

Annotated Bibliography of Christian Apologetics

Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*, Edited by Robert R. Booth (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 1996).

While this book stands as a premier presentation of presuppositionalist apologetics, it is not without its hindrances. Because Bahnsen died at an early age, the book was never completed e.g., his chapter on miracles ends mid argument. Also, the book, while excellently edited by Robert Booth, is not cohesive and its various chapters do not always complement one another. But these technical hindrances do not compare to the flaws in Bahnsen's actual presuppositionalism. First of all, his text contains Scripture references that are not relevant to the issue at hand and includes contextually inappropriate interpretations designed to support his methodology. The final chapter is an exposition of Acts 17 and is quite hermeneutically unsound at times. Next, while Bahnsen continually refers to the need for gentleness, respect and humility in our apologetic, when actually describing the unbeliever, he constantly disparages and ridicules him and such gentleness, respect and humility is nowhere to be found. Third, and similarly, Bahnsen shows no knowledge of the fact that there are any non-Christian worldviews other than naturalistic scientism rather, we are led to believe that all unbelief is the same and should be treated with the same apologetic approach. The middle section of the book, which addresses various apologetic challenges to Christianity, is actually quite helpful. The chapter on the possibility of religious language is among the best available. Unfortunately, and herein lies the forth and final critique, these chapters contradict many of the presuppositional apologetic principles and foundations set forth in the rest of the book. It is likely that some of these problems would be absent were Bahnsen able to complete the work before his untimely death, but many of them would remain and this courageous and able apologist would have represented himself, his apologetic school and his faith in a less than desirable manner.

Francis J. Beckwith, *Abortion and the Sanctity of Human Life* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2000).

In this short work, Beckwith deals with the main issues surrounding abortion in a way that will familiarize a reader new to the issue or stimulate a veteran pro-life advocate. There is a consistent theme throughout the work: the turning point of the abortion debate is whether or not the unborn is a human person. If the answer is affirmative, almost every argument in favor of abortion fails in light of the fact that abortion is the killing of an innocent life that ought to be protected. Those arguments not affected by this question fail on other, philosophical or legal grounds. Beckwith draws heavily from actual pro-abortionists to explain their view and then rebuts them systematically. While too short to be overly academic, Beckwith, in both the endnotes and an appendix, points the reader to medical, political, philosophical and theological resources for further study. This is a key work in the abortion debate and should be in the hands of anyone committed to the right to life of the unborn.

Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig & J.P. Moreland, eds., *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

This collection of essays in honor of Normal L. Geisler serves as one of the most comprehensive and, at the same time, thematically diversified apologetics texts available. 20 chapters, each authored by a respected Evangelical scholar focus on a specific apologetic issue facing the Church today. Some of the topics are rarely addressed in standard works, some are approached from perspectives heretofore unseen in popular apologetics, while others are concise presentations by experts in their fields of material which they have discussed at length elsewhere. The one drawback of the work is that a small number of the articles are written at a high-intermediate or low-advanced academic level and will be inaccessible to the beginning apologist, to whom the book is supposedly directed. In any case, all articles are well written and

share a passion for a winsome, truthful defense of Christianity that seeks to remove obstacles between the unbeliever and the God of the universe. No serious apologetic library can be without this volume.

Francis J. Beckwith & Gregory Koukl, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998).

This book serves as a very brief, popular-level but helpful refutation of the current forms of relativism in Western culture. Beckwith and Koukl offer many definitions and descriptions that clarify just what is claimed by relativists as well as how to respond to relativist arguments. Beckwith's background and expertise in law allow him to speak authoritatively on the legal issues, homosexual marriage and abortion while Koukl's experience with apologetics via radio allow him to share actual relativist worldviews that have been presented to him on-air. While not scholarly enough for academic purposes, the book will prove helpful in mobilizing the Church to defend itself against a secular culture opposed to its very existence.

James Beilby & David K. Clark, *Why Bother with Truth? Arriving at Knowledge in a Skeptical Society* (Norcross, GA: Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, 2000).

Beilby and Clark have done a masterful job at summarizing the core issues in the current epistemological debate. Modern and postmodern skepticism, which negates that we can have genuine knowledge of religious reality, ultimately has no legitimate ground to stand on because of its inadequate application of various truth tests. The authors unveil these weaknesses and then propose an evenhanded, sensible approach to attaining knowledge. Truth is something we can know and, no matter how difficult it may be to grasp religious truth, because it is the most important truth out there, we would be foolish to reject it *a priori*, as does the modern mind, or resort to a default agnosticism, as does the postmodern mind. "Beginning the journey to find genuine knowledge of God is the most reasonable thing to do with our lives" (p. 56).

Michael F. Bird & James G. Crossley, *How Did Christianity Begin? A Believer and Non-believer Examine the Evidence* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008).

Not following the standard format usually found in debate books, this apologetic gem is necessary read for any apologist at an intermediate level or higher. Bird, an Evangelical, and Crossley, a secularist, are historians and the debate is over the historical explanation for how and why Christianity developed. Rather than focus on a few central pieces of data, as most debaters of this topic tend to do, the authors move from the dating of the Synoptic Gospels to the reliability of the Gospel of John to the resurrection to the religious milieu of the first century to the significant sociological factors of the time to the relationship of Jesus and Paul to the Law, all at a deeper-than-normal level and with a different-than-usual approach. As often happens, the authors at times talk past one another. But, for the most part, Bird and Crossley go head to head, offering alternative explanations for the birth and rise of Christianity, starkly revealing the incompatibility between the theistic and secularist interpretations of history. Bird is completely open to the supernatural and presents the data — sometimes compellingly and sometimes not so compellingly — as evidencing God's intervention in history through the Person and work of Jesus Christ and the Church that bears His name. Crossley will not accept any such events and goes to great lengths to show how often-interpreted supernatural events are not much more than run-of-the-mill occurrences in the ancient world. For him, it was the perfect alignment of cultural, religious and sociological factors that allowed a mere man to be recast as God and it was the perfect balance of theological believability and political manipulation that allowed orthodox Christianity to push forward its version of history. New Testament scholars Scot McKnight and Maurice Casey offer Evangelical and secularist critiques, respectively, of Crossley and Bird, also respectively, which bring in other perspectives to the table and liven the discussion. The book's major flaw is the omission of closing, summary statements by each author. Nonetheless, the debate is as compelling as it is complex and should stand as a stimulating challenge to both Evangelical and secularist worldviews and should result in future debates of a similar nature.

Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

With a majority of historical Jesus scholarship unified in the presupposition that John's Gospel is not historically reliable, Blomberg sets out to prove just the opposite. Founded on a tremendous amount of research and interaction with seemingly every view in Johannine studies, he reveals that, in fact, John was the author of the Gospel that bears his name and that it is as historically reliable as the Synoptics. After considering the standard introductory issues with the conclusion that there is good reason to believe that the Gospel is historically reliable and having established criteria for authenticity that are reasonable and free of the *a priori* skepticism found in most studies of John, the book proceeds as a commentary focusing primarily on matters that involve historical reliability. In the end, Blomberg concludes, "one may affirm with considerable confidence that John's Gospel is true – not merely theologically ... but also historically" (p. 294). That said, historical Jesus scholarship and evangelical apologetic interaction with it must be more faithful to include John's Gospel in current discourse.

Kenneth D. Boa & Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001).

Without a doubt, Boa and Bowman have offered the apologetic community and the Church the most comprehensive, honest, contemporary survey of apologetic methodologies. The book begins with two chapters on introductory issues including the Biblical basis for apologetics and a brief historical survey of Christian apologetics that should prove helpful to every believer. From there the book examines the four general apologetic approaches (classical, evidential, reformed and fideist) in four chapters each. The four chapters on each approach deal with main apologists of the approach, 6 metapologetic issues, 6 apologetic issues and then the authors' evaluation of the approach. While many methodological surveys fail to fairly represent a particular view due to either lack of adequate space or clear bias, *Faith Has Its Reasons* uses almost 400 pages in presenting the 4 views and always ends each presentation by offering an equal number of strengths and weaknesses. As the subtitle suggests, the final chapters of the book are dedicated to proposing an approach that integrates the strengths of each of the others. While Boa and Bowman do a superb job in their presentation – offering a person-centered model that answers apologetic inquiries according to the argument or approach that best meets the need of each person – the book's major drawback consists in the brevity of this particular portion of the book. Much more could have been done in this area however, given the humility of the authors and their insistence that their way is not the best way, indeed, that there is no best way, the brevity is understandable. The book also contains a survey of other works that survey apologetic methodologies as well as an extensive bibliography. No serious apologist should be without this book and it should serve as the main text for university and seminary level apologetics courses.

Darrell L. Bock, *The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth Behind Alternative Christianities*, Foreword by Edwin Yamauchi (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2006).

With the "New School" becoming the public authority on Jesus and the early history of Christianity — as evidenced by the influence of the Jesus Seminar, the ubiquity of Bart Ehrmann and the fact that they are the sources to whom the popular media turns for the last word on all things Jesus — it was imperative that a solid Evangelical scholar take up the challenge of defending the traditional/orthodox view in light of the Nag Hammadi discoveries, the so-called Gnostic Gospels. Darrell Bock has provided us with just such a defense. Working intricately with the alternative gospels themselves, Bock reveals that there is not one distinct 2nd/3rd century view that posed a threat to the traditional view. Rather, some of the texts contain beliefs that are very similar to the traditional view, others hold a middle ground between orthodoxy and Gnosticism and, of course some are fully Gnostic. By comparing what these Nag Hammadi texts teach with the New Testament on core doctrinal issues, Bock shows that orthodoxy was early, universal and unified while Gnosticism was late, localized and disjointed. Bock wisely points out the gain in historical knowledge

that comes from learning about the early deviations from the orthodox position, but not without making it clear that the New School's theory that orthodoxy was one alternative among many that ultimately suppressed all of its competition, is historically incredible.

Robert M. Bowman, Jr. & J. Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ*, Foreword by Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2007).

