

# Solid Ground

Enhanced

*A Foundation for Building Ambassadors*

Celebrating 20 Years of Ministry

September 2014

## I N T H I S I S S U E :

### Quick Summary

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- [The Bump of Stuff](#)
- [The Bump of Bad](#)
- [The Bump of Me](#)

### NATURALISM: BUMPING INTO REALITY



The common worldview among most scientists today has a name, actually, a couple of names. It is variously called “physicalism,” “materialism,” or “naturalism” since the basic concept asserts that reality consists of nothing but the physical, material world governed by nothing but natural law. Thus, C.S. Lewis called it the “nothing buttery” view. However it’s characterized, it’s a significant obstacle keeping many skeptics from taking the Christian account of reality seriously. That’s why in this month’s Solid Ground, I offer a critique of naturalism, developing three solid lines of reasoning to show naturalism’s inadequacy and Christianity’s superior “explanatory power” as a reliable guide to understanding the world.

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Thank you...

*Greg Kousser*





## Clear-thinking Christianity

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September 1, 2014

Dear Friend,

"The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be."

These words launch what is probably the most famous science documentary of all time, PBS's "The Cosmos," hosted by astronomer Carl Sagan.

Oddly, however, the defining concept of the series is not scientific at all. No empirical analysis can ever reveal all that ever was, is, or will be, even in principle.

No, Sagan's starting point is not a conclusion of *science*, but rather a presumption of *philosophy* meant to fix the boundaries of reality at the edge of the physical universe. It's a metaphysical doctrine, a spiritual dogma. The religious "ring" to the theme line is not accidental.

In "The Cosmos," Carl Sagan offers a worldview story meant to compete with classic theism. Where the Christian story begins with the words, "In the beginning, God...", Carl Sagan's story essentially begins with the words, "In the beginning, the particles."

Sagan's worldview has a name, actually, a couple of names. It is variously called "physicalism," "materialism," or "naturalism" since the basic concept asserts that reality consists of nothing but the physical, material world governed by nothing but natural law. Thus, C.S. Lewis called it the "nothing buttery" view.

However it's characterized, it's a significant obstacle keeping many skeptics from taking the Christian account of reality seriously. That's why in this month's *Solid Ground*, I offer a critique of naturalism, developing three solid lines of reasoning to show naturalism's inadequacy and Christianity's superior "explanatory power" as a reliable guide to understanding the world.

It is this type of sound information Stand to Reason is dedicated to providing to you and other Christians so you can understand the challenges and respond to them. It is also why STR needs your financial support. When you give, your generosity will help equip many to defend the truth of Christianity in discussions with non-believers in an incisive yet gracious way.

We'd appreciate it if you'd consider sending a gift today to help train thousands and strengthen this vital work. Thank you.

For the Kingdom,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Koukl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Gregory Koukl



# NATURALISM: BUMPING INTO REALITY

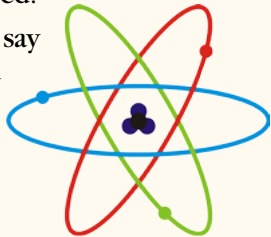
By Greg Koukl

Lately I've been enjoying my nine-year-old Annabeth's theological common sense. "Papa, why don't atheists believe in God?" she asked.

"Well, for a number of reasons," I said. "Partly because they can't see Him, so they don't believe in Him."

"Can they see atoms?" she offered.

"Good point. But I think they'd say that doesn't count since they can still detect atoms with scientific instruments, something they can't do with God. They won't believe in anything they can't measure scientifically."



"That is the weirdest thing that I've ever heard," she concluded.

My fourth grader was on to something that more educated types seemed to have missed: Lots of things are real that cannot be detected by science. How did she know that? She didn't go to grad school. Innocence often sees the obvious.

Annabeth's insight was about the inadequacies of naturalism, modernism's worldview conviction that reality consists completely of material particles in a physical universe governed by natural laws.

