

## A Response to Paul

A fellow named Paul recently paid a visit to my blog and kindly [posted some comments](#) and questions for me to consider. Paul opened his series of questions with the following statement:

This is a general comment regarding the many posts on this site. Thanks for the opportunity to revisit some good cartoon memories. I have read some of what you have written and I am immediately impressed by the logical coherence of your arguments. So I hope that you will understand that my comments should not be viewed in any way as an attack on your intelligence. But I would like to suggest a few things for your consideration.

I want to briefly remark on Paul's welcome approach here. Where other Christians have berated and ridiculed me for my non-belief, deliberately insulting my intelligence (one even referred to me as "a retarded adult"), Paul instead resists the condescending tone which characterizes many Christians who have sought to engage me, even giving me some credit for the work I have put into my postings. This is a significant and refreshing cut above what I find on many Christian apologetic sites, even where we would expect to find at least some self-monitoring and decorum (such as on Gene Cook's [online radio programming](#)).

Paul himself has started his own blog, called [Unveiled Faces](#), and his very [first posting](#) suggests that the approach which he modeled in his comment to me is characteristic of what we can expect from him in the future. For he writes:

I would like to engage in *polite and peaceful* discussions about God, the Bible, and Jesus Christ.

I look forward to reading the kind of discussions he describes, and would encourage other Christians to follow suit.

Now on to Paul's list of questions for me.

Paul wrote:

1) Since you prefer the rationalistic approach, what would be your view of evidential apologetics?

In contrast to presuppositional apologetics, which require the person to believe certain standard absolutes about God and the universe before ever being able to come to know God, evidential apologetics are first and foremost, evidence based. That would certainly be more in keeping with your rationalistic approach. Some of your comments or posts would indicate that your conclusion is that evidence does not support the existence of a God who is the sovereign creator of all things, but I think that it is important for you to never completely rule out the possibility that the God of the Bible exists. In other words, based upon your present view of the evidence as you have come to see it, Jehovah is not real and the Bible is not authoritative. That has now become for you, your presupposition. If presuppositionalism as a mode of rational thought is incorrect, be careful that you do not come to the same place by your own rational thought. You may later gain more pieces to the puzzle. You might want to leave room for the possibility of changing your mind. What if your presupposition . . . that rational human thought is the highest standard of truth . . . ends up being faulty?

Since the preponderance of my blog postings have to do with presuppositionalism, I'd say this is a fair question, and I hope Paul finds my response to be equally fair. Generally speaking, my view of evidential apologetics is that it has already been sufficiently answered. Evidentialism, as a developed form of apologetics, has been around for a very long time, longer than presuppositional apologetics (though some presuppositionalists might disagree with this). Also, evidential apologetics has enjoyed far more popularity over the past decades and centuries than anything approaching that which presuppositionalism has enjoyed during the same period. Consequently, there have already been so many thinkers who have interacted with and critiqued evidential arguments over that period, that it seems to have already been well covered. In fact, before turning my attention to presuppositionalism, I examined arguments stemming from the evidential camp for a long time, and I came to the same general conclusions about them as other non-believing thinkers: that such arguments fail to prove what they were intended to prove. At some point, a doctor needs to pronounce the expired patient dead, and move on.

Another point is that presuppositionalism is now in vogue in many apologetic circles. Although the history of apologetics has been dominated by more or less evidentialist type argumentation (e.g., attempts to infer the existence of a supernatural being from evidences found in nature), presuppositionalism has grown in popularity in

recent years, and is thus becoming more and more common and relevant in the arena of Christian apologetics. In tandem with this is the fact that there are not many sources offering good analysis of and well considered responses to presuppositionalist positions (though this is certainly changing). And while I realize that most philosophers would probably dismiss presuppositionalism as rather unserious, this may possibly change if good answers to presuppositionalism cannot be found while more and more youngsters fall under its captivating spell. In other words, I expect we'll see more presuppositionalists in the future, so I'm assembling a source to provide well-needed counterbalance.

Now I have noticed the tendency among presuppositionalists to retreat to more or less evidentialist postures, once their presuppositionalist positions have been effectively demolished. The "true believer" presuppositionalists see this kind of move as an abandonment of the only biblically warranted approach to apologetics, while others argue that evidential-type arguments are inevitably needed to support presuppositionalist points. It is interesting to observe the disputes among Christian apologists on which is the best or proper or divinely sanctioned method of apologetics. For brining out this aspect alone, I find Cowan and Gundry's *Five Views on Apologetics* quite informative and most enjoyable.

