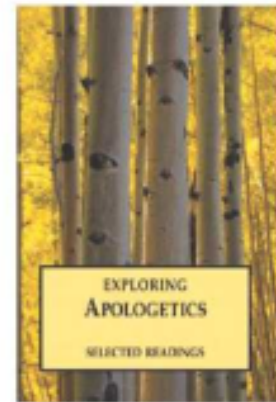


Reviewed by Dr. Donald Oppewal, Professor Emeritus of Education, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



Exploring Apologetics: Selected Readings.
CSI, 2006. Multiple authors,
chosen for relevance by an editorial staff.

Stand Your Ground:
An Introduction Text For Apologetics Students.
Wipf & Stock, Publishers, 2007
Single author: Dean Hardy, Bible Teacher
Charlotte Christian School, Charlotte, North Carolina.



The difference between single authorship and multiple authorship is the clearest format difference between the two volumes, and it effects both the kind of content covered under the term “Apologetics” and the pedagogy that each encourages.

The CSI text *Exploring Apologetics: Selected Readings* draws upon authors, many from the Reformed tradition, who are philosophers, theologians, or journalists. Their contributions are organized under the general rubric of “Objections to the Christian Faith.” The contributors, often relying on personal experience and anecdotal evidence, give testimonials about how they have responded to various criticisms of, and objections to, the Christian faith they hold.

Some defend the historicity of the Bible as evidence of its soundness; some offer more analytic description

of the types of “isms” that opponents of Christianity reveal. Some attack the arguments of the naturalists and atheists for their lack of consistency or plausibility.

Christianity is offered in most of them as the most plausible and convincing world view, while acknowledging that some questions, about the origin of evil for example, are a mystery to be accepted on faith rather than a view to be proved by logic or reason.

Most authors were chosen for their ability to avoid highly technical terminology in describing viewpoints, and thus help the reader assimilate views with minimum jargon of either theology or philosophy. It appears that most of the authors speak to the adolescent mind and its concerns, and in a language this group would understand.

Each contribution is followed by “Reading Review Questions” produced by the editorial staff. They sound more like quiz questions than discussion provokers or requests for evaluation of the arguments in the article. Teachers are left to compose questions or introduce topics that require the student to accept or dismiss given answers to life’s questions.

The *Stand Your Ground* textbook is also designed for teenagers and beginning college students. With the benefit of single authorship, it is logically organized into chapters. It treats the historicity of Christianity in more than one chapter and precedes those chapters by identifying metaphysics, epistemology, and logic as the arenas in which Christianity differs from other worldviews.

The vocabulary in this text is more technical, borrowing terms

from theology and philosophy to deal with matters of truth and of reality. The author quotes liberally from both defenders of the faith and the critics of Christianity to show the reader that real people hold these opposing beliefs. Both logic and common sense are used with care in showing that the Christian faith does not call for blind adherence.

It is noteworthy, and typical of the book, that an entire chapter is devoted to the logic of syllogisms, that is, in proper and improper uses of syllogisms for proving or disproving beliefs. Like the CSI text, this one gives the problem of evil considerable attention in a whole chapter.

At the end of each chapter, there is a

review of the major terms. The student is also asked to evaluate which arguments are the most persuasive. While the questions are called "Study Questions," they include a range of questions, a review of technical terms, and even a list of the most relevant Biblical passages. These tools all reveal the hand of a classroom teacher who knows that both review of the chapter and evaluation of the arguments are needed for advance in learning.

Summary

While both textbooks cover many of the same topics that are appropriate for a course in Apologetics, and both intentionally make the case for

Christianity believable, they breathe a different spirit in making Christianity attractive to the teenage.

While it is difficult to capture this difference in a few words, one can say that the CSI text favors the testimony approach, with numerous examples from both life and the Bible, while the second text favors the logical argument and refutation of the opposition approach.

Because they are both Christian in their intention and well done in their approach, one would be hard put to choose one text as superior over the other. CSI religion teachers who are aware of the books' differences should choose one based on personal preference and comfort level. ★★★★★★★★★★



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situation, which other agencies are currently focusing on similar services in the region, and whether its gifts will be a match for the needs in the area.

CSI may determine that it is the best, or only, organization to invest in a particular situation, but the preference will be to accomplish its international work in and through others.

Engaging the Membership

CSI is not primarily a funding agency or a coordinator of grants. It is a network of people with gifts and skills. It is this "human capital" that CSI seeks to engage in the growth of Christian schools internationally.

CSI will be successful internationally to the extent that an ever-increasing percentage of its

membership is directly engaged with schools and people outside of North America, for purposes of assistance, learning, and mutual edification.

Fostering a Servant Outlook

As the membership is engaged, a priority will be placed on serving others. Activities which help students and adults "get out of themselves," broaden their horizons, and position them as learners and listeners in the global context will be emphasized.

Avoiding the New Colonialism

Human history contains plenty of examples of conquest and domination. Unfortunately, the Christian community can unwittingly participate in an updated version of that scenario.

For example, similar to the practice of European nations drawing boundaries and creating nations in Africa after World War I,

agencies can err by making decisions from North America rather than in the local country, work to "plant the flag" or "own" the ministry in the local country, or seek to further the organization's name rather than to promote a locally-determined direction. Organizations can perpetuate a spirit of compliance, docility, and undiscerning obedience rather than one of true servant leadership, designed to live out one's calling, in a God-pleasing way.

CSI will seek to avoid the error of colonialism in its coordination of projects and also its direct action.

Summary

CSI believes that it has much to learn from those outside of North America; it also believes it has much to give. Our prayer is that we may be faithful to our gifts and calling in the 21st century. ★★★★★★★★★★