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Defending the Christian Faith

*A Closer Look into
Christian Apologetics*



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David Nammo
Executive Director
& CEO

I have always wondered about the word “apologetics” because, to me, an apology means to ask for forgiveness. So, I always wondered why we must “apologize” for our faith.

Of course, a little education goes a long way. In the original (or ancient) Greek, “apologia” means to speak in return or to defend oneself. Socrates’ *Apology*, one of the most famous writings of the ancient Greek world, was the great response to the charges brought against him.

Christian apologetics is crucial as the church faces an onslaught against its faith. The voices of doubt no longer live in their own spheres but have direct access to every human on the globe through the internet and cell phones. Our children are facing direct challenges to the Christian faith, in addition to the cultural pressures that push them away from Jesus.

However, we dare not put a tepid Christianity next to raging paganism.

Apologia should be the response to apostasy, which means defection or revolt or, in the Christian faith, a turning away from Christ. The church must always defend the faith, as it did in its early years whether through Irenaeus facing the Gnostics or Athanasius facing the Arians. And it is no truer today for us as we face the current winds against the followers of Jesus Christ.

The “verses” most people quote when discussing apologetics are 1 Peter 3:15-16 (ESV): “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being

prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.” We want to both defend and present our faith in a way that is respectful yet truthful.

Christian attorneys as a group, in my experience, are particularly attracted to apologetics. We are trained to use our words, written and oral, to defend or prosecute or protect or tear down. So, apologetics is a natural attraction for Christian attorneys, especially because we never want to be left incapable of defending the faith.

It is why CLS is excited about its new partnership with Biola University and Biola’s Talbot School of Theology. Biola is offering a small class of 25-30 CLS members an opportunity to earn a master’s degree in apologetics. This is a two-year program that will be completed mostly online, but with some in-person options.

A master’s degree could give any one of us the leverage to teach a class at our church, give talks to groups of people, and find ways to “love your neighbor” by sharing the faith with gentleness and respect.

I invite you to enjoy this issue of *The Christian Lawyer* and, as you do so, to seriously consider taking the next step in becoming not only a defender of justice in the courts, but also a defender of our faith in the world.

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Defending the Christian Faith

“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”

1 PETER 3:15 NIV



The Evidence for Christianity is Strong

BY SEAN MCDOWELL



The evidence for Christianity is stronger than ever.

This might surprise you to hear. In fact, you might think it is *false*. After all, since the 1990s, we have seen a mounting growth in those who identify as religious “nones” in America, which are now a larger group than both Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants.¹

We are also witnessing a massive dechurching in America. Today, more Americans do not go to church than Americans who attend church.² More people have dechurched in the past quarter century than all those who became Christians in the First Great Awakening, Second Great Awakening, and Billy Graham crusades combined.³

If the “nones” are growing, and Americans are dechurching, how can the evidence for Christianity be stronger than ever? First, the reasons people leave the church are complex. Intellectual reasons can play a part, but often there are emotional, relational, political, and moral factors too. Second, much of the evidence for Christianity has still not filtered down to the pews. Third, much of evangelical Christianity is still rooted in an experiential and emotion-based faith void of apologetic and theological depth.

Fourth, we have to consider *qualitative* issues and not just *quantitative* ones. For instance, we have seen conversions to Christianity from prominent figures like Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a former Muslim and atheist.⁴ Alister McGrath and Denis Alexander chronicle 12 stories of intellectuals coming to the Christian faith out of atheism in their book, *Coming to Faith Through*

Dawkins. And in his book, *The Surprising Rebirth of Belief in God*, Justin Brierley notes that the conversation about God has shifted in both tone and content, and leading public intellectuals such as Jordan Peterson, Tom Holland, and Douglass Murray seemed far more open to the cultural and individual value of Christianity than the New Atheists who dismissed Christianity as false and harmful.⁵

At the same time conversations are turning positively towards God, we are also witnessing significant progress in the *positive* evidence for Christianity. Although this growth can be seen in multiple fields of study, we will focus on five areas: the Bible, the resurrection of Jesus, miracles, near-death experiences, and the soul.

Evidence for the Bible

As a college student, my father was challenged to consider the reliability of the Bible. After in-depth study, he concluded the opposite of what he set out to prove—the Bible was actually *true*. In 1972, he published his first book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. While he updated and expanded the book in the 1980s and 1990s, we worked together with a team of students and scholars to publish the most recent edition.⁶

How does he compare the evidence today with the evidence that first convinced him? “The historical evidence for Christianity today is like a tsunami,” Josh McDowell wrote in an op-ed.⁷ Specifically, he is referring to recent manuscript finds,

archaeological discoveries, and internal evidence (such as un-designed coincidences and embarrassing material). Given his six-decade perspective, this is a significant testimony for the strength of the evidence for the Bible today.

Evidence for the Resurrection

Gary Habermas has likely studied the historical evidence for the resurrection more than anyone alive. He first defended the resurrection in his 1976 doctoral dissertation at Michigan State University.⁸ Dr. Habermas spent roughly 32,000 hours on his recent volume⁹—part one of four—which is over 1,000 pages and focuses on positive evidence for the resurrection.¹⁰

After studying the resurrection for roughly five decades, Gary notes the evidence has grown “increasingly positive” in recent years.¹¹ He also notes there is widespread support among historical Jesus scholars for certain “minimal facts” regarding the death and resurrection and that skeptics have not offered a reasonable naturalistic alternative.

Evidence for Miracles

In his two-volume work, *Miracles*, Craig Keener argues there are extensive eyewitness accounts of miracles in the modern world today that should not be dismissed *a priori* because of their supernatural implications. According to Keener, “the

kinds of miracle claims most frequently attested in the Gospels and Acts are also attested by many eyewitnesses today.”¹²

Although Keener recognizes miracles often don’t happen, he reports that millions of witnesses attest to them in various countries of the world, across denominations, and that we have greater confidence in miracle claims than many other claims we readily accept. In his follow-up book, which could have been another lengthy academic treatise, he chronicles even more miracle claims today.¹³ Other authors have reported miracles today too.¹⁴

Evidence for Near-Death Experiences

In the past few decades, doctors and other scholars have published careful defenses of the reality of near-death experiences (NDE).¹⁵ Perhaps most fascinating, University of Missouri Press published a collection of peer-reviewed essays all written by esteemed physicians or evidence-based scientific researchers who have themselves experienced an NDE.

In the introduction, Dr. John C. Hagan notes: “Over a century of laboratory studies have investigated whether it is possible in principle for the mind to transcend the physical boundaries of the brain. The cumulative experimental database *strongly* indicates that it can.”¹⁶ A strong case has been made that NDEs



don't merely point to life after death, but rather uniquely to the Christian faith.¹⁷

Evidence for the Soul

Among philosophers, belief that humans are composed of body and soul (substance dualism) was deemed dead in the 20th century. And yet, according to Brandon Rickabaugh and J.P. Moreland, “substance dualism is undergoing an unforeseen revival and is poised to make a *strong* return in the 21st century.”¹⁸ In their view, “substance dualism has not been tried and found wanting so much as it has been judged unacceptable and left untried.”¹⁹ Rickabaugh and Moreland marshal a forceful defense of the soul in their recent book, *The Substance of Consciousness: A Comprehensive Defense of Contemporary Substance Dualism*. Although substance dualism is a minority view, the evidence for the soul is stronger than ever.

Conclusion

Despite what we often hear in the media or online, the evidence for Christianity continues to grow stronger. Given that there is a renewed interest in conversations about God, and the evidence for Christianity is stronger than ever, Christian lawyers have the unique training and opportunity to help

advance the case for Christianity. While people believe, and *disbelieve*, for a range of reasons, it is vital that we are all prepared to give an answer for our hope and faith in Jesus (see 1 Peter 3:15).



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connects with audiences in a tangible way through humor and stories while imparting hard evidence and logical support for viewing all areas of life through a biblical worldview. Sean is an associate professor in the Christian apologetics program at Biola University. He is the resident scholar for Summit California. Traveling throughout the United States and abroad, Sean speaks at camps, churches, schools, universities, and conferences. He is the author, co-author, or editor of over 18 books. Sean is married to his high school sweetheart, Stephanie. They have three children and live in San Juan Capistrano, California.

ENDNOTES

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- 19 *Id.* at 7.

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Evidence that Demands a Congregation

ED STETZER

Anything worth having is something worth defending. We lock up our valuables in safes and behind doors because we value them and want to protect them. We teach our children not to cross the street without looking or talk to strangers because we value them and desire to protect them.

