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Pushing the Antithesis: The Apologetic Methodology of Greg L. Bahnsen

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In 1991 Greg L. Bahnsen delivered a series of lectures to high school and college students at the University of Alabama entitled “Basic Training for Defending the Christian Faith” for American Vision’s inaugural Life Preparation Conference. Those lectures make up the main content of this book. At its heart *Pushing the Antithesis* (hereafter *PTA*) is a textbook for the student looking to defend their Christian worldview with presuppositional methods and arguments. Each chapter (twelve in all) is divided into five sections:

1. Central Concerns
2. Exegetical Observations
3. Questions Raised
4. Practical Application
5. Recommended Reading

And in true textbook fashion *PTA* is littered with footnotes, bolded terms defined both in the text and in an end-of-book glossary, end-of-chapter questions with an answer key in the back of the book, and a fairly detailed subject index. But unlike most textbooks *PTA* is an interesting read. Having heard Bahnsen speak in debate and lectures I can attest to the clarity and force with which he spoke. Because *PTA* is rooted in Bahnsen’s live lectures editor Gary DeMar has been able to translate Bahnsen’s clarity and force into this written work as well.

In chapter 1 Bahnsen¹ seeks to expose the “myth of neutrality.” In his estimation once a Christian sets aside their distinctly Christian commitments and beliefs to approach the unbeliever on neutral ground, they’ve already undermined their argument. The strength

¹ Note that while Gary DeMar edited this work, the “central concerns” are Bahnsen’s, so in my summaries of the material I will be referring to Bahnsen, e.g., ‘*Bahnsen speaks...*’; ‘*Bahnsen sees...*’; ‘*According to Bahnsen...*’; etc.

of the presuppositional method over the evidential method is that it recognizes that no evidence is examined on purely neutral ground. This is not to say that evidence has no role to play in presuppositional apologetics, but as Bahnsen says, *“If you don’t start with God as your basic assumption, you can’t prove anything. The assumption of God’s existence is essential to all reasoning.”* (7)

Bahnsen sees *“two influential applications of contemporary thought”* (8) as evidencing the *“general operating assumption”* of neutrality, namely evolution and deconstructionism. According to Bahnsen *“evolutionary theory resists stability and certainty, which are demanded in the biblical outlook.”* (8) Deconstructionism on the other hand is an *“application of evolutionary thinking”* which *“asserts that language refers only to itself rather to an external reality. It challenges any claims to ultimate truth and obligation by attacking theories of knowledge and ultimate value.”* (9) This *“directly confronts the Christian commitment to Scripture.”* (10)

But according to Bahnsen these aren’t the only problems that the Christian student will face. The student attending secular university will be confronted with *“hidden opposition”* because anti-Christian principles are everywhere taken for granted. Bahnsen outlines three examples of this which I summarize below:

1. **Selective considerations** — The professor’s method for teaching effectively locks out Christian principles which get the Christian student accustomed to approaching fields of study detached from their beliefs. (11)
2. **Neutral tolerance** — Universities encourage tolerance for all views yet in practice the Christian view rarely gets equal tolerance. The call to tolerance is self-contradictory because it is intolerant views that do not tolerate behavior that is considered sinful. (11-12)
3. **Censorship claims** — Libraries claim to resist censorship in the name of tolerance but they must of necessity be engaged in some form censorship since they cannot contain every book ever written. Some set of principles will apply in selection of books. (12)

The remainder of the chapter is spent showing that the Christian cannot adopt a position of neutrality and remain faithful to their worldview and Christ. The believer must not attempt neutrality in apologetics because of the fall. In the fall man became hostile toward God and therefore cannot evaluate evidence objectively. Mankind’s enmity against God extends to the Word of God as well, and they’re opposed to the truth claims and demands made in the Bible. The Christian is to: (1) love the Lord with all their mind (Mk. 12:30), and (2) sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts, always being ready to give a defense of their faith (1Pet. 3:15).

