of the worldviews present within the community. The culture of Piperton, Tennessee, has

undergone significant changes in recent years. As the community changed, the congregation as a whole became less confident in sharing the gospel with those who did not share a similar worldview. It was my belief the more one understood the worldviews of others, the easier it would become to understand where and how to engage others with the gospel. To measure each participant's worldview understanding of the local culture a survey was administered comparing results from the beginning of the project to those at the project conclusion.

Ministry Context

Piperton Baptist Church is located in Piperton, Tennessee, in the far southwest corner of Fayette County. Although Piperton is in Fayette County, its zip code is for Collierville, Tennessee, in Shelby County. The city of Collierville falls firmly within the five-mile radius of the church and is where individuals living in Piperton travel for medical needs, groceries, restaurants, shopping, and entertainment. Collierville was once a small, rural town outside of Memphis, Tennessee, located on Highway 57, which runs from downtown Memphis straight through Shelby and Fayette Counties. It is along this highway that much of Memphis's growth has taken place, beginning downtown and extending out into the suburbs. The continued outward growth of suburbia is now extending further east to include Piperton.

In the year 2000, the population within a five-mile radius of Piperton Baptist Church was 26,006. According to the 2010 census data, the current population within a five-mile radius has increased to 29,162, a growth rate of 12.14 percent.¹ Before the housing market collapsed in 2008, immanent growth was forecasted for the community of Piperton. Like most of the country, since 2008 the booming housing market and

¹North American Mission Board, "Esri Census 2010 Summary Profile," NAMB, April 17, 2012.

commercial development have slowed tremendously. While growth has slowed, it has not stopped. A half-mile from Piperton Baptist, construction continues on Highway 385, a bypass surrounding the outlying suburbs of Memphis and connecting to Interstate 40. In addition to Highway 385, the Interstate 69 corridor, which will run from the border of Canada to Mexico as a major trade route, will pass directly through Piperton.²

One major limitation to immediate population growth within the community of Piperton is a lack of public schools. At this time, the nearest public high school in Fayette County for residents of Piperton and the surrounding communities is almost nineteen miles away. Currently, families with school-aged children attending Piperton Baptist Church either reside in Collierville, homeschool, or send their children to private schools. Most school-aged children attend Rossville Christian Academy in Rossville, Tennessee. Rossville Christian Academy is a small K-4 through 12th grade private school with an enrollment of approximately 300 students for the 2012-2013 school year.³ There are deep ties to Rossville Christian Academy within the church, as many parents who currently have children enrolled also graduated from the school themselves. At the time of this study, Piperton Baptist had no active members attending Fayette County public schools and every active member of the student ministry attended Rossville Christian Academy, which created difficulty in engaging families from Collierville. To evangelize the community of Collierville effectively, Piperton Baptist must develop avenues to engage neighboring Collierville schools with a *ögo and tellö philosophy and not a *öcome and seeö approach. In addition, until public schools are built closer to the Piperton community, population growth will remain limited.**

²Piperton, *öCity of Piperton,ö* Piperton, <http://pipertontn.com> (accessed April 24, 2012).

³Rossville Christian Academy, *öAbout Us,ö* Rossville Christian Academy, <http://www.rossvillechristian.com/about-rca/index.cfm> (accessed February 1, 2013).

The current median age of the community is 39.5, which is on par with the median age of Piperton Baptist at 40. A median age such as this within the community is indicative of a considerable number of young families with children in the area. The majority of these families are located just across the Shelby County border, where they are able to attend Collierville schools. These families comprise the largest mission field, at least population-wise, for Piperton Baptist. To engage families with young children effectively, a high priority on children's ministry must be established.

Ethnically, the five-mile radius of Piperton is predominantly Anglo as this ethnicity comprises 79.9 percent of the population. The other prominent and growing ethnicities include African American comprising 13.5 percent and Asian at 4.2 percent. Reflecting the community, Piperton Baptist is predominantly Anglo with very little ethnic diversity within the church. As the population of other ethnicities continues to increase, Piperton Baptist must become more intentional in efforts to overcome ethnic barriers.

Piperton Baptist Church was birthed out of the vision of a few families to establish a Baptist church in the Piperton community. After much prayer, community canvassing, and a considerable amount of resistance, Piperton Baptist Church held its first corporate worship services in 1985. Two years later, Piperton Baptist moved into its first permanent facility located on eleven acres of land donated to the church directly off of Highway 57, a location few would have envisioned twenty-seven years ago would potentially be as influential today.

Weekly worship services are held in a three hundred-seat auditorium, which allows room for growth. In 2008, Piperton Baptist constructed a multipurpose facility that contains a full-size basketball court seating four hundred people. This facility is used for a wide range of activities and events including athletics, fellowships, and Sunday morning worship services on occasion. In addition to the multi-purpose facility, an adjacent office facility was built containing four offices and a workroom. The education

space for the church has been pieced together over the years as the church has grown. Most of the education space is located in the former sanctuary, which was converted into a multi-room education wing. Additional education space is located in the former fellowship hall and education wing.

In its twenty-seven year history, Piperton Baptist has only had three pastors. The first pastor served for fifteen years and the second for nine, but both left on less than amicable terms. The congregation voted the first pastor out, and the second pastor abruptly resigned after a disagreement over an issue with the youth pastor, who also resigned around roughly the same time. Both men remain in Fayette County, and both are pastoring small churches in the area. Upon the second pastor's taking a new position at another local church, some members of Piperton Baptist moved their memberships to his congregation. The previous pastor's sudden departure caused significant hurt within the church that is still being worked through today.

Over the last ten years, Piperton Baptist has averaged 166 in Sunday morning attendance with a peak average attendance of 189 in 2009. Piperton Baptist was on pace for a record attendance average in 2010 until both the senior pastor and youth pastor resigned. The fallout of the events surrounding these resignations hurt the average attendance and overall membership significantly. As Piperton Baptist was without a pastor from November 2010 to September 2011, the average Sunday morning attendance dropped to 139. The current Sunday morning average attendance is 138.

The numerical growth Piperton Baptist has experienced over the past ten years has consisted of 207 individuals joining by transfer of letter from a sister Baptist church or by statement and 135 joining by baptism. These numbers reveal that strategic emphasis must be placed on assimilation, as the number of new members compared to the average Sunday morning attendance is not proportional. Of the 135 baptisms in the last ten years, 90 were of individuals under the age of twenty. Though this is not an

uncommon comparison to other churches throughout the country, it is a helpful reminder of the need for a strategic increase in adult evangelism efforts.

Current strategic evangelistic efforts within the church are limited. Weekly outreach takes place through the intentional follow-up of individuals who have visited the church and filled out a guest card, but if no one completes a card, there is no one to contact. Other traditional outreach events include the annual Wild Game Dinner and the Fall Festival. Each of these events is successful drawing a crowd, but based upon registration cards, primary attendees are individuals who are actively attending, or at least members of, other local churches. These efforts have produced some fruit but still rely heavily upon a "come and see" attraction approach to evangelism rather than a "go and tell" approach. It is important for intentional follow-up to continue with those who visit the church, but there must also be a greater emphasis placed on personal evangelism.

In an attempt to enforce the importance of evangelism and missions every Wednesday night prayer meeting begins with an intentional time of prayer for the lost. It has been emphasized that it is important to pray for the sick, and believers must continue to do so, but members are often guilty of praying more for physical needs than for the lost. Thus, the first portion of the prayer time together is focused on praying for the lost to come to saving faith in Christ. Outwardly it is evident that members grasp the importance of praying for the lost to come to faith in Christ, yet they still spend considerably more time praying for physical needs.

To encourage personal evangelism, each member was challenged at the beginning of 2012 to share the gospel with at least three individuals and to continue sharing until they come to faith in Christ. In addition, congregants were challenged to pray daily for the lost both locally and globally. Forty-five individuals accepted the "New Year" challenge. However, as of June 2013 there were no baptisms that resulted

directly from this challenge. To help with evangelistic efforts, evangelism tracts are freely provided.

If Piperton Baptist is to become a truly evangelistic congregation, the emphasis on and training in evangelism must continue. One of the greatest hindrances to personal evangelism was simply a lack of confidence in one's ability to share the gospel. As a result, individuals were provided with training that not only taught what to share, but how to answer difficult questions that commonly arise in evangelism.

Project Rationale

Most Christians acknowledge the importance of evangelism, but at the same time acknowledge they are not as faithful in doing so themselves. Some admittedly do not evangelize at all. All too often pastors, preach guilt-filled sermons emphasizing the importance of evangelism, but fail to address any of the obstacles that commonly prevent one from sharing their faith. The pastor is then left with a congregation who feels guilty, yet remains unequipped to overcome that which is preventing them from evangelism. Pastors would be well served to use their awareness of the lack of evangelism to fuel effective training.

If it is every believer's responsibility to share the gospel, and legitimate fear exists among the church body preventing one from fulfilling this responsibility, it is the responsibility of the local church to provide appropriate training. This training must not only teach one how to share the gospel, but also equip one to respond to the many hurdles that surround someone coming to faith in Christ. Depending upon the culture, hurdles to the faith may vary. In some cultures the authority of Scripture may be the hindrance, while in others it is the reliability of the resurrection accounts; however, neither of these are primary hurdles to faith in West Tennessee. Thus, in order to equip the people of Piperton Baptist Church as confident evangelists within their community, they were trained to answer the questions they will potentially face.

By training Piperton Baptist members to defend their faith and overcome key evangelistic hurdles, they will become more confident evangelists. It is the belief that greater confidence will result in willing and faithful witnesses. Faithful witnesses will boldly proclaim the gospel, resulting in increased opportunities for response to the gospel.

Definitions and Limitations

The following definitions will be utilized in this project.

Apologetics. As defined and used within this project, is the discipline that deals with a rational defense of the Christian faith. The term comes from the Greek word *apologia*, which means to give a reason or defense.⁴

Evangelism. As defined and used within this project comes from the 2000 *Baptist Faith and Message* of the Southern Baptist Convention and reads as follows:

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.⁵

Worldview. As defined and used within this project literally means one's view of the world. It is a model of the universe that informs individuals what the world is like and how they should live in it.⁶ A Christian's worldview must always be determined by the teachings of Scripture.

⁴Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 37.

⁵The Southern Baptist Convention, "Baptist Faith and Message," SBC, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp#xi> (accessed April 18, 2012).

⁶Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 23.

Limitations of this project are as follows: The length of the project was limited to fifteen weeks consisting of one week for initial survey, one week for man-on-the-street interviews, ten weeks for an apologetics themed Sunday sermon and teaching series, two weeks of community engagement, and one week to evaluate the project.

The second limitation related to participants in the project. The project was open to everyone eighteen years of age and older who committed to be a part of the project. A minimum of 12 to 15 individuals were recruited from those serving in teaching and leadership capacities within the church, but anyone willing to commit to the expectations of the project was able to participate. Participants had to participate in a minimum of ten weeks of the project and provide the last three numbers of their social security number for use in comparison measurements.

Research Methodology

The focus of this project consisted of teaching the congregation of Piperton Baptist apologetics through a ten-week Sunday morning sermon series and a ten-week Sunday night teaching/training time, in order to increase evangelistic confidence. Each Sunday night consisted of in-depth teaching, case studies, discussion, and numerous opportunities for participants to ask questions regarding what was learned. The research methodology centered on the project's three goals.

The first goal was for church members to obtain an increased confidence in evangelism and the second goal was for church members to be equipped to use apologetics in evangelism in everyday life. To measure the effectiveness of the project in accomplishing the first two goals, an identical pre-project survey was administered to participants on weeks 1 and 15 of the project during the Sunday evening worship service. The survey was anonymous, but each participant was asked to provide the last three digits of his or her social security number, which served as an identification tool to compare the results from week 1 to week 15.

The survey utilized 4 open-ended questions along with a 6 point Likert scale indicating strongly disagree, disagree, disagree somewhat, agree somewhat, agree, and strongly agree. Participant responses were used to measure confidence and understanding in the areas of evangelism, apologetics, and worldview. Results of the survey were analyzed and evaluated by assigning each Likert scale answer a numerical value. Responses were tabulated to determine the average response for each answer. Week 1 responses were compared to week 15 responses to measure change. A t-test was used to analyze all dependent samples of the pre and post project surveys.

The third goal of the project was for church members to gain an increased understanding of the worldviews present within the community. To help accomplish this goal each project participant was sent out to conduct "Man-on-the-Street" interviews in the second week of the project. The interviews were designed to open the participant's eyes to the various worldviews existing within the community. The evangelistic engagement of the community in weeks 13 and 14 served to further enlighten participants of the worldviews present within the community as well as to build their evangelistic confidence. To measure this goal, a set of opened ended questions on the survey allowed for comparison of participant responses from week 1 to week 15.

Project participation was open to every member of the church eighteen years of age and older who committed to the expectations of the project. Twenty-five individuals were personally recruited to participate within the project, though the goal was to obtain as many participants as possible. Recruitment consisted of personal invitations via email, phone calls, and one-on-one conversation. Each prospective participant was informed at the time of recruitment of the expectations of the project, which consisted of each participant agreeing to attend a minimum of 10 of the projects 15 weeks.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR
TEACHING WORLDVIEW APOLOGETICS

The New Testament Mandate for Apologetics

Anyone who has an opinion and subsequently seeks to defend his or her position is an apologist. The question is, what kind of apologist is he or she? A Christian apologist by definition is one who defends Christianity against alternative worldviews. Worldviews are like opinions: everyone has one, but not all are backed up by truth. Sadly, the same can be said about the faith of many Christians. For this reason, apologetics is of paramount importance.

In addition to defending the faith, apologetics serves as a valuable tool to strengthen the faith of the believer. According to author, professor, and philosopher Douglas Groothuis,

One reason Christianity has failed to exert much influence on the major intellectual institutions of America is that too many Christians hold their beliefs in an uninformed and precarious fashion. Instead of pursuing answers to the toughest questions an unbelieving world can marshal, they attempt to preserve certainty through ignorance and isolation, relying on platitudes rather than arguments.¹

Many professing Christians provide little to no intellectual defense of the truths they claim to believe. In a world of ever increasing skepticism, many within the church believe Christianity is only a matter of faith, not intellect; however nothing could be further from the truth. Christians have an obligation to make an intellectual case for their beliefs. Jesus himself affirmed that Christians should love God with all their heart, soul,

¹Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2011), 26.

and mind (Matt 22:37-38). It is the mind, however, that is most often neglected, despite a calling to provide a defense and give a reason for the hope within (1 Pet 3:15).

It is not enough for Christians to simply claim biblical truths; they must also be able to defend them. Apologetics enables a Christian to use his or her mind to remove, or at least diminish intellectual obstacles preventing the unbeliever from coming to faith in Christ. The apostles Peter and Paul, and even Jesus himself used apologetics to defend the truths of the gospel. While Jesus is seldom referred to as an apologist, it is evident throughout the Gospels that he reasoned, debated, and provided a defense for his own identity to the sharpest of critics. Jesus, Paul, and Peter employed apologetics establishing a model for all Christians to emulate.

Jesus as an Apologist

The identity of Jesus of Nazareth has been debated for nearly two thousand years. Some claim he was God in the flesh, others claim he was a prophet, and still others identify him as a great moral teacher. While it is beneficial to understand one's opinion on Jesus's identity, it is most important to understand what Jesus himself taught regarding his identity. In reading the Gospels, one finds evidence of Jesus's extraordinary claims to be the divine Son of God. His claims are so extraordinary that in *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis responds by writing,

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.²

Since Jewish leaders perceive Jesus to be simply a mortal man, it is understandable that his claims are met with such skepticism, doubt, and even hostility. On more than one occasion, the hostility Jesus encounters escalates into a desire to have

²C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (1952; repr., New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 52.

him executed for claiming to be one with God (John 5:18, 8:59). In the third of such encounters described in the Gospel of John, Jesus once again faces the threat of execution as he claims, *“I and the Father are one”* (John 10:30). Following this claim, the Jews prepare to stone him. Jesus responds to this action by saying,

“I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” The Jews answered him, *“It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.”* Jesus answered them, *“Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods?’ If he called them gods to whom the word of God came and Scripture cannot be broken do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’ If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.”* (John 10:31-38)

Unlike the previous two encounters in John’s Gospel, Jesus does not immediately withdraw (John 5:13; 8:59). Instead, he confronts his opponent’s lack of belief by defending his claim to be the divine Son of God through apologetics. In this particular case, Jesus points his accusers directly to his works as sufficient evidence. Here, Jesus challenges his opponents to consider which of his performed miracles have justifiably earned their wrath. In defense of his claim, Jesus goes straight to the Old Testament Scriptures and references Psalm 82:6-7, *“I said, ‘You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince.’”* Jesus uses this text to prove that the word *“god”* is legitimately used in Scripture to refer to others aside from God himself. He is making the point that if there are others whom God can address as *“god,”* on what biblical basis can anyone object to Jesus referring to himself as the, Son of God?³

³D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 397.

Jesus's aim with this argument is not to prove that he is the Son of God in the full-blooded sense revealed through the Gospel of John. If this were the case, his argument would be without merit. However, as D. A. Carson states,

He recognizes that the animus of his opponents has not been thought through. In the heat of their opposition to what they hear Jesus to be saying, they are partly right (he does make himself equal with God), partly wrong (this fact does not establish a competing God), and profoundly mistaken (they have not grasped the drift of their own Scriptures to see how he fulfills them, nor have they known God well enough to perceive that the revelation he is and brings is in continuity with and the capstone of the revelation of God already provided).⁴

Jesus's rebuke stalls the crowd long enough for him to appeal once again to the testimony of his words and works (John 10:37-38). He is fully aware of the manner in which his claims are perceived and never expects people to accept them without reason. As a result, Jesus points his accusers to his works, which are always consistent with his claims, as sufficient evidence of his deity. Yet, his works do not convince everyone.

In Matthew 12:38 Jesus is asked by some of the scribes and Pharisees to provide a sign to prove his claims. Jesus responds to this request stating, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt 12:39-40). This passage is the first in which Matthew hints that Jesus will die and rise from the dead. Just as Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of a fish, Jesus will spend three days and nights in the earth. The sign Jesus offers the scribes and Pharisees is not what they expected, yet it is the greatest sign he could provide. The resurrection Jesus alludes to offers the ultimate validation of his identity and mission.⁵ Jesus's resurrection, according to apologists Norman Geisler and Patrick Zukeran, was a

⁴Ibid., 399.

⁵David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 326.

õmajor component of his apologetic, and it was central to the teachings of the apostles, who understood that it was the ultimate proof of Christõs deity.ö⁶ The apostles understand that without the resurrection, there is no salvation and no basis for the Christian faith (1 Cor 15:17; 1 Pet 1:3).

While Jesusõs miracles were an important part of his apologetic witness, one must not overlook his use of logic and reason. As a rational human being, Jesus uses all laws of thought beginning with the law (or principle) of noncontradiction. This principle states that something cannot be both true and false simultaneously.⁷ For example, Jesus cannot be both sinless and sinful; and if there is only one God, there cannot be many gods. Jesus uses the law of noncontradiction when he warns of false prophets in contrast to true prophets (Matt 7:15; 24:24). In the same way, he shows how those who are children of the devil cannot be children of God (John 8:42-47).

Another powerful line of reasoning used by Jesus is the a-fortiori argument, which is when oneõs opponent accepts a similar conclusion with even less evidence.⁸ For example, in Matthew 12:9-14 Jesus enters a synagogue in which he encounters a man with a withered hand. The Jewish leaders, in an attempt to accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, ask, õIs it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?ö (Matt 12:10). Jesus replies, õWhich one of you who have a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbathö (Matt 12:11-12). The obvious fallacy of the Jewish leaders argument, which Jesus quickly points out, is if rescuing sheep on the Sabbath is

⁶Norman L. Geisler and Patrick Zukeran, *The Apologetics of Jesus: A Caring Approach to Dealing with Doubters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 47.

⁷Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 417.

⁸Geisler and Zukeran, *The Apologetics of Jesus*, 70.

acceptable, how much more acceptable should it be to heal a man created in the image of God?

Some Christians are hesitant to label Jesus as an apologist fearing that such a label may be perceived as demeaning. Jesus is, after all, the divine Son of God, the second member of the Trinity, and both fully divine and fully human. Yet as a human, Jesus engages in numerous educated debates with others regarding his divinity. Jesus's use of apologetics includes the testimony of witnesses, miracles, the resurrection, prophecy, reason, the use of parables and more.⁹ He clearly understands that rational human beings must investigate rational evidence prior to making decisions.

Jesus's situation is unique, as he was both an apologist and the apologetic. As the apologetic, the defenses he brings forth are directly connected to his own identity as the Son of God. As an apologist, Jesus never establishes a formal apologetic method, yet he also never establishes a formal systematic theology. The lack of a formal systematic theology does not diminish his clear belief in the doctrines of the divine inspiration of the Old Testament (Matt 5:17-18; John 10:34-35), his sacrificial atonement (Mark 10:45), his physical resurrection (Matt 12:40; John 16:5-7), and his second coming (Matt 24-25).¹⁰

The Apostle Paul as an Apologist

The apostle Paul was a brilliant apologist. In his letters, he exhorts the church to speak against and have a defense for any argument denying the truth of the gospel (2 Cor 10:3-5; Phil 1:7, 16; Col 2:8-9). His letters call the church to take a stand for the truth, and his sermons and personal witness set the example for how such a stand should look. Upon entering a new city to preach the gospel, Paul customarily travels to the local synagogue to argue from the Scriptures first (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1-3, 10, 17; 18:4, 19).

⁹Patrick Zukeran, "The Apologetics of Jesus," http://www.probe.org/site/c.fdkEIMNsEoG/b.5036703/k.5E09/The_Apologetics_of_Jesus.htm (accessed August 14, 2012).

¹⁰Geisler and Zukeran, *The Apologetics of Jesus*, 185.

