

Truth and Christian Mission: A Proposal for Apologetics

In view of our challenging secular and pluralistic world, a holistic understanding of apologetics is needed. This workshop presents a proposal for apologetics as the science and art of exploring the truth question in three different communication contexts. In pre-evangelism contexts, apologetics has the role of answering objections and setting Christian ideas on the agenda. In evangelism contexts, its role is to commend the Gospel and clarify questions to our faith. In post-evangelism contexts, apologetics has the dual role of affirming the validity of becoming and being a Christian and of equipping for “witness about Christ and all his teaching – in every nation, in every sphere of society, and in the realm of ideas” (*The Cape Town Commitment*).

Lars Dahle is a theologian, educator, preacher, and apologist. He works as Vice- Rector (VP) for External Relations, NLA University College (Norway). He is also Associate Professor in Systematic Theology at Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communication (NLA Kristiansand), where he has lectured in worldviews, ethics, and apologetics since 1991. Lars wrote his PhD on Acts 17:16-34. It is entitled *An Apologetic Model Then and Now?* (Open University, UK). Since 2013, he is also the Lausanne Senior Associate for Media Engagement. Lars has written several academic and popular articles on apologetics, media engagement and missiology, and he was a co-editor of *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014). He is also the Founding Editor of the peer-reviewed Nordic apologetic journal *Theofilos*. In addition, Lars co-leads the European Leadership Forum Media Communicators Network with his wife, Margunn. Follow Lars on his blog [Media Messages Matter](#) or on his Twitter account [@LarsDahle](#).

I. The need for a holistic understanding of apologetics

A. *Taking our global context seriously*

- A. Secular and pluralistic challenges
- B. Public and personal challenges
- C. The need for holistic apologetics

B. *Towards a holistic understanding of apologetics*

- A. Learning from standard definitions
- B. Learning from New Testament apologetics
- C. Proposal: “the science and art of exploring the truth question in three different communication contexts”

II. The first communication context: Apologetics related to pre-evangelism

- A. *Answering questions and objections*

- B. *Setting key Christian ideas on the agenda – in public and in communities*

III. The second communication context: Apologetics related to evangelism

- A. *Commending the Gospel – as true, meaningful and beautiful*

- B. *Clarifying questions – related to the truth of the Gospel, the validity of faith and the cost of personal commitment*

IV. The third communication context: Apologetics as related to ‘post-evangelism’

- A. *Affirming the validity of becoming and being a Christian*

- B. *Equipping for “witness about Christ and all his teaching – in every nation, in every sphere of society, and in the realm of ideas” (The Cape Town Commitment).*

Suggested Readings:

- Dahle, Lars: “Truth, Christian Mission and Apologetics: A Response and A Proposal”, *Norwegian Journal of Missiology*, nr. 1 2013. (Published online at http://egede.mf.no/sites/default/files/dokumenter/pdf/NTM_2013_1_Dahle.pdf.)
- Dahle, Lars: “Mission in 3D: A Key Lausanne III Theme”, in L. Dahle, M. S. Dahle and K. Jørgensen (eds.): *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford; Regnum Books International, 2014), s. 265-279. (Available as a free download for personal use: http://www.ocms.ac.uk/regnum/downloads/The_Lausanne_Movement-Final-WMF.pdf.)
- Dahle, Lars: “Media Engagement as a Global Missiological Task”, *Lausanne Global Analysis*, January 2014. (Published online at <http://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2014-01/media-engagement-a-global-missiological-task>.)