While technically a theology text more than an apologetic text, *Putting Jesus in His Place* is an indispensable resource for demonstrating that the New Testament unequivocally proclaims the deity of Jesus of Nazareth. Building from a well-developed mnemonic device. i.e. HANDS—Jesus shares the Honor, Atttributes, Names, Deeds and Seat of God—the authors give ample evidence that the authorial intent of the New Testament was to present Jesus Christ as a Divine Person, a Member of the Godhead. There are more than 70 pages of endnotes that give greater detail and countless references for the reader who wants to study the specific issues in more thoroughly. Bowman and Komoszewski engage current critical and cultic thought and provide a fully Evangelical and orthodox answer to a myriad of erroneous propositions. For the skeptic or critic of the idea that the New Testament presents Jesus as the One True God, this book is the answer. For the Christian who already believes that Jesus is the One True God, this book will further deepen that belief.

F.F. Bruce, *The Defense of the Gospel in the New Testament*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1977).

Most authors, if they address the New Testament material relevant to apologetics at all, cover that material in a 10 to 20-page chapter within a larger work that has a broader purpose. Bruce gives us a thorough study of this NT material that does much more than any of these survey chapters could ever do. He doesn't do restricted investigations on popular apologetic verses or gather verses to substantiate a particular view or methodology. Rather, Bruce looks at the overall context of the NT books that have an apologetic thrust and explains just how the NT authors went about meeting the challenges that faced the Church in the first century. This approach produces results that are otherwise overlooked. For example, Bruce deals with Paul's address on Mars Hill in Acts 17, but he also places that address within the overall setting of Luke's apologetic in Luke-Acts. Thus, we learn not just how Paul dealt with sophisticated paganism, but also how Luke intended such an address to influence his intended Roman audience. Revelations of this nature abound in Bruce's work and it should be studied by any apologist with a desire to better understand the practice and purpose of NT apologetics.

F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 6th Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981).

Clearly the best and widest read introduction to the historical reliability of the New Testament, Bruce's first book remains fundamental to a well-developed apologetic library 60 years after it was written. Almost all of the arguments currently used to defend the traditional authorship, dating and authenticity of the New Testament are found here, often stated better by Bruce than any who have come after him. The author is quick to point out that historical reliability is not the *telos* of investigation but that the confirmation of the Person and work of Jesus Christ, which rests upon such investigation and can lead to a restored relationship to God through Him, is. Particularly helpful are Bruce's surveys of deeper apologetic issues. His discussion of the synoptic problem and his approach to the nature and defense of the Gospel miracles are excellent for both the budding and the master apologist. For more advanced study on historical reliability see Habermas, *The Historical Jesus* and Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* and *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel*.

W.C. Campbell-Jack and Gavin McGrath, eds., *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*, C. Steven Evans, consulting ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

Overcoming the deficiencies of Geisler's *Baker Encyclopedia of Apologetics* by soliciting contributions from over 200 Christian authors, the *New Dictionary of Apologetics* (NDA) is an absolute necessity for any institutional or personal apologetic library. While some of Geisler's entries are more in depth and he treats a number of apologists and apologetic issues that the NDA does not, the NDA should prove to have greater impact for a number of reasons. First of all, the articles in the NDA are written by experts. As outstanding a theologian/philosopher/apologist as Geisler is, he is not an expert on some of the matters he addresses in his encyclopedia. Secondly, the NDA treats a broader range of apologetic issues than does Geisler. While this fact accounts for some of the unfortunate omissions in the NDA, e.g. no entry for "Aristides", there are entries like "Urbanization" and "Globalization" as well as "Television" and "Cyberspace," subject areas not typically discussed in apologetics. A final reason that the NDA is superior to Geisler's encyclopedia consists in the 6 introductory, foundational articles that open the dictionary. These articles address key issues that all apologists think about but rarely address. The NDA is not without flaws. A number of the entries warrant much more discussion than is included and some talk about the periphery and controversial, ignoring the core of the matter. In the end, however, the NDA should, and rightly so, replace Geisler as the standard apologetic reference tool. An apologist with both of these resources at their disposal will be well prepared to face unbelief in our day.

Richard F. Carlson, ed. *Science & Christianity: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

This excellent work should broaden the science and religion debate and work to unify Christians in the struggle against the metaphysically naturalist view of science prevalent in Western culture. Rather than focusing solely on the creation-evolution debate, this book takes a step back to ask the more foundational question of how science and faith interact. Each contributor has a unique proposal for how we should relate (or not relate) our science and our theology. All authors share a fundamental Christian commitment and many of them share similar views on some aspects of science. Nonetheless, each contribution is clearly distinct from the others and serves as a viable option for Christians striving to answer this question for themselves. That each author spends a significant portion of their presentation on the creation/evolution debate in a way that distracts from the fundamental question is the greatest weakness of the book. The response portions of the book were essential but it would have been enormously beneficial if each author was allowed a final response. Science and religion courses should demand this book as a text.

D.A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006).

While Carson makes clear that he is writing from the standpoint of a believer to other believers and is not, therefore, attempting an apologetic answer to the problem of evil and suffering, there is much that is apologetically valuable in this work. Part of what it means to defend the faith is to be able to give a reasonable presentation of the coherence of Christian theism, including the Biblical perspective on the problem of evil. This is where Carson's work excels. In attempting to provide believers with Biblically consistent and theologically sound principles and structures of thought, which he does with characteristic brilliance, he is simultaneously equipping the believer to give a well-rounded presentation of the Biblical picture of God's sovereignty in light of evil and suffering. The work cannot be faulted for failing to deal with the myriad of philosophical details bound up with the problem of evil, for that is not its intent. One should look to Feinberg's, *The Many Faces of Evil* for such discussion. But for a theological, spiritual and pastoral venture into this question that avoids none of the difficulties and draws the reader into the depth and mystery of the God Who is sovereign over evil and suffering, one need look no further.

D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979).

While the debate over which translation of the Bible more accurately communicates God's Word to the world is an internal issue for the Church, Carson, in this brief and accessible work, deals with issues in New Testament textual criticism that will greatly equip the contemporary apologist in his task. 30 years ago, the KJV debate was much hotter than it is now. Today, however, former Evangelicals turned agnostic or atheist, e.g., Bart Ehrman, use textual criticism to argue for the falsity of Christianity. Carson's clear presentation of the discipline go most of the way toward a comprehensive refutation of Ehrman's claims. Knowing the complex and nuanced history of how the New Testament came to be provides the believer with confidence that most modern translations reflect the original text with sufficient accuracy, as well as assists the apologist in defending the trustworthiness of the sole Scripture upon which our faith is based.

David K. Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993).

The large majority of apologetic texts address evidence for the Christian faith and/or challenges to the Christian faith. A smaller, but growing number address apologetic methodology. Clark's work is among the very few texts that deal with the interpersonal aspects of apologetics and the proper communicative techniques that we should use when dealing with evidence, responding to challenges and applying our methodology. And he deals with these issues with a scope and wisdom that many apologists lack. How we interact and communicate with people when we defend the faith is more foundational than our methodology and more important than our handle on the evidence. Therefore, it is important that any apologist turn their attention to this area. Clark's book is definitive in this regard. Mediating and integrative perspectives on the relationship between faith and reason, advances in epistemology, the application of logic and the cultural component of apologetics all provide the apologetic world with a new way to look at how we should do what we do, not methodologically, but dialogically speaking. It is a huge hindrance to the growth and development of apologetics that this book is out of print. Regardless, an apologist who has not heeded what Clark here so lucidly proposes, is ignoring a vital aspect of the work to which he is called.

C. John Collins, *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003).

J.P. Moreland said it well in his review of this phenomenal contribution to the science-religion debate, "There is something here for just about everyone." Collins covers all bases in this amazingly accessible yet intellectually rigorous text. He sets the stage with a powerful and much-needed section on philosophical issues in the science-religion debate wherein he advances his "critical realist" approach to the issues in both disciplines. He then addresses major questions in the debate from a theological perspective, making his case for an old earth creationism, criticizing, without dismissing, other forms of creationism. Collins then returns to these and other issues, addressing the scientific data as we currently understand it. He closes with a charge to all Christians for a unified front against naturalism, as well as active engagement in the sciences by believers committed to God's truth in God's world. Collins is an engaging writer who is even-handed, even while making clear his personal positions. He interacts with many of the major players from all sides of the science-religion debate. As an unexpected bonus, the end notes are filled with much more than simply the source material behind his research. Creationism and the ID movement have made a significant advance thanks to Collins' efforts. (See Polkinghorne's *Science and Theology* for a "critical realist" methodology that is evolutionistic.)

Paul Copan, *"True for You, But Not for Me": Defeating the Slogans that Leave Christians Speechless* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1998).

Paul Copan, in this seemingly brief and popular-level apologetic work, accomplishes something quite amazing. He writes concise chapters, each of which addresses a criticism of Christianity, which are neither trite nor cursory. Each is well argued, well researched and well footnoted. There is a common general response to relativism but Copan is able to adjust it to specifically refute each criticism without being too repetitive. It's limiting factor is that the book addresses Western criticisms only. Especially welcome is the positive evaluation and use of the middle knowledge perspective on divine foreknowledge (see Corduan for negative evaluation of said perspective). This book is superior to Beckwith and Koukl's.

Paul Copan ed., *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?: A Debate Between William Lane Craig and John Dominic Crossan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998).

What could have been simply a marginally helpful transcription of a debate is, in this book, transformed into a vital addition to the apologetic discussion currently taking place. The interaction of 4 other scholars: Robert J. Miller and Marcus Borg of the Jesus Seminar perspective and Craig L. Blomberg and Ben Witherington III of the Evangelical perspective, provides challenging insight into aspects of the debate that would have been left aside without their involvement. Robert J. Miller's criticism of the apologetic project in general is an article that all apologists ought to be not only aware of, but also able to adequately respond to. The opportunity for Crossan and Craig to write concluding reflections after the debate and responses of scholars gave the book a sense of completion that one never finds when attending a live debate. Craig Blomberg and William Lane Craig prove that they deserve consideration as among today's best Evangelical scholars. This book is not one to be neglected as secondary or leisurely apologetic reading rather, it's discussion of the heart of Christianity and foundational issues in apologetics make it a necessary component to an adequate apologetics library.

Winfried Corduan, *No Doubt About It: The Case for Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997).

