

# PREPARE *to* THRIVE

A SURVIVAL GUIDE  
FOR CHRISTIAN STUDENTS



PATRICIA ENGLER  
FOREWORD BY KEN HAM

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FOR CHRISTIAN STUDENTS

Prepare to Thrive

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	v
Dedication .....	vii
Welcome to the Battlefield.....	1
How to Use This Book .....	7

## *Part 1*

### **WAR STORIES**

The Foundation of Our Faith .....	13
The Assault on Scripture.....	25
The Attack on Youth .....	39
Memoirs from the Front Lines.....	57
Global Problems, Global Solutions .....	73

## *Part 2*

### **BOOT CAMP**

Spiritual Foundations .....	93
Intellectual Foundations .....	111
Interpersonal Foundations .....	129

## *Part 3*

### **IN THE TRENCHES**

Critical Thinking 101 .....	149
Dodging Psychological Bullets.....	165
Assessing Information.....	185
Evaluating Arguments .....	205
Combating Brainwashing.....	225
The Next Level .....	245

## *Appendixes*

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION RESOURCES**

Resource List .....	261
Catalog of Logical Fallacies .....	267
Critical Thinking Practice Exercises .....	281
Writing Tips .....	289
Research Tips .....	291
Acknowledgments .....	295



# FOREWORD

“Fake news” is a buzzword in our culture, and examples on both sides of the political spectrum abound (and, sadly, the “fact checkers” often can’t be trusted to check beyond their own biases and presuppositions). Well, fake news isn’t confined to social media or news media. Every day, professors preach fake news in the classroom to thousands of impressionable students. Their murky false narrative and wrong interpretation of the data can be difficult to sift through, and many students swallow it, hook, line, and sinker. Sadly, these students include many Christians who hear clever-sounding arguments and are slowly dragged away from their sincere and pure devotion to Christ and belief in his Word. But it doesn’t have to be that way.

Students must be taught critical thinking skills and equipped with biblical literacy and apologetics so that they can see through the subtle lies and half-truths of the enemy. These skills don’t arise on their own—we must be intentional about coming alongside the next generation and discipling them in the Lord, helping them apply a biblical worldview to the shifting sand of the humanistic secular worldview dominating the classroom and the culture.

But how do we do that? What’s most effective? Patricia Engler lays out a tested and highly practical method for how Christians can survive higher education with their faith not just intact but deeply rooted and how other Christians can be part of grounding younger believers in their faith. We desperately need such an approach, and I’m thrilled this new book is available for students, parents, pastors, mentors, and others.

## **As you read this book, keep five big-picture principles in mind:**

1. Satan seeks to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). The world, including higher education, is not neutral toward your faith (Matthew 12:30) or the faith of those you love. Satan is actively opposing you and trying to destroy you and your faith. You’re in a battle (but—spoiler—Christ has the ultimate victory).
2. For parents, pastors, and others—universities might not be what you remember them to be! What do I mean? Well, when I went to a university in the 1970s, there wasn’t the antagonism toward Christians there is today (the Western world was much more Christianized). I could even mention creation in my assignments and wasn’t penalized for it! But that’s not the way things are on college campuses today. These institutions are very antagonistic toward

Christianity and biblical truth (sadly, even many Christian colleges won't stand for biblical truth in certain areas), and so now Christian students desperately need survival tools to navigate, survive, and thrive in colleges that hate God, hate his Word, and won't stand biblical truth. We can't send students in unarmed!

3. Satan will use the same attack that he used on Eve (2 Corinthians 11:3) to try to cause you to doubt God's Word: "Did God actually say?" (Genesis 3:1). Watch out for arguments crafted to undermine God's Word in subtle ways. That attack is not an accident. It's intentional on the part of our enemy to undermine, weaken, and destroy faith.
4. There are answers! When, as a young person, I came to my godly father with questions he couldn't answer, he would tell me that just because we don't know the answer doesn't mean there isn't one. It just means we don't know the answer yet! If you encounter an argument that contradicts God's Word and can't find a satisfactory answer, don't throw away the Word of God. It is eternal (Isaiah 40:8) and will outlast any argument that raises its lofty head. Let God be true, but every man a liar (Romans 3:4).
5. For parents, pastors, and other Christians—you've been called to make disciples. And that doesn't just mean convert people. Listen to Jesus' words: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20). We're to teach people the Word of God, discipling them in the truth. Don't just abandon your youth when they head off to post-secondary education. Maintain strong relationships whenever possible, being available to answer questions and grapple with difficult subjects. And help those young people, whenever possible, to get plugged in with a strong Christian community at their college campus. We're built for relationship, and young people need those relationships to ground them.

As you read this book, be encouraged—God's Word is true. It has stood the test of time, questions, and persecution in the past, and it will continue to do so until Christ returns. Stand firm and believe his Word and the gospel message!



CEO and cofounder of Answers in Genesis, the Creation Museum, and the Ark Encounter

## *Dedication*

*If you're a Christian young person reading these words, or a parent, pastor, or mentor supporting a Christian young person, then this book is dedicated to you and to Jesus, our Creator, with love.*

*1 Corinthians 16:13–14*





## Introduction

# WELCOME TO THE BATTLEFIELD

Staring at the email, I could only wonder what I'd gotten myself into.

