

The Current State of Evangelical Apologetics: Advances, Future Prospects, and Concerns

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Thank you, Dr. Bush, for the invitation on behalf of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, this time to lecture on behalf of the Center for Faith and Culture.¹ It is always a privilege as well as an enjoyment to visit your campus, and I appreciate the opportunity to do so.

I have known Dr. Bush for about twenty-five years. He has been an excellent friend, a wise counselor, as well as a tremendous scholar. Further, two of my brothers studied under Dr. Bush many years ago, and he prepared them not only to love the truth, but also to love people in their ministry. After all these years, it is simply wonderful to continue to witness Dr. Bush's ongoing testimony and to find him still serving the Lord. It is always nice to see Cindy Bush again, as well.

My topic today was suggested by Dr. Bush. But this is a good subject for contemplation: What advances has evangelical apologetics made in the past few decades? I thought of beginning with a semi-provocative statement, such as: "Evangelical apologetics has arrived" or at least, "it is arriving." Having started with a possible overstatement, there *are* some exciting things happening today. Much of it has had a world-wide impact, both intellectually as well as practically.

But along with the positive developments come some warnings. So I would like to begin by outlining six areas where I think evangelical apologetics has made some incredible strides in recent years. Then I want to issue a warning regarding four potential problem areas that evangelical apologetics may perhaps be either struggling with at

present, or that it may potentially face in the future. On the latter, I would like to sound a little bit of an alarm and just say, “Be careful.”

Since I cannot address in detail all of these issues, I am going to simply mention a few details of each and then move on. There are wonderful resource persons on this campus. Two of them are sitting right here in front (Russ Bush and Bruce Little), and there are many other professors around here who can steer you further into these subjects. I would also invite you to visit my website (www.garyhabermas.com) for additional details, including a number of debates, dialogues, lectures, essays, and a couple of books. Nothing is for sale on the website. I hope you make good use of the items, because they are there for the sake of learning and ministry. So with that background, I will begin with some of the strengths of evangelical apologetics.

Some Initial Observations

Decades ago John Warwick Montgomery wrote an essay called “Bibliographical Bigotry.”² After lamenting the lack of consideration of conservative scholars at leading “liberal” or “critical” schools, Montgomery surveyed two lengthy recommended book lists produced by two leading seminaries. He noticed that these directories of hundreds of scholarly volumes only rarely cited any texts that were written by conservatives. One list included only one work by an evangelical in its sections on systematic theology, Old and New Testament. The other, almost three times as long, included seven works written by conservatives among those publications that were recommended by the scholarly community in the same three fields. This prompted Montgomery to ask why evangelical works were apparently not regarded very highly by critical scholars.

What are we to make of such a survey? Was it simply the case in the 1960s that the broader academy did not know any good evangelical scholars? Were we not making a better impression than that? Could it be strictly prejudicial?

Or could it be our fault, too? In the 1960s and especially prior to that decade, how many evangelical scholars matriculated at non-evangelical universities in order to pursue their doctorates? Were they attending the larger scholarly meetings and reading papers? Were they specifically trying to publish in mainline scholarly journals, or were they content to send their material to like-minded publishers and read their papers to the “choir”? Were they taking the time to develop friendships with non-evangelical scholars?³

Has anything changed significantly in the intervening time of almost forty years? I think evangelicals have come of age, to extend the use a Bonhoefferian phrase. If today we read bibliographies in the areas I am going to mention, an astounding number of evangelical scholars are being footnoted and otherwise engaged. Often, the references are very positive, while on other occasions, they invite dialogue. But either way, the tide has certainly turned significantly.

What accounts for such changes? No doubt, there are many factors. In the areas of philosophy and related fields such as ethics and history, the majority of evangelical scholars are earning doctorates not simply at non-evangelical schools, but often at very prestigious ones, at that. It seems that larger numbers than ever before are also doing the same in Theology, Old and New Testaments. Further, we are publishing with mainline book publishers and with major journals. Further, large numbers of evangelical scholars frequent major society meetings, such as the American Academy of Religion and the

Society of Biblical Literature, including reading papers. And yes, many friendships are being established.

