

***A MANUAL FOR
ORGANIZING A SPEECH
AND DEBATE CLUB***

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SECOND EDITION

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The Puritans' Home School Curriculum

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**A MANUAL FOR ORGANIZING
A SPEECH AND DEBATE CLUB
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**SECTION ONE: PURPOSE AND
GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

A speech and debate club can be an excellent means to give young people practice in public speaking, listening, and note-taking, as well as a host of other skills. This manual shows how one such club has been organized. We hope it will prove useful for others who would like to organize similar clubs in their locality.

We also show in this manual how to incorporate the speech and debate club activities into the curriculum of students involved in the club. Specifically, parents can use various handouts included in this manual to grade the speeches delivered as part of the club. Thus, speech and debate club activity can be the practice section of a program of study in speech and debate at the high school level. *The Puritans' Home School Curriculum* offers other materials for the theory section of such a program.

But this manual serves an even higher end. In our opinion, high school speech and debate needs to be reformed, to be more consistent with scriptural principles. For too long speech and debate has been formed and structured by humanists. For instance, in high school debate organized by the National Forensic League (NFL), the Bible is not treated as the foundation of all knowledge. Debate occurs on a totally humanistic basis and on totally humanistic terms. Furthermore, participants are expected to espouse positions which they do not in good conscience agree with. The latter tends to undermine the Ninth Commandment principle that we are to speak the truth at all times.

Many Christians, especially in the home schooling community, have recognized the need to Christianize high school speech and debate. One of the primary efforts along these lines has been the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA). Here is the purpose of the NCFCA, according to its website at <http://www.ncfca.org/> : “The National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA) believes that formal speech and debate can provide a means for home schooled students to learn and exercise analytical and oratorical skills, addressing life issues from a Biblical world view in a manner that glorifies God. To provide these opportunities to home schooled students, NCFCA shall facilitate qualifying tournaments throughout the country and the annual national tournament.” While this is a laudable goal, we fear that the results have fallen significantly short of the objective, primarily due to the fact that the Christians who have led the NCFCA are not reformed and Calvinistic, but instead generally of the Baptist persuasion. The scope of scriptural relevance is far too restricted in such circles. Though professedly Christian, one rarely if ever hears reference to scripture in NCFCA debate competitions. Scripture is simply not being treated as the foundation of all knowledge, and it is not regarded as necessary for political discourse. Furthermore, as in NFL competition, participants are often expected to espouse positions which they do not in good conscience agree with.

Reformed speech and debate instead treats scripture as the starting point in consideration of all topics, be they topics concerning politics, ethics, theology, law, etc. It is our hope that this manual will help in the effort of reforming high school speech and debate, that it might be more in conformity with scriptural principles, and glorify Jesus Christ as its highest end. We look

forward to the day when there are many such speech and debate clubs, and that each club could send a representative to compete in regional and national speech and debate tournaments, organized according to these principles.

SECTION TWO: ADVERTISING THE CLUB

We used various avenues to advertise the club and attract members.

One avenue was a club website. Here was the description of the club advertised on the website:

During the Summer of 2005 a West Michigan speech and debate club is planned to give student club members practice in public speaking and listening. Club members will speak and debate on various topics. For those who are not yet comfortable in giving original speeches or engaging in public debate, there is the membership option of joining as a student judge. Such judges have to take good notes of the speeches, and write critiques of the speeches. Also, judges will sometimes be asked to present before the group their critique, and in that way get public speaking practice.

Club membership and participation is ****free****, and is open to homeschoolers 8th through 12th grade. Those who want to participate should register in advance with the club coach, J. Parnell McCarter. He may be reached by email at info@puritans.net, or by telephone at tel #616-457-8095 evenings after 9 PM. Those who would like to participate should register with us by May 12, 2005. So send an email to info@puritans.net to register and for any questions.

Normally every Thursday from the end of May through the beginning of August speech and debate club members will meet at Wedgwood Park on Wilson Drive in Grandville, Michigan (just south of Prairie Street) from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM. The first Club meeting for the season is scheduled for May 26, 2005.

Speakers and topics will generally be assigned in advance. Students who are not speaking will be required to write outlines of what speakers have said, in order to improve listening and note-taking skills. Sometimes listening students will even be asked to stand and rehearse before the group what another speaker said. There will be some speech and debate tournaments.

At 12:30 in the afternoon, once the meeting formally concludes, those who want may remain and have picnic lunch together.

Supplies members should bring to Club meetings: Notebook or notepad of 8.5 by 11 inch paper, pen, and lawn chair. (We will line lawn chairs up facing the speaker.)

It is possible to participate as a speaker in either the speech or debate sections, or both.

Time requirements outside of club meetings: Since it is summer, and since it is a club and not a class, it is being done in such a way that less than 30 minutes per week will be required outside of club time to prepare for club meetings. In order to limit time required for speech preparation, club members will be asked to speak on topics that they are already familiar with (eg, favorite vacation, book that they have read recently, etc.). For persuasive speeches, club members can

choose a topic they are already familiar with, so significant research is not required. And evidence cards won't be necessary like in regular debate. After someone has given a persuasive speech, then someone will go up and ask cross-examination questions (but again, they can be of a nature that does not require preparation).

Again, the purpose will be to give members more practice in speaking in front of others, note-taking, etc.

In the debate section, it will be non-team debate. One difference with most high school debate will be that no one will be required to debate for a position they disagree with. Rather, we will survey club members on a range of issues, and match for debate those who disagree on an issue. In the debate, debaters will be required to be civil and polite to one another. Any nastiness will result in automatic loss.

If for vacation or other reasons a student must be away for a certain club meeting, we ask that he or she inform the club coach in advance.

Club meetings will automatically be cancelled if there is rain, or call tel #616-457-8095. to verify a message on the answering machine on the morning of the meeting if there is cancellation due to weather conditions.

Attire: The same rules as apply at Grace Home School Association classes. Their rules are listed at http://homeschoolbuilding.org/grace/grace_policies.htm :

Because we want to exemplify respect for the classroom situation, encourage an atmosphere of academic excellence, and uphold an excellent testimony to the world of our Lord and Savior, we have incorporated the following dress code:

A. Boys are to wear: Nice pants (no jeans, not even black ones, no baggies, and no sweat pants). Pants should not be dragging on the floor. Shirts must have at least short sleeves. Shirts which are made to be tucked in should be tucked in. Earrings, chokers, and chains should not be worn.

