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Disertační práce

THE NATURE AND IDENTITY OF APOLOGETICS IN LIGHT OF THE CALLS OF SCRIPTURE AND THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

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I declare that I am the author of this graduation doctoral thesis,
and that I used in its preparation only sources and literature listed in the Bibliography.

Stuart Nicolson, 31st August 2023

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Contents

Abbreviations

The version of the Bible used throughout is the Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (RSVCE) unless stated.

Scripture
OT – Old Testament
NT – New Testament
1Pt or 1Peter – *First Letter of Peter*
2Tim or 2Timothy – *Second Letter of Paul to Timothy*

Apostolic Fathers
AF(s) – Apostolic Father(s)
1Clem – *First Letter of Clement*
IgnEph – *Ignatius to the Ephesians*
IgnMag – *Ignatius to the Magnesians*
IgnTra – *Ignatius to the Trallians*
IgnRom – *Ignatius to the Romans*
IgnSmy – *Ignatius to the Smyrneans*
IgnPhi – *Ignatius to the Philippians*
IgnPol – *Ignatius to Polycarp*
Pol – *Polycarp to the Philippians*
AH – *Adverses Haereses*

Documents of the Second Vatican Council
AA – Apostolicam Actuositatem
AG – Ad Gentes
CD – Christus Dominus
DH – Dignitatis Humanae
DV – Dei Verbum
GE – Gravissimum Educationis
GS – Gaudium et Spes
LG – Lumen Gentium
NA – Nostra Aetate
OT – Optatam Totius
SC – Sacrosanctum Concilium

Theological Texts and Terms
LAC – *Love Alone Is Credible*
RB – *Razing the Bastions*
NA – New Apologetics
EAC – evangelisation, apologetics, catechetics
BGT – beauty, goodness, truth
GCC – God, Christ, Church
FT – fundamental theology

Other Magisterial Documents
HG – Humani Generis
CCC – Catechism of the Catholic Church
VD – Verbum Domini
VS – Veritatis Splendor
CV – Caritas in Veritate
EG - Evangelii Gaudium

Miscellaneous
ch – chapter
v/vv – verse/s
c./cc. – canon/s

Surveys
PR – Pew Research Survey
SoT – State of Theology Survey

Introduction

Apologetics in recent times has been considered negatively by many and since the term 'apologetics' or similar was omitted from the 16 documents of the Second Vatican Council, it has been held that it belongs to theological and Church history. Apologetics for some has been dismissed for decades and the general impression can be that 'it is not done anymore' and that 'we have moved on'.

However, one Council theme was *ressourcement*, returning to the sources. The origin of apologetics is in Peter's call in 1Peter 3:15-16. This requires all faithful to be prepared to respond to questions and challenges about the faith, and to do so in a Christian manner. Paul and Jude confirm this, and Acts displays apologetical engagements. The call can be shortened – preparation, response, in a Christian manner – and this is used throughout this study.

With this definition in mind, not only can two references to these verses be found in the conciliar documents, there are two clear paraphrases of Peter's call, in *Lumen Gentium*[1] (LG) 10 and *Dignitatis Humanae*[2] (DH) 14, and Jude's call is referenced and repeated in *Dei Verbum*[3] (DV) 8. This means a working definition of apologetics based on the scriptural and conciliar calls can be established. With apologetics having been included by the Council Fathers, without being named, but then mostly rejected after the Council, there is clearly a significant problem regarding the nature and identity of apologetics in general terms.

With a distinct discord between the Council and subsequent developments regarding apologetics, the indications are that understandings of apologetics differ. To explore this possibility, this study seeks answers in the history of apologetics, how it developed, and to what extent it related to the original Petrine call.

This study is split into four main parts. Part 1 establishes the working definition of Petrine apologetics from Scripture and the confirmation in Vatican II. Part 2 observes the development and use of apologetics in four different periods (Parts 2a-d) using selected Christian figures. Part 3 focuses on Vatican II, the prior reform calls, and subsequent developments. And Part 4 examines the need for apologetics today and how it can develop in Petrine terms.

The working definition is established in Part 1 by studying the Greek etymology of *apologia*, then identifies its use and establishes the meanings in 1Peter, Paul's

[1] 'Lumen Gentium' (LG), *The Holy See*, 21st November 1964, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.
[2] 'Dignitatis Humanae' (DH), *The Holy See*, 7th December 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html.
[3] 'Dei Verbum' (DV), *The Holy See*, 18th November 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

2Timothy, and Jude's short Letter. The above mentioned three calls of LG, DH, and DV are briefly examined for their congruency with the Petrine call, which is found to be significant.

Part 2a establishes a means of interpreting Early Church texts as more in accord with the canonical exegesis encouraged in recent decades particularly by Josef Ratzinger / Pope Benedict XVI, rather than the compartmentalising historical-critical method. The former recognises the context of the wider situation, which is more faithful to the contemporary experiences studied. The significant presence of apologetics in the Gospels and Acts is recognised in Petrine terms. The following generation, the Apostolic Fathers also offer evidence of apologetics but this is limited mainly due to a sparsity of sources. It is mainly preparation of the faithful and calls to engage with others. The image develops, but then it changes with the second century adaptation to addressing non-faithful.

An apologetical turn is seen in Part 2b, based on the new approach, which is then strongly imbued with philosophical and legal styles and content by Justin Martyr. While within the general Petrine definition of apologetics, it was clearly intellectual and only for the educated. Although Irenaeus offered a pastoral apologetics after this, preparing his flock and calling them to participate in the faith, Justin's approach became the norm through others like two lawyers with different styles: the fiery Tertullian or the dove-like Minucius Felix – the former eschewed the Christian manner and the latter may have lacked preparation as the Christian content was not well developed.

Eusebius of Caesarea is an important figure, not for his apologetics which overly-quoted his favourite writers but because his propensity for intellectual texts and his writings later becoming the main source for Early Church texts means that any 'ordinary' apologetical texts did not survive the culling of Christian texts in the persecutions. Later Church Fathers concretised the now elite, intellectual, and clerical nature of apologetics: the universal aspect had disappeared and Christian manner was not always present.

There could have been, as Part 2c shows, a Petrine apologetical revival in the Mediaeval period but the pro-preparation reforms of the Fourth Lateran Council were not implemented properly. St Dominic's engagement with the Albigensians, Lateran IV, and two conflicting views of Late Mediaeval faithful are considered. As developed in the Early Church, the faithful were catechised in what to believe and how to enact this, rather than the preparation of why to believe and how to explain it. This meant an inability to explain one's faith to others when challenged in the Reformation.

Part 2d shows the development of credibility – a form of Christian manner – first in the implementation of the Trent reforms by Archbishop Charles Borromeo in Milan, and countering this with the strong apologetics of Edmund Campion, which lacked the third Petrine element. Pascal's subjective approach is noted and picked up later, in Part 4. John Henry Newman established Catholic credibility at an intellectual level, which became a platform for organic developments decades later. The English-speaking environment, where apologetical engagement was often unavoidable, saw a growth of ordinary apologetics, as shown by four selected figures.

In historical terms, there are few useful resources, and many interpretations in light of the Petrine call are necessary. Secondary sources are sparse. Avery Dulles's *A History of Apologetics*[4] is a very good resource but his understanding is Justinian, that is, recognising intellectual and academic texts. Criticism of his approach occurs but overall it has been very helpful. Also, Glenn B. Siniscalchi's *Retrieving Apologetics*,[5] still intellectual, was also very helpful, especially regarding some Council documents.

Part 3 begins in the Catholic European sphere, which was still based heavily on the Council of Trent's defensive approach. Engagement was not encouraged with non-faithful, so apologetics developed in a more catechetical way. Hans Urs von Balthasar recognised problems with both the old ways that needed to change and many of the reform calls based on Enlightenment ideas, as he shows. His third way, establishing credibility in Christian love, is significantly Petrine, which can be seen in the apologetics in the Vatican II documents. Apart from the clear calls, *Gravissimum Educationis* (GE)[6] contains a strong call to provide education/preparation for the faithful and briefly explores the theology of this. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA)[7] is particularly apologetical, with calls for preparation and engagement with others in the community and wider society. There is also apologetical content and clear connections to this in *Ad Gentes*(AG),[8] *Christus Dominus* (CD),[9] *Gaudium et Spes* (GS),[10] *Nostra Aetate* (NA),[11] and *Optatam Totius* (OT).[12]

Despite the clear apologetical calls and content, as apologetics was usually understood in Justinian terms, particularly in Europe, apologetics was mostly rejected as 'the old way'. It was replaced by fundamental theology (FT), which is shown not to be connected to scriptural and conciliar defined apologetics but somewhat as a continuation of the Justinian approach as well as developing in accord somewhat with the reform ideas

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[4] Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005).
[5] Glenn B. Siniscalchi, *Retrieving Apologetics* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016).
[6] 'Gravissimum Educationis' (GE), *The Holy See*, 28th October 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html.
[7] 'Apostolicam Actuositatem' (AA), *The Holy See*, 18th November 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html.
[8] 'Ad Gentes' (AG), *The Holy See*, 7th December 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_lt.html.
[9] 'Christus Dominus' (CD), *The Holy See*, 28th October 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html.
[10] 'Gaudium et Spes' (GS), *The Holy See*, 7th December 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.
[11] 'Nostra Aetate' (NA), *The Holy See*, 28th October 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.
[12] 'Optatam Totius' (OT), *The Holy See*, 28th October 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_optatam-totius_en.html.

that Balthasar rejected. However, in 1980s America, a new organic development of apologetics was taking place.

Due to this development being organic, and FT remaining significantly intellectual, there is a lack of Petrine apologetics studies in academia. Therefore, this study has regularly used sources that are of good quality, sometimes written by academics, but produced for readers with a good education rather than in academia. They differ in quality but many are at a good standard, supplying ordinary faithful with good apologetical preparation. Where standards are lower or questionable (Wikipedia, etc.), the source is used with appropriate wariness and is not relied upon.

The Part 4 focus is on apologetics today. Two surveys show concerning problems in basic Catholic knowledge and understanding in the faithful. Preparation is weak and engagement is therefore problematic. The need for solutions is strong and the growth of New Apologetics is recognised. To develop apologetics today, further unpacking of the Petrine elements is necessary, as well as understanding several distinctions in a deeper way. Three voices are offered to give further insight and good examples: William Levada, Robert Barron, and Peter Kreeft. Each are intellectual, two are clerics, but they encourage and develop new approaches including making apologetics more accessible and understandable.

This study seeks to show that recognising and returning to a Petrine understanding of apologetics is timely and even needed. The postmodern milieu offers rich opportunities for apologetical engagement and this requires preparation of the faithful in order to fulfil the calls of Scripture and the Second Vatican Council.

Part 1 – A Working Definition

1.1 – Etymology and Origins of 'Apologia'
1.2 – The Petrine Call
1.3 – The Pauline Call
1.4 – The Apologetical Letter of Jude
1.5 – Apologetics at the Second Vatican Council

Introduction

The purpose and process of giving a definition of apologetics is not a simple or straightforward task. There is no widely agreed means of identifying what apologetics is, and to many different people an image or definition held can be at variance with others who have a different experience or context in which they have gained their understanding. Dulles gives a flavour of this in his brief exploration of apologetics, particularly with regard to before and around the Second Vatican Council;[13] this is looked at more closely in Part 3.

'Apologetics' elicits a range of positive or negative, and sometimes neutral, responses, when this form of Christian activity is brought up in conversation or as a topic in anything from ecclesial or academic contexts, as well as wider social situations, but the very elements 'apologetics' refers to can differ significantly.[14] One who speaks of explaining the faith to those enquiring deeper can be talking about 'apologetics' to another whose default understanding of 'apologetics' is of an outdated and even painful history in the Church that has little good to offer. The reasons for this will be more apparent later on but the focus of Part 1 is to have a working definition for moving forward in this study.

The benefits of a clear definition are identifying Christian elements and how to develop them in the faithful, how to improve specific abilities, how to understand apologetics in itself rather than being evaluated for what it is not, or should not be, and to identify when it is not being used appropriately. All of these will enable apologetics to develop effectively in itself and in relation to other fields and activities.

The development of a sound general definition should be based upon clear Christian authority, various sources, and more than one time period. This is because Christianity is a structured religion in a vertical shape. It is based upon God the Father sending the Logos, his Son, to mankind because he 'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (1Tim 2:4) through his Son Jesus Christ who redeemed mankind and, aided by the Holy Spirit, formed and developed the Church, which produced the Scriptures known as the New Testament (NT). The Church was

[13] For example, Avery Dulles, *Evangelization for the Third Millennium* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), 115-8.
[14] Ibid., 117-8.

initially led by the Apostles, headed by Peter, and their authority was handed on to the bishops, and thus down through the generations of these who have led the faithful. Therefore, it is right that the definition of 'apologetics' as far as possible comes from the Apostles through Scripture as well as identifying what the Church teaches on 'apologetics' in the largest meeting of bishops in recent history – the Second Vatican Council; this is confirmed by the Council's *ressourcement* – going back to the sources – which can strengthen the Council's authority in the eyes of Christians who do not recognise the apostolic succession in the Catholic Church.

Scripture is the obvious authority for all Christians, and the most significant NT figures after Jesus Christ himself are the Apostles Peter and Paul. Both call us to apologetical activity: in 1Peter 3:15-16 and Paul most clearly in 2Timothy 3:14-4:2. The very apologetical single chapter of the Letter of Jude supplements these – a veritable mine of first century apologetical thinking.

The Vatican II documents are the second main source for building a working definition of apologetics. Chapter 3.2 shows that 10 of the 16 conciliar documents contain clear apologetical calls or include apologetics; two are distinct and define apologetics, thus they are similar to and reiterate the scriptural calls. This deliberate *ressourcement* is a confirmation and even a strengthening of a clear definition of apologetics, and together they identify a working definition for apologetics, which fulfils the four reasons above for a distinct and qualitative recognition of the nature and identity of apologetics.

In Part 1, after considering first the etymology of 'apologetics' to help identify its meaning, the following chapters examine the scriptural sources of key passages of Peter, Paul, and Jude, then examine the three Vatican II quotes that confirm the scriptural content as being relevant today, as well as throughout Christian history. The definition gleaned in Part 1 is used in subsequent parts.

1.1 – Etymology and Origins of 'Apologia'

Contrary to what is sometimes presented,[15] the earliest known use of 'apologia' in the Christian context is in 1Pt 3:15[16], thus it is historically the source of the concept in Christian terms. To have a definition of the concept, it is important to understand απολογια, apologia.

The *Online Etymological Dictionary* (OED) states that two parts make up apologia: apo-logia. The latter, the root, comes from the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root *leg-* which means 'to collect, gather'. In our context, this is 'with derivatives meaning "to speak" on the notion of "to gather words, to pick out words."'[17] This means *logos*, the Greek philosophical concept associated early in Christian understanding with the Son of God in attempting to describe Jesus Christ, can be regarded as 'the chosen word or expression'. OED lists connected words including: 'Greek *legein* "to say, tell, speak, declare; to count," originally in Homer, "to pick out, select, collect, enumerate;"' or 'Latin *legere* "to gather, choose, pluck; read"'.[18] 'Logos' is in the list, with the given meanings 'word, speech, thought, account'. These words already provide a general flavour of the identity of apologetics.

The prefix apo- in Greek is a 'word-forming element meaning "of, from, away from; separate, apart from, free from," from Greek *apo* "from, away from; after; in descent from"'.[19] This is from the 'PIE root **apo-* "off, away"'.[20] In Old English it was '*of*, unstressed form of *æf* (prep., adv.) "away, away from," from Proto-Germanic **af* (source also of Old Norse *af*, Old Frisian *af, of* "of," Dutch *af* "off, down," German *ab* "off, from, down"), from PIE root ***apo-** "off, away."'[21] In today's English, not to be confused with the genitive 'of', it is 'off', or in Scots 'aff'. In meaning, in apologetics, it means out or away from.

Putting the two parts together, apologia refers to a phrasal verb (verb + preposition) meaning 'to speak out'; as a noun, it is words going out, words that go away from the speaker, therefore the gerund 'speaking out' is probably the clearest raw meaning. The normal meaning of 'to speak out', however, is to speak publicly, giving an opinion or pointing out a fact, often a speaking out from a (present or not present) group of others who are not speaking out. Therefore, it has the feeling of speaking as a representative of a group, which is not unlike an apologist explaining the position of Christianity.

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[15] An internet search for 'the first apologia' offers a first page of all 10 links to Justin Martyr's 'First Apology' (https://www.startpage.com/sp/search, on 17th July 2023). Changing this to 'the first apologetics' gives a more general set of results, which includes Justin, names Quadratus as the first apologist, but has no mention of Peter.

[16] See ch1.2.

[17] Douglas Harper, 'Etymology of *leg-', Online Etymology Dictionary, accessed 17th March 2023, https://www.etymonline.com/word/*leg-.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Douglas Harper, 'Etymology of apo-', *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed 17th March 2023, https://www.etymonline.com/word/apo-.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

OED defines the word 'apologia'[22] as a '"defense, justification," 1784, the Latin form of **apology** (q.v.); popularized by J.H. Newman's *"Apologia pro Vita Sua"* (1864). It preserves the older sense of the English *apology* and the sense of the Greek original, especially as used by the Church fathers.' However, OED then unfortunately quotes Max Stackhouse whose first sentence is correct but the remainder is only partially accurate – he omits 1Peter as the original Christian use of apologia and his final claim is arguably wrong:[23]

> In common Greek, *apologia* refers to the speech that an accused person delivered in court, rejecting the charges filed against him or her. The apologists of the second century chose this term because they wanted to show that the charges filed against Christians were unjustified and that the truths of their faith could be described and defended. An *apologia* was dedicated to the Roman empoeror [sic], who certainly never read it.[24]

The OED page on 'apology'[25] provides helpful historical context: 'In classical Greek, "a well-reasoned reply; a 'thought-out response' to the accusations made," as that of Socrates.' This earlier usage of apo-logia also resonates more with the raw 'speaking out'. It describes concepts becoming words that are spoken, thus 'speaking out'; also, it is a reply or response which has a more general meaning than the highly contextualised and even polemic 'defence', which is also used frequently; this study generally avoids its use because of its polemical use.

A final OED entry is of use. The word 'apologue'[26] is a '"moral fable, fictitious story intended to convey useful truths," 1550s, from French *apologue*, from Latin *apologus*, from Greek *apologos* "a story, tale, fable," from *apo* "off, away from" (see **apo-**) + *logos* "speech" (see **Logos**). Literally, "(that which comes) from a speech."' While the fictionalisation in the sister-word 'apologue' seems unhelpful for apologetics, by understanding 'mythos' as an explanation usually of an origin can help colour the meaning of 'apologia' as an explanation including the origin or meaning of a teaching or concept.

While it may be regarded that the apologia is based on the Apologist Justin Martyr, who was a philosopher-legalist (see Part 2b), Peter used it earlier in 1Pt 3:15, and Luke used the verb form in Acts multiple times regarding Paul (who also used it) explaining the faith to several important figures. But what was Peter's source? The Greek legal term for a formal accusation was *kategoria*, and the formal response, *apologia*.[27] This

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[22] Douglas Harper, 'Etymology of apologia', *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed 17th March 2023, https://www.etymonline.com/word/apologia.
[23] See ch2a.3.
[24] Max L. Stackhouse, "Apologia", 1988, quoted in ibid.
[25] Douglas Harper, 'Etymology of apology', *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed 17th March 2023, https://www.etymonline.com/word/apology.
[26] Douglas Harper, 'Etymology of apologue', *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed 17th March 2023, https://www.etymonline.com/word/apologue.
[27] Rob Phillips, *The Last Apologist* (2017), https://app.box.com/s/bi4lr1gn7mm5vo4arxzcg7bnmvarmpm9, 10. Confirmed by D. H. Williams, in emailed manuscripts to the author, 2nd March 2023.

reinforces the idea of speaking out in one's defence, or giving an explanation for one's conduct. This explains Luke using this word as Paul made a defence (e.g., Acts 26:2). However, Peter uses the term and follows it immediately with a condition: to do it in a Christian manner (see chapter 1.2). Therefore, a Christian apologia is not simply to defend oneself but rather to defend or explain the faith in a way befitting a Christian. Why would Peter use such a term? Why not just 'explanation'? Using a Greek legal term suggests that the Christians were already being accused by others – in court or beyond – and that they should not remain silent or secretive but speak out about the faith, to respond to others truthfully, respectfully, in a loving manner.

Therefore, in raw meaning, *apologia* is a speaking out in the sense of a response based upon one's understanding. Originally a legal (or philosophical) defence, a more general meaning of a reply or response is possible: an explanation of meaning or source. As Peter's words require the Christian always to be prepared to make an 'apologia', and the preceding verses regard all situations regardless of danger existing, it is expedient to regard the word 'apologia' in 1Pt 3:15 to have a broad meaning, which can be described as a response, explanation, defence, or bearing witness, as seen in Parts 3 and 4. It is with this range of meanings that this study of apologetics proceeds and any use of any of these words should be regarded as being replaceable by any of the alternative words.

1.2 – The Petrine Call

In defining and identifying apologetics as a concept, a very concise pair of verses in the First Letter of Peter are foundational and are recognised as the source of the original meaning of Christian apologetics because of the Greek word *apologia*. While apologetics is historically – chronologically – found earlier than Peter's Epistle, in other NT books including the Gospels (e.g., Jesus on the road to Emmaus), Peter in a predictably concise manner encapsulated the method and means in the short text. Focusing on these two verses enables defining apologetics from what is not apologetics, which means a careful examination of these verses is fundamental to this study.

Authorship

A brief consideration of the source of 1Peter provides an apologia for its traditional authorship and gives an insight into the period. The style of writing – brief, to the point – is typical of having a more practical background, such as a fisherman.

Historical critical methods which 'scientifically' decontextualise Scripture from its spiritual sources have led to a sceptical spirit that Peter, chief apostle, fisherman, follower, and friend of Jesus, could not have written the Letter. Typically,[28] this is because (1) Jewish fishermen didn't know good quality Greek, (2) persecution – a theme of the Letter – only began in AD 81, (3) Rome was not identified as Babylon until after the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem's Temple, and also (4) the text is dependent upon Paul's epistles for ideas.

These common claims depend on a compartmentalisation of early Christian events, which a non-specialist apologist should be capable of refuting. Sceptics seem to require scriptural authors to have manually written the texts (1), denying any amanuensis with freedom to edit the language quality, especially if Peter's Greek was so poor (although he had had several decades to improve it!). Further, perhaps an editing process retained Peter's words (or certainly meaning) in a sort of dynamic equivalence in up-levelling the aesthetics of his writing – editing or even 'ghost-writing' today does not deny original authorship so why demand it of Early Church writers?

Claiming that persecution really only began in AD 81 under Domitian (2) is puzzling yet the *Eerdmans Commentary of the Bible*[29] holds this. The persecutions in Rome in AD 64 and 67 under Nero, either of which included Peter's Crucifixion, are well established. The *Eerdmans* commentary acknowledges the former, but claims 'There is no clear evidence that Nero's persecution of Christians following the fire in Rome in AD 64 extended into any of the areas to which 1Peter was sent.' The addressees of the Epistle

[28] 'First Epistle of Peter', *Wikipedia*, accessed 25th March 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Epistle_of_Peter. This source is used because it offers a sceptical and brief overview of the source of 1Peter, and it is also a probable source of many 'lay' sceptics with whom apologists engage and also a likely first 'background' source used by some faithful unfortunately.

[29] Graham N. Stanton, '1 Peter', in *Eerdmans Commentary of the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn. (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 1494.

are ‘the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappado’cia, Asia, and Bithyn’ia’ (1Pt 1:1), who belong to the general diaspora of Christians from Jerusalem and the Holy Land due particularly to conflict with authorities and growing Jewish non-acceptance of Christians in synagogues (Acts has many examples). Therefore, Stanton’s claim that ‘persecution’ in 1Peter was only that by the highest authorities (Nero or Domitian) is weak because the Petrine text’s clearest reference to persecution is probably v1:6 – ‘though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials’ – which applies to the Church in the well-established diaspora far more than the localised Rome experience.

It stretches credulity to believe it took many decades before Christians saw parallels (power, spiritual evil…) between Rome and Babylon; as Peter was there clandestinely for over a decade (as is widely established also), him using the code-word ‘Babylon’ (3) for Rome is very reasonable.

Finally, claiming that Peter’s writing was similar to Paul’s and even dependent on it (4) only stands if Peter – chief apostle and fellow inhabitant of Rome – cannot have communicated with Paul or read his letters dating back to AD 50 (1Thess), and nor could any of his possible writers or editors. This Apostle-compartmentalisation is highly unrealistic, thus very weak.

Rather, the burden of proof is on any sceptical claim. The four claims were refuted ably as far back as 1953: H. Willmering establishes 1Peter’s authenticity due to use by ‘SS Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Papias, Polycarp’[30] and the authors of Barnabas and Hermas, and mentions by several key Early Church Fathers; he then lists the sceptical claims – basically the same as Eerdmans’ – and refutes them in a scholastic style with appropriate clarity. On the ‘later persecution’ claim by matching the scriptural wording to more likely events than imperial persecutions:

> The persecution implied in 2:12; 3:9-16; 4:4-16 came from the pagan crowds of slanders, outrages, false accusations of crime, reproaches for the name of Christ. Such forms of persecution Christians were exposed to from the beginning, *cf.* Suetonius, *Nero,* 16; Tacitus, *Annales,* 1, 44.