His audience typically consists of Israelites (Jews by birth and in some cases by conversion) and Gentiles, who recognize that the one true God is worshiped in the synagogue, and possess a desire to join in worship. In each of Paul's synagogue experiences, the Gentiles prove most open to receiving the good news Paul proclaims.¹¹ In Athens, Paul continues his pattern of going to the local synagogue to reason from the Scriptures. In the golden age of Athenian history, the city produced philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The schools and artists in Athens were unmatched by any other city in the world. In Paul's day, the city of Athens had become both politically and commercially insignificant, yet still retained its reputation as the intellectual center of the world.¹² Thus, Paul engages them on an intellectual level.

Following his customary visit to the local synagogue, Paul engages the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles while in the Agora, the center of Athenian life and activity. Among those with whom Paul converses are the Epicureans and Stoics, followers of two of the best-known philosophical schools of the period. The Epicureans who follow Epicurus (341-270 BC), are indifferent to gods and similar to agnostic secularists, who do not fear God or death, and simply live for pleasure. The Stoics follow the teaching of Zeno (340-265 BC), and are pantheists who argue for the unity of humanity and kinship with the divine.¹³ As much as the Epicureans and Stoics differ from one another, they agree that Paul's message does not appeal to reasonable people. Their agreement leads to Paul gaining an audience with the Court of the Areopagus, which exercises jurisdiction in matters of religion and morals.¹⁴ Standing in the midst of the Areopagus, Paul

¹¹F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, The International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 253.

¹²John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999), 208.

¹³Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 561.

¹⁴Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 331.

immediately establishes a bridge to the gospel by saying, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" (Acts 17:22-23). By establishing this bridge Paul captures the audience's attention, opening the door to share the gospel.

Paul's apologetic approach begins with a clear understanding of his audience. In this particular case, he understands he is evangelizing a pagan audience whose knowledge of God, as taught in Romans 1:19-22, is impaired by idolatry. For this reason, it is necessary to begin with a statement about the living and true God.¹⁵ Speaking against the Athenian philosophies, Paul presents a God who is personal, transcendent, immanent and relational. Groothuis states that Paul "conveys all this before uttering a word about Christ. Paul should be our apologetic model here as well. Unless we establish a biblical view of God, people will likely place Jesus in the wrong worldview, taking him to be merely a guru or a swami or prophet rather than Lord, God and Savior" (Phil 3:20; Col 2:9).¹⁶ Thus, apologists would be wise to follow Paul's lead by taking the time to define a biblical view of God before pointing people to the cross.

Paul establishes a clear contrast between the "Lord of heaven and earth" (Acts 17:24) and the false gods of the Athenians.¹⁷ Paul also makes a point of contact with the Athenians by citing two Greek poets when he says, "In him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring'" (Acts 17:28). In doing so, Paul demonstrates his understanding of Athenian culture, which appears to impress his audience. According to Darrell Bock, "Paul is working

¹⁵Ibid., 334.

¹⁶Groothuis, *Christians Apologetics*, 35-36.

¹⁷Ibid., 36.

with ideas in the Greek world that are familiar to the Athenians and only alludes to Scripture in his speech instead of quoting it directly.¹⁸ Paul's use of logic, reason, and cultural intellect convey that mankind is God's offspring; one should not think God to be like any humanly crafted object or image.

Paul is not content to leave this apologetic discourse satisfied with merely debating worldviews and philosophical ways of thought. Rather, Paul calls his audience to repent of their idolatry and respond to Jesus Christ by stating, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). In this text, the resurrection is used by Paul as the overwhelming evidence of the validity of his claims just as Jesus did (Matt 12:38-40). In the same way, Christians today should continually point to the resurrection as definitive proof that Jesus is who he claims.

The Apostle Peter as an Apologist

The apostle Peter writes to encourage Christians dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1) to persevere in the faith even in the midst of suffering. Peter concedes that suffering may occur even when one does right, but in such times he or she must remain faithful to Christ. Such faithfulness in the midst of suffering will naturally bring about questions as to how one remains so hopeful. For this reason, Peter exhorts Christians to always be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame" (1 Pet 3:15-16). Many Christians use this

¹⁸Bock, *Acts*, 568.

passage to justify the need for apologetics. While it is a legitimate application of this verse, it is not exactly what Peter had in mind. Peter was not referring to professional or academic fields of apologetics, or to a courtroom defense of the gospel in these verses. Rather, this passage alludes to informal circumstances in which believers are asked spontaneously about their faith.¹⁹ Peter desires for Christians to humbly and respectfully defend the hope they have in Christ to anyone who might ask.²⁰ Peter assumes believers have solid biblical and intellectual grounds for believing the gospel. According to Thomas R. Schreiner,

The truth of the gospel is a public truth that can be defended in the public arena. This does not mean, of course, that every Christian is to be a highly skilled apologist for the faith. It does mean that every believer should grasp the essentials of the faith and should have the ability to explain to others why they think the Christian faith is true.²¹

If Christians are living out their faith in the midst of suffering, questions are naturally going to arise. Yet, Peter does not imply one is to give a reason for "faith," but rather for "hope." The "hope" Peter speaks of is the very hope separating Christians from the world. This "hope" invites conflict that will require one to offer a defense for his or her beliefs. Persecution and hostility are viewed as inevitable for the Christian. It is not a question of whether suffering will come, but rather how Christians must give an answer for the hope within when trials do come; a hope focused upon the eternal rather than the temporal.

It is important to acknowledge Peter never advocates a withdrawal from society to avoid persecution. Rather, he recognizes isolation from the culture fails to

¹⁹Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 174.

²⁰Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 230.

²¹Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 175.

advance the gospel. The implications of this verse raise a significant question: How many Christians today can articulate a defense for their faith that can be understood by today's culture? According to Karen H. Jobes, "Most testimonies, when given at all, are given in a Christian gathering, using the jargon of the church, which makes perfect sense to the converted, but in terms that have little meaning for those who are not already believers."²² While this practice may uplift fellow Christians, it does nothing to engage the world with the gospel. Christians must be able to relate the Christian faith to unbelievers by addressing questions in terms unbelievers will understand.²³

Christians for generations have faced the challenge of giving a reason for the hope that is within them. R. C. Sproul states,

The discipline of apologetics did not die in the second century; rather, it lives on, because with each passing generation, wherever Christianity flourishes, so too do distortion, misrepresentation, overemphasis, and outright malicious deceit. The church's opponents will continue to accuse her of doing evil (this is assumed in 1 Peter 3:16), and so the Christian apologist assumes a defensive posture in order to repel false accusations whenever they come.²⁴

Unfortunately, many Christians today argue apologetics is not necessary, but nothing could be further from the truth. While one cannot come to faith in Christ without the intervention of the Holy Spirit, apologetics is not useless. It is the Christian's job to provide a defense for the "hope" within. Apologetics used simply as a means of persuasion or argument will never save anyone, but when used to soften an unbelieving heart to receive sound biblical doctrine, it can succeed as a means to winning souls. Christians must remember that the Spirit never asks people to believe absurd or irrational claims.

²²Jobes, *1 Peter*, 230.

²³Ibid., 230-31.

²⁴R. C. Sproul, *Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 16.

Common Hurdles to Coming to Faith in Christ

What is the Purpose of Life?

From creation to present day, mankind has questioned the purpose and meaning of life. According to Groothuis, "It haunts our songs and our poems, it stalks our relationships, and it troubles our philosophies and religions."²⁵ The author of Ecclesiastes, while pondering this question, determines that everything "under the sun" or life without reference to God is meaningless (Eccl 1:2-3); a term used in over thirty passages throughout the book.²⁶ The author lists everything from wisdom to work as meaningless (Eccl 2:17-23, 4:4-6), as ultimately everything concludes with death. The author realizes that even the wisest and wealthiest person in the world can do nothing to escape death. Even more frustrating for the author of Ecclesiastes is one's inability to know for certain the day and time of death. Such frustration is apparent as he writes, "For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them" (Eccl 9:12). His frustration with death is a theme that runs throughout the entirety of Scripture.

While Ecclesiastes is never quoted in the NT, there is an allusion to its message in Romans 8:18-21:

For I consider that the suffering of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

The author's perspective of the world in Ecclesiastes is restricted to a world separated from God. Such hopelessness is the byproduct of the curse of the fall without an

²⁵Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 419.

²⁶Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, The New International Commentary of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 32.

understanding of God's redemption. As a result, nothing on this earth has meaning, not wealth, wisdom, hard work, nor charity as in the end, death brings everything to an end anyway.²⁷ However, the NT teaches that Jesus Christ is the one who redeems his children from the vanity and meaninglessness of this world. His death, burial, and resurrection restore meaning to wisdom, labor, love, and life. By facing death, Jesus conquers the biggest fear the author of Ecclesiastes and mankind face—death. As Tremper Longman states, "He showed that for believers death is not the end of all meaning, but the entrance into the very presence of God."²⁸ Thus, for those who are in Christ, death is not the end it is only the beginning.

Sadly, many today believe that life is simply the result of an accident. For example, renowned atheist Richard Dawkins believes, "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose."²⁹ The key for Dawkins is the word appearance. He goes on to say,

Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the blind watchmaker.³⁰

If this statement were true, it would in fact be impossible for life to have meaning. However, as author C. S. Lewis points out, "Consequently atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with

²⁷Ibid., 39-40.

²⁸Ibid., 40.

²⁹Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 9.

³⁰Ibid.

eyes, we should never know it was dark. Dark would be a word without meaning.³¹ Lewis is correct, atheism is too simple. Regardless of what Dawkins and others like him say, people continue to seek an answer for the meaning of life. If everything is simply the byproduct of an accident like they suggest; why do people continue to seek an answer for life's meaning?

The Bible insists that nothing in existence is here by accident. Life has meaning, because the Creator of life gives it meaning. As David writes in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." The declaration of all creation is to and for the glory of God. Even though the sun, moon, and stars are inanimate entities, they are the work of his hands and reflect him as their maker.³² If these inanimate entities have been given such a great purpose to reflect the glory of God, what then of the human race? The first two chapters of Genesis teach that all people are made in the very image of God: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Gen 1:27) Human beings represent God and are like him in a way that no other creature is in heaven or on earth. According to Vaughan Roberts, "We should realize that none of us is insignificant. All of us, whatever, our gender, race, sexual orientation and physical or mental capacity, have great dignity and worth."³³ Every person, no matter how corrupt by sin, is created in the image of God and exists for a purpose.

The dignity of man is reflected in God's command to Noah in Genesis 9:6, which reads, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image." To kill another human being is to destroy one who bears

³¹Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 39.

³²Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 19 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 180.

³³Vaughn Roberts, *Life's Big Questions: Six Major Themes Traced through the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 43.

the image of God. Even in a post Genesis 3 world there is no evidence sin has marred the divine image.³⁴ The mere fact mankind is made in and continues to bear the image of God explains something very important about purpose and meaning. As divine image bearers, each person is designed to reflect the Creator, in order that his glory may be revealed.

In an attempt to share the gospel and give answer for the meaning of life, Paul in his address to the Areopagus states,

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. (Acts 17:24-27)

Paul understands that before he can share Christ, he has to meet his hearers where they are and in a way they can understand. Thus, he begins with a discussion about the God who gives meaning to all things. He eventually concludes by proclaiming the risen Christ (Acts 17:31). Paul understands from the moment he engages the Areopagus in discussion that the question of life's meaning will ultimately lead to the originator of meaning. For the believer, this meaning is ultimately found in Jesus Christ.

How to Reconcile Faith and Doubt

Doubt is not simply an intellectual or philosophical issue. Anyone who believes anything at all understands a little something about doubt. However, those who know why they believe find themselves in a position to also discover why they doubt. The world of Christian faith, according to Os Guinness, is not a fairy-tale, make-believe world, question free and problem-proof, but a world where doubt is never far from faith's

³⁴Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 315.

shoulder.³⁵ A child continues to believe in Santa Claus even when he or she begins to experience doubt. When their doubting minds begin to seek answers, they traverse the path of faith to doubt, and ultimately to unbelief and for good reason, because Santa Claus is not real. Questions lead the child to truth. Should an unbeliever's or Christian's pursuit of truth be any different? Is it wrong to have questions?

People who go through life unwilling or indifferent to asking hard questions about the faith they claim to believe, will ultimately find themselves defenseless when tragedy strikes or when they face the probing questions of a skeptic. Even one who claims to walk with Jesus for many years can see his or her faith collapse if he has not sought answers to his own doubts. Only those who struggle long and hard with objections to the faith will be able to provide an intellectual response to skeptics.³⁶ Thus, it is important to recognize that doubt is not necessarily a bad thing.

Faith is not doubt free. In fact, every doubt is actually based on a leap of faith. One cannot doubt one thing without having at least a small amount of faith in something else. In the case of Thomas, one of Jesus's original disciples, he doubted the validity of the resurrection claims made by the witnesses, because he did not have sufficient evidence to believe. Thus, he had at least a reasonable amount of faith that Jesus had not risen from the grave (John 20:24-29). In every case of such doubt, Timothy Keller suggests, "In fairness you must doubt your doubts." He continues by stating, "If you recognize the beliefs on which your doubts about Christianity are based, and if you seek as much proof for those beliefs as you seek from Christians for theirs" you will discover

³⁵Os Guinness, *God in the Dark: The Assurance of Faith Beyond a Shadow of Doubt* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1996), 14.

³⁶Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), xvi.

that your doubts are not as solid as they first appeared.³⁷ Thomas doubted, but his doubt ultimately led him to faith in Christ:

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:24-29)

Thomas is affectionately known by many as "doubting Thomas," but this label is not entirely fair. If Thomas had been present when Jesus first manifested himself to the disciples, he too would have more than likely believed.³⁸ To this point in Thomas's ministry, according to D. A. Carson, "Thomas has shown himself a loyal disciple of the Jesus who went to the cross, so far as he understood him; he has not been a believer in any distinctly Christian sense."³⁹ His doubt is keeping him from taking the step of faith, but his doubt is also not yet unbelief. Thomas requires evidence, and evidence is what he receives. Whether or not Thomas actually touched the marks on Jesus's hands is not known, but the impression given is that the mere sight was sufficient. He was so overcome with what he witnesses that he immediately confesses Jesus as Lord (John 20:28). His confession is evidence of honest doubt leading to faith. If Thomas had not confessed Jesus as Lord, his doubt would have become unbelief.

While Thomas's faith is not as notable as those who believe without seeing, Jesus still immediately praises Thomas for his faith upon his confession. Yet, as Carson

³⁷Ibid., xviii.

³⁸Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 656.

³⁹Ibid., 657.

notes, “Jesus here foresees a time when he will not provide the kind of tangible evidence afforded the beloved disciple and Thomas; in short, he will ascend to his Father permanently, and all those who believe will do so without the benefit of having seen their resurrected Lord.”⁴⁰ Thomas, like all other witnesses of the resurrection, believed after seeing the risen Christ.⁴¹ Believers today are not afforded such a luxury, so what of their doubts? They must seek the answers they are looking for and that Scripture provides. When confronted with the truth they, like Thomas, must confess Jesus as Lord or see their doubt turn into unbelief.

Another biblical example of doubt leading to faith is found in Mark 9, when the father of the demon possessed boy cried out, “I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24). In this comment, the father condemns his own doubt as unbelief. He first asks the disciples to heal his son (Mark 9:18), yet their inability to exorcise the demon has shaken his faith. The father’s “I believe” statement to Jesus exhibits a “mustard-seed-like” faith (Matt 17:20), as he pleads for Jesus to help his unbelief. He knows the only way Jesus will heal his son is if he believes, yet doubt lingers as the disciples were unable to do so. Thus, the father stands shaken, doubting, but desperately wanting to believe.⁴² His words become, in a sense, a doubter’s prayer and for good reason. Jesus never responds to genuine unbelief, but heals this man’s son recognizing this man is dealing with doubt; doubt erased when his son is healed.⁴³

Doubt is not necessarily negative, but it is not a trivial matter, either. A healthy understanding of doubt guards against a breakdown of faith when tested. One

⁴⁰Ibid., 659.

⁴¹Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 754.

⁴²Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 434.

⁴³Guinness, *God in the Dark*, 27.

must recognize doubt is not the opposite of faith, nor is it the same as unbelief.

According to Guinness, "Doubt is a state of mind in suspension between faith and unbelief so that it is neither of them wholly and it is each only partly."⁴⁴ Faith and doubt are suspended between a desire to affirm and to discredit. As a result, one can never completely doubt anything; doubt that reaches this point is no longer considered doubt, it is unbelief.⁴⁵ Guinness adds,

Find out how seriously a believer takes his or her doubts and you have the index of how seriously he or she takes faith. For the Christian, doubt is not the same as unbelief, but neither is divorced from it. Continued doubt loosens the believer's hold on the resources and privileges of faith and can be the prelude to the disasters of unbelief. So doubt is never treated as trivial.⁴⁶

Apologetics can help those who doubt address the reasons for their uncertainty and ultimately help them make a decision based upon fact. Faith not rooted in fact can be just as dangerous as unbelief. Unbelievers, according to Grant, "Need to be treated as genuine doubting Thomases and presented with the evidence they need to answer their questions. At the same time, they must be challenged to acknowledge, 'If I see, I will believe.'⁴⁷ If one does not believe he cannot see and if he cannot see he cannot believe. If Thomas had refused to believe after seeing the evidence requested, he would have revealed his unwillingness to believe.

One can be presented with all the evidence in the world, but if he still refuses to believe, his problem is no longer doubt, but unbelief. Apologetics is a great tool for evangelism and must always lead to a clear presentation of the gospel, but apologetics in and of itself will never cure someone of their unbelief. David Watson, in his book *My God Is Real*, writes,

⁴⁴Ibid., 26.

⁴⁵Ibid., 27.

⁴⁶Ibid., 29.

⁴⁷Ravi Zacharias and Norm Geisler, eds., *Is Your Church Ready? Motivating Leaders to Live an Apologetic Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 64.

Unless we are born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God. A man once stood on a soap box at Hyde Park Corner, pouring scorn on Christianity. "People tell me that God exists, but I cannot see Him. People tell me that there is a life after death; but I cannot see it. People tell me that there is judgment to come, but I cannot see it. People tell me there is a heaven and hell, but I cannot see them . . . " He won cheap applause and climbed down from his "pulpit." Another struggled onto the soap box. "People tell me there is green grass all around, but I cannot see it. People tell me that there is blue sky above, but I cannot see it. People tell me that there are trees nearby, but I cannot see them. You see, I am blind!"⁴⁸

No single argument will ever convince an unbeliever God exists or that one needs to put his or her faith in Christ. For this reason, Christians must never wait for every question to be answered and every argument to be settled before sharing the gospel. Jesus himself used signs and wonders as evidence of his claim to be the Christ and many believed, but many more did not. For those who did believe, it was not the signs that saved them, rather the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Apologetics, like signs, serves as a tool to point people to Christ. The aim of apologetics is to see one enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ who can, by his Spirit, invade the human soul and grant the gift of eternal life.⁴⁹

The Problem of Evil

The problem of evil stems from a number of related beliefs about God that appear to be incompatible with the evil found in the world. For example, Christians believe God is totally good (omnibenevolent), all-knowing (omniscient), all-powerful (omnipotent), and the creator of all things.⁵⁰ Yet, the world is filled with evil: natural evil and moral evil. Natural evils are events such as tornadoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and floods. Also included in this category are diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, and birth defects. Moral evils stem directly from human actions, such as

⁴⁸David Watson, *My God Is Real* (Eastbourne, England: Kingsway, 1985), 78.

⁴⁹Zacharias and Geisler, *Is Your Church Ready?* 66.

⁵⁰Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland, eds., *To Everyone An Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 207.

violence, murder, terrorism, lies, and theft. Thus, many in their inability to reconcile these difficulties conclude the existence of evil in the world makes it unlikely God exists.

People try to explain the reason for evil in numerous ways. Some who are unable to reconcile the God of the Bible and the existence of evil turn to different religious worldviews such as dualism, pantheism or to the antireligious worldview of naturalism, which completely denies the existence of God.⁵¹ A simple observation of the culture leaves little doubt that naturalism is the preferred worldview of those who choose to deny the existence of God on the basis of evil. The truth, however, is if one chooses to reject the existence of God because of evil, he or she must also come to terms with something far worse than suffering: meaningless suffering. If God does not exist, there is no justice, and thus no significance to the human life.⁵²

God does exist, and as his image bearers, mankind has an innate longing for justice. Every man, woman, and child recognizes evil as a problem because creation was not designed to be evil. Thus, Christians who are able to provide a biblical defense for the existence of evil open the door for countless evangelistic opportunities. While intimidating, Christians must realize the problem of evil is not a topic to shy away from. Rather, as Albert Mohler states,

A faithful Christian response will affirm the true character and power of God—His omnipotence and His benevolence. God is in control of the entire universe, and there is not even a single atom outside His sovereignty. At the same time, God's goodness and love are beyond question. The Bible leaves no room for equivocation on either truth.⁵³

When giving an answer for pain and suffering, Christians must speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. The Scriptures are clear that the God

⁵¹Ibid., 209.

⁵²Paul Williams and Barry Cooper, *If You Could Ask God One Question* (New Malden, UK: The Good Book Company, 2007), 96.

⁵³R. Albert Mohler Jr., *Culture Shift: Engaging Current Issues with Timeless Truth* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2008), 126.

of the Bible is not the author of sin. When God created the heavens and the earth, (Gen 1:1) evil was not a part of creation. Where then did evil originate? The answer is found in Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve willfully chose to rebel against God by giving into the temptations of the serpent. God did not tempt or coerce them to sin; the serpent did. One may argue the fall was inevitable because of Adam and Eve's finitude, but he or she must recognize all of God's creatures are finite, and the unfallen angels remain both finite and sinless to this day.⁵⁴

Adam and Eve's rebellion brought catastrophic consequences not only to themselves, but to all of creation. The reason natural and moral evils exist is because sin exists. If the fall had not occurred, evil would not exist. Why then did God allow Adam and Eve to be tempted? If God is all powerful, why did he not create a world where evil was an impossibility? Augustine in his classic response to the problem of evil states,

For the Almighty God, who, as even the heathen acknowledge, has supreme power over all things, being Himself supremely good, would never permit the existence of anything evil among His works, if He were not so omnipotent and good that He can bring good even out of evil.⁵⁵

Recognizing the good in the midst of suffering is not easy and is why this topic raises much doubt among believers and nonbelievers alike.