Sure, the letter sounded friendly enough. But did that central sentence really mean what it seemed to mean? Pulse quickening, I read the missive again.

*Yep . . . no mistake there.* My professor's letter gently—but explicitly—suggested that students who didn't believe humans evolved “from the tiniest mammals 150 million years ago” needed to rethink joining the upcoming anthropology class.<sup>1</sup>

*Interesting.*

I'd heard that higher education might be this way. Rumor had it that the university is an ideological battlefield where scary professors with laser eyes (or was it laser pointers?) roved in search of dissidents. Their favorite targets? Nice Christian students. Upon a single glance into a scary professor's eyes, a nice Christian student may never be seen again.

But that was just a rumor . . . right?

*“Scary professors  
with laser eyes”*

Closing the email, I knew I might soon find out. I'd already survived one semester as a Bible-believing Christian, and none of the professors I'd met so far brandished laser vision. Besides, I had another motive for joining classes like this one.

That motive had seeded in my mind years earlier when I'd learned about the consequences of two related beliefs: *earth is millions of years old* and *humans evolved from apelike ancestors*. As we'll explore in the next couple of chapters, these ideas shattered many Westerners' trust in God's Word, driving Western cultures to largely reject Scripture—and scriptural morals—as irrelevant.

Today, it's no secret that this rejection of Scripture remains more rampant than ever, unfolding not only in society but also in countless individual lives. Research has linked Christian youths' unanswered questions about evolutionary ideas to the reality that two-thirds of churched teens are leaving their faith by young adulthood.<sup>2</sup> After all, why should any young person (much less an entire society) believe the Bible if science shows it to be about as reliable as a guide to identifying tooth fairies?

With these consequences in mind, I wanted to find out how Christian students can keep their faith during evolutionary education. But to do so, I had to become one of those students. That's why after 12 years of homeschooling, I enrolled in a science degree at a secular university.<sup>3</sup> And despite my professor's ominous email, I began the anthropology class.

## THE PROBLEM: A BATTLE OF WORLDVIEWS

There and in other classes, I discovered that my instructors weren't so much scary professors as friendly human beings—albeit with much different worldviews than mine. Typically, the worldview that Western societies embrace is secular humanism, an atheistic belief system which claims that humans evolved to become the godlike masters of their own morality.<sup>4</sup> But does that idea seem compatible with the gospel, which explains that humans sinned against their Creator's perfect moral standards and therefore need a Savior? No way!

If secular humanism is true, then the gospel is irrelevant. But for humanism to be true, evolution must be true because humanists must explain their existence without a Creator. Messages touting evolution as an undeniable fact, therefore, often *saturate* Western public education, together with other humanistic messages claiming that truth is

*“It's like being a double agent.”*

ours to decide. So while most universities (hopefully) don't harbor laser-eyed warlord professors, campuses can nonetheless be treacherous worldview battlefields. In fact, universities field one of the highest-stake wars imaginable: a war to coronate human reasoning above God's Word as the supreme authority ruling the beliefs—and therefore decisions—of entire generations.

During the four years I spent on secular campuses, I fought recurring messages falling like missile after missile to rattle the foundations of my faith: *intelligent design is “totally wacked,” evolution is indisputable, Christianity is a cultural construct, and humans created God.*

I wrote home during my first year: “It's strange arguing in quizzes, exams, and assignments for a paradigm I disbelieve (evolution). . . . I'm being conditioned to fight against a worldview I stand for. It's like being a double agent by training as a cadet for an opposing army.”

My story represents only one life among countless students who are being taught to deny a Creator. In diverse studies ranging from anthropology to zoology, students worldwide face a barrage of evolutionary messages enforcing secular humanism. At any cost to culture and the church, these messages are pervasive, persistent, and persuasive.

They're artillery in a spiritual battle for the hearts and minds of students—students who represent society's future.

## KEYS TO SURVIVING THE BATTLE

Naturally, no one expecting to survive a battle can enter the front lines armed with only sweatpants and a water gun. Warriors need equipping. They need to have the right weapons, strategies, tactics, and timing to survive and be effective. And students on the battlefront of humanistic education are no exception.

As one of those students myself, I realized the importance of having strong personal foundations for knowing, defending, and living out the truth of God's Word at a secular university. While these foundations helped *me* survive the battlefield, I wondered what strategies were helping *other* Christian students navigate evolutionary education systems worldwide.<sup>5</sup> So, soon after graduation, I embarked on an investigative globe-trekking mission to find out. My plan? To backpack 360° around the world in 180 days documenting how Christian students keep their faith at universities (more on that adventure in chapter 5).

As I interviewed students, pastors, and campus ministers across 17 countries, I noticed recurring themes which wove these Christians' stories into one overall message. Christian students worldwide need three types of strong personal foundations:

- 
1. **Spiritual foundations:** a close personal walk with God, including frequent prayer, consistent Scripture study, and biblical literacy.
  2. **Intellectual foundations:** training in critical thinking and apologetics, the field of study which examines why the Christian faith makes rational sense.
  3. **Interpersonal foundations:** a Christian support network including family, peers, and mentors.
-

This discovery not only confirmed my own student experiences but also showed me that, while the challenges Christian students face often vary with culture, the solutions are largely the same. Therefore, if families, churches, and ministries focus on these solutions, the results could make a difference for equipping future Christian generations around the world.

