

APOLOGETICS 101: SPEAKER RAY CIERVO

Book Recommendations for an Introduction to Apologetics

- Thinking about Christian Apologetics, James Beilby
- I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist by Norman L. Geisler, Frank Turek and David Limbaugh * highly recommended, classic

DEFINITION OF APOLOGETICS

Greek apologia: Legal Defense.

The kind of defense a lawyer would make in a courtroom. Why you did it, or why you believe it.

PURPOSE

Not to be studied in a vacuum or for its own sake.

Peter 3:15 ... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...

Luke 1:1-4... so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

2 Cor 10:3-5 ... We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

1. "Pre" evangelism, to remove obstacles.
 - a. *Matthew 13* – Parable of the Four Soils – (seed on roadside, rocky soil, thorns, good soil)
Apologetics is like "soil preparation"
 - b. Remove the hang-ups people have
2. "Post evangelism": Strengthen believers, give confidence and certainty to share.
 - a. Boldness, security, and a lack of defensiveness..without compromise (see author Doug Powell)
 - b. **So that** you might know the **exact truth**
3. Taking the fight to the enemy. (Battle for ideas, Battle of the minds.)
 - a. Playing the offense.
 - b. *Acts 17* the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh...destroying speculations
 - c. Destroy "lofty things" raised against God

NATURE OF APOLOGETICS

- Reasoning with logical arguments (Aristotle)
- Part of the art form of Rhetoric – winning someone to your point of view, or to be more favorable
- Persuasion
- You don't want to win the argument and lose the person. "Jesus did not die for good arguments, he died for sinners." Sometimes it isn't even who you are talking to, it is the person overhearing.
- **Example from the scriptures: *Acts 17*** – Paul spent 3 Sabbaths "reasoned with them from the scriptures...and some of them were persuaded"
 - (Paul with the Jews) Scripture > Explanation>Evidence>Proclamation
 - (Paul with the Pagans) Gods of Athens>Explaining>Evidence>Proclamation
 - **Common Ground**>Explaining>Evidence>Proclamation
 - If you do not establish Common Ground and mutual respect, you are talking past each other.
- Universals (true for all people all the time). Truth. Absolutes. Natures.

OPPOSITION TO APOLOGETICS

1 Corinthians 2:1 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

- However, the Context of this quote is that he was not just being a "popular speaker", which was prevalent at the time. Like the self-help gurus we have today.
- Jesus used apologetics
- See to it that no one takes you captive....
- CS Lewis – "Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered"

RELATIVISM AND THE CHRISTIAN MIND: SPEAKER SIMON BRACE

BACKGROUND

- What is truth? : True knowledge corresponds to the way things are.
- Grace is an important part of being persuasive. We talk, but God does the saving.
- The object of the HEART is the GOOD. The object of the MIND is the TRUTH. God is both.
- People talk about how much Christ changes the HEARTS of people, but rarely how much their MIND changed. But this is just as important.

Matt 22:37 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

RELATIVISM IS FALSE

Ideas have power. They drive the culture. Philosophy deals with ideas, and with logic. We value those who are logical, who have reason, and we devalue that which seems illogical or unreasonable.

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

WHAT IS RELATIVISM?

- Most people aren't even aware that they are relativists.
- Philosophy of "What is true for me is for me, what is true for you is for you."
- Not forcing your morality on others. It says "Who are you to judge?"
- Denies that there are absolutes.
- An absolute is something that is universally true, that is, it is true for everyone.

RELATIVISM AND TRUTH: RELATIVISM MAKES TRUTH SUBJECTIVE

- SUBJECTIVE TRUTH (opinion)
 - What is true for me. "Raisinettes are good".
- OBJECTIVE TRUTH
 - What is true no matter who you are. "Simon is going bald."
- *John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*
 - Jesus was making an Objective Truth, but the world makes it a Subjective one
 - *John 18:33 "What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him.*
- Immanuel Kant "You only know the world as it appears to you."
 - David Hume is another philosopher of this mindset.
 - It is the mind that brings structure to our experience. Imposes structure on the data from our senses.
 - *>Maria thinks: This discounts structure imposed by truth<*
 - Consequences of this idea are undermining culture.

KINDS OF RELATIVISM

- Metaphysical – no absolute physical reality
- Epistemological – no absolute human knowledge
- Moral – no absolute morality
- Religious - no absolute religion
- Relativism Comes across as: Fair, respectful, tolerant, unbiased, neutral, compassionate.
- Absolutism is thought of as narrow minded, arrogant, intolerant, judgemental, etc.
- Relativism says about Morality:
 - Morality is a "suggestion"
 - It is a "prescriptive code"
 - Morality is invented by man
- How to deal with Relativism
 - Know that it is a Post-modernism philosophy, rampant in Universities today.
 - Learn to recognize **Self-defeating statements** (How do you know you exist? There is no truth. Don't believe anyone, including me.)
 - The problem with skeptics is they are not skeptical about their own skepticism.
 - You shouldn't be so judgmental. (That in itself is a judgement.)
 - *2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

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RELATIVISM IN CULTURE

- Values-Clarification Curriculum
 - "The goal is to involve the students ...choices and decisions ,conscious and deliberate, based on their own value systems."
 - Emphasis on the individual's own values.
 - They are forcing their own values on you by teaching this.
 - This is only good for them when it doesn't work against them. i.e. Cheating. If the individual values high scores above all else, is cheating wrong?
 - Fails to consider the victims, the collateral damages. (i.e. Affirmative action.)
- Political correctness
- Tolerance Redefined.
 - (Rhetoric vs. sophistry) Passion/pathos. Cause to take action.
 - Tolerance used to be "Disagree but have respect"
 - It has been redefined as "You shouldn't challenge peoples values or lifestyles, or else you are a bigot".
- There is no such thing as a NEUTRAL position or idea.
- Failing to act is not "not doing anything".
- Examples: Abortion, Euthanasia, Homosexuality, Suicide
 - Supreme Court cases based on absolute autonomy = relativism
 - The right to define one's own concepts of being.
 - People should be allowed to decide for themselves about _____.
 - My actions and "who I am" are the same thing, so you can't disagree with my actions without being a 'hater'.
 - What will be next? (Polygamy. Animals. Pedophilia.)
- Spiritual Warfare
 - This is an Ideological battle.

