

What to say to
my friends about
Christianity
being reasonable

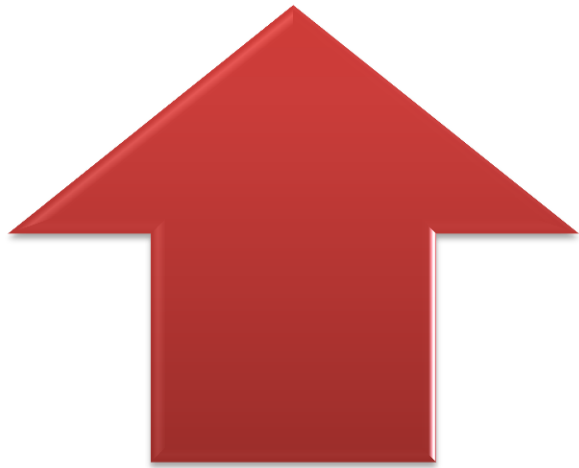
Christian view of the world

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption
- Glory

Christian view of knowledge

- as fallen creatures we need revelation
- Because we are creatures we need the Creator to reveal: it is only the Word of God in Christ that will bring faith where there is unfaith
- Because we are fallen it is only through the work of God the Holy Spirit that there can be faith
- NT writers seem to have a balance of evidence, reason, spiritual power, scripture

Why have reasons?



Answering the
enquirer and
critic



Strengthening
the believer

Discuss

- What do you find most difficult to explain or defend?
 - Answers were – Suffering, The OT compared to the NT, Sin, Intelligent Design, Truth, Bad things religion or the church has done, Creation, Sovereignty of God
- What have you felt reasonably able to explain to your friends?

1. First cause

- Everything comes from something – from nothing, nothing comes!
- All things that begin to exist depends on something else for their existence
- Either
 - the first one just popped out of nowhere with no explanation
 - there is an infinity of dependant things with no explanation
 - there is a finite set of dependant things
- Infinity is impossible as a number of real things. It is useful for maths but not an expression of reality
- (God is infinite in the sense of being without limit or boundaries he is not a infinite set of finite attributes see <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/is-god-actually-infinite>
<http://carm.org/infinite-god>)
- Having no explanation for something being there defies reason
- A finite set of dependant beings implies a beginning by an independent being, self existent being
- Who made God is not a valid question if you define God as self-sufficient and self existent

Acts 17:24-28

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being.



First Cause

- Try to say this argument in your own words
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument

Creation looks created

- Design in beauty, order, similarities

Rom 1:20

For since the creation of the world
God's invisible qualities – his eternal
power and divine nature – have been
clearly seen, being understood from
what has been made, so that people
are without excuse.

- 23 – number of degrees the earth is tilted - produces our seasons. If the angle were different, water vapour from the oceans would move north and south and the earth would gradually be encased by an icecap.
- 93 million – number of miles between the earth and the sun. 1% further away – earth frozen waste. 5% closer – seas turn to steam.
- 10 - If the crust of the earth were only ten feet thicker, there would be no oxygen and all animal life would die.

- 100 million cells = 576 Megapixel camera.
- Self-focussing, self-cleaning.
- Tremors going on 50 times/sec muscles tirelessly rotate minute movements 0.001mm to keep image firing
- Battery usually lasts a lifetime!

Creation looks created

- Design in beauty, order, similarities
- Counter: it is bound to look like that for it to work
- Helpful additional point: Irreducible complexity
 - you need all the parts to make it work

beware the worldview trap

- Evolutionary circular argument:
 - We have observed that the universe, including living things, displays astounding complexity.
 - If evolutionary theory were true, then we could probably explain this astounding complexity as a consequence of evolution
 - Hence, there is reason to suppose that evolutionary theory is true.
- Even worse – assumption of evolution
 - e.g. Stephen Pinker: Speech is too complex to evolve, but the elephant's trunk is also very complex but it evolved so that's ok then!

First cause implies a self existent being
Design implies a person with intelligence and purpose



Design

- Try to say this argument in your own words
- Can you remember any examples of design, order, beauty?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument

The world is broken

- The world looks created but damaged
- Morality – the sense of ought can't be reasonably explained or justified without God:
 - Evolution alone – nature red in tooth and claw not a sufficient explanation for the existence of evil, more importantly the personal pain of evil



A broken world

- How might your friends explain evil in the world?
- Why is it eventually easier for the Christian to explain evil than for the non-believer?
- What can catch you out on this question?

The resurrection

- The strongest apologetic
- The strongest evidential base
- The heart of the gospel preached by the disciples

The resurrection – facts

- Reliability of documents
- Number of eye-witnesses
- Authentic characteristics of the historical accounts
- Implausibility of alternative explanations for empty tomb, eye-witness accounts and the existence of the church

The resurrection – experience

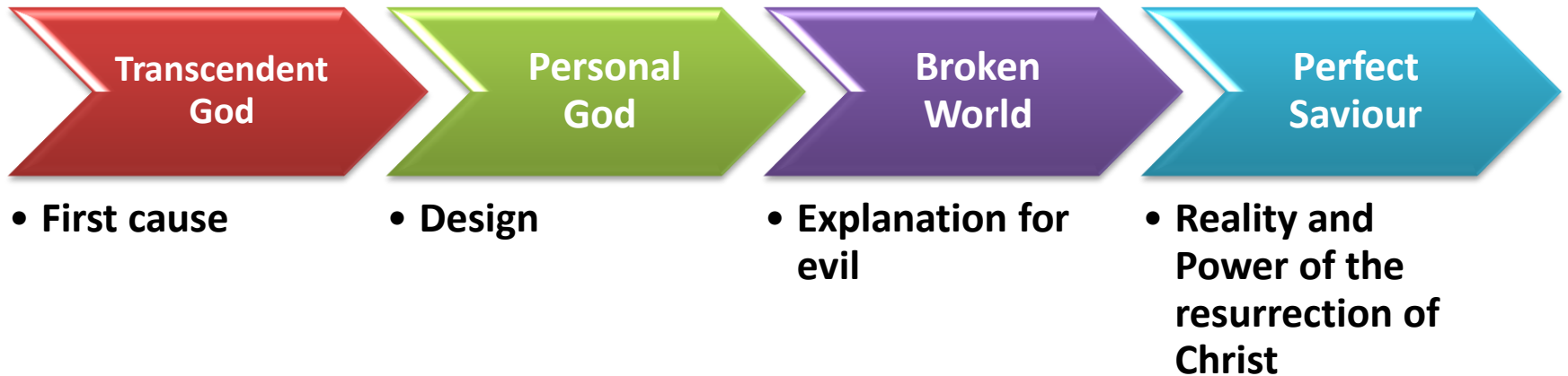
- Disciples transformed
- Church born and flourished – no other explanation
- People, including you, experience life-changing power



Resurrection

- How do I explain the reality of the resurrection?
- What can I say about my personal experience of the power of the risen Christ?
- probably existed and he was a good man"

Summary



Recommended Books

- Reasonable Faith: William Lane Craig
- Popologetics: Ted Turnau
- Hallmarks of Design: Stuart Burgess
- Mere Apologetics: Alister E. McGrath
- Case for Christ: Lee Strobel
- Gunning for God: John Lennox