## THE RIGHT KINDS OF TOOLS

One of these solutions—intellectual foundations—involves arming students with apologetic answers to defend their faith against culture’s myriad lies. But no matter how many answers students memorize, they will always have more questions because there will always be new information. So students need to learn how to think like apologists. They need accessible tools to process any faith-challenging information without panicking, deal with each component, and handle remaining questions, all without draining valuable study time.

Imagine what a toolkit like that could mean for Christian students around the world. Best of all, think of how those tools could benefit not only Christians in secular classrooms but also any Christ followers in broader secular society. After all, persuasive-sounding messages that oppose God’s Word don’t just rain like mortar fire at a university. Statements that life evolved over millions of years also pervade

*“Think like apologists.”*

museums, zoos, aquariums, movies, books, nature shows, kids’ media, news stories, magazines, science centers, and national parks. All Christians who engage with their culture, therefore, are bound to encounter convincingly presented “facts” that challenge a biblical worldview. And as society accelerates away from a biblical worldview, equipping disciples to navigate secular classrooms and cultures without compromising their grip on God’s Word is growing more important than ever.

## A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR THE REAL WORLD

Equipping disciples this way might sound nice in theory, but how does that theory translate into action? What tried-and-true techniques will strengthen believers’ foundations for following Christ in secular schools and societies? How can Christian students prepare for—and survive—the worldview battle in real classrooms?

That’s what this book is about.

Drawing on biblical principles, scientific research, personal experience, and insights from campus Christians worldwide, this book is a field-tested survival guide for Christ followers who want to stand on the authority of God's Word from Genesis to Revelation in secular classrooms and cultures. It exposes unignorable facts about atheistic, evolutionary education, outlines preparatory strategies for youth planning on attending a secular university, and offers tactical tools for students in the trenches of humanistic teaching.

## **EQUIPMENT FOR EVERYONE**

While this book is written to Christian students on secular campuses, it's not only for these students. Here are a few other reasons to pick up this survival guide:

### **If you're a parent, grandparent, pastor, youth leader, campus minister, mentor, friend, or anyone else who is supporting a current or future student . . .**

The best-case scenario is for families, churches, and students to be learning this material together. That way everyone is on the same page when it comes to helping students thrive. Ideally, everyone understands the challenges students will likely face, the preparation they'll need, and the support they'll require. And everyone will be doing their part in response.

### **If you're a student pursuing a Christian education . . .**

Is this book still relevant to you if you're not attending a secular university? Absolutely. As we'll see in chapter 3, evolutionary teachings (and potentially other unbiblical messages) impact many Christian institutions, as well. And temptations to compromise your biblical convictions are not restricted to secular campuses. Even if you never end up facing a single challenge at your university, this book will help you to support friends who are encountering such obstacles and prepare yourself for the battlefield of secular culture beyond the classroom.

### **If you're a student pursuing an online education . . .**

With more schools and programs going digital, you may be anticipating unique sets of challenges and opportunities associated with online learning. For example, while you might not need to stroll through campus hallways papered with unbiblical messages, you may have a tougher time finding the type of in-person fellowship a campus ministry could offer.<sup>6</sup>

Despite such differences, many pressures of secular university—like evolutionary teachings coming from persuasive-sounding

professors—exist online as well as on campus. As a digital learner, you must still be ready for spiritual battle.

## If you're any other Christian engaging with secular culture . . .

What if you don't know any Christian students and don't plan on going (or returning) to a university yourself? The same principles that help Christian students navigate secular college also apply to any

*“Navigate secular culture.”* Christian navigating secular culture or other challenging contexts. The same principles that apply to thinking through evolutionary courses also apply to thinking through any other unbiblical message. And as we'll see in chapter 14, the same foundations that apply to surviving a university also apply to impacting culture.

## READY FOR BATTLE

Ultimately, whether you're a current student, future student, parent, pastor, mentor, or any other Christian engaging with secular culture, this book is for you. As a student myself, I've had the opportunity to test the tools in this book during four years of intensive evolutionary coursework. Speaking from experience, I encourage you that students can survive the battlefield of humanistic education, keep their biblical worldview intact, and emerge not only as Christians but stronger ones. Let's find out how.

### *Endnotes*

1. What's the big deal about believing in human evolution? We'll see in the next two chapters why a consistent biblical worldview can't accommodate evolutionary origins the way my professor was asking us students to.
2. Ken Ham, Greg Hall, and Britt Beemer, *Already Compromised* (Green Forest: Master Books, 2011).
3. The word *secular* is often used to mean “religiously neutral.” But because whoever is not for Christ is against him (Matthew 12:30), there is no real neutral ground. That's why many ideas promoted in secular classrooms and cultures are not just nonreligious but *anti-biblical*.
4. You can find out more about the atheistic nature of humanism in chapter 3, including a definition of humanism from a global humanist organization that states, “[Humanism] is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality” (IHEU Minimum Statement on Humanism, Humanists International General Assembly, 1996, <https://humanists.international/what-is-humanism>).
5. I'll share more about what I experienced in secular university, and how God helped prepare me with foundations for withstanding the battle, in chapter 4.
6. For ideas about connecting with fellow Christians at a university, see chapter 8.