It is true that evidential apologists claim to have actual evidence which supports the claim that their god exists, and they do seem to disagree with presuppositionalists by assuming or implicitly granting, contrary to presuppositionalism, that non-believers are able to examine this evidence independently of subliminal pre-commitments to anti-theistic attitudes which "distort" or "corrupt" their reasoning process. Presuppositionalists have objected to this stance by stating that Christian god-belief requires a complete rototilling of one's most fundamental worldview conceptions, whereas the evidential method, at least according to presuppositionalists, implies that Christian god-belief can fit comfortably atop the non-believer's basic worldview assumptions without necessarily requiring them to be uprooted and discarded. Many presuppositionalists accuse evidentialist apologists of the same "myth of neutrality" that non-believers are said to be guilty of. Of course, I realize that many apologists would consider this whole controversy to be far more nuanced than my rough description might at first blush seem to allow, but I'm not intending to write an introduction to an anthology here. However, I do have my own theory as to why controversies like this persist among apologists.

Paul mentions that portions of my writing "would indicate that [my] conclusion is that evidence does not support the existence of a God who is the sovereign creator of all things." The key word here is *conclusion* - and I appreciate Paul's resistance of the common presuppositionalist tactic of characterizing every position a non-believer has as a "presupposition" - that is, as a position held without the benefit of prior rational support. I did not "just decide" one day that there's no evidence for the existence of a god as if the facts of reality simply rearranged themselves according to my druthers. After all, one of my most fundamental recognitions is the fact that truth does not conform to one's wishing, so I would be inconsistent with my own foundations to suppose that I could simply decide that there's no evidence for something, as if I could dictate reality according to my preferences. Rather, I do take a rational approach to the matter, carefully considering what has been claimed and what has been presented as evidence in support of what has been claimed, and examining how well the two measure up.

But consider: What can we look at in nature and conclude just from looking at it that, "Aha! A supernatural being exists!?" Anything that can be presented as "evidence" for the existence of a supernatural being, typically itself turns out to be something that is itself natural. I already see this as a major stumbling block for the evidentialist's task. We are told that a *supernatural* being exists, but the evidence provided to support this claim is itself *natural*. I can see how the natural serves as evidence of something else that is natural, but I fail to see how something that is natural can serve as evidence of something that is "supernatural." In my blog [Is Human Experience Evidence of the Christian God?](#) I ask the question:

How does that which is natural, material, finite and corruptible serve as evidence of that which is supernatural, immaterial, infinite and incorruptible? In other words, how does A serve as evidence of non-A?

Perhaps at this point a good understanding of what 'supernatural' is supposed to mean is needed. Since my worldview does not affirm anything it calls "supernatural," it is not up to me to supply the meaning of this term. But I certainly reserve the right to question any definitions put forth for it, and to determine how suitable they are for purposes of isolating the essentials that things which are said to be supernatural share in common. Further questions, such as those relating to epistemic methodology, are waiting to be answered as well, such as: How can one discover something that is said to be supernatural? In what form can one have awareness of that which is said to be supernatural? How can one verify that something claimed to be supernatural is in fact supernatural? How can I distinguish what the Christian is calling 'supernatural' from something he may merely be imagining? Etc.

Christians have told me that when they look at the stars, watch a sunset, or marvel at the beauty of a forest or painted desert, they see evidence of the existence of their god. Muslims have claimed the same evidence on behalf of their Allah, which is also supposed to be supernatural. When I visited the Lahu tribe in northern Thailand, they pointed to nature as evidence of their Geusha. But in each case, the things these people point to are finite, physical things. So how do they serve as evidence of something that is said to be infinite and non-physical? They tell me that the complexity of living organisms is evidence for the existence of a supernatural creator. But living organisms are natural, physical, finite and corruptible, while they're god is said to be supernatural, non-physical, infinite and incorruptible. So how do living organisms serve as evidence of something they are not? They tell me that I cannot explain the existence of life on the basis of my non-theistic worldview, and then proceed to point to their allegedly living god as the explanation. But if living things need an explanation outside of life that distinguishes them from other things, how does pointing to something that is itself said to be living serve to explain life? In pointing to their god as an explanation for life, these apologists simply move the need for an explanation back one step rather than giving anything that can be accepted as a serious explanation. And even then, it can only be accepted on someone's say so. The same is the case with the demand for an explanation for rationality: if rationality needs an explanation by appealing to something beyond man's nature, and that explanation is said to be found in a rational god, what explains the rationality that has been attributed to this god? Their god, they tell me, is impervious to any requirement for explanation. This tells me that they have run out of explanations once they get to their god, and so bring the intellectual process to a dead stop once they arrive at their god.