Book Recommendations for Relativism And The Christian Mind

- Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students , Allan Bloom
- Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism , Douglas Groothuis

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM: SPEAKER NEL BRACE

Humans are tuned to consider ideas. The question is not whether you will be a thinker, it is whether you will be a good one or a bad one.

TYPES OR LEVELS OF PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION:

- Table talk (family, heated but less informed, how children get ideas)
- Popular culture (media, journalism) "Let me write the songs of a nation, and I care not who writes the laws."
- Academy (formal examination of ideas and concepts, where ideas are birthed)
- TABLE TALK
 - God Exists, Salvation is required, Salvation is found in Christ
 - What about people of other religions?
- POP CULTURE
 - George Lucas, Madonna, Oprah Winfrey (relativist quotes were given from each)
- ACADEMY
 - John Hick (philosopher)
 - Nature of God, claims to Moral Superiority, Nature of Religious Knowledge, Meaning of Salvation

There is a Fear or arguments of depth in Apologetics, due to fear that congregants are so ill equipped that they might turn from the faith because of the questions these arguments cause them to confront.

POPULAR CULTURE TELLS US:

- All religions are true OR All religions have some truth
- Taste: matters of personal preference, Pluralism is desirable and tolerable only in those areas that are matters of taste rather than truth.
- Poetical Truth (This applies to ...stories, novels, plays...)
 - It says that stories about the same characters can differ in details.
 - *>Maria Thinks: We are seeing this in the Hollywood re-telling of myths, fables, and fairy tales these days. Does seeing it happen in these arenas make people more accepting of it in the religious arena. If so, what do we do?<*
 - Theologians who separate what historically happened as truth VS what Jesus followers said as being mythology.
- Logical/Factual Truth: reality exists regardless of how we think about it. Agreement of thought with reality. What makes a descriptive proposition true is that it corresponds to the way things really are.

LAW OF NON-CONTRADICTION:

Two opposite ideas cannot both be true at the same time and in the same way.

- Before we will believe something is true, we want proof.
- Many religious claims are such that they cannot be proven true physically, historically, and/or philosophically. (ie. Inspiration of scripture. Trinity. Resurrection. Etc.)
- Psalm 19:6 vs Copernicus *Psalm 19:6 It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.*
- *1 Corinthians 15:1-10, 11-16, 17* Summary:...and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.
- Immortality of the Soul...depends heavily on the immateriality of the mind/soul. Some believe that if scientists could create a machine indistinguishable from a human, it calls this into question.
 - *>Maria Thinks: I disagree. Just because WE are unable to distinguish the machine from ourselves, that does not make it the same.<*
- If religious truth claims are logical or factual, they are subject to the law of non-contradiction.
- **[Reference Video for table of comparison of beliefs in God, Salvation, Other Faiths in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hindu, Buddhism]**
- They cannot all be true at the same time. (They could all be false.)

MORE TABLE TALK:

Some Truth claims of Christianity:

- Do you believe that salvation in Christianity is true, exclusively? Can you show why?
 - *Read Romans 1*
- Do you believe that the Bible is historically accurate and has been handed down? Do you trust the writers?
 - Historical markers mentioned throughout.
 - There is a whole field of research showing how it has been faithfully handed down.
- Do you know why you believe Jesus is God?
- Do you understand, and can you explain, the uniqueness of salvation in Christianity?
 - *John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*
 - *Matthew 7:13-14 Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*
- Do you understand the fate of those who do not believe? Do you have compassion for them?
 - **Compassion is expressed not in contending that they are not doomed, but in supporting and taking every effort to give to them the message of Christ.**
 - If you are truly convinced of the exclusivity, then you will be compelled to share your faith.

Book Recommendations for Religious Pluralism

- The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity , Philip L. Quinn (Editor), Kevin Meeker (Editor)
- Truth and Religion, Mortimer Adler
- Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World (And other books in the Four Views series edited by Stanley N. Gundry)

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM: SPEAKER SIMON BRACE

- Potentially greatest challenge facing the church, or the civilization.
- Quantities of people, or countries, are greater than ever before.
- Less than 1% of church ministries target Islam. Even though the Muslims are the largest unreached.
- **Media often has a Straw man argument:** Where you set up what you think the view is, and you knock that over. A false representation.
- Islam means submission, a Muslim is one who submits (also called Islamists, Mohammadeans, Hagarism)