Naturalism is best summed up in Carl Sagan's famous faith statement, "The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be." No Gods, no souls, no Heaven, no Hell, no miracles, no morality, no sin, no forgiveness, no transcendent purpose—just molecules in motion. It's the worldview of virtually all atheists and the methodological philosophy governing all science.

Entire cultures have been

subtly indoctrinated with this physicalistic view. Even many religious people have a naturalistic impulse in their day-to-day dealings with reality, relegating whatever spiritual "beliefs" they have to the shadowlands of "faith."

Dealing with naturalism can be daunting, until we realize we have a powerful ally working in our favor: Reality is actually on our side.

## Reality Our Ally

This is an insight I learned from Francis Schaeffer. If Christianity is true, he noted, then the worldview it presents is accurate—it describes reality the way it actually is *even for naturalists who deny it*. "Regardless of a man's system," Schaeffer pointed out, "he has to live in God's world." This situation creates a problem for skeptics, but an opportunity for us.

Someone once said that reality is what you "bump" into (and sometimes get injured by) when you don't take it seriously. Consequently, anyone who denies some significant feature of the world is headed for a collision. Skeptics are not just at odds with "religion," then. They are at odds with reality. Their claims about the world dictated by their competing worldview are going to conflict in important ways with the actual world they experience every day.

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ON ONE HAND, THE NATURALIST SPEAKS FROM HIS OWN WORLDVIEW. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE WAY HE LIVES AFFIRMS THINGS THAT HAVE NO PLACE IN HIS VIEW OF REALITY.


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Schaeffer called this the "point of tension," a kind of dissonance between what naturalists say about the world and the way the world really is. Sooner or later they're going to affirm—sometimes without even realizing it—features of reality that make no sense given naturalism.

On the one hand, the naturalist *speaks* from his own worldview. On the other hand, *the way he lives* affirms things that have no place in his view of







reality, but makes complete sense in ours. He is sending two conflicting messages at the same time, but doesn't realize it. He's bumping into reality.

Atheist Richard Dawkins is a prime example. On the one hand, his naturalism dictates that morality is just a relativistic trick of evolution to get our selfish genes into the next generation. On the other hand, he rails against the God of the Old Testament as a vindictive, bloodthirsty, homophobic, racist, genocidal, sadomasochistic, malevolent bully. Do you see the problem?

Clearly, Dawkins is not coming to this conclusion based on his naturalism. Instead, that's his common-sense moral realism talking. His protest makes no sense in his worldview, but is perfectly consistent with ours. Dawkins is living in a contradiction on this issue. That's the point of tension. He's trading on our worldview, not his. Dawkins is bumping into reality.

There's something else I want you to see though—not just the contradiction naturalists live in, but also the explanatory power of Christian theism over naturalism. Here's what I mean.

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MY AIM WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO A FALSE WORLDVIEW IS TO TRY TO PLANT A SEED OF DOUBT OR UNCERTAINTY IN THEIR MIND.

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Important details of the Christian worldview fit nicely with the way we actually discover the world to be. They resonate with our deepest intuitions about reality. This “fit” is the classical definition of truth. Consequently, Christianity has the ability to make sense of salient details of the world and of human experience that naturalism cannot.

I want to suggest some practical ways to take advantage of both the naturalists' “bump” into reality and the superior explanatory power of Christian theism. My goal is to be shrewd and creative—to catch him by surprise, if I can—maneuvering with

questions wherever possible. This is the heart of the “tactical” approach.

First, a qualifier. There is no “silver bullet”—no perfect answer, no magic apologetic trick guaranteed to change someone's mind in a single session. Rather, my aim with people who are deeply committed to a false worldview is to try to plant a seed of doubt or uncertainty in their mind, or to get them thinking in a productive way about Christianity. I call it “putting a stone in their shoe.”