Willmering also notes the similarities between Petrine and Pauline writings as being quite expectable as they were not rivals but more likely cooperated. Finally, Peter most likely utilised the available Silvanus as a secretary – as noted by Jerome – and ‘we may attribute the correct style to him.’[31]

Therefore, late-dating is not particularly supportable and depends on an a priori preference and is more sceptical than historical. Therefore, it is reasonable to accept Peter as the most likely author of the content, if not entirely in particular wording or style. This means the first Pope – given the Keys to the Kingdom (Mt 16), being the authority (Is 22:22) of Heaven, and thus most likely to speak in concert with and even by the authority of the Holy Spirit – is the clearest source of how Christians should communicate the faith

[30] H. Willmering, ‘The First Epistle of St Peter’, in *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. Dom Bernard Orchard et al. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1953), 1177.
[31] Ibid.

when called to do so. That sceptical arguments refuted easily in 1953 are still commonly presented in academia and for 'ordinary' use clearly indicates a problem with explaining the faith.

Context of the Petrine Call

The whole letter is a range of calls by Peter to the faithful in the diaspora, that is, all faithful, to do what is right. The imminent return of Christ was decreasingly likely, the Christian message was regularly being rejected, and the great hope of Christianity – many conversions – was happening less often. Rather, Jews were increasingly rejecting Christians from the synagogues and presumably in the streets also. Jesus' words about bringing a sword and families being split, father against son, etc. (Mt 10:34-6), were increasingly evident: the Christian journey was not easy. Christians could only benefit from support and pastoral advice from the Chief Shepherd of the Church as all the faithful were in reality in the diaspora, for there was no worldly home for Christians (cf., Mt 8:19-20).

1Peter 3 begins with instructions to wives and husbands and the theme of relationships between different faithful; having begun in the previous chapter, it ends in v8. The theme of Christians with regard to others begins with v9 and then imperfectly quotes Ps 34:12-16a in vv10-12, probably from memory. Then later, from v18, the text focuses on Christ's proclamation to the imprisoned souls, with v18 acting as a bridge between the themes.

Verses 13-18 contain Christian apologetics in its original context:

> **13** Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?
> **14** But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. 'Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.'
> **15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,
> **16** keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.
> **17** For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
> **18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

The first verses remind the faithful that they cannot be truly harmed if they seek what is right, and that those suffering for right will be blessed (v14), recalling Jesus' Beatitudes: 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Mt 5:10). The focus should not be fear but worshipping Jesus (vv14b-15a). The key apologetical words are in vv15b-16, followed by a reminder that suffering for what is right is better than avoiding what is right (v17). Then is a powerful reminder that the pure Christ died for us impure ones, and it is implied that in faith we too are 'being

put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit' (v18). Therefore, the apologetical context is a reminder, in times of suffering caused by others, that Christ died for us – we who did not deserve it – and that we are called also to die in the flesh in order to live in the spirit. This is about acting, not hiding – to speak up for Christ and one's faith rather be silent on the easy path. One of the Letter's key themes, 'In [God's] great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1Pt 1:3), is a foundation for the more specific words in chapter 3. Also, this idea is contrary both to the mystery religions and generally closed religions, such as Judaism, which encouraged one not to speak out but to retain silence unless necessary.

Therefore, Peter's radical call to all in the diaspora – all faithful Christians – is not to remain inactive or silent but to be without fear because the Christian is rewarded for placing faith in God. This is to be done regardless of the antipathy or enmity towards the believer, in peace or the greatest persecution.

Peter's Call

Peter's call in 1Peter 3 is to

> **15b** Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; **16** and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

The term 'apologetics' is from the original Greek term 'apologian' (accusative feminine single noun) translated above as 'defense' (underlined below):

> **15b** ετοιμοι δε αει προς <u>απολογιαν</u> παντι τω αιτουντι υμας λογον περι της εν υμιν ελπιδος μετα πραυτητος και φοβου (Textus Receptus)

The whole call is encapsulated within v15b but v16 extends and unpacks the last part of v15b.

The first word, the adverb 'always', confirms the constant state of what is called for, which relates directly to the context established in the previous verses: regardless of the degree of problem, antipathy, or enmity, the following instructions are to be carried out. This by implication regards all faithful, being addressed to faithful in the diaspora.

The instructions in the key verses can be summarised by splitting the parts so they overlap:

1) 'Always be prepared to make a defense',
2) 'make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you',
3) 'do it with gentleness and reverence'.

To be precise, while the above description of the communication in 2) is separated from the imperative regarding preparation in 1), these can be connected as shown below into preparation and communication together in i) and the imperative to action is given with a description of the style in ii):

i) ‘Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you’,
ii) ‘do it with gentleness and reverence’.

In this way, the style unquestionably relates to the actual communication.

Really, the three elements of the Petrine call to the faithful should be recognised. These can be shortened into a basic summary that is brief and more usable:

1. Be prepared,
2. Respond,
3. In a Christian manner.

This in turn can be expanded into sentence form: always be ready to respond about your faith in a Christian manner. In short, regarding all faithful, it is preparation, response, (in a) Christian manner.

Theology of the Call

The Greek origins of *apologia* is to defend oneself, position, or group. However, Peter appropriates the word into the Christian context. In the legal, philosophical, or Christian sense, preparation is necessary, then the defence, response, explanation is given. But 1Peter has a further element: do so in a Christian manner, that is, loving, selfless, humble, with the love of God and of neighbour, therefore, representing God worthily and with the other’s salvation in mind. In the context of persecution in 1Pt 3, this realistically means all are called to respond regarding their hope, faith: no one is exempt.

However, Peter does not request that the Christian gives a reasoned answer of standard objective proofs for God or an extended monologue on papal infallibility in specific situations. Instead, he calls the faithful to be able to explain why they have hope, which points to a teleological reasoning for one seeing through his faith to the end, where in Heaven there is no need for faith or hope anymore (1Cor 13:13). Peter’s Call is that each individual develops the understanding and reasoning necessary to answer when another questions or challenges the beliefs of a Christian – it is a call always to be able to stand firm in the faith, which requires the understanding of faith to be developed first. So, the call is to be ready regardless of the persecution, the temptation to surrender to the

crowd, or the authority that offers a reprieve to him who denies his faith. It is to be faithful: in a sense, 'apologetics is to do theology well'.[32]

Theologically, the early adoption of apo-logia, with its root in *logos*, points to an early understanding that the revelations and religious beliefs of Christianity could be explained rationally – with an explanation, a rational reply, a defence. The very connection with Jesus, the Messiah, with the Greek logos – the philosophical concept of 'word' that is more than just a word – is remarkable, and it is first century evidence of developing theology and not just a curiosity of John's first chapter. It is conceivable that Peter's 'apologia', Luke's several examples of 'apologia' and similar, and also in Paul's writings and encounters using logos, reason to debate and explain Christianity to Greeks points to an early absorption of the logos concept into Christian thinking. It is suggested that this was partly enabled by the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo's (20BC-AD50) exploration of the Logos as the bridge between God and the physical world, with the Logos being an extension of God.[33] His attempt – the first – at merging Greek philosophy and Hebrew religion was contemporary with Christianity developing in its foundational understanding and such an idea may well have supported or even inspired the understanding that Jesus is the Logos. This is reasonable as Philo states:

> And even if there be not as yet any one who is worthy to be called a son of God, nevertheless let him labour earnestly to be adorned according to his first-born word, the eldest of his angels, as the great archangel of many names; for he is called, the authority, and the name of God, and the Word, and man according to God's image, and he who sees Israel.[34]

This timing suggests that Peter may have been expressing such an idea with his use of the particularly Greek philosophical-legal term to describe how Christians should act when called upon rather than using another term with a similar meaning. To merely respond, answer, or reply is to offer a minimal or sufficient piece of information of whatever quality, whereas an apologia is a reasonable, developed, and proper response that technically has no completion as it points towards the Logos.

It is reasonable to regard 1Peter as the message of the first Pope. He speaks succinctly but in practical terms to all Christians, thus his call has a universal aspect. In the increasing persecutions and uncertainties of the diaspora, he called upon the faithful to grow in the faith and be ready to respond to others questioning or challenging their hope in Christ. It was necessary to do so in a Christian manner, as ambassadors of Christ. This Call was conceivably part of the early developments of Christ being understood as the Logos, and the faithful were required by the Apostle to participate in this speaking out

[32] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *My Work: In Retrospect* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 100.
[33] Victoria Emily Jones, 'Jesus as Logos, or Cosmic Christ (Part 1)', *The Jesus Question*, 7th March 2011, https://thejesusquestion.org/2011/03/07/jesus-as-logos-or-cosmic-christ-part-1/.
[34] Philo, 'On the Confusion of Tongues', in Charles Duke Yonge (transl.), *The Works of Philo Judaeus* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1854), section XXVIII, http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book 15.html.

the faith. As Christianity is an outward-looking faith, and we are perpetually in diaspora, this is a universal call to be ready to respond in a Christian manner when the faith is questioned or challenged.

1.3 – The Pauline Call

If apologetics was the Apostolic answer to persecution in light of the growing logos idea, a Pauline confirmation is expectable. The passage of 2Timothy 3:14 – 4:2, in a letter from Paul to Timothy, is more pastoral and elaborated than 1Peter in its description of Early Church apologetics, being the result of a Pharisee's education. Its liturgical use is evidence of this and its use late in the liturgical year[35] is consistent with it being final instructions for a young bishop, which can be extended to how mature faithful should approach more difficult times. Identifying other apologetical calls in Paul is beyond the scope of this study.

Authorship and Purpose

Paul is traditionally recognised as the letter writer to Timothy, albeit alternate theories are given more emphasis in some sources for non-specialists such as Wikipedia.[36] The strongest sceptical reasoning is that the author's style differs from other Pauline texts, which is weak when one considers that Paul was writing late in life in a fatherly way to the young bishop Timothy, his mentee, rather than earlier to whole churches that needed a strong hand – using the same style would be more suspicious than expectable! But the general reader is left to the devices of certain reputed historical-critical proponents who tend towards any anti-traditional theory. The general propensity for always doubting the traditional authorship means giving more credence to late dating theories in general, thus the Scriptures can be separated from the prerequisite for NT canonical inclusion of having been authored by apostles.

The traditional reasoning for Pauline authorship, completely absent in the popular internet source, is again presented in Orchard by R. J. Foster,[37] who also refutes other questionable ideas about early Church development, etc. It is worth adding to Foster's response that the existence of bishops (ἐπίσκοπος *episkopos*, overseers) is clear both in several texts from the first century, in Scripture and beyond, as well as being an expectable development in the organisation of the faith community. This in turn confirms the reasonableness of Paul writing to the new bishop.

Presuming Pauline authorship, and considering the content and tone of the letter to the new Bishop of Ephesus, a community close to Paul's heart, it is safe to assume that the letter was written in or just before Paul's martyrdom in AD 67. It is an exhortation to

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[35] Second Reading on the 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time in Cycle C in the Catholic Church.

[36] 'Second Epistle to Timothy', *Wikipedia*, accessed 27th March 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Epistle_to_Timothy#Authorship. An alternative early link in a web search is 'Second Epistle to Timothy', *New World Encyclopedia*, accessed 27th March 2023, https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Second_Epistle_to_Timothy, which at least mentions the traditional authorship and date (AD 67) before emphasising that 'many contemporary scholars believe' otherwise.

[37] R. J. Foster, 'The Pastoral Epistles', in *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. Dom Bernard Orchard et al. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1953), 1142-3.

Timothy to be strong personally and pastorally, without resorting to antagonism or argument; instead, he is to focus on the faith and present himself in the episcopal role with authority and mildness, which is congruent with the Petrine apologetical call. The only difference is Paul is calling one leader to such an approach, rather than universal, however, the Pauline calls are adaptable to all the faithful without any particular re-presentation or translation.

2Tim 2

The chapter before the focus passage is useful for context and also several key points regarding apologetical style and approach, particularly for one in authority but adaptable for communicating with others regarding the faith, within or outwith the Church.

Paul, having just called Timothy to focus upon Christ and that in suffering, even death, eternal life can be gained for 'the elect' (v10), offers a teaching device to the young bishop in 2:11-13:

> **11** The saying is sure:
> If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;
> **12** if we endure, we shall also reign with him;
> if we deny him, he also will deny us;
> **13** if we are faithless, he remains faithful—
> for he cannot deny himself.

This is like Peter's pre-call to avoid fear but it is more pastoral, designed to support the Ephesian bishop in guiding his flock. He then warns – in a way important for apologetics – against attention being given to an area that bears no good fruit:

> **14** Remind them of this, and charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. […] **16** Avoid such godless chatter, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, **17** and their talk will eat its way like gangrene.

This should be borne in mind when defining and identifying apologetics – arguing the details draws the focus away from the Living Christ, from the pastoral focus on building each of the faithful and the community of believers. This is about a good apologetical manner. The 'godless chatter' draws them into error by smoothing away problematic teachings, even the resurrection of the body (v18), to make the faith more palatable to the Greeks who struggles with the Resurrection concept. Good preparation would prevent such issues.

But it seems here that Paul is encouraging Timothy simply to avoid such erroneous faithful – an 'ignore them and hopefully they will go away' type of approach. Instead, however, Paul is setting up a clear and powerful call for Timothy to be above such

nonsense. Verses 20-23 frame the bishop – the community's leader – as necessarily being separate from immature behaviour and being involved in partisan argument:

> **24** … the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, **25** correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, **26** and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

Here, Paul is addressing 'internal apologetics' – correcting not through argument or even harsh discipline but with a mildness that is in accordance with Christian love, an approach that proposes rather than imposes. Carried out with both quiet authority and love, this is most appealing to others who witness the dialogue which has no foundation for personal issues or emotive elements that muddy the communication. In this, the key elements of the Petrine call can be recognised: prepare yourself, and engage in an appropriate Christian manner. Here, Paul's strong emphasis is on a clear Christian manner meaning the leader is perceived as peaceful and calm, avoiding 'lesser' arguments which gives a gravitas otherwise not possible, recalling 1Peter 3:16 somewhat. Such a leader can then pronounce upon issues with greater authority and effectiveness. When the apologist's Christian manner is perceptible, there is more likelihood of the words being heard and valued, even if disagreed with at the time.

2Tim 3-4

The beginning of chapter 3 turns to a future image of society recognisable often since and even today. Describing self-importance as sinful in different ways, leading to having the form but not substance of believers, Paul informs the reader that success in this path will be limited and warns the faithful to avoid such people.

Paul offers himself as a model, an image to inspire and be followed, both in his love and patience (v10) and in the persecutions he has had to endure (v11), and that this suffering is for all the faithful to experience (v12), similar to Peter's diaspora context. He points out that the evil doers shall worsen (v13) and then gives his final instructions in how to deal with this (3:14-4:2):

> **3** **14** But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it **15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16** All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
> **4** **1** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **2** preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching.

Verses 3:14-17 highlight the importance of and expands on the Petrine element of being prepared. Paul instructs the bishop – in turn, all Christians – to learn the faith, to recognise the sources of learning (the Apostle, family, community of faithful…) and Scripture (i.e., the Old Testament (OT)) that teaches about following Christ. Paul states clearly that such texts are of God[38] and are important for preparing for 'every good work'.

The following two verses in chapter 4 then require (v1) the reader to speak up at all times (v2). He uses descriptive words regarding strong communication which conceivably include apologetical communication – these are not only to evangelise but also to respond to others: 'rebuke' is the obvious response word but the other verbs are also inclusive of responses.

The next two verses – beyond the liturgical passage today – confirm the apologetical link:

> **3** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, **4** and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.

Whether this is from a mystical source or simply from the wisdom of a man who has observed many turning easily from the truth and viewed the declining standards of imperial leaders and the morals of society, and the deteriorating situation between Jews and Christians, Paul's words – with Peter – show a growing antagonism towards the faithful. People are being divorced from both sensibility and truth, which is against Christian ideals, and it is incumbent on the faithful to engage with such people by presenting the Christian faith, which includes responding to questions and challenges regarding the faith. The verses also describe our contemporary perspective.

The final verse (5) concludes by recapping the main message briefly:

> **5** As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

The letter is arguably a summary of Paul's own ministry. He recognises the need to deal with questions and challenges within the faithful and in a world with decreasing morals and acceptance of Christians. Paul calls on Timothy to continue his role and the clearest apologetical elements are, like Peter, to be prepared, to engage/respond, and to do so appropriately as a Christian. One may say Paul is referring to evangelisation (especially 4:5), but his message clearly includes explaining and defending, as did his ministry,[39] which is apologetics.

[38] While this is sometimes held as a proof text for scriptura sola, it refers only to OT texts including the Deuterocanonicals, and quite possibly including some that are now deemed as apocryphal/pseudopigraphal.
[39] See ch2a.2 on apologetics in Acts.

Peter and Paul Parallels

Stylistically, it is no surprise that Peter's words – a leader of fishermen, then of Christians – are briefer and more direct than those of the well-educated Paul. Yet they basically make the same point, as is seen in the parallels in the two New Testament sources.

Table 1: Parallels between Peter and Paul's apologetical calls I

1Pt		2Tim	
3:15	Always be prepared…	3:14-17	**14** But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it **15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16** All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
3:15	… to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, …	4:1-2	**1** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **2** preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, …
3:15-16	… yet do it with gentleness and reverence; **16** and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.	4:2	… be unfailing in patience and in teaching.

Table 2: Parallels between Peter and Paul's apologetical calls II

1Pt		2Tim	
3:16	and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.	2:24-25	**24** … the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, **25** correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth,

The difference between the two texts shows two ways to approach the same concept. The preparation aspect is basically a given for Peter, whereas the educated Paul may have appreciated the process and the benefits more. However, Peter's lengthier reminder to engage appropriately is perhaps because he recognises the significant difference achieved when presenting oneself appropriately. Paul is brief here, perhaps because for him good presentation is a given, but he does elaborate on this in chapter 2 (see Table 2). Overall, the two contexts can explain the differences in focus: Peter's general call to diaspora communities and Paul mentoring a companion as a new bishop.

In viewing together the two Apostles' apologetical calls – Peter's more direct and Paul's more embedded – the three main apologetical elements of preparation-response-manner are present. Although a sceptic might argue that this is shoehorning and Paul's call is to evangelisation, Paul nevertheless includes all three apologetical elements when considered in the light of the clear content of Peter's call. Another question might be whether Paul was addressing only his follower as a new bishop, and not all the faithful. However, both Apostles surely knew that their letters would have far-wider audiences (Paul had been letter-writing for over a decade) because they are applicable and adaptable to all the faithful at least in some ways. Confirming this, the Church obviously recognised 2Timothy as not just personal but as a pastoral letter to share with the faithful in the NT canon, but even more by including it in Mass readings. Thus, content addressed to a bishop[40] also applies in many ways to his Church and then all the faithful, including communicating the faith and responding to others both in and outwith the faithful.

It is reasonable to identify parallel themes in Paul's call here to Peter's call to apologetics. The elements are not as explicitly laid out but they are identifiable using Peter's apologetics model. Paul clearly had similar concerns to Peter regarding how the faithful were engaging with each other and others. In different ways, he emphasised preparation, engagement and a good manner. Regarding a universal call, Paul's is a personal letter but the Church has understood it as applicable for the faithful with inclusion in the NT canon and as a liturgical reading. Therefore, it is reasonable to understand Peter's and Paul's calls as not identical but congruent: a very similar message in a different style.

1.4 – The Apologetical Letter of Jude

The Letter of Jude is brief but replete with powerful messages, amongst which and arguably predominant is a clear and powerful call to apologetics. With references to the apocryphal/pseudopigraphal 1Enoch and the Assumption of Moses – Scripture of the Early Church – and other non-apologetical content, its single 23-verse chapter is dense and difficult to describe: 'The style is impassioned, somewhat vague, picturesque and vigorous.'[41]

[40] We should assume other private episcopal correspondence also existed, of which we, naturally, do not have records.

[41] H. Willmering, 'The Epistle of St Jude', in *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. Dom Bernard Orchard et al. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1953), 1191.

A number of stylistic devices are employed in Jude's letter,[42] with both effective rhetoric and straightforwardness. After the introductory greetings, vv3-4 are clear that a problem exists within the (unidentified) community that is not being dealt with properly. Willmering hypothesises on the likelihood of any particular addressee:[43] a Jewish-Christian due to many references to Jewish books and OT history; or it may be a teaching tool, a reminder to Gentile converts; or a recipient in Jude Thaddeus's traditionally recognised destinations of Palestine, Syria, or Mesopotamia; or it was intended as a general text speaking to many Christian communities, pointing to increasingly widespread problems developing in the first century, similar to 1Peter. Regardless, Jude's addressees had problems to solve.

Jude then names several OT-era figures and events not following God's ways and will, making terrible mistakes in this manner (vv5-7). He likens (v8) the present issues to those earlier types, and adds more such past figures (vv9-11). These defile the *agape*, the love feast (cf. 1Cor 11:20), being the shared meal ending with the Eucharist, a kind of proto-Mass.[44]

Jude then reminds readers that judgement will come (vv14-16) and that they were warned of such problems coming (vv17-19), and in v20 that they should build themselves up – similar to Peter's call to be prepared – and to 'pray in the Holy Spirit'.

The last two verses (vv22-23) before the final blessings are not particularly clear in the Greek construction. The Vulgate and its successors (Douay Reims, CPDV, Knox, etc.) consider two groups with overall three elements described, but the Greek is more literally translated as having three groups, which seems to be more accepted as well as likely. Regardless, these are words with clear apologetical meaning. In RSVCE:

> **22** And convince some, who doubt; **23** save some, by snatching them out of the fire; on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

The ones in the first group doubt, probably by having listened to and been swayed by wrong-doers (v4); the faithful should 'convince' the doubters, which requires a presentation of clear teachings in response to the challenge of their wrongful positions. Of the second group, the faithful are to 'save some', suggesting others are too far in wrongful ways; this perhaps recalls Jesus' words[45] or is the reality, because 'snatching them out of the fire' means there is great peril for them and those trying to save them – this is not for unprepared or 'gentle' ones. Finally, the faithful should 'have mercy with fear' regarding the third group and the unclear ending – 'hating even the garment spotted by the flesh' – may refer to rejecting such persons completely as being beyond help, at

[42] Ibid. Also, Phillips, *Last Apologist*, e.g., 10, 19, 29.
[43] Willmering, 'Epistle Jude', 1191.
[44] This was part of the development of the Mass, with a sharing of apostolic letters, words shared from the apostles, and their 'doing this in memory of me' as called for in Lk 22:19 and reinforced at Emmaus (Lk 24:30).
[45] Similar to 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Mt 26:28).

least currently; such persons should not be treated without mercy but the faithful should have similar levels of fear regarding the damage they can do.

Such interpretations of the three groups are speculative as the exact meanings are unclear. However, apologetical activity must take place with the first group to bring them back to orthodox understanding, and the second, more problematic group contains some who can be brought back to the faith similarly. In identifying apologetics, the clearest is 'convince some, who doubt', which is similar to 2Timothy 2 and 4, and also Peter's use of *apologia*. Together with the Jude 3 call to 'contend for the faith', translatable also as 'struggle for the faith', the 'convince some, who doubt' is one of the clearest calls for Christians to engage with others regarding the meaning of the faith, its orthodoxy, and the importance of clear and accurate understanding.

Doug Potter recognises the problem of understanding Scripture through a later lens:

> … there is an indirect or extended application to apologetics today. However, note well that Jude is not instructing his readers then or now to teach the formal subject of study known as Christian apologetics that involves making a systematic case for the truth of Christianity and answering sincere objections and questions.[46]

He recognises that the scriptural call to apologetics was not intended to take on the characteristics that later developed into an academic field. Such challenges in exegesis regard the issues and tensions within the task of reading Scripture in its own meaning[47] while applying it to our own contemporary Christian context. But it does apply more organically today, as Potter reminds us to recognise

> Jude's context and content, to not read into his words a contemporary apologetic. Yet, at the same time, the principle and model Jude set for 'contending . . . for the faith' certainly can be extended and applied to us today. If needed use sound reason and valid evidence no matter where it is found to show Christianity is the true faith and always invite anyone anytime to believe the apostolic teaching of the gospel.[48]

Jude's call is to 'build themselves up', to 'contend' and 'convince', and this applies reasonably to all the faithful. The element of a Christian manner is not explicit but may be interpreted as part of v20: 'keep yourselves in the love of God'. It is clearly a call consistent to Peter's.

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[46] Doug Potter, 'Three Steps to Getting Jude 3 Right: What Does it Mean to "Contend for the Faith"?', *SES*, 9th July 2019, https://ses.edu/3-steps-to-getting-jude-3/.
[47] DV 12 and VD 19.
[48] Potter, 'Three Steps'.

1.5 – Apologetics at the Second Vatican Council

Having defined apologetics from Petrine and Pauline points of view, both being rooted in the Early Church paradigm, and with confirmation from Jude, we now seek the image of apologetics in the modern Church. While some may hold that apologetics was retired by Vatican II,[49] examining the content of the conciliar documents shows that apologetical activity rather is encouraged as part of the calling of all Christians. By identifying common ground between the earliest Church and the most recent Council, it becomes possible to view how apologetics developed in relation to the Petrine definition.