The Christian faith is valuable, too, so it logically follows that the Christian faith is also worth defending. Now, don't get defending the *faith* confused with defending *religious freedom*. While both are important conversations to have, a defense of the faith refers to the integrity of the gospel message itself, while the latter deals with the rights of Christians in a particular society to share that gospel and live as Christians with freedom. It is the former I have in view when I talk about defending the faith in this article.

In his first epistle, Peter commanded the church to prepare to defend the gospel: "In your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15 CSB).

The word "defense" used by Peter is the Greek word *apologia*, and the theological discipline of "apologetics" takes its name from this word. In that meaning of the word, apologetics is the "department of defense" for the Christian church.

When I think of apologetics, the idea of "evidence" immediately comes to mind. For example, in this issue of *The Christian Lawyer*, we have content from Sean McDowell, who updated his father's book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. Such an approach to apologetics is called an "evidentialist" approach because it works to defend the Christian faith with *evidence* of its truthfulness, often through the use of reason and logic, statistical probability, and other evidentiary forms of *apologia*. I'm thankful for this approach to apologetics and for those like the McDowells who have contributed to it. Works like *Evidence*, along with other well-known works like Lee Strobel's *The Case for Christ*, probably make evidential apologetics the best-known approach to apologetics in the popular Christian mind today.

Along with the evidentiary approach, there are other approaches beyond the scope of this brief article. You can learn and study more about these approaches in a unique cohort the



Talbot School of Theology is creating with Christian Legal Society. But my point here is there are different *kinds* of evidence. As a missiologist, I learned early in my study that the church *itself* can be evidence of the truth and beauty of the gospel. The church by its very nature defends the truth and offers evidence to the world that the gospel is true, good, and beautiful. The church can be an apologetic for the gospel.

Now, of course, the church is not the *only* apologetic for the gospel. For example, I've given Keller's *The Reason for God* to a woman I met on a plane because she wanted to consider his arguments—she had no connection to a church. I met a former atheist who studied scientific arguments against religion and concluded there is a God—again, outside of contact with a congregation. And I've walked with people who started considering Christianity because someone invited them into a Christian community that became the apologetic leading to conversion. Unfortunately, though, this doesn't happen as of-

ten as we might think or hope. So, if the Christian community is called to be an apologetic, we must determine *how* that community will become a “department of defense” for the gospel. I think it includes three things.

First, the church must be a community that cares.

Jesus himself told us the love of Christians for one another would be how the world would identify his followers (John 13:34-35). When the world sees the church loving and caring for one another and bearing one another’s burdens, the truth of the gospel becomes more credible. This communal excellence of God’s covenantal community is at the very heart of Israel’s missional calling in the First Testament—a call to be a “light to the nations” (Isaiah 49:6). As we will see in this issue, we must care for those outside of the church, but we must also care for our fellow members within the church. As Paul said, “Let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

Second, the church must be an apologetic for the gospel as a community that serves.

While the community that cares loves those within its membership, the community that serves also loves those outside its membership. As the church expands into the world, the good works of Christian communities display the reality of the gospel. Like the *amuse-bouche* in a multi-course meal, the good works of the church is meant to provoke the appetite of the world to the hope of the gospel. As Jesus commanded, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). In his letter to the Ephesians, after Paul reminds the church they are saved by grace through faith in Christ, he explicitly tells them we are “created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).

Third, the church must be an apologetic for the gospel as a community that shares.

The church cares for those within its walls and serves those beyond those walls in both actions and words. The church must intentionally evangelize, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with those who do not yet believe. The people of the church must view themselves as sent on a mission with Jesus into the

As the church expands into the world,
the good words of Christian communities
display the reality of the gospel.

places where they live, work, and play. I have devoted my life to helping Christians and churches follow Jesus on his mission to proclaim the gospel and make disciples, because a church that would be an apologetic for the gospel must share that gospel.

Jesus knew that the church has always had an opportunity to become a unique apologetic for the gospel. Just hours before his crucifixion, Jesus prayed for the church’s unity—“so that the world may believe” (John 17:21). Ultimately, whatever apologetic approach we employ, an effective apologetic is one that helps people find their way to the foot of the cross and the empty tomb in repentance and faith. Apologetics is not, as it is commonly misunderstood, a weapon to “best” the arguments of atheists, or even to prove the existence of God for the sake of possessing an intellectually superior argument to our neighbor. Instead, it provides evidence of the truth of the gospel and the glory of Jesus Christ, whose eternal reign the gospel announces. There are times when that evidence alone will suffice. But often the evidence demands a congregation to make the gospel clear.



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Why Apologetic Arguments Require Gentleness and Respect

MARY JO SHARP

“Jo, you ought to be a lawyer.” As a kid, I argued with my father about almost everything. I had a desire to know the reasoning for things I was told to do. The phrase “Because I said so” was throwing down a gauntlet, challenging me. Dad, probably exasperated with my attitude, jokingly suggested his choice for my career path. “While my life has not entailed the practice of law, the propensity for argumentation would prove invaluable to my faith, especially through the practice of apologetics.”¹

A Brief Background

I wasn’t raised in the church, and I grew up in a part of the country that doesn’t prize participation in religion. Most of what I knew about Christianity throughout childhood was gleaned from television and the movies, which was often a caricatured view of the historic Christian faith. I didn’t understand the purpose of religion, and I thought it was probably for those who needed it. Further, my skepticism was heightened by high-profile religious leaders who solicited charitable donations and then would concomitantly get caught in sex and money scandals.

My parents raised me with a love of the arts and sciences, as well as a love of nature. Toward my late teenage years, I began to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of human existence. Where does all this knowledge lead? What do these great works of art mean? Do we just live and die, and that’s ultimately all there is? I didn’t just want answers, I wanted answers with a significant shelf-life: substantial, meaningful, transcendent.

In my senior year of high school, my band director felt quite burdened for me. He wanted to share his faith in Christ with me but was afraid of losing his job as a result. Because he could not shake this burden, he gifted me a Bible and said, “When you go off to college, you’ll have hard questions. I hope you’ll turn to this.” My respect for him, especially for his intelligence and compassion as a teacher, led me to read that Bible. To my surprise, I discovered many of the initial answers I was seeking about ultimate meaning, purpose, and value.

During college, I placed my trust in Jesus as my Savior and was excited to start a new chapter of my life. Nevertheless, I was also quite nervous about becoming part of an unfamiliar com-

munity, one in which I had little experience. Overall, I hoped the church would be full of people who were attempting to live out a life of goodness, truth, and beauty, as per their professed commitment to God. If only I had known better. Instead, I found so many people who professed God as good and yet rarely held themselves accountable to the goodness they professed. I found unapologetic hypocrisy over and over. This pat-



tern of behavior in Christians caused me to not only question their belief in God, but also to question my own.

Still, at the bottom, was that little bit of lawyer in me who needed to find out if Christianity was true. I realized the behaviors of Christians could not be the litmus test for the truth of Christianity. This recognition set me on a path of discovering the arguments for and against God's existence. Time and again, on that journey, I ended up with God's existence as the best hypothesis for the evidence and reason available. I understood I could not walk away from Christianity and be intellectually honest with myself.

Yet, I also understood the behavior of Christians *did affect me*, including my beliefs. This circumstance is why I not only greatly value apologetic arguments, but also value the way they are given and lived out in an individual's life. One must not only be able to make excellent arguments for one's belief, but also must be able practice apologetics in a manner consistent with the goodness of God. The intersection of making good arguments and arguing well can be found in the very passage Christian apologists use as the command to practice apologetics.

An Apologist's Creed

There is a passage in 1 Peter 3 that apologists have long used as the "apologist's creed." The passage, in context, was given to a group of persecuted Christians. While there is speculation on what the exact persecution entailed, it is obvious from Peter's encouragement these Christians were fearful of speaking about their faith publicly. Peter says,

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:13-15 ESV).

Along with Peter's reassurances, he tells these believers to always be prepared to make a "defense" to anyone who asks. The word defense is *apologia*—apology—in the New Testament Greek. It is a transliterated word, which means we have taken this word from another language and made it part of our own. In this passage, *apologia* is about making a case for belief in Jesus as risen from the dead, the hope that is in you. Christian

Yet, when one's deeply held beliefs are on the line in a conversation, there is a tendency for defensiveness to creep in, allowing emotion to be in control of the mind.

apologists make a positive case for why they believe in Jesus, and we further handle objections to belief in Jesus. Importantly, though, the passage continues.