B. Girls are to wear: Dresses or skirts which cover the knee or are longer (slits must not be higher than the bottom of the knee). No slacks or jeans may be worn under skirts or dresses. Blouses or shirts must have at least short sleeves. Blouses or shirts must not be tight fitting or have low neck lines. No bare-midriffs.

C. All Students: No writing or pictures on any clothing (other than small logos) and no shorts. No extreme styles or fads will be allowed. This will be left

to the discretion of the GRACE staff. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Philippians 4:5.

SAMPLE SPEECH TOPICS

- Report on a favorite book one recently read
- Report on a favorite vacation one had in the past

MEETING SCHEDULE

<i>Meeting #</i>	<i>Meeting Date</i>	<i>Meeting Topic/Content</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>5/26/05</i>	<i>Intro. Members tell a little about themselves and favorite vacation. Show outline of others' speeches.</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>6/2/05</i>	<i>Book report</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>6/9/05</i>	<i>Reason you are a professing Christian.</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>6/16/05</i>	<i>Defending creationism against evolution</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>6/23/05</i>	<i>Another issue where scripture speaks</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>6/30/05</i>	<i>Persuasive speech tournament</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>7/7/05</i>	<i>Debate skills</i>
<i>8</i>	<i>7/14/05</i>	<i>Cross examination practice</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>7/28/05</i>	<i>Speech and Debate tournament</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>8/4/05</i>	<i>Speech and Debate tournament</i>

Besides the club website, an advertisement was placed in a local home school information forum. The advertisement directed interested parties to the club's website.

Most importantly, the club was advertised by telling home school friends about the opportunity.

SECTION THREE: AGENDA OF MEETINGS

MEETING AGENDA : FIRST CLUB MEETING

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Welcome
- Explanation of purpose of club
- Each meeting will generally be self-contained and independent of the other meetings, in case club members have to miss some meetings.
- Tentative upcoming meeting schedule (see Handout 1)
- Suggestions for incorporating this into a speech and debate course (see Handout 2)
- Resources (see Handout 3)
- Reading from resource (chapter 8 of *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* by Christy L. Shipe)
- Writing speech outlines (Handout 4)
- Format of speech note-taking sheet, to be prepared by listeners as they listen to each speech (Handout 5)

II. Time for members to prepare outlines of what they will say

- Each club member will present a 4-5 minute speech before the group. The topic of the speech will include a brief description of yourself (such as name, age, etc.) and a vacation you have taken in the past that you enjoyed. In the speech tell about the vacation.
- Speakers should notice hand signals of time remaining. In speech and debate competitions, such hand signals are common. You will be required to complete your speech by the time the designated time period has expired.
- Try to use up all of your allotted speaker time.

III. Club members deliver their speeches and listeners will take notes on the speeches they hear. The topic of each speech will include a brief description of yourself (such as name, age, etc.) and a vacation you have taken in the past that you enjoyed. In the speech tell about the vacation. An audience member is assigned to be time keeper and use hand signals to communicate to the speaker the allotted time remaining. Parents in the audience can be asked to write advice on sheets to be given to speaker at the end of the meeting.

IV. Club members one at a time get up and summarize what other speakers have said. Such summaries should normally be about one minute in length.

V. Club Coach Closes meeting

- Next meeting topic: members present book report on a book of their choice
- Collect speech outline notes of listeners

MEETING AGENDA : BOOK REPORT

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Many club meetings I will try to read from or summarize one of the resources listed in the resource handout. Today's resource reading from *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith* and "The Great Debate" between Bahnsen and Stein. See Section Five of this Manual.
- Writing speech outlines (Handout 4)
- Format of speech note-taking sheet, to be prepared by listeners as they listen to each speech (Handout 5)
- Rating of speeches (Handout 6)
- Return speech outlines of listeners from last meeting

II. Time for members to prepare outlines of what they will say in book report

- Each club member will present a 4 minute speech before the group. The speech will be a book report of choice.
- Speakers should notice hand signals of time remaining.
- Try to use up almost all of your allotted time.
- Use Handout 4 to prepare your speech outline

III. Club members deliver their speeches and listeners will take notes on the speeches they hear. An audience member is assigned to be time keeper and use hand signals to communicate to the speaker the allotted time remaining. Parents in the audience can be asked to write advice on sheets to be given to each speaker at the end of the meeting.

IV. Club members one at a time get up and summarize what other speakers have said.

V. Club Coach Closes meeting

- Next meeting topic: club members will be presenting in a 4 minute speech why they are a professing Christian
- Handout 7: suggestions for giving such a presentation. Read this over before the next meeting to give you ideas on what you might say.
- Collect speech outlines from club members

MEETING AGENDA : REASON YOU ARE A PROFESSING CHRISTIAN (APOLOGETICS)

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Today's resource reading from *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith* and "The Great Debate" between Bahnsen and Stein. See Section Five of this Manual.
- Return speech outlines of listeners from last meeting

II. Time for members to prepare outlines of what they will say in defense of their Christian faith

- Each club member will present a 4 minute speech before the group.
- Speakers should notice hand signals of time remaining.
- Try to use up almost all of your allotted time.
- Use the format of Handout 4 to prepare your speech outline.
- See your Handout 7 for suggestions for giving such a presentation.

III. Club members deliver their speeches and listeners will take notes on the speeches they hear. An audience member is assigned to be time keeper and use hand signals to communicate to the speaker the allotted time remaining.

IV. Club members one at a time get up and summarize what other speakers have said. Recommended time length of summary: 1 minute.

V. Club Coach Closes meeting

- Next meeting topic: club members will be presenting in a 4 minute speech their views in the Creation versus Evolution controversy
- Handout 8: suggestions for giving a presentation concerning the Creation versus Evolution controversy. Read this over before the next meeting to give you ideas on what you might say.
- Collect speech outlines from club members

MEETING AGENDA : DEFENDING CREATIONISM AGAINST EVOLUTION

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Many club meetings I will try to read from one of the resources listed in the resource handout. Today's resource reading from [A Puritans' Home School Curriculum Concise Study of 'The Case Against Darwin' : Teacher's Manual](http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/) at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/> . It is helpful in defending creationism against evolution.
- Return speech outlines of listeners from last meeting

II. Time for members to organize for their speeches

- Each club member will present a 4-5 minute speech before the group. The speech will be an analysis of creationism versus evolution.
- Speakers should notice hand signals of time remaining. Try to use up almost all of your allotted time.
- Use Handout 4 to prepare your speech outline

III. Club members deliver their speeches and listeners will take notes on the speeches they hear. An audience member is assigned to be time keeper and use hand signals to communicate to the speaker the allotted time remaining.

