

Part Six

Integrative Approaches to

Apologetics

20

Apologists Who Favor Integration

In the twentieth century, as the debates over apologetic approaches and methods have sometimes seemed to overshadow the apologetic task itself, some apologists have sought to develop an approach that combines or integrates elements of more than one approach. These apologists typically believe that the most effective apologetic will utilize more than one line of argument in defense of the Christian faith.

In a brief comment in one of his essays, C. S. Lewis mentions four kinds of ‘evidence’ corresponding to our four basic types of apologetics: “And in fact, the man who accepts Christianity always thinks he had good evidence; whether, like Dante, *fisici e metafisici argomenti* [physical or metaphysical arguments, i.e., theistic proofs favored by classical apologetics], or historical evidence [preferred by most evidentialists], or the evidence of religious experience [emphasized by many fideists], or authority [the basis for most forms of Reformed apologetics], or all these together.”¹ It is the last-mentioned possibility—using all of these approaches to commend Christian faith to others—that we shall consider in the remainder of this book.

We begin in this chapter by considering the thought of five modern apologists favoring some form of integrative approach.

Precursors of Integrative Approaches

As we have seen throughout this book, few Christian thinkers exhibit a “pure” form of any one of the four approaches we have discussed. This is especially true of apologists before the modern era; few if any pre-modern apologists can be categorized simply as belonging to one of the four approaches. The classical approach, as the name suggests, is most deeply rooted in the history of Christian apologetics prior to the modern period. But, as advocated today, it has developed through its interplay with the other three approaches.

Most of the great apologists of the premodern period anticipate in some way one or more of the alternatives to what is now known as the classical model. This can be seen by the fact that modern apologists from different approaches may find aspects of their approach in the same premodern apologist.

Augustine, for example, is claimed as a forerunner by classical apologists, especially though not exclusively because in his earlier writings he made extensive use of arguments for God’s existence. Warfield saw him as a forerunner of classical apologetics and of Reformed theology.² Reformed apologists, though, find Augustine on a trajectory leading toward their approach in his later writings, in which the authority of Scripture and the sovereignty of God are given special emphasis.

Thomas Aquinas is claimed as a forerunner of the classical approach because of his emphasis on Aristotelian, deductive reasoning. Yet he is also claimed as a precursor to the evidentialist approach because his “five ways” are all based on observed characteristics of the

world, and because he insisted that apologetic arguments based on reason could only yield probable conclusions. And surprisingly, C. Stephen Evans has argued that he can also be read as adhering to a kind of moderate, rational fideism, on the grounds that he “clearly affirms that faith requires some beliefs that are above reason.”³

Anselm of Canterbury is usually classified as a classical apologist because of his use of deductive, a priori reasoning in his ontological proof for God’s existence and in his argument for the necessity of the Incarnation. But Karl Barth’s thoughtful reinterpretation of his apologetic concludes that, for Anselm, “faith leading to understanding” means that only from within the standpoint of faith can the meaning and significance of the Christian doctrines be understood.

Of course, all Reformed apologists claim John Calvin as the forerunner of their apologetic tradition. Yet most also admit that in some ways he remained part of the classical tradition, notably in chapter 8 of book 1 of the *Institutes*, where he presented a traditional line of arguments defending the reliability of the Bible and its supernatural claims. This aspect of Calvin’s theology has enabled classical apologists of a Reformed theological persuasion, such as B. B. Warfield and R. C. Sproul, to defend their approach as consonant with his.⁴ Non-Reformed advocates of classical apologetics, such as Norman Geisler, also claim Calvin for their tradition.⁵ Barth also cites Calvin in support of his version of fideism, again acknowledging that Calvin sometimes fell back on traditional apologetics.

Blaise Pascal has been cited here and elsewhere as an early advocate of what later developed into fideism. As we noted in our analysis of his *Pensées*, however, in much of his argumentation Pascal advocated traditional apologetics, especially of a kind characteristic now of evidentialist apologetics.

These examples (many more could be given) illustrate that it is usually a mistake to speak of premodern apologists as consistent advocates of any one of the four approaches, especially the three nonclassical ones. They may also be cited in support of considering whether an approach that combines or integrates the four model approaches is desirable and achievable.

In the second half of the twentieth century, as the varying approaches began to gain greater distinctiveness and debates about their relative merits began to take place, several apologists attempted to develop a comprehensive approach that incorporated more than one of these models. Most often the focus was on developing a rapprochement between classical or evidentialist apologetics on the one side and Reformed apologetics, especially presuppositionalism, on the other. Four of the apologists we consider in this chapter took up that challenge. Recently C. Stephen Evans has sought to integrate fideism with the classical and evidentialist approaches; our chapter will conclude with a review of his approach.

Edward John Carnell

One of the first Christian apologists to advocate an approach that was partly presuppositional and partly evidentialist was Edward John Carnell (1919-1967). Indeed, Gordon Lewis's summary of Carnell's approach suggests that he sought to integrate all four of the approaches we have considered:

From Cornelius Van Til at Westminster Theological Seminary he took his starting point, the existence of the triune God of the Bible. However, this tenet is not an unquestioned presupposition for Carnell, but a hypothesis to be tested. His test of truth is threefold. At Wheaton College in the classes of Gordon H. Clark, Carnell found the test of non-contradiction. The test of fitness to empirical fact was championed by Edgar S.

Brightman at Boston University where Carnell earned his Ph.D. The requirement of relevance to personal experience became prominent during Carnell's Th.D. research at Harvard University in Søren Kierkegaard and Reinhold Niebuhr.⁶

Here we see respectively the approaches of Reformed apologetics (Van Til), classical apologetics (Clark, because of the emphasis on logic), evidentialism (Brightman, an unorthodox philosopher⁷), and fideism (Kierkegaard). Note that these are not the same “four distinctive and harmonious approaches” that Lewis earlier says are incorporated into Carnell's approach: “facts, values, psychology, and ethics.”⁸ Those four approaches stem from the four points of contact that dominate Carnell's four major apologetics treatises: reason (*An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* [1948]), values (*A Philosophy of the Christian Religion* [1952]), justice (*Christian Commitment: An Apologetic* [1957]), and love (*The Kingdom of Love and the Pride of Life* [1960]).⁹ Carnell himself described these four approaches in *Kingdom of Love*: “In my own books on apologetics I have consistently tried to build on some useful point of contact between the gospel and culture. In *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* the appeal was to the law of contradiction; in *A Philosophy of the Christian Religion* it was to values; and in *Christian Commitment* it was to the judicial sentiment. In this book I am appealing to the law of love.”¹⁰

Carnell was a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary from its founding in 1948 until his untimely death from an overdose of sleeping pills in 1967, to which he was evidently addicted as a result of clinical depression. (He was also president of the seminary from 1954 to 1959.) His emotional turmoil perhaps made him identify more sympathetically with Kierkegaard, and in fact he was one of the first American evangelicals to write a book about Kierkegaard's thought.¹¹ As the sequence of titles cited previously suggests, with the passing of time Carnell

came to place increasing emphasis and priority on the experiential and ethical dimensions of faith. However, his apologetic method remained essentially unchanged.¹²

CARNELL AND CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS

Carnell held a mixed view of what we are calling the classical approach to apologetics. On the one hand, he strongly emphasized the fundamental undeniability of deductive logic. The “law of contradiction [better known as the law of noncontradiction] is so basic . . . that it cannot be demonstrated. The only proof for the law is that nothing is meaningful without the law’s being presupposed” (*Introduction*, 57).¹³ Here Carnell uses a transcendental argument to prove the validity of the first principle of deductive logic in the same way that Van Til used one to prove the existence of the God of the Bible. Carnell’s argument, though, is another way of stating the argument—basic to classical apologetics—that logic must be valid because its denial is self-defeating.

On the other hand, Carnell rejected the idea that the theistic worldview could be deductively proved. The Bible offers no formal proof for God because “nothing significant is known of God until a person directly experiences him through fellowship” (*Philosophy*, 275). Aristotle’s “unmoved mover,” an impersonal God with which man cannot have fellowship, typifies what is wrong with formal proofs for God (*Philosophy*, 278-84). Thomas Aquinas’s five proofs for God, though deductively formulated (*Introduction*, 126-28), really assume an empiricism that cannot validly prove God’s existence. Carnell endorses Hume’s criticisms of these arguments: the empirical cannot prove the transcendent; the finite cannot prove the existence of the infinite; the diverse effects cannot prove that there is only one divine Cause; the

design in the universe cannot prove an absolutely good and perfect Designer (*Introduction*, 129-39).

In his later works Carnell rejects Aquinas's five proofs, not because they are invalid (he does not say they are or are not), but because they "are spiritually vapid. . . . The conclusion 'God exists' evokes no more spiritual interest than the conclusion 'Europe exists.'" A person who is convinced by such proofs may believe in God (James 2:19). "But he certainly does not believe very profoundly, for a profound knowledge of God presupposes a profound knowledge of sin. . . . A wretched man can intellectually assent to God's existence, but only a man of character can spiritually approach God's person" (*Commitment*, ix).

CARNELL AND EVIDENTIALISM

Carnell is much more sympathetic to the evidentialist approach. This is especially evident in the first part of *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*. In the preface to the fourth edition, he explains the point of the book: "This is the foundation thesis upon which this system of Christian apologetics is built: In the contest between the rational and the empirical schools of thought, a Christian must pitch his interests somewhere between the two extremes" (*Introduction*, 7).

Carnell finds this middle path in **systematic consistency**, the internal lack of contradiction in one's belief combined with the external agreement with all the facts of one's experience (56-62). (Although Carnell does not say so specifically, the concept comes from Brightman.)

According to Carnell, systematic consistency is the proper criterion by which Christianity may be proved true. He views Christianity as a hypothesis to be proved in much the same way a

scientist would seek to prove a theory by showing its systematic consistency in accounting for all the data. Christianity, for this purpose, is reduced to “one hypothesis—the existence of God Who has revealed Himself in Scripture.” This one hypothesis “can solve the problems of personal happiness, present a rational view of the universe, and give a basis for truth” (107).

In showing that the Christian hypothesis satisfies the requirement not only of “horizontal self-consistency” (108-109) but also “vertical fitting of the facts” (109), Carnell acknowledges “the fact that proof for the Christian faith, as proof for any world-view that is worth talking about, cannot rise above rational probability” (113). Christianity at its core is about historical facts (especially Jesus’ death and resurrection), and such facts cannot be proved with rational certainty (113-14). Carnell does not think this lack of rational certainty is a hindrance to faith; he contends that the believer who has an inner certainty and probable argument is better, not worse, off than the believer who has an inner certainty only. “One may be morally certain that God exists, and pray with full assurance, though the objective evidence is but rationally probable” (120).

The argument as we have summarized it to this point seems to place Carnell in the evidentialist tradition. Christianity is a hypothesis to be tested according to rational criteria of internal coherence and external fitting of the facts; the correlation of the hypothesis with the external facts will result at best in a conclusion of probability, not deductive certainty. Carnell even invites a critical comparison of the Bible with the historical facts: “Accept that revelation which, when examined, yields a system of thought which is horizontally self-consistent and which vertically fits the facts of history. . . . Bring on your revelations! Let them make peace with the law of contradiction and the facts of history, and they will deserve a rational man’s

assent. A careful examination of the Bible reveals [!] that it passes these stringent examinations *summa cum laude*” (178).

According to Carnell, the Christian proves the validity of the hypothesis that the God of the Bible exists “in the same way that the scientist proves the law of gravity.” That is, he shows that this assumption, or hypothesis, is “horizontally self-consistent” and that it “vertically fits the facts of life” (355). Here again, Carnell’s approach draws heavily on the evidentialist tradition, which self-consciously models apologetics after science.

The same method appears in Carnell’s later books, including *Christian Commitment*. In an important passage in that book, he states the basis on which the Christian “system” is to be considered verified and worthy of belief. “*Systems are chosen or rejected by reason of their power to explain areas of reality that a particular person finds important. . . . Systems are verified by the degree to which their major elements are consistent with one another and with the broad facts of history and nature. . . . Christianity is true because its major elements are consistent with one another and with the broad facts of history and nature*” (*Commitment*, 285-86).

Finally, an evidentialist method is explicit in the following passage from *The Kingdom of Love and the Pride of Life*:

A Christian is willing to accept the philosophy of evidences that men of ordinary intelligence accept when they go about their daily business. For example, such men believe that there was a man called Abraham Lincoln, and they believe because they feel that the evidences are sufficient. Historical claims are neither established nor refuted by science and philosophy. They can only be judged by the sort of common sense that takes pleasure in submitting to things as they are. (*Kingdom*, 148)

CARNELL AND REFORMED APOLOGETICS

If we were to stop at this point, we would seem to have presented a convincing case for classifying Carnell as an evidentialist. But we have passed over certain aspects of his argument that do not fit this model. Returning to his first and most influential work, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, we find that the “hypothesis” that the God of the Bible exists is not treated as a typical scientific or historical hypothesis. Because this is not merely one hypothesis among many in a system, but “the ultimate postulate” (*Introduction*, 89), the Christian hypothesis is actually “an assumption” that the Christian says must be made in order to have a proper knowledge of reality (91). Assumptions are inevitable in daily life and in science, which cannot avoid making worldview assumptions about the nature of knowledge, reality, and ethics (91-94). Carnell anticipates the criticism that he is arguing in a circle and replies that circular reasoning about ultimates is unavoidable:

The Christian begs the question by assuming the truth of God’s existence to establish that very existence. Indeed! This is true for establishing the validity of any ultimate. The truth of the law of contradiction must be assumed to prove the validity of that axiom. Nature must be assumed to prove nature. Strict demonstration of a first postulate is impossible, as Aristotle pointed out, for it leads either to infinite regress – or to circular reasoning. (101-102).

The above statement would seem to require some qualification of Gordon Lewis’s claim that “Carnell does not regard this starting point [of the God of the Bible] an axiom or an unquestionable presupposition.”¹⁴ Carnell, in fact, describes his starting point as an axiom that,

like the law of noncontradiction, must be assumed in order to be proved. This is precisely what Van Til and others mean by a “presupposition.”

It is true, though, that Carnell did not regard his axiomatic starting point as “unquestionable.” (Depending on what this means, neither did Van Til.) But if the existence of the God of the Bible is an ultimate assumption that cannot be demonstrated, how can it also be treated as an hypothesis to be questioned or tested? Carnell solves this problem by distinguishing the *logical* starting point of the Christian system, which would be the triune God of the Bible, from the **synoptic starting point**, the conceptual point from which the logical starting point can be proved (*Introduction*, 124-25). But this raises the question of a suitable synoptic starting point.

Carnell first considers whether such a starting point can be developed using an empirical method, as in the natural theology typified by Aquinas’s five proofs for God’s existence (126-28). As we have seen, he rejects this approach (129-39). Oddly, he holds these arguments to the standard of rational or deductive demonstration, despite having made a good case for the legitimacy of fact-based apologetic arguments that can only yield probable conclusions.

Carnell continues in similar fashion to critique “Thomistic empiricism,” concluding that “there are fewer difficulties which attend Christian rationalism than attend Christian empiricism” (151). By “Christian rationalism” Carnell does not mean the kind of rationalism that seeks to establish all knowledge on the foundation of logic and self-evident truths. Rather, he means a position that accepts the idea that the human mind possesses some knowledge of God a priori as a result of our creation in God’s image (151 n. 20). It is in this innate knowledge of God that Carnell locates his synoptic starting point. We have, he argues, innate knowledge of the true, the good, and the beautiful, and of the self as existent and finite; only the existence of the God who

made us with this innate knowledge can account for it (153-68). In knowing truth, for example, he says “we know what God is, *for God is truth.*” “This argument for God does not constitute a demonstration; rather, it is an analysis. By the very nature of the case, a fulcrum able to support the weight of a proof for God would have to be God Himself. God gets in the way of all demonstration of Deity, for His existence is the *sine qua non* for all demonstration. Proof for God is parallel to proof for logic; logic must be used to prove logic” (159).