Consider the story of Joseph. Joseph, the most loved of Jacob's twelve sons, was seventeen years of age when his brother's evil actions changed his life forever. While his father (Jacob) dearly loved Joseph, his brothers hated him. In a moment in which their anger had reached a boiling point, Joseph's brothers imprisoned him in a pit and sold him into a life of slavery (Gen 37). After many years of slavery and suffering in Egypt, Joseph finds himself miraculously sitting second in command only to Pharaoh over all of Egypt (Gen 41:37-44). During his rule, a seven-year famine fell upon the land

⁵⁴Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 626.

⁵⁵Augustine, *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*, trans. J. F. Shaw (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1961), 11.

bringing Joseph's brothers to Egypt to purchase grain for their family. They were shocked and fearful when they found Joseph in charge (Gen 42). They expected Joseph to seek vengeance for their evil action against him, but instead they heard Joseph say:

Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. (Gen 45:5-8)

Joseph explains to his brothers that God had, in fact, sent him ahead of them "to preserve life." At some point in his tumultuous journey, Joseph reasoned all of his circumstances had occurred for this very reason. He even tells his brothers, "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Gen 50:20). One must assume, according to Victor Hamilton, "That Joseph perceived bit by bit the hand of God in this nightmare. It is doubtful . . . that he embraced this conviction as a seventeen-year-old on his way to Egypt."⁵⁶ As Joseph was given the opportunity to look back over the course of events that brought him to this point, he began to understand why things happened the way in which they did. If it were not for the evil actions of his brother, he would never have risen to second in command over Egypt. If it had not been for the natural evil found within the famine, his brothers would have never come seeking grain. If he had not risen to second in command over Egypt, Joseph would not have been able to save his family from the famine. Everything was working for a grander purpose.

Joseph's spiritual maturity is displayed in his ability to come to grips with God's sovereign plan. However, there are likely means God accomplished through Joseph's suffering he never understood in his lifetime. For example, it is doubtful Joseph

⁵⁶Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 575.

ever understood how his suffering led to the continuation of God's plan of redemption announced by God to his great grandfather (Gen 12:1-3). It is only by looking within the larger biblical narrative one recognizes what Joseph's suffering ultimately accomplishes. Joseph's words to his brothers recall a number of statements in Proverbs pointing to the divinely established order no human actions can destroy (Prov 16:4, 7).⁵⁷ As Proverbs 19:21 reads, "Many are the plans in the mind of man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand." Paul makes essentially the same point within the NT as he writes, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28). According to Keller, Joseph's words emphasize that, "If you have a God great and transcendent enough to be mad at because he hasn't stopped evil and suffering in the world, then you have (at the same moment) a God great and transcendent enough to have good reasons for allowing it to continue that you can't know."⁵⁸ What one can be confident in, as Joseph's story illustrates, is God's sovereignty working all things together for his glory (Rom 8:28).

While moral evil can be explained by the autonomous actions of men and women, natural evil appears to be more problematic, as it is not caused by the free actions of human beings. For example, the events of September 11, 2001, are difficult to comprehend, but people have someone to blame. Joseph's suffering was no less painful, yet he knew whose hands sold him into slavery well before he came to an understanding of God's sovereign plan. Tragedies such as the Asian tsunami in 2004, or the Haitian earthquake in 2010, leave people searching for someone or something to blame. For the naturalist, the scientific explanation will suffice, but how is the Christian to respond?

A common assumption made by Christians and non-Christians alike is that suffering as a result of natural evil is punishment for sin. While there are times in which

⁵⁷Ibid., 578.

⁵⁸Keller, *The Reason for God*, 25.

this is true, as with Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:23-29), it is not the case of every affliction. Jesus addresses this line of thinking in John 9:1-7:

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

Jewish rabbis at this time in history generally believed in a direct cause and effect relationship between suffering and sin.⁵⁹ The same train of thought is found in the book of Job, about which Tremper Longman III teaches, "Loudly and clearly denies that all suffering is the result of sin or that all suffering has the purpose of discipline. The cause of suffering is much too complex to be reduced to a single explanation that can be applied to every case."⁶⁰ While acknowledging the possibility that suffering may be the direct result of sin (John 5:14), Jesus denied this was always the case (Luke 13:2-3). Likewise, Paul acknowledged suffering can at times be the consequence of sin (Rom 1:18-32; 1 Cor 11:30), but was adamant this was not automatic (2 Cor 12:7; Gal 4:13).⁶¹ For this reason, the book of Job serves as a warning against those who judge others on the basis of their suffering.⁶²

As for the man born blind, the disciples evidently accepted the same train of thought as the Jewish rabbis. Yet, they struggled to understand how a man could have sinned before his birth, or why a man would have to bear such a terrible punishment for

⁵⁹Andreas J. Kostenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 281.

⁶⁰Tremper Longman III, *Job*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 462.

⁶¹Kostenberger, *John*, 281.

⁶²Longman, *Job*, 462.

the sin of his parents. Thus, the disciples put the matter to Jesus.⁶³ Jesus responds to their inquiry stating this happened not because of sin, but "that the works of God might be displayed in him" (John 9:3). Here Jesus illustrates even evil ultimately contributes to the greater glory of God, and this is no more evident than in man's sinfulness resulting in Christ's crucifixion.⁶⁴

Although it is difficult to comprehend evil serving to bring God glory this is what Scripture continually reveals. Jesus addresses this line of thinking again in Luke 13:1-5:

There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

Some seem to have reached the conclusion, like those mentioned in the account of the blind man, that the victims of these tragedies must have deserved such punishment. However, Jesus never says, "They deserved it." In fact, he adamantly refutes this line of reasoning. Jesus insists these deaths were not specific punishments stemming from particular sins, and insists those who survived were no more righteous than those killed.

In the midst of tragedies, people often talk about the innocent victims, but notice Jesus does not. Instead, he asks the question, "Do you think they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?" Jesus implies everyone who lived in Jerusalem during these tragedies were guilty of sin. Those who died were no more deserving of death than those who survived. To the survivors Jesus is clear, "unless you

⁶³Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 425.

⁶⁴Kostenberger, *John*, 281.

repent, you will all likewise perish.”⁶⁵ According to Darrell Bock, “The issue is not when death will happen or why, but avoiding a terminal fate with even greater consequences.”⁶⁶ Only repentance will prevent the death that lasts (Luke 3:8; 6:24-26; 10:13; 12:58-59; 15:7). The comparison then is between dying tragically in this life and perishing ultimately before God.⁶⁷ All that remains for mankind is to acknowledge the temporal and fragile nature of this life tragedies such as these reveal, and heed the word of Jesus to the crowd: “repent.” Jesus issues a call for everyone to repent, as disaster looms eternally for all who do not repent and believe.

The reality of evil and the pain and suffering that accompany it cannot be denied. There is no one on this earth able to avoid the consequences of the fall, regardless of whether or not he or she is rich or poor, black or white, believer or nonbeliever. Pain is inevitable for all. Yet, often in times of pain and suffering people become more receptive to evangelistic efforts. As C. S. Lewis notes, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”⁶⁸ Sadly, it often takes painful circumstances to get one’s attention. Christians must be mindful they are not exempt from suffering. For this reason Peter exhorts Christians to always be “prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Pet 3:15-16). Suffering will come, and when it does, Christians must be prepared to give an answer for the hope that is within them— a hope focused on the eternal and not the temporal.

⁶⁵Williams and Cooper, *If You Could Ask God One Question*, 100.

⁶⁶Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1206.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (1940; repr., New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 91.

The Bible also teaches that trials serve to verify the sincerity of one's faith. James writes, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (Jas 1:2-4). While one may be unable to control the trials that come his or her way, each is able to control the way in which he or she thinks about and responds to such trials. As such, James indicates trials are to be regarded as joy as they are an opportunity to endure and prove genuine faith. James is not saying there is no sorrow in trials; rather the reason for joy is not in the suffering, but in its fruit. Ultimately, one's ability to experience joy in the midst of suffering is evidence of genuine faith.⁶⁹

Many who think they have "lost their faith" in the midst of trial actually discover they lacked genuine faith all along. Thus, as Grant states, "When God tests us, we cannot lose what we never had. Tests do not make us lose our faith; tests reveal our faith or lack of it."⁷⁰ From an evangelistic standpoint Grant adds, "It is easier to persuade unbelievers to embrace something they have never had before (real faith) than to try to help them re-embrace something they "lost," which in fact was a false hope and failing them anyway."⁷¹ Ultimately, the reason any good is able to come out of evil stems from the cross of Christ. At the cross, the single greatest example of good triumphing over evil becomes evident. As much as one might like to ask, "Why does God allow suffering?" one's real problem is sin and the real question ought to be "Why did God allow Jesus to suffer on the cross?"⁷² The only way to make sense of the suffering in this world is through the cross of Christ.

⁶⁹Dan G. McCartney, *James*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 84-85.

⁷⁰Zacharias and Geisler, *Is Your Church Ready?* 68.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 68.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 70.

Conclusion

As this chapter details, Christianity is a matter of faith, but it is also a matter of intellect. God never asks people to believe absurd or irrational claims and neither should Christians. People are seeking answers to life's most difficult questions and Christians have an obligation to provide intellectual responses. Simply telling someone to have more faith is not enough. Sadly, many professing Christians are unable to provide an intellectual defense for the truths they claim to believe. Thus the need for apologetics, as it equips a Christian with the ability to use his or her mind to provide a reason for the hope within. By following the apologetic examples of Jesus, Paul, and Peter a Christian will recognize that apologetics serves as a valuable tool not only in defending the faith, but in strengthening faith as well. To this end, Christians should model the apologetic example of Jesus and his followers, and engage non-believers with the gospel both intellectually and in a way he or she can understand.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES OF TEACHING WORLDVIEWAPOLOGETICS TO INCREASE EVANGELISTIC CONFIDENCE

A Postmodern Culture's Shaping Effect on Worldviews

The American culture has shifted and the basic contours of the American culture have been radically altered. The Christian consensus that has encapsulated this nation over the last several hundred years has now given way to both a postmodern and a post-Christian ethos.¹ In this culture, truth is no longer acknowledged as absolute; rather it is defined by each individual personally. No one, according to popular culture, has the right to define truth, morality, or cultural standards. As a result, the worldview of most Americans today is secular, pluralistic, relativism void of any objective standard of truth. According to R. Albert Mohler, Jr.,

Americans have adopted a therapeutic worldview which has transformed all issues of right and wrong into newly created categories of authenticity, self esteem, codependences, and various psychological fads which basically tell us that we are victims, not responsible moral agents. A cult of self-worship has developed, substituting a search for the inner child in place of the worship of the transcendent God.²

The culture that once existed has shifted and there are no signs of it shifting back. Consequently, the church, whose voice in the culture is often dismissed, or ignored all together, is left with three distinct options: retreat from the culture, blend into the culture, or engage the culture with the truth of the gospel.

¹R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "Transforming Culture: Christian Truth Confronts Post-Christian America," Albert Mohler.com, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2009/07/16/transforming-culture-christian-truth-confronts-post-christian-america-2/> (accessed 5 February 2013).

²Ibid.

By default, people are engaged in the world around them. How one views the world shapes who they are, how they think, and how they act. Whether realized or not, each have taken sides. An unbiased observer simply living life in neutral does not exist. Each is driven by his or her deepest beliefs and most basic presuppositions regarding the world. These basic beliefs and presuppositions serve as lenses through which all people prejudge any given situation.³ While few possess a carefully constructed theology, everyone has a worldview. Francis Schaeffer states, "This is as true of the man digging a ditch as it is of the philosopher in the university."⁴ Whenever anyone thinks about anything, from casual thought, to profound questions, one is operating within such a framework of understanding the world. Essentially one's worldview is the perspective through which one perceives what is ultimate, what is real, what his or her experiences mean, and what his place is in the universe.⁵ In fact, as James Sire states, "It is only the assumption of a worldview— however basic— that allows one to think at all."⁶

An examined and thoughtful worldview is more than a private personal viewpoint. As David Dockery states, "it is a comprehensive life system that seeks to answer the basic questions of life."⁷ Every worldview can be effectively analyzed by the way it answers three basic questions: Where did everything come from? What has gone

³Ted Turnau, *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012), 8.

⁴Francis Schaeffer, *Francis A. Schaeffer Trilogy: He Is There and He is Not Silent* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 279.

⁵John Piper and Justin Taylor, eds. *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 34.

⁶James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 5th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 19.

⁷David S. Dockery and Gregory Alan Thornbury, eds. *Shaping A Christian Worldview: The Foundations of Christian Higher Education* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 2.

wrong with the world? And how can what is wrong be made right?⁸ These three questions, according to Chuck Colson, form a grid that we can use to break down the inner logic of every belief system or philosophy that we encounter.⁹ If a given belief system fails to answer these three questions, it cannot be viewed as a viable worldview. These three questions are based upon the belief that objective truth exists. However, what happens when the existence of objective truth is denied? According to Mohler, when truth is denied, only therapy remains and the critical question shifts from asking, “What is true?” to “What makes me feel good?”¹⁰ The question is no longer “Is there a God?” but rather, “Which God?” The question is not “Was Jesus the Son of God?” but “How can I believe there’s just one way to heaven?”¹¹ This growing secular worldview, which can be identified as postmodernism, denies the existence of objective truth and is fundamentally and functionally atheistic, viewing all truth as relative.

The term “postmodernism” came into use around 1971 and was initially used to refer to a new architectural style, but was quickly applied to the world of ideas.¹² The term moved from architecture and the arts, to the classroom, and to the workplace, and from the workplace to the home. Today, postmodernism is an intrinsic part of the American culture’s philosophical framework. At its most basic level, postmodernism refers to the passing of modernity and the rise of a new cultural movement.¹³ Modernity

⁸Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999), 14.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Chicago: Moody, 2008), 121.

¹¹David S. Dockery, ed., *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 179.

¹²Alister E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 29.

¹³ Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 115.

is characterized by the belief that truth exists and is proven through the scientific method, while the postmodern movement holds that truth is not determined by its connection to objective reality.¹⁴ Rather, postmodernism is determined by various social constructions devised for different purposes, such as language.¹⁵ According to postmodernism, nothing one believes he or she knows can be verified against reality. Reality itself is nothing more than a social construction. Therefore, it is language that actually creates reality, making what is real for one linguistic group unreal for another.¹⁶ Thus, one cannot determine the "truthfulness" of language, only its usefulness.¹⁷ Truth is considered merely a matter of perspective, changing from one culture to the next. As Douglas Groothuis states, "Objective truth is ruled out in principle. Truth dissolves into communities, ethnic groups, genders and other contingent factors. No one 'metanarrative' (or worldview) can rightly claim to be a true and rational account of reality."¹⁸ Therefore, what is right for one individual or culture is not always right for another, and what is wrong for one individual or culture is not always wrong for someone else. Simply put, everyone's opinion is as equally true as another.

One major problem with the postmodern view however, is that society holds certain acts such as racism, rape, child abuse, murder, and terrorism as objectively evil, not as relative social constructions. Nevertheless, when postmodernism is carried to its ultimate conclusion, even these horrific acts are considered relative, as no absolute

¹⁴John MacArthur, *The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 9.

¹⁵Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 128.

¹⁶J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 145.

¹⁷Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 223.

¹⁸Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 119.

objective standard for truth or morality exists. How do true postmodernists respond to this dilemma? By simply stating that one man's terrorist can just as easily be defined as another man's freedom fighter. In other words, what is considered ethically right in one culture may not be permitted in another, but this does not make the act inherently wrong.¹⁹ The ripple effect of such thinking inevitably leads not only to confusion, but to a redefining of morality. While most people will never intentionally carry postmodern thought to its inevitable conclusion, such thinking has massive influence upon the shaping of culture. What is deemed wrong today could be considered culturally acceptable in just a few short years. One need not look any further than the ever changing political landscape to see this philosophical evolution illustrated.

In nations with religious freedom, most citizens consider religion to be a matter of personal preference. In these nations, one is as equally free to be a Christian as they are a Muslim, Mormon, or atheist. While each belief system possesses drastic differences, to the point of defining the other belief systems as erroneous, each until recently, have found a way to tolerate the other. One belief system may disagree with what the other believes, but they have fought for the other's right to believe freely. This view of tolerance, according to D. A. Carson, makes three assumptions: first, objective truth exists, and this truth must be pursued; second, each disputing party believes it knows the truth, and all opposing views are wrong; third, each party holds that the best way to persuade others to their understanding of the truth is through the sharing of ideas.²⁰ Consequently, the definition of tolerance has been altered. Under the new definition of tolerance no one view is seen as exclusively true. All beliefs, values, lifestyles, and truth claims are considered equal, which raises serious ramifications. For instance, if as Carson states, "the new tolerance evaluates all values and beliefs as

¹⁹Piper and Taylor, *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World*, 52-54.

²⁰D. A. Carson, *The Intolerance of Tolerance* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 6.

positions worthy of respect, one may reasonably ask if this includes Nazism, Stalinism, and child sacrifice or, for that matter, the respective stances of the Ku Klux Klan and other assorted ethnic supremacist groups.²¹ Subsequently, total relativism regarding religious beliefs is difficult, if not impossible to sustain.

The goal of human philosophy in modernity is truth existing without the existence of God. Today, however, postmodern philosophies are open to the notion of God existing without truth. In other words, a personal spirituality in which everyone is free to create his or her own god.²² Many professing Christians who are influenced by postmodernism, ignorantly change the biblical concept of truth by applying their personal understanding of truth to the Scriptures to justify their personal beliefs. One problem with this practice is that Christianity affirms certain doctrinal truths, i.e. the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, as essential tenets of the faith. To deny these and other doctrines is to deny Christianity all together. Today, many professing Christians have no problem picking and choosing biblical doctrines to believe and deny. For example, the Bible teaches hell is a literal place where those who do not repent of their sins and believe in Christ will spend eternity when they die. Yet, professing Christian and author Rob Bell in his book *Love Wins* writes,

A staggering number of people have been taught that a select few Christians will spend forever in a peaceful, joyous place called heaven while the rest of humanity spends forever in torment and punishment in hell with no chance for anything better. It's been clearly communicated to many that this belief is a central truth of the Christian faith and to reject it is, in essence, to reject Jesus. This is misguided, toxic, and ultimately subverts the contagious spread of Jesus's message of love, peace, forgiveness and joy that our world desperately needs to hear.²³

²¹Ibid., 13.

²²MacArthur, *The Truth War*, 8.

²³Rob Bell, *Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived* (New York: Harper One, 2011), viii.

Rather than denying Christianity, Bell, like many, chooses to simply redefine it to something with which he is more comfortable. In doing so, Bell, instead of God ends up defining the Bible's meaning, resulting in the loss of objective truth. When a work is no longer defined by its author, but rather by the reader, truth is inevitably lost. While enticing to some, this smorgasbord approach, as Groothuis states, "lacks intellectual integrity because it makes religious belief something to use instead of something to discover and live by."²⁴ Thus, religious confidence erodes, and a spirituality void of certainty and sustained conviction develops instead.

In the end, postmodernism leads to chaos, intolerance, and division as it denies an objective standard of truth. Without an objective and unchanging standard of truth, people are free to live however they choose regardless of how their actions affect others. The end result of this postmodern thought has yet to occur, but communities unable to agree upon an objective standard of truth will inevitably fall apart. The only question is when will this occur? The responsibility of the church in times such as these is to stem the tide of the changing culture, not by fleeing, but by engaging culture with a Christian worldview.

The Christian Worldview

Within the western culture, there are two major competing worldviews: Christian theism and a postmodern version of secular humanism.²⁵ Both views frame how one perceives, understands, and interacts with the world. A healthy worldview will always bring reality into sharp focus, while an unhealthy worldview will blur reality.²⁶ Consequently, the best way to drive out an unhealthy worldview is to provide a healthy

²⁴Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 131.

²⁵Piper and Taylor, *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World*, 52.

²⁶J. Mark Bertrand, *(RE) Thinking Worldview: Learning to Think, Live, and Speak in This World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 27.

one. A healthy worldview is determined by its ability to answer the three basic questions mentioned previously: Where did everything come from (creation)? What has gone wrong with the world (fall)? And how can what is wrong be made right (redemption)? The only worldview that can effectively accomplish this aim is the Christian worldview, which has Jesus's life, death, and resurrection at its core.

A Christian worldview is simply another way of describing what happens in redemption, as one's entire outlook on life is re-centered on God and re-built on his revealed truth.²⁷ As Nancy Pearcey states, "God does not save only our souls, while leaving our minds to function on their own. He redeems the whole person. Conversion is meant to give new direction to our thoughts, emotions, will, and habits."²⁸ All intellectual activities must be pursued through the filtering lens of a Christian worldview to determine whether they are allied with truth or engaging an enemy.²⁹ A Christian worldview, as defined by David Dockery, is "an all-consuming way of life, applicable to all spheres of life."³⁰ Genuine Christianity is much more than one's personal relationship with Jesus confined to church attendance, private Bible study, and believing a system of doctrines about God. Instead, genuine Christianity is a way of viewing and comprehending all reality.³¹

Fundamentally, a worldview is one big storyline with a beginning, middle, and end. The Christian worldview's storyline serves to provide intellectual answers to life's most difficult questions through a biblical understanding of creation, fall, and redemption. By applying this grid (creation, fall, redemption), Christians can identify

²⁷Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 46.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 46.

²⁹John MacArthur, ed., *Think Biblically: Recovering a Christian Worldview* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 49.

³⁰Dockery, *Shaping a Christian Worldview*, 2.