At any rate, I don't think any apologetic argument for the existence of a god, whether evidential, presuppositional, etc., will be successful. That is because I am entirely convinced that god-belief is false to begin with. Likewise, I would say that any attempt to prove the claim that squares are both square and circular is doomed to failure, because I am entirely convinced that squares are not circular, and that circles are not square. Some may want to say I am closed-minded, bigoted, or simply foolish for making such statements. They are free to hold these opinions, just as I am free to hold to my verdicts. But I do welcome further inquiries.

Paul's second point was the following comment:

2) Your communicative skills may be superior to most, but that does not mean that your conclusions are.

I was often frustrated as a student by one particular English teacher. I learned much from her, because she was very intelligent and highly skilled in the English language, but the frustration came from not being able to "out-debate" her. Even when I knew that she was wrong and I was right, she could still "win" the argument. Even when SHE knew that she was wrong (and would smile at me with a knowing look on her face), she could still "win" the argument. I could say more, but it would sound like I am trying to flatter you by praising your intelligence. Just remember that it is possible to be an impeccable debater, and still be wrong.

While noting the caveat that Paul embedded in this comment, I do appreciate its complimentary sentiment. And I also appreciate his point: just because I may be skilled at communicating my thoughts, this alone does not mean that my thoughts are flawless or that my conclusions are entirely sound. Of course, I recognize this, so I do try my best to be careful. At the same time, I am not afraid per se of making mistakes, for I find that I have learned some of my most valuable lessons as a result of making mistakes. This in itself is a lesson I have learned as a musician. If I were to allow the fear of making mistakes control me, I would never have sat down at the piano a second time. I was born ignorant and unskilled, and will always be ignorant of and unskilled at many things. I am fallible and I will always be capable of erring. I made peace with these facts long ago. My worldview is not one which will condemn an individual for having 'spots and wrinkles', as it were. To me, it is more important to be honest than to avoid making mistakes, as one can make mistakes and still be honest, and go on to enjoy the benefit of learning from those mistakes to boot. Someone who never makes mistakes may never learn more than he already knows.

I can also sympathize with Paul's anecdote here. When I was in my teens, I was thoughtful, but I had to admit that I was not a very skilled thinker in spite of my scholastic achievements, which were admired by my peers. Having older siblings and a mother who were sharp as whips, often made me feel as though I had a lot of catching up to do if I wanted to spar on their level. After all, even my sisters were significantly older than me, and were well ahead of me by the time I came along. I remember being frustrated by simple one-liners that I often fielded when I tried to make an intelligent point.

Unfortunately, at that time in my life I tended to do what so many people do, namely presume the superiority of other minds. Along with a few other key defects in my psychological make-up, it was this bad habit that I developed and did not adequately check that made me vulnerable to religious suggestion in my early 20s. The presumption that other minds are superior in some respect, effectively disarmed my own mind, at least in certain social contexts, and

eventually led to my being seduced into religious belief. Without really realizing it, I tacitly assumed out of habit rather than for any good reason, that at least some other minds were superior to my own, and this put me in a position to take what they claimed "on faith." Christianity quickly turned me into the psychological yes-man that it requires of men.

I have never thought of myself as an "impeccable debater," even though I suppose I've grown in this area over the years. Rather, I think of myself just as I state in my blogger profile: I am a Man, and I think with my own mind. If others think I have erred, I welcome their efforts to show where I've gone wrong. But that's just it: Where exactly has my reasoning gone wrong?

Paul then asked a series of questions in his third point:

3) If your own intelligent words and thoughts are carefully crafted, does not reason lead us to conclude that the source of your intelligence (your mind/your brain) is carefully crafted as well?

At this point, I doubt that the suggestion of an "intelligent designer" comes as a surprise. Nevertheless, it amazes me to think that such an intelligent person as yourself would not acknowledge your creator. Wouldn't it be a shame to come to the end of life and find out that you were wrong? Can you just imagine . . . imagine God saying to you that you had much less excuse than the majority of people since he had given you a superior intelligence to see all the intricacies of his creation? Can you imagine standing in his presence, and suddenly realizing that you had used the mind that he had given you . . . to marginalize his sovereignty or to reject the fact that he existed? I know you can come up with a rational response to this line of questioning, but nevertheless, what if?

