



Discussing our Faith in A Hostile Culture



The Privilege We've Had!

- A nation with Christian foundations.
- A legal system broadly based on the Bible.
- A culture amenable to Christian principles and practices.
- Higher education started by Christian values.
- A population favoring Christianity.

The Opposition We Have!

- Excoriation of a Christian heritage from school textbooks.
- An agenda-driven liberal legal system.
- Denial of freedom of expression and speech of Christian ideas on campuses across the nation.
- Loss of tenure and employment for teachers and scientist not holding an evolutionary view.

The Opposition We Have!

- Growth of aggressive anti-God atheism.
- The redefinition of terms (eg. separation of Church and State.)
- Government regulations requiring people of faith to act contrary to their beliefs.
- Codified, adultery, infanticide, and sodomy.

The Opposition We Have!

- Termination of blue laws
- Media vilification of celebrities with Christian views (Duck Dynasty)
- Boycotts of business with outspoken Christian CEOs (Chick-Fil-A)
- Commercial real estate owners not wanting to rent to churches.
- The Liberal church as spokesperson for the liberal agenda

Cultural Shift against Christianity

- Schools - no slogans, no prayers, no t-shirts
- Businesses - no posters, plaques, or prayers
- Neighborhoods – no solicitation
- Malls – no loitering/
- On the Street - rudeness to religion
- On Television – crass & crude remarks against Christianity (eg Bill Maher)

It's not New!

- Peter the apostle wrote his first letter to a group of believers living in a hostile culture who were:
 - Accused of doing wrong (2:12)
 - Beaten for doing right (2:20)
 - Spoken evil of (4:4)
 - Insulted because of the name of Christ (4:14)

There Is A Strategy!

- Peter lays out the strategy for living out our faith in a hostile culture in 1 Peter 2:12.

Paraphrased, Peter says:

“Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God” OR

“Have your conduct so honorable among the heathen that when they hurl falsehoods against you they don’t stick, but instead your good works force them to admit something Godly is happening.”

This way of living
will not only be
faithful to God, but
fruitful too.

There Are Two Mistakes Easily Made Though!



- In a hostile culture it is easy to make either of these mistakes:
- 1) Assimilate - get pulled into the culture and compromise your faith and accept their ways.
- 2) Withdraw - pull away from the culture and live apart in a holy huddle with minimal contact with the culture.

How Shall We Then Live?

We are to live neither pagan lives among the pagans, nor Christian lives merely among the Christians, but Christian lives among the pagans!



EG. Praying at the Bar

But Living out our lives in a hostile culture needs verbalization.

- It's one thing to live a Christian life among pagans, but completely another to be VERBAL about it as well.
- 1) To Engage them - To get beyond salutations and chitchat and begin a spiritual conversation.
- 2) To Discuss with them - To hear their true thoughts about God and Christ, heaven & hell, etc. and discuss it calmly and collectedly.



So How Do We Discuss our Faith
➔ in A Hostile Culture?

There's Only One Correct Way

A dark grey world map is centered in the background. The bottom half of the image features a glowing orange and yellow gradient with wavy lines. Four circular icons are scattered: one with an arrow pointing up and right on the left, and three with arrows pointing up on the right side.

Carefully !

The End

Only Kidding

We are often told that
alongside our good deeds
should be our
ready words!

1 Peter 3:15

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

This is true and right!


However,

There are words
and there are words.



What you say can either end the conversation abruptly, or

Get the person hooked and wanting to keep talking.



Whimsical tact needs to be
employed when engaging hostility
and resistance.

We need to be wise as serpents and as
innocent as doves (Matt. 10:16)

What are the Conversation Killers?

- Statements (of beliefs, doctrine, etc.)
- Critical remarks ('That's speculation')
- Opinions ('I think...' or 'I heard')
- 'But the Bible says' (Bad idea to trump w/ Bible)
- Looking uncomfortable or stressed (Relax!!)
- Blabbermouth (long monologue)
- Getting angry (red in the face & raised voice)
- Accusations ('you're just parroting your prof')

What are Conversation Makers?

- Questions (of interest in the other person.)
- Compliments (about the person)
- Comments about things in common
- 50/50 listening and speaking
- Pleasant demeanor and visage.
- Signs of genuine interest in the other person.

But try as we may, we often run into difficult, hostile people that seem to be in attack mode and put us on the defensive.

This is where we need some help knowing how to talk about Christ with them.

Three things we need to be effective:

- Articulation - fluency about how the Lord changed your life and the difference it makes in your life daily (Eg. comment to Gary at HD)
- Defense – anticipating common questions or attacks and knowing how to deliver an answer in a logical sequence. (Eg. woman & Gaia)
- Dialoguing the Gospel – giving and taking – asking questions and bouncing ideas back and forth. (Eg. if Jesus was so inclusive why did he say no one comes to the father but by Him?)

Not a
cookie cutter
approach!!
or a dry,
mechanical
monologue!!