In chapter 2 Bahnsen picks up where he left off in the previous chapter in showing that the unbelieving mind is hostile toward God. Because of this we can’t adopt the mythical position of neutrality which is actually assent to a position that is hostile toward God. Bahnsen says that *“you as a believer did not come to a sure knowledge of Christ through fallen thought processes.”* (26) And also:

Any apologetic method that does not recognize the hostility of the fallen mind is not only gravely mistaken but is resisting the teaching of the very Scriptures which apologetics should be defending. (28)

He goes on to outline how the unbelieving mind denies reality by expounding briefly on the following points (29-30):

- God made all things
- God made all things for himself
- God owns all things
- God governs all things
- God will judge all men

So herein lies the problem with neutrality, it's impossible! You either believe these things or you don't. The unbeliever isn't willing to concede that these things are true so why should the believer be willing to concede that they aren't? Bahnsen even goes so far as to say that we're "*obligated to deny neutrality in [our] apologetic methodology*" and that the call to neutrality "*strikes at the very heart of our faith and our faithfulness to the Lord.*" (31) He advocates a balance between our "objective faith" (i.e., what Scripture reveals) and our "subjective faithfulness" (i.e., what Scripture commands). We "*must balance truth and obedience.*" (31) As Christians we're engaged in a spiritual battle against all thoughts that are contrary to Christ and as such we're called to use the weapons of our warfare which are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses (2Cor. 10:3-5, NASB).

In chapter 3 the task at hand is defining worldviews. To quote the "slightly enhanced" definition:

A worldview is a network of presuppositions (which are not verified by the procedures of natural science) regarding reality (metaphysics), knowing (epistemology), and conduct (ethics) in terms of which every element of human experience is related and interpreted. (42-43)

Bahnsen insists that we must defend the faith as a "*package deal*" because all our thoughts and experiences are interrelated and "*must be seen and understood within the context of a broader system of interpretation of those things.*" There are no "*brute facts, no uninterpreted facts that stand alone without reference to other facts, principles of interpretation, and especially to God.*" (43)

Presuppositions stand at the foundation of any worldview and are defined as "*an 'elementary' (i.e., basic, foundational, starting point) assumption about reality as a whole.*" (44) Everyone has a worldview; it's not as if "*this were some sort of narrowly religious approach to life.*" (45) "*[E]veryone's worldview [is] founded on basic presupposed ideas held as truth and which are immune from revision.*" We begin with these and build from there, they "*provide the authoritative standards by which [we]*

evaluate life issues.” (46) The further a belief moves from the center of our presuppositions, the easier it is to be challenged in these beliefs and even abandon them.

In conclusion:

Since Christianity is a world-and-life view, it has a distinctive approach to reasoning, human nature, social relations, education, recreation, politics, economics, art, industry, medicine, and every other aspect of human experience. To be truly committed to Christ for salvation is to be committed to Christ in all of life. (48)

In chapter 4 Bahnsen turns to the features of worldviews and defines (1) metaphysics, (2) epistemology, and (3) ethics. Metaphysics is the “*study of the ultimate nature of reality, the origin, structure, and nature of what is real.*” (56) Epistemology is “*the study of the nature and limits of human knowledge; it addresses questions about truth, belief, justification, etc.*” (61) Ethics “*studies right and wrong attitudes, judgments, and actions, as well as moral responsibility and obligation.*” (66)

He says that “[*m*]etaphysicians seek to understand the world as a whole. They attempt to discover and apply fundamental principles necessary for systematizing and explaining the way in which we look at, operate in, and relate to the world around us.” These ultimate issues are “*concerns for both secular and Christian worldviews. They can also be expressed in terms of Christian doctrines, such as Creation, Fall, and Consumation.*” But he goes further in saying that “[*w*]hat metaphysicians study is actually Christian theology in secular dress.... because God has created all things and those things can only be properly understood in terms of God and His plan.” (57) The Christian metaphysic is revealed in Scripture and “*founded upon the infinite, personal Creator, rather than upon impersonal irrational chance.*” (59) “*God and God alone defines the world and reality.*”² (61)

“*In Christian theology epistemology corresponds with divine revelation.*” (62) Divine revelation is broken down into three categories:

1. **General Revelation** — What we can know about God through nature (i.e., the created order).
2. **Special Revelation** — What we know about God as he has revealed himself directly and propositionally in Scripture.
3. **Incarnational Revelation** — What we know about God through his revelation in the person and work of Christ.