IV. Club members one at a time get up and summarize what other speakers have said. Recommended time length of summary: 1 minute.

V. Club Coach Closes meeting

- Next meeting topic: club members will be presenting in a 4 minute speech on a topic pertinent to Christianity
- The Bible speaks on many issues on subjects as diverse as politics, social issues, business, entertainment, etc. When we are asked our opinion on these matters, it is an opportunity for us to testify of our Christian faith. We should not think of our Christian witness as being limited to the direct topic of 'why are you a professing Christian?' Biblical Christianity touches upon a whole range of matters.
- Ask club members to give some examples.
- Handout 9 provides some suggestions for this speech.
- Of course, there are topics where the Bible does not say the position is right or wrong. For example, it does not say whether we should prefer broccoli more than spinach, or spinach more than broccoli. So it would not be appropriate to choose that as a topic for your speech in the next club meeting.
- Collect speech outlines from club members

MEETING AGENDA : ANOTHER TOPIC PERTINENT TO CHRISTIANITY

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Many club meetings I will try to read from one of the resources listed in the resource handout. Today's resource reading (chapter 4 of *Public Speaking and Debate* at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/>).
- Return speech outlines of listeners from last meeting

II. Time for members to organize for their speeches.

- Each club member will present a 4 minute speech before the group. The speech will be on a topic where the Bible speaks.
- Speakers should notice hand signals of time remaining. Try to use up almost all of your allotted time.
- Use Handout 4 to prepare your speech outline

III. Club members deliver their speeches and listeners will take notes on the speeches they hear. An audience member is assigned to be time keeper and use hand signals to communicate to the speaker the allotted time remaining.

Each club member can be assigned one other member to prepare a speech rating on the speech rating sheet (Handout 6). This will prepare members for rating speeches in the coming speech tournament.

IV. Club members one at a time get up and summarize what other speakers have said. Recommended time length of summary: 1 minute.

V. Club Coach Closes meeting

- Next meeting: a speech tournament in which club members will present a persuasive speech.
- Club members get to choose their own topic. Speeches should be 4 minutes in length.
- Club members should incorporate what we have learned and discussed in club meetings thus far. Remember: our speeches in speech and debate should first acknowledge the foundational position of God's word, and then explain the implications of God's word on the topic in question. On almost every topic scripture provides principles by which we should evaluate the point in question.
- Handout 10: speech tournament rules and format
- Come prepared to give your speech.
- Members should be reminded to give their rating sheet to the person rated.

MEETING AGENDA : PERSUASIVE SPEECH TOURNAMENT

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Read rules from Handout 10

II. Time for members to organize and prepare for their persuasive speeches.

III. Speech Tournament: Club members deliver their speeches and listeners judge the speeches on rating sheets. Group A and then Group B. (While members listen to speeches of members in their own group, they can be asked to frame at least a few questions to ask of the person giving the speech. This will give members some preparatory practice in cross examination.)

IV. Tabulation of results by parents and announcement of highest scorer in each group. (While results are being tabulated by parents, members should be asked to pose their questions to the speakers. One at a time speakers can stand before club and answer questions in press conference fashion.) Handout 17 can be used to tabulate results.

V. Announcement of highest scorer in each group in the Speech Tournament.

VI. Club Coach Closes meeting

- Next meeting topic: we shall be going over debate skills and getting used to answering questions raised about what one has asserted
- Ask club members if they have ever seen a presidential press conference, where the President is peppered with questions by press reporters.
- Be prepared to give a one-minute speech summarizing what one has said in speeches in the previous two meetings, and then fielding questions like a President gets in a press conference. Also be prepared to ask a question or two of each speaker.
- Recommend that members bring their Bible.
- Ask that Speech Rating Sheets from the Speech Tournament be passed out to club members, and that club members study these sheets to get ideas of how they can work to improve their speeches.

MEETING AGENDA : DEBATE SKILLS

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Handout 11 go over, concerning rating of debates
- Handout 15 go over, concerning speech and debate tournament rules and format
- Handout 16 go over, concerning possible speech and debate topics
- Assignment of Groups A and B, as well as debating pairs for the next 2 debate tournaments.

II. Time for members to prepare what they will say in brief speech, summarizing the speeches they have made in two previous meetings

- Each club member will present approximately a 1 minute speech before the group, summarizing speeches they have given in the two previous club meetings. Then the other club members will spend approximately 5 minutes asking the member questions about the speech content, and the member will try to answer these questions.

III. Club members deliver their one-minute speeches and field questions of other club members. An audience member is assigned to be time keeper and let the club know when the 6 minutes allotted for each speaker is up.

IV. Club Coach Closes meeting

- Next meeting topic: we shall be going over cross examination and getting practice in it. Also, we shall preparing for the first speech and debate tournament.
- Be prepared to give a persuasive speech 3 minutes in length on the topic of your choice at the next meeting.
- Start thinking about topics for the speech and debate tournaments.

MEETING AGENDA : CROSS EXAMINATION

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Today after each 3-minute persuasive speech, a club member will be asked to cross examine the speaker for 2 minutes.
- Advice concerning cross examination
- Handout 18 go over, concerning instructions for judging tournament
- Handout 13 go over, concerning debate skills
- Handout 14 go over, concerning flowing

II. Time for members to prepare for their persuasive speech and assignment of pairs of speakers and cross examiners

- Each club member will present a 3 minute speech before the group.
- Speakers should notice hand signals of time remaining.
- Try to use up almost all of your allotted time.
- Use Handout 4 to prepare your speech outline

III. Club members deliver their speeches and listeners will take notes on the speeches they hear. An audience member is assigned to be time keeper and use hand signals to communicate to the speaker the allotted time remaining. After each 3-minute persuasive speech, a club member will be asked to cross examine the speaker for 2 minutes. All members will have an opportunity to give a speech and to cross examine.

IV. Club Coach Closes meeting

- Next two meetings will be speech and debate tournaments.
- For those who will debate, get together with the people you have been assigned to debate and choose a mutually agreeable topic to debate.
- Assignment of who will be affirmative and negative speakers for those who will be debating.

