



January 2-5, 2013

Saint Louis, MO

www.lcms.org/campusministry

Plenary Sessions Outline

I hear that there is an Apologetics emphasis at this conference. What will we be primarily learning about UNWRAPPED?

Our featured speaker, Craig Parton, will be engaging us on the following topics:

I. Defending the Defense of the Faith

In this section we will analyze the development of the secular age and the misguided responses to secularism given by both religious liberals (motto: "If you can't beat 'em, join' em") and fundamentalists (motto: "If you can't beat 'em, separate from them—but give your testimony of a changed life first."). We will also seek to understand why the central truth claims of Christianity need to be vigorously defended (Hint: truth does not always and simply "rise to the top"). Finally, we will reflect on the cultural and theological reasons why so many Christians avoid apologetics like the plague and the utter disaster for culture (and campus evangelism) that has been the result.

II. Apologetics and the Holy Spirit

We will examine the role of apologetics in evangelism on campus. Is apologetics even necessary? After all, aren't deeds more compelling than creeds, and didn't the apostles turn the world upside down with their lifestyle of love? We will answer the criticism that apologetics is simply about trying to reason people into the kingdom of God. What place is there for "secular reasoning" in the defense of the Gospel? (just in case you're thinking, "It might work in a science lab but there's no way it can be ok to employ in theology!") And while we're at it, we will weigh the idea that apologetics threatens "Grace alone," by answering the question, "Doesn't the Bible present a tension between the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of apologetics?"

III. The Case for Christianity

It's time to marshal the key evidence for Christian truth claims, including issues such as the reliability of the New Testament, how lawyers through history have viewed the evidence for Christianity, and how that evidence fairs in a court of law. We'll also scrutinize the resurrection in light of modern science, whether so-called "Higher Criticism" of the Bible has been successful, and whether none of this matters anyway since "isn't everything a matter of private interpretation"?

IV. Apologetics for the Tender Minded

For many, objective truth claims are not as important as their direct experience with the transcendent through great literature, art, music and film. This section will seek to understand how to reach out to those for whom this is true. We'll also analyze the distinction between "tough minded" objections to Christianity and "tender minded" objections. Speaking of the "tender minded", Parton will help us see how the work of those like C.S. Lewis, Tolkein, Durer, Rembrandt, Bach and Mendelssohn can be helpful in presenting a Christianity for the "tender minded" that reflects man's highest artistic and human aspirations.