³¹Colson and Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live*, 15.

non-biblical worldviews, analyze where they go wrong, and provide an appropriate defense. For example, the Christian worldview answers the question of existence and purpose by presenting a necessary, intelligent, and all-powerful being as the author of all truth and life. The postmodern secular worldview, on the other hand, is fundamentally and functionally atheistic, and provides no reasonable answer to this question. In further comparison, the Christian worldview sees truth as absolute, while postmodernism views truth as relative. The Christian worldview views matters of ethics through the unchanging character of God, while postmodern secularists view ethics as something determined by culture and negotiable in nature.³² In general, postmodernism is marked by a tendency to dismiss even the possibility of objective truth, and suggests that if it does exist, it cannot be known with any degree of certainty.³³ The Christian worldview however, claims to be the objective standard of truth, precisely because God himself is the source of all truth. As John MacArthur states, "Truth cannot be adequately explained, recognized, understood, or defined without God as the source. Since He alone is eternal and self-existent and He alone is the Creator of all else, He is the fountain of all truth."³⁴

The metanarrative through which one views all reality is ultimately the context for one's life and how one understands the meaning of life. According to postmodernism, however, no single metanarrative is possible to affirm, because no single metanarrative is large enough to encompass the experiences of all people.³⁵ This claim stands in stark contrast to the Christian worldview that claims to be the universal truth standard for viewing all of reality. Christians, as Mohler states,

Do not present the gospel as one narrative among many true narratives or merely as our narrative alongside the authentic narratives of others. We cannot retreat to

³²Piper and Taylor, *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World*, 52-54.

³³MacArthur, *Total Truth*, 10-11.

³⁴Ibid., 4.

³⁵Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 133.

claim that biblical truth is merely true for us. Our claim is that the Bible is the Word of God for all—a claim that is deeply offensive to the postmodern worldview, which charges all who claim universal truth with imperialism and oppression.³⁶

Offensive or not, the Christian gospel is nothing less than the worldview of all worldviews.³⁷ Rather than allowing one's thoughts to be held captive by the culture, a Christian must take every thought captive to Jesus Christ.

The construction of a healthy Christian worldview is a matter of discipline needed by every believer. As Dockery states, "This disciplined, vigorous, and unending process will help shape how we assess culture and our place in it. Otherwise, culture will shape us and our thinking. Thus a Christian worldview offers a new way of thinking, seeing, and doing, based on a new way of being."³⁸ While faith is necessary, it is not sufficient. Christians must possess the intellectual capability to think Christianly in every facet of life. With the constant redefining and outright denial of truth today, Christians must hold to the gospel as the objective standard of truth. Therefore, it is the church's responsibility to equip its members with the intellectual prowess to stand firm in the universal truths of the gospel.

The benefits of possessing a well formulated Christian worldview go far beyond simply knowing how to think Christianly. According to Groothuis, "The very articulation of the Christian worldview may have a weighty apologetic effect, even apart from its philosophical defense."³⁹ For instance, the Christian faith carries a negative stigma for many people today. The reasons for this stigma vary, but most result from misconceptions regarding what Christians believe. By clearly explaining what Christianity affirms and denies, one may remove impediments to belief produced by false

³⁶Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 119.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 118.

³⁸Dockery, *Shaping A Christian Worldview*, 9-10.

³⁹Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 78.

stereotypes.⁴⁰ In addition, when the Christian worldview is presented as an intellectual view of all truth, it may serve to constructively influence those in search of a broad and deep worldview.⁴¹ The difficult questions people want answered more often than not have their beginning and end in the Bible. Christians must be equipped with the ability to provide these answers. Therefore, the arming of believers with and the ability to defend a Christian worldview should be a matter of urgency for every local church.

The Role of Worldview Apologetics in a Postmodern World

The relation between divine sovereignty and human responsibility is one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith, but it is evident from Scripture that both are real and that both are equally important.⁴² As J. I. Packer states, "God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are taught to us side by side in the same Bible; sometimes, indeed, in the same text. Both are thus guaranteed to us by the same divine authority; both, therefore, are true. It follows that they must be held together, and not played off against each other."⁴³ These two biblical truths should bring great comfort and humility to the apologist. No matter how eloquent his or her words may be, or how forceful the argument is, apologetics cannot be successful apart from the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. However, this is no reason to remain silent. A biblical understanding of the relation between God's sovereignty and human responsibility in evangelism should compel Christians to provide a reason for their hope with great confidence.

⁴⁰Ibid., 78.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1994), 14.

⁴³J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (1961; repr., Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 30.

Unfortunately, there are those within the church who are heavily influenced by postmodern thinking and believe apologetics is no longer an effective tool in evangelism. They believe apologetics is nothing more than intellectual debates filled with irrefutable arguments and legal language. In an age in which truth is perceived as relative, such an approach, in their opinion, is no longer effective. For example, postmodern pastor and author Brian McLaren believes the best way to rediscover the gospel (he is assuming it has been lost) is through spiritual friendships.⁴⁴ McLaren and others possessing this emergent way of thinking, view evangelism as an opportunity to fund people's spiritual journeys, drawing on the highly relevant resources of little pieces of truth contained in the Christian narrative.⁴⁵ For one to attempt to explain or define the journey of faith would be to cheapen it, in their opinion. The Christian faith is not a problem to be solved, they say, because as Bell states, "You rarely defend the things you love."⁴⁶ Such a view is extremely shortsighted and lacks a biblical understanding of apologetics in conjunction with evangelism.

While people will argue against the use and effectiveness of apologetics for a variety of reasons, intentional training can serve as a tremendous boost to evangelism within the local church. A 2012 LifeWay Research study found 80 percent of individuals who attend church one or more times a month, believe they have a personal responsibility to share their faith. However, 61 percent of these same individuals had not told another person how to become a Christian in the previous six months.⁴⁷ The reasons for this lack

⁴⁴Brian D. McLaren, *More Ready Than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 147-148.

⁴⁵Dave Tomlinson, *The Post-Evangelical* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 138.

⁴⁶Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 27.

⁴⁷Jon D. Wilke, "Churchgoers Believe in Sharing Faith, Most Never Do," Lifeway. <http://www.lifeway.com/ArticleView?storeId=10054&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&article=research-survey-sharing-christ-2012> (accessed 23 February 2013).

of sharing vary, but two of the most common include fear and a feeling of inadequacy.⁴⁸

Evangelism is a serious task as Donald Whitney articulates,

We realize that in talking with someone about Christ, Heaven and hell are at stake. The eternal destiny of the person is the issue. And even when we rightly believe the results of this encounter are in God's hands and that we are not accountable for the person's response to the gospel, we still sense a solemn duty to communicate the message faithfully coupled with a holy dread of saying or doing anything that would be a stumbling block to this person's salvation. Many Christians feel too unprepared for this kind of challenge, or simply have too little faith and are terrified of entering into such an eternally important situation.⁴⁹

Apologetics is a tool the church can use to help its members build confidence and overcome these obstacles. If confidence is lacking, nothing inspires confidence and boldness more than possessing the knowledge to articulate his or her beliefs and answer difficult questions raised by unbelievers.⁵⁰

It is important to emphasize the broader task of Christian apologetics is not to win debates, or even to argue people into a relationship with Christ, but rather to create a cultural environment in which the gospel can be heard as an intellectually viable option.⁵¹ If people today are going to lend an ear to the truths of Christianity, the one presenting these truths must be able to answer the difficult questions that will surely come his way. The need for apologetics has never been greater, yet current apologetic methods must be updated.⁵² According to Ted Turnau, "Apologetics done the traditional way has some serious shortcomings. We need an apologetic that does not pretend to be neutral, one that takes into account worldview influences, such as popular culture, one that builds bridges

⁴⁸Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 99-101.

⁴⁹Ibid., 102.

⁵⁰William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 21.

⁵¹Ibid., 17.

⁵²Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 179.

with the heart's desires of non-Christians.⁵³ These bridges, if established, serve to connect non-Christians to the truths of God's Word in both an intellectual and understandable way, thus connecting a secular/postmodern worldview with a Christian worldview. An apologetic that neglects to consider the worldview of the non-believer will ultimately fail.

Apologetics always takes place against a shifting cultural context. As one's culture changes, so should the apologist's understanding of the culture. If a Christian truly desires to engage a postmodern world with the gospel, his or her approach, method, and style must be culturally relevant.⁵⁴ The presentation of the gospel is never culture free. Consequently, there is no such thing as a cultureless gospel. Jesus healed, taught, and preached within a very particular culture, and so do Christians today.⁵⁵ The gospel can only be good news to broken people if translated into pictures and experiences they can understand.⁵⁶ Therefore, understanding the culture becomes a matter of evangelistic urgency, as the gospel is never heard in isolation. According to William Lane Craig,

It is always heard against the background of the cultural milieu in which one lives. A person raised in a culture milieu in which Christianity is still seen as an intellectually viable option will display an openness to the gospel which a person who is secularized will not. For the secular person you may as well tell him to believe in fairies or leprechauns as in Jesus Christ!⁵⁷

A Christian apologist must contextualize the delivery of the gospel with a healthy understanding of the worldview he or she is attempting to reach. The more one

⁵³Turnau, *Popologetics*, 31.

⁵⁴Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 176.

⁵⁵David A. Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 38.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, Kindle ed., loc 321.

⁵⁷Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 16.

understands another's ideas and beliefs, the better he or she can communicate the truth of Scripture and the gospel.⁵⁸

Contextualization must never take place to the point of theological compromise. However, if contextualization does not take place, the gospel will not be communicated clearly. It is for this reason one must learn to present an apologetic that deals with specific challenges stemming from various worldviews.⁵⁹ To develop the ability to communicate cross culturally is why one learns about cults and religions, and why missionaries try to understand the cultures in which they live.⁶⁰ Consequently, an effective apologist will convey the gospel in a manner that is clear to the culture and audience he or she is striving to reach.

The key to communicating the gospel message efficiently is found in building effective bridges of communication and understanding between believers and nonbelievers.⁶¹ For instance, facts never simply speak; rather, facts always speak through the filter of the worldview of the person receiving them. Two people possessing two worldviews can take the same information and come up with radically different interpretations. Simply speaking the same language is not enough. As Ravi Zacharias states,

While the language may be the same within a culture, what often changes is the filter through which it reaches the average listener's ears. Unless we understand the filter, we will be speaking in garbled terms to those caught in this mix of a high-paced life and a thinking that has become muddled by the instruments of the age.⁶²

⁵⁸MacArthur, *Think Biblically*, 135.

⁵⁹Turnau, *Popologetics*, 39.

⁶⁰MacArthur, *Think Biblically*, 135.

⁶¹Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 176.

⁶²Ravi Zacharias and Norm Geisler, eds., *Is Your Church Ready: Motivating Leaders to Live an Apologetic Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 16.

If apologetics in the twenty-first century is going to be effective, it will require more than having the right facts or speaking the same ethnic language.⁶³ Effectively bridging cultural contexts and varying worldviews is imperative to twenty-first century evangelism. If one is interested in sharing the gospel to new generations, he or she must understand their worldview. Christians, as David Kinnaman states, “cannot just throw up our hands in disgust or defensiveness. We have a responsibility to our friends and neighbors to have a sober, reasonable understanding of their perspectives.”⁶⁴ Thus, believers must be equipped with an apologetic method which possesses both a rich understanding of popular culture and the gospel, in other words, a healthy Christian worldview.

Obstacles to Teaching Worldview Apologetics in the Local Church

Typically conversations within the church about reaching the culture turn into discussions about methodology, not worldview. These conversations are often regarding tactics void of actual strategy. However, without strategy, tactics will inevitably fail. As David Wells states, “Without truth, all of the arts of seduction that the churches are practicing sooner or later are seen for what they are— an empty charade; and because the emerging worldview is not being engaged, the church has little it can really say.”⁶⁵ Therefore, the church has a responsibility to engage the various worldviews of the culture with the gospel. It is important for Christians to remember that along with the great commission also comes the responsibility of the cultural commission. Christians are commanded to both preach the good news and bring all things into submission to God.

⁶³Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland, eds., *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 47.

⁶⁴David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 12.

⁶⁵Piper and Taylor, *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World*, 37-38.

order, by defending and living out God's truth in the unique historical and cultural conditions of the age.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, most Christians today have little to no idea how to respond when faced with assaults against their faith.

Historically, Evangelical churches place a high emphasis on evangelism, but often neglect the responsibility of equipping members with the ability to engage contemporary culture with the gospel.⁶⁷ While the vast majority of Americans still profess to be Christians, most have little to no concept of Christian beliefs.⁶⁸ It is for this reason that half of all adults, according to a 2009 Barna research study, now believe Christianity is just one of many faith options for Americans. Sadly, this belief system is a byproduct of the postmodern culture in which they live. As the study reveals, a number of American adults simply pick and choose what they believe based upon personal preference, with the belief that one's personal preference is equally as truthful as any church or denominations slate of beliefs.⁶⁹ Consequently, most Christians cannot respond to assaults against their faith. Before an educated response can be articulated in a defense of the faith, a Christian must have a clear understanding of what he or she believes and why he chooses to believe it. As Alister McGrath states, "To be a Christian is to think about our faith, beginning to forge answers to our own questions."⁷⁰ Apologetics can achieve this aim, as it allows the believer to go deeper into the Christian faith, discovering its immeasurable riches.⁷¹

⁶⁶Colson and Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live*, 17.

⁶⁷Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 169.

⁶⁸Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 126.

⁶⁹Barna Research, "Christianity Is No Longer Americans Default Faith," Barna. <http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/15-christianity-is-no-longer-americans-default-faith?tmpl=component&print=1&layout=default&page=> (accessed 15 January 2013).

⁷⁰McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 18.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 18.

One of the primary problems facing the church in this postmodern age is engaging a culture that claims to believe in God, yet embraces an epistemology that rejects the possibility of such a being.⁷² Simply claiming to be a Christian does not automatically equate to possessing a Christian worldview. In fact, according to another Barna research study, only 9 percent of all American adults, and less than one-half of one percent of adults in the Mosaic generation (ages 18 to 23), possess a Christian worldview.⁷³ What makes these stats even more alarming is the discovery that one's worldview, while refined throughout life, is primarily shaped and firmly in place by the age of thirteen and then passed on to future generations.⁷⁴

These stats highlight the tremendous role parents have in influencing and shaping the worldview of their children. Based upon this research, it is evident parents are not focused on educating their children with a Christian worldview. On this topic David Wells states,

The children who have grown up or are growing up in the post-modern world bear its mark. They are cut loose from everything, hollowed out, electric, patched together from scraps of personality picked up here and there, leery of commitments, empty of all passions except that of sex, devoid of the capacity for commitment, fixated on image rather than substance, and informed only by personal intuition. They are sophisticates haunted by ominous superstitions, brittle rationalists living in the grip of outrageous myths, shifting, aching beings who gaze on the world as voyeurs and whose vision of salvation has dwindled to nothing more than hope for a fleeting sense of personal well-being. When these children shape a faith after their

⁷²Piper and Taylor, *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World*, 53.

⁷³Barna Research, "Barna Survey Examines Changes in Worldview among Christians over the Past 13 Year," Barna. <http://www.barna.org/transformation-articles/252-barna-survey-examines-christians-over-the-past-13-years?tmpl=component&print=1&layout=default&page=> (accessed 15 January 2013). Barna defined a Christian/biblical worldview as believing that absolute moral truth exists; the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches; Satan is considered to be a real being or force, not merely symbolic; a person cannot earn their way into Heaven by trying to be good or do good works; Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and god is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today. Anyone who held all of these beliefs was said to have a Christian/biblical worldview

⁷⁴Ibid.

own habits, as they are doing in some evangelical churches, it does not much resemble the classic contours of historic Christianity.⁷⁵

However, it is unfair to expect parents to teach their children what they themselves do not possess, and most parents do not possess a Christian worldview.⁷⁶ For this reason, the church's responsibility to teach its members how to think Christianly is of paramount importance. If training does not take place within the local church, as it is already absent from the home, the future Christian church is destined to become even less connected to a Christian worldview than it is today.⁷⁷

The reason for such a lack of proper preparation within the church arises for two primary reasons.⁷⁸ First, there is a segment of local church congregations who see the cultural changes, but refuse to adapt.⁷⁹ These individuals long for days long passed, when one could preach the Bible and have its teachings accepted mostly without question. For example, in previous generations, the church could assume those within the culture possessed a general knowledge of the Bible. The typical nonbeliever in the 1950s more than likely believed in the deity of Christ, possessed some church background, and had a built in sense of guilt when he violated the basic values of the Judeo-Christian heritage.⁸⁰ Thus, many of the evangelistic approaches of the 1950s worked very well, in the 1950s. During this time the top evangelistic approaches included door-to-door

⁷⁵David Wells, *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 222-23.

⁷⁶ Barna Research, "Barna Survey Examines Changes in Worldview among Christians over the Past 13 Year."

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Travis Allen Freeman, "Preaching to Provoke a Worldview Change: Tim Keller's Use of Presuppositional Apologetics in Preaching" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 42.

⁷⁹Gabe Lyons, *The Next Christians: Seven Ways You Can Live The Gospel and Restore the World* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2010), 26.

⁸⁰Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, 174.

visitation, revival meetings, Sunday school, and busing ministries.⁸¹ Today, few if any of the realities and assumptions previous methodologies were built upon remain valid. Consequently, there remains a refusal of many within the church to change. Addressing this refusal to change, Gabe Lyons states,

They have anchored themselves to the view that America is and should stay a sacred Christian nation. They think that God was and should remain at the center of our public square. This faction focuses its energy on resistance despite the obvious trends rising all around it.⁸²

Christians who think this way serve to deceive themselves and those they influence. If individuals refuse to recognize the radically changing culture around them, they and the churches they are a part of will ultimately have no evangelistic relevance going forward. To be clear, there is nothing wrong with believing God should be the center of the public square. The problem, however, in a postmodern society is determining which god will be at the center. The refusal to recognize and engage the ever evolving secular worldview of this nation will inevitably lead the church down a path of complete irrelevance in the very culture it desires to reach.

Second, a significant number of Christians have bought into the public versus private dichotomy brought about by secular naturalists.⁸³ These Christians accept Christian doctrines, such as the deity of Christ, his virgin birth, and resurrection from the dead, but do so strictly as individual items of belief. These individuals do not allow doctrine to influence their jobs, parenting, or academic pursuits. In other words, what is lacking is a fully functioning Christian worldview.⁸⁴ Pearcey calls this dichotomy the "divided mind:"

⁸¹Ibid., 174.

⁸²Lyons, *The Next Christians*, 26.

⁸³Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 33.

⁸⁴Ibid., 32-33.

Believers may be highly educated in terms of technical proficiency, and yet have no biblical worldview for interpreting the subject matter of their field There is no -Christian mind— no shared, biblically based set of assumptions on subjects like law, education, politics, economics, science, or the arts. As a moral being, the Christian follows the biblical ethic. As a spiritual being, he or she prays and attends worship services. But as a thinking being, the modern Christian has succumbed to secularism, accepting a frame of reference constructed by the secular mind and a set of criteria reflecting secular evaluations. That is, when we enter the stream of discourse in our field or profession we participate mentally as non-Christians, using the current concepts and categories no matter what our private beliefs may be.⁸⁵

The Christian witness, in such instances, is thus left without a voice in the very culture it is called to reach. It is no surprise then, that postmodernists reject this dichotomous way of thinking, which occurs when one divides a range of phenomena into two groups and go on to claim one better than the other. Some examples of this type of dichotomous thinking include, but are not limited to: real/unreal, true/false, rational/irrational, right/wrong, good/bad, and beautiful/ugly. Each represents a dichotomy where the first is preferred to the second.⁸⁶ Such divisions explain why Christians struggle to communicate in the public arena. Christians must recognize that nonbelievers are constantly filtering what believers say through a mental fact/value grid.⁸⁷ For example, it is acceptable for a politician to be a person of faith, but he or she must never allow his or her faith to determine how he performs his job. The same holds true for the public school teacher. He or she has the right to believe in a creator God, but this belief should not stem into the classroom. In other words, one's values must be left at the door and only the facts may be used in the public arena. The problem with this way of thinking is that it is impossible to live out. Thus, Christians must liberate the gospel from the cultural captivity in which it is trapped and engage the secular world with a Christian worldview.

⁸⁵Ibid., 34.

⁸⁶Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 146.

⁸⁷Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 22.

Conclusion

If churches today continue to only provide "heart" religion, Christians will not have the ability to counter the lure of the attractive but dangerous postmodern philosophical ideas. Believers also need "brain" religion—training in worldview and apologetics—to equip them with the ability to analyze and critique the competing worldviews they will encounter.⁸⁸ According to Pearcey,

The first step in forming a Christian worldview is to overcome this sharp divide between "heart" and "brain." We have to reject the division of life into a sacred realm, limited to things like worship and personal morality, over against a secular realm that includes science, politics, economics, and the rest of the public arena. This dichotomy in our own minds is the greatest barrier to liberating the power of the gospel across the whole of culture today.⁸⁹

If the Christian worldview is true, then this worldview applies to everything. Developing a Christian worldview means submitting one's entire self to God, including home, church, work, and social life, in an act of complete devotion and service to Him.⁹⁰ Nothing falls outside the central themes of creation, fall, and redemption which encapsulate the Christian worldview. Christians must be completely convinced there is a biblical perspective for everything—not just spiritual matters. While evangelism is incredibly important, churches must equip their congregations with the ability to interact with the world through a Christian worldview apologetic. Christians cannot defend something of which they are ignorant. The church must equip its members to provide an answer for the hope within.

⁸⁸Ibid., 19.

⁸⁹Ibid., 20.

⁹⁰Ibid., 25.

CHAPTER 4
ELEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY
RESEARCH PROJECT

The ministry research project consisted of a 10-week sermon series (Sunday morning) and a coinciding 10-week teaching series (Sunday evening). The elements of the project consisted of a pre-test and post-test survey, man-on-the-street-interviews, and the administering of spiritual surveys within the community. These elements were based upon the project's three goals: (1) for church members to obtain an increased confidence in evangelism, (2) for church members to be equipped to use apologetics in evangelism in everyday life, and (3) for church members to gain an increased understanding of the worldviews present within the community.