MEETING AGENDA : SPEECH AND DEBATE TOURNAMENT

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Make sure club members understand rules from Handout 15

II. Time for members to organize and prepare for their persuasive speeches

III. Speech and Debate Tournament: Club members deliver their speeches and listeners judge the debates on rating sheets, according to speech and debate tournament rules described in Handout 15. Group A and then Group B.

IV. Tabulation of results and announcement of highest scorer in each group. Handout 17 can be used to tabulate results.

V. Club Coach Closes meeting

- Next meeting: another speech and debate tournament.

MEETING AGENDA : SPEECH AND DEBATE TOURNAMENT

I. Club Coach Introductory Presentation

- Make sure club members understand rules from Handout 12

II. Time for members to organize and prepare for their persuasive speeches

III. Debate Tournament: Club members deliver their speeches and listeners judge the debates on rating sheets, according to speech and debate tournament rules described in Handout 15. Group A and then Group B.

IV. Tabulation of results and announcement of highest scorer in each group. Handout 17 can be used to tabulate results.

V. Club Coach Closes meeting, thanking club members for their participation in the summer season speech and debate club.

SECTION FOUR: HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 1 : MEETING SCHEDULE (SAMPLE)

<i>Meeting #</i>	<i>Meeting Date</i>	<i>Meeting Topic/Content</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>5/26/05</i>	<i>Intro. Members tell a little about themselves and favorite vacation. Show outline of others' speeches.</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>6/2/05</i>	<i>Book report</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>6/9/05</i>	<i>Reason you are a professing Christian.</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>6/16/05</i>	<i>Defending creationism against evolution</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>6/23/05</i>	<i>Another topic where scripture speaks</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>6/30/05</i>	<i>Persuasive speech tournament</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>7/7/05</i>	<i>Debate skills</i>
<i>8</i>	<i>7/14/05</i>	<i>Cross examination practice</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>7/28/05</i>	<i>Speech and Debate tournament</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>8/4/05</i>	<i>Speech and Debate tournament</i>

HANDOUT 2 : SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS CLUB AS PART OF A SPEECH AND DEBATE COURSE

Although the Speech and Debate Club is a club, and not an academic class, those who participate may choose to incorporate work performed into an academic class, administered by a parent. It can serve as the practice section of a two-semester course on speech and debate. (The theory section can be accomplished by using The Puritans' Home School Curriculum textbook for introductory public speaking and debate, entitled *Public Speaking and Debate*. It is at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/Public Speaking and Debate.pdf> , and the teacher's manual is also at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/>.) Information on the student's course performance can be recorded below:

Student Name: _____

ACTIVITY #	SPEECH AND DEBATE ACTIVITY	SCORE (ON 100-POINT SCALE)
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
<i>Sum of All Scores</i>		
<i>Average Score (Sum of All Scores/10)</i>		
<i>Letter Grade Equivalent of Average Score*</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

HANDOUT 3 : SOME SPEECH AND DEBATE RESOURCES WE WILL DISCUSS IN THIS CLUB

The most resource 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.

A second resource we will discuss 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 club. It is not necessary to buy it, but we recommend it.

A third resource we will discuss 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> . It is recommended that you print out the book, 3-hole punch its pages, and place them in a 3-ring binder.

A fourth resource we will discuss is 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> .

The fifth resource is not a book but in audio format. It is called “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 .

Finally, *A Puritans' Home School Curriculum Concise Study of 'The Case Against Darwin' : Teacher's Manual* at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/> is helpful in defending creationism against evolution.

HANDOUT 4 : SPEECH OUTLINE

Speaker Name: _____

Topic: _____

I. Introductory Statement: _____

II. Body of Speech:

III. Concluding Summary Statement: _____

HANDOUT 5 : SPEECH NOTE-TAKING SHEET

Speaker Name: _____

Topic: _____

I. Introductory Statement: _____

II. Body of Speech:

III. Concluding Summary Statement: _____

HANDOUT 6 : SPEECH RATING

Speaker Name: _____

MEASURE #	MEASURE OF SPEECH QUALITY	SCORE (ON 10-POINT SCALE)*
1	Professional appearance and attire (clothing, hair, etc.) appropriate for the occasion	
2	Made sure audience was ready and began with good posture	
3	Made good eye contact with the audience throughout the speech	
4	Spoke clearly, calmly and confidently, with good use of vocabulary, and without verbalized pauses	
5	Spoke loudly enough for people to hear throughout the speech, and with emphasis where appropriate	
6	Good stance and appropriate movement and gestures throughout the speech	
7	Efficient, effective, and maximum use of speaker time	
8	Organized and structured speech (such that one could outline the introductory statement, body, and concluding statement)**	
9	Assertions well evidenced, supported and exemplified	
10	Biblical, truthful and logical speech content	
<i>Sum of All Scores (Maximum possible score: 100 points)</i>		

* Scale: from 10 as excellent and of highest quality to 5 as fair to 1 as very poor.

** Speakers should be required to turn in to judge(s) their written speech outline after they have spoken.

HANDOUT 7 : SUGGESTIONS FOR DEFENDING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (APOLOGETICS)

1. The rationale and the manner: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” – I Peter 3:15

2. A divinely inspired example from Acts 17-

Introductory Statement: “Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, [Ye] men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”

Body of Speech: “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands...Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”

Concluding Statement: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by [that] man whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

3. An uninspired summary of the Biblical testimony (from the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1): “IV. The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God. V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.”

4. A thought to consider: Every man places foundational faith in something. The only sure foundational faith is in the infallible Word of God, for God alone is all knowing and always truthful. Man must depend upon the Word of God if he is to have true knowledge of the world. All other foundations are shaky and result in incoherent contradictions.

HANDOUT 8 : SUGGESTIONS FOR DEFENDING CREATIONISM AGAINST EVOLUTION

There are suggestions for defending creationism against evolution in the resource [A Puritans' Home School Curriculum Concise Study of 'The Case Against Darwin' : Teacher's Manual](http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/) at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/> . Here are excerpts from that resource:

“...There is a distinct difference between a presuppositionalist versus evidentialist approach to the science of origins. An evidentialist approach- whether carried out by an evolutionary scientist or a creation scientist- pretends we can prove from the natural data alone the order and timing of biological and geological origins. The presuppositionalist approach recognizes the variables are so many, the possible explanatory models are so great, the data is often so vague, and human nature is so fallen, that man cannot prove from natural data alone the order and timing of origins. Men should be able to recognize that nature was created by God (though sinful men often even deny this), but this is quite different from knowing the order and timing of origin ... A primary flaw of the Darwinian evolution theory is that it relies upon this flawed evidentialist approach to science...