There are lots of different ways to do this with naturalism, but I want to focus here on three bumps with reality that create serious worldview problems for the naturalist, yet serve to validate the Christian view. I'm going to call them “the bump of stuff,” “the bump of bad,” and “the bump of me.”

### The Bump of Stuff

My starting point for this maneuver is simple: Stuff exists. Not too controversial. The naturalist cannot easily deny the existence of the material world. It's her stock in trade, the only thing she's certain about.

Here's the fundamental question: Why is there stuff? Why is there something rather than nothing? Where did everything come from? What caused the universe to come into existence?

Let me show you how this line of questioning plays out tactically in conversation. I was once asked during an audience Q&A to give evidence for the existence of God.

“Can I ask you a few questions to get us rolling?” I said to the challenger. He nodded. “First, do you think stuff exists? Is the material universe real?”

“Yes, of course,” he answered.

“Good. Second question: Has the stuff of the universe always existed. Is the universe eternal?”

“No,” he said. “The universe came into being at the Big Bang.”

“Okay, I'm with you. Now the final question: What *caused* the universe to come into being?”

At this point he balked. “How do I know?” he said. “I'm no scientist.”


“Neither am I,” I admitted, “but there's really only





## EVERY EFFECT REQUIRES A CAUSE ADEQUATE TO EXPLAIN IT

two choices: something or nothing. What do you think? Do you think something outside the natural universe caused it to come into being, or do you think it just simply popped into existence with no cause, for no reason?”



At this point, the skeptic who prides himself in his use of reason finds himself in a rational box. Both the law of excluded middle and the law of non-contradiction (it can't be neither option and it can't be both) oblige him to choose one of only two logically possible options available.

To admit something outside of the natural, physical, time-bound universe is its cause would be to contradict naturalism. Yet, who is in his rational rights to opt for the alternative? Even if he thinks it *possible* the universe popped into existence, uncaused, out of nothing, it's understatement in the extreme to say *it's not the odds on favorite*.

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NATURALISM HAS NO RESOURCES TO EXPLAIN WHERE ALL THE “STUFF” IN THE WORLD CAME FROM. CHRISTIAN THEISM DOES.

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Imagine a man's wife asking where the new Mercedes Benz SL parked in their garage came from. I doubt she'd be satisfied with the answer, “Honey, it didn't come from anywhere. It just popped into existence. That kind of thing happens all the time.” Even ordinary folk untutored in physics know that's not going to wash. *Reason* dictates we opt for the most *reasonable* alternative.

Indeed, the nothing-caused-the-universe option is worse than magic. In magic, a magician pulls a rabbit out of a hat. In this case, though, there's no hat...and

no magician. There's just a rabbit (the universe, in our case) appearing out of nowhere.

You might recognize this line of thinking as the Kalam cosmological argument, an ancient defense of theism recently revitalized by [philosopher William Lane Craig](#). If you haven't read his books, let me give you the short course: *A Big Bang needs a big Banger*. I think that pretty much covers it. Every effect requires a cause adequate to explain it.

Ironically, the night I was working out the particular details of this point in the lobby of a large hotel in Poland, there was a huge bang in the reception area. The gabby crowd in the lounge was immediately struck silent, everyone wondering the same thing: What was that?

Of course, they knew what is *was*. It was a big bang. The real question in their minds was, “What *caused* that?” Did something fall over? Did a firecracker go off? Did someone get shot?

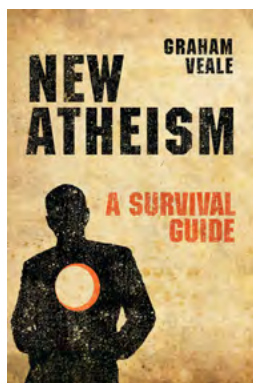
I promise you one thing, though. No one in that hotel—regardless of religious or philosophic conviction—thought the explosion was *uncaused*. It never occurred to anyone that the bang banged itself.

