

Apologists are authors, writers, editors of scientific logs or academic journals, and leaders known for taking on points in arguments, conflicts or positions that are either placed under popular scrutinies or viewed under persecutory examinations. The term comes from the Greek word *apologia* (απολογία), meaning a speaking in defense.

Plato was an ancient Greek philosopher, the second of the great trio of ancient Greeks –succeeding Socrates and preceding Aristotle– who, between them, laid the philosophical foundations of Western culture.

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, anglicised as Tertullian, (ca.155–230) was a church leader and was a notable early Christian apologist. He was born, lived and died in Carthage. He was the first great writer of Latin Christianity, thus sometimes known as the "Father of the Latin Church". He introduced the term Trinity to the Christian vocabulary and also probably the formula "three Persons, one Substance" as the Latin "tres Personae, una Substantia" (itself from the Koine Greek "treis Hypostases, Homoousios"), and also the terms *vetus testamentum* ("old testament") and *novum testamentum* ("new testament").

In his *Apologeticus*, he was the first Latin author who qualified Christianity as the 'vera religio' ("true religion"), and symmetrically relegated the classical Empire religion and other accepted cults to the position of mere 'superstitions'. Despite his great advances to the Kingdom of God in his early years, Tertullian tragically left the Church of Rome late in his life and joined the heretical Montanists.

Early uses of the term "apologetics" include Plato's *Apology* (the defense speech of Socrates from his trial) and some works of early Christian apologists, such as St. Justin Martyr's two *Apologies* addressed to the emperor Marcus Aurelius.

Putting Apologetics to Work in Evangelism

The "Classical" Method: A classical apologist uses a two-step process by first using natural theology to establish the existence of God by observable data in the universe. Only after God's existence is proven do they move on to presenting the case for Christianity, namely the person and work of Jesus Christ. All of this in an attempt to make Christianity the only viable religion. This method is called "classical" because it is assumed to be the style of apologetics of the early church fathers. The key assumptions for this style of apologetics is that man is capable of openly and honestly evaluating the claims of Christianity. The second assumption is that man's heart is fully depraved, but his mind is fully functioning. The last assumption is that the proof of miracles are without equal in their defense of Christianity.

The "Evidential" Method: This method is much like that of the "classical" method in that it uses "proofs" to stimulate man's ability to reason and search for religious knowledge. But unlike the "classical" method, "evidential" apologetics only need one step to accomplish their goal. They will use historical "proofs" to prove Christianity, and the existence of God. A good example of the "evidential" method would be to begin the defense by arguing the historical factuality of Jesus Christ's resurrection, thus proving that God exists as well as Christ's authenticity.

The “Cumulative Case” Method: This approach to apologetics uses the task of proving Christianity not by a formal argument but by an informal one. As Steven Cowan writes in “Five Views on Apologetics”, pg 18 “The case is more like the brief that a lawyer makes in a court of law or that a literary critic makes for a particular interpretation of a book. It is an informal argument that pieces together several lines or types of data and does so better than any alternative hypothesis.”

The “Fidiest” or “Presuppositional” Method: This system of apologetics places its defense of Christianity in the Bible itself. It assumes or presupposes, as the Bible does, that God already exists and that He has spoken by way of His word (the Bible). The fidiest depends on God’s Word and the Holy Spirit to convince the unbeliever through faith. Apart from faith, which is given by God, no person will understand and receive the message of Christianity. The fidiest preaches or proclaims the Word and depends on God to do the work in man’s heart to understand.

The biggest contrast between the “Fidiest” method and all the others is the failure to understand the sinfulness and total depravity of the unconverted. The fallen nature of man is not to seek God or understand His teaching. Outside of the God-given faith to repent and follow Christ, man’s natural behavior toward is God is to rebel. Man will not on his own be able to reason out an understanding of God.

Recommended Reading:

You may be interested in the following literature to enhance and re-emphasize the training being received:

- **How Do You KNOW that You're Not Wrong? Responding to Objections that Leave Christians Speechless** by Paul Copan; *Baker Publishing*
- **Creation Out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical and Scientific Exploration** by Paul Copan; *Baker Publishing*
- **A Joyful Theology: Creation, Commitment & an Awesome God** by Sara Maitland; *Augsburg Fortress*