In probably the best introductory level work on apologetics, Winfried Corduan offers a complete proposal of how to defend Christianity. He is clearly in the cumulative case school and the whole book works together as an exercise in that form of apologetics. Many books are collections of distinct articles on various apologetic topics. Corduan deals with most of these foundational topics but each topic builds off the last and is necessary for the next. His style is engaging, although a little too culturally limited to the West. Although he ultimately rejects the approach, his presentation and consideration of the middle knowledge perspective on divine foreknowledge is heartening to read (see Copan for positive evaluation of said perspective). The vignettes that open and close each chapter, while at times excessive, provided application to each chapter and the closing questions are helpful in thinking through the issues brought up by each chapter. This is the textbook of choice for an introductory course in apologetics.

Steven B. Cowan ed., *Five Views on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000).

It is my opinion that any person with an interest in apologetics ought to study this book carefully. Most apologetic books say very little about apologetic methodology and simply propose their apologetic argument. *Five Views on Apologetics* deals almost solely with methodology with each approach argued by top representatives of each apologetic school. Responses to each method by the other contributors and the closing arguments by each allow for detailed interaction (both criticism and praise), which helps the reader in evaluating the various methods. The greatest weakness of the book was Kelly James Clark's constant use of *ad hominem* arguments. They are excessive enough to bring discredit on the school he represents. Some readers might finish the book confused and/or frustrated that there is no clearly superior

apologetic method. However, upon further reflection, this reality proves that there is a need for an integrative apologetic method i.e., one that treats every person as an individual and offers apologetic argument and evidence that speak to their specific concerns regarding Christianity.

William Lane Craig, *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision*, Foreword by Lee Strobel (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010).

Craig claims that *On Guard* is his attempt at an introductory-level apologetics text. This is the one area where the book fails to attain its intended goal. It seems that Craig is simply not able to put all of his apologetic cookies on the bottom shelf. This failure however, does not take away from the value of the book or its usefulness in the apologetic endeavor. With solid argumentation, poignant personal interludes and extremely helpful logical charts, *On Guard* serves as yet another tool for training the believer in apologetics and providing answers to questions raised by unbelievers. There are discussion questions throughout the book that can serve either as conversation starters or as invitations to dig deeper on the issues under discussion. Of added value are the study guide and the DVD series that can be used in any number of study groups dedicated to apologetics. In fact, the DVD serves as a good introduction to apologetics, while the book deals with each issue in more depth. Of particular importance are the chapters on evil, the resurrection of Jesus and Christian particularism/exclusivism. Craig has added another solid brick in the apologetic fortress that surrounds the Christian faith.

William Lane Craig, *What Does God Know? Reconciling Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (Norcross, GA: Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, 2002).

Editorial oversights notwithstanding, this booklet offers arguably the clearest and most concise presentation of the middle knowledge/Molinist position available. Due to the depth required of such a topic, the book contains advanced philosophical terminology. However, due to the popular nature of the *RZIM Critical Questions Series*, of which this book is a part, Craig explains such terminology with clarity and provides ample examples to assist the beginning reader. The book emphasizes refuting the challenge of Open Theism, which is greatly needed in our day and age. Unfortunately, it therefore gives minimal space in refuting the challenge of determinism/fatalism, which has been and will likely continue to be the more perennial challenge. With the support of sound Biblical and theological orthodoxy and the application of logical and philosophical rigor, Craig has provided us with an extremely valuable tool to further our understanding of the difficult but fundamental realities of God's foreknowledge and man's freedom.

William A. Dembski & James M. Kushiner, eds., *Signs of Intelligence: Understanding Intelligent Design* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2001).

For the newcomer to Intelligent Design studies, this should be your first text. All but the introductory chapter by Dembski were previously published as articles in the July/August issue of *Touchstone* journal, which proved to be so popular that the publishers converted it into book format. The result was the best popular introduction to ID available. Many of the contributors have published similar material elsewhere, but in such complex, specified language that it is beyond the comprehension level of the average reader. This book, by and large, avoids such specification and presents the same concepts and ideas in a simpler, more easily understandable form – all with the goal of promoting Intelligent Design to a culture and context that either presuppositionally or methodologically excludes it as an explanatory option. The most unique contributions are: Dembski's chapter on what Intelligent Design is not, Richards' chapter on the apologetic value of Intelligent Design and Gordon's chapter on ID's status as science. Readers already familiar with ID studies are referred to *Creation Hypothesis*, but even the advanced apologist will benefit from familiarizing themselves with the arguments of *Signs of Intelligence*.

Garrett J. DeWeese & J.P. Moreland, *Philosophy Made Slightly Less Difficult: A Beginner's Guide to Life's Big Questions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.)

While the title of this book may seem to indicate that only the philosophical novice should read it, nothing could be further from the truth. DeWeese and Moreland have presented the Evangelical Church with an intellectual challenge that She must take up and overcome as we move further into the 21st century. In 6 brief chapters, the authors address major philosophical issues in the disciplines of logic, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, anthropology and the philosophy of science. And the final chapter lays out their philosophical challenge to the Church. The challenge is simply this: Become philosophically conversant about your faith and make a deep Christian impact on the culture around you or let your testimony fall on deaf ears and continue to be marginalized by culture and society. Although the book is tailored for readers with little philosophical background and addresses them in a readable, engaging manner, even the academic can benefit from the wisdom and insight that the authors bring to the philosophical questions that we all face every day. DeWeese and Moreland have not only issued a challenge, they have provided resources to meet the challenge in a winsome, effective wholly Christian manner.

Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999).

One of the few books of its kind, Dulles' *History of Apologetics* is required reading both for a proper understanding of Church history and for insight into the development of apologetics as a discipline. More than anything else, this book reveals the evangelistic heart of the universal Church to defend herself against religious and intellectual attack and to answer the questions asked Her by the world. Of course, some forms of apologetics were more successful than others and some have better stood the test of time, but the overall picture that Dulles gives is a Church facing the challenges of Her enemy in every age. Being a Roman Catholic, Dulles fairly presents and evaluates both Catholic and Protestant apologetics but he is not so fair in his evaluation of conservative Biblical scholarship, himself being a proponent of higher critical methodology. The book was originally written in 1971 and therefore does not evaluate the recent explosion in apologetics and many of the founders of today's evangelical apologetic methodologies are relegated to footnotes. Dulles' evaluation of C.S. Lewis in this book is shallow and weak but one can find an excellent article by Dulles reviewing Lewis' apologetics in the June/July 2005 issue of *First Things* journal, #154. This book proves with clarity that the apologist ought to be equipped and prepared to meet the unbeliever on any ground when defending the Christian worldview to the glory of our great God. [A revised edition of the book was published in 2005 by Ingatius press. While still containing the editorial mistakes of the earlier edition an additional chapter was included that covers apologetics from the middle of the 20th century to the first years of the 21st. Unlike most surveys of contemporary apologetics, Dulles' provides information and evaluation of apologists from throughout Christendom and compares and contrasts particularly Catholic and Protestant methodologies. The additional chapter increases the value of the book exponentially.]

Millard J. Erickson, *The Postmodern World: Discerning the Times and the Spirit of Our Age* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002).

This is the most introductory and popular of Erickson's postmodernism trilogy. Unfortunately, it is the worst in many ways. He does an excellent job in summarizing the main tenets of his much more advanced work, *Truth or Consequences*, but in the course of trying to popularize the book he overstates his case at times and in trying to relate to the popular culture, reveals his inability to properly evaluate it. As in his other books, he recognizes many of the dangers and inconsistencies in postmodernism and proposes a compelling Biblical and Evangelical view of truth. However, he also concedes too much to the postmodernist and weakens his argument as a result. This book is recommended with extreme caution.

Millard J. Erickson, *Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998).

In this book, the best of his postmodernism trilogy, Erickson describes and evaluates 6 approaches to postmodernism. While I am unsatisfied with Erickson's dividing of history into premodernism, modernism and postmodernism, and while I believe that his conclusions about postmodernism are dangerous, I commend him for his very fair and detailed presentation of each of the 6 views. He does such a good job in presenting each view that when one comes to the evaluation it is easy to see the differences between them and, in my case, to disagree with his evaluation based on the understanding gained from his presentation. The book ends with a very interesting concluding chapter entitled, "Postmodern Apologetics." It is necessary to read the whole book before being able to fully comprehend this final chapter, however, it is a helpful tool for deciding how best to approach the postmodernist. This book is intended for someone with a basic understanding of the postmodern dilemma but again, represents Erickson's best work on this topic.

Millard J. Erickson, *Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

In his most comprehensive work on postmodernism, Erickson describes, evaluates and proposes a method for addressing the postmodern situation that is at once extremely helpful and quite frustrating. The strength of the book is its ability to cover the history and worldview of postmodernism and to assess it in light of a Biblical and Evangelical understanding of truth. Many of the chapters of the book serve as excellent articles on the particular subject addressed. The great weakness of the book is in Erickson's approach in evaluating postmodernism. He will often contradict himself by negatively critiquing postmodernism for something in one place while commending it for the same thing in another place. Much more harmful is his attributing responsibility to postmodernism for positive characteristics which do not rightly belong to it. The ability to recognize that everyone holds presuppositions is, no matter how neglected in our culture or any other, not an invention of postmodernism. And the Bible has a much more solid and healthy, albeit not as systematic, proposal for community than does postmodernism. Attributing these things to postmodernism gives credit where it is not due. Also, Erickson seems too willing to accommodate to the postmodernist for the sake of gaining their respect than I believe is necessary or helpful. Regardless of its many weaknesses, anyone interested in a thorough study of postmodernism will want to read this book. Those desiring a better Evangelical assessment of postmodernism should read *Truth Decay* by Douglas Groothuis.

Mike Erre, *The Jesus of Suburbia: Have We Tamed the Son of God to Fit Our Lifestyles?* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2006).

In this simple (but not simplistic) call to true discipleship to the true Jesus, Mike Erre touches on a number of apologetic issues in creative and unconventional ways. He makes a very convincing case that the modern, popular, Western version of Jesus does not match up with the Scriptural Jesus and that the Church errs when it presents this version to the world. Another challenging theme throughout the book is that evangelical Christianity often equates faith with knowledge about God rather than with a deep trust and living relationship with God. Similarly, Erre makes it clear that faith is as much about the demonstration of love and compassion as it is intellectual assent to theological truth. Erre has excellent insights into how the Church ought to engage culture and, finally, that the Church ought to be prepared to answer not just intellectual questions, which people are posing less and less, but also moral questions, which people are asking more and more. "My contention is that modern apologetic approaches are not answering these [moral] questions effectively. In a society where any claims of universality, rationality and objectivity are subject from the outset, the Christian must first persuade its audience that Christianity has something important to say and should be heard; only then should we suggest that it might be true." (p. 179)

Anthony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese, *There is ~~No~~ a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (New York, NY: Harper One, 2007).