In other words, the proof for God is a transcendental argument—the very kind championed by Van Til and other presuppositionalists in his tradition. Yet at the same time Carnell denies that this argument constitutes a “demonstration of Deity.” Van Til, on the other hand, strongly claimed that the transcendental argument constituted an absolutely sound and irrefutable demonstration of God’s existence.

With knowledge of these innate truths, Carnell does allow that nature can in a sense furnish knowledge of God, but only in a heavily qualified sense. On the grounds that one of the innate truths we possess is the knowledge of God, he concludes: “Because we *know* God’s existence and nature in our heart, we *recognize* Him in His handiwork” (169). Once we realize our innate knowledge of God, we will recognize God in all his works. The evidences that served as the basis of the Thomistic proofs can be recognized as evidence of God only if we already know that God exists and what he is like. “This is not a formal demonstration of God’s existence: it is simply proof by coherence. The existence of God is the self-consistent hypothesis that the mind must entertain when it views all of the evidence which experience provides” (170).

Unfortunately, because of sin people do not know God and do not recognize him in his works (171-72). This fact necessitates God acting to reveal himself to us in a special way; but how shall we recognize God’s revelation among all the pretenders? Here Carnell returns to his

affirmation of systematic consistency as the test of truth (178). Here and in the rest of the book, though, he shows that it is only a test *retrospectively*. That is, having accepted the “hypothesis” of the God of the Bible as the key to our worldview, we can examine this hypothesis and see that it does account for truth, ethics, and beauty, for the human self and the natural world. Carnell does not propose that non-Christians can or should, from their perspective, apply the test of systematic consistency to determine if Christianity is true.

So, in a later chapter Carnell argues that, while Christians and non-Christians are able to communicate with each other, there is no “common ground between Christianity and non-Christianity” viewed as systems (211-12). Specifically, there is no metaphysical common ground between the Christian and non-Christian. “God is the logical starting point for the Christian, and non-God is the logical starting point for the non-Christian” (215). This is a crucial point of agreement with Van Til, Clark, and other Reformed apologists.

In Carnell’s concluding chapter he explains that the basic philosophical problem is the question of the unifying meaning or significance of the many facts of our experience—the problem of “the one and the many” (353-54). This problem played a major role in Van Til’s philosophy and apologetic as well.

But by the one assumption, the existence of the God Who has revealed Himself in Scripture, the Christian finds that he can solve the problem of the one within the many, and so make sense out of life. . . . Christ, as Creator, is the Author of the many, and, as Logos, is the principle of the One, the Author of the meaning of the many. . . . Christ is the truth, for He is the Logos, the synthesizing principle and the true meaning of all reality. (354)

The presuppositionalist aspect of Carnell's apologetic is most prominent in his first work, but it does surface in his later works as well. For example, he wrote that "defending Christianity by an appeal to evidences that are accessible to human self-sufficiency" was "futile" (*Commitment*, viii). The qualification here of his own appeal to evidences is one that Reformed apologists have insisted is essential.

Apologists outside the Reformed apologetic tradition tend to identify Carnell as a presuppositionalist. Norman Geisler, for example, says "Carnell was hypothetical or presuppositional . . . in his approach, in contrast to a classical apologetic method."¹⁵ Presuppositionalists themselves, on the other hand, have offered strikingly varied evaluations of Carnell's apologetic. Van Til himself wrote against it, arguing that Carnell had really adopted the traditional method of apologetics. One of Van Til's most famous illustrations is a mock three-way dialogue between "Mr. White" (a Reformed apologist), "Mr. Black" (a non-Christian), and "Mr. Grey" (a traditional apologist). Mr. Grey was modeled on Carnell.¹⁶ Van Til acknowledges that "Carnell frequently argues as we would expect a Reformed apologist to argue," but continues, "By and large, however, he represents the evangelical rather than the Reformed method in apologetics."¹⁷ Van Til draws attention to what we have identified as the "evidentialist" thread in Carnell's apologetic to document his charge.

Greg Bahnsen strongly supports Van Til's assessment of Carnell. According to Bahnsen, "the heart of the matter" is that Carnell's "synoptic starting point" is "the *epistemological* criterion of systematic consistency for testing truth-claims," and this criterion is utilized as an epistemological common ground between Christians and non-Christians.¹⁸ This interpretation would seem to be incorrect: Carnell's synoptic starting point is the innate knowledge of God all human beings have by virtue of their creation in the image of God (*Introduction*, 151-68).

John Frame takes a rather different view of Carnell. He notes that Carnell's *Introduction* "is, from a Van Tillian perspective, a curious volume. It is highly eclectic, hard to pin down as to its specific apologetic approach. Carnell uses a lot of language that is recognizably, even distinctively, Van Tillian. . . . There is also language, both in this book and in Carnell's other writings, that almost seems intended to offend Van Til."¹⁹ Frame documents some of the veiled swipes Carnell took at Van Til's approach, as well as Van Til's unveiled, sharp criticisms of Carnell. He then seeks to isolate the real issues dividing the two apologists, concluding that Carnell made "serious errors of presentation" by speaking of systematic consistency as a test of truth, even of Scripture. The result is an unclear and misleading exposition of apologetics that, while intending to uphold a presuppositional stance, compromises that stance. But Frame also concludes that Van Til had "rather drastically overstated" the problems with Carnell's apologetic.²⁰

CARNELL AND FIDEISM

Although Carnell was by no means a fideist, in his later works he drew heavily from and expressed great appreciation for Kierkegaard, while at the same time critiquing his fideist position. In *A Philosophy of the Christian Religion* Carnell proposes "to trace through a set of typical value options in life," giving reasons why in each case one ought to move up to the higher value commitment, the highest of which is faith in Christ (*Philosophy*, 5). This line of reasoning is reminiscent of Kierkegaard's "stages" in which people move from lower to higher forms of religious commitment. Carnell explains that he is not attempting a direct proof of Christianity here, but the indirect proof that if Christianity is not true, despair would seem to be the result: "It is not an attempted demonstration of Christianity in the conventional sense. The

nearest that proof will be enjoyed is in the establishing of a dialectic of despair as the alternative to the Christian option. But in the last analysis there is no proof of any pudding apart from the eating” (45).

Kierkegaardian themes abound here, and they are developed throughout the book. Logical positivism, which claims that we can have no knowledge of the transcendent realities studied in metaphysics or the transcendent values studied in ethics (133-78), must be rejected because in fact no one can live as if such values are unreal. “When an epistemology forces us to deny in theory what we must live by in fact, it is as inadequate as it is inconsequential” (178). Rationalism, however, is not the answer either, because it settles for knowledge of things instead of the higher knowledge of persons, that is, relational knowledge or fellowship (179-224). The gods of the philosophers are unsatisfying; deism, pantheism, and the finite God of Brightman and others all fail to yield a God with whom we can have fellowship and in whom we can fully trust (286-323). The only truly satisfying knowledge of God is to be found in Jesus Christ. “Christ is Immanuel: God with us. And the proof is an examination of the life he lived and the death he died” (324).

Despite the strong affinities of this line of reasoning with the thought of Kierkegaard, Carnell argues that personal knowledge of God is not to be found in *existentialism*. Locating the way to knowledge of God in subjectivism has the unacceptable consequence of rejecting an objective grounding of that knowledge in evidence (449-507). Here Carnell focuses explicitly on Kierkegaard, explaining where he agrees and disagrees with the melancholy Dane. Rather than “a subjective ‘leap’ of faith,” the Christian’s response to the gospel is a “cordial trust in Jesus Christ [that] is always grounded in reasonable evidences. . . . Knowledge by acquaintance is still

an act of rationality” (449). A person can properly have fellowship with God “only when he is first rationally convinced that it is *God* whom he is fellowshiping with” (450).

On the other hand, besides truth as reality itself and truth as “systematic consistency or propositional correspondence to reality,” Carnell identifies a “third locus of truth” (450): correspondence to the perfect character of God, a correspondence embodied, as he says in John 14:6, absolutely in Jesus Christ (451-52). Carnell acknowledges that Kierkegaard “is a powerful apologist of the third locus of truth” (457). But while Kierkegaard’s defense of truth as inward character is “profoundly convincing,” Carnell questions his “attempt to secure inward truth by opposing it to objective evidences” (473). In doing so, he laid the foundation not only for neo-orthodox theology but also for atheistic existentialism (480-500). “Existentialism has ended in complete metaphysical nihilism” (500).

In *Christian Commitment* Carnell expands on the third locus of truth. Besides ontological truth (what is) and propositional truth (accurate statements about what is), there is “the third kind of truth,” which is “*truth by personal rectitude*” (*Commitment*, 14-16). This kind of truth requires in turn a “third method of knowing,” which Carnell calls “*knowledge by moral self-acceptance*” (22). He acknowledges that he learned of this third way from Kierkegaard: “It is a pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to Kierkegaard” (73). But Kierkegaard, in his zeal to oppose the formalism of Hegel’s system, went too far by attacking systematic consistency and advocating absurdity as the precondition of faith. “Whatever else faith may be, it is at least a ‘resting of the mind in the sufficiency of the evidences’” (76).

Despite his criticism of Kierkegaard’s rejection of systems, by the end of the book he is issuing some cautions about systems himself. “Whenever a systematic theologian becomes too systematic, he ends up falsifying some aspect of revelation. It is extremely difficult, if not

impossible, to coax all the data of Scripture into neat harmony” (285). No system that human beings can construct will be without problems.

Carnell concludes by insisting that “apologetics *has* its limits. . . . God is a living person, not a metaphysical principle. Evidences may point to God, but God himself must be encountered in the dynamic of personal fellowship. Only the Holy Spirit can illuminate the evidences” (302).

CARNELL AND INTEGRATION

As we have seen, Carnell’s apologetic has strong connections to three of the four apologetic approaches. The Reformed and evidentialist approaches dominate *Introduction to Christian Apologetics*; Carnell’s synthesis of them is augmented by elements of fideism in his subsequent works. Not surprisingly, he refused to pigeonhole his own approach into any specific camp. “There is no ‘official’ or ‘normative’ approach to apologetics. At least I have never found one. The approach is governed by the climate of the times. This means, as it were, that an apologist must play it by ear” (*Kingdom*, 5).

According to Carnell, the practical significance of this fact is that today Christian apologetics must emphasize moral and spiritual evidences over the more traditional kinds of evidence.

Since apologetics is an art and not a science, there is no “official” way to go about defending the Christian faith. The defense must answer to the spirit of the times. . . . The climate of our modern world is dynamic and existential. People speak of Kierkegaard’s “individual,” of “confrontation” and “crisis.” This is why we have sought to impress the contemporary mind with evidences drawn from man’s marvelous powers of moral and rational self-transcendence. (*Commitment*, vii-viii)

Francis A. Schaeffer

Francis August Schaeffer IV (1912-1984) was one of the most beloved Christian apologists of the twentieth century. His influence was so great that *Newsweek* once called him “the guru of fundamentalism.”²¹ There are many reasons for Schaeffer’s popularity, but two stand out.

First and foremost, Schaeffer embodied the ideal of an apologist who sought to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). He talked to people, showed a genuine interest in them, and in his teaching on apologetics emphasized the importance of approaching non-Christians with compassion as individuals in God’s image. L’Abri, his retreat center in the Swiss Alps that has been duplicated in several countries, was a place where people in spiritual and intellectual anguish could go and be heard and helped.

Second, Schaeffer inspired evangelical Christians to broaden their approach to apologetics beyond the usual disciplines of philosophy, theology, science, and history—which have dominated our own discussion in this book—to encompass ethics and the arts. “Cultural apologetics” touches most people more profoundly than traditional forms, because it connects with them in those areas of life in which personality is more deeply involved.

Francis Schaeffer²² grew up in a blue-collar family in Germantown, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia. The son of liberal Presbyterians, he read the Bible as a teenager and was surprised to find that it contained answers to the most momentous questions in life. He gave his life to Christ and decided, against his father’s wishes, to pursue the ministry. While in college he began spending Sunday afternoons teaching children at a nearby African-American church. While visiting home on one occasion, he attended his family’s church, where a guest minister

was openly attacking the Bible and the deity of Christ. Schaeffer stood up to protest, and then a young woman named Edith Seville also stood up and offered an intelligent defense of the Christian position. Edith, the daughter of missionaries to China, introduced Francis to the apologetic writings of J. Gresham Machen and other professors at Westminster Theological Seminary whom she had met in her parents' home.

After college Francis married Edith and enrolled at Westminster Seminary in 1935. There he studied under Cornelius Van Til, who was still developing his presuppositional system of apologetics. The following year the newly formed Presbyterian Church in America (now known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church), which Machen had founded after he was ousted from the mainline Presbyterian church, suffered a split. The splinter group, which was called the Bible Presbyterian Church, favored a premillennial eschatology and differed in other ways from the more staunchly Calvinist parent body. Schaeffer transferred to the new group's Faith Theological Seminary. He was a member of its first graduating class in 1938 and became its first ordained minister, serving as a pastor for several years in Pennsylvania and Missouri. In St. Louis he and Edith established Children for Christ, which eventually became a worldwide ministry.

In 1948 the Schaeffers moved to Switzerland to serve as missionaries. Postwar Europe was in spiritual crisis, and in 1951 Francis experienced his own spiritual crisis, reexamining the truth claims of Christianity and gaining a more profound realization of the importance of holiness and love in the Christian life. During the next few years young people began coming to Schaeffer's home to discuss their doubts and to learn about Christianity. As they returned home, they spread the word, and soon the Schaeffers found themselves engaged full-time in a ministry

of personal evangelism and apologetics from their home, which they called *l'Abri* (“the Shelter”), to people from all over the world.

Beginning in the 1960s Francis was invited to speak at conferences and at leading colleges and universities in Europe and America. Out of his lectures were developed his most influential books, beginning with *Escape from Reason* and *The God Who Is There*, both of which were published in 1968 by InterVarsity Press. Schaeffer regarded these two books and the 1972 book *He Is There and He Is Not Silent* as a trilogy that formed the foundation of his published work. He published ten other books during this period, and went on to publish six more in the next four years, culminating in *How Should We Then Live?* (1976). This book, which was also made into a film series, offered a sweeping overview of the history of culture and the different worldviews that emerged from the ancient Greeks, the early Christian church, the medieval church, the Renaissance and Reformation, and the modern West.

Schaeffer published just two more books, and because of them he is remembered as a prophetic voice of protest as much as he is an apologist or evangelist. In *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* (1979), co-authored with C. Everett Koop, Schaeffer lamented the evil of abortion in America and warned that euthanasia was not far behind. Schaeffer was one of the principal figures who made abortion a central issue for American evangelicals during the last two decades of the twentieth century. In *A Christian Manifesto* (1981) he warned that America had moved so far away from a Christian worldview that Christians might find themselves in situations where they had to practice civil disobedience. Some evangelicals in the pro-life movement concluded that the time Schaeffer had spoken about had arrived, and that belief led to the practice of civil disobedience in their protests at abortion clinics.

These last two books were written and published while Schaeffer was battling cancer. Realizing that his life was coming to an end, he reedited his books into a five-volume set published in 1982 entitled *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer*.²³ His final literary effort was *Great Evangelical Disaster*, published just before he died in 1984. In this book he delivered a stinging indictment of the state of the evangelical church in America, warning that ethical and theological compromise was becoming the order of the day.

Schaeffer's apologetic method has been the subject of considerable debate, and was even while he was alive. Near the end of his life he commented ruefully, "I have been mystified at times about what has been said concerning 'Schaeffer's apologetics'" (1:176). Within three years of his death, four major books appeared evaluating his thought and offering markedly different analyses of his apologetic approach.²⁴ This diversity may best be explained on the view that Schaeffer had developed a distinctive apologetic that has important affinities with more than one of the four standard approaches.