In order therefore to attain any knowledge of the order and timing of origins we must begin with a presuppositional faith in God's word and in its account of origins. We may be able to hypothesize beyond the Biblical account, but we should recognize there are some significant obstacles to our deriving any firm conclusion from the natural data itself. Darwin's theory of evolution fails most fundamentally because it fails to recognize the necessity of presuppositional faith and it fails to acknowledge the limitations of deriving knowledge of the timing and order of origins from the natural data alone...

James Perloff's 2001 article in WorldNetDaily entitled "The case against Darwin" does a good job of concisely presenting the record of natural data as it relates to Darwin's theory of evolution..." (Here is an example: "Biochemistry is also giving Darwin problems. Michael Behe, biochemist at Lehigh University, has written a book entitled "Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution." In this book, Behe describes how certain biochemical systems are so complex that they cannot have evolved step-by-step; he calls this "irreducible complexity." For example, blood clotting swings into action when we get a cut. The formation of a blood clot is a complex, multi-step process that utilizes numerous proteins, many with no other function besides clotting. Each protein depends on an enzyme to activate it. So to paraphrase Behe very simply: What evolved first -- the protein or enzyme? Not the protein; it cannot function without the enzyme to switch it on. But why would nature evolve the activating enzyme first? Without the protein, it serves no purpose. Furthermore, if blood clotting had evolved step-by-step over eons, creatures would have bled to death before it was ever perfected. The system is irreducibly complex. Behe demonstrates that other human biochemical systems, such as the immune system and vision, are also irreducibly complex -- they cannot have evolved step-by-step -- and give clear evidence that they resulted from intelligent design...")

HANDOUT 9 : DEFENDING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH ON VARIOUS TOPICS

Whether the topic concern politics, personal ethics, salvation, law, theology, science, business, the environment, entertainment, attire, culture, family relations, or any other subject, we should always first and foremost direct our attention to the Bible, for it is the foundation of all human knowledge. Our Christian witness must not be confined just to the topic of personal salvation, because God’s word is not so confined. Many varied topics thus afford us the opportunity of Christian witness. Here are just some examples:

Field	Sample Topic	Ideas for Addressing Topic in Christian Manner
Politics	Should states sponsor lotteries to raise revenues?	The Bible defines right and wrong. It says that it is wrong to try to get wealth by vain means instead of labor (Prov 13:11). It also treats the casting of lots as a holy ordinance of the Lord (Prov 16:33, Acts 1:26), so lotteries violate the Third Commandment (Exo 20:7). The state should not promote that which is wrong.
Theology	Is the doctrine of the Trinity true?	Scripture is the foundation of our knowledge of God. It teaches doctrine of the Trinity (Mt 28:19 and I Jn 5:7).
The Environment	Should there be laws against pollution?	Gen 1:28-29 assigns man stewardship over God’s creation here on earth, so such laws are appropriate.
Law	Can morality be legislated?	It depends what one means by the question. If the question is asking whether people can be made righteous by legal fiat, apart from the grace of God, then the answer is no. But if the question is asking whether morality is involved in civil legislation, then the answer is clearly yes. And the Bible defines morality and provides guidelines for civil legislation. Specifically, civil legislation should uphold the Ten Commandments.
Science	Did the world come into existence 4 billion years ago?	No. The only eye-witness of what happened in this time is the Triune God, and He has indicated in Genesis that the earth is young (approximately 6000 years old).
Entertainment	Is it ok to get drunk as part of our recreation and entertainment?	The Bible defines right and wrong. It says that it is wrong to try to get drunk (Eph 5:18). So we should not get drunk as part of our recreation.
Attire	Is it all right for ladies to wear bikinis?	No. God wants post-Fall mankind to be attired (Gen 3:21). Modest attire is commanded (I Tim 2:9).
Family Relations	Are husbands and wives to have the same roles in the home?	Scripture is the foundation of our knowledge of ethics. We must respect divinely mandated roles (Exo 20:12). Men and women have been given different roles (Eph 5:24-25).

So our speeches in speech and debate should first acknowledge the foundational position of God’s word, and then explain the implications of God’s word on the topic in question. On almost every topic scripture provides principles by which we should evaluate the point in question.

HANDOUT 10 : SPEECH TOURNAMENT RULES AND FORMAT

Club members may speak on the topic of their choice, and 5 minutes will be allotted for each speech. But the speech must be a persuasive speech, preferably on a topic that provides opportunity for Christian witness.

We shall divide club members into two groups: Group A and Group B. While Group A people are speaking, Group B people will be judging them on Handout 6 speech rating sheets. After all Group A people have spoken, Group B will turn in their rating sheets. The rating sheets will indicate the name of the speaker, but not the name of the judge.

Then Group B people will speak, while Group A people will judge them. When Group B speeches are completed, then Group A judges will turn in their rating sheets. Rating sheets will not indicate the judge's name.

Results will be tabulated for each group, and the person with the highest score in each group will be announced. Speech rating sheets will then be passed out to club members, so club members can review their speech's ratings at home and ascertain areas in need of improvement.

HANDOUT 11 : DEBATE RATING

Speaker Name: _____

MEASURE #	MEASURE OF PERFORMANCE	SCORE (ON 10-POINT SCALE)*
1	Professional appearance and attire (clothing, hair, etc.) appropriate for the occasion	
2	Made sure audience was ready before began speeches. Maintained good posture from beginning to end. Appropriate movement and gestures throughout the speech. Made good eye contact with the audience throughout the speeches.	
3	Spoke clearly, calmly and confidently, with good use of vocabulary, and without verbalized pauses. Spoke loudly enough for people to hear throughout the speeches, and with emphasis where appropriate.	
4	Efficient, effective, and maximum use of speaker time	
5	Organized and structured speeches	
6	Refutation of all the points made by the other debater**	
7	Cross examination consisted of relevant and probing questions, conducted in a polite manner. When being cross examined, the speaker responded directly, cogently and politely.	
8	Resolution analysis recognizing the Bible's place as the foundation of knowledge and truth, with relevant application of Biblical principles to the topic being debated.	
9	Assertions well evidenced and supported	
10	Biblical, truthful and logical speech content	
<i>Sum of All Scores (Maximum possible score: 100 points)</i>		

* Scale: from 10 as excellent and of highest quality to 5 as fair to 1 as very poor.