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

When I'd pick up a new book as a time-crunched student, I'd skim the back cover, contents, foreword, preface, introduction, and the first one or two chapters. Then I'd put the book down, needing to tackle an assignment. The next day would bring new demands, however, and nonrequired readings rarely made it into my hands again. So if you're anything like me, you might like to approach this book from a different angle.

Let me explain.

This book is a survival guide, a spiritual army handbook for students to keep their faith alive in the trenches of evolutionary education. If you were lost in the desert behind enemy lines, you probably wouldn't pick up a survival guide to read every page. Rather, you'd flip to the sections that were most relevant to you—like how to navigate with a compass, avoid land mines, and find water. Later, you could benefit from reading the other chapters when your situation stabilized.

On the other hand, if you were at home munching pretzels on your couch before the army sent you on your desert mission, you'd be wise to grab that survival guide and read enough of it to help you keep from getting lost in the first place. You'd likely want information about what challenges to expect from desert environments, what to pack in a desert survival kit, and what to do in case of different emergencies. In the same way, this book contains theoretical, preparatory, and practical information for Christian students facing a *spiritual* survival situation—the battlefield of secular education.

## HERE'S HOW THIS SURVIVAL GUIDE WORKS

### Part 1: Analyze

Part 1, “War Stories,” **analyzes** the realities of evolutionary education. We'll uncover evolution's role in Western cultures' free fall from Christianity, documenting how evolutionary education contributes to an anti-biblical agenda to secularize youth. Later, we'll see that while this agenda is an international problem, the solutions students are



adopting to combat that problem work internationally, too. Along the way, stories from my own university experiences—and those of other Christian students worldwide—will reveal what youth can expect to encounter in secular higher education.

## Part 2: Strategize

Part 2, “Boot Camp,” **strategizes** how students can effectively prepare for a secular university. Backing scriptural truths with insights from real-life student experiences and scientific research, we’ll examine why spiritual, intellectual, and interpersonal foundations are vital. We’ll also explore practical ways to begin building these foundations now, anticipate possible attacks against them, and outline action plans for maintaining all three foundations throughout a secular education.

## Part 3: Mobilize

Finally, part 3, “In the Trenches,” **mobilizes** Christian students with hands-on tools, tips, and tactics for countering evolutionary indoctrination in real time. We’ll cover strategies you can start using right now to recognize propaganda, separate fact from interpretation, spot logical fallacies, and combat the brainwashing conditions which are common on campuses. These resources follow the “seven checks of critical thinking” system for processing any faith-challenging information, based on techniques which helped me as a Christian student in evolutionary classes. At the back of the book, you’ll also find appendices with more information to help you practice thinking through real textbook messages, counter fallacies, and find answers to any remaining questions.

Ultimately, if you’re a time-crunched student wanting to jump straight to these later chapters, go for it—on one condition: no matter what section you head to afterward, it’s essential to first understand the concepts in chapters 1–2. Why? Because without knowing why molecules-to-man evolution poses such a problem for a biblical worldview, you’ll have no basis for fighting evolutionary education with the tools outlined in the rest of the book. So I’d recommend making sure you’re familiar with the concepts in the first couple of chapters before you choose your own adventure from there. I’d also encourage you to peruse part 2, “Boot Camp,” even if you’re already in a university, because these chapters will help you strategize ways to keep your faith’s foundations strong for the long haul.

Ready?

Let’s get started.





*Part 1*

# **WAR STORIES**

*Uncovering the realities of  
humanistic education*



# THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH

I never saw it coming.

Then again, what 14-year-old would expect a single homeschool conference seminar about creation to have such a radical effect?

Honestly, despite growing up in a Christian home, I'd never cared much about creation, evolution, or Genesis. To me, creationists' enthusiasm for fossils, ark models, and rocks from Noah's flood seemed cute but irrelevant. Give me a talk on justice causes, the gospel, or the church's future. Something important. But my entire perspective—and life—shifted at age 14 when I heard a seminar by Ken Ham, the founder of Answers in Genesis.

From the seminar's opening, the message hit me hard. I saw image after image of European churches transformed into restaurants, shops, and night clubs, evidence of how Western nations are growing less Christian every year. I learned how the erosion of Christianity's influence (not to mention moral values) in Western society traces back to a long series of attacks on Genesis 1–11. And I realized that these chapters represent the foundation of the whole Christian worldview—including the gospel.

Even the justice causes I cared about ultimately hinged on Genesis. After all, real justice depends on objective morality, objective morality depends on absolute truth, and absolute truth depends on God. Without a Creator whose character supplies the source of absolute morality, and whose Word distinguishes good from evil, how can anyone consistently say what's absolutely right or wrong? Who decides those moral standards? And if humans are just by-products of natural evolution, why should the moral guidelines we invent objectively value every human life?<sup>1</sup>

*“I knew what I wanted to do with my life.”*

After learning these concepts at the conference, I knew what I wanted to do with my life. If everything I'd known to be important depended on God's Word being trustworthy from its first verse, then I needed to defend the truth of Genesis. And since the story of human evolution is one of culture's go-to frameworks for attacking Genesis, I decided to learn more about evolution by studying science at a secular university.