HISTORY OF ISLAM

- GEOGRAPHY
 - Saudi Arabia
 - Mecca and Medina
 - Mecca in the time of Muhammad – very busy, pilgrimages, trade, Polytheism,
 - Kaaba – a structure supposedly built by Abraham located in Mecca
 - Most popular in Indonesia
 - Sunni Muslims, Shi'ite Muslims in Iran/Iraq
- CONTEXT
 - You must study and understand Mohammed. Who is he? What type of person?
 - Judaism and Christianity were already around.
 - They believe the Bible prophesied the coming of Mohammed.
- EVENTS
 - AD 570 – Mohammed born
 - Age of 25 – 1st wife, wealthy woman Kadijah (there were 11 or 13 of them)
 - AD 610 – was a trader, started to get revelations, from the angel Gabriel, in a cave, for about 22 yrs until he passed away. These became the Quran.
 - Theory that he had epilepsy. Accounts of his encounters with angel have this physical appearance. He initially wasn't sure what it was, but others convinced him it was from God.
 - He had to flee from Mecca to Medina due to hostility.
 - He starts as peaceable, and later becomes a military leader.
 - They believe that a later revelation OVERWRITES any earlier one.
 - AD 632 death, rather suddenly
 - Quran was not yet written/put together.

INTERACTING WITH MUSLIMS

- There are uneducated Muslims just like there are uneducated Christians.
- Ask what they themselves believe. Answer their questions. You don't have to cover everything. They may not believe all of Islam.
- Islam traces the bloodline thru Ishmael. Christians through Issac. See Deuteronomy.
- Muslims are interested in spirituality. Quran mentions Christians and Jews. They do believe in what came before, somewhat.
- They think the Bible is corrupted, and select what parts they think are true.
- Polemic: asking questions of Islam
- Apologetic: answering questions about Christianity
- Aim: sharing the gospel

BELIEFS

- Monotheism. Allah.
 - 99 names (characteristics).
 - However he is so transcendent you cannot know his essence.
 - (As an aside, the doctrine of Analogy falls flat when describing God. Power, Ominpotence, etc. are not "like" the things in this world. If you take this too far it becomes Idolatry.)
 - Rejection of trinity – they see it as being 3 Gods.
 - Their concept of heaven does not include God being there.
- Scriptures
 - Qur'an – what he wrote, his revelations
 - Hadith – what he did in life, written by those who lived around him
 - Tafsia – early commentaries on Qur'an
 - Sahabah - Early biographies of him
- Prophets
 - Believe in many of the Judeo-Christian prophets, but that Mohammed was the last
- Angels
 - Jinn, genies
 - Hashish >> assassin (etymology)
 - God created good Jinn and bad Jinn, sent to test you.
 - Satan is not an angel, he is a Jinn. Who failed to bow to Adam.
 - They have a concept of sin and the fall.
- Judgement
 - Hell (punishment)
 - Paradise (reward) God is not present in either
 - You cannot know that you are saved. Your good works are weighed against your bad works.
- Jihad
 - If you die as a martyr for Islam, you get direct entrance into heaven.
 - Popular belief is that this is meant as an inner struggle.

Defending your Faith Conference, Ephrata Community Church, March 2013 – Maria's Notes

- Classical belief is that this must be done through military conquest.
 - Explains suicide bombers
- Early Islam spread by the sword.
 - Spread into Spain, stopped by Charles the hammer, pushed back out of Spain
- If you do not submit (which is good for you) we will bring it to you by sword.
- Samir Khan – killed in Yemen - #5 most wanted.
 - Attended speech at U of NC. They are among us. But at same speech, Christian student unions did not attend.

FIVE PILLARS

- Testimony: Shahadah – a quote they speak over a child born, and repetition gets you into heaven
- Prayer: Salat – frequency and duration. Originally was directed at Jerusalem, later moved to Mecca
- Alms-giving: Zakat – 2.5% giving to charity
- Fasting: Sawm – Ramadan, month of fasting
- Pilgrimage: Hajj – required to make a pilgrimage to Mecca

FEASTS, SIGNS, SYMBOLS

Did not have enough time for this slide

ARGUMENTS

- The Bible is corrupted
 - However...The Compilation of the Quran is one of the key arguments between the Sunni and Shiites.
- Trinity
 - Jesus is not God
 - The doctrine of the Trinity, 3 persons one essence (non contradictory)

Book Recommendations for Introduction to Islam

- None were given, however, I found the Wikipedia entries helpful in editing these notes. While I am sure there are some inaccuracies and simplifications, as there would be in any Wikipedia entry about any religion, they should be adequate for an introduction to the topic.

DARWIN AND ETHICS : SPEAKER RAY CIERVO

Book Recommendations for Darwin And Ethics

- Darwin Day In America: How Our Politics and Culture Have Been Dehumanized in the Name of Science, Dr. John G. West
- From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany, Richard Weikart

CHARLES DARWIN

- Born into wealthy, well educated English family
- Wife's father was Wedgewood dishes heir
- His grandfather Erasmus Darwin had developed a theory of evolution
- 22 yrs old on HMS Beagle, 1835ish, Galapagos
- Influences from economists:
 - Sir Charles Lyell – The Principles of Geology
 - Thomas Malthus – Essay on the Principle of Population
 - Adam Smith – Wealth of Nations
 - Darwin saw this principle of limited resources and applied this to humans
 - Life as a competitive struggle over limited resources
- Wrote Origin of the Species 1st (did not really attack existence of God)
- Wrote Descent of Man 2nd (introduced ethics, attack existence of God)
- Books were not originally unacceptable to religious
- Historically, this was a time where magical and miraculous was being questioned, and science had not yet trumped everything else.
- ORIGIN SAYS
 - There is no "actual" design to nature (design for purpose, therefore no purpose).
 - Laws of nature acted by chance
 - Laws created all life forms we now see from a common ancestor
 - This happened thru endless genetic mutations
 - The strongest/fittest survived
 - Author Thomas Huxley – wrote about this too
 - The difference from chimpanzees to humans is less than chimpanzees from lower apes.
 - It is indisputable, even though we haven't yet found the evidence for it.
 - Humans DNA is 98% similar to DNA of a chimp – but also 90% similar to DNA of a mouse.
 - The importance is in the Sequencing.
- DESCENT OF MAN
 - Social instinct arises out of biology
 - Naturally would lead to the golden rule - Morality is in how the man would want to be treated
 - No intrinsic right and wrong in the universe
 - Morality leads to self preservation
 - Disbelief in God was gradual
 - Doctrine of Hell was a stumbling block
 - Materialistic/physical/natural world where mind and spirit don't exist.