Peter also states *the manner in which* we are supposed to give arguments and why we are to do so:

[Y]et do it with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

Peter qualifies the way in which we give our defense by saying we are to do so with gentleness and respect. I frequently hear people say they believe apologetics is about being argumentative, an attitude Paul explicitly warns the followers of Christ that they must avoid (2 Timothy 2:22-25). Yet, when one's deeply held beliefs are on the line in a conversation, there is a tendency for defensiveness to creep in, allowing emotion to be in control of the mind. But defensiveness in the driver's seat of a conversation almost always ends poorly, especially for our witness to the truth of Jesus Christ. Peter continues in this section to qualify why we need to give our arguments with gentleness and respect. He states:

having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil (1 Peter 3:16-17).

Here, Peter includes we are to have a good conscience, one clear of offenses toward God and people. His concern is that we live in a manner consistent with God's goodness so we will not be found at fault when we are slandered. He reasons it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. This makes sense because it is expected that if you commit evil, you will suffer the consequences of that evil. What is unexpected is suffering for doing good.²

Peter places an important connection here with the character of the Savior. Jesus suffered for doing good even though He

was without sin, without blame. He was slandered, reviled, beaten, tortured, and put to death. Yet, in all of that, Jesus did not commit evil. As we engage with others, making our arguments and our defense, and do so without committing evil, it reflects the Savior we profess.³

Thinking back on what instigated my own journey of doubt—the patterns of hypocrisy in the lives of those who profess Christ—I realized the importance of our Christian temperament in apologetics. Anyone can make an argument, but Peter calls us to make arguments in a manner pleasing to God, reflecting the goodness of his own Son. Lastly, the Apostle Paul sums up this discussion when he says, “And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2).

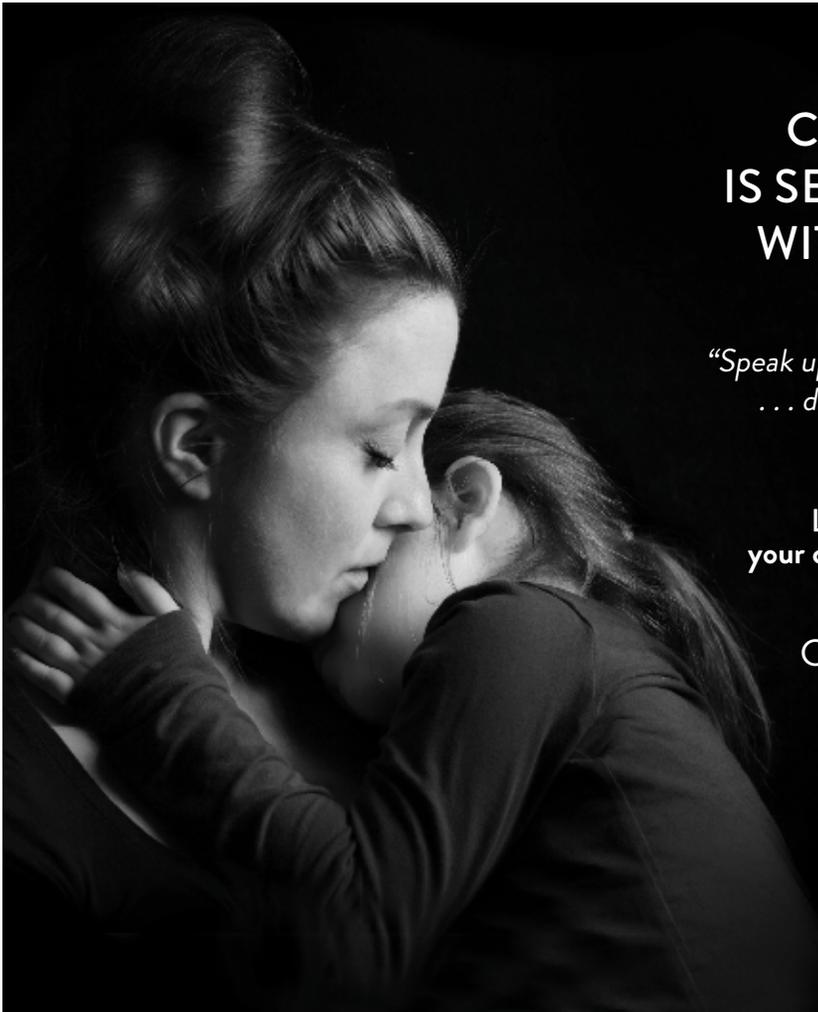


MARY JO SHARP is an assistant professor of apologetics at Houston Christian University and the founder and director of Confident Christianity Apologetics Ministry.

She is the author of *Why I Still Believe: A Former Atheist's Reckoning with the Bad Reputation Christians give a Good God*.

ENDNOTES

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Apologetics and the Juridical Impulse

BY CRAIG HAZEN



I had the good fortune and unusual opportunity to work through and complete a master's and a Ph.D. in religious studies in a department consistently ranked among the top programs in the world.¹ I was a young Christian at the time and chose to pursue religious studies because, first, I was just plain curious about what other major religions really taught and practiced. Second, I felt compelled to learn more about the religions I “left behind” in choosing Christianity. After all, maybe there was a lot more going on in these other religions like Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, but it had escaped me because I had not taken the time to dig deeply enough.

It didn't take long doing research in comparative religions in graduate school to discover there were several features of biblical Christianity that set it apart from the other world religious traditions—and in rather dramatic fashion, I might add. Not only that, but one of the features of Christianity that set it apart from the pack at the same time also gave Christianity a remarkable connection to the content and the practice of law.

The feature of Christianity I am claiming sets it apart in a compelling way from its rivals is this: *testability*. There are other important features that set Christianity apart, but I don't have

space to include those here.² What I mean by Christianity being *testable* is the Christian scriptures, creeds, and historic teachers make clear claims about God, Jesus Christ, humans, creation, sin, and salvation that can be carefully examined to determine if those claims are true. Testability here means once a claim is made you can then offer evidence for it—or you can offer evidence against it—and the evidence actually means something. That is, one can actually decide whether to follow or not to follow the Lord Jesus Christ based on a careful evaluation of the evidence in the case. I call this the “juridical impulse” in apologetics.

You might be asking yourself at this point, “Don't the other world religions make these kinds of testable claims?” Well, no, not really. And some religions are quite upfront in their rejection of such practices. Not only are they not interested in examining religion or religious claims through factual investigation, but they actually believe that doing so is a bizarre and misguided pathway to take if you are on a journey to find salvation or enlightenment.

Take Zen Buddhism for example. One of Zen's most famous teachers and popularizers, D.T. Suzuki, wrote that “irrationality” is first on the list of features describing Zen. By irrationality, Suzuki writes,

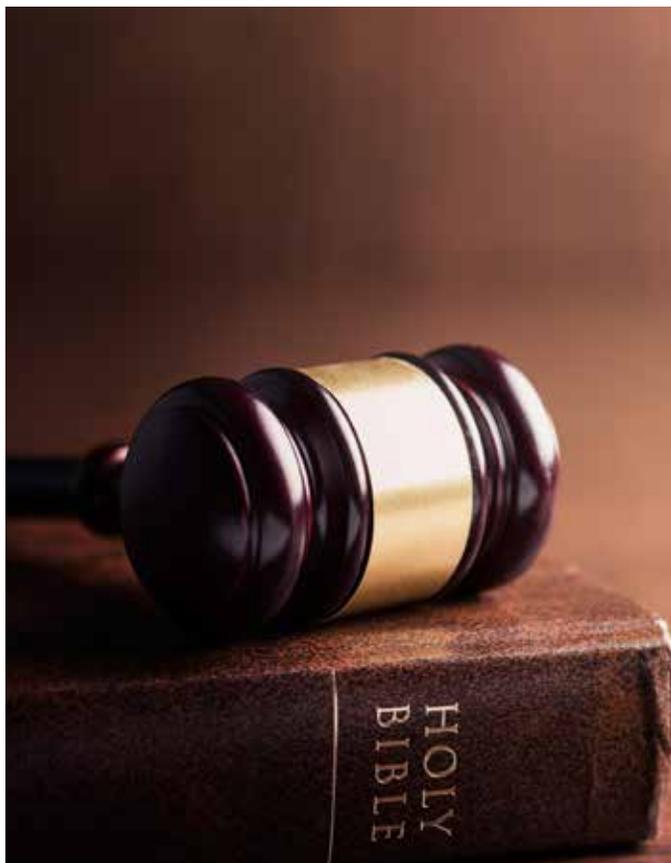
I mean that *satori* [Japanese for ‘enlightenment’] is not a conclusion to be reached by reasoning, and defies all intellectual determination. Those who have experienced it are always at a loss to explain it coherently or logically. . . . The *satori* experience is always characterized by irrationality, inexplicability, and incommunicability.³

Not all religions, of course, embrace the degree of disapproval toward rationality you will find in Zen Buddhism. But once you dig a little bit, and keep your eyes open for it, you are likely to find a rather strong magnetic attraction between most religions and the eschewing of reason in their thought and practice. And it is this baseline abjuring of rationality among religions—big and small—that contrasts dramatically with the strong Christian embrace of reason and its connection to law in both theory and practice.

