

## **Apologetics and the Local Church**

The aim of this workshop is two-fold. First, attendees will explore the biblical role of the New Testament local church in the apologetic enterprise. They will examine various texts of scripture, which are pertinent to the theology that undergirds apologetics. Attendees then will engage in an interactive discussion on the application and relationship that these texts have to the proper use of 21<sup>st</sup> century apologetics. Secondly, this workshop will provide 7 proven strategies for creating an effective apologetic ministry within a local church context. Finally, attendees will leave with a clear vision for how apologetics can be cultivated in their local church by identifying and training those whose ministry is evangelism and defending the Christian faith.

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### **Introduction: The Two-Sided Coin (The Relationship Between Apologetics and Evangelism)**

- Evangelism - The Call to Abandon One's Worldview (Luke 9:23)

*“Unless the gospel is understood at the worldview level, its impact upon those who accept it as well as its ability to change the structures of their societies will always fall short of God's best for his people... The gospel cannot be understood at the worldview level without apologetics” - John N'joroge*

- The goal of the European Leadership Forum
- Every Christian is a missionary (Acts 1:8)

*“Our tasks as image-bearing, God-loving, Christ-shaped, spirit filled Christians, following Christ and shaping our world, is to announce redemption to a world that has discovered its fallenness... The gospel of Jesus points us and indeed urges us to be at the leading edge of the whole of culture, articulating in story and music and art and philosophy and education and poetry and politics and theology the historically-rooted Christian gospel.” (N.T. Wright)*

## 1. The role of the local church (Matthew 28:19,20 and Romans 12:1,2)

### 1.1 To Disciple the Christian Mind

*“According to Paul, the key to change is the formation of a new perspective, the development of fresh insights about our lives and the world around us, the gathering of the knowledge and skill required to know what to do and how to do it. And this is where the mind comes in. Truth, knowledge, and study are powerful factors in the transformation of self and control of the body and its habits for a healthy life in the kingdom of God.” (J.P. Moreland)*

### 1.2 To produce men and women who can combat the hostile and negative attitudes towards Christians (1 Peter 3:15)

Barna Research Group

*“Western culture is becoming far more secular in its thinking, relativistic in its ethics and antagonistic towards the Christian faith than ever before.” (Barna)*

## 2. Every Apologist Needs a Church

### 2.1 All New Testament commissioning comes through the local church

*1 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)*

### 2.2 Benefits of Apologists being connected to the local church

#### 2.2.1 Support in Prayer

#### 2.2.2 Support in Partnership

#### 2.2.3 Support in Protection

### **3. Every church needs apologists**

The Lord has placed Evangelists in the local church (Ephesians 4:11)

Peter warns that false teachers will attempt to mislead the church (2 Peter 2:1)

### **4. Benefits to the church of having an apologist**

Equipped to effectively share their faith

Equipped to effectively defend their faith

Equipped to effectively live their faith

### **5. Steps to launching and apologetic ministry in your local church**

5.1 Interview Influencers: (Who are the decision makers?)

5.2 Investigate Issues: (What will it take to get this done?)

5.3 Institute Incentives: (How can we motivate the congregation?)

5.4 Indicate Instruments: (What tools will we use?)

5.5 Identify Individuals: (Who will we target for training?)

5.6 Initiate Instruction: (When will we start training?)

5.7 Implement Information: (How will we apply new knowledge?)

**Conclusion:**

The local church is the agency God has chosen for the evangelization of the world. Whenever the church retreats from her responsibility to disciple tough-minded, tender-hearted Christians who have the ability to engage the culture for Christ, we lose our influence in society. This is most clearly seen in post-reformation Western Europe. Conversely, apologists who have ministries which are disconnected from the local church are like orphans who are birthing other orphans into the kingdom without placing them into a family to ensure their growth and maturity. The solution to this problem is to embrace the truth that every church needs an apologist and every apologist needs a church.