



**Vilnius
University**

HUMOUR IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS USING SOCIAL MEDIA

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OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Definitions
- Problems Related to Christian Ethics
- Defending and Establishing Humour and Apologetics as Appropriate Ways to Fulfill the Great Commandment
- The Use of Social Media for Communicating the Gospel
- Understanding and Overcoming the Problem of Mediation
- Summary

INTRODUCTION

- The Great Commission – Mission of the Church – Apologetics – Humour – Social Media.
- Humour
 - Philosophical skepticism;
 - Theological skepticism.
- Problems
 - Is using humor in Christian apologetics an acceptable practice for disciples of Jesus, who seek to share the Gospel or at least to attract attention to it?
 - Is using humor in apologetics an effective means to present the Gospel, especially via social media, which act as mediators between the communicator and the recipient?
- Relevance
 - The universality and of humor;
 - The width of Christian witness and Christianization.
- Breadth of Research

DEFINITIONS

APOLOGETICS

- *Apologia* (ἀπολογία) – verbal defense, giving an answer.

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope(Y) that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 1 Peter 3: 15-16

- Committed to defending and substantiating the truth claims of Christianity.
- Theoretical and practical aspects.
- Cannot be disconnected from the person employing it.
- Apologetics – the science and art of Christian persuasion (Pritchard, G.).

HUMOUR

- Superiority Theory
Making fun of another with a desire to show oneself to be superior, while exposing another's stupidity.
- Relief Theory
Dealing with negative feelings and/or emotions and trying to make a certain situation easier to cope with.
- Incongruency Theory
Finding that a phenomenon does not line up with our preconceived expectations and/or reasoning patterns.

Morreal, J. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

PROBLEMS

- Christian Ethics
 - Evangelism and apologetics perceived as intolerant, oppressive, and unloving, thus, anti-Christian.
 - Employing humour in apologetics means devaluing, making fun of or looking down on a person, thus, anti-Christ-like.
- Communication
 - Is employing humour in apologetics an effective means of conveying the Gospel message?
 - How do social media affect the relationship between the communicator and the receiver, and the communication process itself?

FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

- Apologetics and Humour
 - Biblical mandate;
 - Biblical examples.
- Gospel Communication
 - Loving God;
 - Loving neighbour.
- The Role of Humour in Apologetics
 - Attracting attention.
 - Making communication more effective.

CITERIA FOR USING HUMOUR

- Mocking the worldview/ideology, never the person.
- Having pure motivation and the drive of love.
- Choosing one's battles.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Changed creator-consumer relationship
(Ferraris, M. and Martino, V.; Romele, A. and Terrone, E.)
- Anonymity
- Lack of commitment
- Double mediation (humour and social media)

OVERCOMING THE PROBLEM OF MEDIATION WITH SØREN KIERKEGAARD

- Indirect communication
- Attracting attention
- Being contemporaneous



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