These allow the Christian to remain consistent within their worldview but the “*non-Christian must establish his theory of knowledge on the same foundation upon which he*

² Interestingly, either Bahnsen or DeMar (I’m unclear on if this was part of Bahnsen’s lecture or an observation made by the editor Gary DeMar) refer to God as “self-definitional” (a term that was new to me) and point to God’s act of naming as an expression of his authority over all things, yet no one named God. This intimates that “no authority exists over him.” (60 n. 6)

established reality: nebulous, chaotic, irrational chance. If followed out consistently the non-Christian theory of knowledge would utterly destroy the very possibility of knowledge..." (66)

Concerning ethics Bahnsen says that the non-Christian has no sure foundation for them. The non-Christian ethic devolves into relativism because it is based on nothing and irrationalism. *"In the unbelieving system presupposed by non-Christians, there are no—indeed, there can be no—ultimate abiding principles. Everything is caught up in the impersonal flux of a random universe."* (67)

Chapter 5 gives an introduction to alternative worldviews at which time Bahnsen takes Hinduism, Behaviorism, Marxism, and Existentialism as examples and briefly summarizes each particular worldview. But beneath each of these worldviews (as well as others not named) are *"more basic worldview cores: Monism, Dualism, Atomism, Pragmatism, and Skepticism."* (80) Bahnsen answers the inquiry of why philosophers would ponder such things by pointing out that:

(1) God created man in His image, which includes rational thought, so that man has an innate desire from his creation to know; (2) God specifically calls man to seek and to learn, so that man has a moral obligation from his Creator to discover. (80)

The first three of these five worldview cores Bahnsen sees as related to the problem of the relationship between the one and the many, or universals and particulars.

- **Monism** asserts only one ultimate substance or principle in the universe, denying a real multiplicity of things.
- **Dualism** asserts two ultimate realities *"usually designated as mind and matter.... Plato was a Dualist in dividing reality into the ideal world of eternal 'Forms' and the perceptual world of temporal sense experience."* (83-84)
- **Atomism** is materialism and *"hold[s] that the material universe is composed of indestructible particles.... Generally speaking... Atomists do not accept ideals, forms, or gods."* (84) Atomism can be broken down further into:
 - **Deterministic Atomism** which denies free will (e.g. Behaviorism; Marxism) and
 - **Non-deterministic Atomism** which does not. Free will then breaks down into three categories:
 - **Egoism** — self-interest is the proper motive for human conduct.
 - **Libertarianism** — committed to freedom in human action.
 - **Utilitarianism** — men must seek the greatest happiness for the greatest number.
- **Pragmatism** *"holds that the meaning of an idea or proposition lies in its observable practical consequences."* (85) It's about whatever works.
- **Skepticism** *"says we do not know anything for certain at all."* (85) The best we can get is *probably*, but never *certainly*. All knowledge according to skepticism is deemed opinion.

The Christian worldview accounts for this relationship (between the one and the many) by its being rooted in the Triune God. The Trinity is the one while the Persons of the Trinity are the many.