SCHAEFFER AND CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS

Schaeffer distinguished his approach from classical apologetics but did not criticize that approach. As he saw it, classical apologetics was effective because most non-Christians accepted the elemental laws of logic and the reality of absolutes (though not the true absolute of God). Modern man's lack of confidence in logic and his relativistic view of truth make it ineffective to conduct apologetics without challenging such epistemological issues. "The use of classical apologetics before this shift took place was effective only because non-Christians were functioning, on the surface, on the same presuppositions, even if they had an inadequate base for

them. In classical apologetics though, presuppositions were rarely analyzed, discussed or taken into account” (1:7).

Schaeffer’s apologetic retained some elements of the classical model. As in classical apologetics, he advocated a two-stage defense that moves from God as Creator to Christ as Savior. “We must never forget that the first part of the gospel is not ‘Accept Christ as Savior,’ but ‘God is there’” (1:144). Modern people are lost in two senses: they are “lost evangelically” in the sense that they are sinners without Christ, but they are also “lost in the modern sense” that their lives are without meaning. “This lostness is answered by the existence of a Creator. So Christianity does not begin with ‘accept Christ as Savior.’ Christianity begins with ‘In the beginning God created the heavens (the total of the cosmos) and the earth.’ That is the answer to the twentieth century and its lostness. At this point we are then ready to explain the second lostness (the original cause of all lostness) and the answer in the death of Christ” (1:181).

Schaeffer’s argument for the existence of a Creator is most fully set out in *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*. His starting point in this book, which argues for “the philosophic necessity of God’s being there and not being silent,” is basically the same as in the cosmological argument. “No one said it better than Jean-Paul Sartre, who said that the basic philosophic question is that something is there rather than nothing being there” (1:277). As in classical apologetics, Schaeffer analyzes this question in terms of the basic alternative worldviews and the answers they give to the question of existence or being.

One might conclude “that there is no logical, rational answer—all is finally chaotic, irrational, and absurd” (1:280). Schaeffer points out that any attempt to express this view is self-defeating: one cannot make a meaningful statement about all being meaningless, or communicate

the idea that there is nothing to communicate (1:281). So this is really a non-answer to the problem.

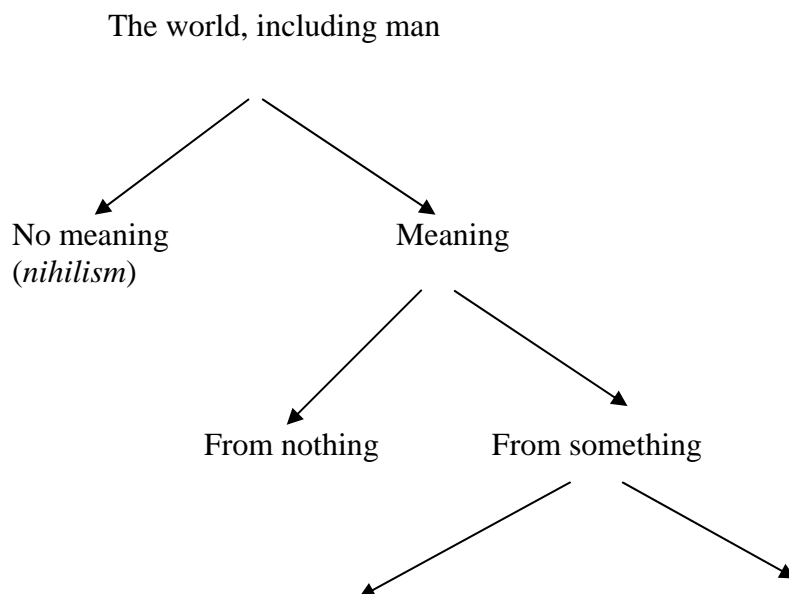
The possible answers to why something rather than nothing is there boil down logically to four. “(1) Once there was absolutely nothing, and now there is something; (2) everything began with an impersonal something; (3) everything began with a personal something; and (4) there is and always has been a dualism” (2:10; cf. 1:282-284). The first answer is actually quite rare once the point is pressed that the beginning must be from an absolute nothing—what Schaeffer calls “*nothing* nothing” (1:282). One is reminded of Norman Geisler’s version of the cosmological argument in which he emphasizes that “nothing comes from nothing.” Schaeffer also dismisses dualism as an answer, since it inevitably reduces to one of the other two remaining options (1:284 n. 1; 2:10).

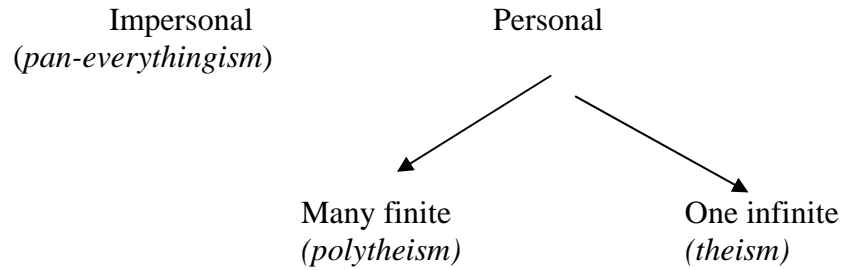
By far the most popular answer among non-Christians is that everything began from some impersonal beginning. Often this is articulated as *pantheism*, but Schaeffer argues that this term is misleading because it smuggles in the idea of a personal God (“theism”) when in fact the pantheist actually holds to an impersonal view of the beginning. He prefers to call this answer “*pan-everythingism*” (1:283). Pan-everythingism is thus the same view, whether it is expressed in mystical religious terms or in modern scientific terms in which everything is reduced to fundamental physical particles. This view founders because it leaves us with no basis for attributing purpose or meaning to anything, including man: “If we begin with an impersonal, we cannot then have some form of teleological concept. No one has ever demonstrated how time plus chance, beginning with an impersonal, can produce the needed complexity of the universe, let alone the personality of man. No one has given us a clue to this” (1:283).

As Clark Pinnock points out, this appears to be “a rudimentary form of the teleological argument.”²⁵ Schaeffer’s argument here broadens beyond the usual confines of both the cosmological and teleological arguments, integrating into one argument the need to account for the origin of diversity, meaning, and morality as well as being.

This leaves as the only remaining possible answer that ultimately everything owes its existence to “a personal beginning” (1:284). This is an answer that gives meaning to ourselves as persons (1:285). This personal beginning cannot be finite gods (they are not “big enough” to provide an adequate answer), but must be a personal-infinite God (1:286-287). Schaeffer here follows a strategy similar to that employed by Geisler: set forth the basic worldviews (atheism, dualism, pantheism, finite theism, theism) and show that all of them except theism are irrational. As in classical apologetics, Schaeffer concludes that a worldview in which everything was created by an infinite-personal God is the *only* worldview that provides a rationally adequate answer to the question of why there is something (1:288).

We may represent the structure of Schaeffer’s argument as follows:





The similarities to the cosmological argument are apparent. It is with some justice that Robert L. Reymond calls it “the old cosmological argument of Thomas in new garb.”²⁶ In addition, the argument is structured using the law of noncontradiction as the basic principle, a feature characteristic of the classical approach.

SCHAEFFER AND EVIDENTIALISM

While few if any students of Schaeffer would conclude that the classical model dominated his approach to apologetics, some do contend that he is properly identified as an evidentialist. Reymond includes Schaeffer (as well as Carnell) in his chapter on “empirical apologetics.” He recognizes that Schaeffer’s apologetic has presuppositional elements (of which Reymond approves), but concludes that he compromised that approach by using “an empiricist verification test of truth.”²⁷

There is indeed some basis for interpreting Schaeffer as advocating a verificational approach to defending Christian belief. The premise here is that Scripture deals with not only “religious” matters “but also the cosmos and history, which are open to verification” (1:120). He suggests “that scientific proof, philosophical proof and religious proof follow the same rules.”

After the question has been defined, in each case proof consists of two steps:

A. The theory must be noncontradictory and must give an answer to the phenomenon in question.

B. We must be able to live consistently with our theory. (1:121)

Christianity is proved by the fact that it, and it alone, “does offer a nonself-contradictory answer which explains the phenomena and which can be lived with, both in life and in scholarly pursuits” (1:122).

A couple of key elements of the evidentialist approach are present in this passage. First, Schaeffer claims that proof in apologetics should follow the same rules as in science. Second, he specifies that for a theory to be considered proved it must not only be logically self-consistent but also consistent with the “phenomenon in question.”

Schaeffer invites non-Christians to examine the Christian worldview in the light of every kind of phenomenon, including nature, history, human nature, culture, and ethics, confident that Christianity will be proved consistent with the facts. We can only do this, he contends, if we “have faced the question, ‘Is Christianity true?’ for ourselves” (1:140). On the basis of John 20:30-31 Schaeffer affirms, “we are not asked to believe until we have faced the question as to whether this is true on the basis of the space-time evidence.” Likewise, the prologue to Luke’s Gospel (Luke 1:1-4) shows that its “history is open to verification by eyewitnesses” (1:154). Schaeffer argues that if we deny that the Scriptures are “open to verification,” we have no basis to say that people should choose to believe Christianity rather than something else (1:259). Christianity, he affirms, offers to modern man “a unified answer to life on the basis of what is open to verification and discussion” (1:263).

The non-Christian who denies that God can speak to us as he has done in the Bible must, Schaeffer warns, “hold to the uniformity of natural causes in the closed system, against all the evidence (and I do insist it is against the evidence)” (1:325). Such a presupposition is not “viable in the light of what we know. . . . It fails to explain man. It fails to explain the universe and its form. It fails to stand up in the area of epistemology.” On the other hand, Schaeffer affirms that the Christian presupposition that God can and has spoken to man is reasonable in light of what we already know. “In my earlier books and in the previous chapters of this book we have considered whether this presupposition is in fact acceptable, or even reasonable, not upon the basis of Christian faith, but upon the basis of what we know concerning man and the universe as it is” (1:326).

Schaeffer therefore invites people to consider both the closed-system and open-system views of the universe, “and to consider which of these fits the facts of what is” (1:326). This “is a question of which of these two sets of presuppositions really and empirically meets the facts as we look about us in the world” (1:327).

Gordon Lewis argues that we need to distinguish between an inductive, empirical approach, exemplified by Montgomery, Pinnock, and others, and a verificational approach, exemplified above all by Carnell. According to Lewis, Schaeffer employed such a verificational method. “The *verificational*, or scientific, method addresses a problem by starting with tentative hypotheses. . . . Then the verification method subjects these hypotheses to testing and confirmation or disconfirmation by the coherence of their account with the relevant lines of data.”²⁸

We would contend that Lewis’s verificationalism is just as much a type of evidentialism as the inductivism of such apologists as Montgomery and Pinnock. Few if any evidentialists

operate according to the naive inductivism that supposes the apologist can begin with only the bare facts and no epistemology or hypothesis as to how the facts are to be explained. As we saw when we analyzed evidentialism, its essential feature is not a pure inductivism but an approach to justifying truth claims based primarily on empirical facts.

There is, however, one major difference between Schaeffer's apologetic and both Lewis's verificationism and other forms of evidentialism. All evidentialists agree that the Christian apologetic properly concludes with the claim that the Christian beliefs defended have been shown to be probable, not certain. To be sure, Lewis argues that Schaeffer did hold to this probabilistic understanding of apologetics, even if he did not articulate it as clearly as he might: "No, Schaeffer's conclusion is not justified by a technically logical implication, but by a highly probable practical necessity, given the alleged lack of other hypotheses to test and the improbabilities of the non-Christian options. . . . A more precisely worded verificationist like Trueblood or Carnell would state the point in terms of probabilities."²⁹

However, Lewis's interpretation is rather difficult to sustain in the light of some specific statements Schaeffer made about probability.

Those who object to the position that there are good, adequate, and sufficient reasons to know with our reason that Christianity is true are left with a probability position at some point. At some point and in some terminology they are left with a leap of faith. This does not mean that they are not Christians, but it means that they are offering one more probability to twentieth-century relativistic people to whom everything is only probability. They are offering one more leap of faith without reason (or with the severe diminishing of reason) to a generation that has heard a thousand leaps of faith proposed

in regard to the crucial things of human life. I would repeat that what is left is that Christianity is a probability. (1:181)

Note that according to Schaeffer, if one concludes that reason can only show that Christianity is probable, the lack of certainty that results must be compensated with “a leap of faith.” Clearly, Schaeffer saw this as unacceptable. By “good, adequate, and sufficient reasons” he did not mean arguments sufficient to convince one that Christianity was likely or probably true, but sufficient “to *know* with our reason that Christianity is true” (emphasis added). Apologists must maintain that Christianity is not merely the best answer to the big questions of life, but that it is the *only* answer.

Schaeffer’s rejection of probability and his frequent reference to presuppositions suggest that he might have some affinity with presuppositionalism, to which we turn next.

SCHAEFFER AND REFORMED APOLOGETICS

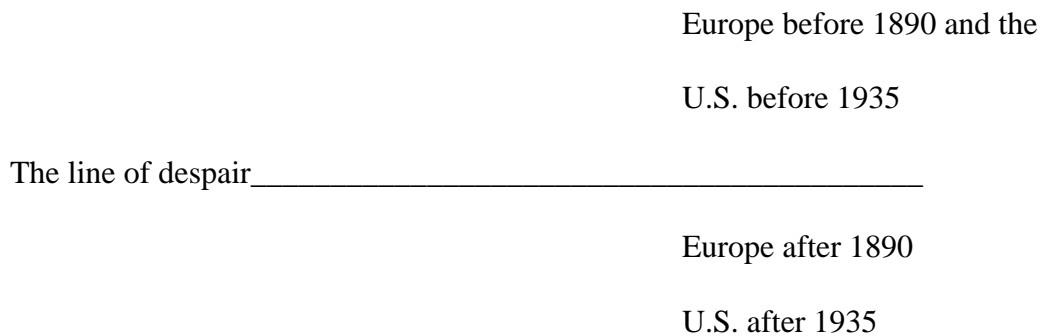
Like Carnell, Schaeffer was a student of Van Til, and like Carnell, he is commonly identified as a presuppositionalist by classical and evidential apologists and as an evidentialist by Reformed apologists. On the one hand, Schaeffer sometimes seems to express himself as only a presuppositionalist would. For example, speaking of the growing difficulty of communicating the gospel in a relativistic culture, Schaeffer states in a subheading, “*Presuppositional Apologetics Would Have Stopped the Decay*” (1:7). The question, of course, is what Schaeffer meant by “presuppositional.” On the other hand, Schaeffer denied being either a presuppositionalist or an evidentialist: “I’m neither. I’m not an evidentialist or a presuppositionalist. You’re trying to press me into the category of a theological apologist, which I’m not. I’m not an academic, scholastic apologist. My interest is in evangelism.”³⁰

The issue, though, is not in what setting Schaeffer employs his apologetic method, but rather what that apologetic method is. For that reason the above answer (which, it should be noted, was an off-the-cuff reply to a question in a public meeting) is less than satisfying. Still, it is clear enough that Schaeffer was unwilling to be classified as a presuppositionalist without qualification, and that fact should be taken into account. Evidently what he meant was that he did not wish to limit himself exclusively to the presuppositional approach. On one occasion he met with Van Til and Edmund Clowney, then president of Westminster Seminary, in Clowney's office to discuss their differences. Clowney reported that Schaeffer agreed with Van Til at every turn, even praising Van Til's summary of his apologetic as "the most beautiful statement on apologetics I've ever heard. I wish there had been a tape recorder here. I would make it required listening for all I'Abri workers."³¹

Schaeffer seems to have been indebted to at least *three* streams of Reformed thought. The first is the theology of Old Princeton. Forrest Baird (who seems generally critical of this influence) has pointed out that Schaeffer followed Hodge and the other Old Princetonians in their emphasis on the inerrancy of Scripture, their critical stance toward revivalism and pietism, and their opposition to liberalism.³²

The second is the analysis of Western history and culture produced by the Kuyperian philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd, according to whom the biblical "ground motive" of creation-fall-redemption was supplanted in medieval thought by an irrational dualism between nature and grace. The biblical motive was revived in Reformation theology, the rejection of which led to the irrational dualism in modern thought between nature and freedom.³³ This analysis of the history of Western thought underlies Schaeffer's own sweeping treatments, notably in *The God Who Is There*, *Escape from Reason*, and *How Should We Then Live?*

Schaeffer's use of Dooyeweerd's analysis is creative and distinctive: according to Schaeffer, the modern dualism eventually broke down and resulted in modern man crossing what he calls **the line of despair**. This line represents the transition from a culture in which people lived "with their romantic notions of absolutes (though with no sufficient logical basis)" to one in which many people have abandoned belief in absolutes and so have despaired of finding any rational basis for meaning or purpose in life. "This side of the line, all is changed" (1:8).



