

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE

An Introductory Course

STUDENT TEXTBOOK

J. Parnell McCarter

“Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor...”
- Ephesians 4:25

FIRST EDITION

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The Puritans’ Home School Curriculum

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SECTION TWO: COURSE CHECK-OFF LIST

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE

Student Name: _____

Assignment Check-Off List

Assignment #	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT COMPLETED? (X)	SCORE (ON 100-POINT SCALE)
1	<i>Foundations</i>		
2	<i>Answering the Critics of Biblical Presuppositionalism</i>		
3	<i>Defending the Faith from the Foundation of Scripture</i>		
4	<i>Speaking the Truth in Love</i>		
5	<i>Logic</i>		
6	<i>Evidence and Research</i>		
7	<i>Affirmative Stock Issues</i>		
8	<i>Affirmative Case Construction</i>		
9	<i>Negative Arguments</i>		
10	<i>Speaker Responsibilities</i>		
11	<i>Speech and Delivery</i>		
12	<i>The Debate Round: What to Expect</i>		
13	<i>Other Speech and Debate Formats</i>		
14	<i>Analyzing a Debate</i>		
<i>Sum of Scores on All Assignments</i>			
<i>Average Score on Assignments (Sum of Scores on All Assignments/14)</i>			
<i>Letter Grade Equivalent of Average Score on Assignments*</i>			

* Grading in this course should be done on a 100-point scale, with letter grades assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Score on 100-Point Scale
A+	97 - 100
A	94 - 96
A-	90 - 93
B+	87 - 89
B	84 - 86
B-	80 - 83
C+	77 - 79
C	74 - 76

C-	70 - 73
D	60 - 69
F	0 - 59

**SECTION THREE: BOOKS NEEDED IN THIS
COURSE**

BOOKS NEEDED FOR THE COURSE ‘PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE’

The most important book you will need for this course is the Bible. It is the foundation of true knowledge in all subjects, including public speaking and debate. It is a guide for use of the tongue, and it is the standard by which we should judge all books about speech and debate. We shall make reference to the Bible often in this course, so it is important that students have ready access to one, to check out things for themselves. One that is free on the internet is at <http://www.blueletterbible.org/> .

A second book you will need is The Puritans’ Home School Curriculum textbook for introductory public speaking and debate theory, simply entitled *Public Speaking and Debate*. It is among the many free on-line textbooks at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/> . More specifically, it is at [http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/Public Speaking and Debate.pdf](http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/Public_Speaking_and_Debate.pdf) . It is recommended that you print out the book, 3-hole punch its pages, and place them in a 3-ring binder.

A third book you will need is *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* by Christy L. Shipe . It is sold at the HSLDA Bookstore and you may purchase it at the website <http://www.hslda.org/bookstore/> . You need only to purchase the textbook; the accompanying video will not be used as part of this course.

Finally, you will need for this course a book authored by the late Dr. Greg Bahnsen, entitled *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*. This book treats the subject of apologetics, or how we should defend the Christian faith, including in our speech. It is published by Covenant Media Foundation, and can be purchased at the website <http://www.cmfnow.com/product.asp?0=203&1=209&3=710> .

Please make sure you have all of these books on hand by the first day of class.

In addition to reading these books, as part of the course students will need to listen to “The Great Debate” between Bahnsen and Stein. It can be listened to free on-line at such sites as <http://www.straitgate.com/bahnsen/> . Or, tapes or audio files of the debate can be purchased at such websites as <http://www.cmfnow.com/subcat.asp?0=207> and http://www.pointsouth.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=BAHNSENG-STEIN&Category_Code=FT&Store_Code=ABS . The debate will need to be listened to later in the course, so make sure you will be able to listen to it when that time comes.

SECTION THREE: ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT 1: FOUNDATIONS

Readings:

Foundations are important. They are the structures upon which buildings are constructed. If the foundations are faulty, the whole building will be weak. So we begin this course on public speaking and debate by considering the foundations.

The only sure foundation of every human endeavor, all human understanding, all human speech, yea, everything, is the word of God, the Bible. It is here that we find the infallible words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There simply is no substitute for the foundation of God's word. Human science is no sure foundation, for it rests upon many assumptions of fallible men. The pronouncements of other religions or philosophies are no sure foundation, for they too ultimately are but the speculations of fallible men. Only the infallible words of the omniscient God are worthy of our faith as the foundation of our thoughts, speech, and conduct.

In his book *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*, the late Dr. Greg Bahnsen showed from scripture why and how the word of God must be the foundation of our thoughts and speech, including our defense of the Christian faith. Quoting from his book, "God's word must then be taken as the final standard of truth for man."

The defense of the Christian faith is called apologetics. It is called "apologetics" because it is explaining the reason we believe, not apologizing for that belief. Even when we are not directly giving a defense of the Christian faith, we must make sure that our words reflect our foundational faith in the word of God. By so doing, our speech on a broad range of topics serves as a witness of our Christian faith. Our speech therefore operates as an apology (in the sense that term means 'reason') for the Christian faith even in a diverse array of circumstances.

Now read chapters 1 through 6 in the book *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*. Dr. Bahnsen addresses the issue of foundations in these chapters, which is where we should begin this course.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions which relate to what you have read:

1. Why does supposed philosophical neutrality rob Christians of true knowledge?
2. What is the foundation of all true knowledge?
3. What is apologetics?

4. Why is supposed philosophical neutrality immoral?
5. Why is supposed philosophical neutrality really impossible for the genuine Christian?
6. What is the true nature of unbelieving intellectual thought?
7. What impact should the scriptural command to bring every thought captive to Christ have on our speech, scholarship and apologetics?
8. What is the consequence of following autonomous human thought with respect to human knowledge?