The exploration of the Council documents in Part 1 is not comprehensive as it is only to assist identifying a working definition, to create a lens through which to examine apologetics through Christian history to our contemporary time. A more in-depth and detailed analysis of Vatican II apologetics is in ch3.2.

The Council and Apologetics

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) took place amidst a growing call for change, an opening up, a bringing up to date – *aggiornamento* – that is, reform. The Catholic-Protestant paradigm had begun to dissolve somewhat, enough to enable a Catholic focus on the Gospel as something to be shared, and removing the defences or, as Balthasar entitled it, *Razing the Bastions*.[50] New approaches to Catholic thinking developed quickly and old ways were discarded. Amongst these – with there having been no mention of the term 'apologetics' in any of the 16 conciliar documents – was the field and area of apologetics, being regarded as 'how it used to be done and thus outdated'. However, there was an irony in the triumphal removal of apologetics and its replacing or subsummation by fundamental theology.[51]

However, while the term 'apologetics' (or similar) is absent, apologetical calls, content, and references can be clearly identified in ten of the documents. Glenn Siniscalchi effectively identifies some of these.[52] Three particular apologetical calls are found in LG 10, DH 14, and DV 8. Also there are calls for apologetics in education, in academia, and regarding the laity in society.[53] By focusing here on the three named, the Council's position regarding the fundamental identity of apologetics can be identified. To do so, the model of the three-fold Petrine call in 1Peter 3:15-16 is used:

> **15**… Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you yet do it with gentleness and reverence; **16** and keep your

[49] See ch3.3.
[50] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Razing the Bastions* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993). See also ch3.1 here.
[51] See ch3.3.
[52] Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 17-26.
[53] See ch3.2.

> conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Of the three elements of preparation-communication-manner, two – communication and manner – are evident in *Lumen Gentium* 10, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*:

> Everywhere on earth [all disciples of Christ] must bear witness to Christ and give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them.(105)

Footnote 105 reads 'Cf 1 Pt. 3:15' so this document's link to apologetics is unambiguous: 'there can be no denying that the Council Fathers were concerned to endorse the validity of apologetics.'[54] The term 'bear witness' denotes the third element of apologetics – a Christian manner – while communication is implied; the 'give an answer' is clearly communicative and encapsulates the 'apo' of *apo-logia*. Therefore, the definitions, etymology, and Petrine reference mean LG unquestionably calls the faithful to apologetical activity in the Petrine way.

The *Declaration on Religious Freedom*, *Dignitatis Humanae* (14) also contains an apologetical call, which contains all three Petrine elements:

> The disciple has a grave obligation to Christ, his Master, to grow daily in his knowledge of the truth he has received from him, to be faithful in announcing it, and vigorous in defending it without having recourse to methods which are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.

The 'grow daily in his knowledge' is the preparation element missing in LG 10. The manner element is clear in the final part regarding wrongful methods. However, the strength of 'vigorous in defending it' is perhaps surprising. Alone, 'defending' recalls the Greek court and the traditional image of the apologist going back to the second century. And 'truth' is in direct contrast to the more fideistic thinking developed by some after the Council.[55] But the opening words are most remarkable. A 'grave obligation' to be apologetical is stronger and more authoritative than the scriptural calls: it is powerful language. Alone, 'obligation' is a clear requirement, but the addition of 'grave' makes it unquestionably a very important and key part of the Christian life. Therefore, DH 14 is an indubitable apologetical call, and even an amplification of the Petrine call.

Regarding those called to engage in apologetical activity – preparation and/or communication – both of these Petrine-based calls are addressed to 'disciples of Christ' and the 'disciple'. This should be understood as 'one who follows another for the purpose of learning … from the Latin *discipulus*, "pupil, student, follower"'.[56] Thus, the one who follows Jesus Christ, engaging with the logos – the Logos – is the one who then sends

[54] Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 18.
[55] See ch3.3.
[56] Douglas Harper, 'Etymology of disciple', *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed 20th July 2023, https://www.etymonline.com/word/disciple.

forth the Word learned, passing it on by speaking out, that is, responding when called upon. So, it should be understood that, for the Council Fathers, those who follow Jesus Christ and seek to become more like him (theosis) need to ('grave obligation') prepare themselves, communicate the faith to others, and do so appropriately, as consistent with the Petrine call. This applies to all the faithful – for none are called to be passive and indifferent in their faith – so this as a universal call to apologetics, albeit the term is absent in the conciliar documents.

A third clear conciliar call to apologetical engagement is addressed to the faithful and assists in framing the meaning of apologetics in a clear manner. *Dei Verbum* 8, in the context of handing on the message of God in Scripture and Tradition, recalls the words of Jude, and even strengthens them. The *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* states:

> Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3)

In the context of passing on the faith, which includes preparation, DV states the 'Apostles … warn the faithful' to 'fight in defense of the faith', which is a powerful call that withholds nothing for the sake of decorum. The foundation of the Epistle and the confirmation of the Council should be seen as a frame for the importance of passing on the understanding of the faith properly to the faithful and then to others, that is, an exclamatory call for apologetics to be firm and based on the Church's teachings.

These three Vatican II documents provide clear and unambiguous calls to apologetics addressed generally to all faithful. The named documents here contain two or three of the identifiable elements of apologetics, that is, preparation-communication-manner: LG 10 has two, DH 14 has three, and DV 8 has two non-identical with LG 10. This confirmation provides a firm and clear means of identifying and defining apologetics in salvation history as they include the earliest and relative latest teachings of the Church. Further analysis of these and other apologetical content in the Council's documents is in ch3.2.

Conclusion

Apologetics, from ‘apologia’, originated in Greek as the defence response to an accusation. Literally a speaking out as a response based on one’s understanding, it is also expressed by defence, explanation or even bear witness. It was used by Peter to denote a response – conceivably to a question or challenge – regarding one’s hope, thus faith. Paul also called for what can be recognised as apologetical responses by the young bishop Timothy, using the Petrine elements of preparation, response, and Christian manner. The educated Paul and the down-to-earth Peter emphasised different elements. The three elements are also present in Jude. In different ways, but most especially in Peter, there is a universal aspect to the calls.

All three Apostles recognised both increasing problems for Christians in engaging with others, even within the Church. They call the faithful not to be fearful but to engage, although Jude gives further warning. In the diaspora, Jews are increasingly problematic, society is worsening, but Christians should be prepared to engage and do so in a Christian manner, which is a powerful witness to others. The three different styles of apologetical calls are evidence of a developing concept in the Apostolic generation, based upon a speaking out of the logos, which was becoming identified with Jesus, the Logos. However, as the ‘Petrine call’ is the most clear and concise of the three, this term will be used going forwards as indicative of the general apologetical call of Scripture.

The opposite bookend of Church history, the Second Vatican Council, despite omitting the word apologetics (or similar) from its documents, irrefutably presents several clear calls for apologetics when considered in Petrine terms. Three documents – in LG 10, DH 14, and DV 8 – have clear apologetical calls. The first two are particularly Petrine, displaying two and three elements respectively, and DV 8, while referencing Jude, also has two Petrine elements. Interestingly, the conciliar language is of equal or greater strength than the scriptural calls. All three include, at least in some way, the universal aspect of the call to apologetics, that all faithful are called to such.

With a clear Petrine definition, it is now possible to identify Christian elements and how to develop them in the faithful, how to improve specific abilities, and how to understand apologetics in itself rather than being evaluated for what it is not, or should not be, according to the scriptural and conciliar calls. This makes it easier to identify when it is or has not been used appropriately, thus enabling apologetics to develop effectively in itself and in relation to other fields and activities.

In Part 3, the Council is focused upon in more detail and over a wider range. Also, the fact that popular sources, such as Wikipedia as shown, still present long-ago refuted academic claims as fact indicates a need today to present the faith more effectively; this is a focus of Part 4, which considers the identity of apologetics today. The journey of Part 2 regards the history of apologetics, how it developed, and how its nature and identity was regarded. Having settled on a working definition of Petrine apologetics with the three elements of preparation, response, and a Christian manner, and the universal aspect, how apologetics developed in history can be examined through this lens: in the light of Scripture and the Second Vatican Council.

Part 2a – Apologetics in Scripture and the (Very) Early Church

Introduction to Part 2

Using the definition of apologetics from Part 1, the whole of Part 2 looks at how apologetics developed historically and identifies where it was, and was not, in accord with the Petrine definition of Scripture and the Second Vatican Council. With the accord between the original calls seen in Part 1 both within Scripture and with the Vatican II documents, the term 'Petrine call' should generally be understood to include all of them unless clearly specific.

The historical study is in four sub-parts. Part 2a looks at the development of apologetics in the first two generations of Christianity, from Christ's ministry into the second century, and how as a response it adapted as needed. Part 2b observes the development of a narrower definition of apologetics from Justin Martyr to the end of the Early Church. In Part 2c, we see how apologetics in the Mediaeval period could have redeveloped more widely but was insufficient. And Part 2d looks at the Modern period beginning with reform, developing credibility, and something of an organic revival in places. By using the three-part Petrine model for all of preparation, engagement, in a Christian manner, the development of apologetics can be examined for its fealty to the calls of Scripture and Vatican II.

Part 2 provides an overview and flavour of the nature and identity of apologetics from the earliest recorded Christian times up to the last century. This includes how it began, developed, was moulded, adapted, and refined, evolving into what became known as Apologetics or the field of apologetics. There is no intention that this is any more than a selected view to show the general developments in apologetics and to observe the journey, seeking to map key changes, new purposes, and different contexts for apologetics, that is, how Christians respond to others regarding the faith. In particular, Dulles's History is very helpful, but it has its weaknesses which become clear. However, there is a sparsity of resources, both primary and secondary on this theme. Nevertheless, an image can be constructed on the journey through Church history to the present.

Introduction – Part 2a

Part 2a regards the Early Church up to the middle of the second century and how apologetics began and developed, both in meaning and style, as well as content and purpose, before it started moving away from the original ideas and becoming more purposed and intellectualised, as will be seen in Part 2b. The definition of apologetics from Scripture – Paul, Jude, and especially Peter – identified in Part 1, and its reiteration in Vatican II documents, is the standard used for identifying apologetics in the Early Church.

There is no specifically apologetical text from the apostolic generation. Jude is closest but it is primarily an exhortation to stand up for the faith without explaining how. Acts is somewhat apologetical, but this is not its primary purpose. This apologetical sparsity is expectable because, as per the Apostles' calls, apologetics should be embedded in the Christian experience, as shown in Scripture, rather than being distinct and even separated. It should be 'ordinary' for the Christian to learn their faith and be prepared, to respond to others, and do so in a good Christian manner. Therefore, the lack of specifically direct apologetics can be generally regarded consistent with the calls, presuming it is possible to identify apologetical elements in the greater scheme. This brief study seeks only to identify that there were apologetical elements in the earliest generations – the Apostles and Apostolic Fathers – and this area certainly has potential for more focused research.

It is possible that the lack of obviously apologetical Early Church texts was due to the destruction of many Church documents, particularly in the Decius persecutions. Eusebius of Caesarea's library was not affected, thus he became the main, even only, historical source for many Early Church writings. Also expectable is little record of the activities of 'ordinary' people, the everyday Christians, rather than the leaders, the great figures. It is only recently that academics and intellectuals have found interest in the *hoi polloi*, and it was seemingly this way in the Early Church, particularly for Eusebius.

The historical texts surveyed are from the earliest extant Christian records: those in the NT canon, and others of and contemporary to the Apostolic Fathers, being the generation of Church leaders appointed and in turn 'sent out' by the Apostles themselves.

The context is important as apologetics, and arguably Christianity as a whole, functions most effectively when under persecution. The earliest Christianity was forming as persecution came from Jewish communities, Roman authority and society, and also alternatives to orthodox Christianity, namely Docetism and the development of Gnosticism. These were outside influences and issues, albeit some made their way into Christian communities, while Christians were developing their understanding of how to follow Christ and the instructions left by the Apostles.

As noted in Part 1, the Christian leaders increasingly observed the problems facing the young faith and they left instructions, calls. The faithful were called to engage, not hide or be silent. This message, sometimes more urgent, can be seen in the texts in this Part: the faithful are called to be ready and respond, in a Christian manner to various extents – sometimes explicitly and sometimes it is implied. These are calls to ordinary

faithful for ordinary apologetics – responding to questions and challenges from others about the faith. However, by the end of this period, a change in approach and purpose can be seen in the Quadratus and Aristides texts, which addressed the emperor; this extraordinary use of apologetics soon became a new approach from the middle of the second century (see Part 2b), which had consequences for how apologetics then developed.

As well as establishing the existence of apologetics in the earliest Christianity, it is especially important to recognise the form and intentions of early, 'original' apologetics. This early image can confirm the apologetics of Scripture continuing into first generations of Christians before developing in other ways. This shows the importance of the Vatican II ressourcement in its understanding of apologetics for today. Because of the smaller numbers of resources and the broad scope of this study, the examination is brief, confirmation biases do exist, and these are purposeful as they seek merely to confirm the existence while gaining something of the flavour of the earliest apologetics consistent with the Petrine call.

2a.1 – Gleaning a Useful Image from Early Texts

It is important to set out how Early Church sources are understood and how apologetics can be identified at that time, before the advent of the Apologists, whom some regard as the first apologetics.

Regarding Scripture sources, this study takes the NT texts at face value for two reasons. First, this is what was produced and shared, and it integrally provided input into the early Christian communities that developed. Therefore, regardless of modern approaches, this content was what contributed to the development of Christianity. The most authentic understanding of what Scripture is was in the earliest generations, because it was its own record and communication. If Peter did not write the words, they were understood as his voice, which was recognisable, and passed on by those who knew him. It was in later generations that inauthentic claims of authorship developed, which Irenaeus responded to with the formation-lineage of John-Polycarp-Irenaeus and meant he was trusted as teaching authentically. Therefore, a study of the how the earliest Christian generations wrote and received must set aside all theories except what was understood by the Church.

Secondly, where more modern interpretations must understand early Christian texts in conjunction with the process of that handed down (*tradere*): Tradition. Benedict XVI recognises the importance of identifying the modern historical-critical method as a tool, not the foundation of exegesis.[57] The approach of canonical exegesis[58] has been endorsed by the Church, where the wider context and narrative of Scripture (and beyond) is used to understand better the text examined. This opposes the historical-critical method that more focuses on multiple minutiae – compartmentalisation[59] – which enables an alternative interpretation to develop, too easily can be based upon a priori positions, and results in a poor overall understanding: not seeing the wood for the trees.

This is no whitewash and every Christian should always seek to rid Tradition of falsehoods – the Donation of Constantine[60] or the False Decretals,[61] for example. However, it is problematic and unhelpful to overly rely on a post-Enlightenment method seeking to reduce traditional understanding of Scripture and the Early Church as much as possible. The subsequent narrative rebuilding has too often reflected the alternative stories developed in early Christian times, making an easy task of recognising their origins and the need for robust and sustained apologetics to be developed. However, apologetics was practically removed from Catholic theology,[62] and only a few such as John Redford continued to respond to error such as the rejection of most of John's Gospel

[57] Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), xvi.
[58] DV 12. Also encouraged in Benedict, *Jesus*, xviii-xix.
[59] As seen in Part 1.
[60] Johann Peter Kirsch, 'Donation of Constantine', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05118a.htm.
[61] Louis Saltet, 'False Decretals', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05773a.htm.
[62] See ch3.3.

by the Jesus Seminar.[63] With so many counter-narratives to Tradition developing, they are far more easily perceived. Similarly, with postmodernism turning scepticism into cynicism and then ignorance,[64] the graces, goodness, order, and especially beauty of Christianity is not only more perceptible but also the only well-developed alternative that exhibits and even embodies Beauty, Goodness, and Truth.[65]

Over-reliance on the scientific method, which depends on how the question is framed, has meant over-acceptance of historical-critical hypotheses stemming from reductionism. Only accepting evidence from a merely scientifically-provable point of view, supportable by evidence, negates the role of the imagination, the narrative, and the development of a general understanding. Consequently, demanding a foundation of only the provable then making empirical developments from this very limited base is like building a pyramid upside-down. As the structure widens, gaps appear, leading to poor fillings: stretching the timeline, joining with speculation, and rejecting anything non-dependent on the chosen a priori position. The result is false narratives: Jesus is separated from the apostles, who are separated from later developments, the Church becomes a human construct, and all becomes a conspiracy. But, if true, why did so many Apostles and early Christians die defending the narrative? Clearly the narrative was real. This begs the question: how many modern exegetes today would defend their position to the point of being martyred? Rather, the supposedly superior modern approach may be considered as more colonial than scientific.

This theological study, in the absence of more suitable alternatives, understands that the NT canon is that which was shared between and within Early Christian communities, and has been presented since as the writings of the Apostles regarding Jesus, his ministry, his calls, and his example. As understood until recent times, the texts were written as a reasonable response by the authors, inspired by the Holy Spirit, for the Christian communities, the local Churches. The texts came out of the rapid spread and growth of Christianity in its first few decades, and stemmed from a relatively well-interconnected set of communities that shared ideas and memories, and where leaders were faithful to the truth as best they could.

Therefore, this study presumes the burden of proof lies on new speculations regarding sources and it does not consider plausible any modern hypotheses of gap texts (Q, pre-Markan narratives…) that certain researchers hold to exist. This is because a failure to have evidence does not stand as evidence that they existed. Instead, the oral narratives developing from witnesses that surely existed in the early inter- and intra-communication between and in local Churches were an early sensus fidelium. Failing to recognise the young Churches' organic and predictable sharing of oral narratives leads to unfounded hypotheses of writing unknown texts by those from a far more paper-oriented time, which encourages ideas of stretching and significant gaps (in time and evidence).

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[63] John Redford, *Who Was John?* (London: St Pauls Publishing, 2008), 115, fn 6.
[64] This is even within the faithful: see, for example, ch4.1.
[65] Stuart Nicolson, 'Rethinking the Approach to Education by Reversing the Transcendentals and Recalling Another', *Caritas et veritas* 12, no. 2 (Apr 2022): 52-71. https://www.caritasetveritas.cz/pdfs/cev/2022/02/11.pdf.

These claims feed the late-authoring ideas that separate posited authors from the named authors, which reduces text authenticity without requiring evidence. Ergo, a priori thinking frames scientific questions to show results that are used to support the new ideas, thus tautological. From this, alternative ideas form: Paul created or radically changed Christ's teachings; the NT texts are late-dated thus constructed, or at least legend; or even that Constantine invented the Church or even Christianity. Rather, it is reasonable that Christianity is directly linked to its origins in Christ and the Apostles he sent out, and that it developed in different ways by different people with a generally strong and significant level of continuity.

Regarding what apologetics looks like, the dynamic of apologetics to some extent gives shape to its definition. There are three forms of apologetics identifiable in this Part: apologetical calls, records of apologetical engagement, and actual, formal apologias. The first is not uncommon in the earliest generations of the Church, the second is rare, and the third begins in the second century. The next time universal apologetical calls are made is at Vatican II;[66] the second develops in the academic sphere as debates and competing papers/books then printing tracts and books, then recently sound and video recordings of interviews and debates and then all types online; and the third type as a large range of books, etc., has remained the norm until recent times. This study looks at how the early, first type was superseded by the third until recently.

The narrowing of apologetics into producing apologetical content, mostly of the third type, began around Justin Martyr, leading many to regard Justin as the beginning of apologetics. This means, including with Dulles as will be seen, there is a more rigid identity given to apologetics what it looks like: intellectual, formal, and often philosophical. The consequences of this are that apologetics too easily becomes more formal, expectant, and demanding and thus with less good, loving, Christian manner. This style generally is an important and specific type of apologetics, albeit developing a more formal approach with less emphasis on Christian manner, but it is only one part of the original, wide-ranging, universal call to apologetics.

This more rigid Justinian approach, heavily dependent on the experience and education of the person, is founded on an apologetics that is based significantly upon Greek philosophy and its norms. This is a presentation of arguments, a defence, the *apologia* to the *kategoria*. A clearly defined problem is responded to using a clear set of points that argue against the accusation that Christians or Christianity are x, y, or z. This process of defending, explaining the faith, is formalised enough and deemed sufficiently important (by content and author) that it be recorded (at some cost) for later or more distant readers, who in keeping it safe means we have it still now. It can be suggested that this was too far a return to the Greek legal-philosophical system, rendering it as Christian in content but not so much in style.

Later types of apologetics, therefore, cannot be used as a measure to identify apologetics in the first century and a half. The reduction of apologetics to a formal method then measuring apologetics before Justin with that standard would indeed be an example

[66] See ch3.2.

of the tail wagging the dog, like insisting that a calculator is by definition electronic, and any calculating tools, or even fingers, are deemed never to have existed! But by insisting that an electronic calculator is by definition electronic and a calculator, then we recognise also the abacus, pen and paper, fingers, etc., as calculators. Therefore, with Christian apologetics in the widest definable terms being Petrine – preparation, response, Christian manner –it is possible to recognise apologetics in the earliest Church times. If one seeks the development of Justinian apologetics, Dulles's *History* is excellent, albeit he omits 'Catholic Apologetics' (see ch3.3).

It is important to return to the original definitions of apologetics and build an image of what it would have been. We cannot judge early apologetical communication – mostly verbal, less formal – as not being apologetics because it did not fit later Greek-infused standards or be 'important' enough to be recorded. Instead, we should reconsider the earliest evidence for apologetics as its purest: explaining the faith to those who question or challenge it can be recognised as the truest form of apologetics, which is enabled by preparation through learning the faith. There are no records beyond Paul in Acts of actual apologetical encounters, but a lack of evidence is not evidence of a lack. Instead, with considered imagination and using the calls to and descriptions of apologetics in early texts, it is possible to develop some understanding of the nature and identity of early apologetics.

2a.2 – Early Apologetics – Scripture

To gain an image of apologetics in the Gospels – early depictions of the earliest Christian thinking, that is, Jesus' words and actions – this study will consider Scripture in two ways. First is a brief survey of the Sunday Mass Gospel readings in Ordinary Time in the three-year liturgical cycle, showing where apologetical content and themes are presented to the faithful in today's Church. This is carried out using the Petrine three-part definition. The inclusion of apologetics in the Gospels confirms both the intentions of the Apostles as seen in Part 1, that apologetics is part of Christian life, and that the late 1960s Church sought – intentionally or not – to present apologetical themes to the faithful as embedded in Christian life through the liturgical readings.

Secondly, using apologetical content including that identified by Dulles, there is an exploration of how such apologetics was a prominent theme in the earliest Church times, as the Apostles and believers interacted with each other and with non-believers and developed the understanding of the faith through how it was explained to others. This can be seen in Part 2b as late as when Irenaeus developed the first systematic theology as he perceived the need to show the faithful, and hopefully others, that Christianity is reasonable, and how theology developed in later centuries often due to the need to formalise and present the teachings of the faith in the face of heretical and other problematic ideas.

The key to identifying apologetics in the Gospels is the three elements – preparation, response, Christian manner – which corresponds particularly with Peter but is also supported in Paul and Jude, and the Vatican II documents LG 10, DH 14, and DV 8. Apologetics is a response to questions or challenges that can be friendly or hostile, or even an explanation of an aspect of the Christian faith, which can be preparation for further apologetically-capable faithful.

Apologetics in the Gospels – a brief survey

The methodology of this general survey of Ordinary Time Sunday Gospel readings for apologetical content is by nature subjective and purely my own interpretation regarding the purpose and type of content. It is neither exhaustive, nor authoritative, but rather descriptive and demonstrative in general terms, showing an approximate image of how apologetical themes are spread across the year and regularly presented to the faithful at Sunday Masses in the key reading: the Gospel. This approximate survey offers only a flavour of the range of apologetical content in the readings and others may disagree. Not every example is strongly apologetical but each can be reasonably justified.

The table below presents multiple pieces of relevant information. The first column gives the week number of Ordinary Time. The following three columns regard the year (A, B, C) of the three-year cycle, each being generally dedicated to one synoptic Gospel. The source of the whole reading is given, as per the Missal, but the actual apologetical content may be all or only part of it. From the Petrine apologetics definition, the

apologetical context is given (corresponding to Year A/B/C): an explanation, an example of how to respond, or either a question from a follower of Jesus (disciple, etc.) or a hostile question intended to 'catch out' Jesus (Pharisee, etc.).
(Abbreviations used: gen-general, qu-question, J-Jesus.)