Applying legal reasoning to help discover the truth of a matter is not perfect by any means, but it is one of the best methods the human race has on hand.

I illustrate this contrast by presenting to you some lines of a religious text—a text I would call one of the strangest passages in all religious literature. Hunt as you may, you are unlikely find a passage like this in the Bhagavad Gita, the Theravada Tripitaka, the Qur'an, the Book of Mormon, or the like. This strange passage comes from 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

In this unique passage, the Apostle Paul presents some ideas that highlight “testability” and are actually rather startling if you have mainstream religious sensibilities. To save space I won't present the entire passage here, although I hope you take a moment to read it on your own. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is doing some important doctrinal teaching for the Corinthian church on the general topic of resurrection of the dead. While doing this, he writes something that seems so out of place in the normal way religion and rationality relate in our minds today:



If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And *if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith*. . . . And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins (1 Corinthians 15:13-14 (NIV)).

It is a rare moment, indeed, when a major religious figure irrevocably connects the reality and the meaning of his burgeoning new religious tradition to a miracle he is claiming took place in public before hundreds of witnesses. And then he is bold enough—or crazy enough—to state with clarity that, if this supernatural event did not take place, this new religion is simply false, and its followers should move on to greener pastures.

Paul was not the only apostle to make such claims. Take a look at 2 Peter 1:16, 1 John 1:1, John 20:30-31, and many more. All of them were claiming to have seen, heard, and touched the risen Lord with their senses engaged and all of their rational faculties functioning.

With regard to the role of rationality in religion, Christianity promotes as different a situation from Zen Buddhism as any observer could imagine.

Testability, the feature of Christianity that sets it solidly apart from most other religions, is also the feature that makes it so attractive to practitioners and scholars of the law. I don't know if this has always been the case as I've not delved into religion or law literature in the Middle Ages, for instance. But I do know, starting in the mid-twentieth century, shelves of books were written that underscored what I am calling here the “juridical impulse”—or the connection between Christianity and legal reasoning. These include titles such as *Christianity on Trial, Evidence that Demands a Verdict, A Lawyer Examines the Bible, Leading Lawyers Look at the Resurrection, Set Forth Your Case, The Case for Christ*, and much more.

Perhaps the leading Christian scholar to explore the nexus of law and religion in our time is a theologian-lawyer-professor named John Warwick Montgomery. With ten earned degrees, and as author of more than fifty books, Montgomery is an undisputed polymath and hence more than qualified to help us understand the issue at hand. In his wonderful book titled *The Law above the Law*, Montgomery asks the question,

Why does this occur? Why are lawyers more inclined to do apologetics than engineers or dentists? One reason might be that the law plays a very large role in Scripture itself—not only through the Old Testament



covenant of law but also in the centrality of the trial of Jesus and Pauline legal imagery in the New Testament. . . . But an even more important reason lies in the very nature of the legal operation . . . the fundamental function of the legal profession is to seek justice by seeking truth. The lawyer endeavors to reduce societal conflicts by arbitrating conflicting truth claims. . . . To this end, legal science, as an outgrowth of millennia [sic] of court decisions, developed meticulous criteria for distinguishing factual truth from error. The preoccupation of the law with conons [sic] of evidence creates natural interest on the part of lawyers to investigate religious truth claims.⁴

Montgomery then goes on to give some of the fundamental principles of the law of evidence, which, if applied to the question of the factual truth of Christianity, “will yield most significant results,” such as the ancient documents rule, the parol evidence rule, the hearsay rule, and the cross-examination principle.⁵

Applying legal reasoning to help discover the truth of a matter is not perfect by any means, but it is one of the best methods the human race has on hand. Thinking we might be able to employ these methods to discover the truth about clearly stated religious claims is not a flight of fancy. To be sure, it might be a methodology that can break through the skepticism, pluralistic thinking, and disdain that characterizes our era.



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in science and religion at Biola University. He is the editor of *Philosophia Christi*, a philosophy journal. He is also the author of the monograph, *The Village Enlightenment in America*; the acclaimed apologetics novel *Five Sacred Crossings*; and dozens of articles and chapters in various books and journals. Craig is a recipient of the Fischer Award, the highest faculty honor at Biola, and has lectured across North America and Europe on key apologetics topics, including lectures on Capitol Hill and in the White House. He is a popular church and conference speaker and a former co-host of a national radio talk program.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The Religious Studies Graduate Program at the University of California, Santa Barbara.
- 2 For a description of five features that set Christianity apart from the other world religious traditions, see Craig Hazen, *Five Sacred Crossings* (Los Angeles: Contend Publishing Group, 2012).
- 3 Daisetz T. Suzuki, *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism: Selected from the Writings of Daisetz T. Suzuki*, ed. Bernard Phillips (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1962), 163.
- 4 John Warwick Montgomery, *The Law above the Law* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 85-87.
- 5 *Id.* at 87-89.



Sharing Jesus at Work: *Lots of Legal Room*

BY STEVE MCFARLAND

As followers of Jesus, our Lord has commissioned us with the privilege of sharing with a desperate world the greatest news ever heard: God is; God loves us; God's Son has redeemed us from sin and offered us life eternal.

Despite the advent of our remote workplaces, our co-workers, clients, fellow students, and opposing counsel need to hear—and see—the Gospel. So what are the current legal channel markers within which we navigate when sharing the Good News with those with whom we work?

1. We have both constitutional and statutory rights to free religious speech.

Many Christians today live in countries wherein they cannot freely share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But thanks be to God, that is not the case in the U.S. Our government (federal, state, and local) is constrained from outlawing evangelism by private citizens, *generally speaking*.

Both the Free Exercise and Free Speech Clauses protect religious speech—and that protection does not depend upon the popularity of the message with the government. As the Supreme Court summarized last year in its latest free religious expression case:

[T]he First Amendment protects an individual's right to speak his mind regardless of whether the government considers his speech sensible and well intentioned or deeply "misguided," [citation omitted] and likely to cause "anguish" or "incalculable grief," [citation omitted].¹

Neither can the government discriminate based on the viewpoint of our message:

Government actors may not discriminate against speakers based on viewpoint, even in places or under circumstances where people do not have a constitutional right to speak in the first place.²

Of course, the federal Constitution does not protect *any* message, *anywhere*, *anytime*. The government police power justifies limits on the time, place, and manner of delivery. As the high court has famously explained:

Expression, whether oral or written or symbolized by conduct, is subject to reasonable time, place, or manner restrictions. We have often noted that restrictions of this kind are valid, provided that they are justified *without reference to the content* of the regulated speech, that they are *narrowly tailored to serve a significant governmental interest*, and that they *leave open ample alternative channels* for communication of the information.³ (Emphasis supplied.)

In addition to the First Amendment of the federal Constitution, virtually every state constitution has both a free speech and a religious freedom guaranty, with varying interpretations by each state's courts. Sometimes, the state constitution gives even greater protection than the federal.⁴

Finally, federal employment law (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) and state employment statutes both protect and limit the speech of private and government workers. See parts 4 and 5, *infra*. Of course, both such statutes are subject to the federal and the respective state constitutions.

2. We have no *First Amendment right to talk about faith in either private or most government workplaces.*

Because it solely limits the government, not private employers, the First Amendment has little to say directly about evangelism in the private, non-government workplace. A private workplace is not a public forum; there is no First Amendment free speech right to talk about faith during work hours. This does not mean we have no freedom to share at work; it just means that we generally cannot claim an enforceable legal right to it, at least not based on the U.S. Constitution.

3. The First Amendment bar on establishment of religion only applies to government jobs and government-funded programs.

Though misleadingly referred to as “separation of church and state,” this first half of the Religion Clause of the First Amendment only applies to government workers and to those private contractors being paid with government funds. Neither federal nor state actors can promote or denigrate religion. That means

Last June, the Supreme Court unanimously “clarified” that Title VII affords religious employees a right (though limited) to have their religious beliefs and practices accommodated in both the private and government workplace.

that a public-facing government employee (e.g., USPS letter carrier) cannot, while on duty or in uniform, criticize another's faith (“Do you actually read this garbage devotional magazine, lady?”). Similarly, a government supervisor might violate the Establishment Clause by using his position of unequal power to proselytize his subordinates in the mailroom or a public customer seeking to renew his driver's license.