ASSIGNMENT 2: ANSWERING THE CRITICS OF BIBLICAL PRESUPPOSITIONALISM

Readings:

Biblical presuppositionalism is the acknowledgement that the word of God is the foundation of all true knowledge for man. Man must bow to the truths of the word of God, or else sink into foolishness.

In the second section of his book, Dr. Bahnsen addresses the objections to Biblical presuppositionalism. And he points out the point of contact of believers with unbelievers in terms of philosophical discourse between the two, given the reality of Biblical presuppositionalism. It is quite important that we understand the appropriate point of contact, to understand how we should speak with and in the presence of unbelievers.

Now read chapters 7 through 12 in the book *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions which relate to what you have read:

1. Whose thoughts must we seek to imitate?
2. What is Biblical presuppositionalism?
3. What are 3 arguments leveled against Biblical presuppositionalism?
4. What are the responses to the 3 arguments leveled against Biblical presuppositionalism?
5. What have been the noetic effects of sin (i.e., the results in the world of thought of the Fall)?
6. What is the point of contact of believers with unbelievers in terms of philosophical discourse between the two?

ASSIGNMENT 3: DEFENDING THE FAITH FROM THE FOUNDATION OF SCRIPTURE

Readings:

In the third section of his book, Dr. Bahnsen lays out how we should defend the faith in our discourse in accordance with the word of God. In other words, the Bible not only gives Christians directions as to what the gospel message is, but also directions concerning how we are to deliver it in our discourse. If we are to glorify God, we must make sure not only that we are presenting the right message, but also we must make sure that we are presenting it in the right way.

Now read chapters 13 through 18 in the book *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*. He addresses the issue of foundations in these chapters.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions which relate to what you have read:

1. In his book Dr. Bahnsen asserts that “the central declaration and challenge of Christian apologetics is expressed by Paul’s rhetorical question in I Corinthians 1:20. What was this rhetorical question?
2. In scriptural perspective, why is a fool foolish?
3. Proverbs 26:4-5 provides a two-fold apologetic procedure. What does Proverbs 26:4-5 say?
4. What then is the two-fold apologetic procedure suggested by Proverbs 26:4-5?
5. In chapter 16 Dr. Bahnsen concisely describes this two-fold apologetic. How does he there describe each of the 2 apologetic steps?
6. What would be the result if we trusted our own intellectual powers or the teachings of the so-called experts more than we trusted the veracity of God’s revelation?
7. When the unbeliever rejects Biblical Christianity, are his objections merely piecemeal, or are they objections to the foundations of the Christian faith?
8. What is meant by the expression “argumentation at the presuppositional level” in Christian apologetics?
9. In chapter 17, what is affirmed to be the Biblical Christian’s foundational presupposition?

ASSIGNMENT 4 : SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Readings:

God's moral law is summarized in the Ten Commandments. This is the law which was written on tables of stone by God for His people in the Old Testament, and it is the rule of life written on the hearts of Christian believers in all ages by the Spirit of God (II Corinthians 3:3, Jeremiah 31:33). The commandment that perhaps most pertains to our public speech is the ninth commandment, which directs us as follows:

“Thou shalt not bear false witness...”

All of our conversation should then be governed by the principle that we must speak the truth. As the Apostle Paul reminds us: “Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor...” (Ephesians 4:25).

God *never* gives man the right to lie, either concerning divine issues or human issues. It does not matter whether we are a high school debater engaged in debate competition or a lawyer presenting a case before a jury. It does not matter whether we are a preacher teaching his congregation on religion or a homemaker correcting her children. Sometimes it may appear immediately advantageous to lie, but we must refrain, even if the cost seem great. In all cases, truth must be our guide.

Now this does not mean we are always required to speak everything we know. Perceiving the trap being laid by the Pharisees, Jesus often refrained from speaking directly to them. Similarly, if a wicked regime is seeking to kill the innocent, we are not required or even advised to go tell such a regime where the innocent are hiding. Jonathan did not tell his wicked father Saul where David was hiding. So we must “be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves” in our speech.

We must also be knowledgeable. Ignorant people generally speak falsehoods, even unintentionally. As we read in Hosea 4:6, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” The consequences of lack of knowledge – especially knowledge of God's word - are grave. God gives men over to all sorts of wickedness who lack knowledge. “Swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery” (Hosea 4:2) are but some of its fruits. So we must become well informed if we are to speak the truth. This must start with becoming well informed in God's word. It is the fountain of life and the foundation of all true knowledge.

Then we must build upon this sound foundation of God's word. History did not cease in the Apostolic era. So we must study history from the ancient past to the present, evaluating history

according to scriptural principles. And we must study God's creation, building upon the information revealed in scripture with additional insights into how God has ordered the world. And we must study logic to insure we are thinking coherently and consistently. Indeed, there are many areas we must study to rid ourselves of ignorance.

But simply because we are speaking truth based upon true knowledge does not mean we are necessarily speaking as well as we should. Speaking itself requires skill. It takes skill to present what we know in an organized fashion that others can understand. Christian men should be prepared in communication and speech. For we are encouraged to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you..." (I Peter 3:15) And the ability to speak, especially publicly, requires practice.

One excellent way, especially for young men, to obtain practice in public speaking is through formal public debate. This course introduces you to public debate as one means to equip you in public speaking. Hopefully, as you acquire skills in public debate, you will be able to employ the skills to public speaking in general.

Now the view of human speech outlined in scripture is markedly different from the prevalent humanist notion of speech. Whereas the Bible declares the requirement that our speech be truthful, the humanist notion declares it should be free. In chapter 1 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* which you will be reading as part of this first assignment, John Milton is quoted as saying, "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." It is little wonder that Milton placed such a high emphasis on freedom (so called) rather than truth in accordance with God's word, for John Milton (1608–1674) was a Unitarian. (See his work *De Doctrina Christiana*.) And it should not surprise us that the Founding Fathers of America followed suit with the same notion in the constitutional framework of the United States. In America during the 18th century, French and English Deism and rationalism made Unitarians of many of our founding fathers. Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Thomas Paine, James Madison and James Marshall were all Unitarians. They overthrew the reformed and Puritan order which dominated most of the colonial American era.

