

## **Lecture # 3**

# **10 Major Types of Apologetics:**

- 1. Classical Method**
- 2. Evidential Method**
- 3. Historical Method**
- 4. Experiential Method**
- 5. Relational Method**
- 6. Presuppositional Method**
- 7. Cumulative Case Method**
- 8. Cultural Method**
- 9. Ref. Epistemological Method**
- 10. Imaginative Method.**



## Classical Apologetics:



A prominent strategy in the history of the church methodologically, this approach to apologetics begins by using natural theology in order to establish theism and then by addressing the historical evidences that support Christianity.



## Evidential Apologetics:

This method takes a *broad range* of historical evidences or data as the starting point and in this way argues for theism and Christianity simultaneously.



## Historical Apologetics:

Often called “*resurrection apologetics*” - this method takes historical evidence as the basis for demonstrating the truth of Christianity with the specific starting point being the historicity of the New Testament documents. This approach then moves to the use of the miracles of Christ, particularly, the resurrection, in order to demonstrate that Christ is God. The conclusion becomes that if one agrees that Jesus is the Son of God then what He affirms is true (the truth of Scripture).

# Relational Apologetics:

Introduce people to the idea of having a love relationship with Jesus Christ. The starting point is the realization that Jesus is the embodiment of truth (moving from “what” to “who”) and then support the fact that Jesus Christ is God by offering evidential, historical, and logical evidences (liar, lunatic, or God). This view counters postmodern teachings that all viewpoints or beliefs are equally valid in view of God, truth, and reality.

# Experiential Apologetics:

This internal approach appeals to Christian experience as the starting point for the truth of theism and/or Christianity. Divided into four major subtypes: (a) general religious experience, (b) special religious experience, (c) Christian mystical experience, (d) existential experiences, this method is commonly and powerfully used in discussing conversion experiences, “a changed life”, and in testimonies how God worked in some area of life, circumstance, or situation: *“I want what you have!”*

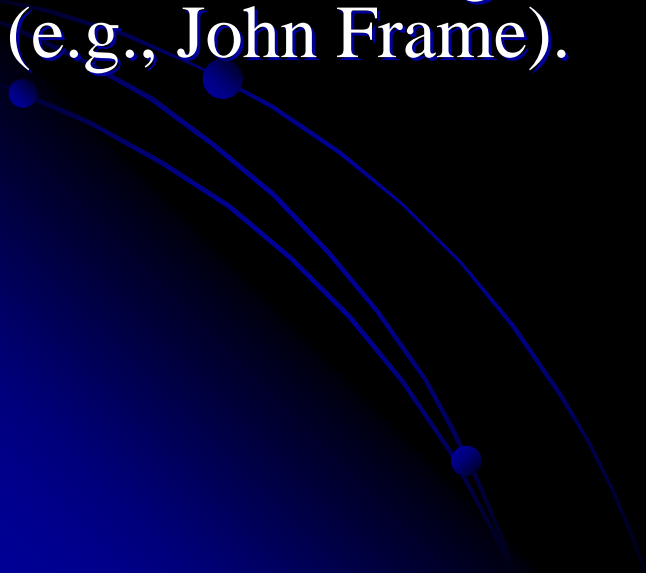
# Presuppositional Apologetics:



Two presuppositional types which presuppose the truth of explicitly Christian theism as the starting point and then argue transcendently that all meaning and thought presuppose the Triune God of the Bible. Direct attempts to persuade nonbelievers are counterproductive because they are not regenerated; there is no neutral ground between the believer and nonbeliever where Christianity can be defended. Rather, the gospel is to presupposed rather than defended.

# Presuppositional Apologetics:

Though the major fathers of presuppositionalism, Gordon Clark and Van Til saw no use for the classical arguments for God's existence or for traditional usage of historical evidences for the Christian faith to supplement the transcendent argument, some later presuppositionalists do (e.g., John Frame).



# Presuppositional Apologetics

- Van Til believes the law of non-contradiction to be a human limitation which is forced upon God. The law of non-contradiction is then an enemy tool to defeat the enemy in battle. Van Til states that he used “*enemy’s own ammunition to defeat the enemy in battle.*”

# Presuppositional Apologetics

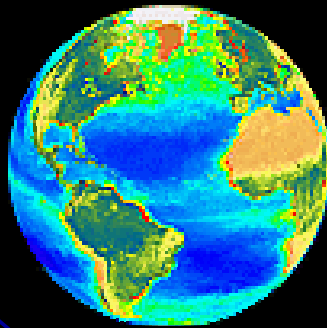
- Two types:

- Transcendental Presuppositionalism:  
Cornelius Van Til

- Emphasizes that all reasoning is circular. The conclusion of one's arguments can always be found in one's premises.
- Nonbelievers presuppose God's existence (though they suppress the truth) in order to find truth.