So I think evangelicals have come of age. In my own areas, somewhere along the line, many of the evangelicals who are making such an impact today were trained by scholars such as Norm Geisler, John Warwick Montgomery, Carl F.H. Henry, E.J. Carnell, Gordon Clark, Gordon Lewis, and Vernon Grounds. Many other professors taught at strong graduate schools and seminaries such as Trinity, Dallas, Bethel, Gordon-Conwell, Fuller, and the major Southern Baptist seminaries, such as those who trained Russ Bush, for example, at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

These scholars inspired their students to achieve higher degrees, to earn a Ph.D., and to succeed in ways that made it difficult to be ignored by the critical community. But then, they were told not to stop after earning their Ph.D. That is simply an invitation to begin teaching and publishing. Moreover, essays should be submitted to journals that are beyond the pale of evangelicalism. By example, the younger scholars learned that they should also finish their doctorates and then submit their work to critical, peer-reviewed journals. Sure, they would take some lumps along the way, but, if successful, scholars everywhere would need to deal with their conclusions. So the message was plain: follow the examples, earn a good degree, and begin writing for peer-reviewed publications.

I would like to say a word here about the field of apologetics. Occasionally in the larger theological and philosophical communities, providing a passionate defense of one's views has been treated with disdain, especially if it involves "converting" others. But there are signs that this attitude may be changing very quickly.

Not the least of these indications is the increasing desire of non-religious persons to defend their own positions with great zeal, as well as interacting vigorously with other views. Conversion and challenge appear to be among their chief goals, as well. Sam Harris says that the “primary message” in one of his books “is to arm secularists in our society . . . against their opponents on the Christian Right.”⁴ There are no better examples than that provided by the onslaught of the so-called “New Atheism”⁵ along with the seeming no-holds-barred assault on anyone who argues on behalf of Intelligent Design or other creation scenarios.⁶ So it appears that apologetics has a new look, even when pursued in radically non-evangelical ways.

Six Positive Areas in Evangelical Apologetics

I am going to mention quickly six areas where evangelical apologetics has made real advances in recent years. SEBTS has professors here who are well able to detail some of these trends better than I. Most of my own research is focused on historical subjects such as the historicity of the resurrection, which has been my specialization.

The first area I will mention is the incredible development of what has been dubbed Reformed Epistemology---the revolution in philosophy and philosophical theology inspired largely by Alvin Plantinga.⁷ It has implications to many areas, but the one I really want to emphasize here is philosophical theology, so much so that this sub-specialty has almost taken on a new definition in the last two decades. When I attended graduate school, philosophical theology was the study of Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Niebuhrs, Raymond Brown, and other similar scholars.

Today in Reformed Epistemology, philosophical theology has been redefined to providing philosophical defenses of cardinal Christian doctrines. These doctrines are not always defended the way you or I might do it, but the efforts are frequently quite superior to any recent studies on these key theological topics. The defenses of the classical doctrine of Hell and the necessity of God's punishment done by scholars like Richard Swinburne, Keith Yandell, or Eleonore Stump are examples. What these philosophers have done is to wade into the pithiest areas in theology to defend such notions as the atonement, the incarnation, and the Trinity. Tom Morris' *The Logic of God Incarnate?*⁸ is an engaging text, to be sure, and you need to do some hard thinking to work through it.

One of the first times I ever had the privilege of hearing Eleonore Stump, she was critiquing eminent New Testament scholar Raymond Brown, showing that he had no basis for believing that there were contradictions in the first ten verses of John chapter 20. Stump argued that Brown was too uncritical by concluding so easily that there are inconsistencies in John's text, where these cannot be substantiated by historical considerations. She suggested that philosophical analyses reveal several such problems.⁹

Permit me to relate an aside comment here. When Eleonore used to teach at Virginia Tech, our department brought her to Liberty University more than once. As I recall, she told us that she and her husband had decided that their lecture honorariums would be designated for social and other needs. Besides delivering a paper defending the notion of Hell, she also spoke to our campus philosophy club, where she delivered a thoughtful thesis on a philosophy of womanhood. She encouraged our female students to be true to both their calling and to their families. She told us that caring for the needs of

her family came before her teaching. This was before she went to the University of St. Louis as Distinguished Professor of Philosophy.