God never gave men a right to speak falsehood (such as the advocacy of Unitarianism) under the pretense of "freedom of speech". In the third commandment we read: "thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This certainly prohibits speech which takes the Lord's name in vain. And the Bible pronounces the death penalty on those who would speak blasphemies against God. "And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, [and] all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name [of the LORD], shall be put to death." (Leviticus 24:16) This certainly does not square with the humanist notion that men have a "right" to say what *they* believe about God, irrespective of what the Bible teaches. Jesus Christ Himself rebuked the Jews for circumventing the command to put children to death who cursed

their parents. Jesus certainly did not believe children had the “right” to speak their mind to parents, when that mind was evil.

In truth, once humanists gained the upper hand in government, they were not so generous as they claimed in their vaunted principle of “freedom of speech”. Let a Christian teacher try to teach the truth about Darwinian evolution in public school, and see what happens. And let a Christian valedictorian state in his valedictory speech that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven, and see what happens. The reality is that in any society “politically correct” speech will dominate; the real question is whether God’s word defines what is politically correct.

But to return to our primary point, it is important that our public speech conforms to the standard of truth, including in debate.

Now read chapter 1 of Christy Shipe’s book *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate*.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions:

1. What is a cross examination debate?
2. What is the affirmative team?
3. What is the negative team?
4. What is a debate round?
5. Most debates follow an 8-3-5 schedule. Write out the 8-3-5 schedule.
6. How much prep time is each team normally given?
7. Which of the Ten Commandments addresses the issue of truthfulness in our speech?

ASSIGNMENT 5: LOGIC

Readings:

An inherent attribute of God is logic. God's word the Bible is the foundation for all understanding of logic and sound reasoning. Biblical Christianity is the only worldview that is thoroughly and consistently logical. The way we reason then should be governed as scriptures dictates.

Scripture dictates that we evaluate all issues and policies according to the standard of the scriptures. It is in the scriptures, and the scriptures alone, where we find the basis for evaluating what is right and wrong. As we read in II Timothy 3:16, "All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." And as we read in Psalm 119:160, "Thy word [is] true [from] the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments [endureth] for ever." And as we read in Matthew 4:4, "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The standard of righteousness discovered in scripture applies to evaluating national issues as well as personal issues. As we read in Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin [is] a reproach to any people."

Since the Ten Commandments summarize God's standard of righteousness in scripture for nations as well as individuals, therefore a proper position on an issue or a proper policy is one that is in conformity to the principles contained in the Ten Commandments. Thus, to prove the propriety of a policy or a position on an issue involves showing how it is in conformity to the Ten Commandments, and to prove the impropriety of a policy or a position on an issue involves showing how it contradicts the Ten Commandments. On the Day of Judgment, we shall all be judged according to whether we evaluated issues and lived consistent with scriptural principles. And God judges nations according to their conformity to the Ten Commandments.

The Bible offers many examples of how issues are to be evaluated. The scriptural histories of Judah and Israel are an extended commentary on their acts in the light of the Ten Commandments. Thus, when Judah and Israel obeyed and enforced the Ten Commandments, they were commended and blessed by God. But when Judah and Israel did not obey and enforce the Ten Commandments, they were rebuked. As God had warned Israel at its beginning: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe [and] to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth... But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee."

So we find for good rulers implementing the Ten Commandments commendatory words such as these:

“Josiah [was] eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did [that which was] right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined [neither] to the right hand, nor to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that [were] on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust [of them], and strowed [it] upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. And [so did he] in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.”

Jesus Christ Himself evaluated Israel’s policies in the light of the scriptural commandments. For instance, in Matthew 15:3-6 He evaluated their policy towards wicked children thus: “But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to [his] father or [his] mother, [It is] a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, [he shall be free]. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.” He rebuked Israel for circumventing the command.

Similarly, the scriptural evaluation of the Gentile nation of Assyria was made using the standard of the Ten Commandments. “For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered [him] with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused [it] to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that [is] in their hands. Who can tell [if] God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did [it] not.” (Jonah 3:6-10) The Assyrian city of Nineveh was spared divine judgment in Jonah’s day because it repented and ordered itself according to God’s moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments. But later in history the Assyrian kingdom was judged by God because it had quickly fallen back into its sinful ways.

The prophets like Isaiah evaluated the policies and acts of the nations according to their conformity to the Ten Commandments. For example, consider this assessment of ancient Babylon:

“Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: [there is] no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate...But these two [things] shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, [and] for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I [am], and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, [which] thou shalt not know.” – Isaiah 47:1-11

This evaluation especially condemned Babylon for its sorceries and enchantments, violations of the first and second commandments.