## WAIT, WHAT KIND OF EVOLUTION?

Before getting any further into this story, I'd better explain what I mean by evolution. Textbook references to biological evolution are often just talking about patterns of genetic variation that show up within different kinds of living things over time, thanks to processes like mutation and natural selection. (We'll cover these more in chapter 7.) This kind of evolution explains why finches with long beaks can give rise to finches with short beaks. But it can't explain how finches could evolve from a totally different kind of animal—like dinosaurs.<sup>2</sup>

That's where another kind of evolution comes in, the “big picture” evolutionary origins story which people rely on to try explaining all life's existence apart from God. While Christians have different interpretations of how God created humanity, it's still a central tenet of Christianity that we exist because the God of the Bible created us in his image.<sup>3</sup> However, it's a central tenet of secular humanism that people evolved from scum—no God required. That's what I mean by evolution.

A complete evolutionary worldview includes four types of supposed evolution.

- 
1. **Cosmic evolution** tries to explain how the universe came to be the way it is.
  2. **Geological evolution** tries to explain how the earth came to be the way it is.
  3. **Chemical evolution** tries to speculate how the first life appeared from nonliving chemicals.
  4. **Biological evolution** tries to explain the history of all living organisms.
- 

Together, these types of evolution compose the big picture of history according to secular humanism. And this is the origins story being taught as the exclusive truth to millions of students worldwide.

## WHY DO ORIGIN BELIEFS MATTER?

To show why culture's beliefs about origins are such a big deal for society and the church, let me tell you my version of the message Ken Ham shared when I was 14. Doing so will take a couple of chapters, but it's vital to establish why equipping Christian students to defend their worldview against evolution—which is the purpose of this book—is so important.

To start, I'd like to invite you on a tour of a typical university in my home country, Canada. Everything I'm about to describe is based on what I personally saw at Canadian campuses during my travels to document Christian students' university experiences worldwide.

## WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY

Stroll through the corridors where students stream like ants between their classes, and you'll notice posters on the walls promoting everything from Bible studies to Eastern spirituality to nightclub crawls. Messages that scream an extremely secular view of human sexuality paper the hallways, complete with free fliers, pamphlets, and paraphernalia. As you head outside, you'll notice political propaganda rioting on the nearby bulletin boards, including a poster telling students to join Canada's Young Communist League.

Try walking into the science building. Those glass displays of fossils labeled as millions of years old look impressive, don't they? There's a staircase just around the corner; if you head up into the maze of faculty offices, you can find cartoons mocking Christianity posted outside professors' doorways. One drawing, for example, shows Moses parting the sea while Jesus walks on the water. At the bottom, a penciled-in caption reads, "When fables collide."

*"Cartoons mocking  
Christianity"*

Why not explore the religious studies building? It's the old brick one across campus with the heavy wooden doors and the stained-glass window. Inside, a glass case exhibits faculty-authored books claiming that God used evolution to create humans, that Adam wasn't real, and that the Apostle Paul made a mistake by claiming that Adam literally existed.

Now you come to the university chaplaincy center. See those pentagrams on the business cards posted inside? You didn't misread them; that's the number you can call for spiritual guidance from the Wiccan campus chaplain.



Clearly, a short stroll across campus is all it takes to glimpse how Canadian culture has abandoned God's Word as its source of authoritative truth.

## WHAT ELSE YOU'LL FIND IN WESTERN CULTURE

Of course, you don't need to visit a university to see how far Western cultures like Canada's have wandered from biblical values. Just read the headlines. In 2018, for instance, news sites buzzed that Trinity Western University, a Canadian Christian university, lost its law school accreditation in a Supreme Court ruling.<sup>4</sup> Why? Because the school upheld the biblical definition of marriage rooted in Genesis.<sup>5</sup>

Or take another topic which often makes headlines: abortion. I'll never forget the bioethics class I attended in the third year at my university, when our professor—one of Canada's most influential bioethicists—stated, "I don't know if you know this, but I am [a] reason why Canada has no abortion law." Did you know Canada is (as I'm writing this) the only democracy in the world with no laws about abortion? Any woman in any province can legally abort any pregnancy for any reason, right up to full-term live births.

My bioethics professor also played a role in Canada's decision to decriminalize euthanasia in 2016. Within just 30 months, euthanasia became responsible for over 1% of all reported deaths in Canada, with 6,749 Canadians killed by "medical assistance in dying" (MAID).<sup>6</sup> By 2020, the death toll had already skyrocketed to more than 13,000.<sup>7</sup> And in 2021, Canada passed a bill offering death not only to people diagnosed with terminal sicknesses but also to those struggling with mental illnesses.<sup>8</sup> Tragically, these examples show how quickly my home country is normalizing assisted suicide and euthanasia.<sup>9</sup>

## A GLOBAL PATTERN

Altogether, the evidence is clear that Canada is turning further away from biblical values by the year. But it's not just Canada—or even North America. The next stop in my investigative globe-trekking mission was Australia, where locals told me their country is growing less Christian every year. Journeying farther to New Zealand, I learned that this nation's nonreligious population keeps rising every year while its religious (including Christian) population keeps falling.<sup>10</sup> I later visited Holland, where for the first time in history, more people identify as nonreligious than religious.<sup>11</sup> When I reached France, a Christian student told me, "I remember a guy saying, 'I

cannot imagine that Christian people still exist.’ This guy knew there were Catholic churches, but he couldn’t believe that other people his age still believe in God.”

