

Apologetics: Method and Practice

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Introduction

As a member of a Christian family and regular church attendee, I did not need to be convinced of the truth of the Bible or the existence of God before I committed my life to Christ. For me, salvation and participation in the work of God was a natural (if not unavoidable) response to my upbringing. Even though there were times in my life when I did not serve God, I never doubted his existence or the implications of his existence. It was not until my time in university that I was introduced to the idea of apologetics and the philosophy of religion. Even then, however, I hardly knew any committed atheists. Though not everyone I knew possessed a Christian worldview, most were theists nonetheless. Finally, after entering into cross-cultural ministry, I began to meet people who were not only non-Christian but anti-Christian. In East Africa I have met committed and devout Muslims who shared my monotheistic beliefs but understood God and his work in completely different terms. I met Hindus who embraced a multitude of deities and saw the world in which we both lived very differently. I met scientists and animal conservationists who denied that any God existed and believed that the world around us was the product of evolutionary forces at work. By interacting with these people, I began to realize the need for training in apologetics as I noticed myself drawing back in timidity rather than engaging others with truth and boldness.

Part 1: Apologetic Methodology

William Lane Craig offers a simple but effective description of apologetics. He states that Christian apologetics is defending Christian doctrine by “making a case for the truth of the Christian faith.”¹ Craig rightly uses 1 Peter 3:15 as a Biblical mandate for practicing apologetics. In this text, Peter admonishes his readers to be ready to give a defense or reason for

¹ William Lane Craig, *On Guard* (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2010), 13.

the faith they have in Christ when asked to respond by the world. This defense or reason of that faith must not only be personally meaningful or fulfilling but also sound and valid in argument. Garrett J. DeWeese and J. P. Moreland define a valid argument as an argument that is correct in form. They write, “An argument is valid if its form is correct, that is, if the conclusion follows from the premises according to the laws of logic.”² They continue that an argument is sound if it “has a valid form together with true premises.”³ Just because an argument is valid in form does not mean that it is true in its premises. Thus, not all valid arguments are sound. However, when an argument is presented with a valid form and true premises, we must conclude that the argument is sound. Even then, the argument may be rejected. Nevertheless, we must make sure that we meet the criteria for a sound and valid argument. When we defend the faith, we do so to a world that usually accepts the laws of logic but with different presuppositions from our own. While DeWeese and Moreland point out that there are even those who reject logic,⁴ the laws of logic are actually fundamental and following them is necessary if we are to create a credible defense of the Christian faith in the eyes of an unbelieving world.

These laws of logic are set forth as fourfold and named by Douglas Groothuis as follows:

1. “The law (or principle) of noncontradiction,”
2. “The law (or principle) of excluded middle,”
3. “The law (or principle) of bivalence,”
4. “The law (or principle) of identity.”⁵

² Garrett J. DeWeese and J. P. Moreland, *Philosophy Made Slightly Less Difficult* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 14.

³ *Ibid*, 15.

⁴ *Ibid*, 11-13.

⁵ Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2011), 46-48.

Groothuis, quoting Aristotle, states that the law of noncontradiction establishes that “nothing can both be and not be at the same time in the same respect.”⁶ For example, a shape cannot be a square and a triangle. A shape having the properties of a square excludes it from being also a triangle in the same form. If a square is modified to be a triangle, then it ceases to be a square since the properties of being triangular exclude the shape from being a square. A statement that asserts that a shape is both a square and a triangle at the same time is invalid and nonsensical because of this law of noncontradiction. As Christian apologists, we must be careful not to put forth a premise that is contradictory but also be able to defend against false claims of contradiction against our arguments.

The law of excluded middle, according to Groothuis, states that “any factual statement and its denial cannot both be true.”⁷ For the post-modernist, this principle is problematic as many claim that truth is relative. To the post-modern community, the statement “Jesus is the Son of God” may be true for some but its denial is also true for others. The truth of both statements, however, cannot be so according to this law of excluded middle. The post-modernist approach to truth may seem appealing at first but ultimately it is self-defeating.