Scheduling of the Elements

The enlistment of participants began three weeks prior to the official start of the ministry research project. The project began with a pre-project survey in week 1 and was followed by man-on-the-street interviews in week 2. The 10-week sermon/teaching series began July 7, 2013 and continued through September 8, 2013. Participants spent two weeks actively engaging the community with the gospel using man-on-the-street interview questions as a bridge. The project concluded with participants completing the post-project survey. A timeline for the project's elements consisted of the following:

1. June 2 ó Began enlistment of project participants
2. June 23 ó Administered the pre-project survey
3. June 30 ó Conducted man-on-the-street interviews
4. July 7 ó Began sermon/teaching series

5. September 8 ó Completed sermon/teaching series
6. September 15 ó Evangelistic engagement of the community
7. September 22 ó Evangelistic engagement of the community
8. September 29 ó Administered post-project survey

The total duration of the project, including the enlistment of participants, was 18 weeks.

Enlistment of Participants

The enlistment of project participants extended to the entire congregation of Piperton Baptist Church. The minimum age for project participation was 18, but my aim was to enlist members from every age demographic within the church. However, with the project consisting of both Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings, I knew obtaining consistent participation could be difficult. Consequently, childcare which is not normally provided on Sunday evenings was added for the duration of the project in an attempt to improve participant involvement.

With a prerequisite of 12 participants required to complete the project requirements, I attempted to obtain commitments from as many individuals as possible. For three consecutive weeks prior to the project, an insert was placed in the church bulletin, announcements were made from the pulpit, a church wide email was circulated, and I personally contacted members by phone, email, and Facebook to encourage participation (see Appendix 1). Members who desired to participate were asked to notify me directly and those individuals were added to a participant email list, consisting of 58 participants at the start of the project.

Participants were informed from the onset that the project would consist of 15 weeks and a minimum of 10 weeks of participation in both Sunday morning and evening services was required for research purposes. In addition, a project calendar was emailed to each participant detailing the project itinerary.

Aware that the research side of my project depended heavily upon faithful participation, I used the participant email list to send reminders, notes, and other helpful resources. The email list also served as an additional means for participants to ask questions throughout the project. For those unable to attend each session, an iTunes podcast was created to stream sermons or training sessions missed or desired for review.

Pre-Project Survey

The pre-project survey was administered to the congregation in the Sunday evening service on June 23, 2013. Three volunteers passed out the surveys while I provided instructions. The survey consisted of three sections. The first served to obtain basic demographic information. The second section was composed of 3 multiple choice questions and 16 additional questions set up on a 6-point Likert scale. The purpose of this section was to discover the confidence levels of participants in the areas of evangelism and apologetics. The third section consisted of 4 open ended questions seeking to identify each participant's understanding of the worldviews existing within their culture (see Appendix 2).

Man-on-the-Street Interviews

The man-on-the-street interviews occurred the week of June 30, 2013. Each participant was provided with a list of 7 interview questions which sought to discover the worldviews of those within their community. Questions focused on the origin of the universe, meaning of life, moral law, and the problem of evil (see Appendix 3). Participants were encouraged to step out of their comfort-zones and conduct as many interviews as possible. Participants were then instructed to submit their results to me by Friday, July 5, 2013. Results were used as part of a teaching exercise in the first Sunday evening training session on July 7, 2013.

Synopsis of Sunday Morning Sermons

The Sunday morning sermon series consisted of 10 weeks (see Appendix 4). The first four weeks were designed to establish a filter to break down the inner logic of every belief system or philosophy encountered on a daily basis. This filter was predicated upon a Christian worldview sought to answer and bring clarity to life's most difficult questions: (1) where did everything come from, (2) what has gone wrong with the world, and (3) how can what is wrong be made right? The remaining six weeks were designed to implement this filter by answering the following questions: (1) does life have purpose and meaning, (2) how do I reconcile faith and doubt, and (3) why would a loving God allow evil to exist?

Sermon 1

In a world of ever increasing skepticism, Christians have an obligation to make an intellectual defense for what we claim to believe. The first sermon introduced participants to the biblical mandate for apologetics as taught by the apostle Peter (1 Pet 3:14-16). Emphasis was placed on the importance of apologetics and the responsibility each Christian has to make a defense for the hope they have in Christ. Additional emphasis was placed upon the need to make this defense with a gentle and respectful approach and proper motives.

At the conclusion of the message, each participant was challenged to question his or her faith and put it to the test. I challenged participants to ask themselves whether or not their beliefs would hold up to intellectual scrutiny and answer life's most difficult questions: (1) where did everything come from, (2) what has gone wrong with the world, and (3) how can what is wrong be made right? These three questions were introduced as the foundation of the worldview filter established over the next three weeks.

Sermon 2

One's worldview is much more than a set of private personal opinions. Rather, it is a comprehensive life system seeking to answer life's most basic questions, the greatest question of them all: where did everything come from? To answer this question, I asked and answered a series of four separate questions using Genesis 1-2, John 1:1-3, and Colossians 1:16-17 as primary texts: (1) where did everything come from, (2) how did God create, (3) why did God create, and (4) what is God doing now?

While many claim Christianity, they live their lives as atheists. Many spend their entire lives in pursuit of their own happiness. Truth be told, their lives would change very little, if at all, if they did not believe in God. I challenged the congregation to consider how the doctrine of creation applies to how we view the world. Does this doctrine change who we are, how we think, or how we act? Are our beliefs consistent with our lives? Are we living for the purpose for which we were created?

Sermon 3

If everything God created was "very good" as Genesis 1:31 teaches, what went wrong? Better yet, how can one reconcile an omnibenevolent, omniscient, and omnipotent God with the existence of evil? To answer this question from a Christian worldview understanding I used Genesis 3 as the primary text. The biblical response for the existence of sin and evil is the result of Adam and Eve's willful decision to rebel against God by giving into the temptation of the serpent. The consequences of sin was catastrophic not only to them, but to all of creation. Consequently, this original sin is the reason both natural and moral evils exist.

The question Genesis 3 does not answer is: why an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent God allows pain and suffering to exist? In answering this question, I concluded that even though I cannot comprehend it, God permitted Satan's fall not because he could not stop it, but because he had a purpose. I finished this sermon by

emphasizing the purpose of Satan's fall and his ongoing existence is ultimately for the glory of Christ, a glory that reached its apex at the cross.

Sermon 4

After spending the previous two weeks studying the doctrine of creation and the fall, this sermon focused on answering the question: how can what is wrong be made right? As the entire Bible serves to answer this question, I had ample passages from which to choose. I chose Romans 5:6-20 for my sermon text as it served to connect and answer the three questions driving this series: (1) where did everything come from (creation), (2) what has gone wrong with the world (fall), (3) how can what is wrong be made right (redemption)?

My aim in preaching this sermon was to change the question from, "Why does God allow evil?" to "Why did God allow Jesus to suffer on the cross?" in order to provide an answer. I taught that we can only understand suffering in this world through the cross of Christ, as the cross was the single greatest example of good triumphing over evil. The crucifixion of Christ served as the only way a perfectly good and righteous God could prove to be just and gracious in response to hopelessly sinful people. It is only through the cross that what is wrong in this world can be made right.

Sermon 5

With the book of Ecclesiastes as my primary text, I walked through the twelve chapters highlighting the author's frustration regarding the question of life's meaning. The author of Ecclesiastes is not alone in his frustration, as from the beginning of creation to present day; mankind has questioned the purpose and meaning of life. While pondering this question, the author determined everything "under the sun" or life without reference to God is meaningless (Eccl 1:2-3). He concluded wealth or poverty, educated or uneducated, good or bad, does not matter as ultimately everything concludes

with death. The author closes his book by telling readers to ðfear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of manö (Eccl 12:13). In the end, God is going to ðbring every deed into judgmentö (Eccl 12:14).

Throughout the sermon I illustrated how to use the Christian worldview filter to answer the question of life's meaning. This filter provides answers for where we came from and why we are here. It also provides the answer for what went wrong and why we become frustrated with our inability to provide an answer for life's meaning. Ultimately, this filter shows the only one who can redeem us from the vanity and meaninglessness of this fallen world is Jesus Christ (see Appendix 6). Only through faith in Christ is one able to escape the eschatological judgment of God, as the author of Ecclesiastes addresses.

Sermon 6

The apostle Paul exhorted the church to take a stand for the truth of the gospel. He boldly and faithfully proclaimed this truth wherever he traveled. One of Paul's most famous apologetic encounters is found in Acts 17:16-34. In this passage he strategically engages the people of Athens with the gospel. Preaching from this text, I illustrated how Paul's apologetic defense serves as a perfect example of healthy cross-cultural contextualization without theological compromise. I also emphasized Paul's cultural awareness and how this awareness allowed him to bridge to the gospel. Paul recognized the Athenians' understanding of God through general revelation, but this understanding was impaired by idolatry. Stressing this awareness, I showed participants how Paul started where his listeners were and took them where he wanted to go, to the person and work of Jesus Christ. I also highlighted how Paul was not content to merely debate worldviews. Rather, he calls his listeners to repent just as we should today.

Sermon 7

Everyone deals with doubt. Even faith itself is not doubt free. In fact, every doubt is based upon a leap of faith. One of the most famous biblical accounts of doubt is found in John 20, the text for this sermon. In John 20:24-28 Thomas, one of Jesus's twelve disciples, earned his nickname "doubting Thomas" after doubting the validity of the resurrection of Jesus. However, this label is not entirely fair as Thomas only requested to receive the same evidence each of the other disciples received. Though Thomas doubted, his doubt ultimately led him to faith in Christ. While doubt is not necessarily unhealthy, it is also not a trivial matter.

Using John 20 as my sermon text, I challenged participants to pursue the truth like Thomas. Seeking truth is the only way to know the accuracy of one's beliefs. Christians today must be willing to wrestle long and hard with the difficult questions of the faith if they desire to be effective and faithful witness for Christ. Unbelievers must be treated as genuine doubting Thomases and presented with the evidence required to answer their questions. However, no amount of evidence will ever convince one who is spiritually dead and blinded to the truth. Unless one is born again, he or she cannot see the kingdom of God.

Sermon 8

The identity of Jesus of Nazareth has been debated for nearly two thousand years. While it is beneficial to understand the various opinions regarding Jesus's identity, it is most important to understand what Jesus himself taught concerning his identity. Preaching from John 10:22-39, I showed participants how Jesus responded to questions regarding his true identity. I highlighted the reasoning behind the Jewish leaders' desire to kill Jesus: not because of his miracles, but because of his perceived blasphemy in his claim as God. Jesus defends this claim by using logic, reason, the Old Testament Scriptures, and by ultimately pointing to the resurrection (Matt 12:38-40).

Jesus's resurrection was the primary component of his defense of his identity and was central to the teachings of the apostles. I also emphasized how the resurrection must be our ultimate source of evidence when defending the deity of Christ. Without the resurrection, there is no salvation and no basis for the Christian faith. Without the resurrection, Jesus would have been nothing more than a dead, lying lunatic. The resurrection proves Jesus was and is who he says he was and that all of his promises hold true.

Sermon 9

The Bible teaches and Christians believe God is omnibenevolent, omniscient, omnipotent, and the creator of all things. However, the evil within the world portrays an apparent contradiction leaving many professing Christians scrambling for a way to reconcile the problem of evil with their belief in God. Nonetheless, God's character is perfectly consistent even in the midst of suffering and evil. Thus, the aim of this sermon was to establish a theological basis for how a loving God could allow moral evil to exist. Preaching from the book of Genesis on the story of Joseph, I highlighted the responsibility Christians have to provide a biblical response affirming the true character and power of God. To provide such a response Christians must speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent.

Despite all of the spiritual maturity Joseph displayed in his ability to come to grips with God's sovereign plan, there were things God accomplished through Joseph's suffering that he never understood in his lifetime. The same holds true today, as like Joseph we can have confidence our suffering is not without purpose, even if we never understand it in our lifetime. I challenged participants to look at their lives from a Christian worldview perspective, recognizing all things are working together for the good for those who are called according to God's purpose (Rom 8:28). This narrative should

remind believers of God's sovereignty and how all things work together for his glory (Gen 37-50).

Sermon 10

Moral evil is difficult to comprehend, though there is typically someone to blame. Not so with natural evil, as it leaves us with no one to blame. Preaching from Job, John 9:1-3, and Luke 13:1-5, I highlighted how Christians are to respond to the problem of natural evil. First, we must speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. Second, we must avoid the tendency to respond like Job's friends and attempt to comfort the one suffering with bad theology. One can have the best of intentions, but providing comfort based upon bad theology always does more harm than good.

There are times in Scripture, such as the flood in Genesis 6, when suffering is a direct punishment for sin. However, Jesus clearly stated this was not the case for every affliction, as evidenced in the case with the man born blind whose disability was not the result of sin he or his parents committed. Here we see this man was blind so the works of God might be displayed in him (John 9:3). Similarly, Jesus never says those who died at the tower of Siloam died because they deserved it. Rather, he adamantly refutes this line of reasoning. Jesus also never references innocent victims. Instead, he implies all are guilty of sin and deserve the same fate. Jesus highlights how natural evils reveal the desperate need to heed his words and repent. As such, if suffering is required to draw one to him, then such suffering is worth it.

Synopsis of Sunday Night Training

Sunday evening training sessions, coinciding with the 10 week sermon series, began July 7 and concluded September 8, 2013. Each training session was designed to reinforce the morning sermon. Participants were challenged with case studies, provided

apologetic examples, taught how to use a Christian worldview filter, and given the opportunity to ask questions (see Appendix 5).

Training 1

The first training session laid the foundation for the establishment of a worldview filter. This filter was used to break down the inner logic of every belief system or philosophy one encounters. The filter was based upon three questions: (1) where did everything come from, (2) what has gone wrong with the world, and (3) how can what is wrong be made right? However, for full disclosure I admitted this filter was based upon the belief objective truth exists, a belief not everyone shares within today's culture. The remainder of the time was spent teaching participants how to respond to someone who states, "That may be true for you, but is not true for me."

In a review of the first day's lesson, I reminded participants of the importance of preparation when it comes to making a defense for the hope they have in Christ. Participants were reminded such a defense must always be made with gentleness and respect. Finally, we reviewed the importance of listening, thinking, and asking good questions when it comes to defending the Christian faith in today's culture.

Training 2

Many view Christianity as a religion that values ignorance and blind faith, not critical thinking and intelligence. While this may be true of some Christians, it is not true of Christianity. However, this view has created public versus private and fact versus value dichotomies in the culture. In this session, my aim was to draw awareness to this way of thinking and demonstrate how we can begin to overcome such thinking.

By highlighting this dichotomous way of thinking, I illustrated how Christians will claim biblical truths such as the doctrine of creation, as individual items of belief. Such doctrines, while believed, have little to no influence upon how one lives the rest of

his or her life. Thus, most Christians lack a fully functioning worldview. To help participants overcome false dichotomies I illustrated how while society has pitted faith and values against each other, the Bible has not. I showed how Scripture teaches all people have knowledge of God and how such knowledge does not come solely from the Bible, but also through general revelation (Rom 1:18-20). I proceeded to provide examples of cosmological, teleological, and moral arguments pointing to the existence of intelligent design.

Training 3

We live in a world where people are asking difficult questions. These questions often create strategic opportunities to introduce people to Christ. In order to honestly answer these questions, one must learn to think and respond with a Christian worldview. My aim in this session was to take a biblical understanding of creation and the fall, and instruct participants how to answer life's most difficult questions through the filter of a Christian worldview.

The evening began reviewing the doctrine of creation. Next, I addressed the problem of evil discussed in the morning sermon. I then illustrated how each of these doctrines serve as individual layers to the Christian worldview filter. One can picture this filter as an inverted pyramid consisting of three layers and answering three different questions: (1) where did everything come from (creation), (2) what has gone wrong with the world (fall), and (3) how can what is wrong be made right (redemption)? Next, I used the problem of evil as an example to help participants learn how to respond to difficult questions within a Christian worldview (see Appendix 6).

Training 4

Considering everything we studied in the previous three weeks, this session was spent answering the question: What happens to the person who never hears the

gospel when they die? Using passages from the apostle Paul's letter to the church in Rome, I taught a seven point lesson: (1) all people have knowledge of God, (2) all people reject true knowledge of God, (3) there are no innocent people in the world, (4) all people are condemned for rejecting God, (5) God provides the way of redemption through Jesus Christ, (6) people cannot come to God apart from faith in Christ, (7) Christ commands the church to make the gospel known to all people.¹ My primary aim in teaching this lesson was to emphasize the exclusivity of the gospel and to address the urgency of evangelism and missions. Both are prerequisites to a healthy Christian worldview.

Training 5

In this session I emailed all project participants mid-week and asked them to provide examples of evangelistic conversations or questions they had experienced or heard in recent years. These scenarios and questions were then compiled into six short case studies. Each case study was read out loud and participants were encouraged to listen, ask good questions, and think about how they would respond. Through the use of the filter, participants were challenged to identify the main point of contention and respond gently and respectfully from a Christian worldview understanding. This exercise was designed to build the confidence of the participants by practicing the knowledge acquired over the first four weeks (see Appendix 6).

Training 6

I began the evening by asking participants to reread Acts 17:16-34. As they read, I encouraged each participant to mark things within the text which stood out about Paul's apologetic approach. I then allowed time for participants to share their observations before taking a closer look at Paul's cultural awareness. Using Paul's

¹David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2010), 141-160.

examples of astute observation and cultural knowledge, I led a brief discussion regarding the importance of healthy contextualization in evangelism. I emphasized there is no such thing as a cultureless gospel and that Jesus himself healed, taught, and preached within a particular cultural context. We spent the rest of the evening discussing how to contextualize without compromising theologically. Next, I introduced a three step approach to accomplish this goal: (1) discover worldview by observing, listening, and asking good questions, (2) create a bridge to the gospel using the information from the discovery, and (3) share the gospel.

Training 7

I began this session with a brief recap of the morning sermon and provided another biblical example of one's doubt leading to faith from Mark 9:14-29. I specifically focused on the father's plea to Jesus, "I believe; help my unbelief!" which serves as a doubter's prayer all experiencing doubt should be encouraged to pray. In an effort to increase each participant's evangelistic confidence, we spent the remainder of the evening putting what was studied into practice. Participants were asked earlier in the week to submit examples of their own doubts, or the doubts they hear from others regarding Christianity. These submissions were used as case studies. Participants were challenged to think through each scenario and to use the Christian worldview filter to respond appropriately.

Training 8

Jesus's situation was unique as he was both an apologist and the apologetic. As the apologetic, the defense he brought forth was directly tied to his own identity as the Son of God. Understanding some may see calling Jesus an apologist as demeaning, I revealed how Jesus engaged many debates regarding his divinity. Jesus clearly understood that rational people must be presented with rational evidence before they can

be expected to make decisions. Jesus never calls for people to believe in him based solely on blind faith.

While Jesus's miracles, particularly his resurrection, played a key role in his apologetic, his use of logic and reason must not be overlooked. Jesus used all laws of thought beginning with the law of noncontradiction and the a-fortiori argument. Each of these apologetic tools was explained, and I then led participants in a time of practical application. We spent significant time highlighting the importance of a Christian's ability to think about and defend the faith in the same way as Jesus. Ultimately, I pointed people to the resurrection as the most essential apologetic defense of the identity of Jesus.

Training 9

The ninth training session was conducted on September 8, 2013. There was no evening service the previous week due to the Labor Day holiday. Consequently, I combined the topics of moral and natural evil into one training session. I began the service with a brief overview of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, emphasizing God's role in preserving, cooperating with, and governing his creation. Participants were reminded nothing happens, either good or bad, without God intentionally and purposefully allowing, ordaining, or causing it to occur. The rest of the evening was devoted to answering questions submitted earlier in the week related to the problem of evil. Participants were presented with submitted questions and challenged to consider how they would respond biblically and compassionately.

Training 10

The final training session was conducted on week 13 of the project, September 15, 2013. The evening was spent recapping the series and reinforcing the Christian worldview filter. Participants were reminded of three distinct options: (1) retreat from the culture, (2) blend into the culture, or (3) intentionally engage the culture with the

gospel, the only biblical option. To effectively engage a postmodern culture, one must possess a solid Christian worldview which enables one to answer life's most basic questions. This worldview will break down the inner logic of every belief system or philosophy encountered. I walked participants step by step through the Christian worldview filter. I then proceeded to engage participants in an interactive role playing dialogue where I presented myself as the one in need of Christ. Participants were challenged to practice what was learned throughout this project by biblically and compassionately engaging me with the gospel.

Evangelistic Engagement of the Community

At the conclusion of the final training session, participants were challenged to intentionally engage their community with the gospel over a two week period beginning September 15 and concluding September 29, 2013. Each participant was provided a list of seven questions, also used during the man-on-the-street interviews at the beginning of the project (see Appendix 3). These questions focused on the origin of the universe, moral law, and the problem of evil. Participants were encouraged to step out of their comfort-zones and engage as many people as possible. Unlike the man-on-the-street interviews, participants were told not to use the questions as a survey, but rather as a bridge to the gospel. Participants were also encouraged to use other means to bridge to the gospel if they desired. These questions were provided as a tool to assist in starting evangelistic conversations. Additionally, copies of "The Story" evangelism tract were provided to each participant, along with an explanation on how to use such a tract in evangelism. The Sunday evening service of September 22 was used to discuss the evangelistic conversations engaged in throughout the week and to answer any questions that arose throughout the week. Participants were sent back out for the second week of evangelistic community engagement.