Altogether, I thought a Christian student in Germany aptly summed up what’s happening in Western cultures worldwide. “Most people are not interested in Christianity anymore,” she told me, “like it doesn’t have anything to do with their lives. Culture influences church more than church influences culture.”

## SO HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

How did so many nations which once built cathedrals, birthed revivals, and brought up missionaries fall so far from God in just a few generations?

Let me tell you a story.

Not long ago in Malaysia, there stood three apartment buildings called the Highland Towers. Behind the towers rose a hill which construction workers were developing, exposing the soil to erosion. An over-pressured water pipe system burst on the hill, triggering a landslide which careened into one of the towers, piled against its foundation, and began pushing the foundation forward millimeter by millimeter. Eventually, locals noticed cracks spreading around the building. But nobody did anything about it—until the structure collapsed, taking 48 lives.

So how does this tragedy in Malaysia relate to Christianity in the West?

Imagine that the Christian worldview is like a building, with God’s Word as our foundation. That foundation is the basis for our Christian doctrines, which are the basis of our Christian morals; together, all these components provide the basis of our Christian lifestyles and ministries.

For the rest of this chapter, let’s look at this building in a little more detail. First, we’ll zoom in on the foundation and see what God’s Word teaches about the world’s history. Next, we’ll see how our doctrines, morals, and ministries are based on that history. Then we’ll be ready to spend the next chapter investigating what happens when something



# *The 7 C's of History*



Creation



Corruption



Catastrophe



Confusion



Christ



Cross



Consummation

compromises this whole structure at a foundational level, like the landslide did to the building in Malaysia.

All set?

Let's dive in.

## THE UNIVERSE ACCORDING TO GOD: A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF HISTORY

Looking at our foundation, God's Word, you'll notice that the Bible talks about both heavenly things of the spiritual world and earthly things of the physical world. Because Scripture is consistently true, both are important. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"<sup>12</sup>

In this context, Jesus was describing earthly phenomena—like the wind—as metaphors for spiritual realities. These verses remind us that Jesus understands how physical and spiritual realities work because he created them. Since he designed (and therefore completely comprehends) the universe, his Word must be the ultimate authority for the truth about everything that exists, both physical and spiritual. So it makes sense that God's Word reveals a history of the universe which covers both heavenly and earthly realities.

Because this history provides the foundation for our entire Christian worldview, let's take a minute to understand Scripture's big picture by walking through what Answers in Genesis calls the 7 C's of biblical history.

Even if this biblical history is a review for you, these 7 C's can help you share the whole message of the gospel with others—a message that stretches from Genesis to Revelation.

*"A message that stretches from Genesis to Revelation"*

### 1: Creation

The first C is Creation. History began when God spoke the universe into existence, creating everything in it over six days. And Genesis isn't the only book which says so! Crack open Exodus, and you'll read, "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them."<sup>13</sup> That's a statement about cosmology—the origin and age of the cosmos—and the order of creation.

Genesis also describes the history of life, repeating 10 times in chapter one that God created living creatures to reproduce "according to their kinds." This implies dogs produce dogs, finches produce finches, and squids produce (you guessed it) squids. And that's a statement

about biology. The Bible doesn't say that God created one original cell and declared, "Let the cell gradually diversify into unlimited kinds of plants and animals over millions of years." He could have said that, but he didn't. So while we do see variation within kinds of created things, like different finch varieties in different environments, we know that offspring will always be the same kind of creatures as their parents.

Speaking of looking like parents, Genesis describes human origins, too. A straightforward reading of Genesis reveals that in one actual, literal day, God fashioned one actual, literal guy, Adam, and one actual, literal woman, Eve. As Genesis 1:21 puts it, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." That's a statement about anthropology.

So far, so good—literally. The end of creation week arrived, and God repeatedly described everything he'd made as "very good."<sup>14</sup> (Hold that thought; it's important!)

## 2: Corruption

You know what happened next. Within this very good creation, God gave humans a boundary: "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."<sup>15</sup> And what did Adam do? He crossed the one line drawn for him, rejecting God's authority in the first human act of sin.

When there's sin, something has to die.<sup>16</sup> It's cause and effect. God is the giver of life, so when we separate ourselves from him through sin, we cut ourselves off from life, hope, and peace, leaving death, hopelessness, and chaos—in other words, the effects of sin.

*"In Adam we fell."*

The problem for humanity is that since we all descended from Adam, we were all figuratively in Adam when we fell. Like a genetic disease, sin infects all its first possessors' descendants. So sin's consequences, which include both physical death and spiritual separation from God, affected not just Adam but all humans because we're all related to Adam.<sup>17</sup> But the consequences didn't stop there. Sin corrupted not only all humans but also all creation because God placed humans in charge over his physical creation. Ever since Adam's fall, as Romans 8:22 puts it, "the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth."