Schaeffer qualifies this schema, explaining that the shift across the line of despair "spread gradually" in three ways. First, it spread from one geographical area to another—from the Continent to Britain to America. Second, it spread from one segment of society to another—from the intellectuals to the workers to the middle class. Third, it spread from one discipline to another—from philosophy to the arts to theology (1:8-9).

Schaeffer argues that modern man, having crossed the line of despair, takes a leap of faith to affirm that life has meaning and purpose because human beings cannot live without such meaning (1:61). This "leap" results in a two-storied view of the world. The "downstairs" is the world of rationality, logic, and order; it is the realm of fact, in which statements have content. The "upstairs" is the world of meaning, value, and hope; it is the realm of faith, in which

statements express a blind, contentless optimism about life (1:57-58, 63-64). “*The downstairs has no relationship to meaning: the upstairs has no relationship to reason*” (1:58). The downstairs is studied in science and history; the upstairs is considered in theology (1:83-85). According to Schaeffer, this two-storied view of the world is what makes liberal theology possible: the liberal excuses theological statements from any normal expectation that they will satisfy rational criteria of meaning and truth because they are upper-story statements.

The third stream of Reformed influence on Schaeffer is the presuppositional apologetics of Van Til.³⁴ While Van Til himself seems to have regarded his influence on Schaeffer as less than adequate, there is clear evidence that Schaeffer learned a great deal from him. Recently William Edgar—who was converted to Christ in a conversation with Schaeffer at L’Abri, later studied apologetics under Van Til, and is now a professor of apologetics at Westminster Seminary—argued that Schaeffer was much closer to Van Til’s position than Van Til recognized.³⁵ He notes that both apologists

- emphasized presuppositions,
- argued that non-Christians could not give a unified account of reality,
- opposed both rationalism and irrationalism but not rationality,
- diagnosed man’s ignorance of the truth as a moral rather than a metaphysical problem,
- advocated an indirect method of apologetics in which one assumes the non-Christian’s position for the sake of argument, and
- affirmed both divine sovereignty and human responsibility.³⁶

But Edgar also sees two crucial differences between the two. The first is Schaeffer’s emphasis (which we have previously considered) that Christianity’s consistency with the way

things are provides verification of its truth. Edgar agrees with Van Til that in this regard Schaeffer was naively assuming that non-Christians agree with Christians as to the way things are and as to what is consistent with things as they are. However, Edgar qualifies this criticism by suggesting that Schaeffer's intent was not to concede to non-Christians that they had an adequate understanding of the way things are, but to acknowledge that by God's "common grace" non-Christians are enabled to express some truth.³⁷

Second, according to Edgar, "presuppositions" are not understood in Schaeffer's system in the same way as in Van Til's. This is a more important question, since if Schaeffer means something different by the term *presuppositionalism* he cannot properly be termed a presuppositionalist in Van Til's line.

Edgar points out that for Van Til the unbeliever's presuppositions in every age and culture are radically different from those of believers. For Schaeffer, on the other hand, premodern unbelievers and believers had the "shared presupposition" that there are absolutes. Modern unbelievers no longer share this presupposition with believers, now that they have crossed "the line of despair."³⁸ However, this is not exactly what Schaeffer says. He says that before the line of despair, "everyone [that is, all non-Christians] would have been working on much the same presuppositions, which *in practice seemed to accord with* the Christian's own presuppositions" (1:6, emphasis added). Note that Schaeffer does not actually say that non-Christians had the *same* presuppositions as Christians, but that their presuppositions "in practice seemed to accord" with those of Christians. What Schaeffer appears to be saying is that non-Christians and Christians before the line of despair had different presuppositions, but in practice these did not seem to interfere with communication in the way the non-Christian presupposition of relativism does today.

Edgar also repeats Van Til's criticism that for Schaeffer a presupposition "is nothing much more than a *hypothesis*, or a starting point." That is, Edgar understands Schaeffer to view Christian presuppositions as hypotheses regarded as possibly true and subject to verification rather than, as Van Til held, transcendental truths to be defended by showing "the impossibility of the contrary." Edgar writes, "At bottom, then, Schaeffer's view of presuppositions does not allow him truly to be transcendental. Rather, he uses presuppositions as a kind of adjunct to various traditional methods in apologetic argument."³⁹

What Van Til and Edgar identify as a weakness in Schaeffer's apologetic, Gordon Lewis identifies as a strength. As we saw earlier, Lewis also understands Schaeffer to present the Christian position as a tentative hypothesis verified by its internal and factual coherence. Schaeffer's emphasis on the verifiability of Christianity does lend some support to this interpretation. However, in general he presented Christianity as anything but a tentatively held position. His consistent claim is that no one can even make sense of being, truth, rationality, knowledge, personality, or morality on any other basis than that of the infinite-personal God revealed in the Bible. "No one stresses more than I that people have no final answers in regard to truth, morals or epistemology without God's revelation in the Bible" (1:184).

For Schaeffer the (transcendentally) necessary truth of Christianity is not incompatible with its verifiability. Although Christianity is absolutely true, non-Christians must still move in their minds from rejection of Christian presuppositions to acceptance of them. When Schaeffer assures non-Christians that they are not expected to believe and accept those presuppositions until they have verified them, by "verify" he means precisely to look and see that Christianity does give the only adequate answers to the big questions.

SCHAEFFER AND FIDEISM

Like most conservative evangelicals, Francis Schaeffer was very critical of the philosophy of Kierkegaard and the theology of Barth and contemporary neoevangelicals. In particular, he frequently criticized the Kierkegaardian notion of a “leap” of faith. The index to Schaeffer’s complete works lists over fifty references to the term in the foundational trilogy of books, and it appears sporadically throughout the other volumes (5:555). One might expect, then, that he would have little or no affinity for the fideist approach to apologetics. Yet in fact there is a strong element of fideism (as we have defined it) in Schaeffer’s method.

First of all, it is worth noting that Schaeffer qualified his criticisms of both Kierkegaard and Barth. Kierkegaard is an important figure because he is the father of both secular and religious existentialism (1:14-16). Yet his writings, Schaeffer observed, “are often very helpful,” and Bible-believing Christians in Denmark still use them (1:15). “I do not think that Kierkegaard would be happy, or would agree, with that which has developed from his thinking in either secular or religious existentialism. But what he wrote *gradually led* to the absolute separation of the rational and logical from faith” (1:16, emphasis added).

Likewise, Schaeffer acknowledged that Barth did not agree with much of what neo-orthodox theologians taught in his wake. “But as Kierkegaard, with his leap, opened the door to existentialism in general, so Karl Barth opened the door to the existentialist leap in theology” (1:55). Elsewhere Schaeffer expresses “profound admiration for Karl Barth” because of his “public stand against Nazism in the Barmen Declaration of 1934” (5:189).

While Schaeffer’s theology and theory of apologetics differ significantly from those of the fideists, his method of apologetics has some striking similarities. Like both Pascal and Kierkegaard, Schaeffer sought to dislodge his hearers from their comfortable delusions through

indirect argument. The delusions were different—Kierkegaard mainly combated nominal Christianity, Schaeffer mainly struggled against atheism and liberalism—but the goal was the same.

The key to Schaeffer’s “method” is to find what he calls “the point of tension” (1:129-135). The basis of this method is the principle that “no non-Christian can be consistent to the logic of his [non-Christian] presuppositions.” That is, people cannot live in a way that is consistent with unrealistic presuppositions about the world in which they live or about themselves. “Non-Christian presuppositions simply do not fit into what God has made, including what man is. This being so, every man is in a point of tension. Man cannot make his own universe and live in it” (1:132). “Therefore, the first consideration in our apologetics for modern man, whether factory-hand or research student, is to find the place where his tension exists. We will not always find it easy to do this” (1:135). We will have to invest ourselves in the person, get to know him, and help him discover the point of tension between his theory and his life. This point of tension is the place from which we can begin to communicate with him.

In order to enable the non-Christian to see the point of tension, we must help him realize the logical implications of his presuppositions. This means that we should not start out by trying to change his mind about his presuppositions, but rather to think more deeply about them. “We ought not to try first to move a man away from the logical conclusion of his position but toward it” (1:138). We must do this cautiously and lovingly. “Pushing him towards the logic of his positions is going to cause him pain; therefore, I must not push any further than I need to” (1:138-139). Exposing the point of tension entails what Schaeffer memorably termed “taking the roof off” (1:140), the “roof” being whatever rationale the non-Christian uses to excuse the disparity between what he believes and how he lives. The Christian must lovingly “remove the

shelter and allow the truth of the external world and of what man is, to beat upon him” (1:140). The non-Christian must be helped to see his need before he is ready to accept the solution: “*The truth that we let in first is not a dogmatic statement of the truth of the Scriptures, but the truth of the external world and the truth of what man himself is.* This is what shows him his need. The Scriptures then show him the real nature of his lostness and the answer to it. *This, I am convinced, is the true order for our apologetics in the second half of the twentieth century for people living under the line of despair*” (1:140-141).

Schaeffer’s reference to “the truth of the external world” should not be construed as a call for empirical investigation into nature or history as a means of establishing rational evidence for the truth of Christianity. While he does not seem to have been opposed to such lines of argument, that is not the direction he is taking here. Rather, he is saying that we need to confront the non-Christian with the truth about the world in which he lives and about what he is and what has gone wrong. This line of argument proves *directly* that we have a need but cannot identify or prove what the solution to that need is. For Schaeffer the answer to our need is only *indirectly* supported or verified by the argument, insofar as the answer given in Scripture—reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ—can be shown to meet the need.

Schaeffer’s apologetic method shows affinities to fideism in its focus on the human condition and need as the point at which non-Christian beliefs are critiqued and the truth of the Christian faith is presented. Schaeffer also sounds a fideist note when he warns fellow Christians that a valid and effective apologetic must include the practice of the truth and not merely its rational defense.

Christian apologetics must be able to show intellectually that Christianity speaks of *true truth*; but it must also *exhibit* that it is not just a theory. . . . The world has a right to look

upon us and make a judgment. We are told by Jesus that as we love one another the world will judge, not only whether we are His disciples, but whether the Father sent the Son [John 13:34-35; 17:21]. The final apologetic, along with the rational, logical defense and presentation, is *what the world sees* in the individual Christian and in our corporate relationships together. (1:163, 165)

There must be an individual and corporate exhibition that God exists in our century, in order to show that historic Christianity is more than just a superior dialectic or a better point of psychological integration. (1:189)

We may summarize those aspects of Schaeffer's apologetic that resonate with fideism as follows: (1) the non-Christian must be shown that he cannot consistently live with his non-Christian presuppositions, and (2) the Christian must show that he can live consistently with his presuppositions.

SCHAEFFER AND INTEGRATION

Schaeffer's formal method of apologetics was shaped primarily, though not exclusively, by Reformed apologetics, including the presuppositionalism of Van Til. However, his actual argument for the existence of the God of the Bible closely follows the classical approach, and he affirmed the verifiability of biblical Christianity in terms compatible with some forms of evidentialism. The practical application of his apologetic, on the other hand, assumes the central fideist contention that the truth must be lived and not merely affirmed.

It is no wonder that Schaeffer avoided being labeled an advocate of any one school of apologetic theory. He did believe there were certain guiding principles that should be followed,

but he rejected the idea of an apologetic system that could be applied in all cases. He emphasizes that in evangelism and apologetics “we cannot apply mechanical rules. . . . We can lay down some general principles, but there can be no automatic application.” Thus “each person must be dealt with as an individual, not as a case or statistic or machine” (1:130). “I do not believe there is any one apologetic which meets the needs of all people. . . . I do not believe that there is any one system of apologetics that meets the needs of all people, any more than I think there is any one form of evangelism that meets the need of all people. It is to be shaped on the basis of love for the person as a person” (1:176, 177).

David K. Clark

David K. Clark is an American evangelical who was raised in Japan, where he became acquainted firsthand with the Eastern philosophies that have since become prevalent in the United States. He studied philosophy of religion and apologetics under Norman Geisler at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he received his master’s degree. While studying for his doctorate at Northwestern University, he wrote a short book entitled *The Pantheism of Alan Watts*, for which Geisler wrote the foreword. Watts (1915-1973) was an Anglican priest who had left the church and devoted himself to advocating a Westernized form of Zen Buddhist philosophy.⁴⁰ Clark’s doctoral dissertation extended his study of the mysticism of pantheistic religion.⁴¹ He is now a professor of theology at Bethel Theological Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

CLARK AND GEISLER’S CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS IN THE NEW AGE

In 1990 Clark co-authored a book with Geisler critiquing pantheism. *Apologetics in the New Age*,⁴² of which Clark was the primary author, is based squarely on Geisler's apologetic method. The first of its two parts describes five different varieties of pantheism, while the second evaluates New Age pantheism, beginning with a summary of themes common in New Age belief, after which it proceeds to the critique proper. The critique begins by analyzing pantheism as a worldview and discussing the criteria for evaluating a worldview. Clark and Geisler first explain why a simple factual (or evidential) evaluation is inadequate. "Since facts are not entirely neutral with respect to world views, a theist and a pantheist may not even agree as to what the facts are. Therefore, straightforward appeal to facts as such cannot be decisive in choosing between two macroscopic world views" (135).

They then consider the view that there is no way to judge between competing worldviews. The premise of this view is "that every criterion for criticizing or defending world views grows out of a particular system of thought. On this view, for example, theism has certain principles and pantheism has others. When theistic criteria are used, theism is confirmed and pantheism disconfirmed. When pantheistic ones are used, the opposite occurs. . . . The argument becomes circular, and the choice of criteria is arbitrary" (136).

While admitting that "many criteria do depend on world views," such as the criterion of agreement with the Bible within Christianity, Clark and Geisler affirm "that at least some criteria are independent of world view" (137). At this point they appear to disagree with at least some versions of Reformed apologetics. But they go on to acknowledge that some people who hold a different worldview deny any rational principles in common with Christians, and suggest that such persons will "reveal by their actions or words a necessary dependence on or implicit assumption of these rational criteria." For example, "even while rejecting such criteria,

pantheists implicitly affirm them in their actions” (137). This is an insight with which Reformed apologists, especially in Van Til’s school of thought, will readily agree, although they apply it in a different way.

Clark and Geisler then present two different, overlapping sets of rational criteria for evaluating worldviews. Citing David L. Wolfe, they briefly endorse the four criteria of *consistency*, or lack of contradiction; *coherence*, “the presence of genuine unity and relatedness”; *comprehensiveness*, or agreement with “large ranges of experience”; and *congruity*, or close, natural fitting of the facts. The first two criteria amount to rationality, while the second pair constitutes empirical adequacy (137-38).⁴³ “In addition to these basic logical criteria, we will also use the tests of unaffirmability and actual undeniability. . . . We assume as basic principles that what is unaffirmable must be false and what is actually undeniable is true” (138). These two criteria are the basis of Geisler’s classical apologetic method as set forth in his book *Christian Apologetics*.

