



Sponsored jointly by the ELS Committee on Apologetics, the Bethany Lutheran College History Department, and the Bethany Institute for Biblical and Ecclesiastical Languages.

Schedule (Thursday, June 21, 2018)

Pre-Conference Session (Meyer Hall 101)

11 a.m.–Noon: **“The Development of Ancient Writing Systems and the Biblical Text”**
(Pastor Joseph Abrahamson)

Main Sessions (Trinity Chapel)

2:00–2:10 p.m. **Welcome** (Pastor David Thompson)

2:10–2:55 p.m. **“Issues of Chronology in the Early Old Testament”**
(Pastor Steven Sparley)

3:10–4:10 p.m. **“What’s Worldview Got to Do with Everything?”**
(Dr. Ryan MacPherson)

4:25–5:25 p.m. **“Why Is Apologetics Lutheran?”**
(Prof. Allen Quist)

5:30 p.m. **Supper** (Old Main; \$15/person, advanced reservation required)

7:00 p.m. **Keynote: “How a False Worldview
Has Eroded Biblical Inerrancy within Churches”**
(John Eidsmoe)

8:00–9:00 p.m. **Q and A with Presenters**
(moderated by Pastor David Thompson)

Video Archive: www.blc.edu/apologetics2018

Before you leave, please return the attached survey to assist our future planning. Thank you.