# ***The Law of Non-Contradiction:***

***Opposite ideas cannot both be true  
at the same time and in the same sense.***

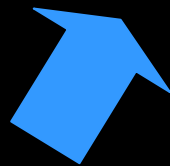
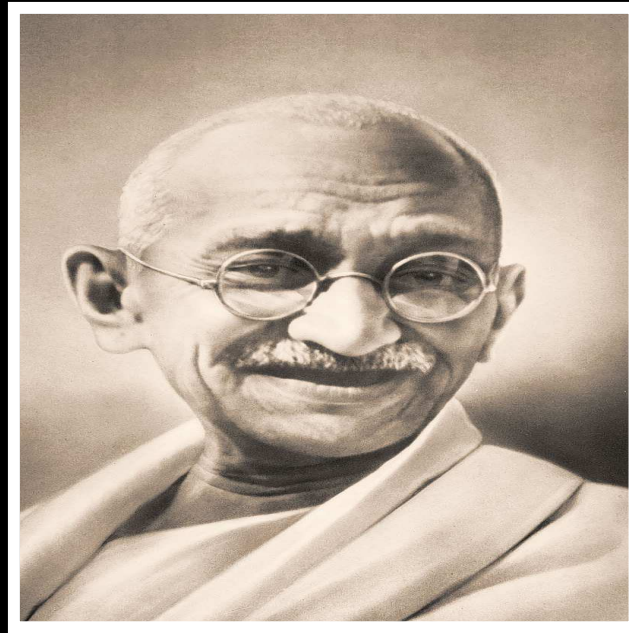


**The Earth is  
Round**



**The Earth is  
NOT Round**

**A true statement matches its object**



**“This man is Gandhi.”**

# Presuppositional Apologetics

- Traditional Apologetics are considered unbiblical and useless in engaging the unbeliever; it is counterproductive.
- All human thought and moral judgments would be impossible if the Christian God did not exist.
- Van Til (unlike some of his followers like John Frame) believed that the transcendental argument is the only valid argument for Christianity.
- Van Til denies that man has the ability to test revelation-claims (e.g., there is no way to decide whether the Bible or the Koran is the Word of God).

# Presuppositional Transcendental Argument: (Indirect Strategy)

Attempts to uncover or undermine the hidden presuppositions of the non-believer. These hidden presuppositions are the necessary preconditions for human thought. However, for man to be conscious of his own existence presupposes a consciousness of God's existence. Thus, when a nonbeliever argues against God's existence, he must first presuppose God's existence just to argue at all. Undermine his presuppositions, point out why unbelieving presuppositions were chosen, and present the gospel.



# Presuppositional Apologetics

- Dogmatic Presuppositionalism: Gordon H. Clark.

- Emphasizes first the existence of the God of the Bible, then deduces beliefs from this principle.

# Presuppositional Apologetics

- This view is against circular reasoning because it is a logical fallacy; not all thought is circular because even though all men have presuppositions, they can be tested just as scientific hypotheses are tested (e.g., God provided ample evidence for His revelation-claims by performing miracles to the unsaved through His spokesmen and by raising Jesus from the dead (John 20:30-31; 1 Cor. 15:3-8)).

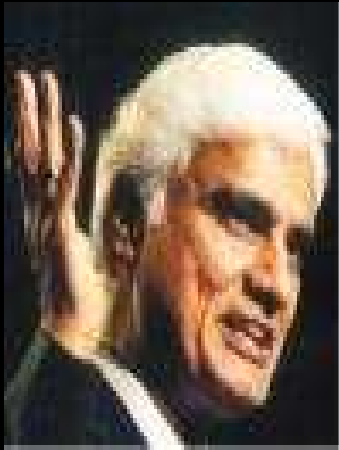
# Presuppositional Apologetics

- Without presupposing the God of the Bible, no knowledge was attainable.
- The law of non-contradiction flows from God's nature; God is logic. Thus, by presupposing the Triune God who revealed Himself in the Bible, you also presuppose the law of non-contradiction. You then use the law of non-contradiction to destroy the belief system of non-believers.

# Cumulative Case Apologetics:



Commonly called the cumulative case method, this informal approach is a strategy whereby it seeks to show that Christianity provides the best explanation of a broad range of data (holistic approach).



## Cultural Apologetics:



This approach, pioneered by Francis A. Schaeffer, uses a presuppositional foundation that argues that only biblical Christianity posits a foundation that is strong enough to support sinful society and produce God-given values, meaning, and significance since He is here and not silent (God is both infinite and personal). Other worldviews/cultures cannot adequately nor consistently handle the sinfulness of humanity, the intrinsic value of creation (including humanity), and the nature of the external world or even produce values that correspond to how things actually are (designed).