Next, Groothuis describes the law of bivalence as the principle of logic which declares “that any unambiguous declarative statement is either true or false.”⁸ Logic demands that statements which claim to assert facts must be determined to be either true or false. A decision must be made concerning “the truth value of a statement once its meaning is determined.”⁹

⁶ Ibid, 46.

⁷ Ibid, 47.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, 48.

Lastly, Groothuis writes of the law of identity that this principle “simply states that something is what it is: $A=A$.”¹⁰ An object cannot be what it is not. A square cannot be a triangle. A shape having four sides cannot carry the name of shape only having three sides. However, this law goes beyond nomenclature and speaks to reality.

Though universal principles are not very popular in the post-modern community, these principles or laws are quite universal. In fact, as many have pointed out, an attempt to deny these principles requires employing these principles. Thus, for any apologetic, these fundamental laws must be taken into consideration and applied to arguments and premises for all people at all times everywhere.

While the laws of logic are universally true for all Christian apologists, the method of application varies. Even though there are several developed methods that have received widespread acceptance in the world of Christian apologetics, these methods often complement one another rather than compete against one another. James Beilby recognizes that various methods of apologetics may be employed in various situations by the one apologist. He refers to such apologists as “eclectic apologists.” He writes, “While eclectic apologists might (and very likely will) prefer one approach over the others, they will not see their approach as the only viable one.”¹¹

Nevertheless, I see classical apologetics (as presented by William Lane Craig¹²) as a favorable model as it blends both sound argument and the experience of the Holy Spirit. While experience itself is a very subjective issue, I appreciate that Craig recognizes the place of

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ James K. Beilby, “Varieties of Apologetics,” in *Christian Apologetics*, eds. Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 37.

¹² William Lane Craig, “Classical Apologetics,” in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 26-55.

personal, religious experience in Christian belief. If experience was our only evidence, then our defense of Christianity would be very weak. However, when combined with sound argument and valid evidence, the work of the Holy Spirit becomes a vital piece of the puzzle linking knowledge with belief. Craig writes that the Holy Spirit, “moves in the hearts of unbelievers to dissolve their sinful prejudices and open their minds to an honest consideration of the arguments and evidence. In the absence of the work of the Holy Spirit, our best arguments will fall like water on a stone, for the natural man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:21).”¹³ While convincing arguments may bring some to salvation, I see apologetics as a tool we use to remove the obstacles of faith in the lives of people so that they are unhindered in progressing in the direction to which the Spirit of God is drawing them. Thus, both human argument and divine prompting are beneficial in bringing someone to belief.

In appealing to sound argument and evidence to defend Christianity, the classical apologist employs a system whereby one endeavors “first to present arguments for theism, which [are] aimed to show that God’s existence is at least more probable than not, and then to present Christian evidences, probabilistically construed, for God’s revelation in Christ.”¹⁴ The classical apologist will use “good deductive argument” which “is formally and informally valid and whose premises are both true and more plausible than their contradictories.”¹⁵ Craig adopts this model and uses the kalam cosmological argument to establish the existence of God. He then cites historical evidence for the resurrection of Christ to demonstrate how Jesus serves as the revelation of God.¹⁶

¹³ Ibid, 53.

¹⁴ Ibid, 48.

¹⁵ Ibid, 49-50.

¹⁶ Ibid, 48-49.

However, Douglas Groothuis addresses what I believe to be an essential element in apologetical work, the issues of worldview. He puts forth an apologetic method he calls “worldview hypothesis evaluation” which takes into account the worldview that is at work behind the scenes of our thought and belief.¹⁷ James Sire defines worldview as “a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.”¹⁸ The worldview one possesses will influence how one views, presents, accepts, and believes (or rejects) the arguments and evidences for or against God. If we want to be effective in our apologetic work, we must combine the methodology of classical apologetics with that of the worldview hypothesis evaluation model as described by Groothuis.

This approach to apologetics requires that we first come to grips with our own worldview. Do we have an entirely Christian worldview? This is an important issue to grapple with in light of the pagan culture that surrounds us. The influence of the culture may have caused us to (knowingly or unknowingly) incorporate unchristian elements into our worldview. Sire recognizes this as he describes worldview as presuppositions that may be true or false. The false presuppositions to which we hold may arise consistently or occasionally. We may not even know we have them. Thus, our working worldview is not determined by what we claim or affirm verbally but what we live out intellectually and pragmatically. There must be an evaluation and possibly a modification of our worldview before we begin the work of an

¹⁷ Groothuis, 49.