Since it is so vital then that we evaluate issues according to the Ten Commandments, we need to understand the implications of the Ten Commandments on the many issues of life. One of the most thorough expositions of the scriptural implications of each of the Ten Commandments is to be found in the Westminster Larger Catechism. For example, here is its exposition of the implications of the eighth commandment:

Q. 140. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.[800]

Q. 141. What are the duties required in the eighth commandment?

A. The duties required in the eighth commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man;[801] rendering to everyone his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof;[802] giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others;[803] moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods;[804] a provident care and study to get,[805] keep, use, and dispose these things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition;[806] a lawful calling,[807] and diligence in it;[808] frugality;[809] avoiding unnecessary lawsuits,[810]. and suretiship, or other like

engagements;[811] and an endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.[812]

Q. 142. What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required,[813] are, theft,[814] robbery,[815] man-stealing,[816] and receiving any thing that is stolen;[817] fraudulent dealing,[818] false weights and measures,[819] removing landmarks,[820] injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man,[821] or in matters of trust;[822] oppression,[823] extortion,[824] usury,[825] bribery,[826] vexatious lawsuits,[827] unjust inclosures and depopulations;[828] ingrossing commodities to enhance the price;[829] unlawful callings,[830] and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbour what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves;[831] covetousness;[832] inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods;[833] distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them;[834] envying at the prosperity of others;[835] as likewise idleness,[836] prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate,[837] and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us.[838]

The *Westminster Larger Catechism Study Workbook* available from *Puritans' Home School Curriculum* contains the entirety of the Westminster Larger Catechism, and other books contain it as well. Resources such as this can be helpful in your preparatory studies to understand the wide ranging implications of the Ten Commandments. It is imperative that we are well studied in scripture and the application of scripture in order to engage in formal debate properly.

Sadly, even many well meaning Christians err by evaluating issues and policies on the basis of humanistic standards. In *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate*, Christy Shipe falls into just such an error. For instance, on the sample issue of whether home schoolers receive a higher quality academic education than public school students, she fails to base the ultimate standard for determining what constitutes a “higher quality academic education” in God’s word, relying instead on such humanly devised standards as the Stanford Achievement Test and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Scripture provides guidelines for education, and we should evaluate different educational systems according to those guidelines. Among those guidelines are the duty of teaching the truth, based on the truth revealed in the Bible; inculcating wisdom, discipline and knowledge; promoting respect for proper authority; and training in those skills necessary to fulfill one’s Biblical duties. Now it may be that performance in some of these guidelines can be gauged by the Stanford Achievement Test and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, but the model argument presented by Christy Shipe neglected to show the connection between scriptural principles for evaluating an educational system and the tests she set forth. And without establishing such connections in her argumentation, it is flawed.

It is a great dishonor to God not to treat His word as the foundational standard. When our argumentation on policies and issues rests in humanistic standards, then it implicitly denies that God's word is the foundational standard. We should not so dishonor God.

So Christian argumentation would follow a Four Step Model for Biblical Argumentation like this:

1. Affirm the authority of God's word in evaluating the policy or issue, recognizing it as the only proper ultimate standard.
2. Affirm (and prove if necessary) how the Ten Commandments summarize the moral law presented in God's word.
3. Affirm and prove the Ten Commandment principles which are relevant to the issue in question.
4. Apply the pertinent Ten Commandment principles to the issue in question. It is at this stage where the Toulmin Model presented by Christy Shipe can be useful.

In the specific debate topic cited by Christy Shipe, here is how one might proceed, using a Four Step Model for Biblical Argumentation:

1. Affirm the authority of God's word in evaluating whether home school education provides higher quality academic education than public school education, recognizing the Bible as the only proper ultimate standard.
2. Affirm (and prove if necessary) how the Ten Commandments summarize the moral law presented in God's word.
3. Affirm and prove the Ten Commandment principles which are relevant to evaluating educational systems. Specifically, show how the Ten Commandments offer us these guidelines for evaluating educational systems: the duty of teaching the truth, based on the truth revealed in the Bible; inculcating wisdom, discipline and knowledge; promoting respect for proper authority; and training in those skills necessary to fulfill one's Biblical duties. Scripture verses should be cited.
4. Show how home school education compares with public school education in terms of following the Biblical guidelines. Data, warrant for the data, and backing of data are all necessary in the comparison.

Now read chapter 2 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate*.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions:

1. Write a sample syllogism.
2. What are the six parts of a rational argument according to the Toulmin model?

3. What type of logical fallacy is exhibited in the following argument: “We should not base government policy on scripture because the vast majority of Americans would oppose it”?
4. What does scripture teach should be the ultimate standard for evaluating national policies and issues?

ASSIGNMENT 6: EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH

Readings:

The Four Step Model for Biblical Argumentation discussed in the previous chapter in no wise eliminates the necessity to obtain evidence outside of scripture, especially in its fourth step. Evidence must be presented as part of applying the pertinent Ten Commandment principles to the issue in question.

Let's consider a specific example. Suppose you are on the affirmative team arguing that tariffs should be raised on imports into the United States. You could argue that scripture asserts that a nation should seek to improve the general economic well being of its citizens. But then you would need to present evidence showing that raising tariffs on imports would improve the general economic well being of the citizens. On the other hand, if you were on the negative team, you could present evidence showing the detrimental economic impact of raising tariffs on imports. You might also add that scripture teaches that we should be concerned about the economic welfare of people not only in our own country, but the world at large. As the negative, you would then need to present evidence for how raising tariffs would adversely affect people in other countries.

Even in some of the other steps of the Four Step Model for Biblical Argumentation, evidence outside the Bible itself may be helpful. For instance, you might cite the arguments of a certain theologian showing from scripture why we should be concerned about the economic welfare of people not only in our own country, but the world at large. This would be especially appropriate if the other team was asserting we should largely disregard the economic welfare of other countries in forming national economic policy.

An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate in chapter 3 offers useful advice concerning evidence and research. Read chapter 3 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate*.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions:

1. What information should be cited with each piece of evidence?
2. What is a tag?
3. What is blocking?
4. What is analysis?

ASSIGNMENT 7: AFFIRMATIVE STOCK ISSUES

Readings:

The burden of proof rests with the affirmative team to prove its case. As part of proving its case, it must sufficiently affirm the resolution being debated. If it does not sufficiently affirm the resolution, then its case is not even *prima facie*.

In order to sufficiently affirm the resolution, the affirmative team must win each of four stock issues. The stock issues are significance, inherency, solvency, and topicality.

