

NEED

The Essence of Apologetics - Part 4 Persuading the hard-hearted

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 4 of this series, Dr Guinness considers how to persuade those who appear 'hard-hearted', to awaken an awareness of their need for the Gospel through various creative means.

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:

Spectrum of individuals from *Diversion* to *Dilemma*

Spectrum of individuals from *Open* to *Closed*

"... the really tough ones are the people who are ... cemented in their dilemma, in their despair, or self-contained in their diversion and without a care and they are very much harder to speak to."

"Take the best and most irrefragable of theories that you can and let that be the raft on which you sail through life, not without some risk, as I admit, if you have failed to find some word of God which will surely carry you." Plato The Phaedo

"Man inhabits, for his own convenience, a homemade universe within the greater alien world

of external matter and his own irrationality. Out of the unlimited blackness of that world, the light of his thinking scoops a little illuminated cave – a tunnel of brightness, in which from the birth of consciousness to its death, he lives and moves and has his being. Man ignores the outer darkness, or if he cannot ignore it, if it presses too insistently, he disapproves of being afraid."
Aldous Huxley

"Seen in the perspective of society every worldview is an area of meaning man carves out of a vast mass of meaninglessness, a small clearing of lucidity in a formless dark, ominous jungle. Every worldview is an edifice erected in the face of potent and alien forces of chaos. This chaos must be kept at bay at all costs. So society provides us with warm, reasonably comfortable caves, in which we huddle with our fellow humans, beating on the drums that drown out the howling hyenas of the surrounding darkness of meaninglessness." Author not stated.

"Apologetics is essentially subversive.... If every worldview that is built on unbelief has a faultline in it, a tension point between the half-truth coming from God and the half-lie coming from man's sinful self-deception, if pressed that faultline ... will create an earthquake at some point. If that pressure point is borne down on by something in life, in word or experience or whatever ..., the unbelieving worldview, which is basically inconsistent and yet is not visible, explodes in some way and the inadequacy is shown through and a person's shelter breaks and he has to find another one fast."

"What if this is turned against us? ... Not only can this be pressed against us – if it can, it should be. Because apologetics is really the flip-side of the pressure towards a radical Christian reformation.... Apologetics means pushing a non-Christian to be true to his position knowing he cannot be. The flip-side of that is a prophetic radicalism which pushes the Christian to be true to his position knowing he'd better be."

"So the weapon is double-edged. But rightly understood no pressing of this back will ever challenge Christianity, although it will fundamentally challenge we Christians. But the more it does, the more we accept that challenge,

in fact it forces us to be better disciples."

"You tell it like it is, at the time that it's appropriate, but not before."

Biblical examples of the need for subversion.

"Apologetics is the human art of following up as we discern what God is doing, using prayer, etc., as junior counsels for the defence."

Pressing people to the logic of their presuppositions. Four tips:

1. The consequences or logic of a person's position is more often seen in their life than in words alone.
2. Don't be the one who answers all the questions – be the one who asks them.
 - use questions to raise questions
 - use questions to push towards conviction
3. Use the other person's prophets.
4. Search for the signals of transcendence.

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