

HOPE'S REASON

Stephen J. Bedard²

Why Another Journal?

Why would anyone want to start another journal, either print or online? And why another apologetics journal? There are a number of apologetics journals and many apologetics blogs (I have one myself).³ On the surface, there seems to be little need to add to what already exists. However, it quickly becomes apparent that most apologetics resources fall into one of two categories: popular or academic. The popular resources are easy to understand but often have only surface treatment of the issues and lack scholarly precision. The academic resources do interact with the larger scholarly world and are more in-depth in their treatment but they are often so theoretical as to be of little use to the local church. This journal seeks to fill that gap.

In starting this journal, we have been blessed with a number of peer reviewers from backgrounds such as Ph.D. studies, pastoral experience and apologetics blog. They will be heavily involved in making sure that the apologetics articles that appear in this journal are of only the highest quality and at the same to be relevant to the ministry of the local church.

Why Hope's Reason?

Coming up with a name that is catchy, descriptive and not over-used is a great challenge. Thanks go to Beth Stovell who came up with the name *Hope's Reason: A Journal of Apologetics*. The name is inspired by 1 Peter 3:15, the foundational verse for all apologetics.

In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always
being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks

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³ <http://www.1peter315.wordpress.com>.

you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.” (1 Peter 3:15 ESV)

Christianity is about hope. It is about beliefs in things that cannot be seen such as an eternal God, grace, peace and an afterlife. However, it is not a faith without reason. There are good reasons to believe in the existence of God, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in historic Christianity as the original faith that was taught by the apostles. This journal will explore the reasons for the faith that many Christians take for granted and that many skeptics reject as myth.

The second part of this passage reminds us of the importance of gentleness and respect. There is no lack of Internet apologetics that insult, ridicule and mock different belief systems. This reminds us that there are two types of apologetics: one to make Christians feel good and one to make connections between Christians and non-Christians. There is a desire for Christians to feel confident in their beliefs and for some this comes through the putting down of others. It is good for Christians to be confident in their faith but there are better ways to achieve this. The goal of this journal is not to make Christians feel good about themselves but to seek to build bridges with those of different (or no) faith systems by scholarly and respectful treatments of the issues. This is the method used by Paul in Acts 17:16-34 and it continues to be vital for today's religious milieu.

The Vision

The vision for this journal is to bridge the gap between scholarship and the local church. Scholars have done much work in the areas of apologetics but their research has often gone unnoticed by the local church. This journal seeks to provide scholarly treatments of important apologetic issues, not just for other scholars, but for pastors, educated laypeople, students and even honest seekers looking for answers. Readers are invited to join us for this journey as we interact with the world around us, demonstrating that indeed there are reasons for the hope within us