

Episode 137 Capturing Christianity

Cameron Bertuzzi

Hello, I am Cameron Bertuzzi, and I am President of Capturing Christianity.

David Capes

Cameron Bertuzzi. Good to see you, Cameron. Thanks for being with us today on the Stone Chapel.

Cameron Bertuzzi

Yeah, I'm excited to be here.

David Capes

You've not been here before. You and your wife just discovered us a while back?

Cameron Bertuzzi

Well, we knew about Lanier Theological Library, but we only made it here in person recently. I've heard and I've known about Lanier for, maybe a decade. And a really good friend of mine asked, Why haven't you gone to Lanier Theological Library yet? And at the time, I was working. I was a photographer. And so, I was always busy. And I just never had the chance to come out and actually be here. Yeah, so I knew about it. But it's really exciting to actually be here and see the library and it's really cool.

David Capes

So, for those who don't know who you are, who is Cameron Bertuzzi?

Cameron Bertuzzi

So, as I mentioned, I am president of Capturing Christianity. And I've also got a wife and two small children. My ministry is an apologetics ministry. It came out of a journey into apologetics. I discovered maybe a decade ago, that my brother is an atheist though we grew up Christian. So, he came out as an atheist. My brother-in-law, called me up and said, 'Hey, I need to talk to you about something. Your brother's an atheist'. And I met with him. I talked to him. And the initial conversation that I had with him, did not go well. I think we argued for maybe three hours one night, and it was a horrible experience. After that, I decided I need to discover if Christianity can be rationally defended. Is there any evidence for it? Can I respond to some of my brother's objections that he was raising during that night?

David Capes

Was he raising intellectual objections?

Cameron Bertuzzi

Some of them definitely were. He mentioned the other 'dying and rising gods' from the ancient near east. And so that was an example of one objection. He also talked about the unevangelized. What happens to the person in Africa who has never heard the gospel? Are they damned to hell? And then if they are, how was that moral? So, there's a lot of different questions and objections that he had that

night. I wouldn't call myself a nominal Christian. I was going to church, was in the worship band. I was very intense about my faith. But I'd never really thought about my faith. I've never really intellectually investigated or thought about some of these challenging objections and questions. He had and so I was just not prepared. But after that conversation, I decided I need to look into it. And it became a kind of obsession for me. My wife will attest to the fact that there were many nights for many years that I was on forums and talking with atheists about apologetics and different arguments for and against the existence of God. And I would stay up past midnight, sometimes just trying to respond to atheists. So, it did become a sort of obsession, in the way that turned into the ministry that we now have, Capturing Christianity. And one day I decided, since I'm spending so much time on these forums, this is where my time is going ultimately.

David Capes

So, you're spending a lot of your time discussing with people who are atheists, but you make a living being a photographer. Were you using up all your photography time that you would have been planning and photoshopping with these conversations?

Cameron Bertuzzi

So, while I was a photographer, or before I became an official photographer at the company that I was working for, I was a photo editor. And so, while I was editing photos, I could listen to something in the background. I would listen to all of these different debates with William Lane Craig and other Christian apologists. And I was able to consume the content that way. And then, on my free time, I would go and engage myself and write and respond.

David Capes

How long have you had Capturing Christianity?

Cameron Bertuzzi

The ministry started as a blog in October of 2017 and has officially existed since then.

So for about six years. And I worked on Capturing Christianity just in my free time for a little over two years, and then I went full time with it. It didn't take very long for it to take off.

David Capes

So why the name Capturing Christianity?

Cameron Bertuzzi

It really is kind of simple. It's just a sort of a play on words for my background in photography. I didn't want to abandon my identity as a photographer when I was going into apologetics. I had really thought long and hard about what to name this ministry. I knew that I wanted to start an apologetics ministry. What is a good name for it? There were some people who have embraced their identity before apologetics, like Jay Warner Wallace.

He's a cold case detective. And he investigated the truth claims of Christianity. He wrote a good book about it called *Cold Case Christianity*. And that's his whole persona. He is a cold case detective, who

was an atheist. He investigated the truth claims of Christianity, and then became a Christian. And that's a cool story.

David Capes

It's almost a Lee Strobel kind of story. He starts as a "Chicago Tribune" journalist and ended up in apologetics. But he still kept that journalistic eye.

Cameron Bertuzzi

Yeah. And so, I was I was thinking, should I completely ignore the fact that I'm a photographer? Are people not going to take my ministry seriously, if they know I started as a photographer. And then I decided people are going to respond to the actual content. And I'm not going to be ashamed of who I really am. This is my background. And so, I just embraced the photographer in me and came up with the word capturing, as in capturing a photo.

David Capes

Oh, I see that now! So, if a person finds you on the internet, what are they going to see under "Capturing Christianity"? What are they going to find?