Chapter 6 opens with a brief summary of everything that has been discussed up until this point before moving into the central concerns. Bahnsen begins by pointing out that the “*conflict between Christianity and the worldview of unbelief.*” (96) It’s not just certain points, but rather all points at which these worldviews differ. “*Presuppositional Apologetics requires that you recognize the antithesis between Christianity and all variations of the non-Christian worldview, whether religious or secular.*” Attempts at neutrality water down this antithesis and argue for the “*probability of the existence of a god — a far cry from Presuppositionalism’s argument for the necessary existence of the God of Scripture.*” (96)

This antithesis is then traced through Scripture with brief observations from the stories of Adam in Eden, Cain and Abel, The Days of Noah, Israel’s Exodus, Satan vs. Christ & Christians, and finally Hell as the final antithesis. The common thread is rebellion against God. Bahnsen then relates the antithesis to biblical apologetics and contends that “*to be a good, faithful, and effective apologist you must be aware, be diligent, and be observant.*” (101) You have to be aware of the antithesis, i.e., know that the unbeliever is hostile toward God. You must be diligent in pressing the antithesis since this is your main tool. Don’t argue for some generic theism but rather a specifically Christian worldview showing the unbeliever that they cannot consistently and meaningfully explain the good in their worldview. And finally you must be observant in noting inconsistencies in the unbeliever’s worldview, e.g., the naturalist/materialist’s appeal to *logic* which only the Christian worldview can account for.

Chapter 7 is dedicated to “Overcoming Metaphysical Bias.” Bahnsen begins by saying that “*Though metaphysics is a central component in any worldview, as you look around you will discover that much of the modern world discounts the value of metaphysics and resists metaphysical inquiry.*” (111) He notes that “[w]here metaphysics is tolerated today, it is assigned a subordinate position to epistemology.” (113) In other words you first establish your epistemology and then draw your metaphysical conclusions from it; this is known as ‘philosophical methodism.’ The majority of the chapter is then spent enumerating the Christian response. Bahnsen lists 8 (although he says “seven” on p. 116) problems with the anti-metaphysical position.

1. **Epistemological method is not neutral** — “*Every method of reasoning, every system of thought presupposes either the truth or falsity of Christian theism.*” (116)
2. **Metaphysics is necessary to epistemology** — “*All worldviews are systems of interlocking presuppositions*” (118) so you can’t separate metaphysics from epistemology.

3. **Anti-metaphysical arguments are uncritical** — It is naïve to dismiss metaphysics and the irony of it is *“the unbeliever who discounts metaphysics does so on the basis of his own hidden metaphysical program.”* (120)
4. **Metaphysical presuppositions are necessary to reasoning** — Every system of thought needs a starting point. Bahnsen says that you must challenge a person’s basic assumptions and demand they provide you with a standard of evaluation. He lists four responses to the question: ‘How do you know that is the right standard?’ (121-22)
 1. He can admit that his standard of evaluation in his worldview has no justification (thus rendering his position arbitrary and irrational).
 2. He can argue that his standard is established by some standard outside of itself (thus admitting that a new standard becomes more ultimate, thereby destroying his previously determined “ultimate” standard).
 3. He can then keep seeking a more ultimate standard, becoming trapped in an infinite regress argument, thereby rendering his standard unknown or unknowable.
 4. He can point to a truly ultimate, self-verifying standard that explains all else, in that it is the ultimate standard beyond which no appeal can be made, as in the Christian worldview which points to God (Heb. 6:13).
5. **Anti-metaphysical arguments are mistaken** — *“The opponent of metaphysics will not allow inferring from the realm of sense experience anything that lies outside of that realm”* (125) yet (1) this contradicts the scientific method itself, (2) *“scientists constantly deal with unseen realities”*, (125), and (3) this complaint is *“irrelevant to biblical metaphysics.”*
6. **Anti-metaphysical claims are destructive** — (1) They are self-contradictory, (2) presuppositional in nature, (3) destroy the very possibility of science, and (4) they destroy reason.
7. **Anti-metaphysical bias is anti-Christian** — This bias precludes the Christian worldview from the outset.
8. **Anti-metaphysical bias is sinfully motivated** — As noted in the earlier chapters, and by Paul in Romans 1, *“The unbeliever ‘suppresses the truth in unrighteousness’ (Rom. 1:18b) so that they become ‘futile in their speculations’ (Rom. 1:21b).”* (128)