Naturalists know this, too. Once at a dinner party a young man sitting across from me announced—somewhat belligerently—that he no longer believed in God. “It's irrational,” he said. “There's no evidence.”

In response, I raised my point about the Big Bang. “If you heard a knock on the front door over there across the room,” I said, “would you think the knock knocked itself, or would you conclude some one was doing the knocking and then get up and answer the door?”

He sniffed dismissively at my question, however (remember, there's no silver bullet), so I let the issue go. Half an hour later over dessert, there was a loud knock on the front door (I'm not making this up).

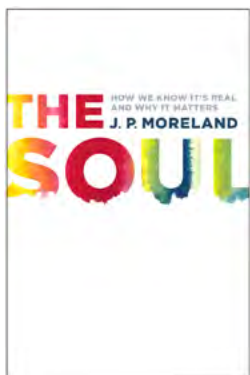




### New Atheism: A Survival Guide, Graham Veale – \$11.99 **\*NEW\***

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### Answering the New Atheists, Gregory Kouss – \$8.95

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With these "new atheists," though, there's a lot more bark than bite in their challenge. Greg will walk you through the issues, answer their charges, and demonstrate that the real culprit is not religion, but false religion, or true religion improperly or inconsistently applied.





Startled, he lifted his head in surprise. “Who’s that?” he blurted out.

I said, “No one.”

The point was lost on him, of course. His next move, though, was telling: *He got up and answered the door.*

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I WANT YOU TO SEE, THOUGH, HOW THE  
PROBLEM OF EVIL CAN BE USED TO YOUR  
ADVANTAGE.

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That night this young, naive atheist had bumped into reality. He knew a simple knock could not have knocked itself, yet seemed completely willing to accept as reasonable an entire universe popping into existence without cause or purpose.

Naturalism has no resources to explain where all the “stuff” in the world came from. Christian theism does.

### The Bump of Bad

Let me introduce this next maneuver with a question. What is the most frequently raised objection to the existence of God, the most durable, the most challenging objection to theism? Answer: the problem of evil.

Evil is a part of reality that naturalists bump into all the time and then make a philosophical fuss with us about. I want you to see, though, how the problem of evil can be used to your advantage.

First, describe for your naturalist friend something morally grotesque (chances are, he’s already provided you with examples). Mention Auschwitz, or some recent killing reported in the news, or any striking inhumanity to man. If those don’t move him, suggest sexual slavery, global warming, second hand smoke,

the NRA, George Bush—whatever pushes his personal moral hot button.

Next, ask, “When you say these things are evil, are you describing the *actions themselves*, or merely your emotions or

your society’s cultural ethic?” (This is the difference between objectivism and relativism.)

Virtually every time—if they don’t have their philosophical guard up—they’re going to tell you the truth. They’re convinced the *actions* are evil, regardless of personal opinion or cultural consensus. They think the evil is *objective*, thus the problem for theists. If morality were reduced to subjective preferences, there’d be no complaint. The problem of evil is only a problem if morality is objective.

Now here’s the final question. How does the naturalist get objective values (things that have *intrinsic* worth—worth in *themselves*) and objective duties or obligations (“Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not”) in a world consisting only of matter in motion? How does naturalism account for the kind of objective morality needed to ground the problem of evil? Simply put, it’s going to be very difficult to make sense of transcendent moral law without a transcendent moral law giver.