FROM DARWIN TO DARWIN-ISM

- Biology
 - Mendel and Pea Plants
 - Breeding animals
 - Eugenics – US in early 1900s, then Hitler
- Psychology
 - Behavior isn't due to sin, but due to genetic makeup.
 - Rape justified as a gene that slipped thru due to survival. Rape and plunder in primitive society.
- Ethics
- Social Darwinism
 - All of life can be explained by natural selection
 - Predicts solutions to ALL social problems VIA SCIENCE
 - Politics and culture becomes dehumanized – how to manipulate human behavior
 - Lobotomy, sterilization, selective breeding
 - People are unequal LESS because of environment than because of internal equipment
 - *>Maria Thinks: false dichotomy between nature vs nurture, socialism vs eugenics<*
 - *>Maria Thinks: How does apologetics speak to socialism, to the equalization of wealth.<*
 - FREE WILL doesn't exist. Your choices are a product of your genetics and your past.
 - Religion is considered a hindrance to the progressive evolution of the human race.
 - The only knowledge that is true and valuable is the knowledge that can be discovered scientifically.
 - The above statement cannot be proven scientifically...self-defeating statement.

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DARWINISM AND GERMANY

- Bartolomaus von Carneri
- Austrian Parliament
- Abolition of free will
- Ernst Haeckel
- 1860-1890
- Social Darwinism promised hope for mankind.
- Human exceptionalism was lost. Humans are NOT exceptional, special. > specie-ism.

PETER SINGER

- Aethist philosopher, Peter Singer, animal rights movement in 1970's.
 - His presuppositions are false. Existence of God.
 - Bestiality is ok, he believes
 - Teaches at Princeton
 - He gives 50% of his income to the poor, and sees rich Christians as inconsistent.
 - Complete consistent vegan.
 - Difference between humans and persons – person must have self recognition, sense of future, ability to communicate, etc. other criteria
 - Infant not yet a person. Etc.
 - Animals that meet these criteria GAIN personhood.

META-NARRATIVES: CHRISTIANITY, COMMUNISM, DARWINISM/SOCIAL DARWINISM, INTELLIGENT DESIGN

- Intelligent Design is not exclusively a Christian movement.
- It says patterns can be described by design.
- It may be a straw man that we will build up and it will get cut down eventually. If we hang our hats on it, they will go down with it.
- Eugenics
 - Are you OK with altering the human genome to improve the human race?
 - What about to exterminate specific diseases?
 - What if we had to use human embryos to test it?
 - To weed out undesirables?
- Morals describe how we DO ACT – CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOR
- Ethics describe how we OUGHT TO ACT –
- If man is only different in degree and kind, then Morals and ethics become arbitrary and relative.
- Without an absolute truth, you lose any hope for a moral society.
- We affect society by changing worldview, culture, what shapes the way they think and act. View of God, man, universe, truth.
- In order to shape that, we have to know what we believe, and that it is a Biblical view.

SATURDAY NIGHT INTRODUCTORY SESSION: SPEAKER RAY CIERVO

Recommendations from Saturday Night Session

- **Video:** "Metamorphosis" about Eastern Monarch migration - illustramedia.com
- **Book:** Amusing Ourselves to Death, Neal Postman
- **Book:** The 10 Things You Should Know About the Creation vs. Evolution Debate , Ron Rhodes
- **Book:** By Design Or By Chance?: The Growing Controversy On The Origins Of Life In The Universe , Denyse O'Leary
- **Book: Upcoming book series for kids/young adults by** Melissa Travis of sciencereasonfaith.com
- **Other:** Seminary – "Southern Evangelical"
- **Other: organization** "Ratio Christi" – on campus apologetic clubs, conferences
- **Book:** The Icons of Evolution, Jonathan Welles
- **Book:** Natural Theology, William Paley and Don Moyer
- **Book:** Retrieving the Natural Law: A Return to Moral First Things (Critical Issues in Bioethics) , J. Daryl Charles

NATURALISM

- Not the love of nature, but a belief that the Natural World is all that exists
- Not to be confused with Darwinism or Evolution
- **Pantheistic Naturalism** – the universe is all that exists, but it is all in your mind, matter is an illusion (Maya), and all of it is God
- **Materialistic/Scientific Naturalism** – everything is matter, all is physical. Mind doesn't really exist, it is a brain.
- **Methodological Naturalism** – when doing science, you can only accept answers from the natural world – you can't know anything from inspiration, intuition, etc. Not opposed to God/spirit, but keep it out of science.
- **Philosophical Naturalism/Metaphysical Naturalism** – there is nothing beyond matter.
 - "Scientism" has hijacked science. Instead of looking at if there "can be" evidence outside of matter (paranormal), it says there is no way to know things outside of science.
 - Presuppositions skew the way anyone would interpret information. (Ruling God out or in.)
- We need to differentiate **Microevolution** (bacterial resistance developing) **VS Macroevolution** (changing species)
 - Darwin's theory supports both.
 - Natural selection and random variation can explain the emergence of biological information
 - "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possible have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down. But I can find no such case." – Darwin, Origin of the Species
 - The Intelligent Design movement is starting to do so.