Doing as Jesus did
and asking
Targeted Questions



A GAME PLAN
FOR DISCUSSING YOUR
CHRISTIAN
CONVICTIONS

TACTICS

 GREGORY KOUKL



Questioning Evangelism

Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did

Randy Newman

Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did:

Answering hostile questions with a
surgical question.

- Mark 10:17-18
- Matthew 22:17-20
- Matthew 12:9-12
 - Luke 5:21-23

Surgical questions cut
to the heart of a
matter.

They expose a person's
presuppositions and
forces them to defend
their position.

The questioning approach
allows you to:

1. Gather information
2. Reverse the burden of proof
3. Lead the conversation in a specific direction.

A look at
five scenarios

Scenario 1.

You're hosting a dinner party at your home for some of your close friends from church. Suddenly, in the middle of the evening, to your utter surprise and embarrassment, your 15 year old son announces with belligerence that he doesn't believe in God anymore. "It's simply not rational," he says. "There's no proof." You had no idea he'd been moving in this direction. There's stunned silence. What will you say?

1. It's not rational to believe in God. There's no proof.

- What do you mean by 'God,' that is, what kind of God do you reject?
- What specifically is irrational about believing in God?
- Since you're concerned about proof for God's existence, what kind of evidence would you find acceptable?

Scenario 2.

It's the night of your weekly Bible study group. During the discussion of the Sunday sermon on the Great Commission, a newcomer remarks, "Who are we to say Christianity is better than any other religion? I think the essence of Jesus' teaching is love, the same as all religions. It's not our job to tell other people how to live or believe."

The rest of the group fidgets awkwardly, but says nothing. How do you respond?

Christianity is basically the same as all other religions

- How much have you studied other religions to compare the details and find a common theme?
- Why would the similarities be more important than the differences?
- I'm curious what you think was Jesus' attitude on this issue? Did he think all religions were basically equal?
- Isn't telling people to love one another just another example of telling them how they should live and believe?

Scenario 3.

You're riding the university shuttle with a friend who notices a Bible in your backpack. "I've read the Bible before" he says, "It's got some interesting stories, but people take it too seriously. It was written by men, after all, and men make mistakes." You try to recall the points from a sermon you heard a few weeks ago about the Bible's inspiration, but come up empty-handed.

What do you say?

You can't take the Bible too seriously because its written by men

- Do you have any books? And were those books written by humans?
- Do you find any truth in them?
- Is there a reason why you think the Bible is less truthful and reliable than other books?
- Do people always make mistakes in what they write?
- If God did exist, do you think He would be capable of using humans to write down exactly what he wants?

Scenario 4.

You're sitting at the car dealer watching TV waiting with other customers for your car to be serviced.

A television news program highlights religious groups trying to influence important moral legislation. The person next to you says, "Haven't these people ever heard of separation of church and state? Those Christians are always trying to force their views on everyone else. You can't legislate morality. Why don't they just leave the rest of us alone?" Other people are listening, and you don't want to create a scene, but feel you must say something. What do you say?

4. It's wrong to force views on other people. You can't legislate morality.

- Do you vote? When you vote for someone are you expecting them to pass laws reflecting your point of view?
- Isn't that essentially forcing your views on others?
- How is that different from what you're trouble about here?
- Is it your view that only nonreligious people should be allowed to vote or participate in the political process? Where in the constitution are they excluded?
- Can you give me an example of legislation that does not have a moral element to it.

Scenario 5.

You're sitting talking at lunchtime with some fellow employees about how much things have changed in the country since you all were kids.

One person says "it just goes to show you how everything is relative. Society and culture evolve too."

What do you say?

Everything is Relative

- What do you mean by relative?
- Is everything relative?
- Would that apply even to your own statement?

10 Second Window

In most cases we only have 10 seconds to respond to a statement before the window of opportunity closes.

Gregory Koukl

Learn how to dissect
their argument

Atheistic Culture

- If you don't believe in God, what do you mean when you say "oh my god?"
- Why is it that when things go wrong I noticed atheists get angry at and blame God?
- With morality being such a backbone of religion, do you have any moral compass in your life?
- If religion is a relic of human ignorance and fear, how do you explain brilliant scientists holding to strong religious views?

Muslim Culture

- Where is Mohammed buried?
- Where is Issa (Jesus) buried?
- According to the Koran, what is of greater importance, things of heaven or things of earth?
- Of the two prophets, Issa and Mohammed, which was born of a virgin? Why was this?
- Why was Abraham asked to sacrifice his son?

Hindu Culture



- How did Karma come into being and how does it dispense justice?
- How does reincarnation bring justice to a murdering rapist who evades the law in life?
- How do you know you have pleased and appeased the right god out of all your gods?

Remember Biblical Guidelines!

- **Proverbs 15:1** A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger
- **Proverbs 15:2** The tongue of the wise uses
knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours
forth foolishness.
- **James 1:19** Wherefore, my beloved brethren,
let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak,
slow to wrath.

The END