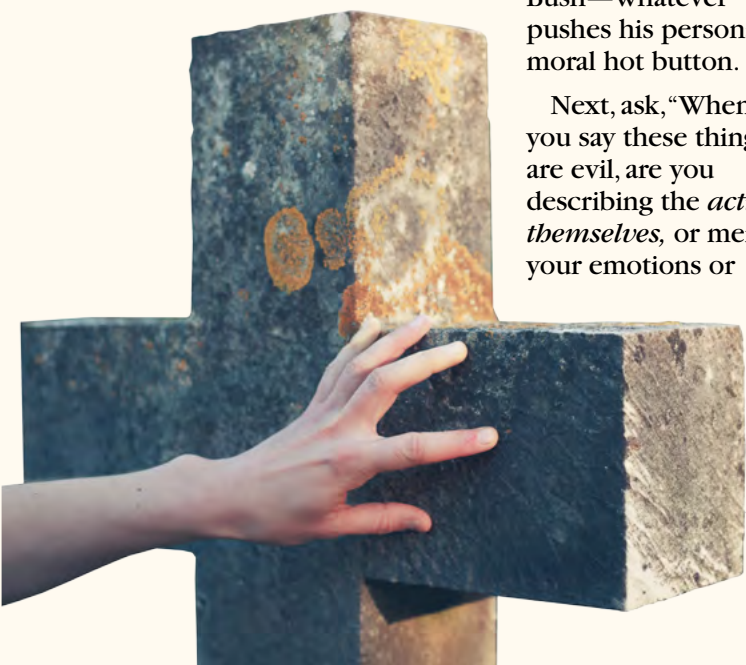
Of course, this is the moral argument for God: If there is no God, there is no objective morality; but objective morality exists (that’s why there’s a problem of evil); therefore, God exists.

At very best, the naturalist might be able to account for mind-dependent morality—relativism, in other words. But if evil is merely a matter of *subjective* opinion, there’s no *objective* problem. What, then, has the naturalist been bumping into all this time when he cites evil against God?

The naturalist has one of two choices here, it seems to me. One, he can cling to his relativism and drop his objection about evil in the world. Surrendering that complaint, though, is going to be hard for him to do because he knows too much. Two, he can salvage his complaint about evil at the expense of his naturalism, since no materialistic scheme can account for immaterial moral obligations. What he can’t do is have both ways if he’s intellectually honest.

Note the “bumps” in this candid admission from former atheist, Holly Ordway:

*My atheism was eating into my heart like acid...My worldview was entirely negative. I could not have explained the source of my own rationality, nor of my conviction that there were such things as truth, beauty, and goodness. My worldview remained satisfying to me only insofar as I refrained from asking the really tough questions.*



As a human being, Ordway could not deny objective morality, but as a naturalist she could not make sense of it, either. Christian theism can by grounding it in the perfect goodness of God. Every time the atheist bumps into bad, point this out.

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THE ANSWER TO GUILT IS NOT DENIAL. THE ANSWER TO GUILT IS FORGIVENESS. AND THIS IS WHERE JESUS COMES IN.

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Notice something else in Ordway's reflection. Not only was her naturalism incapable of making sense of her morality. It was also corrupting her soul. This existential problem is our last "bump."

### The Bump of Me

Personally, I do not think we talk enough about the soul.

Our souls are the one thing we are in direct contact with every waking moment of our lives, yet according to naturalism, conscious souls don't even exist. This denial creates huge difficulties for the naturalistic, materialistic view of reality.



Consciousness is currently such a problem that atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel stunned the establishment with his recent book, *Mind and Cosmos—Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False*. Playing completely against type, Nagel argues that naturalistic approaches are utterly incapable of accounting for the central feature of human experience—human consciousness.

New Atheist Daniel Dennett's claim that, "Consciousness is an illusion of the brain, for the brain, by the brain," shows just how much trouble naturalists are in. Think, for a moment, about exactly what an illusion is. Illusions happen when your conscious mind is being appeared to in a false way. Things that are not conscious (rocks come to mind) do not have illusions. Only consciousness can be "appeared to."

Thus, if consciousness is an illusion, then what is *experiencing* that illusion? Is the illusion having an illusion? Hardly. This is a crystal clear example of self-

refutation, since Dennett must presuppose what he's trying to deny in order to deny it.

No, consciousness—your direct, subjective experience of your own soul—is real. Though you probably never thought of it this way, it is more palpably real to you than anything else in your personal experience since *every* experience is a conscious event of the soul.