¹⁸ James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 20.

apologist. Our worldview must be in harmony with the Christian worldview as determined by the Bible.

How then, should we approach the worldview of others in the work of apologetics? Groothuis asserts that “a worldview – Christian or otherwise – should be put forth as a hypothesis because it presents itself as a candidate for the most important truths (as do all religions and worldviews).”¹⁹ This hypothesis, then, should be evaluated through tests, argument, and evidence to first determine if the worldview is plausible and then if it is optimal. Of course, we hold that the Christian worldview is not only plausible but it is also optimal. Nevertheless, this view is rejected by many and the Christian apologist must be ready to defend the Christian worldview. The classical apologetical approach of first establishing the existence of God and then the revelation of God through Jesus is a powerful method for doing so.

Groothuis offers eight criteria for evaluating worldview.²⁰ First, a worldview should offer appropriate explanations for what it ought to explain. Second, a worldview should have internal, logical consistency. That is, there should be no contradictory elements within the worldview. Third, a worldview should be coherent. The elements of the worldview must not only be noncontradictory but also meaningfully connected. Fourth, a worldview should be factual and supported by empirical evidence. Fifth, a worldview should be existentially viable to the extent that adhering to the worldview causes no philosophical hypocrisy. It should be livable. Sixth, a worldview should contribute to cultural and intellectual life. Seventh, a worldview should not experience radical shifts in order to accommodate to popular opinion or evidence against the worldview. Finally, a worldview should be as simple as possible and not unnecessarily complex.

¹⁹ Groothuis, 49.

²⁰ Ibid, 52-60.

Even though a worldview may meet each of these criteria, the truth of the worldview should be established through further argument and evidence. However, if a worldview fails to meet the above criteria, it should be viewed rightly as illegitimate.

Current Christian apologists must also be wary of post-modernism as this philosophy presents some of the greatest attacks and harm to the belief of the existence and value of universal principles and the apologetic work in general. The post-modernist champions the idea that truth is relative; what is true for me may not be true for you. Truth is not determined by universal principles. Rather, as Groothuis explains, “Truth is a matter of perspective only; it is something that individuals and communities construct, primarily through language . . . Truth dissolves into communities, ethnic groups, genders and other contingent factors.”²¹ Even though such philosophy is self-defeating, it has become popular and the apologist must be ready to encounter such thinking. A concise response would be to challenge the post-modernist’s assertion that there are no universal principles by pointing out that they must appeal to a universal principle in order to reject universal principles. The statement, “the only rule is that there are no rules” is a self-refuting statement since there is indeed one rule.

Such post-modern notions have even influenced how history is viewed. Norman Geisler writes that, “Many arguments have been advanced against the position that history is objectively knowable.”²² This has implications for the Christian apologist who relies on evidence to support his claims. If history is unknowable, it may no longer be used as evidence. Geisler writes that those who reject the knowability of history see the work of the historian as “not more than his own interpretation based on his own subjective selection of fragmentary interpretation of past

²¹ Ibid, 119.

²² Norman L. Geisler, “The Knowability of History,” in *Christian Apologetics*, eds. Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 46.

and unrepeatable events.”²³ How can we rely on such biased and faulty information as true evidence? To this, Geisler responds by not only defending the knowability of history but also by attacking the objector’s line of thought. He writes, “How could they know that everyone’s knowledge of history was not objective unless they had an objective knowledge of it by which they determine that these other views were not objective? One cannot know *not that* unless he knows *that*.”²⁴ Geisler continues to defend the reliability of history when he writes that “the inability to attain 100 percent objectivity is a long way from relativity. . . . If the historian has the relevant and crucial evidence, it will be sufficient to attain objectivity; one need not know everything in order to know something. . . . As long as no important fact is overlooked, there is no reason to eliminate the possibility of objectivity in history any more than in science.”²⁵ Indeed, we need to ensure that we are using credible historical evidence when we employ this type of material as proof of something. Nevertheless, we must recognize that objectivity does exist in history despite the rejection of truth in many western cultures.