Table 3: Apologetical Content in Ordinary Time Sunday Gospel Readings

Wk	A	B	C	Apol type	Response to	Theme
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6	Mt 5:17-37			A: gen response	'It has been said…'	Law(s)
7		Mk 2:1-12	Lk 6:27-38	B: hostile C: explanations	Scribes	Forgiveness
8	Mt 6:24-34	Mk 2:18-22		A: explanations B: gen qu	'Some people'	Focus; Fasting
9		Mk 2:23-3:6		B: hostile	Pharisees	Fasting
10	Mt 9:9-13	Mk 3:30-35		A: hostile B: hostile, gen	Pharisees Scribes, Crowd	J w/ sinners; J authority, family
11			Lk 7:36-8:3	C: hostile	Pharisee	Anointing of Jesus – various
12			Lk 9:18-24	B: explanations	Disciples	Who is Jesus?
13						
14						
15	Mt 13:1-23		Lk 10:25-37	A: question C: hostile	Disciples Lawyer	Sower I parable; Samaritan
16	Mt 13:24-43		Lk 10:38-42	A: question C: question	Disciples Martha	Sower II parable; Mary's non-work
17	Mt 13:44-52			A: explanation	Disciples	Kingdom of Heaven
18						
19		Jn 6:41-51	Lk 12:32-48	B: hostile C: question	Jews Peter	Jesus is Bread; good servant
20	Mt 15:21-28	Jn 6:51-58		A: challenging B: hostile	Canaanitess; Jews	heal my daughter; living bread

Wk	A	B	C	Apol type	Response to	Theme
21		Jn 6:60-69	Lk 13:22-30	B: hostile C: question	many followers; Someone	spirit & flesh; how many saved
22	Mt 16:21-27	Mk 7: 1…23	Lk 14:1…14	A: rebuke B: hostile C: wariness	Peter; Pharisees, etc.; Pharisees	Cross is necessary; law and the heart; pride and seating
23						
24	Mt 18:21-35		Lk 15:1-32	A: question C: hostile	Peter; Pharisees/ scribes	forgiveness; being with sinners
25	Mt 20:1-16	Mk 9:30-37	Lk 16:1-13	A: explanation B: explanation C: explanation	disciples; disciples; disciples;	vineyard workers; the greatest; put God first
26	Mt 21:28-32	Mk 9:38-48	Lk 16:19-31	A: hostile B: question C: hostile	Chief priests; John; Pharisees	doing, not saying; with or against us; Dives & Lazarus
27		Mk 10:2-16		B: hostile	Pharisees	divorce
28	Mt 22:1-14	Mk 10:17-30		A: hostile B: question	Chief priests; rich young man	Who is in Heaven; give up all for me
29	Mt 22:15-21			A: hostile	Pharisees	pay tax or not?
30	Mt 22:34-40		Lk 18:9-14	A: hostile B: hostile	Pharisees; proud people	humble prayer
31	Mt 23: 1-12	Mk 12:28-34		A: explanation B: unclear	people/ disciples; Scribe - neutral	Pharisees; love God, others
32			Lk 20:27-38	C: hostile	Sadducees	marry in Heaven
33			Lk 21: 5-19	C: question	some people	the end

The table shows that apologetical themes and content are both common and spread throughout the Ordinary Time Sunday Gospel readings. Using Petrine criteria, this shows that the liturgical committee – with or without awareness – selected texts containing apologetical themes, being very important underlying themes of communication for Christians; this also shows the range of Gospel apologetics presented, which in turn offers a flavour of Jesus' repeated use of apologetically-themed communication to those with him and those against him, and also the importance of apologetical themes to the authors – both the Holy Spirit and the human authors.[67] While the Gospels are not generally considered to be apologetical texts, due mainly to the Justinian apologetical definition, Siniscalchi points out that, as per the LG 5 description of Jesus' role, they are in a way imbued with apologetics: 'Christ's life is apologetical in the sense that he testifies to the reality of the Kingdom.'[68]

Each year, some Sundays are Lenten Sundays and other major feasts (Pentecost, etc.). Ordinary Time Sunday Gospel readings are from the Synoptics (except some Year B) while other seasons use John much more. The fourth Gospel has its own apologetical content, an obvious example being in John 3 where Jesus explains the faith to Nicodemus.

The three basic categories of apologetical communication as described above (explanation, hostile, questions) are used as a tool to categorise in a basic way the data presented here. These basic categories cover a wider range of types. The cause of an explanation is not always given but it is conceivable as a response to a question or situation. Nevertheless, these point to building-up wisdom and understanding, thus being part of the preparation aspect of apologetics. Related but distinct as a clear response to a friendly or genuine question without any challenge is the category of questions, which relates to the questions a Christian will be asked by those wanting to learn more about the faith, either desiring more understanding or because of confusion or problematic understanding but asked with good will. The other main category, here marked as 'hostile', are the challenges and attempts to undermine Jesus or show him to be wrong, mistaken, foolish, etc., in the form of a question or statement; these stem from Pharisees, Scribes, and a few others. Several are beyond these categories: the Canaanite woman who challenges Jesus to heal her daughter (week 20), Peter's rebuke of Jesus' prediction of his death (week 22), and in response to the wariness of Pharisees, suggesting Jesus knew their thoughts and was responding to them (week 22).

A broad identification of apologetics is being used here. One might consider some of the examples are chosen just because Jesus disagrees with, for example, the chief priests in Mt 21:28-32 (week 26). But it is apologetical because he responds in a way that answers an implied previous conversation or implied responses to him – perhaps facial expression, tone, or unrecorded words – and that this is an example of how Jesus responded, not by rejecting them, mocking them, or arguing with them, but by presenting to them teachings and ideas to challenge them if they did not reject his words. He is

[67] DV 7; Benedict XVI, 'Verbum Domini' (VD), *The Holy See*, 30th September 2010, 19, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini.html.
[68] Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 20.

presenting to them the truth and wisdom of God in a firm but non-aggressive manner, thus he is a good witness to those actually present, to the Early Church reader, and those ever since; the selection of these liturgical readings also indicates that his example remains unceasingly valid and useful for Christians, including showing how to respond to others.

The weeks of Ordinary Time basically chart the chronological order of Jesus' ministry in many ways. The first few weeks without apologetical content might be described thematically as an evangelising time, before questions or challenges come. Subsequently, there is regular apologetical interaction. The evangelising continues, but now amongst responses to genuine and hostile questions, and regular explanations. This shows how apologetics can be within evangelisation, stand alone (particularly regarding hostile questions), or be increasingly catechetical as his followers seek greater and deeper understanding as their faith develops.[69]

There is discernible apologetical content in 24 out of 33 Ordinary Time weeks (at least in one year); after none in weeks 1-5, there is apologetical content in 24 out of the next 28 weeks. Out of all 33 weeks across the 3 different cycles (A, B, C), 9 weeks have 0 apologetical content, 9 weeks have 1 such reading, 12 weeks have 2 apologetical readings, and 3 weeks have 3.

Regarding the actual possibility of hearing apologetical content in an Ordinary Time Sunday Mass Gospel reading, out of 99 possible readings, there is apologetical content of some form in 42 of the readings (42%); this increases after week 5 to 42 out of 84 Sundays in the three-year cycle: 50%. Therefore, after the initial few weeks after Christmas (Baptism of Christ, calling the disciples, etc.) it is as likely as not that an Ordinary Time Sunday Gospel reading will have some kind of apologetical content. By selecting – intentionally or not – such readings for the most commonly attended liturgies of the week, the Church's message is that Petrine apologetical content is important for the faithful, which corresponds with the apologetical calls of Vatican II.

This brief and approximate research focuses on specific readings from the Gospels, but what of the Synoptic Gospels as a whole? It is possible to extrapolate from the above to gain an illustrative image of the extent of apologetics in the whole Gospels. The Jesuit Felix Just presents useful approximate data[70] regarding the Lectionaries for Vetus Ordo and Novus Ordo Masses. He calculated the amount of the Synoptic Gospels used in Novus Ordo Sunday and Major Feasts readings: there are 55.5% of Matthew, 61.1% of Mark, and 56.5% of Luke (John was 59.8%), which averages at 57.8% according to Just's data. Year B has only three John readings and the remainder is from Mark, while Year A is exclusively Matthew and Year C is all Luke. So we can approximate that as around 55-60% of the Synoptics are in Sunday Mass readings and nearly half of those include apologetical content (42%), in very approximate terms at least a quarter of the Synoptic Gospels contain some kind of apologetical content.

[69] See ch4.3 regarding how apologetics relates to evangelisation or catechetics.
[70] Felix Just, 'Lectionary Statistics', *Catholic Resources*, 2nd January 2009, https://catholic-resources.org/Lectionary/Statistics.htm.

A more accurate and careful calculation is beyond the scope and requirement of this study here; this is merely illustrative and a more in-depth, scientific study would be welcomed. Nevertheless, Christians should receive the regularly apologetical content, understand it, and accommodate it within their understanding and development as Christian faithful.

This study has sought to show that the Gospels contain apologetical content, to illustrate the idea that apologetical content has been not only presented by the Christian Scripture writers from the beginning and also willed by God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit[71] but also that it was an integral part of the communication between Jesus and both those with good will towards him and those hostile to him to various extents. Using the Petrine definition of apologetics, it is possible to identify apologetical content in nearly half of all Sunday Gospel readings in Ordinary Time, which means at least a quarter of the Synoptics have apologetical content. Therefore, using the Synoptic Gospels as evidence, apologetics – being prepared, to respond, in a Christian manner – has been important since the beginning of Christianity, has been central to the presentation of Christianity in Scripture, and continues to be such in today's Christian environment.

Apologetics in the Gospels – Dulles

There are other sources for identifying apologetics in the Gospels. Dulles includes a shorter examination of the Gospels while O'Brien reveals apologetical content by exploring Luke's Gospel using the imagination.

Apologetical content is clearly present in the Gospels, including in John which is addressed shortly. Dulles's *History* briefly views each Gospel with varying success. He shows that far from just presenting good apologetical examples, the content of the Gospels themselves were chosen by the authors – divine and human – to present to the faithful explanations and reminders that reinforce the faith in the recipient, to help build up Christians, and help them be strong in times of doubt or when challenged by others.

Dulles begins with Mark,[72] probably due to the modern belief that Mark was written first, or perhaps because his text is most apologetical: 'Mark furnishes abundant materials for the defense of the Christian faith'.[73] He highlights Marks's explanations for the disciples following Jesus, why Jesus was put to death, why the Jewish leaders and crowds behaved in certain ways, etc. He notes that 'Much of the apologetical material in Mark is simply taken over from the pre-Markan tradition', remarking also that Mark provides extra information on the messianic secret and also the Crucifixion.[74] Rather, as Tradition holds that Mark was writing Peter's account, the content should be regarded as primary without evidence to the contrary. Also it should not be surprising that the Gospel of Mark is particularly apologetical: it strengthens the traditional link of Peter being the

[71] DV 7, 11; VD 19.
[72] Dulles, *History*, 16-17.
[73] Ibid., 17.
[74] Ibid.

source of the Gospel and his Letter. This is reinforced by Dulles quoting the early 20th century Anglican bishop Alfred Rawlinson, who describes Mark's purpose as

> partly to edify converts, and to satisfy a natural curiosity about how Christianity began, and partly to supply Christian preachers with materials for missionary preaching, and partly also to furnish a kind of armory of apologetical arguments for use in controversy with opponents, whether Jewish or heathen.[75]

The general theory that with the aging first generation being martyred and Christ's return not as imminent as first believed, there was the perceived need to record the events. Part 1 shows how there was an awareness of the need to strengthen the faithful, not only to continue but to engage with others, including apologetics. It should also be considered, albeit it does not sit well with many modern ideas, that it was God's will and call that the events be recorded in writing. And it is reasonable that Peter saw Mark's writing as producing an apologia, an account or explanation of what happened, in order to prepare others to be able to explain the faith better.

Dulles identifies Matthew,[76] like Mark, as being written for the faithful. But while Mark's content is possibly intended for preparing Christians for dialogue in general, Matthew has a focus on Jewish issues, likely with converts from Judaism, thus it has an apologetical-catechetical emphasis. Dulles quotes Charles Moule, that it should be called the 'Gospel against the Jews', remarking that 'it contains an abundance of ammunition for Christians under attack from non-Christian Jews';[77] while this illustrates in the sense of characterising the content, with the reputation of apologetics, such martial imagery is unhelpful. The Gospels usually enjoy an evangelical image, so it is interesting that Matthew is here described as more a tool of apologetics. This should remind modern thinkers that the Gospels were once very real and contemporary rather than a distant (and incomplete and unsophisticated) record that was developed poorly or inaccurately. Dulles offers several useful examples of Matthew's unique content in preparing Christians for apologetical dialogue with Jews and Jewish converts, including Old Testament references, addresses to Pharisees, etc., and information connected with the Passion.

With Luke,[78] Dulles explains the somewhat positive (or at least not negative) focus on the Roman authorities, supported by his explaining that guilt for the Crucifixion lay on the Jewish leaders. However, Dulles's two pages focus less on apologetics in Luke's two texts and more on typical historical-criticism: the normally wise Paul was cornered and forced to appeal to the emperor, rather than him being open to God's will that he preach in Rome and present the faith to the world's foremost secular power. He also accepts a late date for Luke's writing, with the Gospel answering 'a theological need of the Church in the closing decades of the first century'.[79] This arithmetically then denies Tradition which holds that Luke cared for Mary in her later years, the account of Luke's

[75] Ibid., 17.
[76] Ibid., 18-19.
[77] In ibid., 18.
[78] Ibid., 19-21.
[79] Ibid., 21.

travels in Acts,[80] and certainly leaves the question over his inexplicable ending of Acts before the end of Paul's story – did he present the faith to the emperor or not?

Over-acceptance of historical-critical reductionism – which deserves sustained apologetical analysis beyond the scope here – is unhelpful for seeking to identify apologetical content and activity in the Church's early decades. Our interest here is in the real-life history of that time and to what extent Christians followed the Petrine call to speak out. One fictional and imaginative text that can be a very useful tool for the apologist, assisting in understanding the context and developments in the first century, is Michael D. O'Brien's novel *Theophilos*.[81] It depicts Luke as having sent his Gospel to his eponymous adopted father, a Greek rational thinker who is thus sceptical of the people with whom his son is involved. Seeking to learn more – to expose enough problems to convince his son back to Greek thinking – he meets eye-witnesses in the Holy Land. These characters engage with Theophilos and, being well-prepared in the faith, respond to his questions, explaining much about Jesus and his followers – and all done in a respectful and loving Christian manner. This exploration enables an understanding of the development of Christianity as the reader and author imagine how people interconnected, how the stories of Jesus spread, and how believers and non-believers interacted. This imaginative approach is more realistic than examining the texts of other cultures and framing them through a murky time-telescope based on a priori ideas (the Jesus Seminar[82] being an extreme example) for exploring the early Christian era in a fruitful way. It is realistic because it reminds us that the people in the Gospel were real people, that they engaged with others, and most usefully here, there was apologetical engagement taking place, including with plausible witnesses of the Gospel events. It also reminds us that the human experience, thus the development of the Church, was organic and not constructed.

Instead, the trend is about reducing the early Church's development to some kind of pre-Markan narrative (surely the stories of the faithful!), then Mark (basically because his was shortest – a Petrine trait?), then Matthew and Luke separately who needed the hypothetical Q source, then fixing John at the end because he doesn't fit the theory. By separating the Gospel writers from the organic developments, the Gospels become questionable, even fictional, which serves atheistic Enlightenment ideas and modernist alternatives to Tradition. Rather, by acknowledging apologetical engagement between the faithful and others, it is more plausible that the authors did not sit and write a text in one creative window but collected the stories and memories over time, releasing and sharing them with the Church and even hearing/reading each other's records to an extent. An organic development of what became Scripture seems more realistic than missing texts to fill gaps, conspiracies to create/control a religious movement, or that the Gospels were creatively written. The fact is that we don't have this knowledge, and this might be because we are supposed to have faith. Nonetheless, all of this is mere speculation.

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[80] Usefully laid out in Kevin Rogers, 'Luke's Eye-witness Accounts in Acts', *Investigator Magazine*, November 2013, https://ed5015.tripod.com/BActsWeSections153.html.

[81] Michael D. O'Brien, *Theophilos* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press: 2012).

[82] 'According to the *Jesus Seminar* […] the Fourth Gospel contains virtually nothing which even approximates to what Jesus said': John Redford, *Bad, Mad or God?* (London: St Pauls Publishing, 2004), 24.

Unfortunately, in the John section[83] Dulles ignores the significant and reasonable idea that John wrote his Gospel last – being around 20 years old at the Resurrection and Tradition states he lived to old age – which enabled him to present a more developed theology while adding insights and facts not recorded in previous Gospels. Not only equipping contemporary apologists with explanations and more data (the Washing of Feet, Nicodemus' dialogue), John shows later apologists how Christian thinking developed with more Greek influence after years of engaging with Greek thinking and cultural norms. Paul and Luke had offered much from engaging with the Gentiles, but John had first-hand experience as one of the Twelve, as one of the favoured three (with Peter and James), and was at the Last Supper, the Crucifixion (the only disciple present), the Resurrection (he and Peter at the empty tomb), the Ascension, and Pentecost.

Instead, puzzlingly, Dulles claims John's Gospel is trying to refute followers of John the Baptist around Ephesus and establish Jesus as superior to his cousin, amongst other ideas. He is on stronger ground regarding Gospel symbolism, but he rejects Church Fathers' claims that John wrote with several heresies in mind. He references Raymond E. Brown here, but Brown is not trustworthy regarding a priori assumptions,[84] which weakens his claims significantly.

The first third of the Gospel of John is infused with apologetics in different ways. The first chapter's theo-philosophical discourse on the Logos underpins apologetics with the Word going out into the world while the coming of God into the world was prepared by John the Baptist – both Greek and Jewish perspectives are thus presented in a new way (at least from our perspective). In chapter 2, marriage is confirmed as sacred, as prayers of intercession are presented. In chapter 3, Christianity is explained, especially the relationship between Father and Son, and the importance of being born in the spirit and his essential purpose is given in v16: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.' Chapter 4 shows God's mercy extends even to a Samaritan woman and that faith in God should

[83] Dulles, *History*, 21-23.

[84] Raymond E. Brown holds a priori opinions against the Tradition of the Church and the Early Church Fathers: in a 1980 New York Times review for Elaine Pagels' *The Gnostic Gospels* (Raymond E. Brown, 'The Christians Who Lost Out', *New York Times*,20th January 1980, https://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/books/nba-Pagels.pdf), he refutes Pagels' claim that Clement was a bishop in Rome, stating (without support) that 'there is no evidence for a single bishop in Rome until well after Clement's time'. Presuming this ambiguous statement is not just badly written, he states that the first pope came long after Clement; while mentioning Irenaeus several times in the review, Brown ignores his 'Clement was allotted the bishopric' (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (AH) (Ex Fontibus, 2010), 3.3.3), which proves that in claiming a negative, only one positive refutes the claim. Therefore, his a priori simple error here strongly suggests he is not a good reference in an orthodox apologetical text; further readings show him developing whole neo-narratives (see Paul N. Anderson, 'The Community That Raymond Brown Left Behind: Reflections on the Johannine Dialectical Situation', *George Fox University*, 2013, https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1274&context=ccs), which weakens Dulles's claim regarding John. I recommend Redford above instead. See also Dave Armstrong, 'Fr. Raymond Brown: Modernist Dissident?', *Patheos*, 19th February 2016, https://www.patheos.com/blogs/davearmstrong/2016/02/fr-raymond-brown-modernist-dissident.html; and Benedict, *Jesus*, Foreword.

be more spiritual.[85] In chapter 5, how Christians should regard the Sabbath is shown, as well as Jesus' divinity Then ch6 presents the deep importance of the Eucharist and some explanation of it. Chapter 7 shows how Jesus responded to others including hostile accusations and also a better prepared Nicodemus speaking up for Jesus amongst his fellow Pharisees.

Further examples of apologetics in action are peppered through subsequent chapters but these examples show at least a partly apologetical purpose in John through explanations, presentations, rebuttals, and responses from Jesus. The first four chapters are exceptionally so: John presents Jesus in Greek philosophical terms, who sanctifies marriage through a miracle his mother's had requested, then shows that even Pharisees could and did believe in a new way, and that even the most unworthy (in Jewish thinking) were included, making Christianity a universal call.

It is thus clear that the Gospels should be regarded as significantly apologetical, for they regularly offer such content and arguably were written at least partially for apologetical reasons.

Apologetics in Scripture – the Book of Acts

The Book of Acts presents a perceptible progression of apologetical episodes being recorded, which reflects the journey of apologetics in general regarding the audience or recipients, thus its context and content. While evangelisation and catechesis are (at least in the final form) formed and presented by the Christian delivering them, apologetics, being a response, changes in content and style depending on the recipient(s). This trend in Acts is identified generally by Dulles[86] and more thoroughly in the table below.

Table 4: Apologetics in Acts

Ch	***Situation***	***Speaker***	***Audience***	***Theme, Explanation, or Report of Apologetics***
1				
2	Pentecost	Peter	Jews	Jesus, whom you rejected, is Lord: repent!
3	Temple	Peter	Jews	Jesus, whom you rejected, is Lord: repent!
4	Sanhedrin	Peter	Jews	Jesus, whom you rejected, is Lord: repent!
5				
6				
7	Stoning	Stephen	Jews	Jesus, whom you rejected, is Lord.
8	Samaria Desert	Peter Philip	S. Magus Ethiopian	Holy Spirit is not a commodity: repent! Jesus died for us.
9				
10	Caesarea	Peter	Cornelius	Jesus is Lord! Be baptised! (Even as Gentiles!)

[85] In vv21-24, especially v23 – 'Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.'
[86] Dulles, *History*, 11-14.

Ch	***Situation***	***Speaker***	***Audience***	***Theme, Explanation, or Report of Apologetics***
11	Jerusalem	Peter	Christians	Gentiles can be Christians too
12				
13	Pisidian Antioch Pisidian Antioch	Paul Paul	Synagogue Synagogue	Visit 1. Jesus is alive – follow him! Visit 2. We turn to the Gentiles.
14	Lystra	Paul	Pagans	Denial of being gods, explaining God to them.
15	Jerusalem Council	Peter	Christians	Gentiles need not follow full Mosaic Law
16				
17	Thessalonica Athens	Paul Paul	Synagogue Areopagus	'explaining and proving' 'he argued'; identified the 'unknown god'
18	Corinth Achaia	Paul Apollos	Synagogue Public	'he argued … and persuaded' 'he powerfully confuted... showing'
19	Ephesus Ephesus	Paul Alexander	Synagogue Crowd	'arguing and pleading' 'to make a defense to the people.'
22	Jerusalem	Paul	Crowd	'hear the defense': his conversion story
23	Sanhedrin	Paul	Jews	*Avoids defence – incites Pharisees/ Sadducees*
24	Caesarea	Paul	Felix	*Ananias accusation, Paul replies:* 'my defense'
25	Caesarea	Paul	Festus	*Jews accused,* 'Paul made his defense'
26	Caesarea	Paul	Agrippa	'made his defense' *conversion, capture*
27				
28	Rome	Paul	Jewish leaders	'he expounded…testifying…trying to convince them'

The table presents the most direct apologetical speeches and teachings, which are interpretable as Luke strengthening the reader's faith and preparing him with a template for further apologetical situations. Other passages can also be considered apologetical, that is, explanatory, to the doubting reader or for use in apologetical dialogue, for example, that Jesus is with the Father (ch1), the ideal Christian community should share without deceit (ch5), or that Jesus' gift of healing continues in some of the faithful, as recorded in various chapters.

Out of the 28 chapters in Acts, at least 20 have perceptible apologetical instances based on the Petrine definition: preparation, response, Christian manner. From ch23 onwards, it is usually reports (italics) of apologetical activity rather than examples of generally long presentations (ch17-22). Up to ch11, this tends to be from Peter and usually to the Jews. Later, Paul dominates the record, speaking to both Jews and Pagans. Interestingly, Jesus and the Apostles were open to dialogue with the Jewish leaders nearer the beginning of their journeys; however, later, both Christ and Paul refused to offer any real defence or explanation when it would have been futile – neither sought communication with the Sanhedrin, and it was God's will that the prisoner be condemned. The only significant difference was Jesus' execution was imminent but Paul's oratorial

awareness enabled him to cause an uproar to use his Roman citizen trump card and manoeuvre his final trial to Rome.

Using the limited, Justinian apologetics definition, Dulles identifies the Acts trend after the initial speeches to various Jews in Acts in 'miniature sketches',[87] from Stephen addressing the Jews from a Hellenist Christian perspective, through Peter addressing non-Jews in Israel, to addressing the Gentiles in their world.[88] Recognising this progression is helpful but it can give a simplistic image of the journey from Peter's Pentecostal speech to Paul reaching out to the Jewish leaders in Rome: for example, in Acts 13, Paul proclaims he is turning to the Gentiles, thus from the Jews, but it is unclear whether this meant all Jews, the local Jews, or it was a rhetorical statement because he clearly addressed many Jews elsewhere afterwards. Another important point is that apologetics is shown also to develop Christians' understanding: in Acts 15, Peter addresses the Council with an apologia for reaching out to Gentiles, their inclusion into the faith, and baptism. Also, Luke's trend is to record Paul's visits to local synagogues or Jewish leaders rather than other, everyday encounters. This omits other encounters which Paul surely engaged in, which would have been helpful for Christians reading the text: several converts are named, presumably important in the early Church, but we have little understanding of any conversions or the evangelical or apologetical contribution to these, such as Lydia in Acts 16:13-15. Thus, Luke mainly records the great apologetical speeches of Peter and then Paul, giving only snapshots and a taste of more taking place, while the many anonymous converts include some who came to have faith through apologetical content and activity. Therefore, there is little content to inspire the 'ordinary' faithful to act apologetically in their own 'ordinary' way, which may have contributed to the idea developed in the second century and beyond (see Part 2b) that apologetics was for the learned and important, and thus not universal. However, it is possible that some 'ordinary' Christians were inspired by their leaders to act, thinking 'if Paul can speak to the governor like this, then I can…'

Regardless of the many possibilities hidden just beyond the horizon, Acts is a clearly apologetical book in the sense that it is (but not only) an extensive record of apologetical communication mostly between figures in the early Church and Jewish and Gentile leaders and ordinary people, both Jewish and Gentile.