This book will forever stand as an example of how evidence reasonably considered can change the mind of one who is open to the truth. For most of his life, Anthony Flew argued against the existence of God through his philosophical books and articles. He debated, in public and in print, a number of theists on the very question of God's existence. But after 50 years of answering the question negatively, he reversed his position and is now a devout theist. The classical cosmological and teleological arguments, revived by late 20th and 21st century scientific discoveries concerning the origin of the universe and its fine-tuning, caused Flew to abandon atheism and embrace the existence of an intelligent Designer. His explanation of this conversion is accessible but rationally compelling, putting to death claims that the "poor old man" has lost his mind. An opening chapter and an appendix by Roy Abraham Varghese, who strongly influenced Flew in the process of conversion, corroborate Flew's story and debunk the New Atheism school's common claims that the evidence under consideration is better explained naturalistically. Finally, showing that he is not ignorant of the fact that he still remains outside of the Christian camp, Flew invites N.T. Wright to pen an appendix on the case for the resurrection of Jesus, which Flew considers to be the most compelling argument available. Maybe his willingness to follow the evidence will lead this former atheist to embrace the Christian God after all. The story of this book makes that possibility infinitely more probable.

Bryan A. Follis, *Truth & Love: The Apologetics of Francis Schaeffer* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006)

This book is neither a historical nor an intellectual biography of the life of Francis Schaeffer. Rather, the book traces specifically those thoughts of Schaeffer that are apologetic in nature and it gives only the relevant historical facts that shed light on his defense of the Christian faith. Schaeffer practiced, in spite of the author's claim to the contrary, a person-centered apologetic, i.e., he dealt with each person individually, addressing their particular concerns and questions about Christianity. While some would categorize Schaeffer's method as presuppositional, most presuppositionalists reject Schaeffer for recognizing a point of contact with unbelievers, which presuppositionalism disallows. But it is this very point of contact and his intent to find it that opened the door for Schaeffer to present Christianity to an unbeliever and show them how Jesus is the answer to the tension that living in a fallen world creates. The book would have greatly benefited from closer editing; several thoughts were repeated many times in ways that didn't contribute to the flow of the book. But this problem is far outweighed by the contribution the book makes to a person-centered, integrative apologetic methodology. Francis Schaeffer is an apologist to be emulated, both for the rigor of his intellect and his passion in caring for lost souls.

Gregory E. Ganssle, *Thinking About God: First Steps in Philosophy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

For the philosophically uninitiated, there is no better starting point than *Thinking About God*. From Ganssle's engaging and personal style, to the brevity of each chapter, to his ability to simplify complex material, this book is the ideal popular introductory text in philosophy. Even those with the shortest of attention spans should be able to read this book and do exactly as author intends, i.e., learn how to think well. "I write this book because ... I would like to help some people think better about things that they already think about a little bit anyway." (p. 14) Throughout this engaging read, Ganssle introduces many basic components of philosophical thinking and logical argumentation, all while arguing cogently for the highly probable existence of God. This "philosophy in practice" is why it will engage even the nonstudent. But this positive aspect alludes to its negative counterpart — the book is not conducive for use in an introductory philosophy class at any level higher than high school due to the lack of systematization regarding the philosophical principles. Nonetheless, Ganssle has succeeded in writing a first rate philosophy text that anyone can and everyone should read. May this book advance the late 20th/early 21st century philosophical revolution.

Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999).

Being the single, most comprehensive apologetic resource available, no personal or professional library should be without this work. Geisler's many years of experience in theological, philosophical and apologetic research provide him with the authority to author an encyclopedia such as this; something that would usually be the result of the work of dozens, if not hundreds of scholars. An introductory article, if not an extended discussion of almost every major subject or important person in the history of Christian apologetics can be found here, with a depth and fairness that is not betrayed by his being committed to a classical apologetic methodology. As with all encyclopedias in the *Baker Reference Library* series, each article has a list of sources that can be sought for further investigation. Apart from the unavoidable negative consequences of having a single author write an entire encyclopedic work, which are few in this case, the only missing component is a detailed subject index. There is an article index but this is of little help when the reader is looking for a term or person that is not named in the title of an article. But as it stands, thanks to Dr. Geisler, every member of the body of Christ into whose language this work has been or will be translated has available to them a unparalleled tool to assist their defense of the faith in the 21st century.

Norman L. Geisler & Peter Bocchino, *Unshakable Foundations: Contemporary Answers to Crucial Questions about the Christian Faith* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2001).

In one of the most comprehensive and cohesive apologetics texts available, Geisler and Bocchino have provided the Church with an excellent tool in the defense of the faith. From a modified, cumulative case methodology, the authors present the self-evident truths or first principles in each discipline, show why Christianity is the only worldview in proper accordance with that first principle and then build the case for Christianity upon the discovered and revealed truths. In the opening chapters, the authors substantiate logic as a universal principle and the necessity of correspondence theory of truth. With these as a foundation, the worldview question is discussed and the work becomes a clear apologetic for Christianity. Science, law and the problem of evil are all presented as unquestionably pointing to the existence of God. The two chapters on the historicity of the New Testament and the Deity of Christ, while filled with good material, lack the excellent literary style and readability of the rest of the book. Most of the material seems to be extracted from Geisler's work on these subjects elsewhere. Turning to Bruce's, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* is an advisable alternative at this point in the book. Having established Christ as God, the authors then look to Him in the area of ethics and morals and ultimately, the destiny of the believer and unbeliever. The book concludes with an application of the principles set forth in the book to the questions of abortion, euthanasia and eugenics. Although the book carries a cultural limitation due to its lengthy discussions of U.S. governmental and legal realities, the book can and should still find relevant application outside of the U.S. setting.

Norman L. Geisler & Ronald M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook on Christian Evidences* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990).

When Skeptics Ask is not an advanced apologetics text but it is doubtful that you can progress properly in the field without considering it. The writing style leaves much to be desired and there are a number of unsubstantiated claims that should have been left out of their arguments however, it is still a recommended reference book for anyone with more than a passing interest in apologetics. Particularly helpful are the many charts, and diagrams used to illustrate various arguments and points. The book is unique for an introductory text in that it deals with archaeology and the afterlife – two areas that are often overlooked. While clearly not among the best resources available, this book does make a significant contribution to the rediscovery of apologetics in our age.

Norman L. Geisler & Paul K. Hoffman eds., *Why I am a Christian: Leading Thinkers Explain Why They Believe* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001).

16 individual chapters written by 14 different scholars, all addressing main tenets of the Christian faith, this book is a wonderful addition to the Church's current apologetic endeavor. For a beginning apologetics student, a believer attempting to deepen their faith or for a non-believer investigating Christianity, *Why I am a Christian* offers an excellent overview epistemology, theism, supernaturalism, Bibliology, and Christology. Most authors have presented their material in greatly expanded forms elsewhere, meaning that each chapter is a concise summary of an issue over which they have considerable authority. An unique aspect of the book are the chapters by John S. Feinberg, J.P. Moreland and Ravi Zacharias which discuss more personal reasons for and examples of their faith in Christ. The weakness of the book is the very out of place and simplistic Gospel presentation in the afterword by Josh McDowell. God works in mysterious, miraculous and myriads of ways – it is my prayer that He will use this great book in spite of its conclusion. Regardless, this book is a recommended addition to any apologetic collection.

Gary R. Habermas, Antony G. N. Flew & Terry L. Miethe, *Did Jesus Rise From the Dead? The Resurrection Debate* (Eugene, OR; Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1987).

In this lively debate, Habermas ably defends the New Testament assertion that Jesus rose from the dead and made appearances to His followers after His resurrection. Flew's negative arguments center on two issues: 1. For an extraordinary event you must have extraordinary evidence, which the resurrection of Jesus does not and 2. Paul's vision of Jesus was not an objective, external experience that supports a physical resurrection of Jesus. Habermas, often and with clarity, sets forth the evidence for the resurrection that does exist, namely the creed found in I Co. 15, and challenges Flew to explain these facts. He also clarifies why Paul's language about his own Jesus experience does imply a physical resurrection. Flew spends much of his time reiterating his two claims rather than responding to Habermas' arguments and thus, in the estimation of the judges, loses the debate. But this doesn't mean that Flew's questions are not worthy of contemplation. They do need to be addressed and, throughout the course of the book (both the formal debate, the follow-up discussion and in the responses by Pannenberg and Packer) are successfully addressed. Surely Flew, or another critic, could have mounted a better case against the resurrection if he had been more prepared. Regardless, Habermas has an incredibly powerful argument that supports faith in the One Who was raised from the dead 2000 years ago.

Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, 2nd Edition (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996).

As one of the leading Evangelical Jesus scholars, it is fitting that Dr. Habermas' book is considered one of the best available in the field of Jesus studies. The first portion of the book is an excellent survey, with evaluations, of current opposing viewpoints to the traditional understanding. Habermas then considers the pre-New Testament and nonBiblical evidence for the life of Christ. Being an evidential apologist, Habermas often develops his arguments according to minimal facts i.e., the facts that the majority of scholars will grant as proven or authentic. This work is no different and, using this argument, he identifies 129 definite historical facts about Jesus that agree with and confirm the Gospel as presented in the New Testament. Also included is an excellent essay on historiography, which should be read before beginning the book, and an apologetic outline for defending progressively the trustworthiness of the New Testament, the historicity of Jesus and the New Testament's miracle claims namely, the resurrection of Jesus.

David G. Hagopian, ed., *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, Foreword by Norman L. Geisler (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, 2001).