Clark and Geisler go on to offer several specific objections to pantheism, closing with the point that “pantheism is unaffirmable and self-defeating” (155). They follow up with an analysis and critique of pantheistic views of knowledge, rationality, and good and evil, concluding that the New Age worldview is irrational and that such irrationality is unjustifiable. In their closing chapter they discuss how Christians should engage in apologetics with pantheists. “We believe it is helpful in apologetic conversations to seek to join forces with the dialog partner in a cooperative journey toward truth. If possible, it is helpful to set the stage in such a way that the battle is not between you and me, but between us and falsehood. You and I together are doing our best to root out what is false and find what is true” (225).

Throughout their book Clark and Geisler clearly follow the classical model of apologetics. In their concluding chapter, though, they warn that an apologist must use the arguments against pantheism in a way that is appropriate for the person to whom he is responding. “Apologetics is a concrete business. It means talking to people, individuals, not answering generic arguments that all persons in a class have in common. . . . It provides tools, raw materials, from which individual answers are shaped to meet particular needs of particular persons at their particular level” (226, 227).

Clark expanded on this point just three years later (1993) in another book, this one bearing his name alone.

CLARK’S DIALOGICAL APOLOGETICS

In *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense*,⁴⁴ Clark does not abandon the classical model, but he does deny it exclusive validity.

Clark begins by identifying three ways of relating faith and reason that are options for Christians. One may hold to a *faith without reason*, or at least a faith that is as isolated from reason as possible, in the tradition of Tertullian and Barth (6-7). One may affirm a *faith supported by reason*, as did Thomas Aquinas (7-9). Or one may hold to *reason dependent on faith*, following Calvin (9-11). The first and third options are what we have called fideism and Reformed apologetics respectively, while the middle option includes both classical and evidentialist apologetics. According to Clark, the disagreements are due in large part to differences in the way apologists have understood the words *faith* and *reason* (11-16). He favors the view that faith and reason “operate reciprocally” (23). “Minimum knowledge precedes the exercise of saving faith. But faith makes possible a fuller understanding and acceptance of God’s

truth. And richer knowledge in turn can deepen faith” (23-24). Clark does not equate this answer with any of the three mentioned above, and seems to think of it as a different answer. However, in fact he has restated the position taken in both classical and evidentialist apologetics.

Augustine and Aquinas both held to this view of faith and reason; so do apologists like Norman Geisler and John Warwick Montgomery today.

In a later chapter Clark offers a parallel analysis of the relationship between conceptual schemes and facts. At one extreme, one may hold that “facts determine schemes” on the assumption that we can approach theoretical questions in a neutral fashion. At the other extreme, one may hold that “facts are at the mercy of conceptual schemes so no rational choice between paradigms is possible.” Clark deems the first extreme rationalistic and the second fideistic. Between the two is “soft rationalism,” the view that “facts are influenced by perspectives, yet facts and reasons can help determine the rational merits of competing points of view” (82). To determine which worldview is to be believed, one must employ rational criteria. Clark here repeats Wolfe’s four criteria of consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, and congruity (85-86), but not Geisler’s two criteria of unaffirmability and actual undeniability. Instead he advocates a “cumulative case approach” to testing competing worldviews, specifically citing Joseph Butler in support (87). “Soft rationalism, therefore, follows this general principle: *the world view that most naturally explains wide ranges of evidence is the best*” (88). The evidence in support of Christianity includes the evidence of cosmology, the nature of human beings, ethics, religious experience, and the historical evidence for Jesus, especially the Resurrection. “The cumulative case approach posits the Christian world view as the best explanation for this network of evidence” (89). He continues: “Such an argument achieves only probability. But a cumulative case argument for one of a limited number of alternatives does have a certain

strength: the conclusion does not stand or fall with any one point. All the apologetic eggs are not in one evidential basket” (90).

This would seem to be a quite explicit statement of evidentialism. However, Clark qualifies his advocacy of this approach. Since people are different, they will respond to apologetic arguments differently, and this implies that some arguments will be more effective with a particular individual than other arguments (98-99). This is the basis of what Clark calls “dialogical apologetics”: “Each of the major apologetic methods advanced among evangelical Christians today includes epistemological underpinnings that are partly right. But each also exaggerates its strong points in relation to other facets of a balanced apologetic. Dialogical apologetics recognizes and incorporates the strengths found in four traditional apologetic alternatives” (103).

These four alternatives correspond almost exactly to the four approaches discussed in this book. “Existential approaches to apologetics stress the uniqueness and convicting appeal of Christian experience.” Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Barth exemplify this approach (103), which we have called fideism (with Pascal described as a precursor to fideism, not as a fideist himself). As we saw, it is somewhat misleading to define all of these thinkers’ approach as stressing experience (though Kierkegaard certainly did). Fideists claim not “that experience stands on its own” (104), but rather that God’s revelation stands on its own and must be believed even though it is beyond our ability to prove or comprehend.

“Presuppositional apologetics emphasizes special revelation as the starting point for apologetics” (104). Calvin, Kuyper, Van Til, Carnell, and Schaeffer all have contributed to or elaborated on this approach (105). Clark understands Van Til to have taught that Christians and non-Christians share “no common point of view, rational principles, or experiential facts” on

which Christians can build an argument (105). He finds Schaeffer's "milder presuppositionalism" more workable as an apologetic because it assumes that there is at least common ground on the principle that "world views that make sense of human life and experience are better than those that do not" (106). Ironically, Schaeffer himself contended that the major apologetic challenge at the end of the twentieth century was the fact that many non-Christians no longer agree that worldviews *need* to "make sense" (at least, not *rational* sense).

"Evidential apologetics . . . stresses the accumulation of biblical and historical evidence" (106). Paley, Montgomery, and Josh McDowell represent this approach (106-107). As we have seen, Clark's own approach has much in common with this model. Indeed, he identifies weaknesses, not in evidentialism itself, but in "naive evidentialists" who think "that facts speak unambiguously for themselves. The influence of points of view on interpretations of fact is lost on most evidentialists" (107). Such a criticism does not apply to leading evidentialists like Montgomery, though, who give considerable attention to exposing antisupernaturalist assumptions in non-Christian thought.

"Classical apologetics emphasizes a two-phase defense" in which theism is first proved "as the best world view" and multiple evidences are then used to prove that Christianity is "the best form of theism." C. S. Lewis, Geisler, Craig, and Moreland are all noted twentieth-century advocates of this approach (108). Classical apologists rightly emphasize the need to establish theism in order to place the evidences in their right worldview context. On the other hand, Clark says, "some are too rigid" in insisting that theism must first be accepted before examining any of the evidences for Christianity. He suggests that the distinction between the two stages of the apologetic be retained, while allowing people to "wander back and forth between the two stages as they assess the total cumulative weight of the case for Christianity." Some classical apologists

also tend to demand rational certainty in an argument before it can be viewed as useful. “But shorn of such overstatement, classical apologetics . . . resembles the epistemology I favor” (109). Clark therefore is a classical apologist who, like Craig, incorporates significant elements of evidentialism in his approach.

According to Clark, dialogical apologetics is not merely a fifth view that combines elements of the previous four, “but a *second class or category of views*. The first group of options (the four positions) is, in theory, content-oriented. But dialogical apologetics is person-oriented both in practice and in theory” (109-110). It corrects certain false assumptions that commonly underlie all four of the standard approaches. “First, each tends to assume that proof is either absolute or useless” (110). On this basis classical apologists insist on arguments with deductive certainty while fideists reject rational apologetics because such arguments are invalid. Here again, Clark’s position reflects evidentialist influence.

Clark denies the typical assumption of the four approaches that there is only “one correct epistemology” that “is right for all persons,” arguing instead that while truth is one, human ways of coming to know that truth are varied. Likewise, he denies “that there is only one right way to practice apologetics” (111). The debate over the one right apologetic method “is exciting stuff for the apologetics junkie,” but it searches for a method to reach an “unbeliever-in-the-abstract” rather than real, live unbelievers. “I have never talked with an unbeliever-in-the-abstract. When I am speaking with the man on the Bower Street bus, I try to find out what *he* knows and work from there. If knowledge is person-centered, then my apologetic should start with what *this man* believes” (111).

It is true that some apologists favor one form of apologetic argument, based on a single epistemological model of how a person should or can know that Christianity is true. This is

especially the case for Van Til, who reduced all apologetic arguments to the one transcendental argument that there can be no meaning or rationality or value in anything apart from the God who has been revealed in Scripture. But most apologists, while advocating a single epistemological theory, have allowed that different arguments can be useful in persuading people to believe. The approach that is most open to a variety of arguments is evidentialism. If one advocates a cumulative-case approach using evidence from various areas of knowledge and experience, then one might easily and naturally be interested in using both inductive and deductive arguments, and even the transcendental argument of Van Til—as long as it is viewed as one argument among many.

Here again, Clark’s classical approach is moderated by elements of evidentialism. Thus he goes on to describe dialogical apologetics as “a rational enterprise in that it seeks to build a reasoned, probabilist, holistic, cumulative case for Christianity” (113). Where he distinguishes his approach is more in strategy than in epistemology: the arguments and evidences are to be used with due sensitivity to the differences among persons to whom the apologist is speaking. “Dialogical apologetics encourages a strategy of dialogue with unique persons in which an apologist uses all the tools in the toolbox to move particular individuals toward an intellectual acknowledgment of the Christian world view and a heartfelt commitment of life and soul to the Savior that this world view declares” (114).

C. Stephen Evans

C. Stephen Evans (1949—)⁴⁵ is a Christian philosopher who has specialized throughout his career as an interpreter of Kierkegaard. In fact, Evans’s work has encouraged evangelicals to reconsider the sharply critical view they have typically held toward the Danish thinker.

Evans grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, during the turbulent civil rights era. His father was a bus driver and his mother was a schoolteacher; both were from poor families in rural, Depression-era Georgia. He and his family attended very conservative Baptist churches; their principal church home, he later learned, excluded blacks from membership at the time. At a Christian school he attended, however, he was taught that segregation was wrong. Stephen read books by C. S. Lewis and other Christian authors while still in high school, and from early on showed an intellectual bent. He attended Wheaton College in Chicago, where he studied philosophy under Stuart Hackett and Arthur Holmes. Here he found his “privileged calling,” as he terms it, of being a Christian philosopher. Hackett’s philosophy emphasized the need for an epistemology that integrated rational and empirical dimensions of knowing, and Holmes’s teaching emphasized the value of diverse schools of thought in philosophy. Their teaching informs Evans’s own effort to integrate diverse approaches to Christian philosophy and apologetics.

From Wheaton, Evans went to Yale, where he earned his doctorate and also wrote his first book,⁴⁶ a response to Kierkegaard and other existentialist writers. It was later revised and published as *Existentialism: The Philosophy of Despair and the Quest for Hope*.⁴⁷ At Yale he developed an appreciation for both the analytic approach to philosophy dominant in England and America and the existentialist approach that was more prevalent on the Continent.

As he was finishing up his doctorate, he was offered a teaching post at Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. After two years there he accepted a position at his alma mater, Wheaton College, in 1974. During his early years there he decided to focus his research on a single philosopher, and chose Kierkegaard. On the advice of Howard and Edna Hong, who

were overseeing the translation of Kierkegaard's works into English, Evans spent nine months in Denmark learning the language and culture and researching the thought of Kierkegaard.

In 1984 he accepted a position at Saint Olaf College, a Lutheran school in Minnesota, two years later succeeding Howard Hong there as professor of philosophy and curator of the Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library. During his twelve years at Saint Olaf, he became a renowned Kierkegaard scholar, publishing numerous articles and four academic books on him. He also became more widely known among evangelicals as a philosopher and apologist with such popular books as *Philosophy of Religion* (1985) and *The Quest for Faith* (1986).⁴⁸ In 1994 he moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he is now professor of philosophy at Calvin College. He is also a member of the International Scholarly Committee of the Kierkegaard Research Centre at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

EVANS, CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS, AND EVIDENTIALISM

In Evans's recent works on apologetics, he advocates a broadly evidentialist approach that incorporates what he regards as the valid insights of Reformed apologetics and of fideism. It should be noted that he usually views what we are calling classical apologetics as a variety of evidentialism. So, for example, in one of his most recent books, *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith*, he classifies as a prominent type of "evidentialist apologetics" what he calls "the two-stage strategy." In this approach, one first argues for the existence of God, relying primarily on natural theology, and then argues that the Bible and its events, preeminently the resurrection of Jesus, constitute the true revelation of that God. Evans classifies Thomas Aquinas as "a classical example" of this strategy (233).⁴⁹ The "five ways" show that God exists, while the

Christian miracles confirm the truth that Christianity, and not (especially) Islam, is the true revelation of God (233-35).

Evans also identifies Joseph Butler (235) and William Paley (235-36) as proponents of this approach—with some justification, for they are transitional figures leading up to the modern evidentialist approach. He also cites C. S. Lewis as an example of an apologist using the two-stage strategy, although his specific arguments at the two stages are somewhat different. In *Mere Christianity* Lewis appeals to the moral argument to prove God's existence, then employs the Trilemma argument to press the claims of Christ to be God (236). Evans appears to endorse these examples of the classical approach as legitimate variations on an evidential apologetic.

That Evans is an evidentialist is clear from the way he approaches theistic proofs. In an article defending natural theology, he argues that rather than abandoning theistic arguments we should frame them evidentially.

Natural theology, conceived as part of an apologetic enterprise, does not need to lead to a complete view of God. It needs only to discomfit the atheist and agnostic, suggest the plausibility of thinking there is something transcendent of the natural order, something that has some of the characteristics of the Christian God. . . . Taken collectively they [the arguments] provide a cumulative case for the reasonableness of believing in God which is powerful for him who has ears to hear and eyes to see.⁵⁰

This is the same approach he takes in his popular introduction to apologetics, a revision of *The Quest for Faith* entitled *Why Believe?* He urges critics of the theistic arguments to consider “the possibility that the arguments might have great force if taken collectively” (19).⁵¹ Using the standards of proof in different kinds of court cases as an analogy, he argues that the

level of proof should not be set beyond all possible or even all reasonable doubt, but rather at the level of “the preponderance of the evidence” (20).

A “clear and convincing proof” in this context is defined in terms of “a high probability.”

This seems to me to be the kind of “reasonable case” we ought to strive for in religious matters as well. We ought to strive to make a judgment that is in accord with “the preponderance of the evidence” and that seems highly likely or probable. . . . Trying to look for a single isolated argument on either side to serve as a “proof” is therefore a mistake. Rather, each side here will present a range of facts, drawn from many areas of human experience, to show that the “preponderance of evidence” is on its side. (20-21, 23)

Evans proposes, then, “to show that a reasonable ‘cumulative case’ can be made for a particular kind of religious faith: Christianity. Drawing on philosophy, personal religious experience, and historical evidence, I will try to show that we have very good reasons to think that the Christian faith is true” (24). This is an explicit and standard formulation of the evidentialist approach.

Evans continues to develop his apologetic in a fairly conventional evidentialist fashion. Noting that non-Christians cannot be expected to accept the Bible as inspired, he suggests that we “put aside, then, as question-begging, any assumption that the Bible is inspired by God. . . . Let us simply decide to treat the Bible as a historical document” (69). The New Testament documents consistently present Jesus as divine, and yet they were written too soon after Jesus for the attribution of deity to be a later accretion (69-70). As historical documents, they are worth taking seriously (70-71). They purport to be and are written in the genre of history, not

mythology (71-72). The speculative theories of even the most skeptical scholars acknowledge that there is some historical truth in the Gospels (72-73).

According to Evans, the most plausible explanation for the early Christians' belief that Jesus was God is that he claimed that he was, as the Gospels clearly attest (74-75). Given that Jesus made this claim for Himself, it is difficult to deny his deity, since the alternative is to think Him a liar or insane (75-76). Jesus' followers were convinced of his deity by his resurrection from the dead (76). Evans acknowledges that some readers will deny this on the grounds that all miracles are impossible, but he asks such readers to "try to suspend judgment temporarily and keep an open mind on the question as to whether miracles occur." After all, he points out, "there is impressive evidence of Jesus' resurrection for those who approach the evidence with an open mind" (76). This evidence consists of the empty tomb, the testimony of eyewitnesses, and the changed lives of Jesus' followers (76-77). "If the resurrection did not occur and the witnesses made up the story, it is hard to see why they would be willing to suffer and die for such a concoction. Pascal puts the point bluntly: 'I prefer those witnesses that get their throats cut'" (77).

