

# Email Sniper

Sometimes you think you've got the bases covered, and then someone throws you a curve you didn't expect. John throws a great curve ball - or was it a screwball?

After my first email to John notifying him of my site, and asking him to visit sometime, he wrote back to me. He made some points, and he asked me to answer a few questions. Sometime later, I started to receive hundreds of angry emails from Catholics saying they were mad because they thought I was "attacking" John. I had to ask a student where he found my site. It was in BCS newsletter # 119, along with our email exchange! I found this strange, because I politely asked John if it would be alright if I posted our exchange on my site, but I never heard back from him. I felt asking was the Christian thing to do, and besides it's always been kind of creepy to me when someone knows that they're going to post your conversation publicly, but they don't mention it to you. It's kind of like recording a conversation on the phone without telling the other person, and then bringing it out later – it's too Hollywood for me. I think phone recording is illegal in most states without notifying the other party – but maybe some people think that sort of thing is okay by email. I don't.

Anyway, many of his students were angry that I didn't have a link on my site to John's site. That was correct - I didn't. John had asked me to put a link on my site to his, but he never put one on his site to mine, so it just never happened. Traded links are often called "reciprocal," because each site exchanges them in a "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" fashion. Maybe John figures he doesn't need to reciprocate. The funny thing was that many of his students chastised me, called me a "coward" and beat me into the ground for not having a BCS link, but ignored John not linking to me. Even newsletter #119 didn't link to my site, it just referenced it. Go figure. I have since posted a link to John's site under "Who is the Bible Christian Society?" I want to be Christian, and fair about it. It doesn't matter to me if he posts mine or not. I want people to see what John is doing.

Since the email exchange from newsletter #119, I've challenged John to a more formal and structured debate with a "one subject at a time" format. I did this for a couple of reasons:

1: Loose email exchange debate is less efficient, and more prone to misunderstanding than formal debating is. Pick a topic, set the playing rules, and debate – don't just argue.

2: There's less chance of anyone getting away with a "shot-gun" approach. In my article "The Apologetics of John Martignoni" I describe an email exchange John had with pastor Matt Johnson. In that exchange, I sensed that John knew he was losing the debate. Apparently I was correct. At one point, John bulldozed Johnson by insisting he answer 42 fairly complex theological questions. He insisted that Mr. Johnson answer "yes or no" to each question first, and provide scriptural references for the questions specific to the Bible. Any other questions were to be answered with simple "one" or "two" word answers should Mr. Johnson have chosen to expand his answers. The point is that Martignoni didn't want Johnson to answer, so he setup impossible requirements and rules so that Johnson was shut-down. Since Martignoni owns the platform, he calls the shots, but it's poor instruction for his students. You can find the newsletter debates with Matt Johnson at [biblechristiansociety.com](http://biblechristiansociety.com)

If John Martignoni is going to be honest with his students, he needs to be honest with himself first. He knows he did an end run around me with the sneaky emails, and he knew how his students would react. I've notified Martignoni that I won't loosely debate by email anymore, and I've suggested to him that we conduct a debate with a structured format, and with ground rules. Maybe with questions asked by his students. We'll see what he does. It's possible he'll be up for the challenge choosing to help his students learn, but if not, at least you'll know he had the opportunity to get in on a fair and balanced debate, with no sneak attacks, and no "shotguns in the closet."