Significance addresses this question: is the harm in the *status quo* significant? Biblically speaking, a harm is significant if it involves or produces a material breach of the Ten Commandments, or at least fails to take advantage of opportunities which could further ends consistent with the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, of course, summarize the principles necessary for promoting God's welfare as well as man's welfare. They are the only expression of loving God and man in truth.

Inherency addresses this question: does the *status quo* policy cause harm, such that a change in the policy would erase or significantly reduce the harm?

Solvency addresses this question: will the affirmative team's policy positively address the significant, inherent harm of the *status quo*?

Finally, topicality addresses this question: is the affirmative team's case within the prescribed debate topic?

Now read chapter 4 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate*.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions about the four stock issues:

1. What is significance?
2. What is inherency?
3. What is solvency?
4. What is topicality?

ASSIGNMENT 8: AFFIRMATIVE CASE CONSTRUCTION

Readings:

An affirmative policy case consists of four parts: definitions, harms, plan and advantages. These parts address the affirmative stock issues.

In the definitions section of the case, the affirmative defines the terms of the resolution. Almost every debate resolution contains the term “should”, a term which implies there is an ultimate standard of what is right and wrong. The affirmative team should assert and insist that God’s word is that ultimate standard for man. It is the only acceptable Christian resolutional analysis. So this is the opportunity from the outset where a Christian team has to differentiate its ultimate standard (i.e., the Bible) from fallacious humanistic standards.

In the harms section of the case, the affirmative team explains the significant harms inherent in the *status quo* policy.

In the plan section of the case, the affirmative team presents its plan to reduce or eliminate the significant harms inherent in the *status quo* policy.

In the advantages section of the case, the affirmative team proves its plan will work to reduce or eliminate the significant harms inherent in the *status quo* policy.

A sample debate case follows. It illustrates how argumentation can rest on scriptural principles. In the year in which it was written, the resolution was:

Resolved, that the United States federal government should significantly change its policy toward one or more of its protectorates.

Notice that the following sample affirmative case bases its arguments on scriptural principles:

The Affirmative believes it is necessary to craft a policy that is better for America’s protectorates and profitable for their people. Therefore, we stand resolved that the United States federal government should significantly change its policy toward one or more of its protectorates.

Observation 1: Definitions

Federal: Of, or relating to, the central government of a federation as distinguished from the constituent units.

From the Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary © 1986

Significant: "Important"

From the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 5th Edition

Change: "to cause to be different"

From the American Heritage Dictionary, 3rd Edition

Policy: "A settled course adopted and followed by a government"

From the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 5th Edition

Protectorate: "a state that is controlled and protected by another."

From the Compact Oxford English Dictionary

The Affirmative has included in its case a resolutional analysis. A resolutional analysis sets the criteria as to which team will win the debate round. Our resolutional analysis is that the Affirmative will win if it proves that it has won the four stock issues by showing how the current policy is unbiblical and the Affirmative plan will solve the area in which it's unbiblical.

Psalm 2: 10-11 says, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling." And Psalm 33:12 says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD." Our government's policies must be pleasing to God as laid out in the Ten Commandments.

Observation 2: Harms

Harm 1. The minimum wage displeases God by stealing jobs from the people of Puerto Rico, thus causing unemployment, especially among lower skilled workers.

Leave No State or Territory Behind: Formulating a Pro-Growth Economic Strategy for Puerto Rico

by Lawrence A. Hunter of the Institute for Policy Innovation July 8, 2003

Puerto Rican businesses are also greatly hampered by labor laws that raise the cost of doing business on the island. Like the minimum wage requirements, labor laws essentially impose additional costs on job creation and make it illegal for employers

who cannot afford to pass these costs along to hire workers who are in most need of those jobs. Low wage jobs that once would have been created in Puerto Rico are now going to Mexico, to Singapore, and to other parts of the world where labor costs are not artificially inflated by labor protections.

Harm 2. Clearly violating biblical principles, the current policy which causes unemployment also makes teens turn to *crime* because they are unemployed and makes Americans bear *higher prices*.

Statement on The Impact of Federal Minimum Wage Increase on Small Business
before the Committee on Small Business U.S House of Representatives

by Bruce R. Bartlett, Senior Fellow of the National Center for Policy Analysis

May 15, 1996

When people cannot get legitimate jobs, it is not surprising that they turn to crime and the underground economy. Studies by Professors Masanori Hashimoto of Ohio State and Llad Phillips of the University of California, Santa Barbara both show that increases in the minimum wage increase teenage crime.

More evidence supporting this harm...

Increasing the Mandated Minimum Wage: Who Pays the Price?

By Mark D. Wilson

March 05, 1998

Raising the minimum wage to \$6.15 will cost consumers and workers about \$2.4 billion in fiscal year 1999 and another \$4.1 billion in fiscal year 2000 as the increased cost of entry-level jobs is passed on through higher prices and lower real wages. The overall inflation rate has been very modest in recent years, but restaurant menu prices in 1997 increased 2.6 percent compared with a 1.7 percent increase in the consumer price index. Inflation in the service sector, in which most minimum wage workers are employed, rose 2.8 percent in 1997--1.1 percent higher than the overall inflation rate.

Harm 3. God is displeased with unnecessary spending on welfare for the unemployed due to the minimum wage law.

*Statement on The Impact of Federal Minimum Wage Increase on Small Business
before the Committee on Small Business U.S House of Representatives*

*by Bruce R. Bartlett, Senior Fellow of the National Center for Policy Analysis
May 15, 1996*

Research also shows that the minimum wage increases welfare dependency. A recent study by Peter Brandon of the University of Wisconsin, for example, looked at welfare rates in states that increased their minimum wages... with those that did not. In those that did, the average time on welfare was 44% higher than in states that did not.