Although the evidentialist approach is clearly present in his writings, Evans is critical of a pure evidentialism that attempts to defend Christianity on the basis of an inductivist epistemology. In *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith*, he faults an inductivist evidentialism for holding to an Enlightenment view of objectivity. Actually, Evans finds "two opposite difficulties, which may appear in fact to cancel each other out," in the evidentialist approach (32).⁵²

Both problems relate to the underlying Enlightenment ideal of objectivity that this type of defence of the narrative embodies. The essence of this strategy is to claim that an

objective, neutral historical study of the Gospels confirms the basic reliability of the narrative. The proponents agree with the sceptical critics that the Gospels must be studied as “ordinary historical documents” by “ordinary historical means” and with no “special pleading.” (32-33)

The problem here, Evans argues, is that “ordinary historical documents” do not report supernatural events or the messages of “divinely authorized messengers.” He wonders if it would not be “special pleading” to take such reports seriously (33).

A look at the practices of historical critics, as well as theoretical accounts of what historical method involves, makes it evident that many scholars would claim that ordinary historical methods do require such a bias against the supernatural. If that is the case, then defending the historicity of the narrative using “ordinary” historical methods will necessarily be a losing battle. This raises the question as to whether the defenders of the narrative have essentially given away the contest by accepting the terms of the engagement of their opponents. (33)

Evans’s other objection to this evidentialist approach is that the apologists are not really as objective as they claim to be. Rather than being truly willing “to follow the evidence wherever it leads,” they are simply marshaling the evidence to defend a conclusion they have already reached. “It does not follow from this that their readings are mistaken or unjustified, but it does suggest that presuppositions play a larger role than those committed to an ‘inductive’ method would allow” (34).

EVANS AND REFORMED APOLOGETICS

Evans has given little attention to the Reformed apologetics of Gordon Clark or Cornelius Van Til. However, consistent with his move in 1994 to Calvin College, in recent years he has expressed strong support for crucial aspects of the “new Reformed epistemology” associated especially with Alvin Plantinga.

In chapter 9 of *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith*, entitled “Epistemology and the Ethics of Belief” (202-230), Evans endorses the Reformed epistemologists’ approach to religious knowledge. Following Plantinga as well as William Alston, he articulates and supports “a broadly externalist account” of knowledge and proposes to apply this epistemology “in investigating the epistemological status of historical religious claims” (222). What this means and how it applies to apologetics is best seen from chapter 11, “The Incarnational Narrative as Historical: Grounds for Belief” (259-82), where Evans discusses “the Reformed account” of “incarnational knowledge” (260). By “incarnational narrative” Evans means the basic story line about Jesus, and by “incarnational knowledge” he means a person’s knowledge that the story of Jesus is true.

The Reformed confessions (260-61) and Calvin himself (261-62) taught “that we gain certain knowledge that the Bible is from God by the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit in our hearts” (261). This does not mean that there is no evidence of the Bible’s truth, but only that the believer’s confidence or belief is not based or grounded on that evidence (261). According to Evans, this Reformed view seems fideistic only because it is often interpreted in the context of an internalist epistemology. The **internalist** says that a true belief constitutes knowledge when it is justified by *factors internal to the knower*. Specifically, one’s belief must be based on good evidence of which one is aware (263). If we assume this understanding of epistemological justification, we can interpret the Reformed view of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in one of

two ways. We might interpret it to mean that the Spirit enables people to see what is or should be obvious, namely, that the Bible is true (263), or that the testimony of the Holy Spirit is itself an experience that constitutes “internally available evidence” (264). But the truth of the Bible is not always obvious even to believers, and an internal experience seems to be a weak form of evidence.

“Rather than dismiss the Reformed view as bad apologetics,” Evans concludes that we should interpret it as assuming an externalist account of knowledge. The **externalist** says that a true belief constitutes knowledge when it is justified by *facts external to the knower*. “At bottom the externalist says that what properly ‘grounds’ a belief is the relationship of the believer to reality” (264). Externalists differ in the way they explain justification. But they all agree that “what makes a true belief knowledge is a relation between the knower and the objective world; knowledge requires us to be so oriented to that world that our beliefs can be said to ‘track’ with that world, to use Robert Nozick’s suggestive phrase” (265).

Assuming some form of externalism, then, Evans concludes that if his belief that the incarnational narrative is true is the result of the testimony of the Spirit, and if the Spirit’s testimony generally produces true beliefs, then his belief is justified (268). “If a belief in the truth of the incarnational narrative is formed as a result of the Holy Spirit, and if beliefs formed in such a manner are usually true, then the testimony of the Holy Spirit produces knowledge” (274). This work of the Spirit is not to be equated with the believer’s experience of that work, but is in essence whatever the Holy Spirit does, and however he chooses to do it, to bring a person to faith. This process may or may not include the use of evidence (268-269). The “subjective feeling of certainty” is not the ground of the belief, but is rather the result of the Spirit’s work in bringing the person to embrace that belief (269).

Evans concludes that the primary purpose of Reformed epistemology is not to convince unbelievers that Christianity is true, but rather to help Christians understand how their belief qualifies as knowledge.

The primary purpose of telling the Reformed story is not to persuade or convince someone of the truth of Christian faith; it is not at bottom a piece of apologetics, though in some cases it could function in that way. Rather, it is a story Christians tell when they wish to understand how God has given them the knowledge they believe he has given them. . . . The purpose of the evidentialist story is primarily apologetics, though the doubters to be convinced may be within as well as outside the Church. This task must not be understood as the task of providing a once-and-for-all justification of faith, one that would be convincing to any rational person in any time or place, but as the task of persuading or convincing particular groups of people by responding to particular objections and appealing to particular beliefs already held. (284)

EVANS AND FIDEISM

As we might expect of a scholar who has devoted years to the study of Kierkegaard, Evans's approach to apologetics draws heavily on the fideist tradition. Indeed, in his book *Faith beyond Reason* Evans takes the unusual stance among evangelical philosophers and apologists of viewing fideism as a rational and valuable perspective.

The fideist element in his apologetic may be illustrated from his book *Why Believe?* One way he adopts a fideist position is in his assessment of the value of theistic arguments. He views them neither as rigorous deductive proofs of theism (as in classical apologetics), nor as showing that theism is a probable or most probable position (as in evidentialism), nor as reducible to a

single transcendental proof (as in Van Til's version of Reformed apologetics). Rather, he concludes that natural theology arguments should be viewed as bringing to people's attention *natural signs*, elements of nature that function as signs, pointers, or clues to God's reality. Such signs do not constitute *proof*, but they are not therefore valueless (73).⁵³ The arguments that present such signs are the traditional theistic arguments, but the clues exhibited by those arguments are "recognizable by the simple as well as the learned" (74).

Evans finds three "clues" of God's reality in three "fundamental mysteries . . . the mystery of the physical universe, the mystery of a moral order, and the mystery of human personhood" (31). The traditional theistic arguments explicate these clues, or "calling cards," as he also calls them (32-60). "A calling card is of course not an end in itself. It is a sign that someone has called on us and may call again. We should then be on the lookout, not merely for more clues, but for God himself. And for the person who has met God, the calling cards may look insignificant indeed" (63).

A second fideistic element of Evans's apologetic is that it is centered on an appeal to non-Christians to approach Jesus in the Gospels as a person to know. People do not become Christians "merely by considering evidence or arguments" (78) because, first, "there is a gap between an intellectual recognition of who Jesus is and a commitment to him." Many people agree that Jesus is God but do not live as if that were true. Second, people draw different conclusions from the evidence, as they did in the first century, because they differ "in their own response to Jesus as a person" (78). In turn, people tend to respond in faith to Jesus if they think of themselves as in great need, whereas people who think they are fine as they are tend to be most offended by Jesus (79).

The final challenge then to anyone who is seriously interested in Christianity is to go to the New Testament and meet the Jesus who is pictured there. Think about this Jesus, his life, his message, his death, and his resurrection. Think about your own failings and your own deepest needs and desires. Think as honestly as you can, and see if this Jesus creates in you a response of faith and trust as you get to know him. Perhaps you will discover that God has spoken to you. (80)

How this approach relates to answering apologetic challenges is illustrated by Evans's handling of the problem of evil. For Evans, the problem is solved through pointing to God's proven trustworthiness. "Our evidence for this is simply our total knowledge of God's character. God loves us, God cares about us, and God honors his commitments" (103). We know this to be true about God primarily because he has demonstrated his love and character in Jesus. "For Jesus is God in human form, a God who not only tells us he cares about our sufferings, but shows us he cares" by his life, death, and resurrection (103).

The implication of this for those who wonder whether God has a reason for allowing evil is clear. They do not need a philosophical argument. Rather they need to get to know God and understand his character. They need to be pointed to Jesus. . . . Christian philosophers have given strong refutations of the claims of atheists to have disproved God's existence on the basis of evil. However, the best answers Christians can ultimately give to the problem of evil are two. First, they can point to Jesus, who reveals God's goodness and love and suffers with us. Second, they can follow Jesus' example by working against suffering, and suffering with those who suffer. (103, 104)

A third way Evans follows the fideist tradition is in his use of the paradoxical argument that it is the incredible character of the Christian message that shows its divine origin.

If Peter and John and Paul and the other apostles wanted to invent a new religion, they could hardly have hit on doctrines less plausible to their hearers. To the strictly monotheistic Jews they proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God and that Jesus and his father were both God. To the rationalistic Greeks they proclaimed that Jesus, lock, stock, and body, had risen from the dead and that his followers would someday experience this same resurrection. . . . The very preposterousness of their teachings is a sign that they were proclaiming what they had experienced as true and were convinced was true. (124)

Note the similarity of Evans's argument here to Tertullian's "I believe because it is foolish" argument. Evans continues by asking critics of the mysteries of the Bible to imagine what it would be like if God were to reveal truth to us. "What would we expect such a revelation to contain? Commonsense advice such as 'Dress warmly in cold weather'?" (125). Sound moral wisdom is a more reasonable expectation, but it would hardly be proof of divine revelation. "If God were going to give humans a special revelation, it should contain some truth that humans would be unable to discover on their own. Otherwise, why would he bother? In other words, we would expect a genuine revelation from God to contain mysteries" (125). "Christian doctrines are not philosophical theories to be logically proven. . . . Christians have usually insisted that the basic mysteries of the faith are *above* reason, but not *against* reason. That is, although we cannot fully understand them or prove their truth, they do not contradict what *is* known to be truth" (126).

EVANS ON INTEGRATION

Evans discusses the integration of diverse approaches to apologetics explicitly in *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith*. Specifically, he states that he will assess the viability of

“two different types of theological accounts of how knowledge of the incarnational narrative is possible. . . . These two accounts are an evidential model, that understands knowledge of the story as derived from ordinary historical evidence, and what I shall term the Reformed account, that describes the knowledge as the product of the work of the Holy Spirit within the life of the person.” As we have seen, Evans includes classical apologetics with evidentialism. He will conclude that “a combined account provides the best picture of how such religious historical knowledge is possible” (25).⁵⁴

Evans personally thinks “there is genuine force in a cumulative case argument for God’s existence of the type Swinburne provides . . . though I would prefer to speak in terms of plausibility rather than probability” (240-41). But such arguments seem to be generally ineffective in persuading those who do not already believe. “The evidentialist offers a case that is supposed to be based on objective evidence, evidence that would be generally accepted. Such a case is supposed to show that Christians do know what they claim to know. It appears in the end, however, that the claim that this objective evidence is objectively good evidence is not itself a claim that is generally accepted” (241).

Evans concludes that the evidentialist argument can still be used, but the evidentialist will have to acknowledge that there is “a subjective dimension to the claimed objective case” (241). In other words, he will have to acknowledge that not everyone will see the evidence in the same way. “An Enlightenment foundationalism that demands foundational evidence that is completely certain and completely objective, accessible to all sane, rational beings, certainly will find the evidentialist case wanting. However, since in the previous chapter we found such an epistemology to be itself wanting, this by no means rules out such evidentialist arguments as having any value” (244).

Evans denies that these considerations prove Swinburne's argument to be valueless. Rather, he suggests that we can make the historical case and then, "if the historical basis of the case is attacked, one possible response is to view the concessions made to the more sceptical forms of historical criticism as only made *for the sake of argument*" (249).

There is apologetical value in accepting, for the sake of argument, the conclusions of one's opponents. If I can get my opponent to see that some belief I wish to defend follows from her own premises, then I have been successful. So one can see the value of accepting, for the sake of argument, fairly sceptical accounts of the New Testament. One can then argue, "See, even on your account of the historical status of the New Testament, the conclusions I wish to defend can be derived." However, once we have put aside Enlightenment epistemologies that demand an evidential base of highly certain facts, we must recognize that this argumentative technique implies no general necessity to accept the views of one's opponents about such matters. (251-52)

Evans suggests that we view evidentialist apologetics and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, not as rivals, but as complementary. "On the assumption that the process whereby the Spirit produces belief can include the evidential story, it is perhaps best not to speak of the Reformed and evidential stories as distinct, rival accounts, but as accounts that are given for different purposes or that perhaps reflect different emphases" (288).

Evans suggests "several possible ways the two accounts can complement each other" (288). "First, and most obvious, one might simply see the two accounts as applying to two different groups of people" (289). Evans points out that this seems to be the actual state of affairs: some people come to faith without any conscious consideration of evidence, whereas others come to faith through a process that includes rational reflection on the evidence (289).

“A second possibility is to see the two types of account as applying to different *levels* of knowledge.” Here Evans invokes William Alston’s distinction between first-order knowledge, or *knowing* something, and second-order knowledge, or *knowing that we know* it, which he had discussed earlier (277-80). Evans suggests that we may possess first-order knowledge of the truth about Jesus as the result of the work of the Spirit (which may or may not involve evidence). “Our second-order knowledge that we have this first-level knowledge could be seen, in some cases though not necessarily for all, as based on a more traditional evidential case” (290). Not every believer will need evidentialist arguments to have second-order knowledge, but those with intellectual doubts may find it necessary to examine the evidence for their beliefs to make such second-order knowledge secure (290). Admittedly, such second-order knowledge would then be subject to possible objections, as all evidentialist arguments are. “However, it is important to remember that on this suggestion it would only be the second-level knowledge of a particular group that would be threatened in this way; the people in question as well as ordinary believers may still know what they know, whatever problems may beset philosophical and theological arguments designed to show that they do know what they know” (291).

Moreover, the objections may not be troubling even to second-order knowledge, since the objections will not have force with everyone (291).

There is such a thing as failing to respect the evidence. But there is no looking at the evidence that is not a looking from a particular point of view. Hence evidence that is not appreciated by everyone can still be recognized as good evidence, once the Enlightenment ideal of certainty has been set aside. Of course the believer may be wrong; others will claim this is the case. But that is a necessary feature of being epistemologically finite. (292-93)

Third, Evans suggests that the two accounts can both play a role in resolving doubt in the mind of a believer. *General doubt* about whether I really know that I know can be resolved by an appeal to “the ‘circular’ kind of justification” that reminds me that what I believe is certainly true because it was revealed by God in the Bible. *Specific doubts* engendered by “defeaters”—arguments that, if accepted, would disprove or call into question some aspect or even the whole of my Christian belief—can be resolved by evidentialist type arguments (293), which are especially suited as a “rebuttal, or ‘defeater for the defeater’” (294). Evidential arguments that seem weak or flawed when viewed as providing the sole basis for our knowledge of Christian truth can be perfectly sound as rebuttals (295-96).

