

FRANCIS BERGER

BLOG WORK



As With Everything, When It Comes to Christian Blogs, Motivation is Key

11/29/2023

[8 Comments](#)

I used to spend a great deal of time contemplating the ideas and opinions Christian blogs offer. I still do, but only after I have satisfactorily discerned the overarching motivation driving the blog and the blogger.

At its most basic level, motivation provides the impetus for thinking, acting, and behaving in a certain way. Motivation also provides penetrating clues into a blogger's overall goals and objectives. The motivation driving a blog – *not the ideas or opinions the blogger presents* – reveals what the blogger truly is, where his priorities lie, and what he is ultimately aiming for.

Motivation is particularly crucial in Christian blogs. Christian bloggers whose ideas, opinions, beliefs, and assumptions differ from mine do not unsettle me to any great extent, but Christian bloggers whose motivations do not seem to emanate from a *good place* appal me.

POWERED BY **weebly**



 [RSS Feed](#)

Blog and Comments

Blog posts tend to be spontaneous, unpolished, first draft entries ranging from the insightful and periodically profound to the poorly-argued and occasionally

Even more dismaying are Christian bloggers whose motivations inevitably point **to the eclipsing of or absence of a good heart.**

As with everything, motivation wavers. Even the best Christian bloggers are susceptible to publishing posts that qualify as motivationally suspect. Such inconsistency is understandable and forgivable as long as the overarching motivation flowing from an otherwise *structurally good* heart remains.

That said, when bloggers start losing their motivational grip, the motivational inconsistencies have a way of morphing into antithetical motivations.

The good heart begins to fade, something else stands in its place, and the ideas and opinions the blogger shares stop meaning all that much, regardless of how penetrating or insightful the ideas and opinions happen to be.

Note: A *good heart* is not synonymous with *nice!* Most *nice* Christian bloggers are insufferable, seemingly unsalvageable fools.

Many nasty, cantankerous Christian bloggers have good hearts and clearly discernible motivations that are *good*, but that good heart and those good motivations must be discernible; otherwise, such bloggers are, at best, only nasty and cantankerous or, at worst, on the wrong side.

[8 Comments](#)

Daniel F

11/30/2023 12:45:04

I've thought about this lately with respect to a lot of the Apologetics activity that goes on online, both on video (Youtube) and in blogs. While doctrine and theology are important and have a role, my gut tells me that a lot of the Apologetics is not serving any Christian goal, and is not motivated by a true Christian spirit.

By and large, online Apologetics is aimed at showing that "I am right, and you are wrong." Ultimately, this is prideful, lacks a spirit of charity and repentance, and it is also unclear what the final goal is: "Okay, you are right. Now what?" All too often, the Apologist's response to that question is: "On the next debate!" They would also likely argue that if anyone has been convinced, that person has been "saved". It is largely an exercise in avoidance: avoiding working on one's own flaws and lack of godliness. The pearl of great price in Christianity is repentance, personal reformation and growth, and treating those around us with love. Apologetics end up being simply another worldly activity motivated by fame (clicks), money and pride, or even just distraction from life and more important spiritual work.

As Fr. Seraphim Rose put it in a passage I read the other day in his introduction to *The Northern Thebaid*: "We shall not be judged for our ignorance of the vocabulary of contemporary "Orthodox theology," but we shall surely be judged for not struggling on the path of salvation."

And from the Letter to Thomas Merton I posted the other day: "If we would live our faith more deeply, we would need to speak of it less."

Anyway, this is not to say dogmatics, theology and apologetics have no place, but rather they are areas that call for careful circumspection about one's motivations before engaging in them.

(And let me say, I am not casting the first stone here! I am well aware of my own "sins" in this regard, of arguing over theology etc.)

Reply

Francis Berger

12/1/2023 07:42:22

@ Daniel - "Anyway, this is not to say dogmatics, theology and apologetics have no place, but rather they are areas that call for careful circumspection about one's motivations before engaging in them."

POWERED BY

disparaging.

Comments are moderated.
Anonymous comments are never published (please use your name or a pseudonym).