Consider the implications if we vary the condition on which this question rests: If a person's words and thoughts are *carelessly* crafted, does not reason lead us to conclude that the source of that person's intelligence (his mind and/or brain) are *carelessly* crafted as well? That is to say, the cogency of the desired outcome here depends greatly on the skill level of the one taken as a sample. If carefully crafted thoughts imply a carefully crafted mind/brain which thinks them, do not carelessly crafted thoughts then imply a carelessly crafted mind/brain which thinks them?

However, my primary response to such questions would be to point out the following. I was not born with the ability to put carefully crafted arguments together. Indeed, many of my detractors today claim that my arguments are very poorly crafted, while yet others say I never present any arguments to begin with. (Mind you, the latter seem to be of the type who think the statement "without God, you can't prove anything" constitutes an argument.) One's skill in any ability is something he *develops over time*. We aren't born with these skills, as we would expect if our minds and bodies were well designed finished products. At this point, defenders of the design argument need to shift their premise enough to allow for this, saying that we would have needed to be designed just to have the capacity to develop any abilities in the first place. But if I were to suppose that my brain, because of its capacity for consciousness, required a conscious designer, I would likewise think that its designer itself required a designer, and so on, ad nauseum.

Am I not acknowledging my creator? Well, who is my creator if not *myself*? I am who I am and where I am as a result of my own choices and actions. I have always had the choice to think, or to evade thinking. There was a time in my life when I evaded, and that was when I was a Christian. Then I realized the importance of the choice to think. No one else chose for me (I'm not a character in someone's cartoon, or a puppet dangling on a string). I chose for myself to develop my mind as I did, and I put in the work and effort to make my mind what it is now. You've heard the expression "self-made man." There's a reason why this expression came into use. As I mentioned, I was not born with the abilities I have now. I worked very hard to develop them. No one came along and just gave them to me. I could have just as easily chosen to sit back and watch reruns for all my life. I was the one who chose to develop my mental abilities and apply my mind to the task of living my life, to put in a good day's work, to pursue those values which I have chosen, values which make my life possible and worth living. I had some good models along the way, I also had some bad ones as well. I sought, by my own choice, to emulate the best of the better models, and to refrain from taking on the bad habits of those models I judged to be inferior to what I want to achieve in myself. After all, it is in *my Self* that I live, move and have my being. I am an ever-increasing sum of accomplishments and failures, with more accomplishments and fewer failures as I go.

There's no question that we can imagine a god doing one thing or saying something. But the point is that this is all one *can* do, since we do not find a god in reality. So all we're left with is what we can *imagine*. And throughout the ages, men have imagined all kinds of gods. I can imagine all kinds of things. That does not make what I imagine true or even place what I imagine within the realm of possibility. I can imagine, just as easily as standing before the Christians' god, also standing before the Muslims' Allah, the Lahus' Geusha, the deities of Mt. Olympus, the Vikings'

Odin, etc.

The whole line that human beings find their source in the Christian god is quite incoherent. The source here is said to be perfect and infallible, omnipotent and incorruptible. But human beings are far from perfect and infallible. The source claimed for man does not at all cohere with any aspect of the state of man. Essentially, we have what I would call the problem of deficiency. If the product has any defects, how can it be claimed to have come from a *perfect* source? A creator that creates *imperfection* cannot be a *perfect* creator, because a perfect creator by definition would not create something that is imperfect. Its purposes would be perfect, which would disallow any intended imperfections. Its abilities would be perfect, which would disallow any unintended imperfections. Suppose someone told you that he was a perfect bread maker, but every piece of bread you sample from his ovens was either undercooked, charred to a crisp or so hard that you couldn't take a bite out of it without cracking your tooth. When you tell him that he has yet to perfect his bread making technique, he scoffs and says "Well, I intended my bread to be like this!" Would this at all seem plausible?

In his final point Paul gave some words regarding the notion of faith:

4) Faith, by the nature of what it is, is much harder for the intelligent mind to submit itself to.

