
Notes prepared by Dan Paterson

GOD FOR OTHERS

<a> APOLOGETICS MUST BE IN SERVICE TO THE GOSPEL

Sharing our faith begins by knowing our faith. If you want to make Jesus known then we must begin by making sense of Scripture and how the story of God speaks to life's deepest questions. The message of the gospel is not something that we can invent or adapt; it is something we have received and are to steward (1 Cor 15:1-4; 2 Cor 4:2; 2 Tim 2:2). And if Christians are going follow and talk about Jesus in a secular age, we need to be so familiar with *our story* that it shapes everything we think, say, and do.



Created for Good

(Gen 1-2; Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37-38)

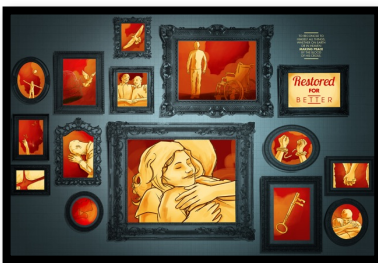
Everything begins with God at the centre. Humans were made good in God's image, and were designed to love God and each other, working together to cultivate the planet. But since love requires choice, God granted humans the freedom to either trust his moral boundaries, or to try and define good and evil on their own.



Damaged by Evil

(Gen 3; Jer 17:9; Rom 1:18-32; Gal 5:19-21)

Humans doubted God's goodness and violated their purpose as image-bearers by becoming corrupted by evil. Selfishness dethroned love, and guilty before God, humans were exiled from his holy presence, subject to death and in danger of God's judgment to bring an end to the evil that plagues his world.



Restored for Better

(Isa 52:13-53:12; John 3:1-21; 10:10; Rom 3:21-5:21)

God became human in Jesus of Nazareth. Through Jesus' life we see God revealed. Through Jesus' teaching and healing ministry we see a window into a world where God is king. Through Jesus' substitutionary death, where he paid the penalty for our evil, we can be forgiven by a holy God. Through Jesus' resurrection we have proof of his divine identity and that death does not get the final say.



Sent Together to Heal

(Matt 20:25-28; 28:18-20; John 13:34-35; 15:5-27)

Jesus sends out his followers as witnesses to his death and resurrection. The Church is commissioned to spread out across the globe and continue the mission and ministry of Jesus, opposing evil and seeking to bring healing to its effects, inviting people to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection.



Set Everything Right

(Matt 24:14-25:46; John 5:24-29; Rev 20:11-22:21)

One day Jesus will return suddenly to bring an end to evil, suffering, and death. All people will be resurrected to undergo a just judgment by Jesus who will set everything right and bring an end to injustice. For those who refuse the offer of forgiveness and eternal life, they will face the eternal punishment of the second death. Those who have trusted in Jesus will live eternally with God in his new world.

Notes prepared by Dan Paterson
GOD FOR OTHERS

** APOLOGETICS MUST BE DEEPLY SPIRITUAL**

“⁸ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

<c> APOLOGETICS MUST BE SEEN AND NOT JUST HEARD

*“⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. ... ¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” ¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.** But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” (1 Peter 3:8-16)*

1. Witness begins in worship:

2. Messenger is the message:

3. Live questionable lives:

4. Christian truth must be spoken with a Christian accent:

Notes prepared by Dan Paterson
GOD FOR OTHERS

<d> APOLOGETICS MUST LISTEN AS WELL AS SPEAK

Behind every question is a questioner. What sets Jesus worlds apart in his spiritual genius is how the stories of the gospels reveal his ability to truly *know* the person to whom he is speaking, and tailor a response to suit. Across the four gospels Jesus asks 307 questions. Why?

1. Questions make people think about their answers to life’s questions.
2. Questions get to the heart of the issue and expose motives.
3. Questions open up conversation in a way that answers do not.

The questions of a questioner are never purely intellectual; there are spiritual and moral components to a person being willing to embrace Christ. Doubts and questions *can sometimes* be a sinful vehicle to assuage the conscience—a smokescreen to avoid addressing the real issue that lies behind a person’s refusal to believe.