If you need evidence of creation's groaning, try tap-dancing bare-foot through a thistle field. Doesn't feel "very good," does it? That's because according to Genesis 3, nastiness like thorns, thistles, and increased pain in childbirth originally didn't belong in God's "very

good” creation but resulted from sin’s curse. In fact, even carnivory apparently wasn’t part of God’s original plan for creation. Check out Genesis 1:29, and you’ll notice that God initially ordained humans, animals, birds—everything that has the “breath of life”—to be vegetarian. But now, intense pain, bloodshed, death, and suffering are par for the course in our sin-broken universe.

### 3: Catastrophe

Eventually, creation grew so corrupt that God, in his holiness, couldn’t bear it any longer. So he reset the world with a global flood, sparing Noah, his family, and the animals they brought on the ark, which God had told Noah to construct. And here’s the thing: because a global flood destroyed every land-breathing, air-dwelling creature not on the ark, we’d expect to see a geological record of that all over the world. We’d expect to find, as I can still remember Ken Ham saying, “billions of dead things buried in rock layers laid down by water all over the earth.”

Moreover, we’d expect those dead things (fossils) to show a record of the sin and destruction which brought on the judgment of the flood. We’d expect to uncover fossil evidence of death, killing, disease, thorns, struggle, and suffering. And in fact, that’s just what we find in the fossil record, including plants with thorns, bones with diseases, and tons of examples of carnivory. We’ve found fossil dinosaurs with bird bones in their stomachs<sup>18</sup>—and fossil mammals with dinosaur bones in their stomachs!<sup>19</sup> (So, long before *Jurassic Park* claimed dinosaurs evolved into birds or were replaced by mammals, these animals were already, um, interacting.)

Altogether, the fossil record shows a history of the effects of sin and judgment by a global flood, which is exactly what we’d expect to find if the Bible’s geology were true. And that brings us to the next C of history, Confusion.

### 4: Confusion

When the flood subsided, God told humans to spread throughout earth. But instead we decided to get together and build a tower to heavens. God confused that plan when उहाँले हामीलाई बभिनिन भाषाहरू दनुभयो जसले हामीलाई फैलाउन र मानसिहरूका बभिनिन समूहहरू हुन बाध्य तुल्यायो।

(That’s Nepali for, “He gave us different languages, which forced us to spread out and become different people groups,” in case you didn’t catch it. At least, that’s what my language translation app assures me.)

Notice, though, that the Bible doesn't teach that we're different races—we're just different people groups which all descended from Adam.<sup>20</sup> And all along, God had a plan to redeem from sin Adam's descendants in every nation. That's why God sent his Son, Jesus.

## **5–6: Christ and Cross**

Remember that when there's sin, something has to die. This reality set the basis for the Old Testament's sacrificial system, with lamb after lamb being slaughtered to temporarily cover for sin. The New Testament, however, talks about another sacrifice, Jesus, the Lamb of God,<sup>21</sup> who bore on the cross the physical and spiritual death penalty for Adam's sin.

Remember how the fossil record shows the effects of sin, including extreme pain, death, killing, disease, thorns, struggle, and suffering? When Jesus became sin for us, he took those effects on himself. He underwent excruciating pain. He experienced death. He let himself be killed. Isaiah says he bore our disease.<sup>22</sup> He wore a crown of thorns. He endured struggle and suffering to reverse the effects of sin, give life to those who put their faith and hope in him, and one day reconcile all creation to himself—the final C of history.

## **7: Consummation (Restoration of Creation)**

Because of Christ's redeeming work on the cross, God promises to prepare a new creation restored to its original "very good" state. As John described in Revelation 21,

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. . . . And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."<sup>23</sup>

# **THE FOUNDATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW**

These 7 C's provide an outline for the complete history of the universe, laying the foundation for the rest of our biblical worldview, including Christian doctrines, morals, and ministry. For example, if the Bible's history is true, then God really created humans in his image, supporting the doctrine that every human life has value. If

that doctrine is true, then we need to protect the unborn. That's the basis for the church's moral stance on abortion. If Christian morals are founded on truth, then Christian ministries like pregnancy care centers are significant. We want to protect the unborn because life has value, which we know because God's Word is true.

Or think about another Christian doctrine, marriage. God established marriage as a family union between a man and woman at creation. So if that history is true, then God's institution of marriage has meaning. As Jesus said when questioned about marriage, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"<sup>24</sup> *"Why does life matter?"*

Jesus was citing Genesis to prove the meaning of marriage. If marriage has meaning, as Jesus taught, then we should protect the institution of family as God designed it. That's why ministries that help build relationships and family counseling are valuable.

Ultimately, our whole worldview depends on the truth of God's Word beginning in Genesis. Think about any major Christian doctrine, and you'll find that it's directly or indirectly founded in Genesis. How can you tell? Because you can't answer key questions about those doctrines without resorting to concepts first established in Genesis. Why does life matter? Why does marriage matter? Why did Jesus die? What is sin? Why is there death and suffering in the world? Why do we need a new heaven and a new earth? Genesis provides the foundation for understanding all these concepts. It's the foundation for our faith.