Cameron Bertuzzi

On YouTube, currently, we're at about 178,000 subscribers. We're growing consistently and fast. So, what they'll find is that the vast majority of the content we produce is focused around atheistic apologetics.

David Capes

What is the situation with your brother now? Is it resolved yet?

Cameron Bertuzzi

I wouldn't say that it's resolved. He still identifies as an atheist. He's definitely not as staunch in his atheism, as he used to be. But he's also not very interested in the subject anymore. And so, he and I are on really good terms. He and I are good. We love each other and have a great relationship.

David Capes

Good. Because I think a lot of times people come to the faith or come back to the faith, primarily through relationships and being loved. As opposed to being convinced by a rational argument.

Cameron Bertuzzi

I had to learn that the hard way. And not say come back to the faith. Sit over here and let me shove this down your throat, and you're going to become a Christian again. And I learned that was not the right approach. It took several years to figure that out. But I completely changed my approach. And now I truly just focus on loving him first. And then if we do have a conversation, I let it happen organically and our relationship has thrived as a result.

David Capes

Good! So, you've got this presence on YouTube? People can find you on YouTube by searching for Capturing Christianity. What will they find? And are you still writing the blog?

Cameron Bertuzzi

The blog is not something that I personally contribute to anymore. We've gone through a series of different contributors that are helping out and writing guest articles. So right now, it's mainly a venue for promoting our events. In fact, we're having one here at Lanier. We're using it as promotion for events. But when we do write an article or response it goes up on the blog. But the bulk of our work as a ministry is on YouTube. That's where all of our resources and effort go.

David Capes

What social media platforms do people use to find you?

Cameron Bertuzzi

It's a mixture of all of them. We do have some people that reach out to us. And if they've written a book recently, that looks interesting, I'll interview them. But typically, what happens is I'll get inspired to cover some particular topic.

I'm looking to cover the topic of mereological nihilism, which is basically the view that there are no composite objects. There's no tables, there's no chairs, there's no books, there's no libraries. There are no composite objects. And so, atheists will sometimes champion this view, in response to a particular argument for the existence of God called the Kalam Cosmological Argument.

David Capes

Andrew Loke is a friend and he's written on that.

Cameron Bertuzzi

Yea, and William Lane Craig, has a good position on this. His first premise, says, whatever begins to exist, has a cause. But some atheists will object to that first premise. They would say that nothing really begins to exist. Everything is just different particles moving around and being arranged in different ways. And so, there's really nothing that begin to exist. To come back to your question now, I find inspiration for my content in many places.

David Capes

When we search You Tube for Capturing Christianity, what are we going to see? Debates, or conversations?

Cameron Bertuzzi

On YouTube, we're called a variety channel. In contrast, there's a really famous podcaster named Joe Rogan. So, Joe Rogan, helped produce three or four hour long episodes, and it's just a podcast of him talking with another guest. And that's all he produces. But on our channel, we have all sorts of different types of content. We have some videos that are me talking about some particular subject. The bulk of what we do are interviews. I'll find some expert to interview. And I usually schedule about two of those a week. So, interviews are probably the majority of the content that we produce. But then we also do

dialogues, and I would say probably about once a month, we will host the dialogue between a Christian and an atheist. We had one recently between a Christian and a Muslim. Those occur every now and then. We also post clips from our longer form interviews and debates. So, it's a variety of different things that you can expect to find when you subscribe.

David Capes

This is a great project that you're involved in. Are you the only person doing this? Or do you have a team of people?

Cameron Bertuzzi

My wife, she came on board with Capturing Christianity a little over two years ago. She's helping us plan events. She is also our liaison with our supporters and our patrons. And she's heading up a few other different projects behind the scenes. She is in charge of every event that we're doing. We hosted two very big conferences, the past couple years. And she planned all those out and contacted everyone and scheduled all the flights and did everything for it. And she's just incredible. She's an amazing, amazing event planner. So, we're very fortunate to have her.

David Capes

I'm not going to ask you to name your favorite guest ever. But if you could just think about that for a minute. Think about a list of people that you really were excited to speak to or you just really wanted to interview. Or one where you weren't expecting much out of that interview, but it ended up being one of the best. What are some of your favorite folks?