Working through these major theological doctrines and providing defenses is one place where evangelicals have long needed to do some serious research, especially given the constant challenges over the decades. You may say “yea” or “nay” on reformed theology itself, because many of the key philosophers who have become more or less loosely linked to the movement are not reformed! But it may be the most significant new philosophical development in recent decades. And it is difficult to underestimate their influence, almost as if Christian philosophers had been waiting throughout their careers for someone to speak up! But what you have here are some of the very brightest minds around who are exceptionally sophisticated and committed to traditional, orthodox Christian beliefs. Seldom had such defenses or critiques been made, but one indicator of their success is the plethora of excellent publications that have been produced. These philosophers do not lack for willing secular or university publishers, which is a major contrast with the next trend.

The second major area of contribution is the revolution that is occurring today in Intelligent Design studies. There are pros and cons about this approach and believers are not even united. But I think the work of the Discovery Center along with like-minded scholars should be singled out. Bill Dembski, Michael Behe, Jonathan Wells, and others are causing a huge secular backlash.¹⁰ The secular rejoinder is due to some of the inroads that have been made. To attempt to publish or speak against Darwinian theses is to invite ridicule, and the effort will probably succeed in having the author excluded from having

the work published in most peer-reviewed journals. Darwinism has been established as the religion of secularism, especially for biological science.

A number of years ago, I was one of the speakers at a Veritas Forum at Stanford University. One of the leading Intelligent Design researchers was one of the other speakers. After providing a number of arguments, he produced a PowerPoint slide that provided some of his publications as available sources for further information. As I scanned the list he provided, none of his articles were from the major peer-reviewed science journals like *Nature*. Afterwards, the speakers were together, and I asked if he gets refused by the leading journals in his area. He replied that he is unable to get published in the major peer-reviewed science journals.

After our second debate on the subject of Jesus' resurrection, former atheist Antony Flew said that Naturalism had failed to answer the Intelligent Design research. This was one of the chief reasons why Tony Flew became a deist. He thinks that Aristotle's cosmology is an even stronger reason, but Intelligent Design was very helpful.¹¹ In our letters, Flew mentioned the good work of Dembski and Behe. Few fields of research have produced scholarly changes of mind not just away from Naturalism, but to Christianity. And yet, by advocating Intelligent Design theory, you can hardly get published. In spite of its many advances, it seems that extreme peer pressure weighs in against publishing these studies.

Third, when I first began my resurrection studies in the early 1970s, the Gospels were not discussed very much. Paul's "genuine" epistles were emphasized, but the Gospel data were often dismissed as being too late and containing too much apologetic

material that the church placed in the mouth of Jesus, in order to validate this or that debate in the early church.

So when I finished and began teaching, I told my students that we were much in need of young evangelicals who were going to finish their graduate studies and then put the Gospels back on the scholarly map. We needed first-rate commentaries, along with other research that argued unabashedly for a solid tradition of direct or indirect eye-witness testimony in those books, as well as addressing the dates of composition, source questions, and so on. This would hopefully help to counteract the main trend in those days that argued against the use of the Gospels in many discussions of the historical evidence. When asked for suggestions for research topics, I encouraged these Gospel studies very near the top of the list.

In a couple of my early publications, I included a single footnote where I listed all the defenses of the Gospels that I could find, which were written by good scholars and published by strong publishers. It was a lengthy note, but all the references fit. Then my list evolved to one note per Gospel. But there were not an overabundance of good works that defended these texts.

In the following decades, however, the trend reversed significantly. Not that I endorse everything in these commentaries, but who does? In fact, there are some things within these works to which I object strongly. Nevertheless, starting from what I saw in the decade of the 1970s, there are now a rather incredible number of commentaries that defend the Gospel texts, published by major publishers, and written by authors who have strong degrees. The religious world is listening. Eyewitness influence and early dates are back on the table again.