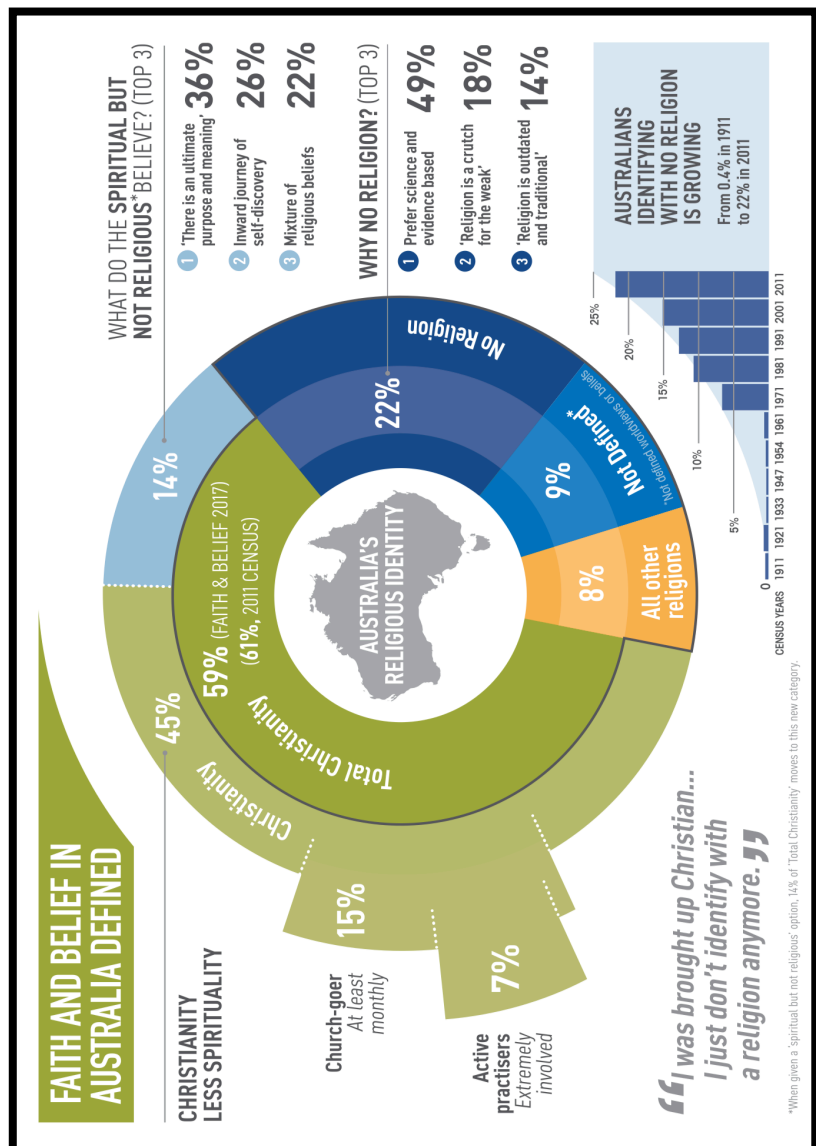
“The first step to applying any cure is to correctly diagnose your patient.”

Cultural Influences:

1. Pop-Media’s comedic portrayal of Christianity
2. Christian schools with apathetic/irrelevant rituals
3. New Atheism’s challenge to the truth and goodness of Christianity
4. Royal Commission to child abuse in Churches
5. Moral revolution on sex and marriage

General Impression:

- Post-Christian attitude, Pre-Christian understanding
- Reject Christianity as untrue (intellectually bankrupt)
 - Abhor Christianity as undesirable (morally suspicious)



Notes prepared by Dan Paterson
GOD FOR OTHERS

HELPFUL QUESTIONS FOR GOD CONVERSATIONS

Examples from Jesus:

- What do you want? (John 1:38)
- Why are you so afraid? (Matt 8:26)
- Who do you say that I am? (Matt 16:15)
- What do you want me to do for you? (Mark 10:51)
- What good is it to gain the whole world yet lose your soul? (Mark 8:36)

Starting a Spiritual Conversation:

- What is your personal story when it comes to faith and God?
- We've never had a chance to talk about our religious backgrounds. Where would you say you are in your own spiritual journey?
- What is your concept of God? Do you view Him positively or negatively?
- Have you ever had an experience that makes you think God might be real?
- Do you find that spiritual beliefs play a role in your life (work, choices, relationships)?
- Do you think much about spiritual things?

Figuring a Person's Worldview:

- Given history and your experience, how would you describe human nature?
- Where do you think humans come from?
- What is the purpose of our existence?
- What do you believe about morality?
- When we die, what happens?
- What are the best ways to know if something is *true*?
- What do you think is at the heart of what's wrong with the world?