Post-Project Survey

The post-project survey was identical to the pre-project survey (see Appendix 2). The post-project survey was administered to the congregation during the Sunday evening service on September 29, 2013. The purpose for administering an identical survey was to evaluate the project's effectiveness by comparing the pre and post-survey results. This format was also utilized in test administration. Two volunteers distributed the surveys while I provided instructions.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the details of a project methodology for those wishing to teach worldview apologetics within their local church. In chapter 5, I will show through the research data that the project was successful in accomplishing its goals and proved beneficial to the church at large. Further evaluation will also be provided as I suggest changes, identify project strengths and weaknesses, provide theological and personal reflection, and share concluding thoughts on the project.

CHAPTER 5
EVALUATION AND REFLECTION
OF PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the methodology and provided a detailed account of the 15 week project. This chapter offers a final evaluation and reflection upon the effectiveness of teaching worldview apologetics to increase the evangelistic confidence of Piperton Baptist Church in the summer of 2013. The results of this project are evaluated to determine if the project's purpose and goals are achieved. In addition, this chapter contains an evaluation of this project's strengths and weaknesses. The chapter will conclude with sections devoted to discussing aspects of the project that I would execute differently and provides theological and personal reflections related.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to train church members in apologetics to increase the evangelistic confidence of Piperton Baptist Church in Collierville, Tennessee. To fulfill this purpose it was critical for each participant to recognize his or her biblical obligation to evangelize as well as to possess a desire and obtain the knowledge to defend his or her faith. The absence of either could have significantly altered the scope and overall outcome of this project. However, according to the pre-project survey 100 percent of participants who met the project requirements either agreed or strongly agreed every Christian is responsible for sharing the gospel with nonbelievers (see Table A7). In addition, 100 percent of the same participants either agreed or strongly agreed they possessed a desire to learn how to defend their faith (see Table

A33). Consequently, such awareness and desire possessed by participants at the onset of the project provided a firm foundation to facilitate success.

The 10 week preaching and teaching series had an average attendance of 138 on Sunday mornings and 28 on Sunday evenings. A total of 60 unique individuals participated in the project by taking a pre or post-project survey. Of these 60 participants, only 15 completed the minimum participation requirements of 10 weeks used for comparable measurements (see Appendix 7). The average attendance of participants who fulfilled the project requirements was 11.67 weeks (see Table A1 in Appendix 7). Only the data obtained from these 15 participants is discussed within the evaluation of the project's purpose and goals. However, a compilation of all 60 pre and post-project survey results was collected, tabulated, and compared as an extension of the project (see Appendix 8).

In order to evaluate the success of the project in achieving its purpose, participants were asked how often they attempt to share their faith. Each was provided with five options ranging from 2 or more times per week to almost never, and asked to mark the one best describing their evangelistic efforts. The pre-project survey revealed 60 percent of participants attempted to share their faith either once a year or almost never. However, the post-project survey revealed 73.34 of the same participants attempted to share their faith at least once a month by the end of the project (see Table A4). Based upon these results, along with the additional research data, to be discussed in the evaluation of the project's goals, it is evident the project was successful in fulfilling its purpose.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The first goal of this project was for church members to obtain an increased confidence in evangelism. Four questions (3, 6, 8, 11) within section 2B of the survey, were used to analyze the effectiveness of the project in achieving this goal. Each

participant was asked to use a 6-point Likert scale to identify his or her response to each question. A paired t-test was also conducted for each question at the conclusion of the project which compared all pre and post-project survey results.

Of these four questions, only one revealed a statistically significant change in response; however each of the four questions revealed an increase in confidence based upon the compared mean averages. Question 6, which sought to identify how confident participants were in sharing the gospel with others, revealed the largest statistical change. The pre-project survey revealed 20 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed they were confident in sharing the gospel with others, compared to 66.67 in the post-project survey (see Table A17). As a result, the paired t-test considered this change very statistically significant. Such a marked increase in expressed evangelistic confidence likely explains the increase in the evangelistic attempts previously mentioned.

Question 3 revealed the least statistical change. This question sought to measure each participant's confidence in his or her understanding of the gospel. The pre-project survey revealed 86.66 percent of participants either agreed or strongly agreed to have confidence in their understanding of the gospel. The remaining 13.34 percent of participants stated they agreed somewhat. However, the post-project survey revealed an increase in confidence to 100 percent of participants who either agreed or strongly agreed to possess confidence in their understanding of the gospel (see Table A11). This question and the rest of the survey however, fail to identify whether or not each participant's confidence is based on a healthy understanding of the gospel.

The final two questions (8, 11) revealed no statistically significant change, yet both indicated an increase in participant confidence. Question 8 sought to identify each participant's confidence level in initiating spiritual conversations. Responses to this question revealed an increase in confidence from a 4.13 to a 4.40 mean average using the 6-point Likert scale (see Table A21). Question 11 sought to identify how fearful

participants were of how people will respond when they share their faith. The mean average from the Likert scale revealed a slight decrease in fear from 4.13 to 4.07 (see Table A28). However, 46.67 of participants surveyed expressed fear of response in the post-project survey as the primary reason they do not share their faith more often (see Table A6). Therefore, fear of response remains a primary factor behind the decision making process to share the gospel.

The second goal of the project was to equip church members to use apologetics in evangelism in everyday life. To accomplish this goal, participants were taught how to answer questions regarding three common apologetic issues: (1) what is the purpose and meaning of life, (2) how can I have faith when I still have so much doubt, and (3) how can someone believe in a God who allows pain and suffering? Participants were taught not only how to answer appropriately, but also how to ask appropriate questions to engage others. Five questions (2, 4, 9, 10, 12) in section 2B of the project survey were used to analyze the project's effectiveness in achieving this goal.

Using the 6-point Likert scale participants were asked to identify the appropriate response to question 2: I feel I am ill-equipped to defend my faith. According to the pre-project survey 40 percent of participants agreed at least somewhat to feel ill-equipped to defend their faith, compared to 6.67 percent in the post-project survey. Consequently, the results of the paired t-test indicated a statistically significant increase in the participants' expressed readiness to defend their faith (see Table A9).

The marked increase in participants feeling equipped to defend their faith was also seen in questions 4, 9, 10, 12, all of which noted statistically significant increases. Of these four questions, the greatest statistical increase was found in the response to question 9: I feel equipped to give a biblical response as to why a loving God allows pain and suffering. In fact, this question received the largest statistical increase of any question on the survey, as the mean average noted an increase of 3.8 to 4.93 (see Table

A24). In comparing the change in percentages, 33.33 percent of participants either agreed or strongly agreed to feeling equipped to provide a biblical response to this difficult question in the pre-project survey compared to 86.66 percent in the post-project survey. Consequently, the paired t-test considered this change very statistically significant (see Table A23).

The third goal of this project was for church members to obtain an increased understanding of the worldviews present within the community. It was believed the more one understood the worldview of others, the easier it would be to understand how to engage others with the gospel. To measure this goal one question was asked in section 2B using a 6-point Likert scaled, and four open ended questions were asked in section 3. The data from the Likert test proved to be easy to discern, however the same cannot be said for the open ended questions. As a result, the evaluation of participant responses in section 3 should be considered subjective.

On question 16 in section 2B, participants were asked to identify their confidence in having a spiritual conversation with someone who does not share their worldview. The pre-project survey revealed 26.67 percent of participants either agreed or strongly agreed to feeling confident in such a conversation, compared to 66.67 in the post-project survey. The Likert test also revealed a change in the mean average from 3.4 in the pre-project survey to 4.67 in the post-project survey. Therefore, the results of the paired t-test considered these changes statistically significant (see Table A37).

In section 3 participants were asked on question 3: How do the worldviews that exist within your community differ from yours at all? Responses varied, but in comparing each participant's response from the pre and post surveys it was evident the majority of participants developed an increased understanding of the worldviews present within the community. For example, participant 10 stated in the pre-project survey, "I live in a predominately Christian community. Worldviews do not differ very much."

However, in the post-project survey he or she responded by stating, "People generally believe they are Christians; some without knowing what it means or true knowledge of Christ." The change in response indicates this participant has developed a healthier Christian worldview and is beginning to recognize not everyone who calls themselves a Christian is in fact a Christian (see Table 41).

Based upon the research data it is evident the project was successful in achieving its three goals, as supported by a statistically significant change in survey results. The strengths within this project will be noted in the next section. Project weaknesses will also be discussed.

Strengths of the Project

Topic relevancy was a significant strength of this project. While the discipline of apologetics was foreign to most participants, the questions we sought to answer were not. The topics of evil, faith and doubt, and purpose and meaning engaged the congregation and encouraged participation. One of the strongest aspects of the project proved to be the question and answer sessions in the Sunday evening training. Participants typically engaged and asked thought provoking questions. To garner as much participation and to address as many questions as possible, participants were encouraged to email questions to me throughout the week. This approach proved to provide a high level of participation from individuals who may not have asked questions otherwise. The questions received were turned into applicable case studies. These case studies proved a beneficial tool allowing participants to apply what was learned and discussed to real life scenarios.

The visual aid of the Christian worldview filter also served as a strength to the project (see Appendix 6). While many evangelistic methods require rote memorization, few teach participants how to think biblically. The implementation of the Christian worldview filter provided participants a systematic approach to answering life's most

basic and difficult questions. The filter took participants beyond rote memorization and challenged them to think biblically.

Sunday evening attendance at Piperton Baptist has been virtually non-existent since I became pastor. The lack of Sunday evening attendance was a major concern prior to the project, but was the only time suitable to conduct a church wide training session. In an attempt to boost attendance, I recruited childcare workers for birth through fifth grade in order to increase attendance. The average Sunday evening attendance increased from an average of 15 to an average of 28 throughout the course of the project. The addition of childcare brought the overall attendance to an average of 40 individuals throughout the project. While the increase in attendance was attributed largely to general interest in the project and personal recruitment, the addition of childcare cannot be overlooked. The addition of Sunday evening childcare resulted in a better learning environment for participants and eliminated a common excuse that would limit participation.

The implementation of an iTunes podcast, made at the request of participants, proved to be an unforeseen strength. The free podcast allowed participants to stream or download Sunday morning sermons and evening training sessions that might have been missed. The podcast also provided a way to review previous sessions. Prior to the project, church members could only obtain recordings by requesting a CD. Based upon the podcast feed stats, 108 unique views were counted over the course of the project. However, the podcast also posed several significant challenges. The first was the inability to produce quality audio for Sunday evening question and answer sessions. As a result, several evening sessions were left unpublished. The use of the podcast also provided an excuse for participants not to physically attend Sunday evening training sessions.

Weaknesses of the Project

The most glaring weakness of this project was the subjectivity of the participant survey in measuring confidence. The 6-point Likert scale served to measure participant responses in areas of evangelism, apologetics, and worldview and fulfilled its purpose successfully. However, the Likert scale was unable to measure whether participant responses were based upon good theology or faulty assumptions. For instance, if a participant expressed evangelistic confidence in the pre-project survey, but discovered over the course of the project their confidence was built on faulty assumptions, the comparison research would have revealed little to no change in confidence level, even if confidence grew exponentially. Additionally, there was no constant variable to measure one participant's confidence against another. One participant could express extreme confidence, but have little to no biblical knowledge to back up his or her confidence. Another participant may have expressed minimum confidence, but as the result of a self-deprecating personality. Thus, the subjectivity of the survey resulted in a failure to provide an accurate reflection of participant confidence growth or decline.

Similarly, the open ended worldview questions in section 3 of the survey proved to be an unsuccessful way to effectively measure understanding of cultural worldviews. To evaluate this response it would have been most effective to conduct an objective worldview test and compare results from the pre and post-project survey. However, implementing such a task would not have been possible with the way this project was set up.

Inconsistent participation was also a weakness. Despite repeated emails, phone calls, and personal invitations, it was extremely difficult to receive the participant commitment required for the project. The lack of consistent participation appeared to be the result of a twofold problem: (1) executing the project over the summer months, coincided with family vacations, and (2) the overall culture of the church. Like many

churches, Piperton Baptist is primarily a Sunday morning only congregation. Sunday evening attendance has been virtually non-existent. Inconsistent participation was not limited only to Sunday evening attendance, as it also extended into Sunday morning. If a child had a baseball tournament or there was an opportunity to venture to the lake, gathering with the church on the Lord's Day was not a priority. Due to inconsistent attendance and participation, the quality of the project and accuracy of the results were negatively affected.

Another significant weakness of the project was my overzealous desire to share a wealth of information. Often times my excitement resulted in covering too much information in some of the initial Sunday evening training sessions. While eager to share all I had learned; I should have remembered that less is sometimes more. For example, in the July 21, 2013 evening session on the doctrine of evil, I attempted to present a philosophy exercise to demonstrate how the existence of evil proves the existence of God. In so doing, my example was communicated poorly as I attempted to deliver an excess of material over the heads of the participants. Sharing too much information resulted in a loss of interest and focus. I would have served the participants better by keeping things simple and allowing more time for questions and real life application.

What I Would Do Differently

There are several things I would change about the project if I were to execute it again. First, I would narrow the scope of the project to reduce the number of participants and teaching sessions. While my primary goal was focused on increasing the evangelistic confidence of overall church membership, I believe the project would have resulted in greater success with a smaller and more committed group of participants. Fewer participants (5-10) would have afforded intentional one-on-one teaching opportunities and a more intimate and less intimidating setting to ask questions. A transition from the Sunday morning and evening format to a once a week training session would also have

likely resulted in increased participation. I make this recommendation with the desire to increase results for those who may replicate this project in the future. Reducing the number of participants and teaching sessions would likely result in consistent participation. Consistent participation would likely provide a greater learning retention, and result in a greater increase in evangelistic confidence. For this reason, I would also increase the expectations on participants from 10 to 13 weeks.

Sunday morning services did not afford time for one-on-one training, but did serve a valuable purpose. I discovered many of the most faithful participants were those who joined the project after it had already commenced. On numerous occasions, members of the congregation commented they had never heard a pastor preach on, or discuss such difficult topics during a Sunday morning service. These individuals expressed appreciation and a genuine desire to learn more about worldview apologetics, evidenced by their participation. If I were to execute this project again, I would conduct a four week sermon series discussing Christian worldview prior in an effort to pique potential participant interest.

In addition, I would also implement the project at another time of the year. Instead of conducting the project in the summer, I would schedule the project in the fall, immediately after school resumed in an effort to boost participation. Inconsistent participation as a result, affected the overall success of the project. However, I was left with only two choices: (1) conduct the project over the summer months, or (2) potentially delay graduation. I chose to conduct the project over the summer months in order to avoid having to delay graduation. I made this decision recognizing it would negatively affect project participation.

Theological Reflections

Preparing the church to use a Christian worldview forced us to engage some difficult theological questions. Over the course of the project, I expected to receive at

least a minimal amount of disagreement or resistance regarding the topic of evil and the sovereignty of God, but I received none. I am unsure if this lack of negative response reflects an unwillingness to engage, general apathy, or a growing trust in scriptural authority.

While I expected resistance regarding the problem of evil, I did not expect opposition regarding the doctrine of redemption. Conversations both prior to and after these sessions, revealed not every participant firmly holds to the exclusivity of Christ in salvation. A belief among a small minority of participants suggested there had to be another way of salvation for those who never hear the gospel. In addition, I noticed all absolute truth statements were met with some opposition by these individuals. This opposition drove me further into the Scriptures and served to strengthen my faith in the person and work of Christ.

Even after receiving opposition to some absolute truth claims, I still managed to receive the comment from those inside and outside of the church who believe postmodernism is dead. There is little doubt that postmodernism is not considered, a respected philosophical construct, however postmodernism has clearly left a lasting impression upon the cultural landscape. For example, the common response of "that may be true for you, but it is not true for me" stems directly from the effects of postmodernism. Postmodern thought abounds in spite of those lacking knowledge about postmodernism. Thus this project confirmed the necessity for Christians to think and respond to all of life's questions and scenarios through the lens of a Christian worldview and understanding all truth is God's truth.

Personal Reflections

I walked into my first doctoral seminar with fear and trepidation. Four years later, I look back and realize this journey stretched me in ways I never thought possible.

I have grown personally, professionally, intellectually, and spiritually throughout this process.

As a pastor it is one thing to preach on the sovereignty of God, but another to cling to this doctrinal truth through the most difficult times of one's life. For my wife and me, these times came over the course of my doctoral studies. Such challenges drove us to our knees, deeper into the Word, and ultimately provided the inspiration for this project. Without my confidence in the person and work of Jesus Christ, I would have never made it through the darkness. By the grace of God I did and I am a stronger man today as a result. I rest confidently in the fact that the only way to make sense of anything in this world is through the cross of Christ.

I am deeply thankful for those who provided significant influence upon my theological and professional development throughout this program and project. While many were professors and guest lecturers, others were authors both living and dead. I knew before entering the program reading would be a large portion of the doctoral process and thousands of pages would be required, but I could never have imagined how much I would grow as a result. As an avid reader, some of the authors were familiar. Reading their works was like sitting down for a cup of coffee with a trusted friend, but this program and project also forced me to read authors with whom I was unfamiliar or had disagreement. Many of these authors became new favorites, while others forced me to gain confidence in critiquing the arguments of those with whom I do not agree.

The discipline I have developed has helped me grow professionally and personally. I learned firsthand that life as a husband, father, pastor, and doctoral student simultaneously is incredibly demanding, yet also incredibly rewarding. This program and project forced me to become better in time management, delegation, and management of priorities. I believe I am a better husband, father, and pastor as a result.

The project itself has increased my confidence as a pastor, theologian, apologist, and evangelist. I was forced to wrestle with life's most basic and difficult questions, and challenged to respond to countless questions presented by members of the congregation. Each conversation and question drove me deeper into God's Word as I sought to discover where the Bible speaks and remains silent. A week did not pass over the course of this project when I was not engaged with someone in an evangelistic conversation. Such conversations included pantheists, atheists, agnostics, and self-professing Christians. Each conversation served to strengthen my evangelistic confidence and confirm the topic of this project was the right choice not only for Piperton Baptist Church, but for me personally.

Conclusion

With a deep love for the local church and an insatiable desire to see her make much of Christ in this skeptical and unbelieving world, I pray this project will benefit those who choose to read it. One of the greatest joys of my young ministry has been to lead my congregation on this journey. To witness individuals build a Christian worldview and grow in evangelistic confidence has been something I will treasure for the rest of my life and career. I pray this increased confidence will carry over into countless evangelistic conversations and conversions.

The benefits of this project should not be limited to Piperton Baptist Church in Collierville, Tennessee. This project can benefit any size church, in any demographic setting, as more than another evangelistic program or method. This project provides churches information to equip their congregations for interaction with the world through a Christian worldview apologetic and with the understanding nothing falls outside the central themes of creation, fall, and redemption.

APPENDIX 1

PRE-PROJECT BULLETIN INSERT AND EMAIL

On December 14, 2012 a man walked into an elementary school in the sleepy town of Newtown, Connecticut and opened fire killing 20 children and six adults. On May 20, 2013 the skies darkened, the wind blew, and a catastrophic tornado dropped from the sky killing 24 people, including 10 children, and destroying the small town of Moore, Oklahoma . The question many of these grief stricken families, news media, and people across the country asked was, why? Why would a loving God allow such evil to exist? As Christians we have a responsibility to provide a biblical response to this difficult question and others like it, but how?

On Sunday, June 23, we will begin a series entitled *Question Everything* that will include both Sunday morning and Sunday evenings. I know Sunday night is family night for many of you, and I respect that, but I want to invite you to commit to make both Sunday mornings and evenings a high priority for your family over the next 15 weeks. There will be excellent children's programming provided (Children's Choir and Nursery) every Sunday night for all children up to fifth grade along with our normal children's programming that will continue every Sunday morning.

While the aim of this series is to help increase your evangelistic confidence it will also serve as a perfect opportunity to invite family, friends, and neighbors who may be skeptics of the faith. So begin praying now about who you can invite.

I truly believe that these 15 weeks could transform the evangelistic culture of Piperton Baptist Church. As a result, I want to encourage you and your family to make both Sunday mornings and evenings a priority throughout this series. I would like you to prayerfully consider committing to attend a minimum of 10 Sunday morning and evening services throughout the series. To help us prepare for the Sunday evening training please email me at jeremy@pipertonbaptist.com if you plan to participate. If your child will be participating in children's choir or nursery please include their names and ages.

Until All Have Heard,

Pastor Jeremy

APPENDIX 2
PARTICIPANT SURVEY

I. Pre and post-seminar questionnaire for project participants.

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your confidence in the area of evangelism and apologetics. This research is being conducted by Jeremy Todd for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer the questions before the ministry project begins and you will answer the same questions at the completion of the fifteen week ministry project. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

The first section of this questionnaire will obtain some demographic information about project participants:

1. Please provide *only* the last 3 numbers of your Social Security Number: _____
2. How many weeks of the 15 week project have you attended? _____
Note: Only to be answered on week 15 of the project.
3. How many years has it been since you came to faith in Christ? _____
4. How old are you? _____

The second section of this questionnaire deals with your confidence when it comes to sharing your faith (evangelism) and how equipped you feel to defend your faith (apologetics):

1. Please circle the answer that best indicates how often you attempt to share your faith.
2 + times a week 1 time a week once a month once a year almost never
 2. Have you ever received evangelism training? Yes No
If you answered yes, what type of training have you received? _____
-

3. Place an X next to the **single** primary reason you do not share your faith more often.

- ___ I am fearful of how people will respond
- ___ I do not have sufficient knowledge to answer difficult questions
- ___ I do not believe evangelism is my responsibility
- ___ My schedule is too busy and I do not have enough time
- ___ Other: _____

Using the following scale, please write the number that best corresponds to your beliefs in response to the following statements:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree

- ___ 1. Every Christian is responsible for sharing the gospel with nonbelievers.
- ___ 2. I feel I am ill-equipped to defend my faith.
- ___ 3. I am confident in my understanding of the gospel.
- ___ 4. I feel equipped to give a defense for the existence of God.
- ___ 5. I feel equipped to give a biblical defense for the meaning of life.
- ___ 6. I am confident in sharing the gospel with others.
- ___ 7. I feel comfortable sharing Christ with someone who expresses serious doubts about the truthfulness of Christianity.
- ___ 8. I am confident in initiating spiritual conversations.
- ___ 9. I feel equipped to give a biblical response as to why a loving God allows pain and suffering.
- ___ 10. I feel equipped to answer difficult questions that may arise when sharing the gospel.
- ___ 11. I am fearful of how people will respond when I share my faith.
- ___ 12. I am equipped to give a biblical response as to how one is able to reconcile faith and doubt.
- ___ 13. Every Christian should be able to give a defense for their faith.
- ___ 14. I am interested in learning how to defend my faith.