FROM DARWIN TO DARWINISM

- *SEE session notes ABOVE – this was largely the same material but summarized*
- Abortion rate in NYC 60% in African-American community, and is 40% overall.
- When there is Limited Healthcare, there will be judgements on who gets care and who doesn't.

TESTING WORLDVIEWS

- Test of Reason – Is it Reasonable?
- Outer Test – Evidence
- Inner Test – Satisfaction
- Reality Test – Does it fit?

TESTING NATURALISM

- Test of Reason – Is it Reasonable?
 - Cannot offer foundations for it's own conclusions = No.
 - No design, purpose, no good/evil = No
 - If your mind is an accident, why do you trust it?
- Outer Test – Evidence
 - Limitation of science is the insistence on evidence based knowledge.
 - Insists only science can contribute to knowledge.
 - Can't provide why we exist, or any philosophical answers.
- Inner Test – Satisfaction
 - If the universe is a closed system, how can man reason abstractly and transcend his own existence?
 - If there is no ultimate meaning to be found, then saying that the universe is meaningless...is meaningless.
 - If it all had no meaning, you would never know that it has no meaning. You have to have a concept of meaningful to begin with.
 - *Maria Thinks: > What is meaningful? If X is meaningful, and part of the universe, then the universe is not meaningless because it contains X. <*
 - Is it good that I believe it is meaningless? Morally good or philosophically astute good? Doesn't labeling something good ascribe meaning? A Naturalist shouldn't believe in either of those things.
- Reality Test – Does it fit?
 - Science provides answers on many levels.
 - Ethically, Naturalism is a Darwinian worldview. There are no absolutes. Relativism.
 - Individual vs Corporate Relativism
 - But even corporate relativism goes wrong (slavery, apartheid)
 - Man loses his exceptionalism from other animals
 - Man is different only in degree, not in kind.
 - *Maria Thinks: Genesis 1:21-31 how God creates creatures "according to their own kind" and then creates man "in His own image" and charges man "to rule over". Clearly different in kind.*
- Norman Geisler quote "naturalists can't even describe their own beliefs with solely scientific evidence"

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- Without God
 - No absolute morals
 - No image of God
 - (missed this one)
- Finding common ground
 - Natural theology
 - The natural word
 - The natural law

NATURAL LAW

- God has written on your heart His law. Conscience.
- Law can't save you. But that doesn't make it worthless.
- Paul and David loved and delighted in God's law.
- Fiddler Crab as an image of how out of balance in Christianity we are with the study of natural law vs the spiritual things.

EXAMPLES FROM NATURE

- **Simple Cell (?paetella – missed the name):** What was supposed to be a simple cell that incrementally evolved into an animal turned out to have 40 MOVING PARTS, MOST OF WHICH CAN'T BE FOUND IN ANY OTHER ORGANISM
 - *Maria Thinks: missed the name, research later*
 - *I found this on tfp.org:*
"Powerful technologies revealed elaborate microscopic worlds inside the cell including a variety of molecular machines, carrying things from one end of the cell to the other, much like traffic on a busy city street, except the biological machines are irreducibly complex. One machine, the bacterial flagellum, functions and looks like an outboard motor and has 40 moving parts. If any part is missing, the machine effectiveness is not just reduced; it does not work at all. To assume that these irreducibly complex machines could develop by "numerous, successive, slight modifications" as Darwin demanded is not realistic."
- **Giraffe**
 - Has a problem: needs pressure for his heart to get blood up 18ft into his brain when eating, but not when leaning down to eat.
 - The pressure would explode his head. BUT it has valves in it's neck, which aren't in any other animal.
 - Also, when it stands back up, it should faint from loss of blood pressure. BUT they have an organ at the base of their brain keeping a fully oxygenated supply available. ONLY animal to have that.
 - How would that evolve?
- **Woodpeckers**
 - Has to have his eyes closed when pecking to keep them in, because the peck is so strong.
 - Has a spring to coil his tongue around.
 - Only bird to have Barbs on the end of tongue.
 - Has a glue enzyme on the tongue, and an enzyme in his mouth to release the glue.
 - How would all that evolve?
- Natural law, as divinely intended, constitutes the fabric of the universe in which we live. It is a mirror of the creator

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION: SPEAKER RAY CIERVO

RENEWING YOUR MIND – HOW DID THE WORLD GET SO MESSED UP?

- Charismatic Christians need to get their minds catching up to their hearts.
- Heart and Mind. It is not either/or, it is both/and.
 - *Romans 12:1,2 (KJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*
 - Note the first verse is body, second is mind. Note mind is so that you can PROVE.
- The word for spiritual here, in the Greek it is actually the word for LOGICAL.
- Therefore – this is justification for...:
 - *Romans 1:16-32 (too long...clippings below...use biblestudytools.com to get the whole thing)*
 - For I am not ashamed of the Gospel...for the wrath of God IS revealed from heaven against all unrighteous men...so that they are without excuse...futile in their speculations...professing to be wise, they became fools...exchanged the truth of God for a lie...for this reason God gave them over...

