

DEAR READER

Zak Schmoll on the Purpose of This Project

An Unexpected Journal is a labor of love. In a way, it is the natural outcropping of our collective education at Houston Baptist University where we all met as students in the Master of Arts in Apologetics program. Some of us attended class in person while others, myself included, took advantage of the flexibility of the online option to learn with our fellow pilgrims. We came together for one very simple reason: a shared desire to present a case for the truth of Christianity using both reason and imagination.

As imaginative apologists, we do not for one second believe that God is simply a figment of our imaginations. To the contrary, we believe that God is very real, but we also believe that He gave us our imaginations to use for His glory. As HBU professor Dr. Holly Ordway writes in her book *Apologetics and the Christian Imagination*, “Imagination is the human faculty that assimilates sensory data into images, upon which the intellect can then act; it is the basis

of all reasoned thought as well as all artistic, or what we would call ‘imaginative,’ exercise.”¹

Arranging the objective truth about the very real existence of God into meaningful images is therefore going to be the purpose of this journal. This process of creative communication is vital to our work as imaginative apologists. In this, our inaugural issue, we think that focusing our attention on one of the true masters of imaginative apologetics is appropriate.

C.S. Lewis wrote *The Abolition of Man* as a dire warning to his surrounding culture. He wrote of a society that would eventually come to the point, “when all that says ‘it is good’ has been debunked,” and only “what says ‘I want’ remains.”² The task of the imaginative apologist could not be clearer in this vision of a dysfunctional world.

The concept of morality has lost its meaning for so many in our culture, as well. We have all heard people say, “What is right for you might be fine, but don’t try to impose your definition of right and wrong on to my lifestyle.” This type of postmodern, subjective understanding of morality comes down to

¹ Holly Ordway. *Apologetics and the Christian Imagination* (Steubenville: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2017), Kindle Locations 334-336, Kindle Edition.

² C.S. Lewis. *The Abolition of Man* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), Kindle Locations 545-546, Kindle Edition.

a matter of *wanting*, as Lewis rightfully noted. We have demolished any understanding of objective good and bad, because it makes us uncomfortable. We are therefore left with only our desires and wants. If we want something, it must be right, and if you want something different, that must also be right. Moral realities are no longer matters of objective truth but are relegated to the waste bin of subjectivity.

Not surprisingly then, many simply do not understand why right and wrong matter. They might understand the inherent inconsistency that emerges when contradictory truth claims are simultaneously accepted as true. However, this logical problem often does not matter because they do not understand why it should. The additional comfort gained by getting what we want outweighs the discomfort from an inconsistent worldview. Sometimes logic in and of itself cannot convince anyone of anything because we can become satisfied with being illogical, as long as it squares with the decisions we want to make. This is the society of wants about which C.S. Lewis prophesied.

In a culture that so often has its wants out of order and is willing to suspend logic for satisfaction, imaginative apologists can provide an alternative approach. Imaginative apologists do not seek to deny logic whatsoever, but they do utilize a different

technique. Rather than argue that a world without objective truth is logically impossible, they seek to demonstrate what human experience in an illogical world would feel like. Through media like storytelling, music, or poetry, the imaginative apologist can show the consequences of a worldview that denies objective truth. For some, seeing the implications of their espoused worldview played out imaginatively can connect them to the truth in a uniquely powerful way. They can more easily recognize that their denial of objective morality has repercussions they do not want. Through the images the imaginative apologist creates, bad ideas can be exposed for what they are while good ideas can be glorified. The end result is the same as when using logical proofs, but the path to that destination takes a different course to get there. C.S. Lewis's truisms in *The Abolition of Man* demonstrate the power and opportunity for imaginative apologists to connect with our culture of chaotic wants.

Please enjoy this inaugural issue of our publication. We hope that it inspires you to broaden your apologetic horizons. Future issues will have different themes and feature various forms of content. We plan on incorporating stories, essays, poetry, book reviews, movie reviews, artwork and other forms of media as we choose other authors, works or ideas to highlight.

Apologetics has traditionally been seen as the domain of the philosopher, using logic to prove the necessity of the existence of God. We recognize, however, that different people respond to different techniques. Some people connect very well to propositional arguments, and we do not seek to diminish that approach whatsoever. Rather, we hope to show you by our work, inspired by *The Abolition of Man*, that utilizing the imagination and reason together can expose the dangerous consequences of certain, popular ideas in our society of disordered desires.

In Christ,

Zachary D. Schmoll

Bibliography

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Lewis, C.S. *The Abolition of Man*. New York. HarperCollins, 2009.

Ordway, Holly. *Apologetics and the Christian Imagination*. Steubenville. Emmaus Road Publishing, 2017.