4. Federal employment discrimination law can limit witnessing at work.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids discrimination on the basis of an employee's (or job applicant's) religion. This means an employer cannot discipline or terminate you because she doesn't agree with your religious viewpoint. Neither can you leverage your power as a supervisor to force a subordinate to listen to your religious viewpoint or to accept your invitation to your church. Neither can he badger you with proselytizing comments. Severe or pervasive criticism of your beliefs and persistent urgings to convert can create a hostile work environment and support a claim of religious harassment—against both your persistent supervisor and (vicariously) your employer.

5. But Title VII can also protect your religious conversation at work during lunch or breaks.

Last June, the Supreme Court unanimously “clarified” that Title VII affords religious employees a right (though limited) to have their religious beliefs and practices accommodated in both the private and government workplace.⁵ According to Section 701j, an employer must accommodate an employee's request for his Sabbath day off unless the employer can show that would impose a substantial burden on the employer—a burden that is substantial in the overall context of the employer's business.

Presumably, a religious employee has a right to share religious testimony and Bible truths with peer co-workers during breaks.

Evangelism arguably fits Title VII's broad definition in section 701j of protected "religion": "all aspects of religious observance and practice."⁶

Conversely, the employer could prohibit private conversations—regardless of viewpoint—that disrupt employee relations and the work environment. Such a content-neutral rule would seem to avoid Title VII's ban on religious discrimination and also excuse the employer from accommodating those religious debates upon showing that it substantially and negatively affected morale and productivity.

Within these broad legal boundaries, you and I can engage in a whole lot of apologetics and Christian testimony in either the private or the government workplace. It might be said that the bigger damper on sharing one's faith is the reduced time we have interacting with others in our remote workplaces—and perhaps our reluctance to broach the subject.



STEVE MCFARLAND practiced employment, commercial and religious freedom litigation in Seattle; has directed the religious freedom and pro-life advocacy of Christian Legal Society (1991-99 and again currently); was the first executive director of the U.S.

Commission on International Religious Freedom, a federal agency; worked on prison reform at Prison Fellowship International and in the Office of the Deputy Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice; and served World Vision/USA as its chief legal officer (2009-23).

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- ¹ *303 Creative v Elenis*, 600 U.S. ___, slip op. at 8 (2023).
- ² *Holloman ex rel. Holloman v. Harland*, 370 F.3d 1252, 1280 (11th Cir. 2004). See also *Cook v. Gwinnett County Sch. Dist.*, 414 F.3d 1313, 1321 (11th Cir. 2005) ("even in a non-public forum, the law is clearly established that the state cannot engage in viewpoint discrimination").
- ³ *Clark v. Commun. for Nonviolence*, 468 U.S. 288, 293-94 (1984) (citing *City Council of Los Angeles v. Taxpayers for Vincent*, 466 U.S. 789 (1984)); *United States v. Grace*, 461 U.S. 171 (1983); *Perry Ed. Assn. v. Perry Local Educators' Assn.*, 460 U.S. 37, 45-46 (1983); *Heffron v. Int'l Soc'y for Krishna Consciousness, Inc.*, 452 U.S. 640, 647-648 (1981); *Virginia Pharmacy Bd. v. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council, Inc.*, 425 U.S. 748, 771 (1976); *Consolidated Edison Co. v. Public Serv. Comm'n of N.Y.*, 447 U.S. 530, 535 (1980).
- ⁴ Washington Constitution, Article 1, Section 5. "FREEDOM OF SPEECH. Every person may freely speak, write and publish on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right." Art. 1 Section 11 "RELIGIOUS FREEDOM - Absolute freedom of conscience in all matters of religious sentiment, belief and worship, shall be guaranteed to every individual, and no one shall be molested or disturbed in person or property on account of religion."
- ⁵ *Groff v. DeJoy*, 600 U.S. 447 (2023).
- ⁶ 42 U.S.C. 2000e-(j).





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Pursuing Justice

Commitment Over Passion

BY ANNIE BECKER

What makes you talk with your hands? What is it that gets you fired up, lights up your eyes, and makes you want to talk longer than the person across from you may want to listen? This is quite possibly my favorite question to ask. There is so much delight to be discovered in hearing the answers. I've learned from people about gardening, English Premier League football, kayaking, and opera—all reflecting an infinitely creative Creator.

For me, the answers have ranged from hobbies—Kansas Jayhawk basketball—to considerations of calling—first education policy, then the inequities in our legal system. As I began to discern where the things that made *me* talk with my hands intersected with God's redeeming work in the world, people would tell me I was “so passionate.” When I pursued legal aid work, that turned to “having such a heart for justice.”

But pursuing justice—living in right relationship with God and others—for the vulnerable is not primarily a matter of passion at all. It is a matter of walking faithfully in response to what God has done.

Paul tells us the following in Ephesians 2:8-10 (NASB):

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are

His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

There is a beautiful both/and here. We are fundamentally saved by grace through faith in Jesus and not good works. And, as we are created anew in Christ, we are actually created in Him *for good works!* Note the primary actor throughout is God: He saves, He creates, and He prepares those works. We simply respond by walking in them.

In a world where the shattering of shalom surrounds us, discerning how and what to walk in can be overwhelming. As we walk by the Spirit, “good works” can describe an innumerable variety of acts of kindness, generosity, love, and restoration that cross our paths on a daily basis. Yet it is a worthwhile endeavor to prayerfully discern what path the Lord may have us pursue with our finite time and resources.

I would like to offer three filters to help us consider how we may do so: commitment, context, and creation.

1. Commitment

As new creations in Christ, our life is defined by our commitment to Him. We are committed to Him and being like Him as revealed

in His Word—and we see that He is the God who not only *loves* justice but actually calls Himself a God of justice (Psalm 11:7; Isaiah 30:18-19). We are committed to living righteously by doing what He has called us to do, and we see repeatedly in His Word that He calls us to love and to practice justice as well (Zechariah 7:9; Micah 6:8). These commands—even the specific commands to defend the oppressed, take up the cause of the orphan, and plead the case of the widow—apply to all Christians (Isaiah 1:17).

For the Christian, there should be no “special heart for justice.” There is only a transformed heart committed to following the Lord.

2. Context

While all Christians share a commitment to the Lord and His Word, we then must turn to our context to see how we each may play this out in our own world. How has God specifically equipped you to meet specific cracks in shalom around you? If you are reading this, there’s a high chance you hold a law license. That is a major piece of context. Our justice system is designed such that (in the vast majority of cases) only licensed attorneys may speak to a judge on behalf of others. And while you may know a lot of lawyers as a lawyer yourself, don’t let your circles fool you. Relatively few people fall under this category. According to the American Bar Association, there are 4 U.S. lawyers for every 1,000 residents.¹ When it comes to lawyers dedicated to civil legal aid matters, this ratio falls to just 3 civil legal aid attorneys for every 10,000 people living below the federal poverty line.²

Why do we care about this? Let’s take an example of someone without significant financial resources in your community facing an unlawful eviction by a well-resourced and represented landlord. Their legal rights as tenants are being violated, and their economic status means they may not have adequate representation to fix the situation. That individual is experiencing injustice. Now, picture your church body. Every person in your church is called to, on some level, be moved by the plight of that individual. While all members of the church are called to advocate, only the lawyers in the body have the ability to walk into a courtroom, actually open their mouths on behalf of that tenant, and secure a just outcome.

Unique ability comes with unique responsibility. There are endless ways to join God’s redemptive work. But I plead with you, Christian attorney, to seriously consider how your law license may shape the good works God prepared beforehand for you to walk in.

3. Creation

Now, and only now, we turn to ask how God has wired us individually. It is beautiful thing that He has given us different gifts and made us unique, vital parts of His body (1 Corinthians 12:14-26). You may thrive in the courtroom, or you may thrive sitting in your office working on a brief. This matters! God is glorified as we examine how He equipped and created us to specifically express our shared commitment to His Word.

My concern, however, is if we start first with the ways we are wired, we actually end up talking a lot more about passion than calling. When pursuing justice for the poor and vulnerable becomes a passion, we make it a hobby for some, rather than a commitment that all Christians are called to make.

Additionally, if our motivation is our passion, we simply won’t last. We are finite and fickle. Our fire will fade. All too quickly, our real motivations for gratitude, personal impact, or even social change will be exposed as we crash against systems, clients, and colleagues that don’t fit our convenient picture of what the work should look like. We need something more sustaining.

Even here, exhale. It is the Lord who sustains and, through Jesus, covers our inevitably faltering commitment. This frees us. May we use our freedom to walk toward Jesus and the things He is committed to. We may never be someone who talks with their hands about justice issues, but it does not matter. We will open our mouths and speak up anyway. For it is not a matter of passion, but a matter of our commitment to the Lord.