BREAKING DOWN ROMANS 1 & 2:

- The Gospel (itself) is the power of God to Salvation
- To everyone who believes
- The righteousness of God is revealed
- The righteous shall live by faith
- FOR (because) – we need this because – the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
- Because they reject God as their creator
- Against all ungodliness
- And unrighteousness
- Those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness
- Those who cause us to keep our heads down
- That which is known about God is evident within them
- Because God made it evident to them
 - *Maria Thinks: >God has given it to them, made it obvious, inspired<*
- They suppress it so they can live how they want to
- Since creation of the world
- God's attributes have been CLEARLY seen thru what has been made
- So they are without excuse (anapologia , with no apology or defense)
- Even though they knew God, they did not honor or give thanks
- Because of this (rejecting God)
- Their foolish heart was darkened
- Futile in their speculations
- Professing to be wise they became fools
- Worshipping the wrong things *Aside: Immorality is always associated with worship of the wrong thing*
- Exchanged the truth of God for a lie
- No acknowledge God any longer
- Worshipped the creature rather than the creator
- Therefore God
- Gave them up
 - To uncleanness
 - The lusts of their hearts to impurity
 - their bodies would be dishonored among them
- Gave them over
 - to degrading passions
 - Unnatural functions of women
 - In the same way men with men
 - Receiving in themselves the penalty which was due
- God gave them over
 - Because they did not want to retain the knowledge of God
 - To a depraved mind
 - To do what ought not to be done
 - Filled with every kind of wickedness...
 - They invent ways of doing evil
 - They disobey their parents
 - Heartless and ruthless
 - They know those things deserve death, but they do them and approve of others who do them.
 - Do not be conformed (pressed into a mold)
 - People calling faith ignorant, a disease
 - Mocking religion (fairy tales)
 - Advertising is one of the chief forms of influence

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- They (you) can be helped:
 - But be transformed by the renewing of your mind
 - Changed from the inside out
 - Remember: Nothing of the butterfly is contained in the caterpillar – no parts, no dna
 - If you don't change the way you THINK about God, nothing changes
 - Digests, interprets, wrestles with information, concepts
 - So that you may prove what the will of God is Good acceptable and perfect
 - We think that God is illogical because he is mysterious, but He is supremely logical – look at how everything is measured out in physics, logical flow of thoughts in scripture.
 - Aside: Seminary exercise: Romans can be written out in syllogisms
 - Aside: The word Mind in the New Testament has 9 different translations

WRAP UP SESSION : SPEAKERS RAY CIERVO, SIMON BRACE, NEL BRACE

ANSWERING WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM ATTENDEES
SATURDAY NIGHT WRAP UP SESSION: SPEAKER RAY CIERVO

Recommendations from Wrap Up Session

NOTE: each book is also listed under the relevant question, below

- **Book:** Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science by John C. Lennox
- **Book:** Paul Wagner – book on history of the Bible (couldn't find it)...might have been:
An exegetical bibliography on Paul's letter to the Romans (Bibliographical aids) by Guntter Wagner
- **Book:** Understanding Scripture: An Overview of the Bible's Origin, Reliability, and Meaning by Wayne Grudem, C. John Collins, Thomas R. Schreiner and J. I. Packer
- **Book:** From God To Us Revised and Expanded: How We Got Our Bible by Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix
- **Book:** Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books by Michael J. Kruger
- **Book:** The Kingdom of God is Within You. Leo Tolstoy
- **Book:** Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False by Thomas Nagel
- **Book:** Michael J. Behe – I didn't get the name of the book, but there were 3 about Darwinism by this author on Amazon
- **Book:** Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design by Stephen C. Meyer
 - **Book:** Correct, Not Politically Correct; How Same-Sex Marriage Hurts Everyone by Frank Turek
 - **Book:** What Is Marriage?: Man and Woman: A Defense by Sherif Girgis, Ryan T Anderson and Robert P George
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- **Is an action moral because God commands it, or does God command it because it is moral?**
 - Euthothrobe(sp?) dilemma, two-horned dilemma, false dichotomy, false choice
 - A: How do you know if it is terrible? If God isn't telling you so?
 - God acts out of his essence to tell you his will. He is good and just, therefore cannot command something terrible.
 - This argument is thousands of years old.
 - For further Research – nominalism.
- **Is believing a young earth a spiritual imperative? Or theistic evolution?**
 - There is another choice – old earther
 - Calvinist vs Armenian discussion (research this)
 - It is not an ESSENTIAL of the faith. (God is not going to ask you what you believed about that.)
 - The argument is to hold strictly to Genesis, and to the rest of the Bible, how you interpret it.
 - Reformed, covenant theologians, homoneutic, escatology. Open theists (future is open).
 - Metaphysics is affecting how you interpret things if this affects you.
 - **Book:** Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science by John C. Lennox
- **Does God change or doesn't he change? He has changed his mind, according to the Bible.**
 - Anthropomorphisms
 - What does it mean for something to change?
- **What to read to get started in apologetics?**
 - Luke
 - Psalms
 - The prophets & the Gospels
 - Read everything with an apologetic slant.
 - They did not want to be specific because God can touch you through anything if you are open.
- **What about the Copying of the Bible? Were there bad translations, and do we need to worry about that?**
 - There are people who devote their lives to studying the original manuscripts, translations, etc.
 - The footnotes in your Bible aren't there to confuse you – that is the translators being honest.
 - Various translations...differences in languages, idioms, figures of speech, grammatical differences. Some lean toward the literal, and may not be as easy to read. Some try to make it easier to read, by showing what the author was trying to convey.
 - Advice is to compare multiple versions. Better yet, learn the original languages and read those.
 - **Book:** Paul Wagner – book on history of the Bible (couldn't find it)...might have been:
An exegetical bibliography on Paul's letter to the Romans (Bibliographical aids) by Guntter Wagner
 - **Book:** Understanding Scripture: An Overview of the Bible's Origin, Reliability, and Meaning by Wayne Grudem, C. John Collins, Thomas R. Schreiner and J. I. Packer
 - The early church didn't choose the books to throw out, they agreed upon the ones that met the criteria.
 - Even the churches that use the Apocrypha, they do not want to take out the other books. So it isn't so much a problem with trusting what is IN the Bible.
 - We look at the earliest times, of when the books were recorded and their proximity of when the historical activities happened.
 - **Book:** From God To Us Revised and Expanded: How We Got Our Bible by Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix
 - **Book:** Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books by Michael J. Kruger
- **How do you debate with a Hindu or Buddhist, since they don't believe the world is logical?**
 - Law of non-Contradiction. If it is not logical, that is a statement that is either true or false, which is therefore logical.
 - Many people use logic in a particular way, and then try to deny they are using it.