Unfortunately, this 300-page book would need to be edited down to about 100 pages in order to find correspondence between its contents and the expressed focus of the debate. None of the authors

can keep from addressing the other hot topic creation issues while trying to discuss the creation days of Genesis. Fortunately, those 100 pages that actually do address the Genesis creation days contain superb debate between the 24-hour view, the day-age view and the framework view. Again, unfortunately, in spite of the expressed desire of both the editor and the author of the foreword, the authors often engage in less than honorable debate tactics throughout the course of the book, disparaging each other in ways that taint inter-Christian dialogue. The evidence of unity of the body of Christ is sorely lacking in this exchange and the powerful message of creation is clouded as the authors lambaste one another page after page. But again, fortunately, in spite of the *ad hominem*s, straw men and begged questions, the authors of the book display their scholarly prowess and dedication to the authority of Scripture that leaves the reader in awe of the richness of God's creative activity. J. Ligon Duncan III and David W. Hall (the 24-hour view), Hugh Ross and Gleason L. Archer (the day-age view) and Lee Irons with Meredith Kline (the framework view) are all to be commended for their exegetical, theological, Church historical and scientific research as the search to properly understand the Genesis narrative continues.

William Hasker, *Metaphysics: Constructing a World View* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983).

This brief primer is a good introduction to the major issues in metaphysics and lays out a clear methodology for engaging metaphysical questions. What the book does not do, however, is give a succinct description of metaphysics. While the opening chapter explains the need for Christians to use philosophy to understand and communicate the essence of their faith, and does so in compelling fashion, the words would have been better spent clarifying the basics of the discipline. This would have brought unity to the chapters that follow, each of which deals with a major area of metaphysical inquiry. In spite of this drawback, Hasker gives lucid explanations and helpful examples of the major metaphysical options in each area of inquiry, critiquing those he finds unfounded or inadequate and applauding those he considers viable. Reader beware: While Hasker is clearly a Christian theist and argues convincingly for the metaphysical foundations for the Christian faith, he comes to certain metaphysical conclusions that many Evangelicals might find unacceptable.

Craig J. Hazen, *Five Sacred Crossings: A Novel Approach To a Reasonable Faith* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2008).

There are few modern fictional stories with apologetic intent and import that are nothing more than supplementary additions to books that focus on apologetics proper and use propositional means of communication. Dr. Hazen's book stands out among those few. He creates a believable world with believable characters in believable circumstances and allows the story to deliver Christian truth naturally as that story unfolds. The result is a sense of certainty that the unbelieving characters in the story are much closer to understanding and accepting Jesus Christ as the "transcendent Deliverer" than they were before having met Dr. Jernigan, the story's main character. The book should help any apologist to value narrative in the defense of the faith. It should help believing non-apologists to see how beautiful, coherent and relevant their faith is. And it should help unbelievers to consider, or reconsider, Christianity as the one true story that can make sense of this world we live in.

Christopher Hitchens & Douglas Wilson, *Is Christianity Good for the World? A Debate*, Foreword by Jonah Goldberg (Moscow, ID: Canonpress, 2008).

As a key, if not the major player in the New Atheism movement, Christopher Hitchens and his influential ideas deserve to be engaged at many levels and in many formats. Fortunately, Hitchens is quite eager to participate in any and every format in order to promote the negative answer to the question posed in this book. Douglas Wilson argues the positive answer to the question, although neither of them stick to the point very consistently throughout the debate. Part of the problem is that Hitchens' broader agenda is to vilify religion in general, the major point of his bestseller, *god is not Great*. Most of the claims

he makes to Wilson are restatements of what he's already said there. The other problem is that Wilson—a presuppositionalist—spends most of his time trying to show the absurdity of Hitchens' positive statements about truth and morality, given atheism. But these problems show only that the book is poorly titled, not that the dialogue isn't engaging and provocative (as anything involving Hitchens will be). Wilson carries the day, it seems, because Hitchens isn't able to adequately answer Wilson's questions, he merely dismisses them as unnecessary for establishing the basis of truth and morality. Wilson matches Hitchens' sharp and sometimes biting literary style, not considering it inappropriate to be offensive to someone as offensive as Hitchens. This particular volley will not be the turning point in the broader match between theism and atheism, but it is worthy of consideration as a unique, accessible and witty exchange.

Klaus Issler, *What Does It Mean To Be Human? Participating in the Game of Life* (Norcross, GA: Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, 2002).

In this unique volume of the RZIM Critical Questions Booklet Series, Klaus Issler construes the human search for meaning and purpose as analogous to a game. The major components of life are all similarly major components in most games: place, pieces, the act of playing, the players and points. In unpacking how each of these game components reflect life and how we live it, Issler throughout reveals the truth claims of the Christian worldview in new and winsome ways. Especially provocative is the idea that the evidence for ID, which is usually used to argue for the existence of a Designer, points to the fact that earth is the sole playing board upon which the Designer intended the game of life to be played. Also eye-opening is the observation that the "default settings" for each player in the game will lead us to lose the game. We need to give ourselves over to the intentions of the Game Master in order to play the game rightly and to win. For anyone seeking a fresh perspective on this age-old apologetic concern, Issler compellingly provides.

Phillip E. Johnson, *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

Aimed at a broader audience than his other works, Johnson here puts forward the basic core of his criticism of evolutionism with accessibility and clarity. Anyone not familiar with the basic debate between the intelligent design movement and evolutionary naturalism would do well to start with *Defeating Darwinism*. Johnson elucidates the negative cultural impact of evolutionary naturalism, especially since the Scopes trial of 1925 and its exaggerated media reproductions of the 50s and 60s. Extremely poignant are Johnson's challenges to teachers and students to engage the controversy with critical thinking and intellectual rigor. The weakest aspect of the book is the chapter 5, "Intelligent Design." Unlike the rest of the book, Johnson here dedicates several pages to the distinction between information and matter and to irreducible complexity when it would have been much more helpful and in keeping with the purpose of the book to state the core of ID and its main goals. In spite of this one departure, *Defeating Darwinism* is a crucial component to Johnson's "wedge" strategy (fleshed out in chapter 6) and an essential piece of the ID puzzle.

Phillip E. Johnson, Denis O. Lamoureux, et al., *Darwinism Defeated? The Johnson-Lamoureux Debate on Biological Origins*, Foreword by J.I. Packer (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1999).

It is essential in a debate to consider both sides of an issue. In this work we have the critical and effective response of a theistic evolutionist to Phillip Johnson's antievolutionism presented in his *Defeating Darwinism*. Following the exchange between Lamoureux and Johnson are articles by both theistic evolutionists and intelligent design creationists that clarify both positions and constructively advance the debate. Regarding the exchange between Johnson and Lamoureux, the latter is the clear victor as Johnson completely fails to respond to Lamoureux's rebuttal of his scientific claims and to the scientific evidence put forward by Lamoureux in favor of evolution. However, Johnson has always presented himself as the

sharp edge of the ID wedge and trusts that other ID creationists will take up the task of developing science from an ID perspective after the thick shell of atheistic, naturalistic evolutionism around science has been penetrated. This book sustains Johnson's claim as several of the book's ID authors (Stephen C. Meyer, Michael J. Behe and Rikki E. Watts) answer the science presented by the book's evolutionists. As the ID movement admits, it has a lot of work to do and the challenges posed by the evolutionary perspective are cogently presented by the likes of Lamoureux, Howard J. Van Till, Keith B. Miller and Michael W. Caldwell. These authors provide incontrovertible evidence that theistic evolutionism is not necessarily the wholesale acceptance of atheistic, naturalistic science. Rather, a Christian can believe in evolution and have a robust faith in a powerful and active God. The exchange presented in this book is lively and productive, revealing strengths and weaknesses in both positions and should prove to deepen the perspective of all in the debate. For those with a rudimentary understanding of the creation/evolution controversy and who have read Johnson's *Defeating Darwinism*, this book is highly recommended.

Preston Jones, ed., *Is Belief in God Good, Bad or Irrelevant? A Professor and a Punk Rocker Discuss Science, Religion, Naturalism and Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006).

In this dialogue between historian, Preston Jones, and Bad Religion lead singer and Ph.D. in zoology, Greg Graffin, the reader will find the raw and real interaction of apologetics, rather than the prepared and formal stuff of academic debates. This has its positives and negatives. Negatively, since neither Preston nor Graffin have formal training in theology, philosophy or religion in general, many of the spoken and unspoken ground rules for this type of discussion are completely ignored. This means that questions raised are not addressed and fallacies committed are not confronted. It is clear that Graffin has no training in philosophy or theology, yet he speaks authoritatively of their shortcomings, failing to realize that most of what he says has no basis in the science, of which he is an expert, but is founded upon a philosophy of science which stands behind everything he says. Needless to say, his philosophy of science — a strong scientism claiming that the empirical method is the only way to have genuine knowledge — does not stand up to rational scrutiny and has been effectively criticized by J.P. Moreland, William Lane Craig and others. Jones, also due to his lack of theological/apologetic training, misses key opportunities to address Graffin's questions and criticisms of Christianity of which someone familiar to such a discussion would take advantage. Positively, however, because they are expert academics in their fields and very intelligent men in general, Jones and Graffin carry on a very stimulating conversation, it is engaging and interesting on every level. It is amazing that Graffin and Jones were able to carry out such a dialogue for so long via email and that such a haphazard style of communication lends itself to such a good book. In the end both faiths, Christianity and naturalism, are given a fair hearing in a way that will enlighten the reader to new insights regarding how apologetics works (and sometimes doesn't work) in today's world.

Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, Edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe, Reprint Edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995) 163-187.

Likely the most widely recognized of the early apologists, Justin, in his first apology, expands on the apologies that came before him and set the tone for many to follow. Along with his often criticized but quite understandable underdeveloped trinitarianism and overzealous search for Christ in the Old Testament, we find in Justin a clear, fair and reasonable appeal to a government that is at best apathetic and at worst antagonistic toward Christianity. After revealing the injustice of convicting Christians of wrong based on little or no concrete evidence, Justin gives his own evidence of the evil and wrongdoing in the culture and habits of the Greco-Romans themselves. The middle of the apology cites countless Old Testament passages and prophecies that have been, in Justin's estimation, fulfilled by Christ. The final section contains Justin's attempt to prove that many Greco-Roman philosophical and religious beliefs have the Old Testament as their foundation and were simply misunderstood and misapplied by those who

developed the Greco-Roman worldview. Scattered throughout are references to 2nd century Christian practices, which help us understand how the post-New Testament Church developed. Justin reveals an unstated but healthy relationship between faith and reason that has served and should serve the Church in its attempt to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Justin Martyr, *Second Apology*, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, Edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe, Reprint Edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995) 188-193.

