

Obstacles and Strategic Opportunities for Apologetics in Academia

In a post-Christian Europe, we face a twofold challenge of intellectual and emotional deception. The first creates a false alternative between a “scientific” worldview and the Christian faith, and the second creates a false alternative between a “progressive” mindset opposed to an apparently suppressive, fearful, and outdated Christianity. Even many Christians are emotionally and mentally immobilized by adopting secular worldviews while they try at the same time to argue the case for Christianity within the mental paths determined by these views. The challenge is therefore to understand and overcome a misleading mindset as well as the corresponding emotional obstacles. In order to strengthen Christian students and academics, we need Christians on all levels of academic life who model the freedom of Christian thinking, encourage others on a personal level, identify and tackle structural, institutional, or political barriers, share best practice experiences, and finally initiate ideas that work in a given environment. This talk will give some examples and seek to encourage a stimulating discussion.

Ralf Bergmann received his degree in physics and a doctorate from German universities. He is or has been involved in topics ranging from solid-state physics to optical technologies at several research institutions in Germany and Australia and has also worked in industrial research. Currently he is a professor at a German university and head of a research institute working on optical technologies and optoelectronics. Beyond his research, he is interested in defending the reasonability of Christian faith, especially all around the triangle of physics, philosophy, and theology and the relevance of Christian faith for modern western society.

I. What is a strategy?

- A. A strategy answers three questions:
 1. Where are we now?
 2. What is our goal?
 3. What measures do we need to get there?
- B. A famous example

II. Where are we now? The post-Christian Europe!

- A. The relevance of Christianity for society
- B. The consequences of the absence of Christianity

III. The twofold challenge and its roots

- A. A false view of science

1. The atheistic claim
 2. Relation of worldviews and natural science
- B. A false view of humans
1. The atheistic claim
 2. The basis of secular and christian world view
- C. Roots, goals and consequences of a false view of humans
1. Marxism, Neo-Marxism and the successors
 2. Reshaping the mind
 3. The false escape and the immobilization of Christians

IV. The goal: A renewed vision of Christianity in Europe

- A. No way back: Every epoch has its own challenge!
- B. A renewed vision of Academia

V. How do we get there?

- A. Rediscover the freedom of Christian thinking
- B. Break the barrier of silence
- C. Opportunities for change

VI. Some Conclusions

A. Develop your personal strategy

B. What can *you* do best?

Suggested Readings:

Ralf B. Bergmann “Does Divine Intervention Violate Laws of Nature?” *Organon F* 26 (1), 86–103 (2019). Open access, available online at: <https://doi.org/10.31577/orgf.2019.26106>

Edward Bernays* “Propaganda” (original 1928) and “The century of the self” Youtube-video series, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnPmgOR1M04>

William Lane Craig* “On Guard: Defending your faith with reason and precision“ David Cook (2010)

Arnaud de Lassus “The Genesis of the Cultural Revolution – The Frankfurt School” *Apropos* No. 21 Lent 2003 (short introduction of 16 pages)

Glynn Harrison: “A better story – God, sex and human flourishing” Inter-Varsity Press (2016)

Craig S. Keener. “Miracles. The credibility of the New Testament accounts” Grand Rapids: Baker Academic (2011)

Gabriele Kuby* “The global sexual revolution: Destruction of freedom in the name of freedom” Angelico Press (2015)

John C. Lennox “Can science explain everything?” The good book Company (2019)

John C. Lennox “Have no fear” 10 Publishing (2018)

John C. Lennox* “Gunning for God: Why the new atheists are missing the target: A critique of the new atheism” Lion Hudson (2011)

C. S. Lewis* “Miracles” William Collins (2012); Original: C. S. Lewis (1947)

Eric Metaxas* “Miracles: What they are, why they happen, and how they can change your life” Plume Book (2015)

Vishal Mangalwadi* „The book that made your world - How the Bible created the soul of western civilization“ Thomas Nelson (2011)

Vishal Mangalwadi “Truth Matters” Series of 10 short videos, see

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGS9ZYryQclqBVDBfzE79AA/videos>

Douglas Murray* “The strange death of Europe. Immigration, Identity, Islam” Bloombury Continuum (2017)

Dale O’Leary “The Gender Agenda - Redefining Equality” Vital Issues Press (1997) (concluding with a short compilation of important strategies of the gender movement)

Alvin Plantinga “Where the conflict really lies - Science, Religion and Naturalism” Oxford (2011)

W. Cleon Skousen “The naked communist – Exposing communism and restoring freedom” Izzard Ink (1958-2017) (with a chapter on “The 45 goals of Communism Today” as from 1961)

Richard Swinburne* ”Is there a God?“ Oxford University Press (2010)

Rolf Wiggershaus, Michael Robertson* “The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance – Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought” MIT Press (1995)

Only available in German:

Ralf B. Bergmann „Gott und die Erklärung der Welt - Christlicher Glaube und atheistische Weltanschauung: Was ist vernünftiger?“ Brunnen Verlag (2019)

Rosemarie Stresemann: „Die geistlichen Wurzeln der 68er Bewegung“ Kingdom Impact (2017)
<https://kingdomimpact.org/mediocenter/buch-die-geistlichen-wurzeln-der-68er-bewegung/>;

Rudolf Willeke: „Hintergründe der 68er-Kulturrevolution - Frankfurter Schule und Kritische Theorie“
<http://www.aktion-leben.de/BAK/Hintergruende/sld08.htm> (short 35 page introduction)

**These books are also available in German. Reference to a source does not indicate consensus to all opinions expressed there or in references or links therein. Responsibility for the content of any book or reference cited solely lies with the respective authors.*