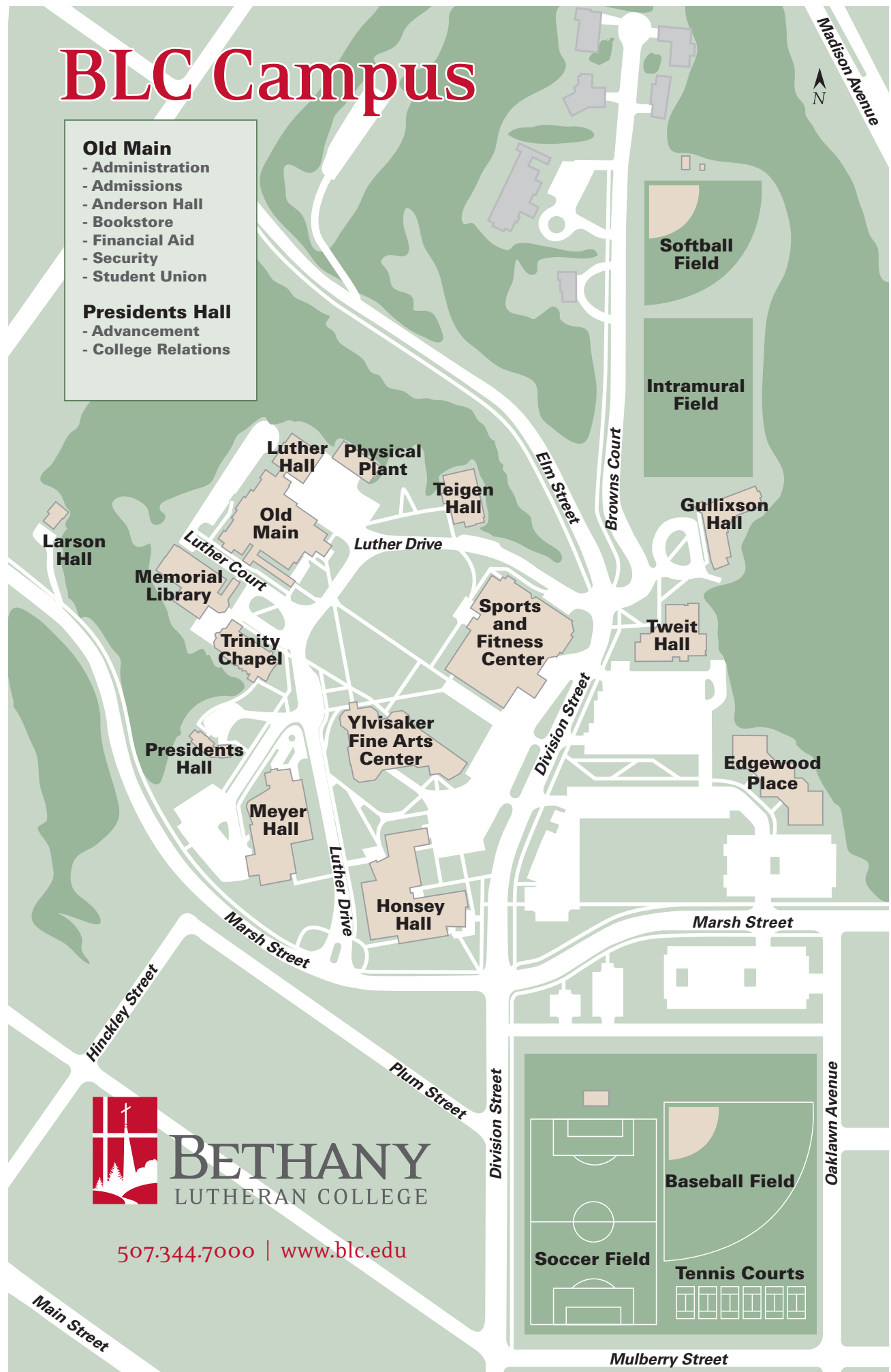
BLC Campus

Old Main

- Administration
- Admissions
- Anderson Hall
- Bookstore
- Financial Aid
- Security
- Student Union

Presidents Hall

- Advancement
- College Relations



About the Speakers

Pastor Joseph Abrahamson currently serves Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Clara City, Minnesota. He and his wife, Mary, have 10 children. Pastor Abrahamson is a graduate of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary and of the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies. He has served on the Faculty at Bethany Lutheran College teaching Religion, Linguistics, Archaeology, and Self-Defense.

Prof. Allen Quist was professor of religion, philosophy, psychology, and political science at Bethany. He served as a Minnesota State Representative for three terms and was the Republican-endorsed candidate for Governor in 1994. He has also been a life-long farmer. He is a frequent speaker and author of numerous articles and books, including *The Reason I Believe: The Basics of Christian Apologetics*. He and his wife, Julie, have 10 children and 47 grandchildren.

Dr. Ryan C. MacPherson is the chair of the History Department at Bethany Lutheran College and the author of several books, including *Rediscovering the American Republic* (2 vols.) and *Debating Evolution before Darwinism*. He lives with his wife Marie and their 6 homeschooled children in Mankato, Minnesota. He also serves as President of the Hausvater Project, which mentors Christian parents.

Pastor Steven Sparley is the Academic Dean and Assistant Pastor at Parkland Lutheran Church and School in Tacoma, Washington. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.A. in Classical Greek and went on to Graduate School in the interdisciplinary Department of Ancient Studies, where he was also an instructor of Sumerian language. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Bethany Lutheran Seminary in 1984. He has served as a parish pastor in Minnesota and Oregon, home missionary in Colorado, a foreign missionary in the Czech Republic, and as a visiting seminary professor in Ukraine and India. He and his wife are blessed with 5 children.

Prof. John Eidsmoe, a retired Air Force Lt. Colonel, is Professor of Law at the Oak Brook College of Law and Government Policy. He is also an Adjunct Professor for the Handong International Law School and the Institute of Lutheran Theology. He has served as Senior Staff Attorney at the Alabama Supreme Court and is currently Legal Counsel for the Foundation for Moral Law. He is an ordained pastor with the AFLC and serves on the Board of Lutherans for Life. As a constitutional attorney he has defended home schools, Christian schools, and the rights of Christian students and public officials. He has authored 14 books and produced numerous video lecture series. He holds seven academic degrees in law, theology, history, and political science, as well as graduating from the Air Command & Staff College and the Air War College. He and his wife Marlene have 3 children and live in rural Alabama.

About the Sponsors

ELS

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod is an American Lutheran church body of 130 congregations in full fellowship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The ELS is also a member of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC), which currently consists of 24 church bodies throughout the world in fellowship with one another. Following Jesus' command to bring the Gospel "to all nations," the ELS operates missions in seven countries around the world: Peru, Chile, India, Korea, Ukraine, Czech Republic and Latvia. See www.els.org/about.

The 2017 Synod Convention resolved to establish a **Committee on Apologetics** "to study the feasibility of establishing a center for Christian outreach that would emphasize three areas: the discernment of worldviews, compassionate apologetics, and cross-cultural evangelism" (2017 Synod Report, p. 118). The synod's resolution suggested, among other possibilities, "an annual workshop on worldview, apologetics, and/or evangelism at Bethany Lutheran College scheduled in coordination with the synod convention." Today's conference has been organized pursuant to that aim. Internet resources are in development at www.els.org/?s=apologetics.

