

Word of Faith Apologetics

Before I begin discussing my type of apologetics, you need to know a little bit about my background. Every apologist draws from what he has learned since he first became a Christian. I was saved in 1984 in a little Assembly of God church in Monroe Michigan. A man named Carlos Lucena and his wife Lydia pastored Monroe Assembly of God. I attended that Church until 1985. In 1985 I started attending a non-denominational church in Southgate Michigan called New Life Christian Church. This is where I meet my wife Trisha, whom I married in 1988.

We left New Life in 1994. We tried to find a new church, but could not find one that we really felt was where God wanted us to be. During this time we attended a Campmeeting in Columbus Ohio at Pastor Rod Parsley's Church. During that week God spoke to me and called me to preach His word. Two years later we moved to Columbus, where I attended World Harvest Bible College from 1996-1998. My major was in Pastoral Leadership. My wife and I moved back to Michigan in 1999. We started attending a wonderful Church in Redford Michigan called Detroit World Outreach. The Pastor is Jack Wallace, a wonderful man with a heart for the lost. Our Church is an independent Assembly of God Church. So my background is basically Pentecostal. This is why I say that I am a different brand of apologist.

Most apologists' are from a background of Cessation Theology. Cessationist Theology for the most part does not believe in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Speaking in tongues, miracles, healings or any of the other Charismatic beliefs and practices. That is why most Cessationist apologists' think that Pentecostal denominations are cults. They only see things one way and that is their way. So basically if you do not believe their way you are in error. That is why we have so many Heresy Hunters that come from an Cessationist background. This is not how apologetics is supposed to work. We need to defend the Gospel. The Gospel is not about whether I speak in tongues or not. It is faith in Jesus for my salvation. I don't think that my Baptist or Methodist brothers are in a cult because they don't agree with my theology. If they believe that Jesus was the Son of God, that He died on the cross for our sins, that He rose from the dead three days later, and have accepted Him as their Lord and Savior as far as I am concerned they are saved. Period! The problem is that Cessationists only look at the errors in the Charismatic movement and judge the whole thing as being wrong. This is called caricature not analysis. This is the wrong way to analyze a movement. You have to look at the whole picture, not just the parts you don't like. I agree with my evangelical brothers, there have been many errors in the Charismatic movement. But you don't discount the whole thing because some have fallen into error. There is still error in the Pentecostal Churches, but to say the whole thing is wrong because some people have missed it is just as wrong! They use the same technique that we all use on Cults to discredit them, they attack the leaders. This is why they go after Kenneth E. Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and others. They feel if they can make them look bad, they can discredit all Full Gospel ministries. Today's evangelical apologists are setting up straw men just to knock them down. Dave Hunt did this over and over in his tragic book called the Seduction of Christianity. (To read a great rebuttal to that book, check out: The Reduction of Christianity by Gary Demar, Peter Leithart) He took small quotes [out of context] and tried to prove that teachers like

Kenneth E. Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and others were heretics. Let me give you an example of what I mean. This is a quote from Kenneth Copeland's tape series on the atonement.

Excerpt From Quenching The Spirit
William DeArteaga

"What [why] does God have to pay the price for this thing [the price of sin]? He has to have a man that is like that first one. It's got to be all man. He's got to be all man. He cannot be a God and come storming in here with the attributes and dignities that are not common to man."

If you went by just this alone, anyone would say he was in error right? This all by itself look's like he is denying the deity of Christ. But if you continue the tape and listen to what follows then you get the whole picture.

"There had to be a man, but it also had to be a man as pure as that first one [Adam], and there wasn't anybody left like that but God. Now somehow or other there's got to be an incarnation, there's got to be a man filled with God, there's got to be a God-man come into the earth."

In the context of his sermon Kenneth Copeland was completely orthodox on this issue. But that is not how it is presented in the heresy hunter's books. Why? Because they are trying to present a case, just like a lawyer does. But they only want you to see what THEY want you to see. They hope that you wont buy the tape and listen to the whole thing, and hear everything in context. They are being deceptive and are claiming that Copeland and Hagin are the ones that are deceiving others. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that everything that Kenneth Copeland or Kenneth E. Hagin teaches is 100% correct. They will admit that to you themselves. I have heard Kenneth Copeland say that he wishes he could get some of the tapes back that he has put out because they had errors in doctrine on them. Kenneth E. Hagin as well has stated that he believes differently on subjects that he has taught on in the past. We all make mistakes. We all change the way we think theologically as we grow in knowledge and in the Lord. But to say that everything that Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth E. Hagin teach is wrong because of a few wrong beliefs in their past is downright stupid. Like Mr. Hagin would say "That's like throwing the baby out with the bathwater".

So what kind of apologist am I? I guess you could say I am a Word of Faith Apologist. I am going to defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And that means the Full Gospel. I am not saying that Pentecostalism is the only way. But I will defend the Word of Faith, Pentecostal and charismatic theology. (Where I agree with it, I wont defend something I don't agree with!) So I will be saying things that Evangelicals wont like, and I will also be saying things that the Full Gospel crowd won't like either, but that's OK, maybe we will all learn something.

Jim Kingsnorth