Cameron Bertuzzi

I've interviewed so many different people at this point, that it's hard to sort of whittle it down. But there are a couple interviews that really stick out in my mind even to this day. When I got into apologetics, the first thing that I did when I was looking for evidence for Christianity, the first thing that I came across was a lecture by William Lane Craig. He was talking about the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. And so, I looked at him for several years as a sort of intellectual hero of mine. This guy, he's done the work. He's obviously very intelligent. And so, I was very impressed with William Lane Craig. And then eventually, several years later, I ended up being able to interview him and start to work with him. He and I consistently work together now. A few times a year we'll do different projects together. So having the chance to interview Dr. William Lane Craig has been just a very incredible experience. But there's one other person who my mind immediately went to, and this person is Richard Swinburne. He's in the UK and he's a Christian philosopher. Some philosophers think of him as the most important natural theologian ever. And what that means if you're not familiar with the term natural theology, it just means someone who defends the existence of God, apart from the Bible. So, you're not using the Bible but using nature to build your theology of God. And so, you appeal to different arguments and evidence.

David Capes

And that is biblical, because it says the heavens declare the glory of God. And God made the heavens and the earth. So, there's a sense in which even that itself is a biblical concept.

Cameron Bertuzzi

Yeah, natural theology is grounded in Scripture. The interview that I did with him was, I believe, in 2019. And I did not really know what to expect going into this interview, I knew that he's well revered, and well respected in the academic community. It was going to be a good interview, but I didn't expect how intimidating it was going to be interviewing him. And if I can just paint the picture. I get into this room, and he just demands respect.

David Capes

Are you interviewing him in person or are you using zooming at this point?

Cameron Bertuzzi

This one was in person. There was a conference happening in Houston and I ended up interviewing a few different Christian philosophers. And Richard Swinburne was one of them. I didn't have any idea what it would be like to interview him or get into this room with him. And this guy is intense. And he hasn't done anything. He's just standing there. And so, we sit down, and we start to have the interview. And I immediately recognize I'm in the presence of an intellectual giant. There was one point during the interview where I really started to sort of feel in a sense, the intellectual prowess of Richard Swinburne, and it was during the point where we were discussing substance dualism. And if you don't know, Richard Swinburne is a big proponent of the view that we have, not just a physical body, but also a spiritual or an immaterial soul. And so, at one point, during the interview, he was defending his view, or he was describing some argument, and I made the comment, "well, that doesn't really strike me as a very plausible argument." And he looked at me and he goes, why not? And at that point, I was like, I made a mistake. I should not have challenged this guy on this!

David Capes

Well at least you didn't say, "you know, that's the dumbest thing I've ever heard!"

Cameron Bertuzzi

Well, I can't remember I'd have to go back and actually watch the interview. It has been so many years at this point, but I just remember that moment distinctly of feeling very small, feeling very intimidated. And in one sense, I loved it. I loved the fact that here's a Christian, who is just demanding so much respect intellectually, and it's a moment I'll never forget.

David Capes

Alright, so we've got an event coming up with you guys soon at the Lanier Library on May 6, 2023. It's called Capturing Christianity Exchange. CC Exchange. And tell us a little bit about that event. What's going to happen there?

Cameron Bertuzzi

So, it's going to be a debate. We call these exchanges. We brand them as an exchange but this one in particular will be a formal debate. It'll be a formal debate between a Christian and an atheist. The Christian is named Eric Hernandez. He's a longtime friend of mine, wonderful Christian apologist. And then the atheist is named Justin Schieber. And I have actually personally debated Justin several years ago. And it was a very fruitful dialogue that we had on the problem of evil. And I remember, during that

debate, thinking, this guy really takes philosophy seriously. He's also just a super nice guy in general. But after that debate, it's kind of funny, he quit doing apologetics. He completely quit philosophy, religion, and apologetic-all of it. He put it down for a while. And he recently picked it back up. And I thought, what better way to bring him back into the fold. He's starting to post about philosophy and religion again. And he's one of these atheists that you don't want to let go. If you can find someone who takes philosophy seriously, who is respectful and challenges Christians in very positive ways. That's the type of atheist I think you want to try to partner with.

David Capes

Now you call the event CC Exchange. And you talked about it as an exchange of ideas. I remember seeing it described as an exchange of ideas in a person-to-person format. Unfortunately when you hear about some debates, you think about people yelling and screaming at each other, but that's not really your style.

Cameron Bertuzzi

It's not my style. I try to find the best I can. I try to vet everyone before I have them on the channel to make sure that they're going to be a good fit. I try to have people that are going to be respectful, and cordial, but also have a very high level of knowledge of the subject matter. So, I don't want to just have some random person, who may have good intentions but doesn't know what they're talking about or defending. They may be a great Christian, but I try to find people who are versed in philosophy and apologetics. And so, both of these guys Eric Hernandez and Justin Schieber, meet those expectations.

David Capes

Cameron Bertuzzi, thanks for being with us today on the stone chapel.

Cameron Bertuzzi

Thank you for the invite. This has been awesome.

David Capes

Standby for a nugget of wisdom from Cameron Bertuzzi.

Cameron Bertuzzi

Good epistemology covers a multitude of sins.