Harm 4. The Constitution denies the federal government the right to impose the minimum wage law on Puerto Rico.

Article 10 of the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved the States respectively, or the people.

Observation 3: Plan

Mandates: The US federal minimum wage law will no longer apply to Puerto Rico and all applicable federal laws shall be amended as needed. Because Congress retains ultimate authority, according to the Constitution, it will repeal Puerto Rico's minimum wage.

Agency: The U.S. Department of Labor and the federal executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government.

Funding: No funding is necessary; in fact the federal government will save money because there will be less expenditures needed for unemployed Puerto Ricans.

Enforcement: The Department of Labor and the federal executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government.

The Affirmative reserves the right to clarify this plan in detail as deemed necessary.

Observation 4: Advantages

Advantage 1. God will no longer be displeased by the theft of Puerto Rican jobs.

Advantage 2. Crime rates in Puerto Rico will be reduced, and prices will decrease, allowing increased standards of living in Puerto Rico.

Advantage 3. Money will no longer be stolen from people because of unnecessary welfare spending

Advantage 4. This area of policy will be in accordance to the Constitution.

Let me now present more evidence confirming the significant harms and solvent advantages of our case...

Statement on The Impact of Federal Minimum Wage Increase on Small Business
before the Committee on Small Business U.S House of Representatives

by Bruce R. Bartlett, Senior Fellow of the National Center for Policy Analysis

May 15, 1996

A study by Professor William Beranek of the University of Georgia found that the minimum wage increases employment of illegal aliens, who are unlikely to report any violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act to the Department of Labor.

Some more evidence...

From Michael LaFaive of the Mackinaw Center for Public Policy

Minimum wage laws may very well be the most anti-poor laws envisioned by modern government policymakers. In order for a job to be created there needs to be something done that an employer is willing to pay to have done. If the value of the employer has placed on that work falls below what the government says is worth (the minimum wage), the employer may simply not hire anybody. A job that would have been otherwise gained is lost.

The affirmative is has proved their case to be topical, showed the inherent and significant harms of the status quo, and furthermore proved how the case is solvent. We have based our arguments from a biblical standpoint. That is why I ask you judge, to vote for the affirmative ballot.

The above case is just a sample. Affirmative cases can vary somewhat in their organization. So the structure of the case above is one model among many you will want to consider as you compose your own.

Now read chapter 5 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* concerning affirmative case construction.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions about the four stock issues:

1. What should be accomplished in the definitions section of the affirmative case?
2. What should be accomplished in the harms section of the affirmative case?
3. What should be accomplished in the plan section of the affirmative case?
4. What should be accomplished in the advantages section of the affirmative case?

ASSIGNMENT 9: NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Readings:

The negative team's task is to analyze whether the affirmative team has proved its case. Since the burden of proof rests with the affirmative team to prove its case, the negative team merely needs to show if the affirmative team has failed to prove it in its presentation. The affirmative team may well be right that its plan would be better than the *status quo*, but if it has not proved its case in its presentation, then it has failed, and the negative team should point that out.

An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate helpfully offers many areas that should be considered by the negative team in analyzing the affirmative team's presentation. I will not repeat them here since you will be reading them in the book. But I will now address some matters which Christy Shipe does not.

The negative team should point out if the affirmative team has not affirmed the Bible as the ultimate standard and it should point out if the affirmative team has failed to prove its case from that standard. If the affirmative team has failed to acknowledge scripture as the ultimate standard or to prove its case from that standard, then it has failed to prove its case overall. This should be done as part of analyzing the definitions section of the affirmative case, and specifically the term "should". If the affirmative team counters that man does not need God's word to know right and wrong, then Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence should be presented by the negative team proving man's absolute need for the scripture. It should be shown how man in his fallen condition can not know right and wrong as he ought because his conscience has been corrupted.

But the use of scripture in debate argumentation does not end on the section of definition. In addressing the harms section of a sample case, *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* notes how the issue of whether a progressive income tax rate is fair may present itself. The author notes how some people think one way and some another way. But as Christians, we should refer this question ultimately back to scripture: what principles does it teach regarding the nature of taxation? God's word is the final arbiter of this issue, and if a team asserts a certain position on it, it should be able to make an argument based upon the scriptural testimony. For instance, how did God have Israel tax its citizens? And what principles are taught concerning funding of the church?

As Christians, it is our duty to analyze issues Biblically. Being part of a negative team offers an excellent opportunity to practice those skills.

Now read chapter 6 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate*.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions about the four stock issues:

1. What are some ways in which significance can be rebutted by the negative team?
2. What are some ways in which inherency can be rebutted by the negative team?
3. What are some ways in which solvency can be rebutted by the negative team?
4. What are some ways in which topicality can be rebutted by the negative team?
5. What is a counterplan?

ASSIGNMENT 10: SPEAKER RESPONSIBILITIES

Readings:

Debate is not only a lesson in public speaking; it is also a lesson in teamwork. It is important for the team to work well together, and complement one another's strengths. Each debater has objectives that need to be accomplished during their assigned speeches, and all the speeches of a team when put together should form a coherent whole.

In chapter 7 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* Christy Shipe outlines the objectives of each speaker and speech. The speeches include: first affirmative constructive (1AC), first negative constructive (1NC), second affirmative constructive (2AC), second negative constructive (2NC), first negative rebuttal (1NR), first affirmative rebuttal (1AR), second negative rebuttal (2NR), and second affirmative rebuttal (2AR).

