

DANGER

The Essence of Apologetics - Part 1 What is it?

Os Guinness

Dr Os Guinness presents a four part introduction to the essence of apologetics. Although these talks were given some years ago, they contain a timeless explanation of apologetics.

In Part 1, Dr Guinness considers reasons that some people are wary of apologetics and highlights some of the limitations that can apply to apologetics. As we listen, it is worth considering to what extent these criticisms and limitations of apologetics apply to our own application of it.

Part 1: what is the essence of apologetics?

Part 2: a Biblical basis for the essence of apologetics

Part 3: How to communicate in apologetics

Part 4: Persuading the hard-hearted

A few notes and quotes from the talk:

The conservative and liberal responses to apologetics:

"Don't persuade, proclaim!"

"Don't defend, dialogue!"

Some limitations of apologetics § Much apologetics is limited in appealing only to the open and the interested. What about the other 95%?

§ Much apologetics is limited in appealing only to the needy.

§ Much apologetics is limited in appealing only to those with a similar worldview to us.

§ Much apologetics is limited in appealing only to the rational, literate, abstract thinker.

§ Much apologetics remain within Christian circles and never makes it's way into the world.

"... to transcend these limitations, we're going to have to develop an apologetics which is flexible enough to communicate to anyone at any level of consciousness, any religion or worldview, of any nationality or language or whatever. In other words, the tough thing in modern apologetics will be to develop a persuasive cross-contextual communication. That's what the best apologetics always was in the past – and is in the Scriptures. It's what the modern situation calls for and what some of the best modern theory points towards."

"How can we be close enough to communicate to real people and yet at the same time be clear enough to be saying something to them? And these are the sort of questions which underlie this demand of our age of cross-contextual, persuasive communication which I think is at the heart of apologetics."

"How do we make convincing sense [of the gospel] to our generation with all these different worldviews?"

"Do we say nothing? That's uncharacteristic of us, if not unchristian."

"Do we say something that's meaningful only to us because we're only speaking to each other? Well that doesn't help."

"Do we just say it again and say it much louder? That doesn't really get it over, yet that's what much evangelism is."

"Do we say it in their language and express something different from what we really mean, so we betray Christian truth? That's what much dialogue has done and that doesn't help either."

"Or do we say something that's clear and convincing and Christian? And if so, how? That's what we're after."

© 2010 Os Guinness

This talk was originally given to L'Abri, UK. It is reproduced here by the kind permission of Dr Os Guinness.