___ 15. Evangelism and Apologetics should be left to pastors and theologians.

___ 16. I am confident in having a spiritual conversation with someone who does not share the same worldview as me.

The third section of this questionnaire deals with your worldview and your understanding regarding the worldviews held within the local culture: A worldview is one's view of the world. It is a model of the universe that informs individuals what the world is like and how they should live in it.

1. Briefly explain what has influenced the shaping of your worldview. _____

2. Explain how your worldview shapes how you live. _____

3. How do the worldviews that exist within your community differ from yours if at all?

4. Does one's worldview determine the method you use to share the gospel with them?

Circle one: Yes No

Explain: _____

APPENDIX 3

MAN ON THE STREET INTERVIEW

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to gain a general understanding of the various worldviews held in the surrounding area of Collierville, Tennessee. This research is being conducted by Jeremy Todd for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer the questions on the survey listed below. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Interview Questions

Would you consider yourself to be a Christian? Yes No (*circle one*)

What is the origin of the universe? _____

Does life have meaning? Yes No (*circle one*)

If yes, what gives life meaning? _____

Do moral laws exist for determining right and wrong? Yes No (*circle one*)

If yes:

Are these moral laws learned or are all people born knowing right from wrong on a moral level?

Learned knowledge Born with knowledge (*circle one*)

Should these moral laws be able to change as the culture changes?

Yes No (*circle one*)

Do these moral laws apply universally to all people in the world?

Yes No (*circle one*)

If yes or no:

Who or what determines right and wrong? _____

Please turn this page over to complete the survey.

What is the primary cause of the problems in the world today? _____

What is the solution, if any, to the problems in the world today? _____

What happens after death? _____

APPENDIX 4
SERMON OUTLINES

Sermon 1 1 Peter 3:14-16

“Be Prepared to Give a Reason”

- I. We as the church are left with three distinct options:
 1. Retreat from the culture
 2. Blend into the culture
 3. Engage the culture
- II. Peter never advocates retreating from or blending into the culture to avoid suffering
- III. If Christians continue to faithfully walk with Christ in the midst of suffering, people are going to begin asking questions
- IV. How does Peter instruct them to respond?
 1. Be prepared
 2. Be gentle and respectful
 3. Having a good conscience
 4. Point them to Christ

Sermon 2 Genesis 1-2

“Creating the Filter: Where did everything come from?”

- I. The Triune God of the Bible is the source of all creation.
- II. How did God create?
- III. Why did God create?
- IV. What is God doing now?

Sermon 3 Genesis 3

öCreating the Filter: What has gone wrong with the world?ö

- I. What has gone wrong with the world?
- II. One trespass led to condemnation for all men (Romans 5:18)
- III. Where did the serpent come from?
- IV. Why not create a world where sin was an impossibility?
- V. Satan's fall and ongoing existence are ultimately for the glory of Christ
- VI. The only way we can understand suffering is through the cross of Christ

Sermon 4 Romans 5

öCreating the Filter: How can what is wrong be made right?ö

- I. Everything God created was created through Christ and for Christ
- II. God permits evil to exist because he has a purpose for it
- III. How can a perfectly good and holy God be both just and gracious to hopefully sinful people?
- IV. Christ came to undo what Adam did
- V. 1 Corinthians 15:20-26

Sermon 5 Ecclesiastes

öUsing the Filter: Does life have purpose and meaning?ö

- I. All is vanity
- II. For everything there is a season
- III. We are all going to die and don't know when
- IV. God is going to bring every deed into judgment
- V. If we don't believe in Christ we are condemned already
- VI. As divine image bearers we are designed to reflect our creator so that his glory may be revealed in us
- VII. Only what we do for Christ will last

Sermon 6 Acts 17:16-34

öUsing the Filter: The Apostle Paul as an Apologistö

- I. Paul called the church to take a stand for the truth
- II. Paul's approach was strategic
- III. Paul demonstrates cultural awareness
- IV. Paul establishes a biblical view of God
- V. Paul calls his audience to repent

Sermon 7 John 20

öUsing the Filter: How do I reconcile faith and doubt?

- I. Doubting Thomas
 1. This label is not entirely fair
- II. The Christian faith is a world where doubt and faith collide head on
- III. If you go through life unwilling to ask hard questions
- IV. Faith is not doubt free
- V. Thomas doubted, but his doubt ultimately led him to faith in Christ
- VI. Doubt will inevitably give way to either belief or unbelief
- VII. No amount of evidence in and of itself will ever cure someone of their unbelief

Sermon 8 John 10:22-39

öUsing the Filter: Jesus as an apologistö

- I. The identity of Jesus of Nazareth has been and continues to be debated
- II. Why did Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus?
- III. Jesus uses OT Scripture to make an a-fortiori argument
- IV. Jesus points people to his works as evidence of his identity
- V. The sign of Jonah.

Sermon 9

Genesis 15, 37-50

öUsing the Filter: Why would a loving God allow evil to exist? (Part 1 Moral Evil)ö

- I. The Bible teaches and Christians believe God isí
- II. The problem of evil
- III. The Christians responsibility to provide a response
- IV. The story of Joseph
 1. Genesis 15:13-16
 2. Genesis 37:5-11, 18-36
 3. Genesis 39:17-23
 4. Genesis 41:14-16, 39-44, 56-57
 5. Genesis 42:6b-9a
 6. Genesis 45:1-5
- V. The climax of the story
 1. Genesis 49:8-10
 2. Revelation 5:5, 9-10
 3. The Lion of Judah was and is the Lamb that was slain
- VI. Confidence in the sovereignty of God
 1. Genesis 50:20
 2. Proverbs 19:21
 3. Romans 8:28
- VII. Suffering is inevitable, but as believers we have hope in Christ

Sermon 10

Job 2:11b-13, John 9:1-3, Luke 13:1-5

öUsing the Filter: Why would a loving God allow evil to exist? (Part 2 Natural Evil)ö

- I. Where was God in this?
- II. We want to avoid the tendency to respond like the friend of Job
 1. Job 2:11b-13

2. Comfort based upon bad theology is no comfort at all
- III. There are times in Scripture that suffering is punishment for sin
- IV. Suffering is not always punishment for sin
 1. John 9:1-3
 2. Luke 13:1-5
- V. What about innocent victims?
 1. Jesus does not mention anything about innocent victims
- VI. Pain and suffering cannot be avoided in this world
- VII. The greatest triumph of good over evil was at the cross
- VIII. Repent

APPENDIX 5
TRAINING OUTLINES

- Training 1 öMeet Modern Day Mark: An Introduction to Worldviewö
- I. The American cultural landscape has shifted
 - II. Every one of us is driven by our deepest and most basic beliefs regarding the world.
 - III. One's worldview is a comprehensive life system seeking to answer the basic questions of life.
 1. Where did everything come from?
 2. What has gone wrong with the world?
 3. How can what is wrong be made right?
 - IV. What do we do when the existence of objective truth is denied?
 1. Remember Peter's instructions in 1 Peter 3:15
 2. Learn to listen, think, and ask good questions
 3. Start where they are
 4. Getting to the cross of Christ is always our aim
- Training 2 öMaintaining a Consistent Christian Worldviewö
- I. Living in a post-Christian nation
 - II. Fact/Value grid
 - III. The Bible doesn't endorse blind faith
 - IV. Romans 1:18-20
 1. Cosmological argument
 2. Teleological argument

3. Moral argument

V. Romans 1:19-21

1. All people are blinded to the truth
2. One must hear and receive the gospel

Training 3 öThe Problem of Evil through the Lens of a Christian Worldviewö

I. A biblical understanding of creation.

1. Who created?
2. How did he create?
3. Why did he create?
4. What is he doing now?

II. A biblical understanding of the fall

1. All moral and natural evil exists because of sin

III. God is in control of all things

IV. All things work together for the glory of Christ

V. Even sin and evil serve to bring glory to God when they are viewed through the cross of Christ

Training 4 öWhat About Those Who Never Hear the Gospel?ö

I. All people have knowledge of God

II. All people reject true knowledge of God

III. As a result there are no innocent people in the world

IV. All people are condemned for rejecting God

V. God provides the way of redemption through Jesus Christ

- VI. People cannot come to God apart from faith in Christ
- VII. Christ commands the church to make the gospel known to all people

Training 5 ðLearning to Use the Christian Worldview Filterö

- I. Be prepared
 - 1. Creation
 - 2. Fall
 - 3. Redemption
- II. Gently and respectfully engage the person with the gospel
- III. Listen
- IV. Think
- V. Ask good questions
- VI. Respond
- VII. Case Studies

Training 6 ðLearning to Bridge to the Gospel in Every Situationö

- I. Read Acts 17:16-34
 - 1. Mark things that stand out about Paul's approach
- II. What are some things that stand out about Paul's approach?
- III. Our approach must be culturally relevant
- IV. Building bridges
- V. How do we do this?
 - 1. Discover
 - 2. Bridge

3. Share

VI. Let us practice

Training 7 ðUsing the Christian Worldview Filter to Answer Doubtsö

- I. Doubter's prayer: Mark 9:24
- II. Discover why you doubt
- III. You must doubt your doubts
- IV. Case studies

Training 8 ðFollowing Jesus's Apologetic Exampleö

- I. Jesus as an apologist
- II. Jesus as the apologetic
- III. Jesus's use of logic and reason in apologetics
 1. Law of noncontradiction
 2. A-fortiori
- IV. Practice

Training 9 ðMoral and Natural Evil and the Sovereignty of Godö

- I. The relation between divine sovereignty and human responsibility
- II. Nothing happens without God allowing, ordaining, or causing it to happen
 1. God is preserving his creation
 2. God is cooperating with his creation
 3. God is governing over his creation
- III. Review Christian worldview filter
- IV. Practice responding to common questions about evil and suffering

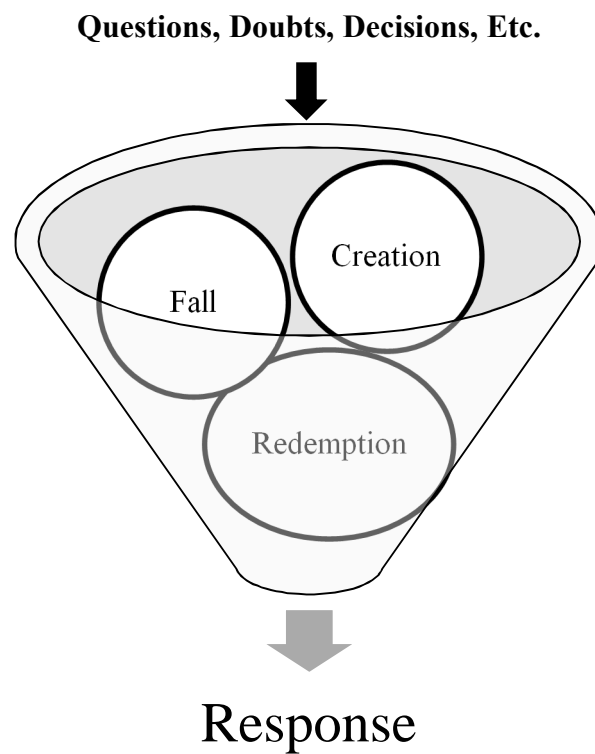
Training 10 ōThe Importance of a Christian Worldview for Evangelismö

- I. The American cultural landscape has shifted
- II. We are left with three distinct options
 1. Retreat from the culture
 2. Blend into the culture
 3. Engage the culture
- III. We each have a worldview
- IV. Public versus private dichotomy
- V. What are we to do?
- VI. The process
- VII. Practice exercise

APPENDIX 6

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW FILTER

Objective Standard of Truth: The Bible as all truth is God's truth.



Creation: Where did everything come from?

Who? How? Why? What is he doing now?

Fall: What went wrong?

How do all people enter the world as a result of the fall?

Why do all moral and natural evils exist?

Redemption: How can what is wrong be made right?

Through what Jesus Christ did on the cross and through God's coming judgment.

The only way to make sense of meaning or suffering is through the cross of Christ.

When Jesus returns he will make all things new.

APPENDIX 7

SURVEY RESULTS FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO
MET PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Table A1. Response to Question 2 in Section 1

Section 1: Question 2	
How many weeks of the 15 week project have you attended?	
Mean Average	11.67
Median Average	11.5

Table A2. Response to Question 3 in Section 1

Section 1: Question 3	
How many years has it been since you came to faith in Christ?	
Mean Average	27.24
Median Average	20.5

Table A3. Response to Question 4 in Section 1

Section 1: Question 4	
How old are you?	
Mean Average	43.35
Median Average	39

Table A4. Response to Question 1 in Section 2A

Section 2A: Question 1				
How often do you attempt to share your faith?				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
2 + Times a week	0	0	3	20
1 Time a week	0	0	4	26.67
Once a month	6	40	4	26.67
Once a year	7	46.67	3	20
Almost never	2	13.33	1	6.67
Total	15		15	

Table A5. Response to Question 2 in Section 2A

Section 2A: Question 2		
Have you received evangelism training? (Prior to this training)		
	Pre-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent
Yes	7	46.67
No	8	53.33

Table A6. Response to Question 3 in Section 2A

Section 2A: Question 3				
What is the single primary reason you do not share your faith more often?				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
I am fearful of how people will respond	9	60	7	46.67
I do not have sufficient knowledge to answer difficult questions	3	20	2	13.33
I do not believe evangelism is my responsibility	0	0	0	0
My schedule is too busy and I do not have enough time	2	13.33	3	20
Other	1	6.67	3	20

Note: The pre-survey other response was "opportunities are not presented to share." The post-survey other responses were: (1) I don't know why. (2) Missed opportunities. (3) Not around others often.

Table A7. Response to Question 1 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 1				
Every Christian is responsible for sharing the gospel with nonbelievers.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	0	0	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
5 Agree	1	6.67	0	0
6 Strongly Agree	14	93.33	15	100

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two tailed P value equals 0.3343. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A8. Average Response to Question 1 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 1	
Every Christian is responsible for sharing the gospel with nonbelievers.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	5.93
Post-Survey Mean Average	6

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A9. Response to Question 2 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 2				
I feel I am ill-equipped to defend my faith.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	3	20
2 Disagree	7	46.67	11	73.33
3 Disagree Somewhat	2	13.33	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	3	20	0	0
5 Agree	3	20	1	6.67
6 Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0263. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Table A10. Average Response to Question 2 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 2	
I feel I am ill-equipped to defend my faith.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.13
Post-Survey Mean Average	2

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A11. Response to Question 3 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 3				
I am confident in my understanding of the gospel.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	0	0	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	2	13.33	0	0
5 Agree	5	33.33	9	60
6 Strongly Agree	8	53.33	6	40

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 1.000. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A12. Average Response to Question 3 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 3	
I am confident in my understanding of the gospel.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	5.4
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.4

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A13. Response to Question 4 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 4				
I feel equipped to give a defense for the existence of God.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	1	6.67	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	5	33.33	1	6.67
5 Agree	8	53.33	11	73.33
6 Strongly Agree	1	6.67	3	20

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0450. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Table A14. Average Response to Question 4 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 4	
I feel equipped to give a defense for the existence of God.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.53
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.13

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A15. Response to Question 5 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 5				
I feel equipped to give a biblical defense for the meaning of life.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	0	0	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	4	26.67	0	0
5 Agree	8	53.33	10	66.67
6 Strongly Agree	3	20	5	33.33

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.1109. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A16. Average Response to Question 5 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 5	
I feel equipped to give a biblical defense for the meaning of life.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.93
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.33

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A17. Response to Question 6 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 6				
I am confident in sharing the gospel with others.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	2	13.33	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	1	6.67	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	9	60	5	33.33
5 Agree	2	13.33	10	66.67
6 Strongly Agree	1	6.67	0	0

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0032. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant.

Table A18. Average Response to Question 6 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 6	
I am confident in sharing the gospel with others.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.93
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.67

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A19. Response to Question 7 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 7				
I feel comfortable sharing Christ with someone who expresses serious doubts about the truthfulness of Christianity.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	1	6.67	0	0
2 Disagree	0	0	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	2	13.33	2	13.33
4 Agree Somewhat	9	60	3	20
5 Agree	2	13.33	10	66.67
6 Strongly Agree	1	6.67	0	0

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.1077. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A20. Average Response to Question 7 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 7	
I feel comfortable sharing Christ with someone who expresses serious doubts about the truthfulness of Christianity.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.93
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.53

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A21. Response to Question 8 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 8				
I am confident in initiating spiritual conversations.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	1	6.67	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	3	20	1	6.67
4 Agree Somewhat	6	40	7	46.67
5 Agree	3	20	7	46.67
6 Strongly Agree	2	13.33	0	0

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.3636. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A22. Average Response to Question 8 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 8	
I am confident in initiating spiritual conversations.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.13
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.40

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A23. Response to Question 9 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 9				
I feel equipped to give a biblical response as to why a loving God allows pain and suffering.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	2	13.33	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	4	26.67	1	6.67
4 Agree Somewhat	4	26.67	1	6.67
5 Agree	5	33.33	11	73.33
6 Strongly Agree	0	0	2	13.33

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0093. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant.

Table A24. Average Response to Question 9 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 9	
I feel equipped to give a biblical response as to why a loving God allows pain and suffering.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.8
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.93

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A25. Response to Question 10 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 10				
I feel equipped to answer difficult questions that may arise when sharing the gospel.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	2	13.33	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	2	13.33	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	8	53.33	8	53.33
5 Agree	3	20	7	46.67
6 Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0453. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Table A26. Average Response to Question 10 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 10	
I feel equipped to answer difficult questions that may arise when sharing the gospel.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.8
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.47

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A27. Response to Question 11 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 11				
I am fearful of how people will respond when I share my faith.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0		1	6.67
2 Disagree	2	13.33	1	6.67
3 Disagree Somewhat	1	6.67	2	13.33
4 Agree Somewhat	6	40	5	33.33
5 Agree	5	33.33	4	26.67
6 Strongly Agree	1	6.67	2	13.33

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.8358. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A28. Average Response to Question 11 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 11	
I am fearful of how people will respond when I share my faith.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.13
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.07

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A29. Response to Question 12 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 12				
I am equipped to give a biblical response as to how one is able to reconcile faith and doubt.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	1	6.67	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	3	20	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	6	40	5	33.33
5 Agree	4	26.67	7	46.67
6 Strongly Agree	1	6.67	3	20

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0472. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Table A30. Average Response to Question 12 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 12	
I am equipped to give a biblical response as to how one is able to reconcile faith and doubt.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.07
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.87

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A31. Response to Question 13 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 13				
Every Christian should be able to give a defense for their faith.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	1	6.67	0	0
2 Disagree	0	0	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
5 Agree	2	13.33	4	26.67
6 Strongly Agree	12	80	11	73.33

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.6074. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A32. Average Response to Question 13 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 13	
Every Christian should be able to give a defense for their faith.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	5.53
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.73

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A33. Response to Question 14 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 14				
I am interested in learning how to defend my faith.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	0	0	1	6.67
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	0	0	2	13.33
5 Agree	2	13.33	2	13.33
6 Strongly Agree	13	86.67	10	66.67

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.1038. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A34. Average Response to Question 14 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 14	
I am interested in learning how to defend my faith.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	5.87
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.33

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A35. Response to Question 15 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 15				
Evangelism and Apologetics should be left to pastors and theologians.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	12	80	11	73.33
2 Disagree	3	20	4	26.67
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
5 Agree	0	0	0	0
6 Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.1038. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A36. Average Response to Question 15 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 15	
Evangelism and Apologetics should be left to pastors and theologians.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	1.2
Post-Survey Mean Average	1.27

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A37. Response to Question 16 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 16				
I am confident in having a spiritual conversation with someone who does not share the same worldview as me.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	2	13.33	0	0
2 Disagree	3	20	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	2	13.33	1	6.67
4 Agree Somewhat	4	26.67	4	26.67
5 Agree	3	20	9	60
6 Strongly Agree	1	6.67	1	6.67

Note: A paired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0141. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Table A38. Average Response to Question 16 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 16	
I am confident in having a spiritual conversation with someone who does not share the same worldview as me.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.4
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.67

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A39. Response to Question 1 in Section 3

Section 3: Question 1		
Briefly explain what has influenced the shaping of your worldview.		
Participant	Response	
1	Pre-Project	Scripture
	Post-Project	Scripture
2	Pre-Project	Growing up in the USA is the baseline. Added to that is my travels to Europe, China, Egypt which add perspective. Reading Bible daily also shapes my worldview.
	Post Project	Reading Bible daily, preparing Sunday School lessons, and apologetic study
3	Pre-Project	Scriptures, pastors and teachers
	Post-Project	Bible, Creation
4	Pre-Project	I became a Christian as a young child. I was taken to church regularly and read the Bible by my mother even before school age. Praise be to God! I had the privilege of being taught the Bible by Christian adults (SS teachers, VBS), So I know that God loves me.
	Post Project	I can thankfully say that I have been taught the word of God since a very small child by first my mother and then by Christian women of the church. I did not have trouble believing in a creator God and have never questioned it.
5	Pre-Project	I have attended church since before birth (in my mother's womb) and she always had me involved in church all my life. I accepted Christ at an early age and have let His view and God's word shape my view of the world and how we should live in it.
	Post-Project	My upbringing and continued participation in church, my family, my walk with the Lord--staying in his Word, spending time with Him, keeping a close relationship with him.
6	Pre-Project	My environment, church, work, fellow Christians.
	Post Project	My worldview has been shaped by my culture, environment, etc.
7	Pre-Project	Church, family, TV
	Post-Project	Experiences, church, community, family, Bible, raised in a Christian home but didn't realize until I was an adult that negative influence
8	Pre-Project	My belief in Jesus Christ has shaped my worldview