She also discusses the objectives of cross examinations, which follow the constructive speeches. As she notes, this is an occasion for a team to poke holes in the arguments and evidence of the other team. Suppose, for example, that the affirmative team has based their argumentation upon humanistic standards. Here are some questions the negative team might want to ask during their cross examination of the affirmative team:

1. In your resolution you used the term "should." Does the term "should" imply there is an absolute and ultimate standard for measuring good versus bad and right versus wrong?
2. What is that absolute and ultimate standard?
3. In your speech you never alluded to the Bible as being the absolute and ultimate standard, nor did you justify your plan from scripture. Why not?

On the other hand, if you are on the affirmative team, and the negative team has objected to you basing your argument on explicit scriptural grounds, asserting such things as its unconstitutionality, here are some probing questions the affirmative might want to ask:

1. So are you asserting that the US Constitution is the absolute and ultimate standard for measuring good versus bad and right versus wrong, and not the Bible?
2. What does this statement by the Apostle Peter and the other apostles teach about whether the Bible or the US Constitution is the higher law: "we ought to obey God rather than men"?
3. Besides, does not the affirmative have the right to fiat power, which includes the right to amend the Constitution if necessary to enact the plan?

Depending upon the nature of the case, the affirmative team might even ask probing questions which undermine the contention that the plan is unconstitutional. The US Constitution, for example, deferred to the Christian religion by not having elections on Sunday.

So in this and other ways each team should make full use of the cross examination periods to further their own case and undermine that of the other team.

Chapter 7 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* concludes with a discussion of flow charting each of the speeches in the debate round. This is a necessary technique for following and making sure to address the various elements in the argumentation. And it is a skill which can only improve with practice. There is a helpful illustration in chapter 7 showing how it looks.

Now read chapter 7 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate*.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions about the four stock issues:

1. What should the first affirmative constructive (1AC) achieve in his speech?
2. What should the first negative constructive (1NC) achieve in his speech?
3. What should the second affirmative constructive (2AC), achieve in his speech?
4. What should the second negative constructive (2NC) achieve in his speech?
5. What should the first negative rebuttal (1NR) achieve in his speech?
6. What should the first affirmative rebuttal (1AR) achieve in his speech?
7. What should the second negative rebuttal (2NR) achieve in his speech?
8. What should the second affirmative rebuttal (2AR) achieve in his speech?

ASSIGNMENT 11: SPEECH AND DELIVERY

Readings:

Chapter 8 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* offers very helpful advice on public speaking, especially within the context of debate. But a few points need to be added.

First, remember that in your public speaking – like in all the rest of life - the primary and ultimate objective is to glorify God. In the words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, “man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Or in the words of I Corinthians 10:31, “whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” If you truly glorify God in your debate, then whether you win or lose in the eyes of a human judge is of secondary importance. But if you do not glorify God in your speech, then even if you win according to the judgment of the debate’s human judge, you have failed in the court that really matters.

Second, as we emphasized in Assignment 1, speak the truth in love. It is better to lose a point in some debate than to lie. The world already has far too many liars. And by being truthful, you strengthen your credibility on the points you do make.

Read chapter 8 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate*.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record the main points of speech advice provided in chapter 8.

ASSIGNMENT 12: THE DEBATE ROUND – WHAT TO EXPECT

Readings:

Debaters should come to the debate well prepared. This includes bringing the proper supplies, and being properly nourished and rested before the debate.

During the debate, wise use should be made of prep time. Most of the allotted prep time should not be used before any one speech, but certain of the speeches will require more prep time than others.

An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate concludes with the following point: “You can use the skills you develop in debate to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by verbally defending His morals and His standards in a world that rejects Him and His absolutes.” It has been the contention of this course that the debate itself offers an opportune time to defend the Lord Jesus Christ, His morals, and His standards. Defending Jesus Christ should not wait for some time outside the debate. And as Jesus promised:

“Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”

Read chapter 9 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate*.

Exercises Related to the Readings:

Record your answers to the following questions about the four stock issues:

1. What supplies should you bring to debate tournaments?
2. How should 1AC come prepared in terms of flowing?
3. What advice is offered for ordering evidence before a speech?

ASSIGNMENT 13: OTHER SPEECH AND DEBATE FORMATS

Reading:

Up to this point in our course we have primarily considered formal team debate. But there are, of course, many other formats for speech and debate.

The Lincoln-Douglas debate format is one prominent debate format for non-team debate. This format draws its name from the 1858 debates between the politicians Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. These men were campaigning against each other for a senate seat in Illinois. Several times they met before voters to debate. Fact, policy and value were all used in their debates. But their greatest strength and their greatest claim to fame was how each speaker tested the other's values, premises and logic—all the factors which today's Lincoln-Douglas debates try to emulate. Unlike some modern political debates, which are really modified press conferences, the original Lincoln versus Douglas debates used direct clash and confrontation, and focused on winning the support of the audience they were addressing.

Today's Lincoln-Douglas Debate follows a formal format structure. The time format for Lincoln-Douglas debate is 6-3-7-3-4-6-3: a six-minute affirmative constructive, a three-minute questioning period, a seven minute negative constructive, another three-minute questioning period, a four-minute affirmative rebuttal, a six-minute negative rebuttal, and finally a three-minute affirmative rebuttal. Another time proposal is to combine affirmative rebuttal times so that the time sequence would be 6-3-7-3-7-6. This time structure allows for greater time by the affirmative to respond to and advance issues in the round in more depth. This time format is not widely practiced, but does have some merit. In both cases, each side has thirteen minutes of speaking time and three minutes to question his opponent's constructive speech.