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- **What about people who are confused because there are so many different religions?**
 - Since these people all hold to different views, different conceptions of the essence of God.
 - There are several monotheistic, a polytheistic, and atheistic. God can't be both one AND many/none.
 - It is not mean to disagree with them.
 - The important thing that matters is that you wrestle with this. If God exists and is interested in you, in your life, you might want to find out about that.
 - The Buddhist construes evil to be an illusion. Do you agree with that?
 - Hindu believes that contradictions are true. But only in a spiritual sense, not in physical life.
 - Are these people consistent within their worldview?
 - Don't mistake their kindness and honesty for truth.
- **What about Mormons ?**
 - They believe that if you want to know if something is true, you pray to God, and when you feel it you will know it is true. This is a subjective experience...what if I have felt that and I wasn't a Mormon? Every religion has subjective experience. So we need to go outside of those experiences...look at the physical world, etc.
 - They believe there were massive civilizations in North America, but there is no physical evidence for them.
- **Chances and circumstance, if life is a gift why does it get taken away? Aren't we all just positive and negative energy?**
 - *Read Acts 17: 16-32*
 - Would a purely physical being even ask that question?
 - The fact that you are asking the question, there is proof of your eternal soul. That you would notice, that you would seek him out.
- **Everything is a perception -**
 - The thought contradicts itself. It cannot be a thing and a perception.
- **What really matters is our intention**
 - You can be unintentionally wrong. You can be sincerely wrong. But you are still wrong.
 - **Book:** Conversational Evangelism: How to Listen and Speak So You Can Be Heard by Norman Geisler and David Geisler
 - **Book:** – Greg hockle(sp)...Tactics – I couldn't find this one.
- **When someone asks "How do you know there is a God? " How do you respond?**
 - Why is there something rather than nothing? Nothing can cause itself to exist...something had to exist to cause it.
 - Accidental? Purposeful?
 - SURGE – Second law of thermodynamics,..., Einstein's theory of relativity
 - Time space and matter are contingent on one another. Whatever caused them to exist has to be immaterial, infinite, and eternal. And powerful.
 - The singularity, expansion of the universe, radiation echo. All is evidence for the creation moment.
 - If there is a moral law, there must be a giver of the law, and it must be a personal morality.
- **Noah's ark, and the explanation of animal species.**
 - This is the issue of skepticism. If I cannot answer this question, then I am going to suspend judgment on everything else.
 - Do you apply that to areas of your life other than religion? Such as marriage?
 - I am not going to walk away because there is one thing I cannot explain when I am pretty convicted about the other stuff.
- **Look at the multiple denominations of Christianity...how can I believe if you can't even agree?**
 - That doesn't answer the question of if God exists or not.
 - These are people who disagree about certain things, have debates about certain things.
 - But this is no reason to walk away from it, if you find that you are a sinner and need forgiveness, that doesn't change because these other people are having these petty arguments.
 - If God exists and is holy, how do you respond to that?
- **What about Geographic evidence?**
 - Terry Mortenson – answers in Genesis website
 - Pretty strong case geologically for a young earth, but weak in other areas.
 - Astronomy is pretty strong for old earth.
 - But none of this is a priority of the faith.
- **Renewing the Mind – how to go about it**
 - Ask God to stimulate you into these things
 - It will be hard work reading.
 - Fill your mind with the knowledge of God.
 - But it can be done by anyone.
 - **Book:** The Kingdom of God is Within You. Leo Tolstoy
 - *Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.*
 - the relationship between the renewing of the mind and discovering the will of God in your life
- **How can you believe the Bible is the Word of God?**
 - If we believe that God is a personal being, then it is reasonable to think that God would reveal himself to us.
 - General revelation – the world around us
 - Special revelation – the Bible
 - We can test the words of the Bible against the physical world
 - We can test it against itself, if it is consistent