Clearly, by the 60s, Petrine apologetics was already considered an important Christian element, intertwining the communication method with evangelism and justification. Most Acts chapters are at least somewhat apologetical in content and the verbs used – 'made a defense', 'explained', 'persuades' – are undeniably apologetical. It is even safe to say that Acts is partially written as an apologia – both to assist in converting Jews and Gentiles, as well as even being a kind of instruction manual, or series of examples, to help prepare Christians for apologetical dialogue themselves. All four Gospels are plentiful in presenting explanations, responses, and teachings identifiable as apologetical, whether as

[87] Ibid., 11.
[88] Ibid., 12.

Jesus' direct teachings or as framing of content by the authors. By focusing more on the likely context and situation in the first century, thus moving beyond the fragmenting of the overemployed historical-critical method, apologetics is clearly an important part of following Jesus, in both receiving and becoming prepared and also delivering apologetical content appropriately as modelled by the Gospels.

2a.3 – Early Apologetics – the Apostolic Fathers

Apologetics is a response, which means it is adapted to the context, situation, topic, and especially the recipient and others hearing or reading the response. The main focus of the known texts in the Church's earliest times is the conversion and formation of Christians, which then often became defences against Judaising and Docetic ideas, then later attempts to establish some civil protection for Christians. In that time, Gnostic ideas were growing and mutating as Judaeo-Christian concepts met Greek ideas and did not always lead to orthodox Christian understanding, which needed to be dealt with by the Church.

The Early Church was developing, the original apostolic leaders were replaced by the next generation, and numbers within the Church were growing and more local Churches were appearing. In local contexts, interactions with the Jewish communities were deteriorating as Christians were being removed from synagogue involvement. Increased interactions with, and many converts from, various forms of the Greek and Roman cultures meant more exposure to different ideas, beliefs, and practices. Particularly for Jewish converts, coming from a closed, non-proselytising religion, connection and even interaction with pagans would have been a large step requiring repeated encouragement. Therefore, it is expectable that Christian leaders and significant figures continued the calls to engage in apologetical activity – to prepare well, to respond, to do so in a Christian manner, which requires much grace and personal strength.

Unfortunately, the Justinian apologetical definition has generally limited recognition of apologetics in the Apostolic Fathers (AFs). Dulles's well-researched but specifically-focused *History* is sparse in recognising texts in this generation and even states that the AFs 'did not themselves engage in what one should call apologetics'.[89] He does not explain why this is so, or why the development of explaining the faith to others failed in the AFs but suddenly did so a generation later. He identifies only three of the 15 texts[90] included in this study, being chronologically (probably) the last three texts, as they adhere most to the commonly-held definition of apologetics.

Rather, loosely, the Apostles contributed to the NT canon, the Apostolic Fathers developed and adapted explaining the faith in a range of texts considered here, and the third generation saw the intellectualisation of apologetics and 'ordinary' faithful fade from apologetical history until recently.[91] This means this chapter observes the last time the universal aspect of apologetics was in the Early Church. Before this narrowing, apologetical themes and developments can be found in the earlier texts of the *Didache*, the *Letter of Barnabas*, and also the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and, then the possibly papal texts of the *Letter of 1Clement* and the *Preaching of Peter*, then the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp. These are divided into the first three, which partly use the Two Ways approach that is preparation for Christians understanding the importance of following Christ by

[89] Ibid., 27.
[90] Ibid., 30-1.
[91] Generations are not easy to define and are only a generalisation. They can be as lengthy as Irenaeus's description of him sitting at the feet of Polycarp, who did the same when learning from the Apostle John. Here, the third generation is beginning after Quadratus and Aristides.

distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate ways as a framework for explaining to others why Christians are different. Then two more or less papal texts are considered for their contribution to early apologetics, followed by the letters of two bishops show that they were guiding the faithful in apologetical content and calls to respond to others. Finally, two apologias to secular authorities, which begin a new approach, are briefly considered.

Two Ways Apologetics

Before the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem and the ensuing dispersal, the Christian diaspora was already taking place, being those to whom Peter's first epistle was addressed. The 60s were tumultuous for Christians: increasing persecutions and martyrdoms, especially of Peter and Paul in Rome and James the Bishop of Jerusalem; growing ejection from synagogues and rejection by society in general; authorities blaming Christians unjustly; Docetists claiming Jesus was mere spirit and avoided the death on the cross; and Jewish and Roman conflict leading to escape to Pella… Amongst growing pressures, Peter called them to prepare, respond, and do so in a Christian way.

With such instability, and increasing converts to the faith needing direction, it would have been necessary to establish and maintain clear understanding of the faith, leading to preparation. Further, new Christians were now not just converts but also the children of earlier converts growing up in the faith, which added to the pressure to teach the faith well. Gentile converts needed a moral, spiritual framework, coming from a belief system with many whimsical gods, curses, superstition, and good or bad fortune.

Problematic previous beliefs and the need for basic teaching were solved with the Two Ways code which creates a foundation on which to build. It is an effectual, simple way for Christians to approach their faith, and begin to explain it to others. One of the great foundations of Judaeo-Christian development has been created by the Two Ways code, having been used many times before and after the AF generation: it is Deuteronomic and also appears in Isaiah, Sirach, the Dead Sea Scrolls' *Community Rule*, Matthew, Galatians, *Barnabas*, the 4th century *Apostolic Constitutions*, and the *Rule of Benedict*.[92] Jesus used Two Way thinking at various times, and the Gospel authors chose to include these severally.[93] This indicates the Jews needing reminders of a good way and a bad way, redolent of the blessings and curses as an integral part of the covenants, for example, the Mosaic Law. This was needed because the Law was being skewed by Pharisees, etc., and culturally the idea of the Romans being enemies and the Messiah coming to defeat them meant Jesus needed to remind them that the battle was spiritual, not socio-political. Thus,

[92] Clayton N. Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 161-2.

[93] Examples are sheep and goats (Mt 25:31-46), those invited or not to the wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-14), the servants who make a return on the talents or not (Mt 25:14-30), or the servants waiting for the master or the maidens waiting for the bridegroom (Lk 12: 35-40; Mt 25:1-13).

Jesus certainly used the Two Ways code in his teachings, and the AF generation continued this.

The Two Ways code presents the choice between God's way or that of the world, the enemy, destruction, etc.; it is light or darkness, blessing or curse, heaven or hell, good or evil. It can also be applied in the Jewish/Christian sense of law or spirit, such as in Galatians 4-5, where it becomes acts of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:19-23). The Two Ways approach is catechetically useful and can certainly be applied apologetically in dialogue with other beliefs as well as in developing the understanding of the faithful at a foundational level.

Being distinct and simple, it very likely spread organically as it was used and disseminated by word of mouth and was easy to describe in writing. We cannot know how many early genuinely Christian writings did not survive time or later persecutions, and some may have been rejected later because of the practice then of attaching an important figure's name to improve the likely circulation of one's text, which is not unlike the sharing of memes in social media today. As memes are shared only when they have some redolence or pertinence, perhaps there was a form of 'natural selection' taking place with early Christian texts and those not regarded as important then may have perished – this means we may speculate there was 'ordinary' apologetical writing because absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, nonetheless this can only be hypothesis, as the 'important' texts alone survived.

With the dangers of Docetism and even the beginnings of Gnosticism challenging orthodox Christianity, apologetics that laid out clear demarcations regarding thoughts, words, and actions was both useful and easily understandable by all the faithful. Therefore, the Church's leaders employed the Two Ways as an apologetics in response to the problem and challenges they were facing, so that the faithful could in turn be prepared for continuing this clear response.

The general approach in the AFs was to group ideas and sayings in small batches, however, in the *Didache*[94] and *Barnabas*,[95] the Two Ways sections are lengthy. A Jewish heritage for much of the Two Ways style and some content should be recognised. However, Jefford points out that many sayings are of Christian origin, from Jesus or the apostles, or others; some that are reported as 'from the Lord' may be Jesus before or after his death and Resurrection,[96] as well as prophetic words in prayer in the contemporary context.[97]

Barnabas has a clear example of second generation Two Ways writing. In ch18- 20[98] the motif of light and darkness amongst others is used. In ch19, there is a

[94] 'Didache' in Kirsopp Lake, *Apostolic Fathers* (London: 1912), http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-lake.html.
[95] 'Barnabas' in Lake, *Apostolic Fathers*, https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/barnabas-lake.html.
[96] Balthasar states that these were almost exclusively before the Triduum, but they are picked up again particularly in the AFs, which he does not cover. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 9-12.
[97] Jefford, *Apostolic Fathers*, 53-54.
[98] Jefford describes the Two ways content in *Barnabas* as in chapters 18-19 (e.g., *Apostolic Fathers*, 53) but ch20 is clearly in the same manner, albeit the form is now 'the bad way is x, y, z; it is not a, b, c'

mixture of instruction models: sometimes 'do this, not that'; in other verses 'don't do that, that, or that, but do this'. The subjects are various and do not generally follow a specific path but move from topic to topic, however, within verses the content makes sense so while the Two Ways is lengthy, the subject matter is typically in small batches. An example is in v6:

> Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods, thou shalt not be avaricious. Thou shalt not be joined in soul with the haughty but shalt converse with humble and righteous men. Thou shalt receive the trials that befall thee as good, knowing that nothing happens without God.

This shows Jewish and Christian sources and themes, which is typical of much of chapter 19. Kraft accurately points out that the Two Ways thinking is sprinkled throughout *Barnabas*[99] but his later claims that another common source is necessary because neither *Barnabas* nor the *Didache* is the source for the other[100] requires the reader to ignore the possibility that organic oral communication and the reading of various sources could cause two somewhat similar texts to be written with sufficient independence of one another within a somewhat homogeneous-thinking group spread out over a large area (not to mention the influence of the Holy Spirit).

The other, longer example of AF Two Ways is the first six chapters of the *Didache*, which begins by defining the ways as Life and Death. Here, there is more coverage of both good and bad ways, and the ensuing actions, habits, and thoughts. Chapter 3 is an interesting section for while both texts, as well as scriptural examples, name the terrible sins met on the wrong path (murder, lust, theft…), here, feasibly as a response to a question regarding magnitude, the progression from mild to strong is also explained. This is clearly a warning but perhaps also to those who don't find themselves among the lists of terrible sins and may assess themselves as good: for example, verse 6 warns 'My child, be not a grumbler, for this leads to blasphemy, nor stubborn, nor a thinker of evil, for from all these are blasphemies engendered'. The remainder of the *Didache* was not only very useful for contemporary faithful but also for later apologists as a source regarding early Christian beliefs and practices: sacraments and prayers are included, as are roles within the Church and, overall, the text is instructional, supporting early Christians in understanding the faith and following it. It is thus clearly apologetical-catechetical.

The historical understanding of apologetics over the centuries has been hindered as the *Didache* was lost and *Barnabas* was often suspected, including by Eusebius, as being spurious. By the late 19th century, an unknown 'primitive Two Ways document'

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where a, b, and c are good actions, etc. Interestingly, the Lake translation gives ch19 the title of 'The Way of Light' and ch20 has 'The Way of Darkness': 'Barnabas' in Lake, *Apostolic Fathers.*

[99] Robert A. Kraft, *Barnabas and the Didache* (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965), section #2, http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rak//publics/didache/2waysint.htm.

[100] Ibid., section #4.

was proposed,[101] based only upon the belief that all documents must come from other documents, rather than from oral communication. Such a reasoning was based heavily on the contemporary academic system of publishing an idea and others publishing their response as a disagreement or development, rather than accepting that the Early Church developed and shared ideas organically or even allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire the faithful. With the support of Harnack and others, the missing proto-document took on a Jewish origin that was fixed onto two separate finds of parts of the *Didache*. Suggs states that this hypothesis 'prevented the relegation of the Two Ways to the second century and its use as a "demonstration" that second-century pietism had "degenerated" into a "mere moralism."'[102] This would have been just another projection of contemporary positions on the past contexts. Or it could have been regarded 'as evidence of strains in primitive Christianity which were not congenial to the prevailing views of the apostolic age'.[103] That both Jesus and Paul presented the Two Ways in several different ways, including the more advanced Galatians 4-5, this is an example of a priori preferences overtaking the evidence.[104] The *Didache* content was soon shown not to be the source but it took four decades, until the 1920s, for the common source theory to be overtaken; but then proposals arose of Barnabas authoring the *Didache* and the text being assigned a late date of composition. When speculation becomes foundational in arguments and propositions, error is not far behind. A good apologetical approach – empirical, supportable, defensible – would have avoided the problems developing from weak positions.

Nevertheless, the Two Ways content shows the pastoral concern that the authors have for the understanding and lifestyle of the Christian faithful. It is clear instruction on how to live and follow the faith. This is done by a clear demarcation of the two poles of thinking, acting, believing. It creates then reinforces a clear 'us' and 'them' attitude, which is balanced in Christianity with the call to pray for others, especially one's persecutors. This was pastoral and catechetical. It was also apologetical in that the writer was explaining to those who, rather than asking a question directly, were ailing in their faith or fading in their enthusiasm for following Christ and his Church. The flock were wandering, losing direction, and the observant pastor was noticing the unspoken question of 'Where shall we go?' By answering the question of 'In whom do we have hope, faith?', each of the Two Ways authors, being pastors of some sort, through a blend of apologetics and catechetics set out the choice clearly that one path was to God and the other was not. This is also evident in the aphorisms of the 12 mandates in the Shepherd of Hermas.[105] While it is beyond the range of normal apologetical texts, this method was clearly apologetical in that it responded to those faithful who were asking – with words or deeds

[101] M. Jack Suggs, 'The Christian Two Ways Tradition: Its Antiquity, Form, and Function', in *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature*, ed. David Edward Aune (Brill, 1972): 60, https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004266155/B9789004266155-s007.xml.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 61.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Jefford, *Apostolic Fathers*, 121. 'The Shepherd of Hermas', trans. J. B. Lightfoot, *Early Christian Writings*, accessed 12th April 2023, https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/shepherd-lightfoot.html.

or a lack of such – for direction. Thus, it can be regarded as pastoral apologetical catechetics.

This confirms it is possible to identify apologetical thinking earlier than the middle of the second century. Such content provides us with some understanding of first and early second century Christianity and the prominence of basic apologetical preparation as well as the need to be able to present these ideas to others, and to build up within the Church, and to those outside it, that this was how good and faithful Christians think, speak, act. The more such ideas became embedded in the Christian mind and soul, the more such morals and ideas were shared as part of the Christian identity and became part of the Christian narrative, thus forming a stronger protection against temptation and the faith being skewed or diluted.

The Two Ways narrative used in the early Church was noted as a pre-apologetic by Clayton Jefford.[106] This changed as Christianity became more established and stable. Jefford observes regarding the evolution in apologetical writings (for 'household codes', read Two Ways for the general meaning):

> It is all the more interesting, therefore, that the codes quickly disappeared from Christian literature after the middle of the second century. One must assume that this disappearance is associated with some recognition among the second-century Christian apologists and heresiologists after them that the household codes were no longer necessary or useful as a standard by which to establish an ethical Christian lifestyle.[107]

Such an approach is definitely of its time(s), particularly when clear moral/spiritual understanding needs to be developed, such as in the Mosaic Law, Benedict's Rule of Faith, and the somewhat precarious Christian diaspora. The Two Ways code is a reminder of Jesus' teachings and also laid out a moral division that still exists today, in a time where such a foundation might be needing to be established again.

More Early Papal Apologetics?

The second of four categories of AF apologetical texts is the non-canonical texts written with varying degrees of certainty by popes. Clement is understood to have been the fourth Bishop of Rome and *Clement* is written clearly from the Roman Church leadership to the Corinthian Church. It shows authority, giving advice regarding particular problems including apologetical content. The second is the *Preaching of Peter*; this is not strongly attributed to the Apostle, but it is quite feasible that his content contributed somewhat to the final composition. It too has clear apologetical elements when understood through the Petrine three-fold definition of preparation-response-manner.

[106] Ibid., 88.
[107] Ibid.

1Clement (1Clem)

There are five source manuscripts of this epistle and dating is between AD 68 and 110; later dating is less supported and the 90s is considered most likely.[108] This may be the same Clement that was with Paul in Philippi in 57 (Phil 4:3).[109] Eusebius records the letter's Early Church use in (proto-)Masses: 'in many churches this epistle was read aloud to the assembled worshippers in early days, as it is in our own' thus feasibly considering it as inspired.[110]

The early chapters clearly address issues of authority in the Corinth Church, where settled and trusted leaders were ousted and replaced by disorder. Clement exhorts the Church to return to what it knew and followed before, writing with pastoral authority and a clear grasp of Scripture and pastoral approaches; even the Protestant Andrew Louth comments that he is showing an establishing of the position as Pope.[111] The use of many scriptural quotes – mostly not so accurate albeit clear paraphrases or comments – points to the organic spread and understanding by Christians of the content that became Scripture. It is used to explain why the recipients should repent of their sins, particularly envy, and return to be in good faith, following Christ and the teachings of Scripture and the Apostles. Through an apologetical lens as being a type of catechetical apologetics, it teaches to remind in order to persuade those fallen away to repent and come back into the fold. In later authority paradigms, his words would be considered pastoral guidance and admonition. This points us to how apologetical activity can be perceived in other areas of Christian communication, including, and sometimes especially, pastoral.

Looking through an apologetical lens, 1Clement is clearly an apologetical document. Pastorally, it is trying to solve a division in the local Church and give a reminder of the original focus of the Church: following Christ and building community in him as Paul had taught them. Apologetically, as a response to significant problems in one Church, another Church held to have special authority (Peter's and Paul's martyrdoms, the successors of Peter, etc.) is presenting reasons for hope and faith, and how to live accordingly, so that the Corinth Church will revert, convert, or discipline themselves to return to orthodox ways and faith. The extent of Rome's knowledge of the disruption is unknown; gleaning from 1Clement, there was disruption because those in authority – named mostly as presbyters – had been driven out and the usurpers were causing great confusion and disruption to the community.[112] In response, Clement provides them with narratives that can be considered apologetic in a primary sense but especially can be employed by the Corinth Christians against those who reject orthodoxy. Louth recognises the overall style as typical of the time: 'His method reflects current rhetorical technique, unlike most of the writings of the New Testament (except *The Epistle to the Hebrews*), in that his epistle is built around a carefully arranged series of

[108] Roberts-Donaldson, *First Clement*, https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/info/1clement.html; also, '1 Clement' in Lake, *Apostolic Fathers*, 3-7, https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/1clement-intro.html.
[109] Roberts-Donaldson, *First Clement*.
[110] Eusebius, *The History of the Church* (London: Penguin, 1989), 3.16.
[111] Andrew Louth, 'Clement of Rome' (introduction) in *Early Christian Writings*, revised trans. Andrew Louth (London: Penguin, 1987), 20.
[112] 1Clement (1Clem), 47-8, in *Early Christian Writings*.

exempla.'[113] Some general themes covered include envy and disobedience leading to death, that Christ humbled himself for us, that bishops and deacons are from the Apostles, that the lawless persecute the just, that love is the way forward, that faith and works must go together, etc. The thematic wide range intended to paint a broad picture of reasons to reject sin and turn back to God as individuals and community is confirmed in ch62 where the author suggests firmly that he has provided sufficient reason for the Corinthians to 'get on with it'. This includes 'By all means be pugnacious and hot-headed, my brothers, but about things that will lead to salvation.'[114] His message is to fight for the faith.[115]

Therefore, 1Clement is a particular type of apologetics: a strong reminder of rejecting the sand and rediscovering the rock as a foundation (Christ and Peter, even Clement). The letter responds to those who have strayed or lost their orthodoxy. Whether the intended recipients included the usurpers specifically or the letter was only to encourage the local Church in removing them is not clear.[116] However, it both is an apologia – a presentation of the reasons for faith and hope in Christ – and also a rich source for apologetical ideas and narratives, very helpful not only to build up the Corinth Christians but also for their use against the usurpers and their supporters. Here, as writings explaining how to be part of the Church from one in higher authority, we may regard this as pastoral catechetical apologetics.

The Preaching of Peter (Preaching)

This text is unknown in its proper form and is available now only in quotations from Clement of Alexandria, who approves of it, and Origen, who is unclear; it should not be confused with a Syriac document of the same name. Regardless of whether it is truly Peter's words, based upon them, or merely using his name for status, they are partly apologetic in nature,[117] which is again evidence that apologetical writings as well as words (of Peter or whomever), were being used in the so-called pre-Justin period.

The text[118] contains several apologetical elements including a description of how the Apostles studied the Scriptures and recalled Jesus' words and made sense of all that had happened, as well as including a clear statement of Jesus' suffering, thus against Docetic beliefs:

> But we having opened the books of the prophets which we had, found, sometimes expressed by parables, sometimes by riddles, and sometimes directly (authentically) and in so many words naming Jesus Christ, both his coming and his death and the

[113] Louth, 'Clement', 20.
[114] 1Clem, 45.
[115] This is reminiscent of the Letter of Jude.
[116] 1Clem 56 is a call to accept correction, thus confirmable of the document's apologetical nature in a pastoral sense. However, whether this addressed the troublemakers or not is unclear. Perhaps the respected deliverers of the letter, as described in ch65, were not only to observe the Corinth situation but also had been entrusted with making some level of 'neutral' intervention if necessary.
[117] 'Preaching of Peter', *Bible Gateway*, 5th April 2023, https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Preaching-Peter.
[118] 'The Preaching of Peter', in Montague Rhode James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1924), 16-19, http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/preachingpeter.html.

> cross and all the other torments which the Jews inflicted on him, and his resurrection and assumption into the heavens before Jerusalem was founded (*MS.* judged), even all this things as they had been written, what he must suffer and what shall be after him. When, therefore, we took knowledge of these things, we believed in God through that which had been written of him.

It is explained that the Apostles were sent to the Jews for 12 years then out to the world, which corresponds with the Acts progression above. Also, Christians are explained as a third type of people, who do not worship animals and worldly things after the Pagans, nor the Jews who do not follow God properly, rather focusing on angels and the moon regarding months.

There is little study and knowledge of the text because of its peripheral nature (not well known, fragmentary, undatable, brief…). Its dating is before the 3rd century as Clement of Alexandria quoted it. Some date it late in the 2nd century because it has apologetical content[119] but this requires an absence of apologetical activity until the Greek influence of Justin. Dulles recognises this thinking as weak (even with his limited recognition of pre-Justin apologetics) and places the *Preaching* alongside Quadratus in 125.[120] However, he then recognises Quadratus's contemporary Aristides as conceivably using some of the *Preaching*[121] so he dates it likely from any time pre-125.

Of course, the content could be as early as the 60s but the final form up to 200. The *Preaching* contains early-themed content, clearly from the apostolic generation, and its later apologetical styles may mean it was finalised using later styles. We may hypothesise that the title points to either the words being Peter's or paraphrases of them while retaining the meaning, or that the author recognised Peter's style and named the text to reflect this. The fact that apologetics is based upon Peter's call – surely inspired by the Holy Spirit and his recognition of the need for better Christian engagement with others – means that the method of apologetics needs to be recognised as being part of the Christian world in the Apostolic and AF generations. Moving beyond, it is reasonable to recognise that each generation needed to be called to genuine Christian apologetics, and the *Preaching of Peter* in many ways bridges the gap between the first and second generations of Christianity, thus also showing that so-called pre-Apologetics is really Petrine apologetics.

Bishops' Pastoral Apologetics

Within local Churches, if apologetics was existent, there would surely be evidence of this – at least in calls and support for such. While not explicit, Petrine apologetics can be implied as taking place to some extent at least from the content of bishops' writings at the

[119] Kathleen Arbogast, Rubén R. Dupertuis, and Zoe Grout, 'Preaching of Peter', *Bible Odyssey*, accessed 5th April 2023, https://www.bibleodyssey.org/passages/main-articles/preaching-of-peter/.
[120] Dulles, *History*, 30.
[121] Ibid., 31.

time. In the unsettled and fluid time of the AF generation, this is observable in the writings of two bishops who wrote to episcopal peers and also their faithful laity.

Ignatius of Antioch, condemned to death and on his final journey to Rome, wrote seven letters to Churches along the way including one to the Roman Church itself. This most prominent AF included apologetical content useful then and since, for example, on bishops, Sunday Sabbath, etc., which have been apologetical topics since the Reformation. Ignatius' key, repeated themes were to follow one's bishop, of unity, and rejecting heresy, which were clearly issues he had perceived and was responding to on his journey. There is also Polycarp of Smyrna, himself a young bishop visited by Ignatius and a recipient of one of his letters, who wrote his own epistle later. The letters are clearly responses to perceived issues as well as useful for preparation for the faithful who can then in turn respond in a Christian manner.

Ignatius to the Ephesians (IgnEph)

The first Ignatian letter is apologetical as it explains the importance of bishops and other clergy, and dealing with heresies.

He is positive towards and explains the importance of the bishop and, connected to this, also of unity. While Louth[122] considers the absence of a mention that the bishops were direct successors of the apostles, which would not have been antithetical to the text, it is not expectable that Ignatius would have included an explanation on what was an established practice – the omission thus points also to bishops being established as successors. The early documents of the Church were pastoral and educational in different ways, and were written for the contemporary faithful, who likely would not have needed the obvious described to them; Clement, however, regarded it expedient to state the succession because the Corinthian clergy had been ousted, which was not the case in Ephesus. A further example of not relying on an argument from silence is the debate whether the Ephesian Bishop Onesimus was Paul's runaway slave (Philem): the Ephesians would already know whether he was the scriptural slave, a namesake of his, or that it was random coincidence. Therefore, expecting unnecessary content that would be helpful to future scholars is a weak argument from omission.