Typically, Lincoln-Douglas Debates are considered debates about values, and not policy debates. While values have policy implications which can be addressed by the speakers, the primary intent is the examination of a system of values and ethics on a philosophical level. Here are examples of Lincoln-Douglas Debates which have been sponsored by the National Forensic League in the past:

Resolved: A businesses's responsibility to itself ought to be valued above its responsibility to society. (November-December 1996)

Resolved: The principle of universal human rights ought to be valued above conflicting national interest. (January-February 1997)

Resolved: An adolescent's right to privacy ought to be valued above a parent's conflicting right to know. (November-December 1997)

Resolved: In a just social order, the principle of equality ought to be valued above that of liberty. (January-February 1998)

Resolved: Civil disobedience is justified in a democracy. (March-April 1998)

In a typical one-day tournament sponsored by the National Forensic League, each debater will debate four rounds, two rounds advocating the affirmative side, and two rounds advocating the negative. Longer tournaments typically have five preliminary rounds, in which all debaters participate. The top debaters from the first five rounds then advance to a single-elimination tournament to determine the winner of the tournament.

In many tournaments, and especially in smaller tournaments, all debaters present have the potential to 'hit', or square off against each other, at the discretion of the tabulation staff. At other tournaments, generally larger tournaments, less experienced debaters may be separated from more experienced debaters, in essence, forming two parallel tournaments. Some very large tournaments may even have three tracks: Novice, Junior-Varsity, and Varsity. Some LD tournaments are "power matched." In this system, after each round, the meetings for the next round are decided on the basis that winners meet winners and losers meet losers.

In NFL sponsored tournaments the winner of a debate round earns 6 NFL points, and the loser of the round earns 3 NFL points. This is the same points given for Policy Debate. Given that Lincoln-Douglas rounds are shorter than Policy rounds (meaning that some tournaments hold more rounds of L-D than of Policy), in some circuits Lincoln-Douglas can be the fastest way to earn NFL points.

Although the Lincoln-Douglas Debates as conducted by the National Forensic League are value debates, and not policy debates, there is nothing which would preclude having a policy debate using the Lincoln-Douglas debate format. Policy debates focus on government policy, whereas value debates focus upon ethical questions. However, we should not think that values can ever be divorced from government policy, for values inform government policy. Furthermore, given man's moral depravity after the Fall, man needs the Bible in order to know proper values and government policy. Since the Fall, man's conscience has been warped by sin; fallen man is depraved in his intellect and his will. So fallen man cannot rely upon his internal conscience to know what is right from what is wrong. Man must therefore look to God's word to correct his corrupted conscience. It is the mistake of most debate leagues implicitly to deny the doctrine of man's depravity as a consequence of the Fall by thinking either values or policy debates should be conducted without reference to scripture. Fallen man depends upon the word of God to attain a true knowledge of values, and a true knowledge of values is needed in order to frame proper government policy.

Needless to say, individual debate competition pre-dated the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858. Ancient China and Athens, for example, conducted such debates. Philosophy was seriously studied in these societies. And, in Athens, teachers and sophists taught methods of oral argument for individuals to defend themselves in courts and participate in the educated conversations of the teachers and philosophers. In ancient Israel two men often would present their different positions before a king, each trying to persuade the king as to the policy direction he should pursue. Too, in ancient Israel, people would come before judges, who would have to make judicial decisions after hearing the arguments of each side. Disputation was central to the education and curriculum in liberal arts during the Middle Ages in Christianized Europe.

Teachers and religious leaders of that time saw disputation as being closely allied with logic. Logic was then defined as the study of methods of argument and proof. In study groups disputation topics were selected from the areas of logic and philosophy. The intent of the debates, the disputes, was to increase the ability to understand and to use abstract reasoning. Such debates continued into the era of the Protestant Reformation. Colleges used the technique as part of their education of students, and by 1531 Oxford and Cambridge were clashing in debates, primarily values debates. One of the most famous debates was the Leipsic Disputation between Dr. Eck representing the Romish side and Martin Luther representing the Protestant side. In fact, there were many such debates conducted during the Protestant Reformation. Before adopting Protestantism, various cities or states would hold a public debate, allowing both the Protestant and Romish sides to present their cases. After such a full airing of the sides, the city or state would then decide whether to maintain their established Romish religion or adopt Protestantism as the established religion.

Debate, formal and informal, is part of modern life. Many debate leagues exist at the secondary school and college levels. Debates are often heard in legislative bodies, such as the US Congress. Debates are conducted as part of the election process, such as the modern presidential debates. These can follow a variety of formats. And debates are the normal mechanism by which judicial decisions are made. In the US Supreme Court, for instance, two sides will present their arguments before the justices, and the justices must decide which side has made the more persuasive case. So debate continues to be an important part of human culture, even as it has long been.

The moral validity of debate as a method of learning truth is perhaps best captured in the scriptural proverb which says how an argument can seem compelling, until the counter-argument is heard. Christians have good reason to train in public speaking and debate.

Exercises Related to the Reading:

Record your answers to the following questions about the reading:

1. How did Lincoln-Douglas debate originate?
2. What is the typical time format of Lincoln-Douglas debate?
3. Is Lincoln-Douglas debate typically a values debate or a policy debate?
4. How does a values debate differ from a policy debate?
5. What was the name of the famous debate between Dr. Eck and Martin Luther?
6. Why is scripture needed in order for man to attain a true knowledge of ethical values?

ASSIGNMENT 14: ANALYZING A DEBATE

Reading:

We have read a considerable amount of material about speech and debate theory, as well as how Christians should present their beliefs. Now it is time to analyze a sample debate by men experienced in it. The sample debate is between Dr. Greg Bahnsen and Dr. Joel Stein. One debater is a Christian, while the other is an atheist. We can learn much by observing experienced speakers and debaters.

Exercises Related to the Reading:

1. Listen to “The Great Debate” between Bahnsen and Stein.
2. Write a 1-3 page typewritten paper analyzing the debate between Bahnsen and Stein. Explain how Dr. Bahnsen did or did not apply the method of presuppositional apologetics he advocates in his book *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*. Also analyze the success or failure of the arguments presented by both sides in the debate. And conclude which side made the most persuasive case and why.