



The Ethics of Apologetics

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Context

a) The nature of apologetics § Criticism of alternatives

§ Response to objections and questions from culture and philosophies of the day

§ Search for common ground/shared criteria

§ Present own case- mission and evangelism

b) Rejection of apologetics § In theory - Barth - undermines divine revelation

§ In practice - Church omits

§ The Morality of Apologetics

1. The Morality of Concerns – 1 Cor.9.16. 'Woe to me, if I do not preach the gospel § Concern for the lost- the reality of a lost eternity

§ Concern because we shall answer before the judgement seat of God. Rom. 14.11-12

§ Concern to obey Christ. Matt. 28 .18-20

§ Concern to imitate Christ. 1 John 2. 6, Phil 2.5-6.

§ Concern to imitate NT methods 1 Cor.11.1.

§ Concern to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading Acts 8. 26-29, 16.7

2. The Morality of Truth

a) Concern to rebut the lies of Relativism § It is self-contradictory

§ It is inaccurate

§ It absolutises one view of truth

b) Concern for proper tests of truth § Coherence theory of truth

§ Correspondence with reality

§ Pragmatic test of truth- transforming.

c) Concern to resist subjecting Christian truth

to false standards

d) Concern to reject control of theological thought by some current philosophy/ideology

e) Concern to have confidence in Truth.- It shall make you free John 8.32

3. The Morality of Persons and Relationships

a) Concern for the integrity of ourselves § What we believe and why

b) Concern for the integrity of others § Give respect

§ Rationality

§ Holistic

§ Not paternalistic

c) Concern for the freedom and autonomy of others § The rich young ruler. Luke 18.18

d) Concern for the culture of others- human identity v. inhuman division

e) Concern for the destiny of others.

4. The Morality of Methodology

a) Concern to do justice to the nature of Gospel Truth

b) Concern to avoid commercialisation of the Gospel § The success motif

§ Selling not sharing/proclaiming

§ Quantity of fruit rather than quality.

§ Faithfulness

c) Concern for the wrong kind of consensus- lowest common denominator

d) Concern for holism § Not separate personal from communal

§ Not separate private from social.

e) Concern for plurality- variety is God's gift and human reality

f) Concern for faith- not absolute certainty N.B. early Church § Content/context

g) Concern for a proper understanding of tolerance § Not intolerance nor extremism

§ Open minded beware of

§ Empty minds

h) Concern for appropriate methods § No force or violence

§ No manipulation of the truth

§ No conscious omission

§ No false emphasis or cheap grace

§ Whole truth - cross and crown

§ No blurring of the differences/ distinctives

- § No surrender or false modification
- § No over-simplification
- § No false accommodation
- § No ghetto retreat

5. The Morality of Distinctiveness

§ Beliefs

§ Life Style

§ Authority of Scripture- Inspiration, Interpretation and Application

§ Authority in the Church

§ Authority of Transformed lives and communities

§ Authority of Transforming lives and communities

§ Integration of public and private

§ A disciplined and disciplining community