The Christian apologists must not only develop himself intellectually but also in persona; character. The apologist must not neglect his own credibility but do whatever possible to cultivate a lifestyle that is worthy of the calling he has (Ephesians 4:1). Even though we may have excellent academic qualifications, the truth of what we speak could be doubted based on how we live our lives outside academia. The goal of Christian apologists is not just to make some interesting arguments but to compel one to believe. We should not let any negligence in character hinder those with whom we are engaged in apologetics from coming to belief in Jesus.

²³ Ibid, 48.

²⁴ Ibid, 51.

²⁵ Ibid, 53.

Nevertheless, the issue of credibility goes both ways. In the Christian community, we have many people engaged in debate who lack the credibility to speak with authority. We have been told that the world is sick and that Christianity is the cure. Thus, we, as cure holders and providers, should be busy sharing the cure with anyone and everyone we can. I do not wish to diminish the need for or seriousness of evangelism but I just want to add an element to this illustration that I think will communicate my point on the importance of credibility. Suppose you are walking down the street and a person unknown to you (perhaps looking rather strange) leaps from behind the bushes brandishing a hypodermic needle. This person tells you that you are sick but he has the cure and now he wants to administer it immediately. If you indeed recognize that you are desperately sick, you may take the injection. However, if you are unconvinced you may run away as fast as you can. Why? Most people turn to a community of people whom they believe to be credible to give vaccinations; that is, doctors and not random people on street corners. Many times we in the Christian community can be like that person behind the bushes. We have an amazing cure but lack the credibility to administer it. We need to cultivate credibility in all areas so that our churches (and the people who form them) can speak to our culture with authority and be heard and believed.

Lastly, we must refer back to the scripture used above, 1 Peter 3:15. Peter admonished his readers to practice apologetics with “gentleness and respect.” Many times, we lack credibility because we do not show respect. However, love demands that we view those arguing against us not as the objects of our wrath but as the recipients of God’s grace. Thus, we practice apologetics not in arrogance but in humility. Humility does not equal timidity. We are bold and confident yet we are also concerned for the person on the other side of the aisle. Unless we are

concerned about the eternal condition of those whom we debate we should not engage in argument. We do not argue to win debates, we argue to win souls.

Part 2: Defending Christian Theism in the Midst of Darwinists

I live in the western Kenyan city of Eldoret. This town is home to several major public and private universities including Moi University and the University of Eldoret where the schools of laws, medicine, animal science, and business are full of faculty and students from across Kenya and the world. It was in the midst of these secular learning institutions that our denomination established a small Christian college for the purpose of training pastors. I began working there in 2009. Our little school is quite overshadowed by these larger institutions but we have found ways to work together. We invite professors to come and share with our students in many practical areas such health, business, and farming. We have also become acquainted with many of the students, especially the international students, and in particular an American lady named Lia.

Lia is seeking a career in animal science. Several years ago, she enrolled in the University of Eldoret for her master's degree program. Much of her work involved living in the bush with baboons. She followed them each day for months recording their eating habits and analyzing how a new invasive fruit species was effecting the troop. During breaks she would return to the city and we met her during one of these breaks through another group of Americans.

Through our friendship, we found that Lia grew up in a nominal Catholic family. She was baptized as an infant and confirmed in the church as a young lady. Yet her relationship with the church was never strong and she drifted far away during her teen and early adult years. Her studies in the animal sciences had caused her to become a rather strong proponent of Darwin's view of natural selection. Thus, she rejected God as anything but a religious figure. In her mind,

he certainly did not create the world and the creatures within it and he was no longer relevant to her at all.

One day while following the baboons in the bush, the troop crossed paths with a group of elephants. Lia found herself inadvertently standing between a baby elephant and its mother. The elephant charged her. In just a few seconds the elephant had trampled her and pierced her with its tusk. Then, the elephant went away. Lia reported to us later that she expected to die because science holds that when an elephant feels threatened for its child, it will attempt to kill what has made the threat. Yet Lia survived. Though she spent much time in the hospital and is still recovering, she is nearly finished with her master's thesis.