Here's the problem. Naturalism denies the obvious, reducing human beings to physical parts stuck together without reason or purpose—biological accidents, cosmic junk. No wonder they call it nihilism—nothing-ism. And when you start really believing nothing-ism about human beings, bad things begin to happen.

Most of us know better, though. Deep inside we know we're not simply chunks of meat in motion. Reality informs us there is something wonderfully unique about humans—qualitatively, not just quantitatively. Humans are special, wonderful, valuable.

We know something else, though. Humans are beautiful, yes, but they're also terribly broken. We are not physically sick; we are morally corrupted. And we know it.

Years back I lectured to a sold out crowd at the University of California at Berkeley. I made the case against moral relativism simply by pointing out how frequently we bump into—and ultimately violate—objective morality in our daily lives. This discovery, I pointed out, has explanatory power since it accounts for the personal feelings of guilt each of us experiences. We *feel* guilty because we *are* guilty.

That's the existential crisis. We know we're beautiful, but we also know we're broken. That's undeniable reality. Yet naturalism gives us no reason to believe either of these things. It cannot account for our wonder and it cannot repair our brokenness.





Christians have the remedy, though. “The answer to guilt is not denial,” I told the students at Berkeley. “The answer to guilt is forgiveness. And this is where Jesus comes in.”

Where naturalism fails, Christianity succeeds. Because our souls bear God’s own image, we are wonderful. Because we have rebelled against the God who gave us our beauty, we are fallen, guilty, and ultimately lost.

Frenchman Guillaume Bignon, finding his own naturalistic atheism being challenged as he encountered Christ in the New Testament, nevertheless found the cross befuddling. “Why did Jesus have to die?” he asked, over and over again. It made no sense to him.

Then something completely unexpected happened. “God reactivated my conscience,” he told me. “That was not a pleasant experience. I was physically crippled by guilt, not knowing what to do about it.”

Suddenly it dawned on him, “*That’s* why Jesus had to die. Because of me. Because of my guilt.” He immediately surrendered all his brokenness to the only one who could repair it, all his guilt to the only

one who could forgive. When he did, “The feelings of guilt just evaporated.”

Naturalism cannot do this. It cannot explain the beauty and wonder of being human. And it has no answer to human brokenness. It cannot provide the consolation of true forgiveness. Only God in Christ can solve our existential crisis.

So here is my suggestion: When talking with a naturalist, keep an eye out for his “bumps” with reality. When you see one, point it out—graciously, but clearly—using questions as much as possible.

Show him naturalism doesn’t make sense of the reality he encounters every day. It doesn’t make sense of the existence of the world. It doesn’t make sense of the problem of evil. And it doesn’t make sense of his own deep hunger for significance or rescue from sin.

By contrast, in each of these areas Christianity has superior explanatory power. Intellectually, Christian theism proves to be a much more satisfying answer. Existentially—personally—it’s the only answer.

Poke naturalists with reality to get them thinking. It’s no silver bullet, but it might just put a stone in their shoe and get them thinking.

## Putting This Solid Ground into Action

- Keep in mind that reality is our ally. If Christianity is true, it describes reality the way it actually is even for naturalists who deny it. Schaeffer pointed out, “Regardless of a man’s system, he has to live in God’s world.”
- Remember that naturalism, as a worldview, is totally inadequate to explain the world’s existence, evil, or conscious awareness.
- When talking to an atheist, remember “the bump of stuff,” “the bump of bad,” and the bump of me,” then use tactical questions to lead the discussion.
- Understand there is no “silver bullet.” Rather, my aim with people who are deeply committed to a false worldview is to try to plant a seed of doubt or uncertainty in their mind, or to get them thinking in a productive way about Christianity. I call it “putting a stone in their shoe.”