Several introductions to New Testament thought help set the table. These writings include those written by Donald Guthrie, John Drane, Stanley Porter and Lee Martin McDonald, and the text by Donald Carson, Douglas Moo, and Leon Morris. And the works of Craig Blomberg and Paul Barnett on the reliability of the Gospels succeeded F. F. Bruce's earlier efforts.

To name just a few of the major examples of individual studies, we now have more recent publications such as the following: Commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew include works by Craig Keener, Bob Gundry, and Robert Mounce. On Mark, some of the key volumes include those by William Lane, R.T. France, Craig Evans, and Larry Hurtado. On Luke, we have I. H. Marshall, Craig Evans, Joel Green, as well as Darryl Bock's two-volume masterpiece.

John has traditionally been the most questioned of the Gospels. But the volumes on this subject have soared in recent years. Craig Keener's two-volume tour de force has received much notoriety. Other major works include those by Don Carson, Leon Morris's 1995 update, Craig Blomberg, Andreas Köstenberger, and Gary Burge.

On the Book of Acts, Craig Keener's huge work is due to be published soon. It will join other noteworthy texts such as those by Colin Hemer, Richard Longenecker, C. K. Barrett, and Darrell Bock's very recent commentary.

I can no longer fit all of these and other relevant references into a single endnote! But there is still more! Many mainline scholars are weighing in with helpful conclusions of their own. For example, when I did my graduate studies, we would often hear that the Gospels were not biographies. What kind of genre is found there? It was sometimes said

to be a special genus to which little else could be compared. But this would often serve as the springboard to scholars saying that these texts could not be accepted as historical.

Then about fifteen years ago, British classical scholar Richard Burridge wrote a book entitled *What Are The Gospels?*¹² Through the work of Burridge and other scholars, there has been a major shift in thinking. The Gospels are now usually seen as one of the types of ancient biography, perhaps a sub-category, complete with its own emphases. Now we can talk about the Gospels as part of this genre. To be sure, questions remain, but Burridge and others have brought the relevant issues to the forefront of recent discussions.

Such conclusions have far-reaching effects. I had the privilege of having lunch with Richard Burridge just recently. We discussed the scholarly recognition of his views on the Gospels as a species of ancient biography. Then I asked about his view on the resurrection appearances of Jesus, on which he has also published. Burridge identified his view as that Jesus was raised from the dead bodily.

Another influential publication was signaled by the recent release of British New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham's volume, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*.¹³ Here an influential, mainline scholar argues theses such as the apostle Peter being the chief source behind the Gospel of Mark (as per the testimony of Papias), and that the author of the Gospel of John is an eyewitness (albeit John the Elder rather than the son of Zebedee). Evangelicals seem to see these as ways to place some of the old theses back on the table when they are often ignored for arguing similarly. But these emerging trends were very uncommon in Gospel studies just twenty-five years ago.

So for many, then, the Gospels have moved full circle back into the discussions, and often are seen in a positive light, at least by a fair number of scholars. Along the way, evangelicals have found new allies among several other mainline scholars, so the support has broadened. While many scholars also oppose these more conservative trends, it is certainly positive that the questions are at least being asked and defended by reputable researchers, which was not the case just a few decades ago.

The fourth major advance of evangelical scholarship is seen in historical Jesus studies, which is not synonymous with Gospel studies. In a survey of current studies, Raymond Brown stated a little over a decade ago that “perhaps the most agreed upon scholarly approach to christology” is the position he terms scholarly or moderate conservatism.¹⁴ Brown defines this as the view that Jesus himself had a personal Christology, either explicitly or implicitly. To be sure, Brown’s characterization of this group is far broader than what we would call evangelical thought. Nonetheless, a look at his lists of “Select Books” and “Bibliographical Index” indicate that he has included the research of many scholars who are either conservative or evangelical.