The incident with the elephant caused Lia to ask questions about life. Before these questions were ever presented to me, my wife and I began to cultivate a relationship with Lia. She knew we were Christians but she allowed the friendship to flourish. After the accident, we were intentional about being a help and a positive influence in her life. We made our home and our vehicle available to her. I like to think that we established credibility with her. She knew we did not know much about animals and were not fans of Darwinism but she also knew that we cared for her. Thus, the door was opened for questions and conversation of substance.

Over the past few weeks, I have been researching how to engage in apologetics with people like Lia. In this second part of this paper, I will present some of what I have compiled. As I return to Kenya, I intended to use this information in my attempt to convince Lia of the truthfulness of the Gospel and the reality of God.

Jonathan Wells describes evolution from Darwin's viewpoint as "descent with modification" to the extent that all living organisms find their origin in the first living things.

Thus, “over time, evolutionary change gives rise to new species.”²⁶ In his book, *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin describes how “a number of new species descended from one species” and that “all the organic beings which have ever lived on this earth have descended from some one primordial form.”²⁷ This view has implications for Christianity. The Bible teaches that God created the heavens and the earth as well as the living creatures that populate the earth.

Humankind is a special creation of God, having been made in God’s own image (Genesis 1-2).

The assertions of Darwin, however, run counter to the Biblical account and thus diminish the Christian view of God. For the holder of a naturalistic worldview rooted in Darwinism today, God is no longer in the picture. His existence has been denied and ultimate reality is matter, not the Maker; creation, not the Creator. James Sire writes, “Nothing comes from nothing.

Something is. Therefore, something always was. But the something, say the naturalists, is not a transcendent Creator but the matter of the cosmos itself.”²⁸ Referring to Darwin’s influence on science and scientific worldview, Groothuis writes that, “natural selection working on random mutations is the dominant model for change at the deepest level” and that this worldview “currently dominates the scientific establishment.”²⁹

Such a worldview makes belief in God unnecessary and trivial for people like my friend Lia. Lia interprets so much of what she sees through the lens of this worldview. She has spent a great deal of time explaining to me how the mannerisms of baboons betray them as our evolutionary relatives. The baboons build friendship, deceive one another, mourn death, and practice a crude form of democracy (taking a poll to decide what direction to move). I have even been on Safari to observe some of these behaviors myself. However, questions have arisen that

²⁶ Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution* (Washington: Regency Publishing, 2000), 4-5.

²⁷ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (London: Wordsworth, 1998), 380.

²⁸ Sire, 68.

²⁹ Groothuis, 276.

Lia's worldview has left unanswered. But even if Lia did not have these questions, my desire to see my friend come to Christ and participate in his abundant (and eternal) life compels me to challenge this naturalistic worldview. My primary goal is not to win the battle of worldviews but bring my friend into a better worldview.

We begin by examining the naturalistic worldview using Groothuis' eight criteria for worldview examination. At least two criteria seem to be lacking in this worldview. First, it has been demonstrated by several writers that there is a lack of evidence to support certain tenants of evolution. For example, Groothuis points out, "While it seems true that single-celled organisms occupy the earliest strata of earth history, many organisms appear in great numbers with no traceable ancestors."³⁰ If the vast numbers of species that we see today evolved from a few organisms in the ancient history of the earth, there should be a gradual growth of species in the fossil record. However, "the fossil record shows that the major animal groups appeared abruptly and completed formed."³¹

The worldview that arises from Darwinism also lacks in the area of contributing to culture. Rather, the naturalist worldview is degrading to culture. As Groothuis points out, the adherents to this worldview "insist that humans and the rest of the cosmos are nothing but the result of time, space, matter/energy, impersonal laws and chance."³² This understanding of the physical world is depressing. Life doesn't matter to this cold, impersonal system of laws and chance. The fittest may survive but everything will die eternally.