** Debaters should be required to turn in to judge(s) their written flow sheets after the debate is completed.

HANDOUT 12 : DEBATE TOURNAMENT RULES AND FORMAT

Before the date of the debate, club members who will be participating in the debate tournament will be divided into Group A and Group B. Also, within each group, members will be paired as to who they will be debating. Finally, the order of speaking will be determined by random drawing. (The first speaker will be the affirmative, and the second speaker will be the negative.) Each pair of debaters will decide the topic that will be debated. The topic must be mutually agreed upon, and the topic question should be worded so the first speaker is the affirmative. This will be a non-team debate tournament.

On the date of the debate tournament, while Group A people are debating, Group B people will be judging them on Handout 11 debate rating sheets. After all Group A people have finished their debates, Group B will turn in their rating sheets. The rating sheets will indicate the name of the speaker, but not the name of the judge.

Then Group B people will debate, while Group A people will judge them. When Group B debates are all completed, then Group A judges will turn in their rating sheets. Rating sheets will not indicate the judge's name.

Results will be tabulated for each group, and the person with the highest score in each group will be announced. Debate rating sheets will then be passed out to club members, so club members can review their ratings at home and ascertain areas in need of improvement.

Each debate between a pair of debaters will consist of two constructive speeches (one affirmative and one negative) lasting 4 minutes per speech, one minute of cross examination time for each debater, and two rebuttal speeches (one affirmative and one negative) lasting 2 minutes per speech. The negative will cross examine the affirmative after the affirmative gives his constructive speech, and the affirmative will cross examine the negative after the affirmative gives his constructive speech.

Each debater will be given 1 minute of preparation time for use over the whole period of the debate. The preparation time includes the time to get to the podium to speak.

An official timekeeper will keep track of the time.

In rebuttals, completely new lines of argumentation that have not been addressed in constructive speeches should not be proposed. Judges must disregard new lines of argumentation presented in rebuttals.

HANDOUT 13 : DEBATE SKILLS

1. Flowing and note-taking
 - “Flow” the debate, taking notes on what each other debate speakers say, as well as how you will respond
 - Write in cursive, for purposes of speed
 - Use symbols and abbreviations in note-taking, for purposes of speed (e.g., “DA” is the common abbreviation for ‘disadvantage’)
 2. Cross-examination
 - Ask probing questions to disclose any contradictions in the other person’s arguments
 - Be polite and not obnoxious
 - Have the other person clarify any points where you were uncertain what he meant
 3. Resolution analysis
 - Explain that the Word of God is the foundation we should utilize to evaluate issues, considering the scriptural principles which are relevant to the topic in question.
 - Indicate that if it can be shown that my position is consistent with scriptural principles, while that of my opponent is not, then the audience should agree with my position.
 4. Speech structure
 - Have an introduction (normally including resolution analysis), body, and conclusion to speech.
 - Organize so it is easy for listeners to outline your speech. Don’t drift.
 5. Presentation of evidence
 - Try to support all assertions with evidence, either by logical argument, authoritative source in field, etc.
 - Make sure evidence is credible.
 - Explain how the evidence supports the point being made.
 6. Refutation of arguments
 - Make sure to refute all the other debater’s arguments, showing why those arguments are flawed.
-

Sample speech outline:

- I. Intro: There should be a law prohibiting talking on a cell telephone while driving. Drivers caught doing it should be fined. The Word of God is the foundation we should utilize to evaluate issues, considering the scriptural principles which are relevant to the topic in question. The relevant principle in this case is the Sixth Commandment, which calls us to take reasonable measures to preserve life.
- II. Body: (Cite statistics concerning automobile accidents where driver was not paying attention because talking on a cell telephone. Show how fining such would be a reasonable measure, and how much lives and property would be saved, based upon evidence.)
- III. Conclusion: Since such a fine would preserve much life and property, and would be reasonable, such a law should be passed.

HANDOUT 14 : FLOWING (SAMPLE)

1AC

1NC

1AR

1NR

HANDOUT 15 : SPEECH AND DEBATE TOURNAMENT RULES AND FORMAT

The speech and debate tournament will consist of a debate section (Group B) and a speech/cross examination section (Group A). Group A will be delivering persuasive speeches and fielding audience questions, and group B will be engaged in non-team formal debate. Selection of group will be on a voluntary basis.

For those in the debate section (Group B), before the date of the debate, members will be paired as to who they will be debating. The order of speaking will be determined by random drawing. (The first speaker will be the affirmative, and the second speaker will be the negative.) Each pair of debaters will decide the topic that will be debated. The topic must be mutually agreed upon, and the topic question should be worded so the first speaker is the affirmative.

On the date of the speech and debate tournament, while Group B people are debating, Group A people will be judging them on Handout 11 debate rating sheets. After all Group B people have finished their debates, Group A will turn in their rating sheets. The rating sheets will indicate the name of the speaker, but not the name of the judge.

Each debate between a pair of debaters will consist of two constructive speeches (one affirmative and one negative) lasting 4 minutes per speech, two minutes of cross examination time for each debater, and two rebuttal speeches (one affirmative and one negative) lasting 3 minutes per speech. The negative will cross examine the affirmative after the affirmative gives his constructive speech, and the affirmative will cross examine the negative after the affirmative gives his constructive speech. Each debater will be given 2 minutes of preparation time for use over the whole period of the debate. The preparation time includes the time to get to the podium to speak. An official timekeeper will keep track of the time. In rebuttals, completely new lines of argumentation that have not been addressed in constructive speeches should not be proposed. Judges must disregard new lines of argumentation presented in rebuttals.

Those in the speech section (Group A) of the speech and debate tournament should come to the tournament prepared to deliver a 4-minute persuasive speech, on the topic of their choice, followed by 2 minutes of responding to questions posed by fellow Group A members. While Group A people are speaking, Group B people will be judging them on Handout 6 speech rating sheets. After all Group A people have spoken, Group B will turn in their rating sheets. The rating sheets will indicate the name of the speaker, but not the name of the judge.