A common Ignatian theme is against heresy, included several times here. After a call to continue in unity, he teaches the importance of always avoiding heresy and commends the Ephesians for rejecting recent heretics who had tried to lead the faithful from orthodoxy.[123] He writes unequivocally against Docetism, stating clearly in what Louth suggests may have been quoted from a hymn,[124] describing Jesus as both body and spirit and recalling his Incarnation and Crucifixion.[125] It is reasonable that this may also have been against Jewish conspiracy ideas that existed at this time to discredit Christianity, and perhaps even as a statement of belief for Christians to use apologetically with Jews. Later chapters explain that heretics are punished by God, thus being a reminder

[122] Louth in *Early Christian Writings*, 57.
[123] IgnEph, 5-7, in *Early Christian Writings*.
[124] Louth in *Early Christian Writings*, 67, fn.3.
[125] IgnEph, 7.

to be orthodox and a statement to be given to heretics who tempt.[126] It is even a form of the Two Ways code. Therefore, he is preparing them, building them up, and showing them the ways of how to respond, and he does so in a clear, authoritative and Christian manner.

One more general pastoral admonition seen through an apologetical lens is that those who teach the faith should follow their words and live up to the faith: the longer-term view of the Christian manner called for in 1Pt 3:15-16.

Ignatius to the Magnesians (IgnMag)

The second and far shorter letter to the Magnesians confirms the importance of bishops and deals with problems from Jews and Docetists.

In the first half, Ignatius praises the young bishop of the local Church, emphasising the importance of being obedient and respectful to him.[127] This confirms the importance of early Church bishops and unity is again called for, which suggests it was an important theme of the time. In chapter 4, Ignatius points out that 'meetings' without the bishop, which may be liturgical and/or administrative, have 'no sort of valid authority.' This suggests that the Magnesian representative, who met with Ignatius in Smyrna, may have reported such problematic events to Ignatius, leading to his pastoral apologetical declaration of invalidity.

The second half begins with a clear and somewhat blunt separation of Judaism, including Jewish Christians, and Christianity:[128] 'To profess Jesus Christ while continuing to follow Jewish customs is an absurdity.'[129] He explains this in several ways regarding the incompatibility of retaining Jewish loyalty to law or customs. Louth points out that Docetic teachings mixed with Jewish beliefs were problematic at the time for orthodox Christians,[130] that is, those with connection with other Churches, especially Rome, and who sought communion with other Christians in the early Church. Of particular interest to later apologists, the first recorded use of the term 'Christianity' is in chapter 10, used in contrast to Judaism, and there is also the first record of the Christian holy day being Sunday: 'they have given up keeping the Sabbath and now order their lives by the Lord's Day instead'. The latter refutes the minority Protestant narrative that Constantine invented Sunday as the Christian holy day in the fourth century, forcing this on the First Council of Nicaea, and even that this was to glorify a solar deity;[131] still today, an academic publication considers claims that Sunday became the holy day in the fourth century as 'secure conclusions'.[132]

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[126] Ibid., 16-17.
[127] IgnMag, 2-4, 6, 7, in *Early Christian Writings*.
[128] Ibid., 8-11.
[129] Ibid., 10.
[130] Louth in *Early Christian Writings*, 74-5, fn.4.
[131] For example, 'How the Sabbath Was Changed', *Sabbath Truth*, accessed 7th April 2023, https://www.sabbathtruth.com/sabbath-history/how-the-sabbath-was-changed. In reality, Constantine made Sunday a holiday because it was the Christian holy day. Also, the Nicene Council (in the Synodal Letter) settled the Quartodeciman (Easter dating) issue.
[132] Robert K. McIver, 'When, Where, and Why did the Change from Sabbath to Sunday Worship Take Place in the Early Church?', *Avondale University*, September 2015, 35,

Ignatius' themes of pro-bishops and other clergy, anti-Docetism, and breaking from Jewish customs are becoming established. Being apologetical then, they are also important resources now. His general tone and content point directly to apologetics in the Petrine definition as he responds to problems and false claims.

Ignatius to the Trallians (IgnTra)

The author continues his theme of praising obedience to each Church's bishop, after receiving representatives of each in Smyrna, and in each letter the bishop is regarded as in loco Christi in the local Church. Clergy and deacons are also due obedience by the laity; it is understandable that, by 'clergy', some kind of priesthood is meant, then this is strengthened with a clear reference to 'three orders'[133] meaning it was common if not the norm. This is apologetically useful today as a later institution of priests is claimed by some non-Catholics, even the academic Philip Jenkins, an ex-Catholic and now Episcopalian. Jenkins, among others, recognises priests as *sacerdos*, as used regularly by Tertullian; however, *presbyter* was used by Clement, which is dismissed by Jenkins, and also by Ignatius, whom Jenkins ignores.[134]

For second generation Christians, Ignatius shows this to be the structure to be followed. He recognises the Trallian Church as young,[135] and warns of the importance of avoiding heresy and those who seek to persuade such to develop.[136] To avoid this temptation, Ignatius advises obedience to Christ and the Church's clergy.[137] In chapters 9-11, he explains the heresies: the Docetists claim Christ as spirit without body. In response, Ignatius lists Christian facts: Jesus was born of Mary, he ate and drank, he died on the Cross and was raised bodily. Chapter 10 is against 'some who deny God'; this may be Docetists who deny the Christian God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or pagans. Regardless, the message is unmistakable – focus on Christ who is body and spirit, follow your clergy, and ignore others who offer different teachings. This is apologetical response and preparation content.

The brevity of the Trallians letter may be explained by the Church being relatively young and in need of focus to avoid heresy. His mention of the three orders of bishop, priest, and deacon may be a reinforcement of the common structure and is now evidence of this around AD 100. While catechetical, it could be used apologetically in the local Church.

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https://research.avondale.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=theo_papers. This article considers Ignatius's words as an 'ambiguous reference', claiming it as a sole reference that is not clear (23-24, n. 29). It must be asked what other sources the author regarded as expectable to prove otherwise. Further, Ignatius' several chapters on the Jewish topic show clearly that this is no passing or random reference but a more widespread usage. Finally, the article nitpicks Ignatius's meaning of the Lord's Day, which shows the a priori position as more important than Ignatius' clear meaning.

[133] IgnTra, in *Early Christian Writings*, 3.

[134] Philip Jenkins, 'Inventing the Christian Priesthood', *Patheos*, 13th November 2017, https://www.patheos.com/blogs/anxiousbench/2017/11/christian-clergy-became-priests/. Also seen in, for example, B. Le Roy Burkhart, 'The Rise of the Christian Priesthood', *The Journal of Religion*, Vol 22, No. 2 (April 1942), https://www.jstor.org/stable/1199051.

[135] IgnTra, 5.

[136] Ibid., 6.

[137] Ibid., 7.

Ignatius to the Romans (IgnRom)

This letter is a very powerful apologia of another kind. Unlike the others with their common themes explaining about clergy, heresies, or unity, this letter is very personal and provides the Roman Church, and readers since, an insight into the thinking and spiritual state of Ignatius on his long journey to, humanly speaking, a terrible and frightening death. It is an apologia because instead of speaking of fear and asking help, it does the complete opposite. To the world it is madness, like the calmness before the crowd and wild animals that so many Christians displayed. Such an approach invites the question 'why?' and Ignatius clearly explains this here. It is the response of a Christian leader explaining how the faithful should approach such a situation.

For the Christian, it is a powerful witness to the strength of faith that so many showed, explaining it as a path to being with God, of being saved. For the apologist, it should be shared with one who questions, showing that love of God is more important than anything in the world, and to give one's life for him is the ultimate gift of love to God. It also helps explain why Christ died horribly rather than call down legions of angels to aid him. And it describes sacrifice and how the priest (or bishop) offers the sacrifice and sometimes was also the sacrifice, as was Christ on the Cross. The letter is rich with imagery: the lions' teeth grinding him 'to be made purest bread',[138] the finest sacrifice. Such Christian themes are a powerful witness to those who seek answers rather than dismiss 'religious insanity'. The apologist can present ideas such as love for God, sacrifice, purity, and rejecting the world's ways. Christianity is thus presented as a truly different path, and the joy of Christians in such a humanly terrible situation was the paradox that drew so many to Christianity, as Tertullian later supposedly described: 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.'[139]

To the Church in Rome, it was also an apologia explaining why Ignatius forbade them to try to intercede with the authorities, but to rejoice with him in his chains. It was a pastoral witness that explained and strengthened the local Church while removing any confusion over how they should act or perceive the situation.

This very personal letter was a strong apologia to the local Church and has been for Christians since, explaining why one must persevere and not despair in the face of such violence and persecution.

Ignatius to the Philadelphians (IgnPhi)

This letter, the first of three written later on the journey, provides apologetical content that is similar but more detailed than before. Ignatius is responding to perceived issues in the Philadelphia Church with the earlier themes of unity, obedience especially to the bishop, and avoiding heretics.

He links together avoiding heretics and following the bishop (ch 2). He explains the negative, what to avoid, but also the positive, what to do instead. The next two chapters state that heretics may repent and join the faithful but there can be only one

[138] IgnRom, 4, in *Early Christian Writings*.

[139] Tertullian, *Apology*, ch50, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0301.htm. Literally: 'The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; *the blood of Christians is seed*.'

Eucharist, thus no separate Eucharist of others in disagreement: it is a common Eucharist, at one with the bishop and God.

Ignatius switches to another type of heretical thinking, which Louth explains[140] is due to many converts from the large Jewish community in Philadelphia.[141] There was a problem with converts retaining old ways or teachings. Those not converting fully are 'no more than tombstones and graves of the dead':[142] harsh words, but no more so than Christ condemning Pharisees as 'whitewashed tombs'.[143] The solution is unity: one community under the bishop appointed by God.

Interestingly, Ignatius attributes his spoken words to the Philadelphian delegation on obedience to the three orders not to a human source; his words were prophetic, entirely from the Holy Spirit. Albeit not a typical apologetical response, this is consistent theologically with the charism of an ecclesial leader inspired in prayer, which reminds us that apologetics is not primarily an intellectual exercise but integral to Christian faith and should occur in a prayerful way.

To faithful who doubt the Gospel if it is not 'in our ancient records', Ignatius responds: 'my records are Jesus Christ; for me, the sacrosanct records are his cross and death and resurrection, and the faith that comes through him. And it is by these, and by the help of your prayers, that I am hoping to be justified.' This shows how the faithful should respond to such challenges from doubters. This is useful content for later apologists: without an NT canon, albeit certain texts were circulated, this shows there is more to Christianity than that written down, which negates sola scriptura.[144] Second, the authority of the Church precedes Scripture.[145] Third, by Christ's death and Resurrection, and by faith, and by the prayers of the faithful, Ignatius hopes to be justified, which refutes both sola fides and being saved once and for all because it involves Christ's part, faith in this, and the prayers – works – of the faithful. Therefore, the AFs did not see salvation as guaranteed by having faith, which was later taught by Calvin and others.

Finally, Ignatius shows the intercommunion of the early Churches making up the Church: he asks if the Philadelphians would send a deacon to help his own Church in Antioch, as others had done, now that the persecutions have ended. A Philadelphian deacon could bring news, or even a copy of his letter, to Antioch to bring consolation to his flock that their shepherd was faithful and strong in his situation. Not only pastoral, he could also explain their bishop's thinking and teachings on his final journey.

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[140] Louth in *Early Christian Writings*, 92.
[141] The same one that was condemned in Rev 3:9.
[142] IgnPhi, 6, in *Early Christian Writings*.
[143] Mt 23:27.
[144] This position was unholdable by pre-canon Christians, even up to the late 4th century with the first official canon proclaimed by the Council of Carthage (397) agreeing with St Athanasius's list in 367. Before this, and especially before the late 2nd century, there was no particular standard or list until Irenaeus around 185, who included 1Clement and the Shepherd of Hermas. Before this, any claim of sola scriptura would have meant any 'scriptural' document could have been claimed inerrant, from the most Gnostic to Marcion's edits. Thus, the idea of scriptura sola was not feasible until centuries after the beginning of Christianity, making it historically untenable.
[145] For Scripture could not have proclaimed itself as Scripture, being tautological; Christ gave authority to Peter and then the apostles, not to a series of writings, which was the foundation of Islam and the Church of Latter Day Saints. It was the Church established by Christ that proclaimed the canon.

Ignatius to the Smyrneans (IgnSmy)

Ignatius had clearly perceived Docetist problems in Smyrna. He responds with pastoral advice and an apologia: reasons for rejecting the problems, as well as evidence for later apologetical use.

He begins by praising the Church for their faith, listing the key elements almost like a short Creed – a *Creditis* rather than a *Credo*. He explains how they must focus on the reality of the Christ's suffering: 'His Passion was no unreal illusion, as some sceptics aver who are all unreality themselves. The fate of those wretches will match their belief, for one day they will similarly become phantoms without substance themselves.'[146] He references (ch 3) Jesus to the disciples on Easter Sunday evening: 'Touch me…' and he ate with them.

He warns the faithful to avoid those trying to persuade them into heresy, instead asking the faithful to pray that they might turn to Christ; this reminds apologists not to reject heretical persons but their beliefs, albeit ensuring one cannot be swayed by their influence –love God first, then one's neighbour. Being with God in this world entails suffering, but the simple choice is whether to please Christ or the heretics,[147] but the fruits of heresy are rotten in this world and judgement awaits them in the next.[148]

Ignatius presents a clear Eucharistic statement of faith on the True Presence of Christ: 'the Eucharist is the self-same body of our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His goodness afterwards raised up again.'[149] Those in heresy do not attend the Eucharist or prayers and they should be avoided entirely. The Church has strength, but clear and present temptations to heresy mean they need to protect themselves before attempting to evangelise those without orthodox Christian faith – this includes significantly the preparation element of apologetics.

In chapter 8, Ignatius gives his clearest message for unity with the bishop, the guarantor of a valid Eucharist, and baptisms without the bishop are forbidden. To be with the bishop is to be with God; to do otherwise is to be with the enemy.[150] Again he asks for a delegation to go to his own Church, to support their rebuilding and assure them of their brotherly love in Christ. He commends the Smyrneans in their strength of faith, prompting them to reach out to other Churches, which shows the growing unity in the early Church.

Deeper and more theological, this is his strongest apologia regarding Docetism. He responds with Scripture,[151] reason, and points of faith to show that a Christian believes in Christ of both body and spirit, who died for us, and whose body we consume in the Eucharist, which is valid through the bishop. This is powerful evidence, then and now, of how the second generation Church understood the Eucharist, validity, succession, and sacrifice – themes that remain important today in apologetics.

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[146] IgnSmy, 2-3 in *Early Christian Writings*.
[147] Ibid., 4-5.
[148] Ibid., 6.
[149] Ibid., 7.
[150] Ibid., 9.
[151] We should assume that both Ignatius and the Smyrnean Church had, or had knowledge of, the Gospel texts by this time.

Ignatius to Polycarp (IgnPol)

Only ch6 here addresses the faithful like in the other letters; this final epistle is to the Smyrnean bishop Polycarp and is more personal and particular to the role of bishop. However, as all are called to apologetical activity, we can glean valuable Ignatian advice.

Within the context of unity – 'there is nothing more important'[152] – the bishop at the head of the community, rather than focusing on good pupils, should 'try to bring the more troublesome ones to order'.[153] While practical, this also shows apologetical care for all the faithful. Also, he shares the wisdom that the same cure cannot be applied to all problems and one must have the serpent's wisdom applied with the dove's gentleness, which can certainly be applicable to apologetical adaptation to the context. Further, the role of the bishop, as with the apologist, includes our physical nature being used to 'gain the favour of this outward and visible world' while 'pray[ing] for insight into the invisible world as well'. This more evangelical aspect of apologetics is to go out to the world while retaining and even developing one's faith and understanding.

A Christian manner under pressure is necessary for an apologist, and a bishop:

> You must not let yourself be upset by those who put forward their perverse teachings so plausibly. Stand your ground with firmness, like an anvil under the hammer. The mark of a true champion is to stand up to punishment and still come off victorious. It is our duty, particularly when it is in God's cause, to accept trials of all kinds, if we ourselves are to be accepted by Him.[154]

Possibly useful for apologists now but a good witness then, ch5 encourages chastity where possible, and marrying is with the bishop's permission to avoid wrongful motives.

Ignatius repeats his unity call and later writes of his relief that his own Church now has peace after persecution, and again asks that a delegation is sent for support and comfort.

Ignatius's common themes in his letters are unity, obedience to the bishop, avoiding heresy, and pastoral care. These are themes not uncommon in apologetics, and Ignatius explains these in different ways, with a clear development through the letters. His words build up and guide faithful readers, they are preparation as well as a call to engage appropriately – wisely and with a Christian manner. These are calls to prepare, respond, in a Christian manner. It might even be said that this bishop was also the earliest Church's chief apologist.

Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians (Pol)

Polycarp wrote his letter to the Philippian Church at their invitation, recalling that Paul also wrote 'letters'[155] to them.

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[152] IgnPol, 1 in *Early Christian Writings*.
[153] Ibid., 2.
[154] Ibid., 3.
[155] This plural is a reminder that there were more writings than those chosen to be canonical.

He praises many good things in the community, while reminding them of the importance of doing better. Usefully, his focus on respecting deacons and the roles of the presbyters suggests they were established by then.[156] His ch1-6 content is generally positive, showing that pastoral apologetics can and often should be positively presented. It is a response, an assessment report with feedback that praises good practice and sets targets.

He switches in ch7 to warning against those who do not profess Christ. They must watch for anyone claiming to follow Christ but in an unorthodox way: he is the 'first-born of Satan'. He may be referring to Marcion, or he may have used this terms more than once.[157]

The falling away of Valens[158] is an obvious cause for apologetics: a loved one, a family member, an important community member has left and this requires a response from leaders, and Polycarp's words console and are minatory – do not follow him. The bishop calls them to be open to helping him return, albeit not at risk to themselves. This shows the apologetical response to those falling away and how to potentially communicate with them, reflecting the Petrine call: to prepare, to respond when the opportunity arises, and to do so in a Christian manner. He confirms this: 'For I am confident that you are well versed in the Scriptures, and from you nothing is hid; but to me this is not granted'[159] and reminds them to avoid anger, using scriptural quotes, and his prayer is that God will 'build you up in faith and truth, and in all gentleness, and without wrath, and in patience, and in longsuffering, and endurance, and purity', which is a very apt prayer that also reminds them to focus on participating with God by being built up, that is, being prepared to be stronger Christians that are ready potentially to engage with Valens once again.

Therefore, the themes of preparation, of responding to problems properly, of focusing on God and carrying themselves in a Christian manner are regarded as important, amongst many other themes: they are being reminded how to do apologetics. This was pastoral apologetics seeking to develop ordinary apologetics.

Apologias to Authorities

In the first half of the 2nd century, a new approach developed according to extant sources: addressing authorities in defence of Christians and their civil rights, and to explain their faith – part evangelisation and part response to serious problems. Of course, Peter and Paul had explained the faith to authority figures, hopefully even the emperor; perhaps the Christians judged by Pliny[160] had explained their faith, like a traditional *apologia* to the *kategoria* of being Christian. But this was now an important Christian speaking out for

[156] Dated between 110-140, it is likely to be somewhat later than the early dating as he speaks authoritatively whereas Ignatius letter of around 110 is addressing the relatively new Bishop Polycarp.
[157] AH 3.3.4.
[158] Pol, 11, in *Early Christian Writings*.
[159] Ibid., 12.
[160] Cf. Pliny, 'Epistulae X.96', http://vroma.org/vromans/hwalker/Pliny/Pliny10-096-E.html.

the faithful who were being challenged and it was not so much an evangelical address but now an explanation that they did not deserve such treatment. Thus, a new apologetical paradigm began.

These are what Jefford regarded as the final two proto-apologetics, before the Apologists. Both are addressed to the contemporary emperor so they are markedly different as they were not addressed to the faithful to solve problems or as preparation for apologetics. They were the first written apologias addressed to non-Christians.

Quadratus of Athens

This is the earliest text identified as an apologia by Eusebius. It was addressed to Hadrian (117-138) and written because 'unscrupulous persons were trying to get our people into trouble'.[161] The text is lost but Eusebius reports that he knew of many possessing it and that it has 'shining proofs of the author's intellectual grasp and apostolic correctness'.[162]

Jerome wrote of Quadratus,[163] a 'disciple of the apostles', and names him as the successor to Publius, the martyred bishop of Athens. Quadratus had worked to rebuild the local Church before agitators persecuted them again as the emperor was visiting the city. The new bishop responded with his apologia, presenting it to Hadrian. Jerome describes it as 'a work composed in [sic] behalf of our religion, indispensable, full of sound argument and faith and worthy of the apostolic teaching' and states that it includes Quadratus's own testimony of having 'seen many who, oppressed by various ills, were healed by the Lord in Judea as well as some who had been raised from the dead'. Different apologetical methods are used: argument, statements of faith, teachings, and testimony of miracles.

Regarding the testimony, dating, and Jerome's ambiguous wording, if Quadratus had witnessed the healings, he would have been writing his apologia aged 95 or more; it is more likely he later met the living witnesses of Christ's healings. These, and confirmation by their communities, were a powerful reminder and witness in evangelisation and apologetics. This is a significant theme in O'Brien's *Theophilos*.

Quadratus's apologia, as far as we can now know, showed his preparation, it was a response to the faith being challenged, but the Christian manner of delivery is unknown. The universal aspect is not applicable in this specific situation as the general faithful are the passive victims of the challenge, but, with hindsight, it points to a higher capability being needed to engage in this type of apologetical activity.

Apology of Aristides the Philosopher

There are various theories about Aristides' content and identity. Some hold that he based his writings on Quadratus, which cannot be checked as the latter's text is lost; others theorise without support that they are the same person, who presented the apologia to Hadrian in Athens. Regardless, this is an apologia of the early Church, dating around 125

[161] Eusebius, *History,* 4.3.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Jerome, *Illustrious Men,* 19, quoted in 'Fragments of Quadratus of Athens', *Early Christian Writings,* accessed 16th May 2023, http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/quadratus.html.

according to Eusebius and Jerome, and his text may be the earliest extant apologetical source from a lay philosopher.

Aristides' initial content is in short chapters that present clear arguments for God and his attributes: a prime mover argument is given with the statement from Gen 1 that all creation is for man, leading to a loose version of Christ's two-fold Great Commandment to love God and neighbour. The attributes of God follow, showing theological understanding in the early Church: the meaning of his perfection, his unity and genderlessness, that all is made by him, the fullness of his wisdom and his sinlessness, etc.

He then presents an extended and developed Two Ways apologia, but with four ways: the religious beliefs of Barbarians, Greeks (including Egyptians), Jews, and Christians. The first three are variations of bad-ways, leaving the good-way Christians until last. The Barbarians have natural religion, meaning the elements and even the earth itself are deities, but the elements are not treated in nature as holy (water stood in by animals, etc.) so this shows that the world is created. A longer and detailed section casts light upon the structure and details of Greek gods, with several examples of how unsuited they are to being considered gods (madness, murder, incest…): they are neither models for people nor worthy of respect or worship. Aristides is clear that he is condemning the very gods celebrated in the ceremonies for which Hadrian was visiting Athens. The Egyptian variation of these gods and their deification of animals is bluntly condemned: 'As the Egyptians, then, were more stupid than the rest of the nations, these and such like gods did not suffice for them. Nay, but they even apply the name of gods to animals in which there is no soul at all.'[164]

The Jewish system is treated briefly, showing that it is mainly correct (one God, compassion for the poor…). They err in focusing on angels, following the moon's cycles, and their dietary laws. This recalls the *Preaching of Peter*, suggesting these were a stock image of Jewish problems for Christians, but interestingly he mentions nothing of the Jewish leaders and Good Friday crowds, unlike the Acts (especially ch2).

Aristides then presents Christian attributes in morals from avoiding idols (and food offered to them) to seeking to judge fairly and find solutions peacefully, and from avoiding 'every unlawful union'[165] to being generous in helping anyone in need. The relatively long chapter is a litany of good Christian attributes and behaviours, focusing more on love of one's neighbour than of God but not neglecting the latter. He recommends the emperor reads Christian writings. Finally, he recaps with a juxtaposition of Greek licentious behaviour with the goodness and truth of Christians and their beliefs. Furthermore, Christians pray for those who persecute them and rejoice if they repent. These reasons are why Christianity is true and others should worship 'the true God'.[166] Only at the end is Jesus named, for it is he who will return to judge all people.

[164] Aristides, 12, in *The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher*, trans. D. M. Kay, http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/aristides-kay.html.
[165] Ibid., 15.
[166] Ibid., 17.

Basically, God exists, most others worship nonsense, and Jews are nearly there but 'get it wrong'; Christians are the ones who display good morals and care for others, even when persecuted by them; they worship the real God and the late-mentioned Jesus will judge all people. As Jesus is only mentioned near the beginning as the founder of Christians and right at the very end,[167] this could suggest either that he lacks a sufficient philosophical argument to embed Jesus in the presentation earlier or that his name is polemical. In chapter 15, describing Christian behaviour and morals, the content could also almost apply to a good, observant Jew – there is hardly a mention of anything specifically Christian. We may also speculate that the apologetical norm for Aristides, and all Christians, was to engage with Jews and Jewish converts regarding these themes to show a continuity with Jewish morals. But it also is quite possibly a rhetorical device to build a strong case for his group then name Jesus in the finale.

