How the Church Responds to the Secularisation of Europe

What are our chief strategies in speaking the truth of the gospel into a secular world?  From the time of the Apostle Paul, Christians have tried to engage persuasively with the anti-Christian worldviews we encounter.  This is the art of apologetics – making a case for the gospel that is both relevant and culturally appropriate.  Faith does not stand in opposition to reason.  Grasping this topic will help us grow as leaders ourselves (being more persuaded of the gospel truths) and equip us in our ministry and leadership.

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1. How the Gospel Conquered Europe

	1. “Christianity was victorious because the early Christians out-lived, out-thought, and out-died the world around them.” T. R. Glover
2. Secularisation of Europe
	1. The Historical Roots
	2. The Ongoing Process
3. Two Misguided Responses from the Church
	1. Liberal Theology
	2. Pietistic and Charismatic Theology
	3. The Result: Cognitive Dissonance
4. The New Testament Calling
5. Peter: “Always be prepared to give an answer [apologia] to everyone who asks you to give the reason [logos] for the hope that you have.”1 Pet 3:15
6. Paul: “As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. ‘This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,’ he said.  Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.” Acts 17:3-4
7. Luke’s five verbs: reasoned, explaining, proving, proclaiming, persuaded

1. Paul’s logic: clarify the role of the Messiah – identify Jesus as the Messiah
2. Jesus: word-search in the four Gospels (NIV): “taught” (16), “proclaimed” (20), “preached” (22) “asked” (303), “answered” (144 times)
3. Jesus stimulated conversations, dialogues and debates!
4. Conclusion

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Col 4:5-7