Results from the rating sheets will be tabulated for each group, and the person with the highest score in each group will be announced. Debate rating sheets will then be passed out to club members, so club members can review their ratings at home and ascertain areas in need of improvement.

HANDOUT 16 : POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR SPEECH AND DEBATE

Sometimes people have difficulty coming up with possible topics for speech and debate. Here are just some for your consideration:

Field	Topic
Politics	Should the US have free trade with China or raise tariffs against Chinese imports?
Politics	Should the US have open borders or restrict immigration?
Politics	Should the US withdraw its military forces from Iraq now?
Politics	Should abortion be outlawed at the federal level, or left up to each state to decide?
Politics	Should marijuana be legalized for medicinal purposes?
Politics	Should gambling be made illegal?
Politics	Should the government mandate that family take care of patients like Terry Schiavo or should it leave it up to the family to decide?
Politics	Should there be "Sunday blue laws"?
Politics	Should the US remain in the United Nations?
Theology	Is pre-millennialism or post-millennialism true?
Theology	Is presbyterian church government or independent/congregationalist church government the proper model?
Politics/Economics	Should the US return to the gold standard?
Politics/Economics	Should taxes be raised or spending cut to reduce the budget deficit?
Politics/Economics	Is NAFTA a good or bad thing?
The Environment	Should the US have adopted the Kyoto Treaty relating to global warming?
History	Was the US mistake in the Vietnam War ever getting into it or not fighting it to victory?
Agriculture	Should the government subsidize US farming?
Agriculture	Should the US allow imported food products from nations with lower agricultural standards?
Agriculture	Are the advantages of organic farming justified or hyped?
Entertainment	Should people watch the Star Wars movie or not?
Diet/Nutrition	Should people use the Adkins' diet?

HANDOUT 17 : TOURNAMENT TABULATION SHEET

Group A Speakers:

Club Member	Scores by Individual Judges	Total of All Scores
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	

The Group A speaker with the highest total of all scores was _____.

Group B Speakers:

Club Member	Scores by Individual Judges	Total of All Scores
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	
	+ + + + + + + +	

The Group B speaker with the highest total of all scores was _____.

HANDOUT 18 : INSTRUCTIONS FOR JUDGING SPEECH AND DEBATE TOURNAMENT

1. Judging should not be based upon whether you agree with the position of the speaker, but a fair rating based upon each criterion being rated on rating sheet.
2. It will be presumed in the debate section of the speech and debate tournament that there is agreement with the following proposition: “The Old and New Testaments of the Bible are the true and infallible word of God.” If there is not agreement with that proposition among those who will be debating, then they need to debate that proposition, and not some other topic. So if some other topic is being debated, and one of the debaters argues against an argument based upon scripture, that scripture is not true or does not matter, then that refutation should be regarded as inadmissible by the judges. (Note to debaters: make sure if you disagree with the proposition “The Old and New Testaments of the Bible are the true and infallible word of God.” that you let us know so that proposition itself can be the debate topic.)
3. Judges should flow the debate, so they can determine how well arguments of the opposing debater have been refuted.

**SECTION FIVE: SUMMARY OF
APOLOGETICS MATERIALS
BY BAHNSEN**

In this section we have included two essays (one by D. Parnell McCarter and one by Calvin McCarter) summarizing the contents in *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith* by the late Dr. Greg Bahnsen and “The Great Debate” between Bahnsen and Stein. These summaries may be helpful for club coaches wishing to summarize the contents of these apologetic resources.

The Great Debate

June 5, 2005

By Calvin B. McCarter
Speech and Debate Theory

The University of California, Irvine held a debate on one of the most important philosophical questions—“Does God exist?” Dr. Greg Bahnsen, a Christian professor, pastor and writer, defended the affirmative side. He has written several books on Christianity, including *Always Ready*. In this book, he introduces how to defend the Christian faith from a biblical perspective. He says the Christian method of defending the faith is to examine whole worldviews to show how only Christianity is logically consistent, called the “presuppositional” approach. The negative side was represented by Dr. Gordon Stein, a prominent atheist. From the debate that followed, we see the foolishness of denying God and the truth of the Bible. In addition, by watching Dr. Bahnsen apply principles introduced in his book, we can learn how to debate in a Christian manner, especially in the defense of the faith.

Let us now begin to examine the debate by considering Bahnsen’s case for God’s existence. He first shows the necessity for presuppositions in forming a worldview; people of all faiths, he says, must make assumptions. The correct worldview is the one that does not contradict itself and is consistent with human experience. For the rest of the debate, Bahnsen attempts to demonstrate that the atheist worldview is contradictory, while the Christian worldview is logically consistent.

Bahnsen’s case for God is that the atheist worldview cannot account for any universal absolutes – logical, moral, or scientific – while the Christian worldview is logically consistent. He shows that there would be no basis for laws of logic in a solely material world in which everything must be proved on an empirical basis. In addition, if logical laws are merely human conventions, as Stein supposes, why are one person’s laws superior to another’s? In addition, he asks, why is logic unchangeable and true everywhere if there is no God? In conclusion, Bahnsen demonstrates how Stein and all other atheists “steal” from the Christian worldview to account for logical laws which atheism cannot explain.

The second proof of the existence of God, according to Dr. Bahnsen, is the existence of moral laws. He showed how laws of morality could not exist without a Christian God. Nothing can be “good” or “bad” in the solely material world that atheists believe in. Stein states that “bad” is anything that leads to a general decrease in human happiness, but Bahnsen is able to show that this definition of “good” is flawed and arbitrary. Ultimately, Bahnsen is able to show that everybody – even atheists – considers morality an absolute, but that this view is only possible in a Christian worldview.

The laws of science are the third type of law that only Christianity explains. Bahnsen says that science presupposes God’s existence by assuming that scientific observations repeat. He says that we could not expect the behavior of anything to be constant in a chance atheistic universe. Through the whole course of the debate, Bahnsen is able to prove that atheism does not account for scientific laws, but that a belief in a Christian God is the basis of science. Based on these reasons, Bahnsen says that atheists must assume God’s existence to account for absolutes, but that they still suppress their knowledge of Him.