We should of course remember that apologetic arguments do not have to convince anyone, much less everyone, in order to be successful. There are many other goals for such arguments, that could be summarized under the rubric of “softening up” the intended audience, such as lessening the grip of various objections, removing certain barriers that make it impossible fairly to consider faith, producing a disposition to hear with a more open mind or to seek to hear more about the faith, and many more. (295)

Fourth, Evans discusses ways the evidentialist account can be strengthened by integrating it with the Reformed account. The incommensurability of evidential argument with the absolute commitment of faith can be resolved by rejecting the idea that the “degree” of belief (whatever that means) must be proportional to the degree of evidence. One could argue that faith should be rooted in some evidence—a kind of “threshold” requirement—while denying that faith must be weaker or stronger depending on the amount of evidence—the “proportionality requirement” (298). The firmness or tenacity with which a Christian believes can be attributed to the work of the Spirit rather than indexed to the varying strength of one’s evidential case (299). The other

major problem for evidentialism is the fact that evidential arguments depend greatly on prior assessments of the relative probability of certain assumptions of the argument. Evans suggests that the Reformed account can help here by assuring the evidentialist that his view is correct (because assured by the testimony of the Spirit) even if he cannot convince any or all nonbelievers that his assessment of those probabilities is correct. “If the believer’s knowledge is rooted in a process (the work of the Holy Spirit) that is a truth-conducive ground, then whether the knowledge in question is basic or evidentially mediated, it can qualify as knowledge, *regardless of whether the believer can produce an argument that will satisfy some particular opponent*. Being justified or warranted in a belief is one thing; being able to justify a belief to someone else is another” (300).

Perhaps the central thesis of Evans’s model for integrating the evidentialist and Reformed traditions is that apologetics and religious epistemology are not identical enterprises. “Apologetics is a vital enterprise, but it is not identical with the task of gaining a reflective understanding of how the knowledge is gained” (305-306). Understanding how one came to believe “is by no means the same thing as having an answer to a challenger or enquirer” (306). For Evans, the Reformed approach generally has more value in understanding how we come to faith, while the evidentialist approach generally has more value in functioning as a means through which we come to faith.

John Frame

John M. Frame (1939—) is an exceptional apologist in the Van Til tradition. Among Van Til’s leading interpreters, Frame alone has offered a critical, creative interpretation of

presuppositionalism that makes room for many of the traditional kinds of apologetic arguments criticized by Van Til.

Frame was converted to Christ as a teenager.⁵⁵ He went to Princeton University and majored in philosophy in the late 1950s, the heyday of the analytic philosophy school that is still dominant in many English and American departments of philosophy. The thinkers who most influenced him in college, though, were Christian apologists, especially C. S. Lewis, J. Gresham Machen, and above all Cornelius Van Til. After he finished at Princeton, Frame studied under Van Til at nearby Westminster Theological Seminary (1961-1964). From there he went to Yale, where he received a master's degree in philosophy. After teaching for some time at Westminster, he became professor of apologetics and systematic theology at Westminster's sister school, Westminster Theological Seminary in California (located in Escondido, a suburb north of San Diego). After many years there, Frame became Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida.

The foundational book for Frame's apologetic method is *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (1987).⁵⁶ In it he develops an epistemological theory that he calls **perspectivalism**, in which he seeks to integrate rational, empirical, and subjective aspects of human knowledge on the basis of a Reformed theology of knowledge and revelation. In summarizing Frame's system, we will be citing primarily from this book. In *Apologetics to the Glory of God* (1994), he applied this perspectivalism directly to apologetics.⁵⁷ In addition, he has written two books applying a perspectival model to ethics.⁵⁸ Frame's colleague Vern S. Poythress, a professor of New Testament at Westminster in Philadelphia, has likewise applied perspectivalism to systematic theology and to hermeneutics.⁵⁹ Poythress's book *Symphonic Theology: The Validity of Multiple Perspectives in Theology* (1987)⁶⁰ was published the same year as Frame's *Doctrine of the*

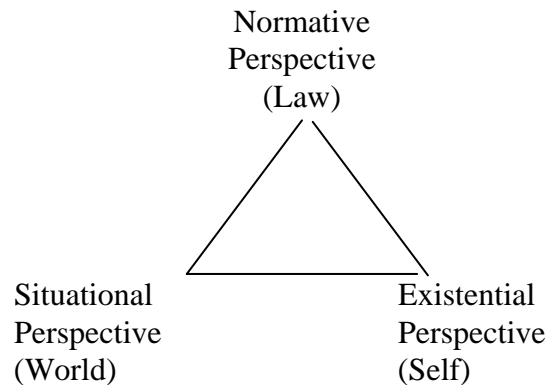
Knowledge of God. Poythress, in fact, contributed greatly to the development of Frame's perspectivalism, as Frame himself acknowledges in several places (194, 216, 328, 360).

Most modern epistemologies seek to correlate or balance two principles or aspects of human knowledge: the *subject*, or knower, and the *object*, or the known. According to Frame, subject and object cannot be properly correlated without relating them to a third aspect of knowledge, the *norm*, or standard of knowledge. Epistemological theories err if they seek to locate that norm in the subject or object, because in fact God, who created both the subject and object, is the source of the norms of human knowledge. Thus perspectivalism is an explicitly theistic epistemology, one in which God's norms for human knowledge must be taken into account in order to understand how we know what we know.

There are, then, three perspectives in all human knowledge, which Frame calls the existential, situational, and normative perspectives. All three are equally basic aspects of knowledge, and epistemologies that champion one at the expense of the others will be inadequate. So, when the **existential** perspective, which considers the knowing subject or self, is absolutized, the result is *subjectivism*. The **situational** perspective considers the object of knowledge, the world; *empiricism* results when this perspective is absolutized. The **normative** perspective considers God's laws of thought that govern how we know; when the laws of logic (here viewed as the supreme norm of thought) are absolutized as the only perspective on knowledge, the epistemological theory of *rationalism* is the result (62-75, 89-90, 107-122, 162-63, 250-51). Note that the three epistemologies criticized in Frame's perspectivalism correspond to the three non-Reformed approaches to apologetics: fideism tends to subjectivism, evidentialism is based on some form of empiricism, and classical apologetics tends to rationalism.

The solution is not simply to add these three approaches together: “Combining one bankrupt epistemology with another leads nowhere” (122). Rather, one should see each as a partial and interdependent perspective on the whole of knowledge. None is absolutized because the one absolute in knowledge is God, who alone as the Creator can “guarantee that the three elements will cohere” (110).

John Frame’s Three Perspectives on Human Knowledge⁶¹



What makes perspectivalism not only explicitly theistic but in fact a *Christian* epistemology is that Frame includes the revelation of God in Scripture as basic to the normative perspective. Rather than viewing logic alone as the norm of human knowledge, as in rationalism, Frame agrees with Van Til that all human knowledge depends on God’s revelation. This does not mean the normative perspective *is* Scripture, but that in it all knowledge is viewed from the perspective of its accord with Scripture (163). Logic, on the other hand, is considered part of the situational rather than the normative perspective, because logic “is subordinate to Scripture, which is our ultimate law of thought.” Logic is thus viewed as a discipline that uncovers information or facts to be used in interpreting Scripture (243).

FRAME AND REFORMED APOLOGETICS

Although Frame views himself as “Van Tilian,” he is critical of the “movement mentality” that many of Van Til’s students and followers exhibit. As early as 1976 he was calling in print for “constructive critical analysis” of Van Til’s thought.⁶² As we will see, this call was not mere lip service; Frame has gone on to publish several books in which he pointedly criticizes Van Til’s writings and makes his own creative proposals for building on Van Til’s achievement.

Basic to Van Til’s apologetic was the assumption of Reformed or Calvinist theology as the best exposition of the teachings of Scripture. While Frame agrees with this assessment, he is uncomfortable with the dogmatic way Van Til applied Reformed theology. Van Til judged evangelical theologians, even other Reformed theologians, to have deviated from fundamental biblical truths if they strayed from what he regarded as the true understanding of Calvinism. As Frame notes, “Van Til tended to put the worst possible construction on the statements of non-Reformed writers,” and, we may add, nonpresuppositional Reformed writers. Frame, on the other hand, tends to find as much truth as he can in writers of different points of view, and to try to give them “the benefit of the doubt.”⁶³ Nevertheless, Frame himself acknowledges that, in *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, he was dogmatic enough “to assume Reformed theology without argument” (xv).

Since we referred frequently in Part Four to Frame’s exposition of Van Til’s system, a brief summary of the main points of his position will suffice here to make his broad agreement with Van Til clear. Since presuppositions are unavoidable in all human thinking, there can be no such thing as “neutrality” in the sense of an absence of commitment toward some view of truth

and reality. Moreover, since fact and interpretation of fact are interdependent, there is no such thing as “brute fact,” or uninterpreted fact (71-73, 99-100, 140-41). Thus non-Christians cannot be neutral with respect to Christianity, nor can they be shown facts that will in and of themselves prove Christianity true. They hold presuppositions that are alien to Christian faith, and they interpret all facts in light of those presuppositions (87-88, 125-26).

Presuppositions are not only intellectually unavoidable, they are also ethically obligatory. We have an obligation to believe the truth, and God holds all people accountable for believing falsehood. For Frame, this is just another way of asserting that God is the Lord of all human thought, an idea to which his subtitle, *A Theology of Lordship*, alludes (see also 11-21, 40-48). Therefore, basic to the Christian’s message to unbelievers must be, at least implicitly, a call to repentance of intellectual sins, including the acceptance of unbiblical presuppositions (63-64, 73-75, 108-109, 149, 248).

Frame also agrees with Van Til that the triune God who reveals Himself in Scripture is the necessary and true presupposition of all truth, knowledge, and moral judgment. Thus he endorses Van Til’s method of taking the non-Christian’s position and showing by a *reductio ad absurdum* that it is at bottom irrational and incapable of justifying his claims to knowledge (359-63).

FRAME AND CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS

Despite Frame’s basic commitment to the presuppositional model, he interprets it broadly enough to accommodate significant elements of classical apologetics. This may be seen most directly in his handling of the question of arguments for God’s existence. For Van Til, all apologetic argument must be transcendental: it must argue that unless Christianity is

presupposed as true, nothing is intelligible. So, all theistic proofs reduce to the one transcendental proof that God is the necessary presupposition of everything. For Frame, by contrast, the transcendental argument functions in one of three perspectives of what he calls “offensive apologetics” (359-63).

In his later textbook on apologetics, Frame elaborates on theistic arguments. He denies Van Til’s charge “that the traditional arguments necessarily conclude with something less than the biblical God.” For example, the teleological argument does not imply that God is *merely* a designer; the cosmological argument does not imply that God is *merely* a first cause.⁶⁴ Nor does he think it proper to criticize an argument “because it fails to prove every element of Christian theism. Such an argument may be part of a system of apologetics which as a whole establishes the entire organism of Christian truth.” Not even Van Til’s transcendental argument can prove at once the entirety of Christian theism.⁶⁵

Frame also points out, as we suggested in our discussion of Van Til’s view of theistic proofs, that the indirect form of argument Van Til favors can be converted to a direct argument.

In the final analysis, it doesn’t make much difference whether you say “Causality, therefore God” or “Without God, no causality, therefore God.” Any indirect argument of this sort can be turned into a direct argument by some creative rephrasing. The indirect form, of course, has some rhetorical advantages, at least. But if the indirect form is sound, the direct form will be too—and vice versa. Indeed, if I say “Without God, no causality,” the argument is incomplete, unless I add the positive formulation “But there is causality, therefore God exists,” a formulation identical with the direct argument. Thus, the indirect argument becomes nothing more than a prolegomenon to the direct.⁶⁶

FRAME AND EVIDENTIALISM

Frame also builds bridges between presuppositionalism and evidentialism, giving a more respectful assessment of evidential apologetic labors than is typical of Van Til or his other advocates. He grants that specific evidentialist arguments can be useful and appropriate. “It is quite proper to point out that the resurrection of Christ is as well attested as any other historical fact. It is legitimate to ask why the apostles were willing to die for the belief that Christ had risen. It is legitimate to examine the alternate (unbelieving) explanations for the resurrection reports and to show how implausible they are” (353).

The last sentence here stands in tension with Van Til’s position on alternative explanations for the resurrection of Jesus. According to Van Til, one must argue that such explanations are not merely “implausible” but *irrelevant*: “*God’s self-existence is the presupposition of the relevancy of any hypothesis*. If one should seek to explain the claim of the disciples of Jesus that their Master’s body was raised from the tomb by offering the hypothesis of hallucination, we reply that the hypothesis is irrelevant. Our further study of the factual evidence in the matter is no more than a corroboration of our assertion of the irrelevancy of such an hypothesis.”⁶⁷

Presumably one could argue that a hypothesis was both irrelevant and implausible, so Frame is not necessarily contradicting Van Til. Yet there can be no question but that Frame’s approach makes a concession to more traditional historical apologetics that goes beyond Van Til and fits with his approach only with some stretching.

Basic to the evidentialist model of apologetics is the use of empirical arguments that end in conclusions deemed probable based on the evidence. Van Til flatly rejected such arguments in apologetics; the apologist, he maintained, must conclude that the Resurrection certainly

occurred, not that it probably occurred. While agreeing in substance with Van Til's position here, Frame again seeks to broaden the presuppositional model to include some sort of probability. He points out that even if we regard some matters of faith as certain, not every factual matter pertaining to God's revelation in Scripture will be known to us with certainty. "Even if our faith were perfect, there would still be some matters relevant to theology about which, because of our finitude, we could have only probable knowledge. For example, I doubt that even an unfallen Adam, living in the present, could know with absolute certainty the author of Hebrews. . . . Butler was right when he said that many of our decisions in life are based on probability rather than absolute certainty" (136).

Frame goes on to assert that Butler went wrong because he said "that our belief in Jesus Christ for salvation is only a matter of probability" (136). Actually, Butler does not seem to have said this. For Butler and evidentialists following him, our ability to demonstrate facts about Jesus using historical methods of inquiry could never rise above probability, but this leaves open the possibility of the Christian having certainty about Christ from another source (say, the work of the Holy Spirit). Even this qualified statement about probability, though, would seem to be unacceptable to Frame. Based on the New Testament teaching that sinners have no excuse not to repent, Frame concludes, "Thus the evidential argument is demonstrative, not merely probable. The evidence compels assent; it leaves no loophole, no room for argument." He admits that an empirical argument generally "can never justify more than a probable confidence in its conclusion" (142). The Christian evidential argument attains certainty, though, for several reasons:

- a. Empirical arguments are normally probabilistic because they utilize only *some* facts, but the Christian argument is that God reveals himself in "*all* the facts of experience."

- b. “The very concept of probability presupposes a theistic world view.”
- c. The Holy Spirit’s testimony can accompany the evidence and produce certainty.
- d. “The Christian evidential argument is never *merely* evidential,” but is always part of a “broadly circular” argument presenting the evidence in the light of Christian presuppositions. (143).

We should point out that these factors do not really address the point about empirical arguments reaching probable conclusions. Any specific evidential argument must be based on specific evidences, or selected facts, not on the whole of reality (*a*). The argument that the concept of probability presupposes theism is not an evidential argument at all, but a worldview or presuppositional argument (*b*). The testimony of the Holy Spirit does not alter the logical structure of empirical reasoning, and so is irrelevant to the question of the force of an evidential argument (*c*). Finally, an argument that “always” presents evidence within a “broadly circular” presuppositional argument is really not an empirical argument, but an argument from the logical coherence of the evidence with the Christian system of thought (*d*).