Aristides' more detailed version of the Two Way presentation was an interesting approach to the supreme leader of the known world to show Christians – depicted as good, moral, sensible, caring, and decent – as not worthy of persecution but respect. It ends with a thinly-veiled warning to those who do not repent and follow the Christian God.

Overall, Aristides' text is of significant importance, closing the earliest apologetical times and bridging the gap to the Apologists. As Dulles describes in conclusion,

> Notwithstanding its brevity, Aristides's *Apology* deserves high respect for its clarity and firmness of argument. By placing primary emphasis on the good moral lives of Christians, including their purity and charity, rather than the biblical miracles, this work lays the basis for some of the most successful apologetics of the next few centuries.[168]

It is possible that the apologies of Quadratus and Aristides presented to Hadrian had a significant effect. The emperor was promoting acceptance of philosophies at the expense of traditional senatorially favourable social structures and this included a rescript to Minucius Fundanus,[169] the Proconsul of Asia, which was 'a document if not favourable to the Christians, then at least unfavourable to their accusers'[170] for it required accusers of Christians to prove their case as the burden of proof was now upon them. Whether the apologies contributed to or even caused this change in policy is unclear.

Like Quadratus, Aristides was well-prepared and responded to challenges to Christians. His Christian manner was not so well-developed: he was particularly unpleasant to Egyptians. However, he considered his audience by focusing on the

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[167] Ibid., 2 and 17 (out of 17).
[168] Dulles, *History*, 31.
[169] This is recorded by Justin Martyr (*The Second Apology*, 12, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0127.htm) and reported by Eusebius (*History* 4.8.6-4.9.3). There is doubt cast upon the full authenticity of this by some scholars while others defend it: see various footnotes by Schaff in Eusebius for an overview: Philip Schaff, footnotes in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* Series II, Volume 1, available at: https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201/npnf201.iii.ix.viii.html, fn. 1050 and https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201/npnf201.iii.ix.ix.html, fns. 1056, 1057.
[170] Benjamin Garstad, Review of *Hadrian and the Christians*, by Marco Rizzi, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2011, https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2011/2011.12.55/.

fruits of Christianity rather than merely giving a theological discourse. To whatever extent his attack on Greek deities was acceptable in the Athens visit context is unknown and beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, he was significantly Petrine except somewhat in Christian manner and again disconnected from the universal aspect.

The Two Ways texts were for predominantly for Christians, which was a strong apologetical focus in the earliest decades of the Church after the Apostles. The need was to build the Church and make clear the direction that Churches, and the faithful constituting them,[171] had to follow. But also in the diaspora – Christian and then Jewish – outward apologetical concerns became more apparent as Jews as well as Greeks bearing Docetism became the other ways, the heretical. And as the Church was becoming better established, it began its dialogue with the Roman authorities, rather than being regularly punished by them, Christians began to appeal to them using apologetical means (Quadratus, Aristides, Justin). Apologetics evolved, without entirely losing its earlier purposes. Aristides extended to 'Four Ways' while Justin described a stylised apologetical dialogue (see Part 2b). We can consider Aristides as a fulcrum, adapting from two to four ways while addressing not the faithful but the authorities. Quadratus may have exhibited a similar adjustment in approach and style.

[171] Ibid., 105.

2a.4 – The First Century of Apologetics

It is a challenge to ascertain the nature of early Christian apologetics from afar because it is entirely expectable that in this period until 125 there is no known record outside the NT canon of developed apologetical thinking, conversation, rebuttal, discussion, or riposte between Christians or to others, as a question or challenge. The purpose of recording such without being a direct address would have been relatively pointless as apologetics is primarily a verbal engagement and useful example were already in Acts. Therefore, the absence of written evidence is not evidence of an absence of verbal communication, and the only evidence available now includes calls, instructions, and teachings.

It might be concluded tentatively here that the call for apologetical response from Peter and reinforced in Paul and Jude was understood early on to some extent as being more for those in authority because they were already relatively prepared and thus capable. The general faithful were not so capable of responding to others in dialogue. There was no guarantee that a bishop or others in a Church had educational interests and capabilities, and not every person was a keen learner with a good attitude for dialogue in a Christian manner. Nevertheless, it was something to strive to achieve and the writings suggest that there was at least something of this but that it needed developing. Overall, the image is generally of believers being pulled in different directions at times and leaders trying to protect them and guide them.

Supporting preparation, the Gospels have been found to include apologetical content regularly and often, with approximately one quarter having sections or units of content with some level of apologetics; this is either preparatory for apologetics or as models on how to respond to hostile or friendly questions. It is not claimed that this was the primary object of these texts but that it was modelled as part of the Christian experience both in the authors' intentions (human and divine) as well as being presented to the reader (or listener) as part of the Christian experience. This was also the case for the Book of Acts in its portrayal of Peter and then Paul engaging with others, both faithful and beyond.

The texts of the Apostolic Fathers also included some apologetical content as the young Church developed and met challenges from within and without. The development of bishops and other clergy shows a structure forming and a common call by Ignatius was to unite under the bishop, who had responsibility to prepare his flock for living as Christians faithfully; such developments needed to be explained to the faithful, and challenges to this met with a response. This included at times, and perhaps most clearly in Polycarp's letter, being ready to engage with problematic others. By 125, the first specific apologia to a non-Christian, that is, the emperor, presenting Christians as not a problem but even a solution in some ways, sought to reduce persecutions. This presaged the developments in apologetics that were to come, that is, apologias intended as addresses to those outside the faith, which is the focus of Part 2b.

In spite of many apologetical developments, the change to a narrower definition was already underway. Although both Eusebius and Jerome report Aristides' content, it

was hidden in plain sight within John Damascene's *Barlaam and Josaphat* until the 19th century. For this reason, as well as the brevity noted by Dulles above, it is Justin Martyr (c.150) who is more widely recognised as being the founder of Apologetics. This is, of course, only a historical construction due to Justin's work being known to us across the centuries but it was a significant factor in moving apologetics away from, in particular, its universal aspect in Peter's call.

Conclusion

This view of the earliest generations of the Church, into the second century, has focused on Scripture from the NT canon as well as writings from the time of the AFs. The purpose here has been to identify apologetical content – whether actual apologias or exhortations to be apologetical or content that directly and intentionally prepares the reader for such through explanation – in order to ascertain whether apologetical content existed in that time, whether apologetics was part of the Christian experience then, and to gain something of a flavour of it. To identify apologetical content, the Petrine definition decided on in Part I – preparation, response, Christian manner – was employed as the standard.

If one holds that such apologetics as identified in this study is a response to others in any situation, at any level, then it means that apologetics is organic and ordinary. It has not been possible to identify such apologetics directly for the obvious reason that such activity would not be at all expected to be recorded. However, it can be inferred from the number of calls, exhortations, warnings, and preparation offered that apologetics was taking place to some extent and that the Christian leaders wished for more but were also aware of the problems and risks such activity could cause for the faithful. What is clear is that such basic communication would have taken place to some extent anyway as such apologetics is part of ordinary dialogue in life and it was in this time that apologetics was at its most organic and least, for want of a better word, stylised, or more bluntly, artificial or manufactured.

Using the Petrine (and Vatican II) understanding of apologetics, this is identifiable in much of the Gospels and Acts amongst the organic development of the early Church. It evolved in later generations as needed, being a response: first with the Two Ways code (especially the *Didache* and *Barnabas*) which addressed the faithful as well as giving witness to miracles and examples of strong faith, then strengthened the awareness and resolve of the faithful against different heretical ideas (Ignatius, Polycarp), then presented the teachings of the faith and presented testimony of powerful miracles (Quadratus) and developed into Four Ways within a context of a philosophical understanding of God (Aristides), which was a new direction leading to apologetics as a Christianised *apologia* to a *kategoria* again by Justin Martyr.

Part 2b – The Apologists and Their Successors

Introduction

In the middle of the second century there occurred what may be called the apologetics turn, or more accurately the apologetics narrowing, which significantly changed how apologetics was done. This defined apologetics in many ways up to the present and even continues to do so. This was so fundamental that some consider that the 'first apologists' or Apologists were in this time,[172] usually regarded as Justin Martyr, and experts such as even Dulles in his *A History of Apologetics* state this, for example, 'The earliest apologists were primarily concerned with obtaining civil tolerance'.[173] This means apologetics is often defined according to this model, but the problem is that it is not a complete image of apologetics in both shape and extent. This study will seek to show that while Justin et al. are indeed, and of course, apologists and their content is apologetical, it is not representative of the whole of apologetics, making it problematic to define apologetics from their model. In simple terms, it is like pointing to a car and saying it is the definition of a vehicle, or to a cow and saying it defines a farm animal.

Part 2b focuses on, and even emphasises how the Early Church Apologists that are looked at are not entirely indicative of apologetics as a whole but in no way does this diminish the very important role they have had in theology, and apologetics in particular. Their contributions have been often very significant and sometimes fundamental to Christianity's development in different ways and no disrespect is implied. However, where specific uses of apologetics have varied from its original meaning, as defined in Petrine terms in Part 1 and identified in Part 2a, it will be highlighted as unhelpful, even problematic in light of apologetics having been intended as preparation for making a response in a Christian manner by all Christian faithful.

The narrowing of apologetics came after the Quadratus/Aristides refocusing of apologetics to a defence, and Justin Martyr and several other legally-minded Christians returned to the apologia as a defence against an accusation, as well as increasing the

[172] For example, the impression given in Pope Benedict XVI 'General Audience', *The Holy See*, 21st March 2007, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20070321.html.
[173] Dulles, *History*, xx; also 31 and elsewhere by inference.

philosophical content, which was developed further by several figures of the Alexandrian School of Catechetics in the second and third centuries. However, Irenaeus produced an excellent pastoral apologia against Gnosticism to protect the faithful before the end of the second century, as if harking back somewhat to older apologetics. Eusebius, famous for his historical work, was both an apologist and a collector of books, which furnished us with many texts, however, his focus on intellectual content contributed to the limiting of evidence available to us and also shaped apologetics as increasingly intellectual. This trend continued after the legalisation of Christianity by Constantine, and the figures of Athanasius, John Chrysostom, and Augustine confirm in different ways the continuing intellectualisation of apologetics over subsequent centuries. Finally, the major Church Councils of the period are considered for their contributions to the development of theology and how this relates to apologetics. Signs of ordinary apologetics, by the faithful, are scant.

2b.1 – Apologists in the Persecuted Church

It is difficult today to comprehend properly the environment in which the early Christians lived without having experience under a totalitarian regime or other state/social environment that may turn to violence, or even capital punishment against Christians. This took place in Europe in the last century, in post-Christian societies where the ruling authority enforced change from Christianity to the state religion, whereas the early Christian experience was more akin, for example, to China today as a minority faith.

There were general Roman persecutions – by Nero, Domitian, Decius, etc. – and local persecutions, such as in Antioch (Ignatius) or the martyrdom of most Christians in Lyons (while Irenaeus was in Rome). At other times authorities were more tolerant, for instance, the apologetical addresses being given to Hadrian in 125, when it was safer for Christians to defend and explain their beliefs and this was written as an *apologia*, the Greek legal defence to an accusation, *kategoria*.

Additional problems regarded orthodoxy and the Gnostic temptations from those claiming to be the true believers, presenting anything from strict asceticism to greed and licentiousness because the physical world was evil, with a plethora of 'schools' offering secret knowledge and spiritual salvation. Also, Christianity was attacked by philosophers with a skewed understanding that they were undermining the Empire, being incestuous (because Christian spouses called each other brother and sister – still used liturgically today) and were cannibalistic, eating a man's body and drinking his blood. Clearly, an apologetical response was necessary.

It can be seen that in the final decades of the pre-legal Church, important events surrounding Eusebius, the Church historian, and the persecutions of Diocletian, who had all Christian books burned that could be found in 303, may have influenced the understanding of the nature and identity of apologetics.

The events and writings of this period, from the middle of the second century to the beginnings of the fourth, practically cemented the identity of apologetics. While early apologetics was most likely organic, it became stylised; from all intelligence levels it became intellectualised; and from a focus on preparing the faithful to respond, it now focused on perceived enemies. Thus, it became narrower than the intentions in Scripture – Peter, Paul, Jude – and the ressourcement of Vatican II.

Justin Martyr

An internet search for 'who was the first apologist?' predominantly names Justin Martyr,[174] in spite of the Part 2a findings. With a Petrine definition, there were many apologists in the ordinary sense in the first century of apologetics, from Jesus onwards.

[174] For example, Doug Geivett, 'Justin Martyr: The First Great Apologist of the Christian Church', *Biola University*, 10th June 2015, https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2015/justin-martyr-the-first-great-apologist-of-the-christian-church.

But the lay legal philosopher Justin is widely recognised as the earliest because of his specific approach.

Comparatively, much is known of Justin, a pagan from the Holy Land born around 100. He describes his journey seeking truth in various philosophies – Stoicism, Pythagoras, even Plato – but this may have been more rhetorical than historical. A meeting with an old man led him from human philosophies to seek God as the prophets had known him. The witness of the joy of suffering Christians led him beyond self-interest and indulgence to something profound, which he explains twice: 'Both accounts exhibit the two aspects of Christianity that most strongly influenced St. Justin; in the "Apologies" he is moved by its moral beauty (I Apol., xiv), in the "Dialogue" by its truth.'[175]

Authentically, we have his two apologies and his *Dialogue with Trypho*; other texts ascribed to him are dated later than his martyrdom. However, he, Irenaeus, and Eusebius report there were others, but there is some doubt.[176] Like Quadratus and Aristides, his apologias sought to obtain toleration of Christians in society while *Trypho*,[177] possibly perhaps based on an actual dialogue with the well-known Rabbi Tarphon in the early 130s in Ephesus,[178] is the only extant 2nd century apology addressed specifically to the Jews.[179] If so, it is the only depiction of actual oral apologetics of the time, and if fictionalised it is surely based upon actual occurrences, albeit idealised.

Justin is the earliest apologist source that abides directly with the third element of the Petrine call – to do so in a Christian manner. Previous authors either addressed pastoral apologetical concerns, thus not communicating with non-Christians, or were blunt, even unpleasant regarding non-Christian groups (Aristides). But Justin's philosophical background, and two decades as a Christian, presumably made him aware of the importance of a good Christian manner. While his statements may seem harsh with Trypho, he is not rude, reports Dulles, and the two part on good terms.[180]

Justin's content covers several areas. The first apologia mainly holds that Christians should be protected under the law insofar as them having the same rights to trial and should not be persecuted merely for being Christian, as per Hadrian's rescript three decades earlier; whether this had faded in effect, not been implemented, or was regional only is unclear, unless the sceptical claims that it was fake were true.[181] Another theme was that Greek philosophers had a limited truth, which reflects his own journey. The old man on the beach[182] introduces him (and Justin hopes also the Greeks and Romans) to the prophets of the True God, who reveal him, thus the Christian faith. He shows that while the pagans had partial understanding, the gaps had led them into error.

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[175] Jules Lebreton, 'St. Justin Martyr', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910), 21st April 2023, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08580c.htm.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Sometimes spelt Tryphon.
[178] Lebreton, 'Justin'.
[179] Dulles, *History*, 32. The treatise against the Jews of Aristo of Pella is lost.
[180] Ibid.
[181] See Schaff's footnotes in Eusebius, *History*, Schaff and Wace edition.
[182] Similar to the setting and use of dialogue in Peter Kreeft, *Jacob's Ladder* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013).

Considering recognition of Justin as the first Apologist, his work should be considered through the lens of the Petrine call: preparation, response, a good Christian manner. Besides his apologetically appropriate content and manner, the form needs to be considered. His writing is vast compared to previous authors: *Trypho* has 142 chapters of a similar length to those in Scripture. It is thus a completely new type of apologetical text, and its depiction of a lengthy religious-philosophical debate is very different from original apologetics, however, it is not outside the scope of apologetics. In an example of *Trypho* (ch 14), Justin claims that:

> By reason, therefore, of this laver of repentance and knowledge of God, which has been ordained on account of the transgression of God's people, as Isaiah cries, we have believed, and testify that that very baptism which he announced is alone able to purify those who have repented; and this is the water of life. But the cisterns which you have dug for yourselves are broken and profitless to you. For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath and from covetousness, from envy, and from hatred; and, lo! The body is pure. For this is the symbolic significance of unleavened bread, that you do not commit the old deeds of wicked leaven. But you have understood all things in a carnal sense, and you suppose it to be piety if you do such things, while your souls are filled with deceit, and, in short, with every wickedness. Accordingly, also, after the seven days of eating unleavened bread, God commanded them to mingle new leaven, that is, the performance of other works, and not the imitation of the old and evil works. And because this is what this new Lawgiver demands of you, I shall again refer to the words which have been quoted by me, and to others also which have been passed over. They are related by Isaiah to the following effect: [a quote longer than this one from the Book of Isaiah follows][183]

This is certainly explanatory and thorough, being part of a several-chapters-long response to Trypho's claim that Christians erred by not following the Mosaic Law, a common Jewish claim. It is frank in manner but this is not problematic and so it is not against the Petrine three-part call: prior preparation is obvious; this is certainly a response; and it is in a Christian manner. But the text neither regards nor prepares ordinary Christians as it is lengthy and narrowly focused in its intellectual form, thus limited in usage and usability, and it is not readable in Church gatherings. In short, it is not for most Christians but rather a very intelligent few.

The *First Apology*, addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius, has only 68 chapters that are shorter than in *Trypho*. Justin presents apologetically that Christians should be treated with common rights for they are not a problem. Perhaps of most interest to the authorities was ch17, that 'Christ taught civil obedience':

> And everywhere we, more readily than all men, endeavour to pay to those appointed by you the taxes both ordinary and extraordinary, as we have been taught by Him; for at that time some came to Him and asked Him, if one ought to pay tribute to

[183] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/01282.htm.

> Cæsar; and He answered, Tell Me, whose image does the coin bear? And they said, Cæsar's. And again He answered them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. Whence to God alone we render worship, but in other things we gladly serve you, acknowledging you as kings and rulers of men, and praying that with your kingly power you be found to possess also sound judgment. But if you pay no regard to our prayers and frank explanations, we shall suffer no loss, since we believe (or rather, indeed, are persuaded) that every man will suffer punishment in eternal fire according to the merit of his deed, and will render account according to the power he has received from God, as Christ intimated when He said, To whom God has given more, of him shall more be required. Luke 12:48[184]

In Petrine terms, he is again prepared, responds to the issues, and does so in a Christian manner. But the lengthy justifications of Christian beliefs and practices, while an excellent intellectual explanation of Christianity, are not typical of Peter's intentions. It is a general apologia for Christianity and addresses many problems that many Christians had but it is not organic: it is difficult to imagine even this philosophical emperor reading the whole document with particular interest. Therefore, addressing it to the emperor is likely rhetorical, the document definitely intellectual, and the content stylised as a philosophical argument. While not outside the bounds of apologetics, in Petrine terms it is far more niche than normative.

Justin did indeed build upon Aristides and his texts are within the scope of the definition of apologetics. But his work constituted a fundamental change in apologetics for two particular reasons. He is the first (known) legally-trained philosopher who used this background in the Christian setting, thus intellectualising his apologia to be more akin to the Greek legal sense. This negates Peter's Christianisation of the apologia as a more organic response to another who asked about the faith, or one who made a statement that was erroneous and problematic. To be useful for ordinary faithful, an intellectual would need to adapt it, perhaps in preaching or teaching. Instead of apologetical writings supporting Christians to be apologetical, Justin reinforced and developed Aristides' novel approach, intellectualised it, and presented formal arguments to others who were certainly neither Christian nor necessarily asking about the faith. This was a departure from the original apologetics in earlier decades of the Church that would have remained a curiosity if not for subsequent writers.

Letter to Diognetus

This epistle was either addressed to the tutor of the stoic philosopher and emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180), to another of that name, or even to one seemingly converting: Diognetus means God-born. The author, named as 'Mathetes', is 'student', therefore this means anything from an anonymous pair to a stylised Christian convert, and is maybe

[184] Justin Martyr, *The First Apology*, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0126.htm.

even supposed to be the emperor explaining his new Christian understanding to his philosophy tutor. The style and emperor-connection most likely suggests a date around or just after Justin but may have been earlier or later.

Diognetus is a pagan seeking understanding: 'I see thee, most excellent Diognetus, exceedingly desirous to learn the mode of worshipping God prevalent among the Christians, and inquiring very carefully and earnestly concerning them, what God they trust in, and what form of religion they observe'.[185] The letter is unmistakably an apologetical response which is effectively framed in that it explains that the first step is to clear away the detritus of pagan understanding (idols), then it refutes Judaism before describing the unfair treatment of Christians in the world. They are not of the world and man was in a wretched state before the Son came from God. Faith in God brings blessings and the faithful grow in his love.

This is a readable, effective, and standard apologia, which is adaptable for many uses, including preparation. It is short enough for wider Church-sharing and is certainly approachable for most readers/listeners. The writer is clearly prepared, responds effectively, and has an appropriate manner. But it is clearly an apologia rather than a call to apologetics, suggesting it as Justinian in style but certainly Petrine in usefulness.

Irenaeus

Before Justinian apologetics was developed by others, Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons, having learned at the feet of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of John the Apostle, produced a very important apologetical text: *Against Heresies* (AH).

From afar we may lose sight of how the teachings and message of Christianity was not well established for several centuries and it necessitated the work of many, including apologetics to establish orthodox Christianity. As apologetics is an appropriate response made by a prepared person it was necessary that orthodox theology developed quickly. Irenaeus in the 180s shows this progress because the AH quintet of books were primarily meant as preparation texts for the faithful to recognise Gnosticism and understand why it should be rejected, but they developed into the first systematic theology.

Around a century before, a fusion of poorly formed Judaeo-Christian ideas not rooted in the foundation of love collided with Greek concepts and begat the fluid and virulent ideas of Gnosticism. It is impossible to map its multitude of sources that intertwined and unravelled in many flavours and styles, some utterly in opposition to one another. But the enticing secrecy and inherent elitism was enough even to draw some out of the Church, particularly those not well formed in the faith. Peaking in the mid-century but not fading quickly, it engendered some sects led by well-known figures such as Valentinus while other groups sought anonymity. The general theme was approximately

[185] 'Diognetus', in *Apostolic Fathers*, transl. Lightfoot & Harmer, 1891, ch1, http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/diognetus-lightfoot.html.

that a good creator God was far distant and the Christ came to show the way, leading the elect to some soteriological end. However, the Demiurge – the OT God – was an evil, under-developed deity who had trapped the elect spirits in a malicious plan by creating the physical world and our material bodies. Only Gnostic knowledge could enable the few to escape to be one day with the spirits again. From this basic narrative, myths of aeons in a dualistic reality and skewed Christian beliefs grew into harmful ideas, for example, that Jesus was not the Christ, the Christ-spirit had taken on bodily form up until the Crucifixion, and even that Judas was in on the plan.[186] Where formation was insufficient, faithful were vulnerable to falling into this thinking.

The Church was struggling with this attempt to usurp Christian orthodoxy; an example is that in Rome Polycarp rejected Marcion, who taught some Gnostic ideas, and he was sent away along with the large donation with which he had inveigled his way into the Church there. Additionally, there was the problem of Montanism – a reaction to the perceived lack of Christ's return. Some disappointed Christians followed the false prophecies of Montanus and his prophetesses that Phrygia was the new Jerusalem; other were attracted by his asceticism. There was a local response: 'By the bishops of Asia Minor, who felt their authority threatened, one or more synods were held soon after 160, which have the distinction of being the earliest synods of church history, and in which Montanism was condemned.'[187] The heresy reached Rome and may have diverted the Church's proper attention from the threat of Gnosticism until Irenaeus's AH.

A particularly terrible persecution – by mob and authorities – took place around Lyons. All known Christians were rounded up and martyred in the arena. However, the priest Irenaeus was in Rome over the winter and returned possibly to realise he was the only priest there; he became the bishop and rebuilt the local Church while writing warnings and information for his small but growing flock that became the five lengthy books of AH. Recently named as the Doctor of Unity, he shows that the best response to error is clear teaching of the faith, thus we can see how, through a certain process, heresies lead to greater development of orthodoxy, just as suffering leads to stronger faith. It is inexplicable, however, that Dulles completely omits Irenaeus from his brief survey of 2nd century apologetics; it can only be imagined that this was because it does not fit the Justinian apologetical paradigm.

Walker[188] focuses on one key debate theme of the time: the Gnostics claimed that secret Christian knowledge had been passed down orally from the Apostles but Irenaeus pointed out that any secret would have been passed to the most trusted, that is, the bishops and other Church leaders, who were instead teaching orthodoxy – after all, he had a two-generation direct link to John. Another argument is the fruit of the unity and goodness preached and practised by the orthodox Christians which was perceptible in the

[186] A somewhat recent apologetical need was to respond to the National Geographic led translation and publication of the *Gospel of Judas*, which was translated inaccurately according to other experts in order to cast Judas in a positive light; this was a major theme of my MA dissertation.
[187] Williston Walker, *An Introduction to Church History: From the Beginnings to 1500*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), ch4, http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/ch_501_intro/04_Gnost/01o_tx-or_04_gnost.htm.
[188] Ibid.

succession of generations of Christians since Christ, contrasting this with the inconsistencies of Gnostic claims in different groups. In this, 'heresy', that is, 'a choosing' is the multitude of possibilities that are not the one true faith.