# Reformed Epistemological Method:

This approach maintains that positive arguments for Christianity or for theism are **not necessary** for holding a belief in God. Belief in God is properly basic and therefore rational to maintain without having to offer any evidence or argument. Arguments can be offered, but apologetically, the focus is usually centered on rebutting or undercutting objections to theism and Christianity.



# Imaginative Method of Apologetics:

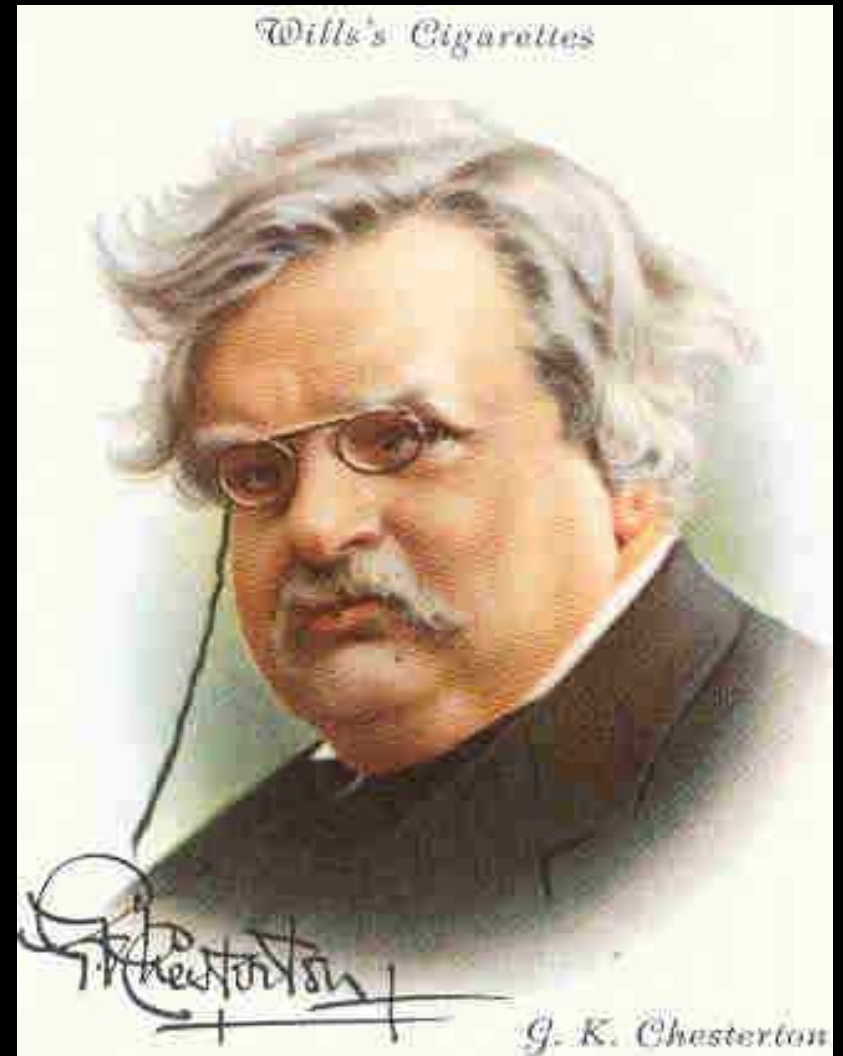


Imaginative apologetics finds its source in the literary genius of the creative group of apologetics in England. G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), Dorothy Sayers (1893-1957), & J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973) typically used symbolic stories as a central apologetic strategy in their depictions of absolutes, evil, goodness, sacrifice, the ultimate evil, the power and corruption of temptation, and virtues such as loyalty and love. Thus, using the power of imagination, brilliant story telling, and irony/paradox, can powerfully communicate biblical concepts and teachings in a compelling way.

# A closer look at imaginative method of apologetics:

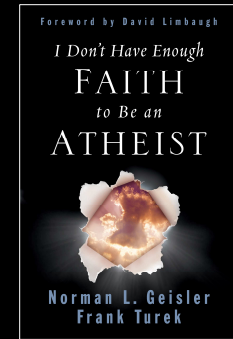
- G. K. Chesterton used “*parodox*” in argumentation as an attempt to subvert unbelief.

e.g., Orthodoxy is the one and only real unpardonable heresy.”



# Twelve Points that Show Christianity is True

1. **Truth about reality is knowable.**
2. **The opposite of true is false.**
3. **It is true that the theistic God exists.**
4. **If God exists then miracles are possible.**
5. **Miracles can be used to confirm a message from God.**
6. **The New Testament is historically reliable.**
7. **The New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God.**



# Twelve Points that Show Christianity is True:

8. **Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:**
  - a. **His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;**
  - b. **His sinless and miraculous life;**
  - c. **His prediction and accomplishment of His resurrection**
  
9. **Therefore, Jesus is God.**
  
10. **Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.**
  
11. **Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.**
  
12. **Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God (and anything opposed to it is false).**