Bahnsen takes a sidebar in #4 of the above objections to anti-metaphysics to defend presuppositional apologetics from the charge of circular reasoning or begging the question with four responses:

1. Presuppositional apologetics is not *“special pleading. . . [it’s] simply asking which system makes human experience intelligible.”* (123)
2. *“All systems must ultimately involve some circularity in reasoning. . . . This is a transcendental issue. . . [and] the Christian apologetic is not engaged in viciously circular argument, a circular argument on the same plane.”* (123-24)
3. *“‘Circularity’ is one’s philosophical system is just another name for ‘consistency’ in outlook throughout one’s system.”* (124)

4. *“The unbeliever has no defensible standard whereby he can judge the Christian position.”* (124) See the answers to the question asked in #4 above.

In chapter 8 we begin to move into application. The format breaks from that which the reader has grown accustomed to and begins with the exegetical observations before moving on to the central concerns. Proverbs 26:4-5 is seen as a text suited to the presuppositional apologetic. Solomon says: “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.” Bahnsen explains the import of this passage as meaning that we *“should not reason with the unbeliever according to the assumptions of his worldview”* (142) but for the sake of argument we may adopt their worldview to show them its inconsistency (or folly). So the central concern of this chapter is one of procedure or method.

The believer’s argument is not a direct argument that focuses on facts, but rather an indirect argument that focuses on the nature of facts. *“Facts in themselves can’t settle anything because they need a worldview to provide their interpretation.”* (147) This indirect argument is an argument from the *“impossibility of the contrary.”* In other words, the Christian worldview is the *only*—not simply the *best* which implies that there is another valid albeit lesser—worldview which makes human experience intelligible. The rest of the chapter gives some examples on how to employ this apologetic with appeals to human experience, rationality, empirical scientific investigation, and ethics. All of these things are a witness to the existence of God and when the unbeliever appeals to them they expose the inconsistency of their worldview. The truth is that they are borrowing from the Christian worldview without acknowledging it.

Chapter 9 deals with the problem of moral absolutes. The Christian has an absolute standard of morality (God) while the unbeliever falls into moral relativism. A number of humanists and philosophers, as well as a law professor and even a Wikipedia article (!) are cited to show the morally relativistic position of the unbeliever. The problem with this position is that it is self-contradictory because:

In effect, *they contradictorily have a morality about no morality.* They say you *should* (“should” entails moral obligation or duty) believe there are no moral absolutes. This is illustrated by the ethics professor, committed to moral relativism and denying moral absolutes, who will absolutely demand that his students not cheat on his exams. (172)

Then the problem of “good” comes into play. Good is defined as that which “evokes approval” either social approval or personal approval. The problem with good being that which evokes social approval is demonstrated with appeals to societies who have engaged in genocide, cannibalism, human sacrifice, infanticide, child molestation, widow immolation, and community suicide. By the social approval standard all of these things must be viewed as “good,” but they aren’t! Personal approval is meaningless because it is subjective.

Another approach to defining “good” is to see it as that which achieves certain ends, e.g., the greatest happiness for the greatest number. The problem here is that we can’t truly know that this is good. It assumes that the end is good without knowing how or why it is such. The unbeliever builds his house on a sandy foundation so when the wind blows hard enough the house comes toppling down. In other words, the unbelieving worldview cannot rationally account for morality.