Moving beyond Christology to historical Jesus studies, many evangelicals rank among the very best scholars today, and are frequently cited as such. Bibliographies and footnotes by many non-evangelicals attest to this, by citing very frequently researchers such as Barry Blackburn, Darrell Bock, William Lane Craig, Craig Evans, Murray Harris, Craig Keener, Graham Twelftree, Ben Witherington, and N.T. Wright, besides the authors of the major commentaries such as those listed above. These along with other evangelical scholars have really made a mark.

Moreover, the television documentaries on the Gnostic Gospels and similar topics interview many of these same evangelical scholars along with the moderate and radical researchers. In fact, Darrell Bock told me just recently that during one such stretch, he simply went to New York and stayed in a hotel for a week or so because of the large number of television and other interviews he was doing! This is in stark contrast to the situation with historical Jesus studies just three or four decades ago, where one might look for a little while before finding many evangelicals who were cited very often. As we have said, there is no shortage of names at present.

Fourth, I would like to mention my own research area: resurrection studies. Three decades ago, belief in Jesus' bodily resurrection appearances was encountered only rarely outside evangelical circles. While many rejected the event, due to the influence of scholars like Rudolf Bultmann, the most common opposition view was that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead, but that he appeared to his followers in a non-bodily manner.

Today, belief in the bodily resurrection appearances of Jesus is perhaps even the dominant view.¹⁵ This was a growing trend even before the appearance of Tom Wright's *The Resurrection of the Son of God*,¹⁶ but this volume has certainly provided some major impetus for the case. And as in these other areas, evangelicals are among the influential leaders who have been arguing in this direction.

Last night I was at Duke Divinity School for a friendly dialogue with one of their New Testament professors, Joel Marcus. (By the way, I was told that about twenty or twenty-five SEBTS students were in attendance.) It was a good night. Why are evangelicals getting these opportunities? Because, to a certain extent, we have come of

age; we have paid our dues. Does everyone agree with us? By no means! So there is work left to do. But we are getting a hearing.

I am only going to mention very briefly the sixth trend—the resurgence of Pauline studies. The tide turned a couple of decades ago against the Bultmannian sorts of emphasis, largely due to the research of W.D. Davies and E.P. Sanders.¹⁷ We might even say that Paul tends to be the hero of critical scholars. Only very rarely will anyone dispute the authorship or reliability of six or seven key books that bear Paul's name. These include Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon. I will simply say that this is an absolutely crucial body of material that needs to be used, since Paul is taken so seriously. Now, I am aware of the new hermeneutical issues with which we also need to deal, but I am speaking here of the larger terrain of Pauline studies to which evangelicals have also contributed many major studies.

I have mentioned six areas where evangelicals have made major inroads in recent years. They are philosophical theology, especially what might be called Reformed epistemology, Intelligent Design, the resurgence of interest in the historicity of the Gospel narratives, the historical Jesus, Jesus' resurrection appearances, and Pauline studies. But I also want to note some warning signs.

A Few Areas of Concern

With all of this progress comes some concern, as well. One of the Proverbs (4:23) cautions us to give special heed to guard our hearts, since it is the key to the central matters of life. C.S. Lewis warns that people seldom lose their faith because of

intellectual difficulties that cannot be answered. Rather, they almost always succumb for non-factual reasons. Other things are usually going on.¹⁸

So why do even evangelicals sometimes fall by the wayside, however we define that? Why do some evangelicals seem to walk away from their faith, at least according to what they tell us? Although evangelicals appear to be coming of age and paying their dues, acquiring their Ph.D.s, publishing in peer-reviewed journals, and so forth, there is sometimes a heavy price to pay. Some are leaving their roots. The list is even fairly sizeable.

If C.S. Lewis is right, this process generally occurs for reasons *other than* there not being good philosophical, historical, or scientific answers to our questions. Acquiring the expected degrees and publishing in the right places can have its drawbacks. One of the first wars we often face is peer pressure.¹⁹ It is often difficult to take a stand against the crowd—or contrary to the faculty members and mentors under whom we studied. Peer pressure can be very tough. A lot of evangelicals bend for the wrong reasons.