Frame takes more or less the same position in *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, but moves slightly closer to endorsing probabilistic arguments in apologetics. He suggests that it can be legitimate to formulate arguments in which, because of our imperfect understanding of the subject matter, we are not able “to convey adequately the absolute truth of God’s evidence.” “To do so, and to use the word probably in this connection, is not to say that the revealed evidence for God is merely probable; it is rather to say that one portion of the evidence, not well understood by a particular apologist, yields for him an argument which is at best possible or probable.”⁶⁸

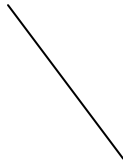
Evidentialists should have no trouble agreeing with Frame here. They would simply go one step further and assert that in the nature of things, *no* “particular apologist” has or can have enough information about *any* “one portion of the evidence” to produce an argument that yields absolute certainty for its conclusion. In other words, because apologists are finite human beings with limited knowledge, they cannot produce empirically grounded arguments that show a 100 percent probability, or absolute certainty, for their conclusions.

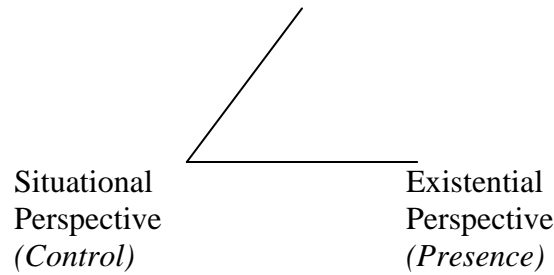
FRAME AND FIDEISM

One of the three perspectives in Frame’s perspectival epistemology is called the *existential* perspective. It is thus natural to ask whether Frame’s treatment of this perspective integrates fideistic elements into his apologetic. It seems that it does. According to Frame, the Lordship of God consists of three perspectively related aspects that correspond to the three epistemological perspectives. They are *authority*, in which he establishes the norms for his people; *control*, in which he rules over every situation of his people; and *presence*, in which God is personally related to the people themselves (15-18). Thus the existential perspective takes into account that coming to faith is a matter of a human person coming into a restored relationship with the God who is always present. We may illustrate these three perspectives as follows:

John Frame’s Three Perspectives on God’s Lordship

Normative
Perspective
(*Authority*)





Frame's development of the existential perspective confirms its correlation with fideism. We are responsible not merely to agree intellectually with the truth, but to "live in truth, walk in truth, do the truth. . . . To know is to respond *rightly* to the evidence and norms available to us" (149). The apologist should challenge non-Christians, then, not merely to accept the doctrines of Christianity, but to act on the Christian message. One famous fideistic formulation of this challenge is Pascal's Wager, which Frame defends against several objections (356). "Faith is a lot like wagering, after all—not that Christianity is uncertain or like a throw of the dice! But the Christian's certainty is not the kind of certainty envisaged by rationalist philosophers, either. . . . Think again of the example of Abraham, who ventured in faith, though many objections to God's promise stared him in the face. In the midst of questions and unresolved difficulties, we follow God" (357).

In addition, Frame agrees with fideists when he writes, "One of the strongest (i.e., *most persuasive*) arguments is Christian love" (357). Apologetics without love and godly character poses a serious danger. Commenting on the famous apologetics text in 1 Peter 3:15-16, Frame writes: "It is interesting that Peter does not urge apologetics to be intelligent and knowledgeable (although such qualities are certainly helpful), but to lead consistently godly lives. He gives us a practical standard for a discipline we are inclined to regard as theoretical. . . . If our life contradicts our doctrine, then our apologetics is hypocritical and loses credibility."⁶⁹

FRAME AND INTEGRATION

Frame does not explicitly argue for integrating different apologetic approaches, but his handling of the approaches and his own epistemology imply a concern to bring them closer together. He explicitly denies that there is only one correct method in apologetics. “Indeed, there are as many methods in apologetics as there are apologists, persons needing Christ, and topics of discussion” (347). He qualifies this statement later by saying that “in some respects all of our methods should be alike” (355), but this does not negate the point.

Perspectivalism, in which the justification of Christian knowledge is refracted into three perspectives, is a model for integrating the different apologetic approaches. There is some ambiguity, though, as to how Frame’s three perspectives correlate with the four apologetic approaches we have been discussing. As we have seen, when he critiques non-Christian epistemologies, he identifies rationalism, empiricism, and subjectivism as three extremes resulting from absolutizing the normative, situational, and existential perspectives respectively. Rationality, empirical reality, and subjective experience must all be used under the authority of God’s revelation in Scripture. In his own Christian epistemology, though, rationality is assigned not to the normative but to the situational perspective, and Scripture is said to be the focal point for the normative perspective.

Further complicating the matter, in his book on apologetics Frame relates the three perspectives to apologetics in yet another way. Constructive apologetics, or apologetics as proof, is the normative perspective; offensive apologetics, or apologetics as offense, is the situational; and defensive apologetics, or apologetics as defense, is the existential.⁷⁰ We may understand what Frame means from his application of the schema to the rest of the book. Apologetics as proof centers on the proof for Christianity from God’s own normative revelation, confirmed by

arguments for God's existence and for the truth of the gospel (chapters 3–5). Frame's arguments here draw from presuppositional, classical, and evidential apologetics, and so this perspective cuts across the lines of the apologetic models we have drawn. Apologetics as defense focuses on responding to arguments thought to disprove Christianity; Frame focuses on the principal such argument, the problem of evil (chapters 6–7). Again one finds classical and presuppositional arguments here, as well as arguments common in more than one apologetic approach. Finally, apologetics as offense focuses on the critique of unbelieving thought; the argument here is characteristically presuppositional but is largely paralleled in classical and evidentialist apologetics (chapter 8).

Conclusion

All the apologists profiled in this chapter have made significant efforts to develop an approach to apologetics that makes good use of alternative approaches. They represent a growing number of evangelical apologists who believe that apologetics ought to incorporate elements traditionally distributed among the four approaches.

Typically, these apologists integrate two or more approaches by expanding one approach to absorb elements (usually not the whole) of the others. So, for example, David K. Clark is really a classical apologist with a broad enough understanding of that method to include the other approaches (especially evidentialism), using the important principle that the utility of arguments is person-relative. C. Stephen Evans is really an evidentialist in his apologetics and a broadly Reformed epistemologist in his theology of revelation and faith. John Frame is (as he maintains) a presuppositionalist with a broadened understanding of that approach to include the others viewed as perspectively related.

We suggest that this practice of expanding or enriching one apologetic approach by incorporating elements of other approaches is just what apologists should do. We doubt that it is possible, or even desirable, to formulate a “fifth” apologetic system that would wholly combine and thus supersede the four basic approaches. Rather than striving to produce the perfect single apologetic system or method or model that all apologists should use, we think Christians should start from the best approach they know and augment or refine it using whatever they can from other approaches. In the remaining chapters of this book, we will elaborate on this proposal.

For Further Study

Hanna, Mark M. *Crucial Questions in Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981. Presents an approach called “veridicalism” as an alternative to presuppositionalism and traditional apologetics.

Mayers, Ronald B. *Balanced Apologetics: Using Evidences and Presuppositions in Defense of the Faith*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996. Originally published as *Both/And: A Balanced Apologetic*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Argues that a sound apologetic must maintain a “dialectical balance” between the rational/presuppositional and the empirical/evidential aspects of apologetics.

¹C. S. Lewis, “On Obstinacy in Belief,” in *The World’s Last Night*, 17.

²B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1956).

³Evans, *Faith Beyond Reason*, 55 (see 55-64).

⁴See B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism*, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, vol. 5 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981).

⁵Cf. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 111-12.

⁶Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims*, 176.

⁷Edgar Sheffield Brightman (1884-1953) was a philosopher in the tradition of idealism. He taught that God is a finite being who brought the universe into its created form out of a preexistent chaos and is working to perfect the universe and himself.

⁸Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims*, 11. Note that for some reason Lewis changes the order of Carnell's books, discussing *Kingdom of Love* (in chapter 9) before *Christian Commitment* (in 10), and therefore "psychology" (which deals with love) before "ethics" (which deals with justice).

⁹Edward John Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics: A Philosophic Defense of the Trinitarian-Theistic Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; 4th ed., 1953); *A Philosophy of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952); *Christian Commitment: An Apologetic* (New York: Macmillan, 1957; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982); *The Kingdom of Love and the Pride of Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960).

¹⁰Carnell, *Kingdom of Love*, 6.

¹¹Edward John Carnell, *The Burden of Søren Kierkegaard* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965).

¹²The only published biography of Carnell is Rudolph Nelson, *The Making and Unmaking of an Evangelical Mind: The Case of Edward Carnell* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

For background on Carnell's life and work at Fuller, see George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987). Introductions to Carnell's apologetic and theology include Bernard L. Ramm, "Edward John Carnell," in *Types of Apologetic Systems: An Introductory Study to the Christian Philosophy of Religion* (Wheaton, Ill.: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 210-36; Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims* (1976), 176-284; John A. Sims, *Edward John Carnell: Defender of the Faith* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1979); John G. Stackhouse, Jr., "Who Follows in His Train': Edward John Carnell as a Model for Evangelical Theology," *Crux* 21, no. 2 (June 1985): 19-27; L. Joseph Rosas III, "Edward John Carnell," in *Baptist Theologians*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman, 1990), 606-626; Rosas, "The Theology of Edward John Carnell," *Criswell Theological Review* 4 (1990): 351-71; John A. Sims, "Part Two: Edward John Carnell," in *Missionaries to the Skeptics* (1995), 95-148.

¹³Carnell, *Introduction*, 57. Carnell's four major works are cited in the text as *Introduction*, *Philosophy*, *Commitment*, and *Kingdom* respectively. For full titles, see n. 9 above.

¹⁴Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims*, 178.

¹⁵Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 114.

¹⁶Cornelius Van Til, *Defense of the Faith*, 3d ed. (1967), pp. 225-57; see also Van Til, review of *Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, by Carnell, *Westminster Theological Journal* 11 (1948): 45-53; chapter 3 of *The Case for Calvinism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1963); “Reply” to Gordon R. Lewis, in *Jerusalem and Athens*, ed. Geehan, 361-68.

¹⁷Van Til, *Defense of the Faith*, 227.

¹⁸Bahnsen, *Van Til’s Apologetic*, 549 and n. 64; see 537-50.

¹⁹Frame, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought*, pp. 286-287; see the entire chapter, 285-97.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 294.

²¹Kenneth L. Woodward, “Guru of Fundamentalism,” *Newsweek*, 1 November 1982, 88.

²²On Schaeffer’s life, see Edith Schaeffer, *L’Abri* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1969) and *The Tapestry* (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1984); Christopher Catherwood, *Five Evangelical Leaders* (Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw, 1985), 113-61; Colin Duriez, “Francis Schaeffer,” in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter E. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 245-59; Burson and Walls, *C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer* (1998), 34-48.

²³*The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer*, 5 vols. (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1982). Quotations from Schaeffer’s writings, and page references in the text, will all be taken from this set, with the volume number preceding the colon and the page reference following.

²⁴Louis G. Parkhurst, *Francis Schaeffer: The Man and His Message* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1985); Lane T. Dennis, ed., *Francis A. Schaeffer: Portraits of the Man and His Work* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1986); Ronald W. Ruesegger, ed., *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986); Thomas V. Morris, *Francis Schaeffer's Apologetics: A Critique*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987; original, 1976).

²⁵Clark H. Pinnock, "Schaeffer on Modern Theology," in *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer*, ed. Ruesegger, 186.

²⁶Reymond, *Justification of Knowledge*, 145.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 146 (cf. 136-48).

²⁸Gordon R. Lewis, "Schaeffer's Apologetic Method," in *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer*, ed. Ruesegger, 71 (cf. 69-104).

²⁹*Ibid.*, 94.

³⁰As quoted in Jack Rogers, "Francis Schaeffer: The Promise and the Problem," *Reformed Journal* 27 (1977): 12-13.

³¹Quoted in Edgar, "Two Christian Warriors," 59.

³²Forrest Baird, "Schaeffer's Intellectual Roots," in *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer*, ed. Ruesegger, 46-55.

³³See our discussion of Dooyeweerd's philosophy in chapter 12.

³⁴Baird takes notice of the connection, but his description of Van Til's apologetic is unsatisfactory (ibid., 55-58). For example, he erroneously asserts that according to Van Til, "the careful development and presentation of Christian evidences is really a waste of time" (57).

³⁵Edgar, "Two Christian Warriors," 57-80.

³⁶Ibid., 60-64.

³⁷Ibid., 70-74.

³⁸Ibid., 75.

³⁹Ibid., 75.

⁴⁰David K. Clark, *The Pantheism of Alan Watts* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1978).

⁴¹David K. Clark, *The Relation of Tradition to Experience in Mysticism* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1982).

⁴²David K. Clark and Norman L. Geisler, *Apologetics in the New Age: A Christian Critique of Pantheism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990). Parenthetical page references in the following paragraphs are to this book.

⁴³David L. Wolfe, *Epistemology: The Justification of Belief*, *Contours of Christian Philosophy* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1982), 50-55.

⁴⁴David K. Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993). Parenthetical page references in the following paragraphs are to this book.

⁴⁵Evans has recounted his life and career up to 1991 in “A Privileged Calling,” in *Storying Ourselves: A Narrative Perspective on Christians in Psychology*, ed. D. John Lee, Christian Explorations in Psychology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 187-209.

⁴⁶C. Stephen Evans, *Despair: A Moment or a Way of Life* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1971).

⁴⁷C. Stephen Evans, *Existentialism: The Philosophy of Despair and the Quest for Hope* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984; Dallas: Probe Books, 1989).

⁴⁸C. Stephen Evans, *Philosophy of Religion: Thinking about Faith*, Contours of Christian Philosophy (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1985); *The Quest for Faith: Reason and Mystery as Pointers to God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1986). The Contours of Christian Philosophy series was edited by Evans himself and included a volume on ethics by his former professor Arthur Holmes and other noted evangelical philosophers.

⁴⁹C. Stephen Evans, *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith: The Incarnational Narrative as History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 233. Parenthetical page references in the following paragraphs are to this book.

⁵⁰C. Stephen Evans, “Apologetics in a New Key: Relieving Protestant Anxieties over Natural Theology,” in *The Logic of Rational Theism: Exploratory Essays*, ed. William Lane Craig and

Mark S. McLeod, *Problems in Contemporary Philosophy*, vol. 24 (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 70, 75.

⁵¹C. Stephen Evans, *Why Believe? Reason and Mystery as Pointers to God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 19. Parenthetical page references in the following paragraphs are to this book.

⁵²Evans, *Historical Christ*, 32. Parenthetical page references in the following paragraphs are to this book.

⁵³Evans, *Why Believe*, 73. Parenthetical page references in the following paragraphs are to this book.

⁵⁴Evans, *Historical Christ*, 25. Parenthetical page references in the following paragraphs are to this book.

⁵⁵For most of the biographical information presented here, see Frame, *Cornelius Van Til*, 15-18.

⁵⁶John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God: A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1987). All parenthetical page references in the text in this section are to this book.

⁵⁷John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994).

⁵⁸John M. Frame, *Medical Ethics: Principles, Persons, and Problems* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988); *Perspectives on the Word of God: An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1990).

⁵⁹On hermeneutics, see Vern Sheridan Poythress, *Science and Hermeneutics: Implications of Scientific Method for Biblical Interpretation*, *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academic, 1988), later published as part of a single volume, *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, ed. V. Philips Long (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); and Poythress, *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).

⁶⁰Vern Sheridan Poythress, *Symphonic Theology: The Validity of Multiple Perspectives in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academic, 1987).

⁶¹Cf. Frame, *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 75.

⁶²John M. Frame, *Van Til: The Theologian* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Harmony Press, 1976), 5 n. 10.

⁶³Frame, *Cornelius Van Til*, 16.

⁶⁴Frame, *Apologetics*, 71.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 72, 73.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 76.

⁶⁷Van Til, *Christian-Theistic Evidences*, 56-57, emphasis in original.

⁶⁸Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, 81.

⁶⁹Ibid., 27.

⁷⁰Frame, *Apologetics*, 2-3 and n. 5. Parenthetical page references in the remainder of this paragraph are to this book.