In what serves as a concrete example of the general Roman injustice referred to in his *First Apology*, Justin, here in his *Second Apology*, writes an appeal on behalf of several Christians who have been imprisoned quite recently for little other than being identified as such. This real life situation sets the stage for another attack against Roman ignorance and unjust discrimination in government, followed by an explication and defense of Christianity. Included in these sections are discussions on creaturely freedom, a primitive form of the anthropic principle and, unlike his *First Apology*, which mentioned the truth that some philosophers prior to Christ had ... , a distinct presentation on why Christ is greater than any other philosopher. More is said about the uniqueness of the Christian way of life and why it is superior to any other, even if temporarily, adherence to it results in death.

Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

F.F. Bruce's excellent book on the reliability of the New Testament documents demanded a companion volume on the reliability of the Old Testament documents. After almost 60 years since the completion of the former, Dr. Kaiser rose to the challenge of penning the latter. His book not only addresses OT reliability but also its relevancy. He applies his hermeneutical mastery to the OT text and provides the reader with a primer on how to apply the OT to our contemporary situation. Unfortunately, it is this latter third of the book that is the strongest. The first two-thirds of the book, which address the issue of reliability, do not measure up to the brilliance of Bruce's offering. In fact, it doesn't measure up to the brilliance of Kaiser's other works either. The writing is poor, there is abundant redundancy and multiple editorial mistakes exist. The material and research needed to prove the OT reliable is available in the book, and what is provided is strong, but it is presented quite poorly and often quite confusingly. Only because of the lack of introductory level resources on OT reliability is this book recommended.

John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Battle for the Beginning: The Bible on Creation and the Fall of Man* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2001).

Being primarily a collection of sermons, this book does not deal with many of the issues in the creation/evolution or young earth/old earth controversies. However, for a collection of sermons, MacArthur does effectively address the threat that naturalistic evolutionary theory poses to a Christian understanding of human origins. The introduction and the first two chapters are the most apologetic of the book while the remaining serve as a standard, young earth exposition of Genesis 1 through 3. MacArthur makes some indiscriminately preposterous claims about theistic and atheistic evolutionists and fails to adequately address the full ramifications that the fall may have had on nature and its processes. This book would need to be read along with several others if someone wanted to properly understand the human origins dilemma.

Ronald B. Mayers, *Balanced Apologetics: Using Evidences and Presuppositions in Defense of the Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984).

For the apologist without the time to invest in Boa and Bowman's extensive *Faith Has Its Reasons*, this book will serve as a shorter, more accessible introduction to an integrative, person-centered apologetic approach. However, even for those committed to a particular apologetic methodology, this book contains studies absent from most works and should be in the possession of any serious student of apologetics. The chapters on New Testament and early Church apologetics are phenomenal, second only to Dulles' *A History of Apologetics*. Mayers' survey of apologists from previous centuries, who were the forerunners of today's various methodologies, while not as detailed as the discussions in Boa and Bowman or Dulles, is well done and helpful in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each apologist. The final chapter of the book is an excellent presentation of how both evidences and presuppositions can be used in concert, even if it does not deal with all of the problems or answer all of the questions that arise when presuppositionalism and evidentialism collide. The book contains a very helpful glossary of theological and philosophical terms that pertain to apologetic discussions. Mayers is not the best writer, nor is his work without its deficiencies, however, he has provided us with a first-rate study that touches on several issues often ignored in apologetics today.

Scot McKnight, *Who Was Jesus? Understanding His Identity in Light of Historical Scholarship* (Norcross, GA: Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, 2002).

McKnight's unique approach to understanding who Jesus was understood to be in His day reaffirms anew what orthodox Christianity teaches about Him and supplies us with a fresh method for defending that view in light of modern critical thought. He begins by surveying what various modern critical scholars have to say about Jesus, revealing that there is a lack of consensus among them. He then proceeds to look at the New Testament to see how Jesus was understood by the crowds, by His opponents and by His followers. These three later perspectives (all derived from the Gospels) show much more unity and coherence than the modern critical approaches and support the claims of the remainder of the New Testament and the teachings of the Church. McKnight is too fond of his own sense of humor but that can be forgiven in light of his contributions to Jesus scholarship. The one major weakness of the book is the absence of any distinct defense of the historical reliability of the Gospels upon which he bases all of his argument. He makes some comments which addressing these issues but a short defense would help to round out the work. Nonetheless, the book is a welcome addition to Jesus studies and apologetics alike.

Chad V. Meister, *Building Belief: Constructing Faith from the Ground Up* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006).

Amidst a sea of introductory apologetic texts, Meister's stands out in a number of ways. First of all, he develops a cumulative case system according to a pyramid paradigm that is both easy to remember and logically consistent. One moves from the lower, broader levels of the pyramid, like the existence of truth, the worldview concept and the basis for theism to the particularly Christian levels of the pyramid like scriptural revelation and the resurrection. The peak of the pyramid is the Gospel. And here is the second area where Meister's book stands out. In many of the apologetic texts that end with a Gospel presentation, the approach is usually some take on the 4 Spiritual Laws that will often include the testimony of the author's path to Jesus. While those are valuable, Meister's concluding chapter is preferable. He gives a basic theology of the Kingdom of God concluding with an invitation to Kingdom living. He helps the reader to understand the nature of what it means to step out of the kingdom of darkness and into the Kingdom of light, emphasizing equally the individual and corporate aspects of Christianity. It's unique and compelling. The last valuable component of Meister's text is the depth of discussion in each argument. His book is short and so there aren't a lot of arguments discussed but for those that are included Meister states the argument, thoroughly develops the rebuttal and then gives adequate space to the counter argument. The reader comes away quite informed on those arguments that are included. *Building Belief* is a

highly recommended text for all apologists. It will introduce the novice to the discipline and will sharpen the skills of the veteran.

Terry Miethe & Gary R. Habermas, *Why Believe? God Exists! Rethinking the Case for God and Christianity* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1993).

The flaws in this book are slightly outweighed by its contributions to apologetic thought. The flaws include the fact that it is now somewhat dated. Books that deal with scientific specificities often become so and there is no exception here. Also, Terry Miethe has an often difficult-to-follow writing style that makes his half of the book somewhat laborious to read. While offering great reminders to Christians not compromise our message with an inconsistent life or through a poor debating presence in the book's appendices, Miethe makes a number of inappropriately disparaging comments toward atheists and evolutionary naturalists. Another flaw of the book is its overly confining structure that results in excessive, unnecessary repetition, that in turn leaves less space for a better development of the treated issues. Habermas' portion of the book is a much better read with a more respectful tone. His proposed solution to the problem of evil and evidence for the resurrection of Christ are good introductions to both issues. The book as a whole is an adequate introductory overview of a number of apologetic issues, although there are much better resources available. The book has an extensive, while dated, bibliography that can lead the reader to many more resources on the topics discussed in the book.

John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity: A Vigorous, Convincing Presentation of the Evidence for a Historical Jesus* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1965).

While somewhat dated, Montgomery's book serves as a helpful and accessible introduction to the historical Jesus question. He addresses many of the problems that are still raised by secular historical research today. His exaggerated writing style keeps the reading interesting but given that he often gives less than complete answers and explanations, a person must turn to Bruce or Habermas for fuller evidence and more scholarly presentation. The transcription of a 1965 panel discussion including Montgomery, Carl F.H. Henry and others reveals that many of the questions debated today about the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are not new.

J.P. Moreland ed., *The Creation Hypothesis: Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer*, Foreword by Philip E. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

While this book is one of the earliest works of the Intelligent Design movement, it remains one of the most important. Moreland and ten other highly qualified scientists, philosophers and theologians band together to show the logical circularity and unscientific nature of philosophical and methodological naturalism, the evidential and statistical bankruptcy of natural selection and evolutionary theory as well as the coherence and reasonableness of intelligent design or special creationism. The book is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the philosophical aspects of naturalism and intelligent design, the second looking at specific proofs against evolution and naturalism, and for design, from various branches of science. A great strength of the book is the use of contemporary research of and abundant quotations from scientists who believe naturalistic evolutionary theory. This is especially powerful when pointing out the widespread belief (among naturalists) that most of the evidence for the origin of the universe and life in general point to and intelligent designer. A unique contribution, generally uncommon to the argument against evolution and for intelligent design, is the chapter on human language capacity. Not only do humans display linguistic abilities exceedingly beyond that of any other living being, also our capacity is beyond that which can be accounted for by any naturalistic theory.

J.P. Moreland & Kai Nielsen, *Does God Exist? The Debate Between Theists and Atheists* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1993).

If a reader desires a definitive answer to the question of this book, they should look elsewhere. However, if the reader is looking for excellent examples and in-depth explanations of various forms of theistic and atheistic arguments for and against God's existence, this book more than adequately succeeds. In the formal debate portion of the book, which includes discussion about God's existence as well as a discussion on theistic and atheistic morality, Moreland and Nielsen seem to talk past one another. Moreland argues evidentially while Nielsen argues linguistically. Moreland does not satisfactorily respond to Nielsen's argument while Nielsen basically refuses to enter into Moreland's argument at all. But that is not all there is to the book. Anthony Flew and Keith Parsons provide alternative atheistic presentations while William Lane Craig and Dallas Willard do the same for theism. Craig, likeminded in apologetic methodology to Moreland, does not fail to bring strong critiques against Moreland's presentation while Dallas Willard provides a uniquely different and powerful argument for God's existence. Peter Kreeft's introduction and conclusion are very well done. It would have been helpful, however, to read an atheistic perspective on the, "what now?" question answered by Kreeft in his conclusion.

J.P. Moreland & Tim Muehlhoff, *The God Conversation: Using Stories and Illustrations to Explain Your Faith*, Foreword by Lee Strobel (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007).

This short book contains a wealth of apologetic resources for those engaged in active apologetics. Some reviews refer to it as an introductory apologetics text but that misses the mark. The book assumes a working knowledge of the major apologetic issues, giving only very brief treatments of the traditional arguments. The bulk of the book, focuses on apologetic conversation pieces to help the believer talk with those who may not follow nor understand the relevance of the formal arguments. Film episodes, news stories, historical and literary figures and many other everyday examples are provided to help a person connect the apologetic truths of the Christian faith to real life. Every apologist should have this book on their shelf and refer to it as often as they encounter those who have questions about the faith. Moreland and Muehlhoff are to be commended for this practical addition to the Evangelical apologetic project.

