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Sunday, August 20, 2017  
Did You Know?

## Presuppositional Apologetics

Last month I was in Charlotte North Carolina taking a class in apologetics for my Doctor of Ministry degree. The last time I took an apologetics class was 25 years ago when I was in seminary, so a refresher was long overdue. This class, however, proved to be quite different from what I remember from the class I took 25 years ago. Let me explain.

First, a definition. What is apologetics? Apologetics is a reasoned defense of the Christian faith. The Apostle Paul is the person we see engaging in apologetics the most in the Bible, but this verse from 1 Peter 3:15 helps us understand how we should do it. "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." This verse tells us how to do it: revering Christ as Lord, being prepared to give an answer, and to do it with respect.

There are several apologetic methods that Christians employ today. I'll mention two. The first is called Classical Apologetics. This method has been used successfully for many centuries. It begins first by showing that God exists using common arguments like the existence of something rather than nothing. Then, it proves the deity of Christ using historical arguments such as appealing to the reliability of the gospels. The other common method is called Evidential Apologetics which was made very popular by Josh McDowell. In this method we attempt to provide evidence for such things as the actual occurrence of the resurrection.

The kind of apologetics I learned recently is called Presuppositional Apologetics. Its aim is to show that Christianity is the only rational worldview position to hold. What I appreciate about this brand of apologetics is that it not only plays defense like in evidential apologetics, but it goes on the offense, challenging and questioning the non-Christian's worldview. For example, let's say you are speaking with a relativist, that is, one that believes that all worldviews are equal and legitimate, and that one should not impose the superiority of one worldview over another. A presuppositional apologist would challenge the relativist at his foundation, perhaps by asking, "When you say that all worldviews are equal, aren't you making a non-relative statement, in other words, an absolute statement? Isn't your worldview in opposition (self-contradictory) to the very statement your worldview is making? In saying that all worldviews are equal, you are actually saying that your worldview is superior, and aren't you imposing that worldview on the rest of us?" While we continue in this dialogue, that might then give us the opportunity to explain to them the Christian worldview, and show them how the Christian worldview that believes in God, in creation, the supernatural, in absolute morals, to be the most rational and consistent and plausible worldview.

I hope you've begun to get the idea. Sometime in the future, perhaps in the new year, I will teach a class on apologetics based on what I learned. In the meantime, all of us should, by God's grace, live out 1 Peter 3:15 -- be ready to give an answer for the hope that you have.

Soli Deo Gloria

*Pastor Peter*