Examine Driving Desires:

- What do you want out of life?
- Who do you want to be?

Digging and Directing:

- What do you believe about ... ?
- What do you mean?
- How did you come to believe that?
- How do you know that is true?
- What would it take you to change your mind?

Exploring Familiarity with Christianity:

- What is your take on Jesus? Who is Jesus to you?
- If you could be sure God exists, how would that change your life?
- Has anyone ever explained how knowing God makes a difference?
- Have you ever heard of the evidence for why Christians believe?

Identifying Barriers:

- In what ways have you felt let down by God or Christians?
- What holds you back from believing in Christianity and Jesus?

Notes prepared by Dan Paterson
GOD FOR OTHERS

<e> APOLOGETICS MUST GIVE GOOD ANSWERS

“Make religion attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is.”
(Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*)

ENGAGING SECULARS

1. Challenge the secular story. Expose where it is at odds with how seculars people live?
2. Share the Christian story. Why is the gospel *good news* for this person?
3. Prepare to answer questions. Think about what you could say to the obvious questions seculars level towards Christianity (suffering, science, sexism and sexuality, hypocrisy, religious violence, other religions, miracles and the Bible).
4. Focus on Jesus. Whilst the Church has a lot of baggage, Jesus carries a cultural currency that is unrivalled. The goal isn't to convince people of an idea but introduce them to a person.
5. Embrace community. The Church is brighter together as a witness of Christ's kingdom. Invite seculars to see and experience the love and collective gifts and wisdom of community.

GOD FOR OTHERS

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

BOOKS:

1. *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis (classic apologetic for Christianity)
2. *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller (answers objections and gives arguments for God)
3. *Making Sense of God* by Tim Keller (helps make sense of and engage the secular story)
4. *Cold Case Christianity* by J Warner Wallace (explores why you can trust the gospels)
5. *Reasonable Faith* by William Lane Craig (cumulative arguments for Christianity)
6. *Jesus Among Other Gods* by Ravi Zacharias (why Jesus over other religions?)
7. *Coffee House Chronicles* by Josh McDowell (entry level apologetics in fictional stories)
8. *5 Minute Apologist* by Rick Cornish (short answers to tough questions)
9. *Tactics* by Greg Koukl (conversational strategy for sharing your faith)
10. *God's Undertaker* by John Lennox (answering the science questions)
11. *Gunning for God* by John Lennox (responding to the New Atheists challenges)
12. *Why Suffering?* by Ravi Zacharias & Vince Vitale (answering suffering questions)
13. *But Is It Real?* by Amy Orr-Ewing (answering cultural/philosophical objections)
14. *Why Trust the Bible* by Amy Orr-Ewing (answering objections to the Bible)
15. *Unbelievable* by Justin Brierley (explores the case for Christianity from a popular level from a radio host who weekly has top Christian and atheist thinkers on his podcast "Unbelievable" for debates and discussion)
16. *Uncover Studies* by Rebecca Manley Pippert (evidence based study of Luke's gospel)
17. *Resurrection iWitness* by Doug Powell (helpful picture book for youth ministry of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, and why naturalistic theories don't work)
18. *Notes from the Tilt-A-Whirl* by N. D. Wilson (contemporary apologetic)
19. *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* by Nabeel Qureshi (biographical journey of a devout Muslim who became a Christian and why he believes the Bible over the Qur'an)
20. *Unapologetic* by Francis Spufford (argument for the value of Christianity)

PODCASTS:

1. <http://rzim.org/just-thinking-broadcasts> (Ravi's Talks)
2. <http://rzim.org/ask-away-broadcasts/> (Vine & Jo Vitale Q&A)
3. <http://www.premierchristianradio.com/Shows/Saturday/Unbelievable?> (Apologetics)
4. <http://podcast.redchurch.org.au/e/this-cultural-moment-episode-1-what-is-post-christian-culture/> (Mark Sayers & John Mark Comer on Christianity and Culture)

ONLINE:

1. <http://rzim.org/>
2. <http://www.bethinking.org/>
3. <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/>
4. <http://oneminuteapologist.com/>
5. Dan's Resources
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fi74zlx7wjpzawl/AAD7e0WjdbjFbCPAEdxcnqvYa?dl=0>

TRAINING:

1. <http://rzimacademy.org>