## Your Support Makes a Difference

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Our mission—no, our passion—at Stand to Reason is to help you develop as a Christian Ambassador who can handle the Word of God carefully, communicate its knowledge clearly, and defend it graciously. This is possible because faithful friends like you support STR’s efforts prayerfully and financially. Your gift today helps ensure that STR continues equipping followers of Christ to promote “Christianity worth thinking about.”



## Stand to Reason Speakers Near You



### Greg Koukl

#### September

5-7 Spanish River Church, Boca Raton, FL [Contact](#)

12-13 NorCalFire Conference – Striving for Eternity, San Jose, CA [Contact](#)

20 Compass Bible Church, Aliso Viejo, CA [Contact](#)

24 Reasonable Faith Chapter, Atlanta, GA [Contact](#)

26-27 Stand to Reason presents reTHINK Apologetics Youth Conference, Laguna Hills, CA [Contact](#)

#### October

3-5 Anchor Apologetics, Corpus Christi, TX [Contact](#)

19 Christ Lutheran Church, Santa Clarita, CA [Contact](#)



### Brett Kunkle

#### September

11 Upland Christian Academy, Rancho Cucamonga, CA Topic: “The Mormon Challenge”, “Mormonism 101” [Contact](#)

19 Compass Bible Church, Aliso Viejo, CA Time: 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Topic: “Is One Way the Only Way”, “Why Should I Believe Anything at All? Worldviews in Conflict” [Contact](#)

21 Mountain View Church, Oakdale, CA Time: 9 a.m., 10:45 a.m. & 6:45 p.m. Topic: “Why I Am a Christian”, “True for You but Not for Me” [Contact](#)

26-27 Stand to Reason presents reTHINK Apologetics Youth Conference, Laguna Hills, CA [Contact](#)

#### October

10 St. George, San Fernando, CA Time: 8 p.m. Topic: “Why I Am a Christian” [Contact](#)

12 Mariners Church, Irvine, CA Time: 7-9 p.m. Topic: “The Mormon Challenge” & “Mormonism 101” [Contact](#)

18-19 Upland Christian Academy, Rancho Cucamonga, CA Topic: “Mormonism 101” Private Event

22-25 YWAM, Salem, OR Topics: “If God is Good, Why is there Evil?”, “Is One Way the Only Way?”, “Doubting Your Doubts” [Contact](#)



### Alan Shlemon

#### September

14 Faith Lutheran Church, Capo Beach, CA, Time: 4-8 p.m. Topic: “Homosexuality: Truth & Compassion” [Contact](#)

18 Emmanuel Faith Community Church, Escondido, CA, Time: 7 p.m. Topic: “A Closer Look at Islam” Private Event

26-27 Stand to Reason presents reTHINK Apologetics Youth Conference, Laguna Hills, CA [Contact](#)

#### October

3-5 Hillside Baptist Church, Dickinson, ND Topics: “Homosexuality: Truth & Compassion”, “Same Sex Marriage & the Future of Family”, “Making Abortion Unthinkable”, “Tactics in Defending the Pro-Life View”, “Ambassadors for Christ” [Contact](#)

18 Camp Caleb, Portland, OR Topics: “Making Abortion Unthinkable”, “Tactics in Defending the Pro-Life View” [Contact](#)

20-21 YWAM, Salem, OR Topics: “Tactics in Defending the Faith”, “Truth & Tolerance in a Whatever World”, “Homosexuality: Truth & Compassion”, “Making Abortion Unthinkable” [Contact](#)

To get information about inviting an STR speaker to your church, email [Dawnielle@str.org](mailto:Dawnielle@str.org) for Alan or Brett, or [Melinda@str.org](mailto:Melinda@str.org) for Greg.