Second, Lewis' next answer is sin. Sometimes a believer simply “wants a woman, or wants to tell a lie, or feels very pleased with himself, or sees a chance of making a little money in some way that is not perfectly fair.” These are moments “at which it would be very convenient if Christianity were not true.”²⁰ Notice the emphasis here on the fact that we are making these *choices*. We have preferred something else over our faith.

However, Lewis says that when a person falls into sin, they're definitely not going to say, “Frankly, I've been sinning a lot lately.” Rather, they will usually

download it as, “I’ve been thinking . . . ” Others believe better of us when we are “thinking” rather than when we are sinning. So that’s how we might rationalize it: “I’ve been thinking. Christianity is not all it is cracked up to be.” No, what we mean is, we have been sinning, and we simply have to make God in our own image!

Third, Lewis points to the area of our emotions.²¹ While there is definitely some overlap as well as differences here, studies indicate that this is where many of our personal religious struggles emanate. This can perhaps be illustrated from the sub-category of religious doubt, concerning which I have been involved in both formal as well as informal studies for over thirty years. The former consists of working with one of our best clinical psychologists, Gary Sibcy, in a couple of his testing programs. We will hopefully be ready soon to publish our work. We believe we can document the claim that the majority of religious doubt originates from our emotions. In other words, doubts usually do not arise for “good reasons.” Indeed, the vast majority of our questions are not strictly rational or empirical. And if we do not control our emotions, we may be heading for a shipwreck. Most doubt comes from areas other than not being able to answer all the questions.

However, when people make emotional moves, they often use factual language. They act as if all they need is one more fact. But the experienced emotional doubter knows that no factual answer can ever give her the sort of peace that she desires above all else. There is no factual answer to her struggle because it is not a factual issue. This is just one of the many twists and turns of a subject where so much even seemingly good advice can get us into trouble.

As an aside, I have written two books on doubt, both of which are out of print.²² But both are available free of charge on my website: www.garyhabermas.com. If you know anybody who is going through various sorts of doubt, please download whatever portions of the books are helpful. Recommend them to hurting people. That is why they are there.

Most of you are seminary students. Some of you desire to go on and complete a Ph.D. Some of you want to publish. The concern is that these accomplishments often come at a price. My last, perhaps chief, advice can be summarized this way: *mind your heart*. Our heads and our hearts must be wed. I think this is part of the point in Proverbs 4:24. Our heads and hearts must be joined. They must work together. We must nurture our souls just as much as we must nurture our heads. This includes making room for private time with the Lord. It is not too childish or too undergraduate-ish, or something like that.

And we also must walk with the Lord. We need to practice the Christian disciplines; we all need this profoundly. Sometimes we need to let our hearts catch up with our heads. If we lose our sense of relationship with Christ, it is often not long before our beliefs follow the same trail. It is one of the easiest things that can happen in a world dominated by graduate degrees, public lectures, and publishing. But the price is not worth it. In fact, what could be worse?

I think that giving in to peer pressure, sin, emotional struggles, and the failure to develop our devotional lives and tune our hearts to walk with the Lord are arguably among the most dangerous things that can happen to us. Nothing grieves me like hearing about a former student who has taken one of these steps off the edge, so to speak. By

God's grace, I do not know of very many. But our academic endeavors help to lure us into some of these problems. Yes, we need students to complete Ph.D.s. Yes, we need students to fill teaching positions. Apologetics is a hot area for publishing right now, due to some of the trends in today's postmodern world. It was not like that twenty years ago. But we need well-trained scholars to write books and articles. But we are back to our dilemma. Pay the price, and some of our friends are going to fall away. They place themselves on the shelf and some of them eventually declare that they are no longer Christians. That hurts! In 3 John 4 we are told that the author had no greater joy than to observe that his children are following the truth. I agree.

Conclusion

Evangelicals have recently become very successful academically. So, yes, I think we have a great legacy. We may even be winning the battle in the realm of ideas, where our specialists do their best work. That was not the case when I started my work. Thirty years ago, the people who did apologetics were mostly pastors and non-specialists. The best known apologists in those days actually had very few specialists among them.