Now let's think about what happens to our whole worldview structure—and to a society at large—if we allow just one compromise at a foundational level.

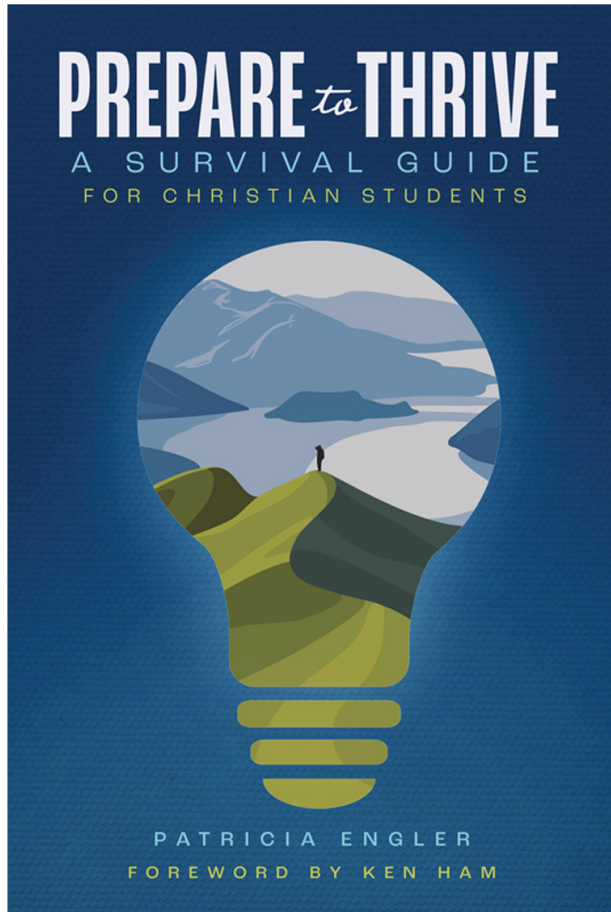
## *Endnotes*

1. For more on why objective morals depend on the truth of God's Word beginning in Genesis, see <https://answersingenesis.org/morality>.
2. While we won't have time to dive deep into the science of why natural selection and mutation can't drive Darwinian evolution, entire books, articles, and videos already exist to show just that. You can find some of them listed in appendix A.
3. While salvation does not require a literal interpretation of Genesis, in chapter 2 we'll see some of the major theological and consistency problems with the idea that God used evolution or millions of years.
4. Kathleen Harris, "Trinity Western Loses Fight for Christian Law School as Court Rules Limits on Religious Freedom 'Reasonable,'" Canadian



- Broadcasting Corporation, June 15, 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trinity-western-supreme-court-decision-1.4707240>.
5. Genesis 2:24, quoted by Jesus in Matthew 19:5 and Mark 10:7.
  6. Heath Canada, *Fourth Interim Report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada* (Ottawa), 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-system-services/medical-assistance-dying-interim-report-april-2019.html>.
  7. Department of Justice Canada, “Government of Canada Proposes Changes to Medical Assistance in Dying Legislation,” media release, February 24, 2020, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-justice/news/2020/02/government-of-canada-proposes-changes-to-medical-assistance-in-dying-legislation.html>.
  8. Bill C-7, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Medical Assistance in Dying), 2nd sess., 43rd Parliament, 2021, <https://parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-2/bill/C-7/royal-assent>.
  9. In assisted suicide, patients give themselves their own lethal medicine, whereas in euthanasia, a healthcare worker personally ends the patient’s life. Out of over 5,000 deaths reported in Canada outside Quebec, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut from 2016 to 2018, only six occurred by assisted suicide; instead, nearly all those thousands of Canadians died by euthanasia (see endnote 6).
  10. McCrindle Research (commissioned by the Wilberforce Foundation), “Faith and Belief in New Zealand,” 2018, <https://nzfaithandbeliefstudy.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/faith-and-belief-full-report-may-2018.pdf>.
  11. Hollandse Hoogte, “Over Half of the Dutch Population Are Not Religious,” Statistics Netherlands, October 23, 2018, <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2018/43/over-half-of-the-dutch-population-are-not-religious>.
  12. John 3:12
  13. Exodus 20:11
  14. Genesis 1:31
  15. Genesis 2:16–17
  16. Romans 6:23
  17. Romans 5:12
  18. E.g., Jingmai O’Connor, Zhonghe Zhou, and Xing Xu, “Additional Specimen of Microraptor Provides Unique Evidence of Dinosaurs Preying on Birds,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108, no. 49 (2011): 19662–19665.
  19. E.g., Yaoming Hu, Jin Meng, Yuanqing Wang, and Chuankui Li, “Large Mesozoic Mammals Fed on Young Dinosaurs,” *Nature* 433, no. 7022 (2005): 149–152.
  20. For more on what the Bible (and science) teaches about human “races,” see <https://answersingenesis.org/racism>.
  21. John 1:29
  22. Isaiah 53:4 (Note: In some versions of the Bible, *disease* or *sickness* is translated as “griefs” or “sufferings” here.)
  23. Revelation 21:1–4
  24. Matthew 19:4–5

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