BLC

Bethany Lutheran College is a Christian liberal arts college owned and operated by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and committed to the teachings of the Bible as expressed in the statements of faith known as the Lutheran Confessions. The college provides Christian higher education in a challenging academic environment where personal mentoring guides students to pursue knowledge, truth, and discernment for productive and fulfilling lives. Bethany Lutheran College engages students with the saving knowledge of Christ and assists them in developing their God-given talents and abilities for meaningful lives of service in the family, church, and society. A program of study grounded in the liberal arts and taught through the discerning lens of a Christian worldview equips students with knowledge, understanding, and adaptable skills. See www.blc.edu/about-us.

Bethany's **History Department** guides students in exploring the people, ideas, and events that have shaped America and the world. Most importantly, history sheds light on the religious life of all people and our faculty strive to provide a Christian perspective on historical events. See www.blc.edu/history-major.

BIBEL

The **Bethany Institute for Biblical and Ecclesiastical Languages** seeks both to show the dangers the church faces when it loses the Biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek), and what we can do to address those dangers by supporting the work of learning, retaining, and using the Biblical languages. Martin Luther warned us 500 years ago: "we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages." See bibelanguages.blogspot.com.

This conference follows the format of what is known as a "free conference," similar to format of the Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary Reformation Lectures. Participation in the conference is intended for academic discussion in a setting outside of the framework of fellowship. The presenters and participants are understood to speak for themselves, and the viewpoints they share are not necessarily representing in any official way the church bodies of which they are members.

Bethany Institute for Biblical and Ecclesiastical Languages
Apologetics Seminar, Friday, June 21, 2018
Pastor S. R. Sparley

CHRONOLOGY OF GENESIS/EXODUS ACCORDING TO THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Genesis 15:13-16 – “Then the LORD said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for **four hundred years**. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’”

Exodus 6:16-20, 25-27 – “These are the names of the **sons of Levi according to their generations**: Gershon, **Kohath**, and Merari, the years of the life of **Levi** being **137 years**. The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their clans. The sons of **Kohath**: **Amram**, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, the years of the life of **Kohath** being **133 years**. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites **according to their generations**. **Amram** took his wife Jochebed his father’s sister, and she bore him **Aaron and Moses**, the years of **Amram** being **137 years** ... These are the heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites by their clans. These are the **Aaron and Moses** to whom the LORD said: ‘Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their hosts. It was they who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the people of Israel from Egypt, **this Moses and this Aaron**.’”

Exodus 12:40-42 – “The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was **430 years**. At the end of 430 years, on that **very day**, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It was a night of watching by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.”

(The *Septuagint* (3rd cent. B.C. Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) and the Samaritan Pentateuch both read: “And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt **and the land of Canaan**, was four hundred and thirty years.”)

1 Kings 6:1 - “In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the LORD.”

(Note: *Ziv* is the Phoenician name of the second month of the year, which is why the explanatory clause is added. Hebrew would be *Iyyar*.)

Galatians 3:15-17 – “To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many, but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came **430 years afterward**, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.”

(Note: In the context of Galatians 3 the word “law” plainly refers to the moral law of God, given at Mt. Sinai, as opposed to the gospel, and not as is so often the case in the New Testament to the *torah*, the “teaching” of Moses.)

(Note: The two chronological points that Paul fixes in place are the giving of the explicit promise to Abraham, Genesis 12 and 15, and the giving of the law to Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai. This period, Paul says, is 430 years long, agreeing with the reading of the *Septuagint* and the Samaritan Pentateuch in Exodus 12:40-41. To be noted here is that the explicit citing of the Genesis 15 promise is central to Paul's argument. For it is in the very context of Genesis 15 that it is said: "And he (Abraham) **believed** the LORD, and **he counted it to him as righteousness.**")

PERIODS OF OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

Intertestamental period - from c. 400 B.C.
Post-Exilic/2nd Temple period – 539 to 400 B.C.
Babylonian Captivity – 605 to 539 B.C.
Southern Kingdom period – 722 to 605 B.C.
Post Davidic/Divided Kingdom/1st Temple period – 966 to 722 B.C.
Kingship Period – c. 1030 to 966 B.C.
Joshua/Judges Period – 1406 to c. 1030 B.C.
Passover through Wandering – 1446 to 1406 B.C.
Sojourn in Egypt proper – c. 1661 to 1446 B.C.
Sojourn in Canaan – 1876 to c. 1661 B.C.
Post-Diluvian period – ? to 1876 B.C.
Ante-Diluvian period - ? to ?