Today, if someone asks me to debate God's existence or objective truth, there is no way I would accept. I have guys on my faculty who are much better than I am at this. Or go call J. P. Moreland, Bill Craig, Norm Geisler, or someone else. Call some of the folks you've got here at SEBTS, like Bruce Little. Do not ask me to do it. That is not my specialty. The same thing is the case if you want someone to argue about the state of New Testament manuscripts, or about ethics and morality, or Intelligent Design, and so on. As the old saying goes, we need to put our best foot forward. I will stay on topics

such as the resurrection or the afterlife. Twenty-five years ago, this was not the case, but now we are literally flooded with good scholars.

Remember what John Montgomery said 40 years ago? The works of very few evangelicals were mentioned in lengthy lists of recommended texts. Today, do a similar search and see what comes up. A large number of evangelical publications are listed in the broader scholarly community. In a recent book review, while Jesus Seminar member Stephen Patterson recognized his sometimes major differences, he still acknowledged that evangelicals were among the “Competently trained scholars [that] now operate on both sides of the great divide.”²³

Yes, evangelicals have come of age. But with success comes temptation. Unfortunately, we have sometimes lost good members, due to peer pressure, sin, emotional struggles, and due to a lack of nurturing our hearts. Let us resolve to both defend as well as follow truth. May that remain the case for Liberty University where I teach and may it characterize Southeastern Seminary and the L. Russ Bush Center for Faith and Culture.

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¹ It should be noted that this contribution was a lecture at SEBTS, at the invitation of Dr. Russ Bush and the Center for Faith and Culture. Many of the informal references have been left in the manuscript.

² John Warwick Montgomery, “Bibliographical Bigotry,” in *The Suicide of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1970), 180-183.

³ I am currently working on an invited article on the place of friendship in scholarship, due to be published soon in the inaugural issue of the *Journal of the International Society of Christian Apologetics* (ISCA).

⁴ Sam Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation* (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), viii.

⁵ As typified by Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006); Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the End of Reason* (N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 2004); Christopher Hitchens, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (N.Y.: Hachette, 2007).

⁶ A few examples include Michael Ruse, *Darwinism Defended* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1982); Philip Kitcher, *Abusing Science: The Case against Creationism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982); Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1986); Daniel Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (N.Y.: Simon and Shuster, 1995).

⁷ See the now classical volume edited by Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

⁸ (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); cf. Morris' *Anselmian Explorations: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987).

⁹ Eleonore Stump, "Visits to the Sepulcher and Biblical Exegesis," *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 6 (1989), 353-377

¹⁰ Sample publications include Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (N.Y.: Simon & Shuster, 1996); William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999).

¹¹ See Antony Flew and Gary Habermas, "My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism: A Discussion between Antony Flew and Gary Habermas," *Philosophia Christi*, Vol. 6 (2004), especially pages 199-200.

¹² *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹³ *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).

¹⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (N.Y.: Paulist, 1994), 14-15, 102.

¹⁵ For details, see Gary R. Habermas, "Mapping the Recent Trend toward the Bodily Resurrection Appearances of Jesus in Light of Other Prominent Critical Positions," in Robert B. Stewart, editor, *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright in Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 78-92.

¹⁶ (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

¹⁷ W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, Revised Ed. (London: SPCK, 1980); E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM, 1977).

¹⁸ C.S. Lewis, "Religion: Reality or Substitute?" in *Christian Reflections*, edited by Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 42-43.

¹⁹ Cf. C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Revised ed. (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1952), 123.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Ibid., pp. 122-124; “Religion: Reality or Substitute?” 40-43.

²² Gary R. Habermas, *Dealing with Doubt* (Chicago: Moody, 1990); Habermas, *The Thomas Factor: Using Your Doubts to Grow Closer to God* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999).

²³ Stephen J. Patterson, review of Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*, in *Review of Biblical Literature* [<http://www.bookreviews.org>] (2007).