After demonstrating the problems with the naturalistic worldview, the classical apologetical work can begin. It may seem difficult to even start arguing for the existence of God

³⁰ Ibid, 286.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid, 240.

in light of the so called evidence that the Darwinists possess. However, when you begin to examine their teaching on the beginning of life and the universe, it will give you a starting place from which we may build a case for God. First, let's look at the beginning of life on earth. In 1953, Stanley Miller and Harold Urey conducted an experiment which supposedly proved that life could have arisen from natural causes without the intervention or creative work of a divine being. By simulating the atmosphere of primitive earth, these scientists "produced some of the chemical building blocks of life by sending an electric spark through a mixture of gases."³³ However, subsequent research into the early atmosphere of the earth found that the atmosphere created in the laboratory by Miller and Urey was nothing like the actual atmosphere of primitive earth. Wells reports that the experiment is now regarded as irrelevant to the explanation of life on earth.³⁴ A revision of the experiment in 1983 proved to be of no value as well. Thus, the idea that life pulled itself out of the primordial soup is no longer promising despite the fact that the Miller/Urey experiment is still often cited as evidence for such a theory.³⁵ This is just one of numerous examples cited by Wells to demonstrate how much of the historical arguments for macroevolution and Darwinian philosophy have failed to hold up over time.

Another theory held by those in the naturalist's worldview that can be used to establish the case for God is that of the Big Bang. Groothuis writes that Christian scientists and apologists have "sought epistemic support for creation ex nihilo through the scientific evidence for big bang cosmology . . . which is interpreted by most to require an absolute origination of the universe from nothing about fourteen billion years ago."³⁶ The Big Bang theory, which is accepted by such atheistic scientists as Stephen Hawking, demonstrates that the universe is not eternal; that

³³ Wells, 11.

³⁴ Ibid, 17.

³⁵ Ibid, 18.

³⁶ Groothuis, 223.

is, it had a beginning. From this big bang, the conditions of life were set in place to such necessary detail that they can only be described as being fine-tuned. John Polkinghorne writes, “Carbon-based life can evolve only in a universe that has a remarkably specific character. . . . Physicists agree that our universe is characterized by a precise quantitative specificity which has been necessary for its being able to evolve carbon-based life.”³⁷ This fine-tuning of the universe to support life is so remarkable that it can hardly be explained by chance as illustrated by Robin Collins. He writes that “one could think of the initial conditions of the universe and the fundamental parameters of physics as a dart board that fills the whole galaxy, and the conditions necessary for life to exist as a small one-foot wide target: unless the dart hit the target, life would be impossible.”³⁸ He and Polkinghorne describe multiple ways in which this fine-tuning is observed. One example is that “if gravity had been stronger or weaker by one part in 10^{40} , then life-sustaining stars like the sun could not exist.”³⁹

William Lane Craig summarizes these findings when he writes, “Astronomers have been stunned by the discovery of how complex and delicate a balance of initial conditions must be present in the big bang itself if the universe is to permit the existence of intelligent life anywhere at all in the cosmos.”⁴⁰ No longer can we see the universe as something from which life would evolve from eventually, when the conditions were right. On the contrary, we see that the conditions were set, fine-tuned, from the beginning for life to exist.

In light of this, Craig offers the following argument:

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is due to either physical necessity, chance, or design.

³⁷ John Polkinghorne, “God and Physics,” in *Christian Apologetics*, eds. Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 464-466.

³⁸ Robin Collins, “A Recent Fine-Tuning Design Argument,” in *Christian Apologetics*, eds. Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 107.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Craig, 107

2. It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.⁴¹

While we recognize the implausibility of chance for explaining the fine-tuning of the universe, we must look at the issue of physical necessity. Physical necessity claims that the universe has no choice but to be the way that it is. In other words, a universe that prohibits life is impossible because a universe must permit life by necessity. Such a view is grasping at straws in order to avoid the reality that the fine-tuning of the universe points to a designer (God) who created the universe and set things in place for life to flourish.

At this point, we must offer our alternative to Darwinism and argue for Intelligent Design. Intelligent Design is the belief that “nonhuman intelligent causes better explain certain aspects of nature than undirected, merely natural causes.”⁴² Even though Darwin was the champion of life coming from natural causes, he wrote, “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”⁴³ In response, Michael J. Behe points out the existence of irreducible complexity in nature. By this, he means “a single system which is composed of several interacting parts, and where the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to cease functioning.”⁴⁴ An irreducibly complex system is a great challenge to Darwinism since such a system demonstrates creation rather than macroevolution. Simply put, a de-evolved version of an irreducibly complex system simply could not function. Thus, the existence of irreducibly complex systems in modern creatures and humans illustrate that such

⁴¹ Ibid, 111.