Faith requires leaning on someone or something else, instead of self. Quite frankly, you might not see any need to do so. A person with seemingly impeccable logic would have much more reason to feel self-sufficient. If you feel like you have something solid to lean upon, why would you look for anything firmer to give you support? Especially when, from your perspective, other things seem to be as reliable as a swaying reed. Except in this case, the kind of support needed is not physical, but a support for life. Upon what should the whole of life be rested? For you, it seems that it is human logic and reasoning. And there is no doubt that what you have chosen is far superior to the weak things that many choose to rest their lives upon. Some rest their lives on physical security or provision. Some rest their lives on social acceptance or being loved. Some rest their lives on social superiority (physical, intellectual, talent-related, position/rank). And then others rest their lives on that which supercedes this present life . . . the possibility that there is presently something that transcends what we call space and time. Ultimately, even though I could call upon an enormous body of evidence to demonstrate the reality of Jehovah and the reliability of the Bible . . . ultimately that requires faith . . . faith in someone beyond yourself. To lean on someone who is presently unseen. And for a person with reason enough to trust himself, because of his intellectual prowess, faith of that kind is very difficult.

After reading through this statement a few times, the one question that I continually come back to is: what exactly is this 'leaning on someone' supposed to accomplish? Is it supposed to accomplish something one should do for himself, but doesn't want to? Is it supposed to accomplish something one needs, but cannot do for himself? Is it supposed to make one feel better about himself? Perhaps my question boils down to this: *Do I need faith?* And, if one answers "Yes, Dawson, you do need faith," *why does he think I need it?* At this point, we'd need a really good understanding of what is meant by faith. Paul indicates what faith requires, distinguishing it from self-reliance. Paul concedes that I might not need to lean on someone or something other than myself. Perhaps we need a good understanding of what "lean on" means in this context. I "lean on" my wife, for instance, to help me in many tasks. But I would not call this an expression of faith in the sense of leaning on someone I cannot see. For I can certainly see my wife. But I do not expect her to do my thinking for me.

Paul asks "upon what should the whole of life be rested?" My answer would be: on that which can support a life as it should be lived. And of course, I hold that it is up to each individual to determine for himself how he should live his life. I live for my own sake, and intend to lead an independent, productive life, increasing my skill set and knowledge of the world according to my interests as I go. I intend to lead a happy and spiritually nourished life, as I have done so successfully since my departure from Christian mysticism. Reason is what makes all this possible. It is not just a tool that can be picked up and put back down when it no longer suits my needs. On the contrary, it is the only standard that can suit my needs, since my needs are life-based needs, needs dictated by my nature as a biological organism with the capacity for conceptual awareness. I can take reason wherever I go, I can use it wherever I am. It will suit my needs so long as they are rational.

by Dawson Bethrick

posted by Bahnsen Burner at [7:00 AM](#)

5 Comments:

[Jerry](#) said...

[quote]Nevertheless, it amazes me to think that such an intelligent person as yourself would not acknowledge your creator.[/quote]

My creator would be natural selection and the natural forces that exist in the universe. I certainly acknowledge that. Why does Paul assume that the creator has to be conscious?

[June 26, 2006 6:47 PM](#)

[Jerry](#) said...

[quote]Wouldn't it be a shame to come to the end of life and find out that you were wrong? Can you just imagine . . . imagine God saying to you that you had much less excuse than the majority of people since he had given you a superior intelligence to see all the intricacies of his creation?[/quote]

You are assuming that these "intricacies" have no natural explanation. Even if they don't it doesn't mean that one doesn't exist.

The fact of the matter is that we gain knowledge about reality via the senses. To sense something "intricate" and then conclude that it was created by a supernatural entity is to commit the fallacy called "argument from incredulity". It's a form of non sequitur.

Many years ago the ancient people saw the tides come in and leave and they concluded that the gods were responsible for this action. But of course we know better today. We know how these things happen and the gods "explanation" is not necessary.

Notice something about all of these arguments from design by theist. They all appeal to ignorance. The god hypothesis in order to survive must stay within the confines of ignorance.

But most importantly I truly believe that Dawson is coming to his conclusions honestly such as I am. It would be dishonest of Dawson or anyone for that matter to abandon his conclusions on a "what if I am wrong" premise because it is to reject the very use of the mind that this god allegedly created.

Let's apply this type of reasoning to Paul. Is Paul a Catholic or a protestant? If a protestant well then he may be wrong if the Catholics are right, or if the Muslims are right. No matter who you are or what you think there is going to be someone there to say to you, "Ah ha, but you could be wrong and if I am right you will suffer!"

Why do you Paul, hold to your theological conclusions that you hold to even though there are many people who say that you will suffer for the conclusions that you hold to? You could be wrong to! Why do you want Dawson to capitulate to such reasoning but you yourself will hold steadfast to your views despite the multitude of people who disagree with you and say that you will go to hell for it?