	Post-Project	The Bible, my faith in Jesus
9	Pre-Project	Crichton College, personal mentors, personal research, life crisis
	Post-Project	The Truth Project, discipleship by mentors I have had and this study
10	Pre-Project	My religious upbringing, receiving Christian education, and my personal faith in Christ.
	Post-Project	Growing up in a Christian home, attending a Christian college, attending church, and personal study.
11	Pre-Project	Family, Culture, upbringing
	Post-Project	God's word, personal study and parents/family relationship
12	Pre-Project	Christian theology based on the Bible and what is taught at our church
	Post-Project	My worldview has always been shaped by the Bible, because that was the only worldview I was around/taught. But it's been both challenged, redefined and strengthened by Bible study as I grow and learn more.
13	Pre-Project	My worldview is shaped by my family, friends and church. The Bible has provided me with everything I need to know about why I am here and what I am called to do. I exist to glorify God.
	Post-Project	My worldview has been influenced by the Bible and the creation story. God's perfect creation, man's sin, Christ's death on the cross and a belief that it is only by His grace we are saved from eternal death
14	Pre-Project	The world is filled with sin, pain, and suffering. It holds good things but primarily it is a Christian's enemy holding captives that should be rescued.
	Post-Project	I've seen how evil I can be and how others can be evil as well. The country we live in is full of evil. But I believe that with Christ, all things will be repaired
15	Pre-Project	Family, church, and mentors
	Post-Project	Scripture

Table A40. Response to Question 2 in Section 3

Section 3: Question 2		
Explain how your worldview shapes how you live.		
Participant	Response	
1	Pre-Project	My life should always be patterned after God's teaching as demonstrated by Jesus' life on earth. I want to be more and more like Jesus.
	Post-Project	I live to glorify the creator god and enjoy what He has done and is doing in my life.
2	Pre-Project	I try to surrender myself daily to Christ and ask for his will to be done in my life
	Post Project	I want to live to glorify Jesus Christ and God the Father
3	Pre-Project	According to Scripture.
	Post-Project	Try to be a Biblical Christian
4	Pre-Project	God created me for his glory. It is my desire to live in a manner that pleases him and brings glory to his name. His spirit equips me to live in this sinful world. I know that I am never alone.
	Post Project	I am confident in my Savior's ability to work every situation in my life for good and to bring Glory to Himself.
5	Pre-Project	Christ guides me and all my decisions--how I work, worship, treat others, handle trials, worries, how I should take care of my body, everything.
	Post-Project	Allows me to have the kind of "magnetism" that draws others to a "different" lifestyle so others see how you handle "life" and they are curious as to how and why. Showing the love of Christ in the things you say and do and how you treat and react to others.
6	Pre-Project	I'm comfortable with my beliefs and it strongly determines how I live.
	Post Project	It determines how you feel others "perceive" things
7	Pre-Project	They can make it hard for me to stay on track.
	Post-Project	The more I learn the more it changes my understanding and the need for salvation church, and spreading the gospel.
8	Pre-Project	I try to live by the gospel and ask for forgiveness daily for not meeting it.
	Post Project	Live by Jesus shapes it
9	Pre-Project	It helps me decide what it means to be human and

		alive, and helps me understand who God is and who I am.
	Post-Project	I try to treat y wife in the pattern put forth by scripture and I try to view work, family and my health through the eyes of Scripture.
10	Pre-Project	I strive to live according to God's will.
	Post Project	I gave my life at an early age and later learned what it means to live the Christian life. I rely on God's grace and guidance every day.
11	Pre-Project	In every way it shapes meí how I think, act, respond, and who I associate with. I strive to live as Scripture teaches and as I grow in my relationship with him, my worldview aligns better with His.
	Post-Project	It's everything! It determines how I live, what I say, what I do, etc.
12	Pre-Project	My Christian worldview affects how I interact with others, how we make decisions in our marriage, how we spend our time, money, etc.
	Post Project	It's everything! It determines how I live, what I say, what I do, etc.
13	Pre-Project	My worldview is the basis for how I spend my time and money. It shapes my life because it gives me purpose and meaning.
	Post-Project	It gives me purpose and hope. Guides how I am called to live.
14	Pre-Project	Up and down. Some days I hate the world. I want the bad stuff away from me. Yet other times, when I sin, I am in it, but I don't want to be.
	Post Project	Knowing of the evil, I know I have to be prepared for anything. I put my trust in Christ to get me through. I have to rely on his commandments and obey them.
15	Pre-Project	Your vision of worldview is your perception of what matters or what you actually operate by.
	Post-Project	Convictions of faith affect everything

Table A41. Response to Question 3 Section 3

Section 3: Question 3		
How do the worldviews that exist within your community differ from yours if at all?		
Participant	Response	
1	Pre-Project	Many people live as "of the world"í letting the culture and man's wisdom determine their lifestyles.
	Post-Project	Many live for themselves and disregard God and turn to "idols" for pleasure and fulfillment
2	Pre-Project	Different ethnic groups in Memphis having different viewpoints
	Post Project	Similar to my worldview
3	Pre-Project	Most have a world view influenced by the culture around them.
	Post-Project	Less Biblical and more cultural
4	Pre-Project	Yes, I work with others that make no bones about living without the Lord. I also work with Christians who I question whether or not they have a biblical worldview.
	Post Project	It's not hard to see how many within my immediate neighborhood do not ever worship the Lord by going to his house to worship. There's a world out there that's dying without Christ.
5	Pre-Project	The world is rapidly changing--turning away more and more from God to a "God-less" life and lifestyle. Even though we live in the Bible belt, we really only live in the "tip of the buckle" anymore.
	Post-Project	Most others around me on a daily basis, have a bleak worldview, no hope, no excitement, even hostility toward God and the things of God. Or, they have been involved in church, but have a poor/false understanding of God and his word.
6	Pre-Project	There are atheists, catholic and different views in my neighborhood.
	Post Project	Muslim, Catholic, all view Christ differently
7	Pre-Project	God is not always put first in the world but I try to always put him first
	Post-Project	Mine are based on living for God.
8	Pre-Project	There are many Christians in my community. However, I do have friends that are not believers and would like to feel confident to discuss the gospel with them.
	Post Project	Not everyone believes in Jesus and that he is the

		only way
9	Pre-Project	The different worldviews I come in contact with are agnosticism, Islam, Judaism, and other Christian denominations
	Post-Project	I have an agnostic Jewish cousin and an orthodox Jewish cousin, and a Lebanese Islamic relative on my wife's side
10	Pre-Project	I live in a predominately Christian community. Worldviews do not differ very much.
	Post Project	People generally believe they are Christians; some without knowing what it means or true knowledge of Christ.
11	Pre-Project	The worldviews in my community are very different from mine—culturally, ethically, morally—the many without Christ or a knowledge of Christ and the Gospel are most prevalent.
	Post-Project	Greatly! Many do not believe in the God of the Bible, even if they profess that they do.
12	Pre-Project	Most have a "Christian" worldview, but do not fully understand the gospel.
	Post Project	Some people think they have a "Christian" worldview, as I once did, but it is often misinformed and ignorant to the truth.
13	Pre-Project	My worldview seems to be very similar to the people I am around.
	Post-Project	Some do and some don't. Many would say their worldviews are shaped by their experiences, family, evolution, knowledge of science
14	Pre-Project	The South holds the "good ole boy" syndrome. Everyone in the south "loves" God. But no one wants to give up what they want to do.
	Post Project	I believe that a lot of people believe in God, heaven, hell, and the Trinity, but they haven't truly trusted Christ. I want them to grasp what it means to truly know Christ.
15	Pre-Project	I feel more and more surrounded by a people that believe wrong ideas about God and the Gospel
	Post-Project	weak to no gospel

Table A42. Response to Question 4 in Section 3

Section 3: Question 4		
Does one's worldview determine the method you use to share the gospel with them?		
Participant	Response	
1	Pre-Project	Yes and No: People must understand the difference in "their worldview" and "God's view" which is the only view for eternal life.
	Post-Project	Yes: We must go to the true word of God to explain everything.
2	Pre-Project	Yes: I would tailor the way I express my views based on to whom I am talking.
	Post Project	Yes: The discussion will differ based on the person's background
3	Pre-Project	Yes: Do they believe there is a God? Do they know some Scripture? Are they part of a false religion? Do they think they are believers?
	Post-Project	Yes: To utilize the strategy that uses Scripture to target their belief system
4	Pre-Project	No
	Post Project	Yes: It determines how you might start your conversation with them. Whether they believe in the God of the Bible or a false God. One God can meet any need they have, we just need to probe and listen with respect to see where God is leading us to begin the dialogue.
5	Pre-Project	Yes: I find it difficult at times to put myself in others shoes and not being judgmental when I develop a relationship and begin sharing the gospel with someone totally opposite from me. So I do have a hard time sharing with someone whose worldview is not the same as mine. I have to step back and remember to not use "churchy terms" with those who have no clue what you're talking about. When someone disagrees with my worldview I want to be able to redirect them back to "The Truth" without arguing.
	Post-Project	Yes: You have to build that relationship with a person and understand where they are coming from to sometimes explain how and why the gospel is the truth.
6	Pre-Project	Yes: I would approach a Muslim different than an atheist.

	Post Project	Yes: You have to know where they are and who they say God is. Must determine if you both have the same understanding of God.
7	Pre-Project	Yes: Not everyone has been raised in church like me or around Christian friends or family.
	Post-Project	Yes: Some people already know about God, some don't. The way they are raised their culture (where to start) everyone needs to know.
8	Pre-Project	Yes: It should, otherwise if your worldview differs from the gospel, what is shared may not be the gospel.
	Post Project	Yes: It shapes every part of it
9	Pre-Project	Yes: I feel that I can explain the Christian worldview to a evolutionary scientist, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Jew and an agnostic.
	Post-Project	Yes If they are not a Christian, I do not start with Scripture. I start where they are.
10	Pre-Project	Yes: I have learned that it is important to learn about other worldviews, so that I can be better equipped to answer any questions.
	Post Project	Yes: We are to be respectful and kind to anyone we are sharing the gospel with.
11	Pre-Project	Yes: If you are unable to connect or gain trust to develop a relationship, you will be unable to share effectively.
	Post-Project	Yes: It dictates our approach in how to engage, where to start defining, sharing, etc.
12	Pre-Project	Yes: If someone had a similar worldview, I'd be more concerned with highlighting sin, because most don't realize sin = death. If another worldview, I'd also start with sin, but spend time talking about who Jesus is.
	Post Project	Yes: The way I'd share the gospel with someone would be dependent upon who they say Jesus is.
13	Pre-Project	Yes: You want to know how to approach that person so you can relate to them and understand where they are coming from. Not everyone will be as receptive to hear the gospel and some won't be receptive at all.
	Post-Project	Yes: Depending on one's worldview/beliefs you will approach each situation differently but ultimately point back to the same Gospel message. The gospel won't change, just the angle at which you approach it.
14	Pre-Project	No: The gospel is the gospel. There is only one.

	Post Project	Yes: I'll share the gospel with anyone but it's easier to relate to someone who is in or used to be in the same lifestyle I used to have.
15	Pre-Project	Yes You meet the person where they are and work towards an opportunity to share the gospel with them.
	Post-Project	Yes Find out where they are and bridge toward the true Gospel

APPENDIX 8

SURVEY RESULTS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

Table A43. Responses to Question 3 in Section 1

Section 1: Question 3	
How many years has it been since you came to faith in Christ?	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	28.01
Post-Survey Mean Average	25.46
Pre-Survey Median Average	30
Post-Survey Median Average	21

Table A44. Response to Question 4 in Section 1

Section 1: Question 4	
How old are you?	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	43.78
Post-Survey Mean Average	42.71
Pre-Survey Median Average	43
Post-Survey Median Average	40

Table A45. Response to Question 1 in Section 2A

Section 2A: Question 1				
How often do you attempt to share your faith?				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
2 + Times a week	1	2.13	6	21.43
1 Time a week	5	10.64	8	28.57
Once a month	17	36.17	5	17.86
Once a year	13	27.66	4	14.28
Almost never	11	23.40	5	17.86
Total	47		28	

Table A46. Response to Question 2 in Section 2A

Section 2A: Question 2				
Have you received evangelism training?				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
Yes	17	36.17	13	46.43
No	29	61.70	15	53.57

Table A47. Response to Question 3 in Section 2A

Section 2A: Question 3				
What is the single primary reason you do not share your faith more often?				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
I am fearful of how people will respond	19	40.43	11	39.29
I do not have sufficient knowledge to answer difficult questions	22	46.81	7	25
I do not believe evangelism is my responsibility	0	0	0	0
My schedule is too busy and I do not have enough time	5	10.64	6	21.43
Other	1	2.13	4	14.29

Note: The pre-survey other response was "opportunities are not presented to share." The post-survey other responses were: (1) I don't know why. (2) Missed opportunities. (3) Not around others often. (4) No response.

Table A48. Response to Question 1 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 1				
Every Christian is responsible for sharing the gospel with nonbelievers.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	2	4.26	0	0
2 Disagree	0	0	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	1	2.13	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
5 Agree	5	10.64	0	0
6 Strongly Agree	39	82.98	28	100

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0738. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not quite statistically significant.

Table A49. Average Response to Question 1 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 1	
Every Christian is responsible for sharing the gospel with nonbelievers.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	5.62
Post-Survey Mean Average	6

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A50. Response to Question 2 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 2				
I feel I am ill-equipped to defend my faith.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	3	6.38	6	21.43
2 Disagree	18	38.30	15	53.57
3 Disagree Somewhat	7	14.89	2	7.14
4 Agree Somewhat	12	25.53	3	10.71
5 Agree	7	14.89	2	7.14
6 Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0103. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Table A51. Average Response to Question 2 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 2	
I feel I am ill-equipped to defend my faith.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.04
Post-Survey Mean Average	2.29

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A52. Response to Question 3 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 3				
I am confident in my understanding of the gospel.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	1	2.13	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	3	6.38	1	3.57
4 Agree Somewhat	10	21.28	5	17.86
5 Agree	19	40.43	12	42.86
6 Strongly Agree	14	29.79	10	35.71

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.3394. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A53. Average Response to Question 3 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 3	
I am confident in my understanding of the gospel.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.89
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.11

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A54. Response to Question 4 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 4				
I feel equipped to give a defense for the existence of God.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	4	8.51	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	18	38.30	1	3.57
5 Agree	20	42.55	20	71.43
6 Strongly Agree	5	10.64	7	25

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0004. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Table A55. Average Response to Question 4 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 4	
I feel equipped to give a defense for the existence of God.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.47
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.21

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A56. Response to Question 5 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 5				
I feel equipped to give a biblical defense for the meaning of life.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	1	2.13	0	0
2 Disagree	2	4.26	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	3	6.38	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	15	31.92	1	3.57
5 Agree	18	38.30	18	64.29
6 Strongly Agree	8	17.02	9	32.14

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0010. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant.

Table A57. Average Response to Question 5 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 5	
I feel equipped to give a biblical defense for the meaning of life.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.51
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.29

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A58. Response to Question 6 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 6				
I am confident in sharing the gospel with others.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	5	10.64	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	5	10.64	1	3.57
4 Agree Somewhat	24	51.06	11	39.29
5 Agree	9	19.15	12	42.86
6 Strongly Agree	4	8.51	4	14.29

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0065. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant.

Table A59. Average Response to Question 6 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 6	
I am confident in sharing the gospel with others.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.04
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.68

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A60. Response to Question 7 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 7				
I feel comfortable sharing Christ with someone who expresses serious doubts about the truthfulness of Christianity.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	1	2.13	0	0
2 Disagree	3	6.38	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	8	17.02	4	14.29
4 Agree Somewhat	20	42.55	7	25
5 Agree	10	21.28	14	50
6 Strongly Agree	5	10.64	3	10.71

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0454. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Table A61. Average Response to Question 7 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 7	
I feel comfortable sharing Christ with someone who expresses serious doubts about the truthfulness of Christianity.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4.06
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.57

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A62. Response to Question 8 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 8				
I am confident in initiating spiritual conversations.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	3	6.38	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	12	25.53	4	14.29
4 Agree Somewhat	19	40.43	14	50
5 Agree	8	17.02	8	28.57
6 Strongly Agree	5	10.64	2	7.14

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.2246. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A63. Average Response to Question 8 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 8	
I am confident in initiating spiritual conversations.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	4
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.29

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A64. Response to Question 9 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 9				
I feel equipped to give a biblical response as to why a loving God allows pain and suffering.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	7	14.89	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	12	25.53	2	7.14
4 Agree Somewhat	17	36.17	5	17.86
5 Agree	9	19.15	15	53.57
6 Strongly Agree	2	4.26	6	21.43

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0001. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Table A65. Average Response to Question 10 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 9	
I feel equipped to give a biblical response as to why a loving God allows pain and suffering.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.72
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.89

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A66. Response to Question 10 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 10				
I feel equipped to answer difficult questions that may arise when sharing the gospel.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	8	17.02	1	3.57
3 Disagree Somewhat	9	19.15	2	7.14
4 Agree Somewhat	20	42.55	11	39.29
5 Agree	8	17.02	10	35.71
6 Strongly Agree	2	4.26	4	14.29

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0024. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant.

Table A67. Average Response to Question 10 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 10	
I feel equipped to answer difficult questions that may arise when sharing the gospel.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.72
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.5

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A68. Response to Question 11 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 11				
I am fearful of how people will respond when I share my faith.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	1	2.13	3	10.71
2 Disagree	9	19.15	2	7.14
3 Disagree Somewhat	6	12.77	6	21.43
4 Agree Somewhat	14	29.79	11	39.29
5 Agree	13	27.66	4	14.29
6 Strongly Agree	4	8.51	2	7.14

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.4041. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A69. Average Response to Question 11 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 11	
I am fearful of how people will respond when I share my faith.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.87
Post-Survey Mean Average	3.61

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A70. Response to Question 12 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 12				
I am equipped to give a biblical response as to how one is able to reconcile faith and doubt.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
2 Disagree	5	10.64	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	7	14.89	4	14.29
4 Agree Somewhat	21	44.68	8	28.57
5 Agree	12	25.53	10	35.71
6 Strongly Agree	2	4.26	6	21.43

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0070. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant.

Table A71. Average Response to Question 12 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 12	
I am equipped to give a biblical response as to how one is able to reconcile faith and doubt.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.98
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.64

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A72. Response to Question 13 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 13				
Every Christian should be able to give a defense for their faith.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	2	4.26	0	0
2 Disagree	0	0	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
5 Agree	16	34.04	8	28.57
6 Strongly Agree	29	61.70	20	71.43

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.3243. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A73. Average Response to Question 13 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 13	
Every Christian should be able to give a defense for their faith.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	5.54
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.71

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A74. Response to Question 14 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 14				
I am interested in learning how to defend my faith.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	3.57
2 Disagree	0	0	1	3.57
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	0	0	2	7.14
5 Agree	10	21.28	7	25
6 Strongly Agree	37	78.72	17	60.71

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0129. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Table A75. Average Response to Question 14 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 14	
I am interested in learning how to defend my faith.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	5.79
Post-Survey Mean Average	5.29

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A76. Response to Question 15 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 15				
I am fearful of how people will respond when I share my faith.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	27	57.45	19	67.86
2 Disagree	18	38.30	9	32.14
3 Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
4 Agree Somewhat	1	2.13	0	0
5 Agree	1	2.13	0	0
6 Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.2121. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

Table A77. Average Response to Question 15 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 15	
I am fearful of how people will respond when I share my faith.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	1.53
Post-Survey Mean Average	1.32

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

Table A78. Response to Question 16 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 16				
I am confident in having a spiritual conversation with someone who does not share the same worldview as me.				
	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
1 Strongly Disagree	3	6.38	1	3.57
2 Disagree	8	17.02	0	0
3 Disagree Somewhat	4	8.51	3	10.71
4 Agree Somewhat	14	29.79	8	28.57
5 Agree	12	25.53	12	42.86
6 Strongly Agree	6	12.77	4	14.29

Note: An unpaired t-test was conducted to measure the results and found the two-tailed P value equals 0.0624. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not quite statistically significant.

Table A79. Average Response to Question 16 in Section 2B

Section 2B: Question 16	
I am confident in having a spiritual conversation with someone who does not share the same worldview as me.	
Pre-Survey Mean Average	3.89
Post-Survey Mean Average	4.5

Note: Using a 6-point Likert scale of 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) disagree somewhat, 4) agree somewhat, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree.

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING WORLDVIEW APOLOGETICS TO INCREASE EVANGELISTIC CONFIDENCE AT PIPERTON BAPTIST CHURCH, COLLIERVILLE, TENNESSEE

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014
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The purpose of this project is to train church members in worldview apologetics in order to increase evangelistic confidence. Chapter 1 presents the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, limitations, and research methodology of the project.

Chapter 2 provides biblical and theological support for teaching worldview apologetics by examining the New Testament mandate for apologetics. Additionally, this chapter explores common hurdles to coming to faith in Christ including: (1) the purpose of life, (2) reconciling faith and doubt, (3) and the problem of evil.

Chapter 3 discusses theoretical and practical issues of teaching worldview apologetics. Specifically, this chapter explores postmodernism's shaping effect upon worldview, Christian worldview, worldview apologetics in a postmodern world, and obstacles to teaching worldview apologetics in the local church.

Chapter 4 explains the elements of the ministry research project. This chapter systematically describes what the project entailed and how it was conducted including: project surveys, interviews, and sermon and teaching synopses.

Chapter 5 provides an evaluation and reflection of the project's purpose, goals, and modifications to strengthen the project for future use. This project can benefit any size church, in any demographic setting, as more than another evangelistic method.

VITA

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