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- **If a caterpillar can turn into a butterfly, why can't an aeomba turn into a giraffe or ape into a man?**
 - Maybe it is within the realm of possibility. But it is improbable.
 - This is using anecdotal evidence (butterfly) which both atheists and Christians are baffled by.
 - But anecdotes can only be one piece in a stack of evidence.
 - There are patterns in nature. Does this hold to the patterns?
 - What is the chance that so many varieties of caterpillars all having the trajectory that they build a chrysalis and turn into a butterfly?
 - If something cannot be falsified, we cannot determine if it is true or not.
 - There isn't enough time in billions of years for the mutations to have happened to get from chimpanzee to man. For example, the bone structure of the foot, length of arms, etc. 16 changes just to allow them long distances of walking.
 - Anthropology, missing link. Debate has moved to the microbiology level. The information in one cell.
 - **Book:** Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False by Thomas Nagel
 - **Book:** Michael J. Behe – I didn't get the name of the book, but there were 3 about Darwinism by this author on Amazon
 - **Book:** Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design by Stephen C. Meyer
- **What can we do to preserve Biblical marriage?**
 - Vote, be informed, and attend events.
 - Work to get different politicians in, get different Supreme Court justices to change future judgments.
 - When the president says your vote is unconstitutional, you need to get involved about that.
 - The witness of your own marriage.
 - Do not be convinced that you can't find common ground with them. Be an example.
 - **Book:** Correct, Not Politically Correct; How Same-Sex Marriage Hurts Everyone by Frank Turek
 - **Book:** What Is Marriage?: Man and Woman: A Defense by Sherif Girgis, Ryan T Anderson and Robert P George
 - **Note:** While this book has a marriage topic and argues for marriage, ¾ of the book is not religious.
 - Aside: All of the systems in our body function independently EXCEPT reproduction.
- **How can we respond to Muslim claim that we have 3 Gods (the trinity)?**
 - Trinity is not in the Bible. But the doctrine is there, and we've named it that.
 - They have tarred which is nowhere in the Quran.
 - We aren't saying he is 3 beings and one being. It is 1 being and 3 persons.
 - Start showing them where this is in the scriptures.
 - Read about Theophanes,
 - Ask Who is it that wrestles with him?
- **How can we believe in an all loving God when bad things happen to good people, innocent children? How can a God of love drown 20k people?**
 - The problem of evil
 - Is an all-loving God one who only loves? Does that exclude a God who is just? Who judges? Who is Holy?
 - The Bible also says that God is light, but that doesn't mean that all light is God.
 - We have to go back to the Biblical descriptions of God.
 - The Wrath of God is as much part of his character as the love of God.
 - He is also merciful and just.
 - We are all sinners, and the wrath of God will come to all the unrighteous equally.
 - We have to learn to believe beyond what we WANT to believe, what is easy and friendly.
 - Those who go to Hell have definitively chosen that destiny for themselves. They are not there by mistake, they did not slip through God's justice system.
 - This is difficult to impossible to talk about without bringing up Jesus sacrifice.
- **Why Hell? Why not just annihilation? Why physical torture/burning?**
 - Not sure if this is physical, or analogy.
 - Not annihilation because that is not free will, is not just.
- **What about people who have never heard of Jesus?**
 - The scriptures are clear that the only name is Jesus Christ.
 - God also gives us the general revelation (natural world) and when you respond to that, even more.
 - Cornelius and the Eunuch in Ethiopia, and God sends this to them in miraculous ways.
 - Pray for the church in Korea
 - But that can't be your excuse to not deal with the claims of Christ that have been presented to you.
 - *Maria Thinks > Romans 1 & 2 seemed to talk about that.<*
- **NPR and Naturalism**
 - A great place to recognize sophisticated nonsense and practice apologetics
 - Everything else is plausible and acceptable, except orthodox Christianity
 - But they are telling you that you are a sophisticated baboon. So how can you have all these spiritual thoughts?
 - Conservative public radio can be just as bad.
 - Top two education systems in the world, S Korea, Finland. America is 17th. The common denominator is attitude of the govt toward education. The teachers have a master's degree. It is harder to become a teacher than to be in engineering or medicine. The professional does their job, not a monkey following preset curriculum. They do not spend more per student, or more technology.
- **Courses on Apologetics**
 - Most public college courses will not do. What is the statement of believe and statement of faith, view of the scriptures? Systematic theology? Philosophy?
- **How to get involved once educated?**
 - Teaching
 - Networking skills
 - Let someone help you get plugged in
 - Facilitating groups, sponsoring a seminary student, financial support, administration

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- **How do you deal with seeds along the road, hearts unwilling to change?**
 - Your interest in people
 - We give up easily because people learn how to fend you off
 - Pray for the person, for God to work, for opportunities
 - Be open to opportunities and listen to what people say
 - Sometimes you have to learn social skills that do not come naturally
 - Learning how to engage and lead a conversation, not beat the person up with facts
 - Have a period of hit and miss, but do not give up
 - Listen to what people are saying, hear behind their words, hear their heart
 - Almost everybody is unwilling to hear about Jesus when you start with them, you have to lead them
 - Put a pebble in the shoe
 - Even the experts struggle to communicate it to certain people, learn through mistakes and desperation, and lose family members. Not a 100% success rate. Pushing too hard, scaring people off.
 - Some people are so recalcitrant and angry, the conversation is oppressive.
 - Be praying and allow the spirit to guide you. You are the tool. The conviction and salvation is between God and them.
 - Your tepid prayers can be more powerful than your works.
- **What about the government/law? Is there a time to choose?**
 - We are a long way off from understanding the law.
 - We need to pay attention to what laws become precedent.
 - Understand what the moral law is.
 - How does it relate to civil law, "positive law". We are making them up as we go along.
 - There is always a time to choose. When we don't respond, we have made a choice.
 - Is the US Constitution inspired and not an alterable man-made document?
 - Not just because we do not like the outcome, but because it is morally wrong.
- **Final Thoughts:**
 - Argue charitably and vigorously, but don't get angry about it.
 - Remember that sometimes people have other things they are worried about, such as their own loneliness.
 - Use the Socratic method: asking questions, unpacking their answers, ask another question so that the answer is their own.