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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Demographics, American Bar Association Profile of the Legal Profession, <https://www.abalegalprofile.com/demographics.html#:~:text=Nationwide%2C%20there%20are%20nearly%204,more%20than%20the%20national%20average> (last accessed March 8, 2024).
- ² *What is Access to Justice?: Protecting Rights and Securing Basic Needs*, National Center for Access to Justice, <https://ncaj.org/what-access-justice> (last accessed March 8, 2024).



Chaos

BY MICHELLE WILLIAMS

Imagine the chaotic scene. A woman is physically dragged by a group of male religious leaders to where a crowd has gathered and is being instructed by a teacher. She keeps her eyes downcast and is roughly thrown at the feet of the man teaching the crowd. In the din of all the noise, she hears her accusers tell this teacher she has been caught in an act of adultery. Fleeting thoughts go through her mind, “Why have they not brought the man who was caught in the act with me? Why am I alone? Why am I the only one accused?” Then she hears the question, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?” (John 8:5 NLT). The woman is terrified to the point that she is sure the men can hear her heart pounding, see her trembling and shaking. She dares not look up at the teacher, keeping her head down, seeing only his feet. What is he doing? He is squatting, and he is writing something in the dirt with his finger but does not speak. The religious leaders get louder and demand an answer. She dares not look up but notices large stones in the hands of her accusers and the crowd, stones that are meant to pummel her body until death takes her. She begins to silently weep, not able to stop her tears as shudders shake her frame. She sees the teacher rise and tightens her body into a ball as she expects to feel the stones strike at any moment. Fear and dread fill her being. The faces of those she loves filter through her mind. The teacher speaks. Stones begin to fall at the feet of those who had carried them as she hears the teacher’s words, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first

stone!” (John 8:7b). Then she notices the teacher has stooped and is writing in the sand again. Wait! She hears the voices of the riotous crowd go silent as they walk away. How can this be? She can’t believe what has happened, yet her eyes remain downcast, terrified of what will happen next. Will he stone her himself? There is silence, stillness, calm, peace. Then she hears him address her, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” (John 8:10). With a trembling voice she responds, “No, Lord.” Then he speaks the words she will never forget and that change her forever. “Neither do I. Go and sin no more” (John 8:11). She stands and looks into the eyes of the one who saved her from a certain death, this man they call Jesus of Nazareth. For the first time, in that moment, she is seen and known completely.

We don’t know exactly how this woman responded because scripture does not share that with us, but the dramatization above is plausible. I think it is safe to say this situation was chaotic for her.

What is chaos? Merriam-Webster defines “chaos” as “A. a state of utter confusion; B. a confused mass or mixture; C. a state of things in which chance is supreme especially the confused unorganized state of primordial matter before the creation of distinct forms.”¹ Strong’s Concordance of the Bible gives us the Hebrew word for “chaos” as “tohuw,” pronounced “to-hoo,” from an unused root meaning to lie waste, a desolation of surface, adverb-in vain, confusion, empty place, without form,

nothing, nought, vain, vanity, waste, wilderness.² The most prominent concept of chaos is found in Genesis 1:2: “The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.” The earth was formless and empty, and darkness (chaos) covered the deep waters. Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light (Genesis 1:3). Light dispels darkness and disrupts chaos.

Headlines today don’t need to tell us our world is chaotic. There is a frenetic energy to our social media-tech driven society. Our world is always “on” and seemingly never stops. This frenzied attempt to beat deadlines and meet tasks is not sustainable and can result in disordered thoughts and activities.

How does this chaotic pace affect those in the field of law? In the ABA’s 2018 National Task Report on Lawyer Wellbeing, 26 to 38 percent of lawyers qualified as “problem drinkers,” 28 percent of lawyers reported struggling with depression, and 19 percent reported struggling with anxiety.³ In 2014, a law student wellbeing survey was conducted with 15 law schools participating and findings reported rampant alcohol and drug abuse, depression, and anxiety disorders.⁴ In recent years, there have been a plethora of studies published highlighting the downside of a media-driven society on mental health and social trends.

How do we address the chaos, frenetic energy, and society’s insatiable appetite for constant productivity while simultaneously attending to the glaring mental health needs of those in the profession of law? We look back to the beginning. On the sixth day, God created mankind in His image, and He blessed them and told them to govern and reign over the earth. The seventh day we read God rested. The first day for Adam and Eve after being created was a day of rest, not a day of tending to the garden! In Deuteronomy 5, we read how Moses functioned as an intermediary between God and man and spoke the words given to him for the people. One of those commands was to keep the Sabbath day holy. I recently attended a conference where I heard theologian Dr. A.J. Swoboda speak.⁵ Dr. Swoboda, referencing Exodus 20:1, stressed that the law comes after the grace of God. Dr. Swoboda noted he has seen people fired for breaking the other nine commandments, but if people break the Sabbath command, they get a raise instead.⁶ Let’s get back to the basics, to the plan ordered by our Creator.

There is no historical figure or person that ever had to do as much as Christ did, all in a span of three years. Yet he never

seemed rushed or showed disquiet—seeing each interruption as an opportunity instead. He demonstrated how to walk in peace while carrying the weight of the world on His shoulders. He treated prayer, rest, and abiding with the Father as of the utmost importance, teaching this to His disciples.

We have learned from one garden experience—in the Garden of Eden—now let’s learn from another. On the night Jesus was betrayed, the Garden of Gethsemane became a place of chaos as soldiers came to arrest him. Peter even cut off the ear of one soldier. Jesus rebuked Peter and healed the ear. Even on the night of his betrayal, Jesus brought peace into the chaos. Prior to this scene, we see Him agonizing in prayer and communion with the Father, where He obtained the peace needed for His mission. Let us do the same. Take the Sabbath and abide with the Father, growing refreshed and restored. Through the Law Student Ministries Wellness program, we will address ways and methods to improve our mental health. But first, let us start with a proper foundation in God as evinced in the Creation narrative.



MICHELLE WILLIAMS is currently the coordinator for Law Student Ministries. She graduated *summa cum laude* from Longwood University with a B.S. in therapeutic recreation and minor in abnormal psychology. In her career, Michelle has worked as a recreation therapist in various settings. Her greatest honor is being a mom of two and Nanna. And her greatest passions are serving our Lord and justice and riding her horse.

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- 1 Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Chaos. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved February 2024, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chaos>.
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- 5 Dr. A.J. Swoboda (Ph.D., Birmingham) is an associate professor of Bible, Theology, and World Christianity at Bushnell University. Dr. Swoboda leads a Doctor of Ministry program around spiritual formation and soul care at Friends University. He has taught at Multnomah University, London School of Theology, LIFE Pacific, and Southeastern University.
- 6 Swoboda Speech, general session at Youth for Christ National Conference, February 1, 2024.



Rest and Retreat

BY LAKUITA BITTLE

As attorneys, we have very busy lives filled with constant pressures, demanding clients, dire situations, intense deadlines and so much more. That does not even account for personal and ministry obligations and other things that vie for our attention. However, there are common themes which resonate with attorneys and law students alike. We do not do a good job of taking care of ourselves the way we should. We live a fast-paced lifestyle. For these reasons and more, attorneys and law students alike must carve out times for retreats.

CLS held five regional retreats this past spring. These retreats were filled with great fellowship and deep and meaningful conversations and sprinkled with bursts of fun throughout the weekend. Without your attendance and support, these weekends would not be possible! Many of you sacrificed your time and resources or shifted around family obligations and work schedules to attend. It is my prayer you will continue to practice this spiritual principle throughout the remainder of the year.

What is a retreat? First of all, retreat is a place for relaxation, rest, and relief. A spiritual retreat is an opportunity to separate ourselves from the busyness of life and take the opportunity to come away with God. Merriam-Webster has one definition of retreat that fits us very well at CLS. It is “a period of group withdrawal for prayer, meditation, study, or instruction under a director.”¹ As the director of Attorney Ministries at CLS, I have the honor and privilege to and work alongside

attorney chapters across the nation to host these retreats each spring for Christian attorneys and law students. I learn so much from each of you, including why it is key we learn to rest and retreat.

Why should we retreat? I want to take this moment in the article to reflect on some things I have learned concerning why it is so important to have moments of rest and relaxation. During our CLS Southwest Regional Retreat, I had moments where I really felt like I was rested. For some reason, I just felt at such peace during this retreat. And I even found moments of down time to explore the area and relax more. And after the retreat ended, I had a beautiful time of reflection and relief. I will admit I absolutely need to do this more. Of course, as you can imagine, planning and hosting our spring retreats are not a retreat by any stretch of the imagination for me; however, I really enjoy hosting all of the retreats mainly because I realize attorneys and law students need some down time. These weekends create opportunities to decompress in a safe environment, feel replenished by dynamic speakers, and make meaningful connections within our CLS community.