Emails welcome:

f e r e n c b e r g e r (a t) h o t m a i l (d o t) c o m

Blogs/Sites I Read

[Bruce Charlton's Notions](#)

[Meeting the Masters](#)

[From The Narrow Desert](#)

[Synlogos † Aggregator](#)

[New World Island](#)

[New World Island YouTube](#)

[Steeple Tea](#)

[Adam Piggott](#)

[Fourth Gospel Blog](#)

[The Orthosphere](#)

[Junior Ganymede](#)

[Trees and Triads](#)

Archives

[February 2024](#)

[January 2024](#)

[December 2023](#)

[November 2023](#)

[October 2023](#)

[September 2023](#)

[August 2023](#)

[July 2023](#)

[June 2023](#)

[March 2023](#)

[February 2023](#)

[January 2023](#)

[December 2022](#)

[November 2022](#)

[October 2022](#)

[September 2022](#)

[August 2022](#)

[July 2022](#)

[June 2022](#)

[May 2022](#)

[April 2022](#)

[March 2022](#)

[February 2022](#)

[January 2022](#)

[December 2021](#)

[November 2021](#)

[October 2021](#)

Yes, I agree with what you have suggested here. At its core, I suppose apologetics are a declaration and defense of metaphysical assumptions.

One big problem with most traditional Christian metaphysics is the virtual denial of consciousness development. Everything that needed to be revealed has been revealed. Our job as Christians is to simply bow our heads and follow along in the belief that every major problem has already been revealed and solved by some theologian or saint and that people never change, so why reinvent the wheel? Under the umbrella of such assumptions, talking about and defending Christianity intellectually becomes the noblest of pursuits. The problem with that is obvious -- talking about is not doing. So in this since, I think you are right -- it is an exercise in avoidance, and it probably has become an obstacle to repentance, spiritual growth, and love.

My favorite line from apologists is the old "yeah, but traditional Christianity has already addressed that."

There's also the legalist aspect -- the motivation to defend like a trial lawyer, using similar tactics, strategies, and rhetoric.

Reply

bruce g charlton

11/30/2023 14:40:23

I agree, and one of the main ways I discern motivation is trying to establish whether somebody has sufficient self-knowledge and honesty to state his own fundamental assumptions, and that they are assumptions.

Therefore; the kind of Christian whose motives I distrust is one who is always attacking other peoples understanding with negative critique or mere denigration; and who simply assumes the validity of his own assumptions... Especially someone who denies that his assumptions are indeed assumptions buy instead asserts they Must Be true.

Reply

Francis Berger

12/1/2023 07:47:25

@ Bruce - Being against is far easier than being for, isn't it?

I think many Christians do their best to declare that they are "for" when they critique other negatively, but what they are "for" is often quite nebulous and weak. Or the for is just a regurgitation of doctrine or assumptions, albeit with a glaring lack of comprehension, analysis, and "ownership."

Reply

bruce charlton

12/1/2023 08:06:59

" what they are "for" is often quite nebulous and weak"

Yes, it is better than Nothing to wave a hand vaguely in the direction of an institution with an expression of "I believe and obey... whatever They say"

But it is Not Enough; because it is dodging spiritual responsibility.

And, at some level, those who do it Know that it is a dodge.

That dodge of responsibility (and the commensurate pseudo/ affectation of humility) is one of the great secret appeals of becoming any kind of obedient believer.

Francis Berger

12/1/2023 09:38:48

@ Bruce - Yes, and there's also the matter that the "for" being just a disguised "against", which ends up being two sides of the same negative value and motivation.

I am for diversity and mass migration sounds like I am for love, tolerance, helping people, bending down to the weak, oppressed masses, but what it really means is that I am against the supposed negatives associated with the native population, and being against the "negative" native population means I am for the positives diversity and mass migration.

What matters is that I get a ticket to ride and that I have dodged the reality of my own self-hatred and hatred of God and x fors and againsts bandied about in the public sphere.