J.P. Moreland, *The God Question: An Invitation to a Life of Meaning* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers: 2009).

It would not be outrageous to guess that if a first-rate Christian philosopher—one who has spent two-thirds of his life propounding the deepest aspects of Christianity in professional and academic settings—attempted to present the basics of those aspects to an audience unfamiliar with them, that confusion and misunderstanding would result. Not so with Moreland's, *The God Question*. Moreland speaks primarily and directly to the skeptic of Christianity and, secondarily, those believers who have not been introduced to some of the basic issues in Christian philosophy and spirituality. What he's said in thousands of pages of technical work in the past on arguments for the existence of God, the historical reliability of the New Testament and how to live a life of genuine spirituality and happiness, he says here in just 200 pages of conversational prose. And not only is he able to communicate these complex issues clearly, he does so winsomely, with passionate conviction and genuine concern for those who do not yet know God. This is a book to give to anyone who is interested in the rationality, coherence and meaning of a vibrant life as a disciple of Jesus but who isn't yet able to plunge into the intellectual deep end of the Christian faith. Reading this book will move that person toward those deep waters, armed with many of the devices necessary for staying afloat as they get there.

J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1997).

In order to practice apologetics clearly, correctly and convincingly, one must have an adequately developed mind. That is why J.P. Moreland's book, while primarily addressing spiritual formation, is foundational for an apologist to master. Moreland offers a challenge to Christians to be what God intends them to be, "If we are going to be wise, spiritual people prepared to meet the crises of our age, we must be a studying, learning community that values the life of the mind" (p. 39). Even though only one chapter specifically addresses apologetics, every chapter advances the idea that Christianity is rational and that we should use our minds as much as we use our other God-given faculties in living out our faith. Doing apologetics well requires a disciplined mind; this book provides a method for acquiring such a mind.

J.P. Moreland & John Mark Reynolds, eds., *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999).

If one is looking for a detailed discussion about either the scientific or the Biblical evidence for the major views on origins, this is not the book to read. However, if one desires to read an in-depth dialogue between these views about their philosophical and theological foundations, each of which are diametrically opposed to atheistic naturalism, there is not a better discussion. Paul Nelson and John Mark Reynolds promote young earth creationism, fully aware of the evidence that seems to contradict their view and the poor history of the view in terms of its exclusivism and improper methodology. They spend most of their time proving that young earth creationism has a place at the table, is intellectually exciting and that the traditional/literal understanding of the Biblical text should not be abandoned without much more evidence and consideration. In arguably the best presentation of the book, Robert C. Newman promotes a well-developed old earth creationism, showing that this view is the most balanced between accepting the authority of Scripture and the findings of science. Howard J. Van Till promotes what he calls the fully-gifted creation view (titled "theistic evolution" by the editors) and argues that the "scientific fact" of evolution is fully compatible with a God who would gift His creation with everything necessary for self-organization and transformation. The scholarly interaction of the book is tremendously enhanced through the responses of Walter L. Bradley, John Jefferson Davis, J.P. Moreland, Vern S. Poythress, Richard H. Bube and Phillip E. Johnson, each of who give critiques of the presentations from their own view concerning origins. With the exception of the theistic evolutionists in the volume, who write disparagingly about ID, this book provides great support for the rationality and reasonableness of the intelligent design movement.

Tom Morris, *Philosophy for Dummies* (Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 1999).

If one were to read only one book on philosophy, this should be it. Tom Morris has provided a thorough introduction to the subject from a theistic position that is readable and engaging without dodging any of the difficult issues that are so ubiquitous in philosophy. And because the book is part of the hugely popular "For Dummies" series, it will be read by many who would otherwise avoid or be ignorant of the other high quality Christian philosophy contributions put out by Evangelical publishing houses. Not only does Morris address the major issues, such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, anthropology and philosophy of religion; he also takes on issues that others often fail to address, such as life after death and the meaning of life. A major strength of the book are the opening chapters, which address the nature of philosophy and the importance of the philosophical endeavor. Because of his experience, expertise and popularity, Morris is able to cogently make the case that we all are engaged in philosophy, every day, and so it behooves us to do so intentionally, with passion and precision. Our lives will be more satisfactory for the having done so. While some readers will take exception with certain positions that Morris takes, they cannot criticize him for not taking most other positions into account; Morris is very inclusive and generous on that score. The book would be more valuable if Morris would have included a major section on logic, which, in the current edition is reduced to a breakout box on one page. (Of course, the book exemplifies

rigorous logic throughout). Nonetheless, the publishers did the Western world a huge service philosophically (and did Christianity a huge service apologetically) by inviting Morris to write this book.

Paul K. Moser, Dwayne H. Mulder & J.D. Trout, *The Theory of Knowledge: A Thematic Introduction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Moser, Dwayne and Trout have provided the contemporary philosophical world with a readable yet academically rigorous introduction to epistemology in this brief but powerful work. As the subtitle connotes, all of the various aspects of the standard definition of knowledge—defined as justified, true belief—are unpacked thematically, with clarity and often, with extremely helpful examples. A number of epistemological alternatives to the standard definition are presented and critiqued, e.g., relativism and the correspondence theory, along with a critique of radical epistemological skepticism. A key chapter addresses the sources of knowledge, i.e., the various means by which we come to know things. All of the chapters set the stage for the presentation of the authors' own novel epistemological theory, which they have called, "broad explanationism." This theory is an epistemological modification of "inference to the best explanation," and states that we have knowledge when we believe something, when that thing is true and when it is able to best explain all other corresponding factors under discussion. The major weakness of the book is that one of the authors writes in a significantly different (more difficult) style than the other two, the result being that a number of chapters are less easily digestible. The strengths of this book far outweigh this minor weakness, however, and believers will be better equipped to face unbelieving epistemological challenges more boldly and knowledgeably thanks to it.

Paul K. Moser, *Why Isn't God More Obvious? Finding the God Who Hides and Seeks* (Norcross, GA: Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, 2000).

"Proper knowledge of God, according to Jesus, requires your standing in a humble, faithful, and loving child-parent, or *filial*, relationship to God as your righteously gracious Father" (p. 10). Because the skeptic that usually asks the question that serves as the book's title is not willing to enter such a relationship, Moser argues, he will not be able to gain this proper knowledge of God. The question, then, is not whether God has adequately revealed Himself but why we fail to come to Him on His terms, under which He provides abundant evidence of His reality and presence. Moser's style of writing and careful argumentation should disarm even the most hardened atheist, causing them to reconsider their stand against the God of the universe, Who, in and through His Son, offers us a new life, reconciled to God and empowered to love our fellow man. This powerful book will help any apologist answer the question at hand, while growing him into a more humble, loving witness to God's great glory.

Kenneth A. Myers, *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1989).

The two main strikes against this book are its absurdly ridiculous title and its outdated references to media forms that are two decades old. The subtitle brings enough clarity that a person can understand the aim of the book in spite of the poor title. And one can overcome the references to cassette decks and forgotten TV shows by imagining iPods and contemporary shows in their place. With that slight shift Myers becomes as relevant today as he was when he wrote the book. He explains the drastic differences between high culture and pop culture, between receiving art and using art, why it is that pop culture is almost totally incapable of the former and how the latter hinders personal growth and development, fostering the decay of society. Myers paints a vivid picture of how we got where we are, how Churches can guard against being taken captive by pop culture forms and what Christians can do to be reasonable and relevant to a world dominated by the simple and immediate. While there is room for disagreement with Myers on the application of his principles, those principles are Biblically grounded, incorporated into a fully-orbed Christian worldview; just the kind needed to develop an effective and winsome cultural apologetic.

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995).

The reality of sin, being tied as it is to the doctrine and problem of evil, must be dealt with in a well-rounded apologetic. Plantinga, in this beautifully written and painfully poignant book, does just that. He exposes sin as a parasite or corruption of the good and argues that neither sin nor evil can exist without good being present in one sense or another. The book is primarily a doctrinal work, however, Plantinga's use of present day examples and modern research brings each theological point to life. The most apologetic aspect of the book consists in the author's ability to balance the addictive, deterministic aspects of sin and man's definite responsibility for his own sin. This work will be more useful as a cultural tool than as an apologetic handbook, but that does not diminish the need for apologists to be familiar with its message and arguments. The greatest drawback of the book was the brevity of the epilogue, which, while powerful, could be more conclusive in nature and much more exhortative.

John Polkinghorne, *Science and Theology: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998).

Acknowledging the recent surplus of publications that address specific questions in science and religion and the dearth of anything that might serve as a textbook in the field, Polkinghorne sets out to provide such a work. His academic and literary career has prepared him for such a task and he does not disappoint. He ably addresses both the common and uncommon issues that surround science and religion discussions, while keeping things brief enough to not lose the intended goal of a cursory survey. He is at his best when he sets forth his "critical realist" methodology, when he applies it to various areas of inquiry and when he critiques overly naturalistic and reductionistic proposals. He is weakest when he completely dismisses any view that does not coincide with an old earth or assume the factuality of the basic evolutionary process. Polkinghorne makes complex science accessible to the beginner and is honest regarding those areas where more research is needed. He defines his approach as one of consonance and defines it thusly, "Science and theology retain their due autonomies in their acknowledged domains, but the statements they make must be capable of appropriate reconciliation with each other in overlap regions" (p. 22). For such a model fully applied, look no further. (See Collins' *Science and Faith* for a "critical realist" methodology that is creationistic.)

Richard L. Pratt, Jr., *Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Truth* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1979).

While a very readable and approachable apologetics text, Pratt's work contains a number of inconsistencies, weak theological arguments and questionable interpretations of Scripture, along with excessively insulting and derogatory language directed at and describing unbelievers. The presence of such blatant and glaring errors hurts not only his credibility and the credibility of the presuppositional school of apologetics, which he represents, but the apologetic project as a whole. Admittedly, the book is written for high school students, requiring the absence of some of the philosophical and theoretical language one is accustomed to reading in apologetics literature, however, his simplistic and formulaic model for engaging the unbeliever is abrasive, disrespectful, and far from being winsome, not to mention out of touch with the reality of what an unbeliever, or a proponent of another apologetic school, might actually believe. Some of the specific comments made in chapter 8 on the attitudes an apologist must exhibit are well-stated and necessary to heed unfortunately, his lack of consistency in exemplifying these attitudes in the remainder of his work compromises his message. Other presentations of apologetics in general, and presuppositionalism in particular should be read in place of this text.