Mark 6:31 (NIV) says, “Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.’” Doesn’t that sound like how some of us are within the legal profession? We can go through each day work-

ing so hard that we do not make time to rest or relax throughout the week. We may even forget to eat. It is hard to squeeze in the time. A retreat seems like a nice idea to just get away or unwind. But even when we get away, we're still working rather than relaxing. I have realized lately there are so many scriptural references that demonstrate the necessity of retreating from our daily hustle and busyness. If we look closely at passages in the Bible, we will see that even Jesus retreated.

While each CLS Regional Retreat had its own specialized theme, varying activities and different speakers, there were many common threads that I noticed amongst all five of them. There was a hunger and desperation from each attendee to really experience the presence of God. I truly believe this desire was fulfilled for each person that attended the retreat, including myself. Isn't that what a retreat is all about?

While it is important to have times of solitude (as we learned at the CLS Northeast Retreat), it is also important to be around other believers. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 says we should "encourage one another and build one another up." Hebrews 10:25 admonishes us to not neglect getting together as a habit so that we can encourage one another. If you missed the spring retreat in your area, I hope you will join us next year! If you were able to join us, I hope you will see yourself in the photos placed within this edition of the magazine.

Either way, I want to encourage you to continue to find times to relax, rest, and retreat. If you already implement these spiritual principles that is amazing! I hope we can all look for wholesome fellowship where you can join groups for prayer and meditation and pause your daily commitments. It does not have to just be at our annual spring retreats for CLS. You can find retreats for women, men, marriage, or so many other foci all throughout the year. It is so important you find those times. I will certainly be doing the same!



LAKUITA BITTLE, the director of CLS' Attorney Ministries, oversees CLS membership and provides support to CLS attorney chapters nationwide. Prior to joining CLS in March 2021, Lakuita worked in Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office for over five years, most recently as a prosecutor in the Major Crimes Unit. She is actively involved in her family, community, church, and serves on a local nonprofit board, Kadash CDC.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Retreat. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved May 2024, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/retreat>.



CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY

Tune In

Saturdays at 2:30 PM Eastern 11:30 AM Pacific





CLS attorney chapters provide the opportunity for regular fellowship activity, mentorship, resources, and so much more. Each of our chapters listed below holds monthly or regular meetings that will help you integrate your faith and the practice of law while establishing healthy relationships with Christian attorneys in your community. To learn more about your local chapter or for current contact information, visit our website at AttorneyMinistries.org.

ALABAMA

CLS Birmingham
CLS Mobile

ARIZONA

CLS Phoenix
CLS Tucson

CALIFORNIA

CLS Inland Empire
CLS Los Angeles
CLS Orange County
CLS Sacramento
CLS San Diego
CLS San Fernando Valley
CLS San Francisco
CLS West L.A.

COLORADO

CLS Colorado Springs
CLS Denver

CONNECTICUT

See New England

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CLS DC Metro

FLORIDA

CLS Orlando
CLS Jacksonville
CLS Tallahassee
CLS West Palm Beach

GEORGIA

CLS Atlanta

HAWAII

CLS Hawaii

ILLINOIS

CLS Chicago

INDIANA

CLS Indianapolis

KANSAS

CLS Topeka
CLS Wichita

LOUISIANA

CLS New Orleans

MAINE

See New England

MARYLAND

CLS Baltimore

MASSACHUSETTS

CLS Boston
See New England

MINNESOTA

CLS Minnesota

MISSISSIPPI

CLS Central Mississippi

MISSOURI

CLS Kansas City
CLS Springfield
CLS St. Louis

NEBRASKA

CLS Lincoln
CLS Nevada
CLS Las Vegas

NEW ENGLAND

CLS New England

NEW HAMPSHIRE

See New England

NEW JERSEY

CLS Cape May County

NEW YORK

CLS Central New York
CLS New York City
CLS Albany

NORTH CAROLINA

CLS Wake County

OHIO

CLS Northeast Ohio
CLS Central Ohio

OKLAHOMA

CLS Oklahoma City

OREGON

CLS Oregon

PENNSYLVANIA

CLS Philadelphia
CLS Western Pennsylvania

SOUTH CAROLINA

CLS Greenville
CLS Tennessee
CLS Chattanooga
CLS Memphis
CLS Nashville

TEXAS

CLS Austin
CLS Dallas
CLS Houston
CLS San Antonio
CLS Williamson County

VERMONT

See New England

VIRGINIA

CLS Leesburg
CLS Richmond
CLS Virginia Beach

WASHINGTON

CLS Seattle

WISCONSIN

CLS Madison

*View complete chapter information
by scanning the code below:*





2024 REGIONAL RETREATS

This year, CLS held regional retreats in five different areas across the country: the Midwest, Southeast, Northwest, Southwest, and Northeast regions. These annual spring retreats provided hundreds of Christian attorneys and law students with an opportunity to experience God in new ways and with new connections. We appreciate each of you helping to make the retreats a huge success! If you were unable to attend, we hope to see you next year! If you're interested in having a retreat in your area, please do not hesitate to reach out to Lakuita Bittle, director of Attorney Ministries, via email at lbittle@clsnet.org.

Below are the group photos from our 2024 retreats.



Midwest
Regional
Retreat
Lake Geneva,
WI (February
2024)

*Photo Credit:
Darcy Dekker*

Southeast
Regional
Retreat
Chattanooga,
TN (February
2024)

*Photo Credit:
Christina Bradford*





Southwest
Regional
Retreat
San Diego, CA
(March 2024)

*Photo Credit:
Lakuita Bittle*



Northeast
Regional
Retreat
Southbury,
CT (April
2024)

*Photo Credit:
Lakuita Bittle*



Northwest
Regional
Retreat
Cannon
Beach, OR
(April 2024)

*Photo Credit:
Lakuita Bittle*



Connect with a Christian Legal Aid clinic in your community.

ALABAMA

Montgomery
Faulkner University Law
School Legal Clinics

ARIZONA

Tucson
Christian Legal Society of Tucson
Christian Legal Aid Program

CALIFORNIA

Auburn
3R Ministries

Los Angeles
Pepperdine University Legal Aid Clinic

Los Angeles Metro Area
Christian Legal Aid of Los Angeles

Oakland
Pope Francis Legal Clinic

Sacramento
Love & Wisdom (LAW) Clinic

San Diego Metro Area
San Diego Christian Legal Aid

Santa Ana
Christian Legal Aid of Orange County
Trinity Law Clinic Mobile Legal Clinic

COLORADO

Denver
Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center

Denver Metro
Christian Legal Clinic of Metro
Denver Triage Legal Clinics

- Denver Rescue Mission Clinic
- Broomfield FISH Clinic
- Samaritan House Clinic
- Salvation Army Clinic
- Providence Network Clinic
- More Life Center Clinic
- Life Center Clinic
- SECOR Clinic
- The Rising Church Clinic
- Dry Bones Clinic
- Arvada Covenant Church

Fort Collins
Serve 6.8 Legal Clinic

Loveland
House of Neighborly Services Clinic

DELAWARE

Wilmington
Sunday Breakfast Mission Legal Aid Clinic

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Christian Legal Aid of the District of
Columbia

- Central Union Mission
- DC Dream Center

FLORIDA

Jacksonville
CLS Pro Bono Project

Jacksonville Metro Area
Jericho Road Legal Service Ministry

Miami
City on a Hill Legal Ministry

ILLINOIS

Chicago
Cabrini Green Legal Aid

INDIANA

Indianapolis Metro Area
Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic

KANSAS

Wichita
Wichita Christian Legal Aid

KENTUCKY

Lexington
Merciful Justice Legal Clinic

Louisville
Access Justice

LOUISIANA

Shreveport
Christian Legal Aid of North Louisiana

MARYLAND

Baltimore
Good Samaritan Advocates

- City of Refuge

Montgomery County
Good Samaritan Advocates

- Covenant Life Church
- Montgomery County
Correctional Facility
- The Salvation Army Center

MICHIGAN

Detroit Metro Area
Christian Legal Aid of Southeast Michigan

Detroit
The Joseph Project

Grand Rapids
West Michigan Christian Legal Aid

Kalamazoo
Christian Legal Aid of Southwest Michigan

Lansing
Christian Legal Aid of Lansing

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis
Park Avenue Walk-in Legal Clinic

Twin Cities
Twin Cities Christian Legal Aid

MISSISSIPPI

Jackson
Mission First Legal Aid Office

MISSOURI

St. Louis Metro Area
New Covenant Legal Services

NEW JERSEY

Newark Metro
Immigrant Hope

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque
New Mexico Christian Legal Aid

Las Cruces
Catholic Charities of Southern New Mexico

NEW YORK

New York City
Open Hands Legal Services, Inc.

