

The Amazing Power of History to Make a Difference Today— History as a Tool for Apologetics

By telling the story of what God has done in the past, we can see more clearly what He is doing today. As we see how followers of God served Him in the past, we learn lessons for what we should be doing today. Showing the footsteps of God in history provides a bridge for communicating the Gospel with unbelievers today. This workshop will include a panel of three Christian leaders who have effectively used history to communicate with believers and unbelievers alike. The goal of this workshop is to encourage ELF participants to learn the history of Christianity in their country or region and find ways to effectively tell that story today.

Daryl McCarthy serves as Vice President of Academic Programs and Strategy with Forum of Christian Leaders (FOCL). Besides directing the ELF Academic Network, he also directs the Cambridge Scholars Network. Daryl has traveled to 60 nations speaking at universities, conferences, and churches. After teaching at Kansas Christian College for several years, in 1988 he helped start Global Scholars and served as President until 2014. Daryl has earned a doctorate from Fuller Theological Seminary, as well as graduate degrees from Nazarene Theological Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Daryl and his wife Dr. Teri McCarthy lived in Lithuania 2010-2015 where they taught at Lithuania University of Education in Vilnius. They have a son and a daughter who are both married and they have five grandchildren.

I. Why study history?

- A. Cultural Impact.
- B. Spiritual genealogy.
- C. Real people.
- D. Spiritual growth.
- E. The Church—fragile but strong.
- F. Context for world events today.
- G. God wants us to study history.
 - 1. Psalm 111:2; Psalm 77:14
 - 2. Passover, Exodus 12:14
 - 3. The Exodus
 - 4. Manna, Exodus 16:32
 - 5. Stones from Jordan, Joshua 4:7
 - 6. The Lord's supper

II. Why history serves as a good bridge to unbelievers as well as to believers.

- A. History is factual.
- B. History can be less threatening than apologetics or theology.
- C. History is interesting.

III. Ways we have used history as a bridge, with panel members Jaroslav Lukasik (Ukraine) and Charles White (USA).

- A. Historic events which can be used effectively as an apologetics tool
 - 1. St. Patrick's Day and the conversion of Ireland.
 - 2. Irish monks transforming Europe.
 - 3. The Protestant Reformation and its cultural, educational, economic, and political impact.
 - 4. Famous Scientists who were Christians, or How Christianity Gave Birth to Modern Science
- B. Movements.
 - 1. The global expansion of Christianity.
 - 2. The expansion of Islam and it changed our world.
- C. Literature.
 - 1. "Great Books I Have Read That Will Change Your Life."
 - 2. Biographies of Christian leaders.
 - 3. Classic fiction which teaches Christian truths or virtues.
- D. Videos about the history of Christianity in a country or region.

Suggested Resources:

Christian History magazine. Available at www.christianhistoryinstitute.org. You can subscribe digitally for a contribution.

There are many good church history books, but the following books are especially good at showing how the history of the Christian movement connects with issues today.

The best overall books on the impact of Christianity throughout history

Hill, Jonathan. *What Has Christianity Ever Done for Us? How It Shaped the Modern World*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005.

Kennedy, D. James and Jerry Newcombe. *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?* Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1994.

Mangalwadi, Vishal. *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization*. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2011.

Schmidt, Alvin J. *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Harper Collins, 2009.

Books dealing with a particular era or specific issues

Dayton, Donald W. *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*. 1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1976. Evangelicals, and particularly Wesleyans, were at the forefront of the battling slavery, discrimination against women, and other social issues in the 19th century.

Stark, Rodney. *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Stark, Rodney. *God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades*. 1st ed. New York: HarperOne, 2009.

Stark, Rodney. *How the West Won: The Neglected Story of the Triumph of Modernity*. Kindle ed. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2014.

Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*. San Francisco, Calif.: Harper San Francisco, 1997.

Stark, Rodney. *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 2005.

Tomkins, S. *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce's Circle Transformed Britain*. Lion Hudson PLC, 2012.

Movies related to Christian history

"Martin Luther," Classic 1953 black-and-white movie on Luther's life. 105 minutes.

"Luther," 2013 movie starring Joseph Fiennes. 123 minutes.

"The Hiding Place," the life of Dutch Christian Corrie ten Boom.

"The Inn of the Sixth Happiness," the life of Gladys Aylward, English missionary to China.

"The White Rose," on German youth who tried to expose the torture of Jews in the Holocaust.