ISSUES OF EARLY OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

1. There are two fixed points for early Old Testament chronology: I Kings 6:1 and Exodus 12:40-42.
2. There are three genealogies that have a bearing on chronology: Exodus 6:16-27, Genesis 10 and 5.
3. New Testament use of Old Testament genealogies.
4. The purpose of Old Testament genealogies.
5. Time keeping through history.
6. Methods of time keeping in the ancient world: Solar/Lunar/Astral/Other.
7. Time keeping and government.

What's Worldview Got to Do with Everything?

"A Reliable and Defensible Christianity: Equipping Christians to Defend and Share the Gospel," June 21, 2018
Ryan C. MacPherson, Ph.D. (www.ryanmacpherson.com / www.blc.edu/history-major)

1. What Is Meant by "Worldview"?

- "The term **worldview** refers to any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement, or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world, and man's relations to God and the world." (David Noebel, *Understanding the Times*)
- **Weltanschauung** (Immanuel Kant; G.W.F. Hegel); **Weltansicht** (Wilhelm von Humboldt)
- "For all people **walk** [הלך] each in the name of his god. But we will **walk** in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever." (Micah 4:5) ("Walk" means "trust and travel" in Gen. 5:24, 6:9, 17:1, 24:40, 48:15, etc.)
- "Therefore gird up the loins of your **mind** [διάνοια; cf. νοῦς, "mind"; φρόνησις, "prudence"], be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pt 1:13)

2. How Can a Worldview Be Identified?

- **3 Questions:** What does the messenger say about Creation, Fall, Redemption? (Nancey Pearcey, *Total Truth*) Or, about Human Nature, Human Morality, Human Fulfillment? (Kelly James Clark and Anne Poortenga, *The Story of Ethics*)
- **8 Questions:** What is reality? What is truth? How and why did the universe come into existence? What is human nature? What's the difference between good and evil? What's the solution to evil? How will the world end? How does our culture reflect the answers to each of these questions? (David Thompson, *What in the World Is Going On?*)

3. What Does a Biblical Worldview Look Like?

- **Natural Law:** We have been created by God. We are morally accountable to God, according to His objective moral law written in our hearts (conscience) and discerned by right reason. We have grossly offended His moral law. Therefore, we deserve His wrath. Meanwhile, the family and the state, when operating in accord with the natural moral law, can constrain sin considerably, thereby protecting people's God-given rights to life, liberty, and property.
- **Biblical Christianity:** The Natural Law worldview is correct but incomplete, since it presents only the Law and not the Gospel. The Gospel ("Good News") message is that God has provided forgiveness of sins, new life, and eternal salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens the faith by which we personally receive these blessings and also equips us to love one another and to glorify God.
- **Christianity "Stinks":** Christians bear the "fragrance of Christ"—among unbelievers, "the aroma of death leading to death," but among believers, "the aroma of life leading to life" (2 Co 2:15–16).

4. Which Worldviews Have Been Especially Influential since Biblical Times?

- **Gnosticism (early church period):** Sharply distinguishing between mind/spirit/soul and body/matter, claiming that body/matter is evil and mind/spirit/soul is good. Therefore, salvation consists in obtaining enlightenment and separating oneself from the body. Two camps: 1) ascetic self-denial of bodily pleasure; or, 2) hedonistic embrace of bodily pleasure (either way, the common theme is that the body is irrelevant).
 - The incarnate God, the crucified Messiah is "to the Greeks, foolishness" (1 Cor 1:23).
 - Gnosticism was revived in the late 1900s as **Existentialism:** my own thoughts have the power to re-invent my human nature and to determine the kind of existence that I will have.
 - "I identify as a [gender alternative], and therefore you ought to treat me as such, regardless of my body."
- **Scholasticism (late middle ages):** Disproportionately emphasizing God's good gift of human reason, following Peter Abelard, *Yes and No*; Peter Lombard, *Sentences*; and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*. The *disputatio ordinaria* of the universities established a framework of logical analysis that was viewed as the method for solving any question in theology (cf. Luther's *95 Theses* and *Heidelberg Disputation*).
 - Biblical Theology + Aristotelian Physics + Aristotelian Logic = Roman Doctrine of Transubstantiation
 - Hairsplitting distinctions for kinds and degrees of sin, to which specific acts of penance were assigned.
- **Modernism (1700s and 1800s):** Elevating God's gifts of reason (logic) and the senses (empiricism) above faith, and thereby pursuing naturalistic explanations that, by excluding God, culminate in evolutionary materialism.
 - *Charles Darwin:* Complex life has evolved from simple life through chance filtered by natural selection; man has evolved from ape-like ancestors through sexual selection (males competing for females).
 - *Karl Marx:* History is driven by conflict among social classes, competing for material resources; religion is the "opiate of the people," i.e., a delusion that keeps them content in their inferior economic status.
 - *Sigmund Freud:* Human consciousness is but a projection of biological conditions; human behavior is driven primarily by the subconscious, which was shaped in earlier stages of the individual's development and the species' evolution.