⁴² Groothuis, 268.

⁴³ Darwin, 177.

⁴⁴ Michael J. Behe, “Evidence for Intelligent Design from Biochemistry,” in *Christian Apologetics*, eds. Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 101.

creatures and humans did not come into their current state gradually but were created as is. As an example of an irreducibly complex system found in human beings, Behe uses blood clotting. He writes, “clotting requires this enormously complex system so that the clot forms only when and only where it is required.”⁴⁵ If the blood clotting system did not work in our evolutionary ancestors as it does for us today, those ancestors would not have survived to produce another generation.

These systems of irreducible complexity point to design, not evolution. A creator, God, formed these things for life to exist. Not only that, he created a setting for life to flourish billions of years beforehand. For my friend, Lia, who loves animals and wants to give much of her life to see their preservation and study, this concept should be a welcomed alternative to the cold, impersonal, depressing worldview of naturalism. The animals which she studies are not simply the product of chance; they were especially created by God and given a well developed home in which to live. Intelligent design gives value to nature as the creation of God where Darwinism devalues it as the product of chance. For Darwinists, value is ascribed to those that happen to arrive and survive. For believers in Intelligent Design, value is contingent only upon being God’s designed creation, which describes the whole world.

These brief sketches are given in the hopes that God would be considered as not only a plausible alternative but an actual being who exists. This God of creation is not foreign to creation. He is close and involved, caring for those whom He has created. It is at this point in the conversation that we turn to a discussion of Jesus as the revelation of God. If God is the creator, why must he be the God of the Bible and not the God of, say, Islam? Jesus should give us the answer.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 102.

Jesus is certainly not a myth. The historical record of his existence is strong both biblically and outside the Bible. Most scholars agree that Jesus was an actual historical figure. The problem arises though when we begin to affirm the Biblical view of Jesus. Here is where many secular scholars will claim that the Gospels make Jesus into something he is not. William Lane Craig, however, defends the reliability of the Gospels and claims that they give an accurate depiction of Jesus. He argues that we can trust the Gospels for five reasons. First, “there was insufficient time for legendary influences to erase the core historical facts.”⁴⁶ The gap of time between the events and their recording is quite short and would allow little opportunity for a mythology to form around the person of Jesus. Second, “the gospels are not analogous to folk tales or contemporary ‘urban legends.’”⁴⁷ The Gospels describe real people, places, and things in actual history that can be verified by non-biblical writers. Third, “the Jewish transmission of sacred traditions was highly developed and reliable.”⁴⁸ The people of Jesus’ day had a much greater necessity and capacity to memorize and recite information accurately. We can expect this accurate memorization and retelling of the events of Jesus’ life. Fourth, “there were significant restraints on the embellishment of traditions about Jesus, such as the presence of eyewitnesses and the apostles’ supervision.”⁴⁹ A community existed to keep one another in check and affirm accuracy. Finally, “the Gospel writers have a proven track record of historical reliability.”⁵⁰

If the Gospels are reliable, what did they teach about Jesus? That he was the Son of God sent into the world to demonstrate God’s grace to His creation. Creation fell when it tried to live

⁴⁶ Craig, 188.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 189.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

independent of God and in rebellion towards God. That fallen state is detrimental to all creation. Yet God has purposed to restore creation, including and especially humanity, through Jesus Christ. We can believe in this restoration and salvation promise because Jesus himself was raised from the dead. Craig points to multiple sources for evidence of the resurrection. First, there is the empty tomb and the eyewitnesses and historical reports of a burial but no body. Second, there are eyewitnesses to account for seeing Jesus resurrected; alive and well and fellowshiping with his followers. Third, the early continuance of the Christian faith demonstrates that the resurrection was not a fabrication but a reality that fueled the movement.

With my friend, Lia, I would use my outline here as a starting point for defending the faith and convincing her of the reality of that faith. Nevertheless, I understand that the Holy Spirit is also at work. I would hope that my work would remove whatever obstacle exists so that she would not find any reason not to respond to the Spirit's calling.

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