Stein tried to refute Bahnsen’s case for God’s existence, but his response was weak and ineffective. His explanation of laws of logic varied throughout the debate. He first stated that these laws were human conventions, but he later said that logic was self-verifying when Bahnsen pressed him. He even suggested that requiring him to explain logic would be unfair. Undoubtedly, Stein’s atheism cannot cope with the existence of logical laws.

His defense of atheism with reference to moral standards was equally disjointed. As previously noted, Stein maintained that humans have agreed that evil is anything that leads to a decrease in human happiness. However, he never explains why universal principals can be based on human agreement, and why human happiness is an ideal and matters in an atheistic universe.

In response to Bahnsen’s third reason for God’s existence, Stein said that science is compatible with atheism and is, in fact, atheistic. He stated that science assumes no divine intervention; science is supposedly based on probability. However, this disregards the fact that scientific laws are considered certain, rather than probable expectations that may or may not prove to be correct.

In this portion of the debate, Bahnsen’s arguments were clearly more persuasive. Using the presuppositional approach by analyzing the entire atheistic worldview, he showed how illogical it is to deny God. Rather than launch into a piecemeal case for why a “Supreme Being” probably exists, Bahnsen was able to prove the existence of the Christian God and worldview. In stark contrast, Dr. Stein was unable to refute Bahnsen’s case for God’s existence. He simply failed to show how atheism could account for universal laws.

Let us now examine why Stein says a Christian God cannot exist. His first reason was the famous problem of evil—why a good God would allow evil. Dr. Stein asks why Christians die along with atheists and why God does not “prove Himself” so that atheists would believe in Him. He also attacks Christianity on the basis of bad professing Christians.

His second reason against God's existence raises the problem of suffering. Stein says a good God would never allow death and pain in the world, ignoring that the Bible says it comes from sin. Of course, this brings the issue back to the problem of evil.

Dr. Bahnsen addressed these issues and was able to disprove the supposed contradiction between a good God and evil. He first asked how Stein, as an atheist, could use the term "evil" because atheism cannot account for evil. In other words, Stein borrows from Christianity to form a concept of evil, and then uses it to attack Christianity. Dr. Bahnsen then showed how sin and suffering is compatible with God's existence. He said that the rebellion of man causes suffering and death. In my opinion, Bahnsen did not fully explain how there is no incongruity between evil and God's existence as described in his book, *Always Ready*. However, Dr. Bahnsen still refuted Stein's arguments against God's existence.

By the end of the debate, Bahnsen had proved that the Christian God exists and that alternatives such as atheism are actually impossible. Why was his case more persuasive than Dr. Stein's? By following the "presuppositional" approach, he showed the falsehood of the atheistic worldview by demonstrating that it cannot account for any universal laws, and successfully articulated the truth of Christianity. And by humbly yet boldly presenting the gospel, he provides us an example of how to be always ready to defend the faith.

The Great Debate

D. Parnell McCarter, May 2005

Dr. Greg Bahnsen, with his powerful arguments for the existence of God, won the debate against Dr. Gordon Stein, an atheist. Bahnsen used a presuppositional approach in the debate and made a strong case that laws in relation to logic, science, and morality are impossible without a theistic worldview. In contrast, Stein wavered on the definition of atheism, failed to respond to Bahnsen's arguments, and made some faulty assertions of his own. While both sides raised important points, Dr. Bahnsen won the debate in making the case for God's existence.

Bahnsen made a number of points in his convincing case for God's existence. He asserted that the laws of logic, science, and morality imply the existence of God. Bahnsen said that the laws of logic are necessary and universal and that they are not merely conventional or inferred from observations. He said that for these laws to be universal, requires God whose thought are inherently characterized by logic. Bahnsen also described the "neutrality fallacy," which he said pretends it is possible to not have presuppositions. Bahnsen noted that Stein, for instance, presupposes that supernatural events do not exist. Bahnsen also said suffering and sin are a result of man's rebellion, and not God's fault. He in addition pointed out that towards the

end of the debate Stein changed his definition of atheism. Bahnsen argued effectively for God's existence with a number of powerful points.

Dr. Bahnsen's arguments were generally consistent with his instructions for defending the Christian faith in his book, *Always Ready*. First, he used a presuppositional approach, arguing that everyone looks at an issue with assumptions. Second, he showed how Stein's own arguments required God's existence and therefore Stein was being inconsistent. Finally, Bahnsen was unafraid to defend specifically the Christian faith and the Bible. Though there were some statements made by Stein that could have probably been refuted more powerfully, Bahnsen's arguments mostly reflected the advice in his apologetics book.

While making some noteworthy arguments, Dr. Gordon Stein clearly failed to defend atheism and refute Bahnsen's points. First, Stein wavered in his definition of atheism. At the start of the debate, Stein said that atheists simply believe that God's existence has yet to be proven, but towards the end of the debate, he said that atheists believe that it is clear God does not exist. Second, Stein spent a significant amount of his time refuting theistic arguments that Bahnsen did not even make. When Stein did attempt to respond to Bahnsen's arguments, they were fairly weak. For instance, in response to Bahnsen's argument regarding the laws of logic, Stein claimed said that those laws are simply a convention. Of course, Stein in reality treated the laws of logic as binding and universal in the way he argued. He also claimed that science uses an atheistic worldview but failed to address Bahnsen's argument that their must have been a Creator who made scientific laws. Perhaps Stein's weakest defense of atheism was that on morality. He said that laws of morality do not require God's existence but that instead morality is what makes the most number of people happy. Even though such a standard might seem to make sense, without God, one cannot say it is wrong to break such a humanly devised definition of morality. Dr. Stein raised some other points worth noting. He asked why many Christians are immoral and how God and evil can coexist. He also asked why natural disasters kill both Christians and non-Christians. While Dr. Stein did raise a few pertinent questions, his arguments were faulty and contradictory.

Bahnsen succinctly made the case for the existence of God using presuppositional arguments. His statements reflected the directions for defending the faith in his book, and he effectively rebutted Stein's assertions. In contrast, Stein was unable to defend his atheism. The debate between Drs. Bahnsen and Stein vindicated the presuppositional approach to defending the existence of God and the Christian faith.

SECTION SIX: SOME SUGGESTED AGENDA OF OTHER MEETINGS

- A debate tournament according to the rules and format at Handout 12
- A 'press conference' type format where each club member gives a brief speech outlining his views on various topics and then is peppered with questions by club members in the audience. Club members in the audience would raise their hands and be called upon by the speaker to pose the question.