- **Postmodernism (1900s and 2000s):** Since modernism has philosophical weaknesses and fails to answer life's important questions satisfactorily, each individual should feel free to conclude that his or her own answers are just as good as anyone else's—or that there really are no answers anyway.
 - *Subjectivism:* Truth is whatever I think; I make my truth, and I tolerate your truth.
 - *Relativism:* Truth is whatever we think; each culture has its own truth, and should tolerate other cultures.
 - *Nihilism:* There is no truth; questions about truth are meaningless nonsense.

5. What Does “Worldview” Have to Do with Everything from A to Z?

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Angels; Archaeology; Art | • Nature; Natural Law |
| • Bible; Biology; Body | • Origins |
| • Christ; Chronology; Communism | • Persecution; Personhood; Prayer; Psychology |
| • Demons; Dinosaurs; Dominion Mandate | • Questioning |
| • Education; Environmentalism; Eternity; Evolution | • Redemption; Righteousness |
| • Faith; Feminism; Forgiveness; Friendship | • Salvation; Sex(ism); Sin; Sociology; Soul; Spirit |
| • Geology; Gender; God; Gospel | • Tolerance; Truth |
| • Higher Criticism; History | • Unbelief; Understanding |
| • Insight; <i>Issues, Etc.</i> | • Virtue; Vocation |
| • Jesus; Judgment; Justice | • Wisdom; Worship |
| • Kindergarten; Knowledge | • Generation X |
| • Law; Life; Love | • <i>Why</i> do bad things happen to good people? |
| • Marriage; Morality | • Zen; Zoology; Generation Z |

Examples

- For applications to various academic disciplines, see www.ryanmacpherson.com/scie-320/152.
- **Angels:** non-existent (atheists; Sadducees); cute and delicate (pop Christianity); mighty warriors (Bible)
- **Art:** self-expression (postmodernism); pursuit of wisdom, goodness, and beauty to God's glory (Bible)
- **Dominion Mandate:** speciesists thinking they have license to exploit the environment (pop criticism); responsibility to preserve nature for the use and enjoyment of future generations (Bible)
- **Gender:** my self-chosen weapon for identity politics (pop culture); God's design for complementarity (Bible)
- **Marriage:** an invention of the state to foster equality and individualism (Sup. Ct.); a divinely established, lifelong union of two persons celebrating objective sexual complementarity, children, and chastity (Natural Law) and furthermore imaging the relationship between Christ and the church (Bible)
- **Why do bad things happen to good people?** God doesn't exist (atheism); God isn't good enough or strong enough to prevent evil (polytheism); good and evil are the same anyway (postmodernism); even “good” people actually deserve far worse: God, however, in His unsearchable wisdom, mercy, and power permits some evil while also working all things for the ultimate good of His beloved children (Bible)

6. How Are Worldviews, Apologetics, and Evangelism Connected?

- **Worldviews:** Discerning God's mindset, our mindset, and other people's mindset in order to align our hearts to God's will and then to build bridges to meet others in their *status quo*.
 - **Discernment** for clear judgment (remove the plank in order to remove the speck, Mt 7:1–5)
 - **Adaptability** insofar as conscience permits (becoming all things to all people, 1 Cor 9:19–23)
- **Apologetics:** following the example of Christ and His apostles in presenting eye-witness testimony as reasonable evidence for the truth of biblical claims—even while affirming some truths that surpass logic/sight:
 - **Gospels and Acts:** Hebrew Scriptures + Words of Christ + Deeds of Christ + Eyewitnesses of Christ
 - **Faith ≠ “wishful thinking”;** = trust in God, who has demonstrated His faithfulness throughout history
 - **Faith ≠ “intellectual assent”;** = Spirit-wrought trust in the words and promises of Christ
 - **Unbelief ≠ “other faiths”;** = rejection of the biblical testimony concerning Jesus Christ
- **Cross-Cultural Evangelism:**
 - **Apologetics as Pre-evangelism:** undermine false beliefs; support Natural Law
 - **Apologetics as Evangelism:** proclaim the Gospel as biblical and eyewitness/historical testimony
 - **Worldview as Evangelism:** recognizing cultural differences in order to “translate” the Gospel for others