POWERED BY

- [September 2021](#)
- [August 2021](#)
- [July 2021](#)
- [June 2021](#)
- [May 2021](#)
- [April 2021](#)
- [March 2021](#)
- [February 2021](#)
- [January 2021](#)
- [December 2020](#)
- [November 2020](#)
- [October 2020](#)
- [September 2020](#)
- [August 2020](#)
- [July 2020](#)
- [June 2020](#)
- [May 2020](#)
- [April 2020](#)
- [March 2020](#)
- [February 2020](#)
- [January 2020](#)
- [December 2019](#)
- [November 2019](#)
- [October 2019](#)
- [September 2019](#)
- [August 2019](#)
- [July 2019](#)
- [June 2019](#)
- [May 2019](#)
- [April 2019](#)
- [March 2019](#)
- [February 2019](#)
- [January 2019](#)
- [December 2018](#)
- [October 2018](#)
- [September 2018](#)
- [July 2018](#)
- [May 2018](#)
- [March 2018](#)
- [February 2018](#)
- [January 2018](#)
- [December 2017](#)
- [November 2017](#)
- [June 2017](#)
- [May 2017](#)
- [March 2017](#)
- [February 2017](#)
- [January 2017](#)
- [November 2016](#)
- [June 2016](#)
- [March 2016](#)
- [January 2016](#)
- [December 2015](#)
- [November 2015](#)

Self-love is one "for" with which Christians can avoid the dodge and challenge the self-hatred permeating the West. If Christians love God, then they are obliged to love themselves, and loving yourself entails assuming that responsibility so that one can love another.

Jesus commanded us to love one another, which is a very different thing from indiscriminately pretending to love some abstract "other" in the hope that this will somehow mask my own self-loathing and nihilism.

Reply

JMSmith →

12/3/2023 15:44:43

I think it is a bad idea to be a "Christian blogger," but not so bad to be a Christian who blogs. Being a Christian, he or she will frequently blog on Christianity, but this is not the only line of opinion the store carries. C.S. Lewis said much the same thing about Christian writers. Christians may of course be writers, but they should beware of becoming "Christian writers." Those who give way to the temptation and become "Christian writers" too often become monomaniacs, moralizers, and cranks. You are a good example of resisting this temptation. You write about art, literature, chickens, and, when the Spirit moves you, Christianity. And my sense is that your posts tell us what Francis Berger thinks of these topics, not what Christianity thinks of these topics.

I yesterday posted a short defense of William Wildblood, who seems to me possessed of a good heart, and who came in for some stiff internet criticism. If you read a blogger for years and have no sense of him as a man, but only as a mouthpiece, I think that blogger is coming from a bad place. This is true even when that blogger is a mouthpiece for something good.

Reply

Francis Berger

12/3/2023 18:38:04

@ JM - Good points. You are right about it being a bad idea to be a Christian blogger, at least one who blogs exclusively about Christianity. I use the term here to refer to any blogger who includes Christianity in his/her choice of subject matter, either exclusively or selectively.

With this in mind, I enjoy your posts on other subjects as well.

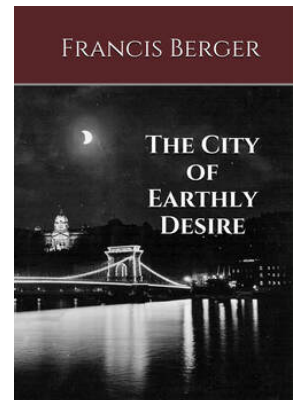
I appreciate your support of William. I came to his defense as well in the original diatribe that started it all. I feel the same way about William. He is good man, and he is definitely coming from a good place!

Reply

Your comment will be posted after it is approved.

Leave a Reply.

- [October 2015](#)
- [September 2015](#)
- [July 2015](#)
- [April 2015](#)
- [January 2015](#)
- [December 2014](#)
- [October 2014](#)
- [August 2014](#)
- [July 2014](#)
- [June 2014](#)
- [May 2014](#)
- [April 2014](#)
- [March 2014](#)
- [February 2014](#)
- [January 2014](#)
- [December 2013](#)
- [November 2013](#)
- [October 2013](#)
- [September 2013](#)
- [August 2013](#)
- [July 2013](#)
- [June 2013](#)
- [May 2013](#)
- [April 2013](#)
- [February 2013](#)
- [January 2013](#)
- [December 2012](#)
- [October 2012](#)
- [September 2012](#)



Name (required)

Email (not published)

Website

Comments (required)

Notify me of new comments to this post by email

Submit



POWERED BY