

Apologetics
Gospel Growth
Will Galkin & Aaron Boyce

What Apologetics Is:

- “Apologetics will...”
- “Apologetics can...”

What Apologetics Isn't:

- “Apologetics wont...”
- “Apologetics can't...”

Interact with this statement:

“The prevailing cultural attitude toward Christianity in the West has shifted and morphed, adding new layers of complexity. At present, we have a convergence of skepticism, hostility, and indifference. As a result, many Christians’ faith has become fragile. Believers are prone to doubt, and unbelievers make assumptions that make Christianity seem not only untrue, but also highly implausible and shamefully harmful. Today, many consider biblical perspectives on issues such as marriage and divine judgment not just wrongheaded but even damaging. A hesitant Christian and a hostile secularist aren’t a good combination for effective evangelism.

Presuppositional vs. Evidentialist Apologetics

At the risk of oversimplification, let us restrict ourselves to presuppositionalism, rational presuppositionalism, and evidentialism. All three labels are loaded, and various proponents mean slightly different things by them. Moreover there is a tendency, especially among more popular writers, to caricature the other positions. Thus:

(1) The presuppositionalist may charge the evidentialist with superficiality. You can line up evidence to support the truth of Christianity until you have exhausted yourself by your efforts, but no amount of evidence is sufficient to compel belief. Did not Jesus himself say that even if someone came back from the dead, they would not believe? Evidentialism simply does not understand the implications of human finitude or the profound noetic effects of the Fall—and both limitations are exacerbated by postmodernism.

(2) The rational presuppositionalist is scarcely better. He acknowledges that there are controlling presuppositions, but thinks he can give adequate reasons to defend Christian presuppositions. **Can a human being by reason find out God?**

(3) The rational presuppositionalist largely agrees with his presuppositionalist colleague with respect to the evidentialist, but then charges the presuppositionalist with vague irrelevance. If you cannot give reasons for the superiority of Christian presuppositions, will you simply offer a critique of everyone else's position and then sit around and wait for the Spirit to strike? **Does not the record of New Testament preaching show that reasons were advanced in the bold advocacy of the gospel?** Besides, doesn't the pressure of postmodernism drive us to the conclusion that unless we provide reasoned argument why the Christian worldview is the true one, people will think of Christianity as just one more arbitrary option?

(4) The evidentialist reminds her presuppositionalist colleagues that human beings, made in the image of God, are endowed with reason, and however corrupted those powers, God's truth must be set forth so as to appeal to that reason and to destroy alternative claims. Do not the canonical evangelists and other New Testament believers present the evidences in support of Jesus' resurrection, and take pains to debunk the denials? Moreover, precisely because postmodernism is so strong in the land, it is important to overturn presuppositionalist thought as a cop-out that inevitably ends in subjectivity and uncertainty. **Proclaim the truth and support it with the fullest arsenal of evidences; it is God's truth, and by God's grace it shall prevail.** March 26, 2013 by [Andy Naselli](#) | D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Fifteenth Anniversary Edition; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 184–88: