

## **Persuasive Debating**

In much of the Western World it is assumed that debating with people is somehow impolite, a refusal to respect their beliefs and an attempt to coerce people into faith. In this seminar we look at how public debates in different formats can be excellent vehicles for communicating the Gospel and can bring people into contact with Jesus Christ for the first time.

**David Robertson** is the minister of St Peter's Free Church in Dundee, Scotland (a church that is best known for being the church of Robert Murray McCheyne) and the Director of the Solas Centre for Public Christianity. He is the author of *Awakening* (a contemporary account of McCheyne's life) and *The Dawkins Letters*. The latter has resulted in him being invited to debate and discuss all over the UK and elsewhere in Europe. This has been done in cafes, bars, libraries, universities, pubs, restaurants, village halls, and even occasionally in churches! David is a chaplain at the University of Dundee, columnist, broadcaster and debater. His interests include history, reading, music, politics, theology and football – he supports Dundee FC although his other team is Barcelona! David is married to Annabel and they have three children; Andrew (26), Becky (24) and Emma Jane (15).

### **I. Introduction**

1. Is debating Biblical?
2. Is debating culturally relevant?

### **II. Different types of Debates**

1. Formal University/Town Hall
2. Informal Café/Community
3. Church

### **III. Principles of Debating**

1. A Clear Question
2. Listening
3. Elucidation, Education, Entertainment.
4. Interaction
5. Communicating Christ

### **IV. What can go wrong?**

1. People
2. Opponent

3. Yourself

4. Church

***Suggested Reading***

David Wells: *God in the Wasteland*, IVP, 1994

Niall Ferguson: *Civilization*, Allen Lane, 2011

Diarmid MacCulloch: *Reformation – Europe’s House Divided*, Allen Lane, 2006

John Stackhouse: *Humble Apologetics*, Oxford University Press, 2002

Thomas E Schmidt: *Straight and Narrow*, IVP, 1995

Francis Schaeffer: *The Trilogy*, Crossway, 1990

DA Carson - *Telling the Truth* – Zondervan, 2000.

Thomas E Schmidt: *Straight and Narrow*, IVP, 1995