In chapter 10 the focus is on the uniformity of nature. *“The uniformity of the universe predicts that what happens at any given time in the material world will, under sufficiently similar conditions, occur again.”* (187) This entails two truths: (1) uniformity is valid in all places, and (2) uniformity is valid at all times. Uniformity is important because *“our everyday lives would be inconceivable without [it]. We would have no unity at all either in experience or thought.”* (188) But accounting for uniformity presents a serious problem for the unbeliever if they are to account for it according to their worldview; *“[a]ll sane people assume uniformity, but only the Christian worldview can account for it.”* (189)

The unbeliever attempts to account for uniformity by pointing to the past. They say: *“We know the future will be like the past because our past experience of the oncoming future has always been thus.”* (189) The problem is that this only tells us about the past and not the future that lies ahead of us. Bahnsen points to atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell’s appeal to the principle of induction which he admits *“has no foundation in observation, in sense experience.”* (189) This ultimately breaks down into relativism for Russell but the unbeliever has another problem in that they have no genuine assurance that the universe is uniform at all.

The issue boils down to this: Since man cannot know everything he must *assume* or *presuppose* uniformity and then think and act on this very basic assumption. *Consequently the principle of uniformity is not a scientific law but an act of faith which undergirds scientific law.* Thus, adherence to the principle of uniformity—though absolutely essential to science and the scientific method—is an intrinsically religious commitment. [...] The unbelieving worldview requires faith in miracles, yet without a reason for those miracles. (192, 194)

However, the uniformity of nature is consistent with the Christian worldview because the sovereign Creator/God of the universe reveals to us in Scripture and experience that *“we can count on regularities in the natural world.”* (194)

In the previous two chapters Bahnsen addressed the problems that moral absolutes and the uniformity of nature present for the unbelieving worldview. In chapter 11 he covers one more major problem: the problem of universals. He begins, *“As always, the trouble for the unbeliever is that in denying the existence of God he is asserting chance as the ultimate backdrop of the universe. But in a chance universe man cannot account for... the laws of logic. . . . without logic and universals we could not understand anything at all or engage in coherent reasoning.”* (199-200) A ‘universal’ is *“any truth of a general or*

abstract nature—whether it be a broad concept, law, principle, or categorical statement. Such general truths are used to understand, organize, and interpret particular truths encountered in concrete experience.” (280) We’re also to note that “*universals are immaterial realities distinct from material particulars.*” (201)

Bahnsen explains that the laws of logic are universals saying that “[t]hey are the most general propositions one can possibly hold. [...] The laws of logic are not laws of thought, but presuppositions of (coherent) thinking.” (202) The three basic laws of logic are: (1) the law of identity, (2) the law of (non-)contradiction, and (3) the law of the excluded middle. “*Obviously universals and the laws of logic are fundamentally important to rationality. Without them you could not relate one thing to another, nor reason about the world and life.*” (203) But this places the non-Christian in a predicament. He lists four problems that answer the question of why can’t the unbeliever’s worldview account for universals and the laws of logic:

1. **Empirical Limitations** — Empiricism says that knowledge comes through the senses and is observable, but the “*laws of logic are not physical objects existing as part of the sense world. They are not the result of observable behavior of material objects or physical actions.*” (205)
2. **Chance Foundations** — The unbelieving worldview is rooted in chance but “[i]n a chance universe, all particular facts would be random, have no classifiable identity, bear no pre-determined order or relation, and thus be unintelligible to man’s mind.” (207)
3. **Dialectical Tension** — In other words, contradiction. The laws of logic must be employed to say anything about chance, yet if pure chance and randomness were true then this would not be possible.
4. **Conventional Subjectivity** — If the unbeliever asserts that the laws of logic are simply “*human conventions’ agreed upon by man*” (209) they run into difficulty in that not all men agree on the laws of logic (he cites Taoism and Zen Buddhism as examples). “*The laws of logic are not dependent upon people: they are true whether or not people exist.*” (210)

The Christian answer is that God is the source of logic in that logic reflects his unchanging nature and character. The world and our experience in the world is coherent because there exists a correspondance between God’s mind and ours. “*Perfect coherence characterizes the mind of God so that for us to reason we must think with logical consistency.*” (211)

In the final chapter the subject of personal dignity and freedom is taken up. “*The naturalistic worldview cannot account for freedom. . . . If naturalism is true, then the advocate of the naturalistic approach is only saying he affirms naturalism because nature has determined that he would. . . . He has no reason for declaring naturalism to be true; he is just forced to say so.*” (217) Likewise, the naturalistic worldview cannot account for human dignity. Funerals are used as an example of the assertion human dignity. Some wild animals sniff their dead and then eat them, but throughout the history of humanity there has always been some sort of reverence for the dead. Another example

of this assertion of human dignity is in the establishment of legal systems and courts of law. These establishments are supposed to protect and encourage life, and while many non-believer's believe in human dignity, they can't account for it.