NORTH CAROLINA

Durham
Justice Matters

Greensboro
Wilberforce Center for Justice
and Human Rights

Raleigh
Campbell Community Law Clinic

OHIO

Cleveland
Scranton Road Legal Clinic

Columbus Metro (Westerville)
Vineyard Immigration Counseling Service

Richland County
Richland County Legal Aid

Toledo
Christian Legal Collaborative

Delaware
Delaware Dream Center

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma City Metro
Trinity Legal Clinic

- Crossings Community Center
- Cross and Crown Mission
- City Rescue Mission

- Living Faith Ministry
- OKC First Church of the Nazarene
- Salvation Army—Norman

Tulsa
Tulsa University College of Law
CLS Christian Legal Aid Clinic

OREGON

Portland
Union Gospel Mission of Portland
Christian Legal Aid Clinic

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia
Christian Legal Clinics of Philadelphia

- West Philadelphia Legal Clinic
- Hunting Park Legal Clinic
- South Philadelphia Legal Clinic
- Chester Legal Clinic
- Germantown Legal Clinic
- Kensington Legal Clinic
- Chosen 300 Legal Clinic
- North Philadelphia Legal Clinic

Pittsburgh
Christian Legal Aid of Pittsburgh

TENNESSEE

Nashville Metro
Compassionate Counsel

TEXAS

Dallas
Revive Justice

Houston
Restoring Justice

Houston Metro (Cypress)
Houston Legal Aid Center

Houston Metro (The Woodlands)
Community Christian Legal Aid

VIRGINIA

Arlington
Restoration Immigration Legal Aid

Northern Virginia
Good Samaritan Advocates

- Columbia Baptist Church
- Reston Bible Church
- The Lamb Center

WASHINGTON

Seattle
Open Door Legal Services

Spokane
Union Gospel Mission of Spokane
Christian Legal Aid Clinic

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee
JC Legal Resources Center Inc.

INTERNATIONAL

Toronto, Canada
CCM Toronto Legal Clinic

**For contact information and other details for the Christian Legal Aid clinics,
view the full clinic directory at ChristianLegalAid.org.**



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Apologetics!

No, I am not saying “I’m sorry” to anyone though I probably should. Instead, “apologetics” is the focus of this article of *The Christian Lawyer* magazine.

The word “apologetics” is itself strange to me. To be frank, I thought it was called that because someone in the second century thought all of the appropriately descriptive terms had already been taken: words like “truth,” “gospel,” “evidence,” etc. It was my grandson, Jay, who set me straight. He said the word comes from the Greek word “ἀπολογία” (or apologia), which roughly translates to “speaking in defense.”

Jay, who is a student at Regent University, told me the concept is directly biblical. He pointed me to 1 Peter 3:15(b) (NLT): “And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.”

Jay also explained that Christian apologetics can be broken into three overarching fields: scientific, historical, and logical reasoning. Scientific apologetics uses scientific and empirical evidence to prove events like the flood in Genesis. Historical apologetics can be used to prove both events in the Bible and the accuracy of translations over time.

Finally, logical apologetics focuses on finding reasoning for one’s faith and constructing arguments to respond to questions.

In addition to being prepared, 1 Peter 3:16 commands us to “do this in a gentle and respectful way.” We are expected to not just prepare for defense, but also to gently and respectfully speak to others on these grounds. Romans 10:17 instructs, “So faith comes from hearing, that is, the Good News about Christ.” We need more than preparation; we need to act!

For good books on apologetics, Jay and I recommend the following out of our own library:

Case for Christ by Lee Strobel

Can We Trust the Gospels by Peter J. Williams

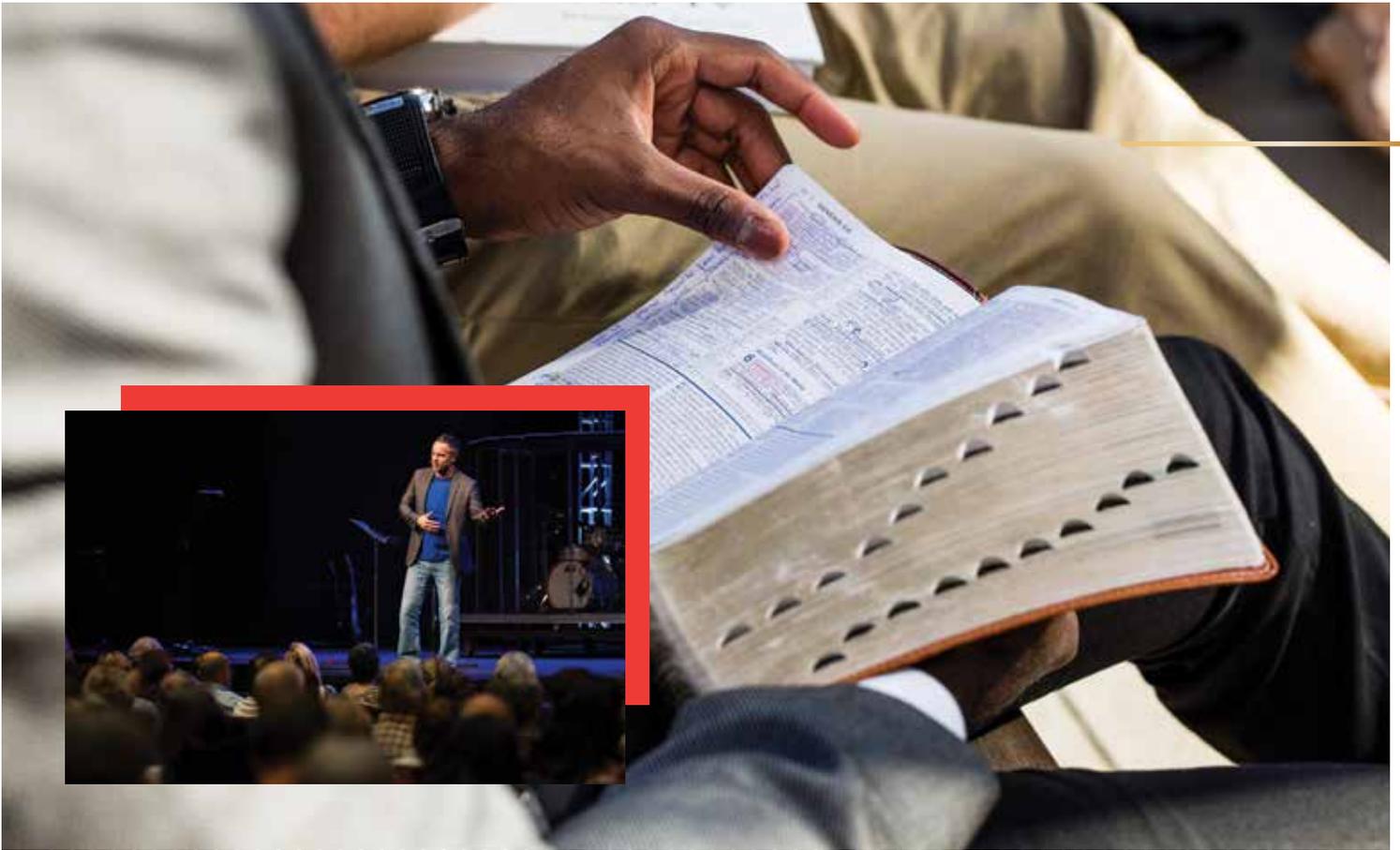
Evidence Demands a Verdict by Josh and Sean McDowell

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

Faith & Reason Made Simple by Rick McGough



JEFFREY S. FOWLER
President & Chairman of
the Board



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW YOUR ABILITY TO MAKE A CASE CAN BE HONED FOR GOSPEL IMPACT?

CLS and the Talbot School of Theology at Biola University have joined together to offer CLS members a **master's degree in Christian apologetics**. This program will stretch you as you explore evolution and the reliability of Scripture, learn how to respond to the challenges of evil and suffering, and so much more!

Learn in community with CLS colleagues, both in-person and online, and come away with a secure foundation of faith, a compassionate heart, and a mind prepared to answer gospel questions with confidence and authenticity.

Join the first CLS cohort to get a master's degree in apologetics from Biola University. It will be much more than a degree; the training will be for a lifetime.



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