7. How to Cultivate a Biblical Worldview?

- **Search the Scriptures:** A biblical worldview must be *biblical*. Are you reading the Bible daily? Consider the 7 reading questions (Confession, Absolution, etc.) presented here: www.hausvater.org/bible-studies/187.
- **Seek a Prophet:** “He who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully” (Jer 23:28) Is your pastor a faithful prophet of God's Word? Do you participate weekly in the divine service? Consider how the liturgy and hymnody of the church shape your worldview and shine the light of God's Word onto the world's confusion.
- **Share with Others:** Christians by their very nature (as new creations in Christ Jesus) are an Image-of-God bearing, Gospel-proclaiming people. We do this wherever God places us (*vocation*) in the family, in the congregation, and in the broader society. Consider “Where Are You in Titus 2?” (www.hausvater.org/articles/320) and “Discovering Your Vocations” (www.hausvater.org/bible-studies/328).

Why Is Apologetics Lutheran?

by Allen Quist, June 21, 2018

Definition: *Apologetics* answers the question: Is Christianity true? There are two forms of apologetics: *offensive* and *defensive*.

I. The importance of Scripture to the Christian church:

Luther told Charles V the following:

Unless I am convinced by the teachings of Holy Scriptures or by sound reasoning—for I do not believe either pope or councils alone, since they have often made mistakes and have even said the exact opposite about the same point—I am tied by the Scriptures I have quoted and by my conscience. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither safe nor right. Here I stand. God help me. Amen.^{1, 2}

And in Ephesians 2: 19-20 Paul said:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:19,20).

That is, the Old and New Testaments are the foundation of the Christian church in all its aspects, including its doctrine, its practice, and its apologetics.

II. Why apologetics is Lutheran:

A. Scripture admonishes us to be knowledgeable in apologetics.

1 Peter 3:15 states:

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer (Greek = *apologian*) to everyone who asks you to give the reason (Greek = *logon*) for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

B. Scripture admonishes us to present evidence for the gospel message (use apologetics) when speaking to others.

The last recorded admonition that Jesus gave his disciples reads as follows:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

¹ Frederick Nohl, *Luther: Biography of a Reformer* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2003), 107.

² By sound reasoning Luther meant logical conclusions based on God's Word, also known as the *ministerial use of reason*. Lutheran theologians have always recognized the *ministerial use of reason* as being necessary for dogmatics, while rejecting the *magisterial use of reason*—reason that stands in judgment over Scripture.

This means there are five parts to the Great Commission. They are: (1) go into all the world, (2) preach the gospel to everyone, (3) baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, (4) teach them to observe everything, and (5) provide them with evidence that the gospel message is true.

And in the Old Testament Isaiah admonished us to:

“Present your case,” says the LORD. “Set forth your arguments,” says Jacob’s King (Isaiah 41:21).

That is, we are told to proclaim the truth that Christianity is the only religion and/or religious position that has credible evidence for being true. All other religious positions are a blind leap of faith.

C. The Lutheran Confessions show us by example that we should give adequate study and teaching to those areas where the church is currently under attack. Such areas are largely in the field of Christian apologetics.

The Augsburg Confession includes 57 lines of exposition on the topic “Article XXIII: Of the Marriage of Priests,” but only 13 lines regarding “Article III:

Of the Son of God.” Which subject is more important? Why the difference? One of the most important attacks against the Christian faith today involves the question: Is the Bible True? This question is in the field of apologetics. Are we prepared to respond to such accusations?

D. Apologetics points us to the central truth of Scripture that we are saved by God’s grace alone through faith in Jesus the Christ.

The Apostle John said:

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30-31).

That is, the signs (miracles) Jesus performed are instrumental (methodologically) in bringing people to faith in Christ and receiving salvation as a result of this faith. Apologetics has this one purpose—to bring people to faith in Christ.

