

Apologetics for the 21st Century

Louis Markos, Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway, 2010

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In this far-ranging and probing book, Louis Markos provides a survey of some of the twentieth-century's most important "popular" Christian apologists both in Britain and the United States, along with a look at contemporary writers and issues in apologetics. Louis Markos (Ph.D. University of Michigan) holds the Robert H. Ray Chair in Humanities at Houston Baptist University. Markos's broad knowledge of theology, apologetics, C. S. Lewis, and western culture serves the reader well in these pages as the author moves across the century and two continents to provide a fresh look at apologetics today. Markos writes for the non-specialist.

Markos divides his book into two sections, the first dealing with specific writers such as C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, Dorothy Sayers, Francis Schaeffer, and Josh McDowell. In the second part of the book, Markos considers various arguments for the existence of God, the person and work of Jesus Christ, apologetics for postmodern people, Intelligent Design, and the New Atheism. He begins in chapter one by defining apologetics and outlining the nature of the subject in our post-Enlightenment times, thus laying the foundation for the studies to follow.

In chapters two through seven, Markos begins with C. S. Lewis, outlining Lewis's popular apologetics along the lines of the innate human yearning that only God can satisfy (chapter two), moral arguments (chapter three), theodicy (chapters four and five), free will (chapter six), and Lewis's understanding of how myth, as Lewis understood it, points us toward God (chapter seven). Markos takes readers to the heart of the most important parts of Lewis's apologetics. It is not an exaggeration to say that C. S. Lewis is a "liberal arts education" in his own right, and Markos's extensive knowledge of Lewis allows the reader a trenchant and timely review of Lewis's contributions to the defense of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

Following his analysis of C. S. Lewis, Markos turns to some twentieth-century British writers—G. K. Chesterton and Dorothy Sayers, to be specific—with whom some American readers may not be familiar. With Chesterton, Markos presents a thoroughly Christian outline of human history which has become, sadly, radical in our times. With Sayers and her book, *The Mind of the Maker*, Markos offers a defense for the specifically Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Though the treatment of Francis Schaeffer in chapter eleven is sadly too abbreviated, Markos brings Schaeffer into the conversation and demonstrates how we can still use his “preapologetics” today with postmodernists. Turning to Josh McDowell next, Markos outlines his “down-home, conversational American” style which, he states, still speaks today on American university campuses and elsewhere.

Part Two will be more familiar territory for evangelical American students of apologetics. In this lengthy section, Markos frames his analysis in recognizably-traditional philosophical forms. For instance, he argues for the existence of God along lines of logic, science, and ethics (chapters thirteen through fifteen). In chapter sixteen, Markos defends the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture, though he acknowledges that many postmodernists find these arguments not to be compelling. The chapter on Christianity and other religions is particularly helpful in its treatment of Islam and the unique place of Christianity among serious world religions. Turning to decidedly more contemporary issues, Markos’s treatment of Intelligent Design in chapter twenty-two is well-balanced and nuanced, brief though it is, and his comments on the New Atheism round out his survey of contemporary apologetics. Finally, Markos provides four extremely useful appendices—Timeline, Glossary, Who’s Who, and an Annotated Bibliography.

Apologetics for the 21st Century dazzles with its broad scope and its author’s extensive learning. American evangelicals will find the British writers in Markos’s study to be welcome

new material for their study, and British readers will get a good taste of American offerings. Everyone will find some sparkling epiphanies where their thinking will be challenged and their frames of references re-aligned just a bit. The vast scope of the territory surveyed makes it impossible for Markos to engage the reader in any extended studies. Still, however, *Apologetics for the 21st Century* is a timely and nuanced addition to an increasingly-important field today. Heartily recommended.

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