William Raeper & Linda Smith, *A Beginner's Guide To Ideas: Religion and Philosophy Past and Present* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1991).

This rudimentary text in philosophy is valuable for introducing a younger audience to the history and disciplines of philosophy. Major philosophical disciplines are presented hand in hand with major philosophers who made an impact in those disciplines, giving a broad perspective in both fields. The chapters are very short and digestible without ignoring major issues in the discussion. Almost every chapter contains a timeline so that the reader can place the discussed philosopher in his historical context. The book contains an excessive amount of pictures and images. These may be a good draw for younger readers but it doesn't assist in the development of the mind in a way that prepares one for deeper philosophical reading, which, needless to say, is not rife with such superfluities. Another drawback is that, in attempting to be timely and relevant, many late-twentieth-century cultural references are made. Now that we are in the early twenty-first century, the book is culturally dated. Nonetheless, this beginner's guide is an excellent, non-threatening, theism-friendly introduction to a subject that is often considered intimidating and unapproachable.

Katherin A. Rogers, *Perfect Being Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

Perfect being theology is a crucial component to the Christian philosophical endeavor. While the idea that God's perfection demands that we understand His attributes in particular ways predates him, it was Anselm of Canterbury who was the first to systematically develop it into a distinct branch of philosophical theology. Even those philosophers and theologians who reject the ontological argument which Anselm developed and upon which perfect being theology is based still engage in the dialog as they discuss the nature of God and time, God's omniscience, omnipotence and omnibenevolence, as well as His necessity, simplicity and immutability. Rogers takes the reader through each of these issues, as well as several others, and expounds the traditional position on each one. She is simultaneously comprehensive, bringing up most of the major questions on each particular question, as well as introductory, keeping the book to a manageable and introductory page length. The greatest drawback of the book is Rogers' insistence that any conclusion that veers from what she understands as the correct one is excluded as an option for "true" perfect being theology. Surely there is room for multiple interpretations in a project as philosophical and theoretical as this.

Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God*, Revised Edition (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1995).

In this outstanding presentation of cosmological evidences for the existence of God, Hugh Ross displays not only his scientific aptitude, but also His commitment to Evangelical Christianity. After assessing the current results of cosmological research that point to a big bang, he reveals the lack of adequate explanations for it from the scientific community. He then proceeds to explain why the best possible explanation is special creation by an intelligent Designer while noting that the scientific community is drastically opposed to such a notion. The later portions of the book lay out in full form what Ross often contributes in summary form in collaborative apologetic works namely, specific and detailed evidences that our planet and universe were designed specifically with us in mind, further pointing to a divine Designer. He closes the book with an appeal to respond to such amazing evidence with a belief in the Christian God. The book suffers from excessive repetition and Ross does not adequately bridge the gap between Designer and the Christian God. However, these weaknesses do not detract from the books contribution to the Intelligent Design movement.

Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, vol. 5, *A Christian View of the West*, 2nd Edition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1982) 413-501.

Schaeffer's challenge to Christians to stand against the secularism of our age rings loudly and clearly in this work. And in spite of the fact that this manifesto was written in 1981, it is as powerful a challenge today as it was when it was penned. Schaeffer gives a clear definition of civil disobedience then draws clear lines between it and anarchy. When it comes to the sanctity of life questions, a major theme of the manifesto, it is clear that we, as Christians, must act, and if our actions against the atrocities of abortion and euthanasia are deemed civil disobedience, so be it. The manifesto also calls Americans back to the Founding Fathers' understanding of the relationship between Church and state. The modern, secular interpretation, which holds that religion should be segregated to the private practice of individuals and have no role in politics, is not at all in line with the original intent of the Fathers. Rather, they wanted a form of government that did not oppress and control religion but that was fully informed by the best religious, political thought of the day. Finally, the manifesto is one of the earliest challenges to worldview thinking. The Church often focuses on specific, internal issues rather than on the fact that the Christian worldview has been slowly and systematically replaced by a materialistic, atheistic secularism. If Christians want to continue to live out and express their faith, we must work at all levels of society and culture to prove that the Christian worldview is the foundation for the freedoms and privileges that our nation now experiences. If and when the Judeo-Christian foundation of our nation is eradicated, so will be its fruits.

Francis A. Schaeffer, *No Final Conflict*, in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, vol. 2, *A Christian View of the Bible as Truth*, 2nd Edition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1982) 117-148.

This brief work is as helpful as it is prophetic. Written in 1975, this article sets out to explain the damage done to an evangelical view of Scripture as inerrant and infallible by placing a dichotomy between what Scripture teaches about faith and religion and what it teaches about science and history. Schaeffer blames an existential methodology and liberal theology for such a dichotomy. We would not use such terms today but the dichotomy is more universal than it was when the article was penned. The most instructive of the book is the chapter entitled, "The Freedom and Limitation in Cosmogony as Set by the Bible." Here we have Schaeffer's view of possible ways to integrate the teachings of Scripture and the findings of science and two beliefs that must not be compromised. What is so helpful and prophetic about these ideas is that they are precisely the ideas that have advanced evangelical views on origins issues in the subsequent years via old earth and intelligent design creationism. Schaeffer holds to the conservative version of the "no final conflict" view. Rather than proposing no conflict because the Bible does not touch on science, he holds that there will be no final conflict between science and religion because it is the same God behind both sets of truth. The God of special revelation and the God of general revelation is one and the same. Thus, the teachings in these two books of revelation are true, corresponding and coherent.

Michael C. Sherrard, *Relational Apologetics: Defending the Christian Faith with Holiness, Respect & Truth* (Brooks, GA: Hill Harow Books, 2012).

In many respects, Sherrard has made a much-needed contribution to the evangelical apologetic endeavor. Especially in the first chapters of the book where he focuses on the spiritual/moral character and relational qualities that an apologist should exemplify, the reader is challenged to be the kind of winsome, engaging, respectful believer that we all aspire to be. Unfortunately, however, riddled throughout the book are numerous examples when Sherrard betrays the very characteristics he calls his readers to demonstrate. In many cases, he writes as though the default for an apologist is to be inattentive, rude, overly-agenda-concerned, and prideful; his tone is one of ridicule toward the very people he is trying to reach. It takes significant concentration to ignore these hypocrisies, but it is worth the effort because what he promotes is so foundational to a person-centered apologetic. Toward the end of the book, where

some of the standard apologetic questions are addressed, the reader may find himself frustrated with the all-too-cursory treatment of the issues. It would have been better to leave this section out of the book completely, especially since almost every idea and argument raised is either a paraphrase or a restatement of something said by much more eloquent, cogent and authoritative apologists elsewhere. The book ends with a very good topical resource list, which points the reader to the sources of the arguments that Sherrard uses in his work. This book is highly recommended for the critical reader who can weed out the many negative nuances and all such readers are encouraged to apply the principles and morals espoused.

James W. Sire, *Why Should Anyone Believe Anything at All?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

The nature of belief and the complex methodology of discerning and evaluating our beliefs are not simple subjects, however Dr. Sire has presented them in a way that anyone can understand. His book not only introduces these issues but also presents the reader with the challenge to investigate their beliefs in order to make sure they are believing things for the best possible reasons. After this initial explanation and challenge he makes an apologetic case for the Christianity primarily based on the person of Jesus Christ. Unlike other apologetic texts, he does not deal with scientific or philosophical or evidences for the existence of God but sticks to this Christocentric apologetic. The one exception is his exceptional chapter on the problem of evil. Sire closes his book with an uncommon but quite welcome invitation to the reader to investigate Christianity rather than presenting a simplified, out of context Gospel presentation. The statistical research behind Sire's arguments in the first half of the book, being based solely on interaction with American college students, is the one cultural limitation of the book. That he recognizes this fact and presents his case without total dependence on the research alleviates the problem somewhat.

Gerd Theissen, *The Shadow of the Galilean: The Quest of the Historical Jesus in Narrative Form*, Updated Edition, Translated by John Bowden (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007).

This brief novel, first written in 1986, has had tremendous impact in the world of New Testament scholarship. Theissen takes a large portion of what we know historically of 1st century Israel and weaves it into the story of a fictional character, Andreas, who experiences the socio-political tensions surrounding Jesus' death. Even though the main character is fictional, many of those with whom he comes into contact are not, and the events he experiences are often based on historical realities. Any allusion to something with historical merit is endnoted. As a result of *The Shadow*, the reader will come away with a fresh take on the world of the New Testament and a confidence in much of what the Gospels present to us. It is for this reason that this non-apologetic work is included in this bibliography and highly recommended.

Steve West, *Philosophical Dialogues on the Christian Faith: Discussions on the Arguments, Evidence, and Truth of Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007).

Set in conversational format between two philosophical seekers, this short work presents some of the major arguments for the truth of Christianity in an extremely readable and approachable manner. For the most part, the conversations come across as genuine, even though there are times when the conversational believability gives way to philosophical clarity. This is an excellent introductory text for someone new to either apologetics or philosophy; the discussions on the cosmological argument and the problem of evil are especially valuable. The major strength of the book lies in West's ability to present the material clearly and convincingly in the initial chapters without revealing his presuppositional perspective. The major weaknesses of the book lie in the over-simplified caricature of evolution and in the singularly-focused presentation of presuppositionalism in the discussion of epistemology. In spite of these weaknesses, this is a book for anyone new to the world of apologetics and philosophy.

Heath White, *Postmodernism 101: A First Course for the Curious Christian* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2006).

With greater accuracy, more eloquent prose, better principles of evaluation and much more cultural relevance than is found in Millard Erickson's *The Postmodern World*, Heath White offers an introduction to postmodernism from which any Christian can learn and benefit. Not everything in the book will be acceptable to all Evangelicals however, the major thrust and tone of the book should be. White charts a possible path for postmodernism's future and a concrete path for Christian involvement with our culture of postmodernity toward which we all ought to strive. The reader will find clear explanations of the roots of postmodernism, a sample of Evangelical mischaracterizations of postmodernism along with ample and apt warnings against the dangers posed by postmodernism as they are manifested in many different spheres of life and thought. With a careful eye, any Christian can avoid White's minor missteps and develop a healthy attitude toward postmodernism thanks to this unique and powerful little book.