III. Applications:

- (A) Why did the church never accept the Gospel of Thomas?
- (B) How much oral tradition was incorporated into the New Testament?
- (C) Are we preparing our youth for the attacks on Christianity that they will face?

HOW A FALSE WORLDVIEW HAS ERODED BIBLICAL INERRANCY WITHIN CHURCHES

John Eidsmoe

BACKGROUND

- America's Anglican/Puritan/Presbyterian foundations
- Rise of Deism—significant in Europe, esp. France, very small in U.S.
- Rise of Unitarianism—Bible, Biblical morality, but no Trinity—arrested by Awakening.
- Rise of Transcendentalism—belief in divine spark in us connecting us with Divine.

MOVEMENTS INFLUENCING RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM

- Darwinism: Everything is evolving, growing, improving
- Progress, GE: "Progress is our most important product"
- American expansion, wealth, technology, medicine, education, paradise on earth.
- Higher Criticism: some in 1700s. Jesus taught love; Paul, Church distorted.
- Graf-Wellhausen Theory, JEDP. Wide acceptance HTL 280. Fallacies:
 1. Different names for God do not = different authors.
 2. No MSS ever discovered with J, E, D, or P. All together.
 3. No Jewish or other ancient writer ever suggested Moses not author.
 4. Jesus, OT, NT, all attribute Torah to Moses.
 5. Law already in existence in days of Josiah, 600s BC.
 6. After Exile, Ezra re-instituted Law; must have been venerable institution.
 7. During reign of Ahasuerus (485–65 BC), Jews in Persia kept Law (Esth 3:8)
 8. Samaritans kept Law, at least in part.
 9. Wellhausen assumed Hebrews illiterate; not true. Ignored archeology. Ebla Tablets; HTL 283, 284.
 10. No contradictory accounts (Gen 1–2; Ex-Deut). Ex historical account of reception of law; Deut codification of law.
 11. Why no reference to king except prophetic (Deut 16), no temple, Zion?
 12. If post-exilic, why in Hebrew rather than Aramaic?
 13. Composite authorship 19th cent fad: Shakespeare, Beowulf, Nibelungenlied
 14. JEDP rooted in Darwinism, HTL 288–29
- Existentialism. Kierkegaard 1813–1855. Leap of faith, Bible becomes Word of God.
- Social Gospel—Walter Rauschenbusch, create heaven on earth by social activism.
- Theosophist Movement late 1800s: Mme Blavatsky; denial of objective truth.

SO WHAT IS RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM?

- Denial of absolute truth. Truth is relative, subjective, evolving.
- Emphasis on man rather than God. God exists to serve man. Truth starts with man. Focus on man's works, not God's grace.
- Presumption against miraculous, supernatural, prophecy. Strained explanations. Rudolph Bultmann 1884–1976 "demythologization."
- Low view of Scripture
- Just work of man:
 - Becomes Word of God when we believe it.
 - Inspired but not inerrant.
 - Accurate in its theological concepts but not in its details.
 - Emergent Church, New Evangelicals: forget doctrine, just love Jesus.

THE DANGERS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM

- Doesn't save. Christ only teacher, example, not Savior.
- Doesn't form solid basis for morality. Morality relative.
- No basis for evangelism, missions, if Christianity no better than others.
- Some may hold onto Christianity, but their children will not.
 - Every church that has adopted liberalism is declining.
- No basis for freedom under Biblical view of law and government.
 - Germany: Teutoburg Forest, Luther, Bach.
 - But same Germany that gave us these, gave us Hitler & Third Reich.
 - Why? Heinrich Heine, HTL 819–20 fn 48
- 1800s: Leibniz rationalism, Schliermacher romanticism, Schopenhauer arianism, Nietzsche existentialism, Wellhausen higher criticism, Bultmann demythologization, Rauschenbush's social gospel created spiritual desert. Nazism.
 - America: elephant's graveyard where old German heresies go to die.

STANDING FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD

- Know God's Word
- Know Lutheran Confessions and Dogmatics
- Understand philosophies and theologies of religious liberalism
- Study and practice apologetics
- Attack ideas, not people
- Have opponents, not enemies
- Defend Biblical inerrancy as the watershed issue, beyond which is a slippery slope

HTL = *Historical and Theological Foundations of Law*, 3 vols., by John Eidsmoe (Ventura, CA: Nordskog Publishing, 2016)