## Endnotes

1. A view also called “physicalism” and “materialism.”
2. Carl Sagan, Ann Druyan, Steven Soter, “The Cosmos: A Personal Voyage,” PBS, 1980. Note the religious ring to Sagan’s words, the atheist’s equivalent of the “Gloria Patri.”
3. Francis Schaeffer, The God Who Is There, in The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer, Vol. I (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 138.
4. I develop the tactical applications of this idea in chapter 10 (“Taking the Roof Off”) of Tactics—A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).
5. Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 31.
6. I’m not suggesting his complaint is sound, but rather that objectivist moral assessments like this are only at home in a theistic world view.
7. Truth as correspondence: A claim or belief is true if it matches the way the world actually is. On the flip side, when one’s world view does not fit reality, it’s false.
8. These are the basic questions tied to the cosmological argument, the case for God based on the existence of the cosmos.
9. E.g., William Lane Craig, Reasonable Faith, third edition (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008).
10. As it turned out, an over-pumped tire inner tube had exploded.
11. I discussed this move in detail in “God, Evolution, and Morality, Part II.”
12. It’s possible for naturalists to avoid this dilemma by taking no personal stand on morality while pointing to an apparent internal contradiction in theism, but I’ve almost never heard it put this way in actual conversations. Atheists usually launch their complaint by first affirming objective evil.
13. Holly Ordway, Not God’s Type (Chicago: Moody, 2010), 27.
14. Naturalism also cannot make sense of objective good.
15. For a more thorough, accessible discussion of the first two “bumps,” see William Lane Craig’s On Guard (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010).
16. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=in2FXOjq7g8>.
17. Your soul is what you are aware of when you introspect, the ground or basis of your irreducible, first-person perspective.



**Greg Koukl** is available to schedule to teach for your church service, youth group, or conference. Contact STR today for information about Greg and STR’s other speakers.

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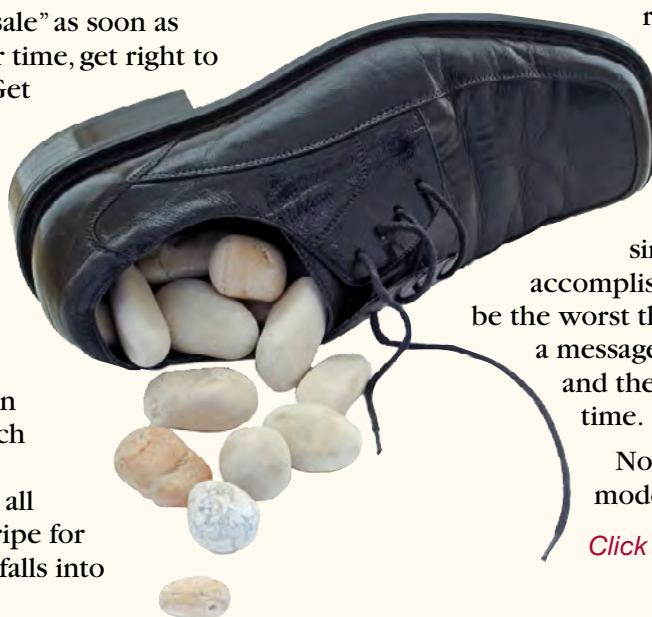
## *A Stone in His Shoe*

By Greg Koukl

In some circles there's pressure for Christian ambassadors to "close the sale" as soon as possible. When pressed for time, get right to the meat of the message. Get to the Gospel. If the person doesn't respond, you've still done your part. Shake the dust off your feet and move on.

A wise ambassador, though, "seasons his words." He weighs his opportunities and adopts an appropriate strategy for each occasion. Sometimes, the simple truth of the cross is all that's needed. The fruit is ripe for harvesting. Bump it and it falls into your basket.

Usually, though, the fruit is not



ripe; the nonbeliever is simply not ready. He may not even have begun to think about Christianity in the right way. Dropping a message on him that, from his point of view, is meaningless or simply unbelievable doesn't accomplish anything. In fact, it may be the worst thing you can do. He rejects a message he doesn't understand and then he's harder to reach next time.

Now here is my own more modest goal.

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