The consistent unbeliever will deny that there really is any such thing as human dignity, while those who affirm it are forced to borrow from the Christian worldview. Likewise, a chance universe cannot account for dignity. "*Chance destroys the very possibility of meaning and significance, taking down with it the notion of dignity.*" [...] *At best, dignity is simply a human convention. And when affirmed it becomes a contradiction in the unbeliever's worldview.*" (226-27) The Christian view however, is that mankind was created in the image of God and therefore we derive our dignity from God. The Bible is replete with affirmations of the dignity and worth of humanity. "*Only Christianity provides 'the preconditions for intelligibility.'* *The unbelieving worldview destroys even the dignity of human life, thereby undermining even the motive to argue against the Christian.*" (230)

Up until this point I have mainly summarised Bahnsen & DeMar's work and now I offer my estimation of its value. As a textbook I think that *PTA* succeeds on many levels. The presentation is clear, concise, and for the most part comprehensible. The format is conducive to easily retaining the material presented, with features such as the questions that appear at the end of every chapter and the answers that appear in an index in the back of the book. The author/editor constantly affirm, summarize, and reaffirm the book's main thesis, but in a way that is not annoying or overwhelming. The practical applications at the end of each chapter are also helpful in that they get you to start using what you've just learned immediately, and one of the best features is the recommended reading, mainly because the vast majority of the material is available online. This saves the student the trouble of having to make a trip to the library or purchase new books; they can simply start their further reading immediately after finishing the chapter (providing they have internet access). And finally the glossary and detailed subject index are extremely helpful. I can honestly say that my understanding of the presuppositional apologetic has been severely sharpened from reading this book.

Having said that, there are what I believe to be some deficiencies with this volume as well. One of my major problems was not being able to easily discern where Bahnsen was speaking and where DeMar was speaking. Throughout the summary presented in my review I have referred to Bahnsen because the introduction says that the "central concerns" are his from the lectures given in 1991, but there are times when I wasn't so sure. On the other hand, there were times when it was clear, e.g., when DeMar quotes material that was written after Bahnsen's death. Another thing to note is that when Wikipedia is quoted (169, 175-77, 218 n. 4) there are no footnotes giving the URL and the date of access. This presents a problem because Wikipedia can be edited by anyone at any given time. The information from March 2007 (the date of publication) might not be that which the reader encounters in December 2008.

And my final criticism is that even though I feel this book presents a thorough introduction to the presuppositional method of apologetics, I'm left wondering how

useful this approach is on a broader scale. It consistently argues for the ultimacy of the Christian worldview above and beyond all others but in practice it really only focuses on atheism. This approach can successfully crush the atheist's presentation every time, but how does it stack up against other theists? What's to keep the Muslim who believes in God and divine revelation in the Qur'an from using a presuppositional apologetic for their worldview? What would render their arguments null and void? What about Christian cults such as Oneness Pentecostals or Jehovah's Witnesses who claim belief in the God of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures? Can they not apply the same methodology within their frame of belief? I understand the appeal to God, but why the Christian God as opposed to Aristotle's Unmoved Mover? Sadly these questions are left unanswered and perhaps intentionally so, this might not have been the forum to address them, but they remain concerns nonetheless.

In the end I think that Gary DeMar has provided the body of Christ with a useful tool in making Bahnsen's lectures available in a reader/learner-friendly format. I believe that any Christian looking for a way into presuppositional apologetics will do well to read this volume.