[June 26, 2006 7:08 PM](#)

[the\\_arkie](#) said...

Thanks for your response, Dawson.

I don't have time for a continued discussion right now, but I would like to engage in more discussion as time allows. But one brief comment about faith. Faith does not have to be "blind" in order to be faith. You most likely do have faith in your wife. Trusting her to be honest . . . able to rely upon her in various ways. Not asking her to do your thinking for you, but (hopefully) willing to trust her thoughts if they prove to be superior to yours (on occasion (smile) ). But more detailed comments will have to come later.

And Jerry, I still believe God is responsible for the tides . . . (smile). An appeal to ignorance? Come now . . . that is an atheistic a priori . . . an assumption that human reasoning and scientific observation exhausts the possible sources of intelligence (or ignorance). And I am addressing Dawson as a man who once held to Christian ideas, and who might still be in the process of consideration, regardless of how determined he is in his present conclusions. I am not ignoring your other comments, but it takes time to answer appropriately.

When I can, I will try to put in my first post . . .



[July 08, 2006 8:56 PM](#)

[Bahnsen Burner](#) said...

Hello Paul,

I'm glad you have come back to me. I can certainly understand and sympathize with your time constraints. I, too, have similar limitations. But I will try to make myself available if the discussion seems worthy of my time.

As for faith, I tend not to use the expression "blind faith" simply because I think it is an inherent redundancy. I realize Christians resist this, but that is because their worldview compels them to through its admission to being a faith in the first place.

My trust in my wife has nothing to do with faith, because she proves herself to me everyday. Faith is simply not required. And there are times when her viewpoint is wiser than mine. But accepting that is not an act of faith, for the determination that her suggestions are wiser than my initial inclinations on certain matters is borne on rational considerations, not by consulting a confession of faith.

Also, you will find that I agree with Jerry on the reliance of god-belief on human ignorance. This is not at all "an atheistic a priori," but a conclusion which has been confirmed time and time again as a result of repeated interactions with what Christians offer as arguments or reasons for their stated beliefs. I find this even in the case of presuppositional apologetics, where it is most obvious to me that the arguments presuppositionalists employ are premised on ignorance of how the mind works in forming concepts and of the basic nature of the relationship consciousness has with its objects. Apologists for Christianity circle around any whiff of ignorance, like vultures circling around a wounded animal on the ground. When they perceive ignorance on some issue, they see an opportunity to widen a gap big enough to fit their god-belief. I've seen this over and over and over again, so it is certainly not an "a priori" assessment. I would not be the first to point out the kinship between Christian apologetics and defeatist skepticism. Waiting in the wings there's always the ready retort, "You can't know that God does not exist!" Really? Essentially the Christian spouting this kind of retort is saying that his god created men with minds that simply cannot work. Can I not know that square circles do not exist? Religious belief is all about negating the human mind, not empowering it. The objective of apologetics is not to enlighten man, but to break his spirit. And against the backdrop of such a self-refuting context, we're supposed to be impressed with theistic arguments? You will be disappointed here, Paul, for I see through the game already.

Regards,  
Dawson

[July 09, 2006 12:04 PM](#)

[the\\_arkie](#) said...

I got my first post up and running. Perhaps it will give you a better idea of where I am coming from.

I think that you and I have different definitions of faith. Faith is not negated by proofs. Faith is bolstered by proofs and thus is able to make the next step with confidence even if the next step is not yet visible or proven. Like a chair that has held you each of the last 100 times you have sat in it, so you have faith that it will hold you again, and so you sit in the chair with confidence. That kind of faith is not blind. It is reasonable and logical.

You also said: Religious belief is all about negating the human mind, not empowering it. The objective of apologetics is not to enlighten man, but to break his spirit.

That, of course, is a major assumption. It is assuming that you are familiar with all religious thought and all apologetics. Regardless of how much personal research and experience you have regarding these subjects, you are making a generalization that is unwarranted.

Since you were a Christian at some time in the past, what kind of experience was it for you? My first assumption is that something about the experience must have been negative, otherwise you would probably still be a Christian. Perhaps that also influences the strength of your opposition to Christian or Biblical teaching today. You don't seem to be "neutral" toward Christianity, but rather "negative."

Is that purely a logical negative response, or are there some negative emotions in there as well?

Kindly,  
PAUL

[July 09, 2006 10:50 PM](#)