Irenaeus's content is clearly Petrine as it prepares the reader, which encourages development of apologetical understanding usable as a response. The Christian manner is clear in his theological contributions, for example:

> For the glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God. For if the manifestation of God which is made by means of the creation, affords life to all living in the earth, much more does that revelation of the Father which comes through the Word, give life to those who see God.[189]

However, very occasionally Irenaeus in his pastoral work, for it is primarily that, slips briefly into mockery as he catalogues heresies and how to recognise them, thus neglecting the ideal of the second part of Peter's call:

> But along with it there exists a power which I term a *Gourd*; and along with this Gourd there exists a power which again I term *Utter-Emptiness*. This Gourd and Emptiness, since they are one, produced (and yet did not simply produce, so as to be apart from themselves) a fruit, everywhere visible, eatable, and delicious, which fruit-language calls a *Cucumber*. Along with this Cucumber exists a power of the same essence, which again I call a *Melon*. These powers, the Gourd, Utter-Emptiness, the Cucumber, and the Melon, brought forth the remaining multitude of the delirious melons of Valentinus.[190]

He is ridiculing the Gnostic naming of aeons with comical suggestions of gourd, emptiness, cucumber, and melon. While humanly understandable, especially as he was writing for his own flock and not directly responding to those who challenged the faith, such an inclusion is to the consternation of modern Gnostic scholars who use this as reason to dismiss everything else the bishop wrote, while condemning him as 'ranting', 'suspicious', one who 'denounces', 'heresy-hunter', and indeed 'not nice'.[191] Although some modern scholars with various Christian and/or gnostic leanings focus on his latter quote when evaluating whether he is worthy of inclusion in their research, one admits AH is more valuable than many of the Gnostic works themselves,[192] but their portrayal of the 'bad bishop' means a certain selectiveness takes place.

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[189] AH 4.20.7.
[190] AH 1.11.4.
[191] In order: Bart D. Ehrman in Rodolphe Kasser, Marvin W. Meyer, and Gregor Wurst, *The Gospel of Judas: From Codex Tchacos* 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2006), 165; Elaine H. Pagels and Karen L. King, *Reading Judas: The Controversial Message of the Ancient Gospel of Judas* (London: Penguin, 2008), 6, 56, 92; Bart D. Ehrman, *The Lost Gospel of Judas Iscariot: A New Look at Betrayer and Betrayed* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), 110, 134, 64.
[192] The Gnostic-sympathising Sean Martin admits the importance of Irenaeus as a source on page 16, citing him on 11% of the pages according to the index of Sean Martin, *The Gnostics: The First Christian Heretics* (Harpenden: Pocket Essentials, 2010), 16.

One of the most important AH themes is that of participation,[193] which calls the faithful to be active, not passive. Not only was this against the powerful Gnostic narratives but it was apologetical – to respond rather than remain quiet. This is repeated in the general approach of the Vatican II documents[194] and is contrary to the trend that was beginning to develop of ordinary faithful leaving apologetics to those more intellectually capable.

Irenaeus's AH was a watershed in apologetics, as he not only was the first and clearest to stand significantly against the Gnostics but he also offered such a wide teaching that began to turn the tide and was part of the Church establishing not only its universal authority but also demarcating in a firm way what was and was not Christian. This was part of a clear movement towards the establishment of standardising and identifying Christianity for all, and at the level of the ordinary faithful included learning the Creed and catechetical teaching before baptism as well as the canon of Scripture being developed. Walker concludes, albeit he separates two of the Marks of the Church:

> Thus out of the struggle with Gnosticism and Montanism came the Catholic Church, with its strong episcopal organization, credal standard, and authoritative canon. It differed much from the Apostolic Church; but it had preserved historic Christianity and carried it through a tremendous crisis. It may be doubted whether a less rigid organization than that developed in this momentous second half of the second century could have achieved as much.[195]

The vast number of themes in Irenaeus's work are a treasure of the Church. The doctrines in AH are well-developed and clearly presented to the faithful. His text was the lengthiest thus far in Christianity, being a compendium of information about why Christians should follow the orthodox faith. So, in returning to apologetics written by a bishop primarily for the benefit of his flock, in protecting them through explanation and education, that is, in Petrine terms preparation, they were then equipped to respond to others – within the Church and also outwith the faithful. And while Irenaeus may have slipped in manner when pastorally writing to his own, his general style is more accessible than the more legal-philosophical Justinian apologetics.

Western Legalists: Tertullian and Minucius Felix

Tertullian took up the legal apologetics style at the end of the second century, paying little heed if any to the manner element of the Petrine call. Like Justin before him, his legal style points the reader away from apologetics of the ordinary Christian, helping develop it as intellectual. It is impossible to determine the extent that this affected ordinary apologetics at the time but his content must have required teachers to re-present his works

[193] Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21.
[194] See ch3.2.
[195] Walker, *Crisis*, ch4.

through catechesis, homilies, and pastoral work if it were to prepare ordinary faithful for apologetical engagement as per the call of Peter. However, the law-based approach was not homogenous in manner as shown by Dulles contrasting the metaphorically sword-wielding Tertullian with the style of Minucius Felix (sometime between 150-250) who 'displays a noble reserve and consistently avoids all suggestions of polemical invective' with 'clear, graceful, and elegant' writing as his stylised *Octavius* was written in a 'pleasing Ciceronian style'.[196] However, Dulles also recognises that the theology is sparse and no reference is made to Scripture, which makes it particularly suited to dialogue with pagans as there is no dependence on Scriptural revelation, which they would not accept. As an exercise, it is philosophically a good advertisement for and defence of Christians but it lacks Christian depth.

But if the peace of a dove was with Minucius Felix then Tertullian had the aggression of a tiger in his 10 years as an orthodox Christian before slipping into the Montanist heresy as he sought a more robust approach to faith: his *Apology*, which is reiterated in his other apologetical works, 'is a brilliant application of Roman juridical principles to the defense of Christianity'.[197] He exposes the unfounded claims of Christian immorality as well as pointing out the absurdity of the legal position of Christians, especially as they were generally the most stable and decent citizens, even praying for the emperor, albeit not accepting him as a deity. These arguments were adaptable by Christians apologetically. But Tertullian went further than other apologists, stating that revelation is necessary for a proper understanding, and rejecting the Greek way as insufficient: he famously questioned 'What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?'[198] and his famous paradox paraphrased as 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church'[199] – is an apologia, even a challenge.

Ironically, Tertullian's fall from orthodoxy was quite possibly in his refusal to refute Christian heresies. Dulles describes[200] Tertullian's use of a legal technical tactic, the *praescriptio*, that caused cases to be dismissed. Tertullian reasoned that heretical Christians have no right to be heard in the orthodox Church, but this lacks pastoral care for Christians and love for one's enemies, and also closes the Church in on itself which prevents the faithful from learning how to deal with heresies. The apologist himself refused to engage and exercise his talents properly, albeit dealing with some very clear heresies (e.g., Marcionism), but he did not apologetically examine Montanism, the heresy closest to his 'defiant supernaturalism' approach.[201] Tertullian's fire burned bright but it soon faded into Montanism a decade after his conversion and he most likely died naturally, rather than experiencing the martyrdom he seemingly valued the most. His fall meant his apologetics was less explored, recommended, or used particularly in normal apologetics as his reputation was tarnished.

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[196] Dulles, *History*, 48.
[197] Ibid., 49.
[198] Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics*, ch7, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0311.htm.
[199] Tertullian, *Apology*, 50.
[200] Dulles, *History*, 51-2.
[201] Ibid., 53.

Instead, it was the more peaceful style that was to become prominent and certainly more stable as apologetics continued to develop.

Alexandrian Philosophical Apologetics: Clement and Origen

Around the same time, in the east, Clement, a convert, probably Athenian, travelled at length seeking religious understanding and settled in Alexandria. First a pupil of the Didaschalium, the catechetical school where the apologist Athenagoras of Athens[202] taught, and which may have been founded by the Gospel writer John Mark, Clement in time became the dean. Being far more Minucius Felix than Tertullian, Clement lived up to his name and Athenagoras's 'irenic apologetics'.[203] Dulles compares his apologetical content in his Protrepticus – an 'exhortation to conversion'[204] – to Justin Martyr but 'Clement writes in a far more polished and graceful style, calculated to attract his readers and make them enthusiastic for the following of Christ.'[205] This surely appealed to intellectual Greek readers and his position gave him influence: the trickle-down effect to his pupils, including clerics, who passed it on to the ordinary faithful, most likely promoted the idea that apologetical matters were increasingly intellectual.

Origen succeeded Clement as dean early in the third century. While famous for other writings, he did produce a very valuable apologia. His *Contra Celsum* was in response to Celsus' accusatory *The True Word* in 178; Origen reluctantly wrote the apologia around 248 at the request of a patron for a response. His is the only known reasoned response to Celsus of value. The influence of Celsus' writings in contemporary society is unknown and may have been a source or inspiration that caused personal issues for Christians, for local Churches, or even helped sway popular opinion or the attitude of authorities. The desire for an apologia was anything from perceptibly needed to a vanity request, but it seems more likely that there was a perceived need at least by the donor; whether this response was to help the preparation of ordinary faithful or as an intellectual rebuttal is also unclear. Either was possible as there is no perceptible record of 'ordinary' Petrine apologetics taking place in the third century, however, the Novatianist controversy suggests there was much falling away, meaning apologetical understanding was likely weakening in the faithful. Dulles' narrowing focus on Alexandrian and Latin proto-academic apologetics is unhelpful: there is no consideration of ordinary Christians, called to prepare then respond regarding hope in Christ in a Christian manner, who is every day living in an environment hostile to their beliefs. Instead, Dulles reports that 'so

[202] Athenagoras was an apologist that Eusebius curiously omitted. His 170s apologia fused Aristides's address to authorities and Justin's philosophy. Clearly increasingly intellectual, it has a strong series of points against legal issues regarding Christians while showing pagan beliefs as inferior to those of Christians. See Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians*, https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/athenagoras-plea.html.
[203] Dulles, *History*, 39.
[204] Ibid., 39.
[205] Ibid.

many of the apologists of this period were convert lawyers'.[206] Regardless, the image was growing, then and now, that apologetics was increasingly elite and not for 'ordinary' faithful.

Origen's Contra Celsum*: a Blurred Insight into Early Apologetics?*

One may learn more listening to one's enemies than one's friends. The extent of apologetical activity by 'ordinary' Christians in the 2nd century remains mostly hidden. Extant reports of apologetical conversation after Paul in Acts are slim: Justin's dialogue with Trypho,[207] and then in the next century.[208] The historical silence is not proof of absence because it was not expectable that such evidence was recorded in pre-modern societies. Perhaps several examples of Peter's call being heeded would have changed the development of apologetics through subsequent centuries. But such a fantastical document unsurprisingly does not exist. However, by examining Celsus, who wrote strongly against Christianity, we can identify something of how Christians communicated.

Celsus' writings are lost, but Origen's extensive refutation *Contra Celsum* provides us with much of the polemic. Interestingly, many of Celsus' themes against Christian veracity continue to be presented still today; perhaps disappointing apologetically, this reminds us that every generation is called to witness to Christ and explain their hope and faith. Celsus' main theme is that if Jesus were divine, he would not have suffered, or been widely rejected, but would have enjoyed a better state in life; clearly Celsus' a priori belief is that any deity would be recognised and treated very well, being unaware that God was not calling us to believe blindly like robots but to make a leap of faith and to suffer for him so as to learn to love him. In basic terms, Celsus' image of Christianity is not the common caricature (cannibalism, incest, etc.). Rather, he had clearly learned much about the Christian faith, but he did not understand it well, having researched it from a convinced-pagan standpoint; ideally, he would have accepted Pascal's Wager.[209] The need for a well-prepared, skilled, and patient apologist is clear. Unfortunately, as with the New Atheism proponents of recent times, there was no effective apologetic to counter the skewed image of Christianity, meaning the straw man image of God, Jesus, Church, etc. spread throughout the contemporary culture.

Regarding Christian communication, Celsus is not impressed. He quotes some Christians that Origen regards as not very intelligent:

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[206] Ibid., 47.

[207] One known to have existed from the 140s but now lost is the *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus*, centuries later attributed to Aristo of Pella. It is known best through Celsus' polemic and Origen's apologia.

[208] Caius wrote an apologia in the early third century against the Montanist Proclus, of which fragments remain. See information and text linked from https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/caius.html. Only 10 such dialogues were recorded up to AD 300: see Alberto Rigolio, *Christians in Conversation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 6, 70.

[209] See ch2d.1.

> the following are the rules laid down by them. Let no one come to us who has been instructed, or who is wise or prudent (for such qualifications are deemed evil by us); but if there be any ignorant, or unintelligent, or uninstructed, or foolish persons, let them come with confidence. By which words, acknowledging that such individuals are worthy of their God, they manifestly show that they desire and are able to gain over only the silly, and the mean, and the stupid, with women and children.[210]

The claim is that Christians are told to approach only women, children, and the unintelligent or easily persuaded – the intelligent, especially educated ones should be avoided regarding evangelisation. Celsus has found a few who report not being allowed to dialogue with the learned; on one level this is prudent advice, not to engage with educated pagans unless properly prepared and capable of representing and explaining the faith accurately, but it also suggests that apologetical preparation could have been better in Petrine terms.

A similar accusation is made a little later:

> We see, indeed, in private houses workers in wool and leather, and fullers, and persons of the most uninstructed and rustic character, not venturing to utter a word in the presence of their elders and wiser masters; but when they get hold of the children privately, and certain women as ignorant as themselves, they pour forth wonderful statements, to the effect that they ought not to give heed to their father and to their teachers, but should obey them; that the former are foolish and stupid, and neither know nor can perform anything that is really good, being preoccupied with empty trifles; that they alone know how men ought to live, and that, if the children obey them, they will both be happy themselves, and will make their home happy also. And while thus speaking, if they see one of the instructors of youth approaching, or one of the more intelligent class, or even the father himself, the more timid among them become afraid, while the more forward incite the children to throw off the yoke, whispering that in the presence of father and teachers they neither will nor can explain to them any good thing, seeing they turn away with aversion from the silliness and stupidity of such persons as being altogether corrupt, and far advanced in wickedness, and such as would inflict punishment upon them; but that if they wish (to avail themselves of their aid) they must leave their father and their instructors, and go with the women and their playfellows to the women's apartments, or to the leather shop, or to the fuller's shop, that they may attain to perfection;—and by words like these they gain them over.[211]

Celsus again accuses Christians of undermining authority by approaching weaker ones (children, less intelligent women) and inciting them to rebel against those with authority.[212] When challenged, some are silent while others provoke the weak to revolt.

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[210] Origen, *Contra Celsus*, 3.44, https://ccel.org/ccel/origen/against_celsus.
[211] Origen, *Contra Celsus*, 3.55.
[212] The cliché that all Early Church faithful were poor and uneducated, with Christianity attracts only lower social classes, is not supported as Paul had wealthy supporters. Also, see especially the sociological study in Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), ch2.

From Celsus' position this is accurate as Christians are being disruptive but he does not seek why (Jesus brought a sword, Christians turned the world upside-down). Origen in the next chapter challenges Celsus to compare objectively the lives of those 'weak' ones before becoming Christian to their lives afterwards: Christians care for one another, especially helping the needy, the poor, and the weak, for Roman society gave them no support. This is not a powerful refutation but it employs an aesthetic apologetics, which points to the beauty, the fruits of the faith, which is used by Ignatius, Aristides, Justin, Irenaeus, and others. At least Celsus tells us there was some success in Christians approaching the poor and downtrodden at that time; but it also informs us that 'stronger ones' were possibly not being addressed apologetically or evangelised and Origen does ask his opponent if the teachers and fathers are of good morals and teach sound philosophy. However, Origen does not call for greater preparation of the faithful so they can engage more effectively, which would have been in accordance with Peter's call.

Celsus then switches focus to cast light on a supposed contradiction:

> That I bring no heavier charge than what the truth compels me, any one may see from the following remarks. Those who invite to participation in other mysteries, make proclamation as follows: 'Every one who has clean hands, and a prudent tongue;' others again thus: 'He who is pure from all pollution, and whose soul is conscious of no evil, and who has lived well and justly.' Such is the proclamation made by those who promise purification from sins. But let us hear what kind of persons these Christians invite. Every one, they say, who is a sinner, who is devoid of understanding, who is a child, and, to speak generally, whoever is unfortunate, him will the kingdom of God receive. Do you not call him a sinner, then, who is unjust, and a thief, and a housebreaker, and a poisoner, and a committer of sacrilege, and a robber of the dead? What others would a man invite if he were issuing a proclamation for an assembly of robbers?[213]

Celsus reduces the idea of repentance and healing to the non-existent perfect in order to claim that Christians say their 'mysteries', that is, the Eucharist, is only for the pure and sinless but they invite the sinners to participate. Origen clearly sets out the process from sinner to participant: repentance, healing, avoidance of sin, learning, growth, being blessed and receiving the word, that is, learning from Scripture. Only then can one participate in the mysteries. This is a helpful apologetical explanation.

Celsus' images of Christians show that the young faith was not well understood in Roman society, which required the ability of Christians to explain it: apologetics. However, he claims the Christians were not particularly capable of explaining their faith, thus generally not well prepared. These are of course rough estimates from little evidence but they are consistent with the idea that apologetical capability and adherence to the Petrine call was being overtaken by an intellectualisation of apologetics. That Origen does not explore the idea of developing Christian understanding in the faithful can point to them not being considered as potentially capable of apologetics, which was for the intellectually elite.

[213] Origen, *Contra Celsus*, 3.59.

Apologetics into the third century was maturing as the focus changed. It can be hypothesised that apologetics was becoming less imminent in its application, growing distant from the common person. It is very difficult to ascertain properly whether less apologetics was taking place at the normal level of interaction, that is, person-to-person, socially, and with a link to evangelical activity, although it seems that was the trend, but the range of apologetics at the more intellectual level developed significantly as it became more legal, philosophical, and ecclesial in its dealings within the Church's understanding of its identity and that of the faith.

Little evidence exists but Celsus reported in the later second century that (at least some) Christians were only engaging with seemingly weaker minds of little or no education, suggesting apologetical preparation was weak and the faithful were unable to engage with stronger thinkers. This breadcrumb of evidence is, of course, a snapshot of perhaps limited experience and substantial bias – he may have had other information that he withheld as it did not support his position. We can only presume that this did not improve in the third century. From our position, it seems apologetics was understood increasingly as intellectual, that is, Justinian apologetics rather than universal as per the Petrine call.

When the faithful receive only catechetical input, which generally teaches what to believe and how to do it, they are not able to explain the 'why believe' that apologetical preparation enables. This impacts not only one's understanding of the faith but also limits the ability to engage with others, like Celsus' stronger thinkers. This lack also meant that the faithful were increasingly prone to apostasy and heresy, and of cultural Christianity developing instead of a living and growing faith. With weaker understanding of the faith, Christians were less likely to evangelise the pagans. The Christian faith was growing in numbers but 'ordinary' Christians were less able to explain their faith to others and themselves. While this was at least happening with the supposed 'weak' in society, the elite – here, Origen – did not show particular concern.

This is a summary of apologetics moving away from the ordinary faithful. But it does not condemn the apologists for what they wrote, because intellectual arguments needed to be at that level, like all others. Apologetics covers all levels – always be prepared; the intellectual arguments are what shape and provide content for less high-brow apologetical dialogue.

There is a distinct lack of apologetical texts and some are lost, such as the *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus* – was this pre-Justin dialogue more ordinary and Petrine or like Justin's philosophical debate. It is clear that, from existing evidence, the early (Part 2a) apologetical impulses from Church leaders to the faithful were replaced by the Justinian apologetics of the Apologists and this trend soon became the established apologetical paradigm.

2b.2 – Eusebius of Caesarea, the Pivotal Bishop

Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea has been recognised throughout the centuries for his invaluable work *The History of the Church* which has furnished us with many original texts, or fragments of them, from the first three centuries that were otherwise lost. Caesarea was at times the most prominent of cities in Roman Palestine and came under the Patriarchy of Antioch. In Eusebius's time, it had large Jewish and Samaritan communities, while the Christians were a growing presence. Origen had spent his last two decades there in exile and developed an academy and library there, which 'made it an intellectual center'.[214] Although never meeting Origen, the priest Pamphilus continued the Alexandrian's work, preserving his writings by copying them himself, and wrote an *Apology of Origen* aided by his mentee Eusebius before his martyrdom in 309 in the ongoing Great Persecution.[215] Eusebius's escape from martyrdom and his later attachment to Emperor Constantine point to his importance and influence.[216] Having been born in the relatively peaceful time after the Valerian persecution, he received an extensive education and was Bishop of Caesarea from 313 until his death around 339. His *History* was compiled over a decade and completed by 324/5.

The apologetical writings of Eusebius are regarded highly by some: 'Eusebius deserves high praise for his apologetical works, which make him, in the opinion of some authorities, the leading apologist of the ancient Church.'[217] He wrote a 25-book reply to Porphyry's *Against the Christians* (268-70), several other apologies, and *Preparation of the Gospel* (314, against pagan claims) and *Proof of the Gospel* (320, answering Jewish claims of not following OT teachings). Importantly here, 'The ideas of earlier Christian thinkers like Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, gave him solutions already at hand for many issues,'[218] shows his adherence to Justinian apologetics. Dulles clearly admires his apologetics – it has 'a genuine unity of design and argument'[219] – and unpacks some of the content, showing the *Presentation* as more philosophical while the *Proof* may be contemporaneously useful. However, the extent of his writings[220] indicates some level of problem in this study. Eusebius abbreviated the teachings of his much longer *Preparation* and *Proof* in his last decade in his *Theophany*. Being generally representative, the first of the five books of *Theophany* is 56 standard pages long, with over 70 footnotes, while the original teachings were 15 and 20 books (*Preparation* and

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[214] Andrew James Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 2.
[215] In the East, this continued longer than elsewhere, only ending with the 313 Edict of Milan.
[216] Francis Joseph Bacchus, 'Eusebius of Cæsarea', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05617b.htm.
Louth is less convinced and regards the bishop as having wishful thinking regarding the emperor's position (in Eusebius, *History*, Introduction, xi); nevertheless, Eusebius, having been branded a heretic previously, managed to give the Emperor's address to the Council of Nicaea while sitting beside him.
[217] Dulles, *History*, 63.
[218] Glenn F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius*
(Mercer University Press, 1986), 32.
[219] Dulles, *History*, 63-4.
[220] See Eusebius's list of texts at 'Early Church Fathers – Additional Texts', ed. Roger Pearse, accessed2nd May 2023, https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/index.htm#Eusebius_Pampilii_of_Caesarea.

Proof). The language is often flowery and at times thick in style, rendering it accessible only to the well-educated; this reinforces, even confirms the general 'academised' trend of apologetics. There is no evidence to suggest any of this content was (or was not) trickling down, through clergy to educated laity, never mind to the less or not educated to help them explain and defend their hope and faith. So, while Eusebius was, rightly and very usefully, responding to pagan attacks on the faith, this was on the intellectual level and likely of little use to ordinary faithful.

Louth amongst others is less celebratory as he points out limitations: 'even though his focus of interest is the Eastern Mediterranean, he ignores everything other than Greek Christianity. […] Eusebius knows very little about what went on outside this area.'[221] His interest narrows further:

> If we inquire more deeply, it seems however that the picture is much more partial than this might suggest. Eusebius compiled [*History*] by working in two great libraries, those at Caesarea and Jerusalem […] Reliance on these two libraries, built up by men with very similar outlooks, slants Eusebius' history.[222]

Louth remarks[223] that although Eusebius's learning was vast as his use of others' writings shows, he rarely used his own words; this suggests he may not have been so developed in his theological understanding: he was capable of marshalling quotations of others, but perhaps he could not express himself very well. Those who interested Eusebius is significant: 'Another limitation in what Eusebius tells us about the Christians he refers to is that although he is particularly interested in literate Christians, and often gives lists of their works, he is not very interested in their ideas.'[224] And this colours the Early Church history he presents:

> [*History*] is, then, the work of a scholar, but a scholar less interested in ideas than in facts, evidence, information. And people: so it has seemed that the most useful way of providing commentary on [*History*] is by concentrating on the people mentioned by providing a prosopography, a 'Who's Who.' The people Eusebius introduces us to – the people he relies on for his information, the people who fill the pages of [*History*] – are the reference points for almost all the themes included in this history.

Coming from an intellectual education and continuing the development of the library,[225] Eusebius valued intellectual writings greatly.[226] A question that needs to be asked in the context of this study is whether and to what extent Eusebius made any – conscious or unconscious – selections or omissions regarding the apologetical writings included in the *History*. On selection, he certainly was not trying to be objective and balanced: '[…] we shall introduce into this history in general only those events which

[221] Andrew Louth in Eusebius, *History*, Introduction, xxiv.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid., xiii.
[224] Ibid., xxv.
[225] He was active in locating valuable texts: Carriker, *Library*, 22-3.
[226] A presumed list of texts available to him is in ibid., 299-311.

may be useful first to ourselves and afterwards to posterity.'[227] He admits selecting content according to his preconceived idea of usefulness for then or subsequent times, which may have been swayed by his clear interest in intellectual texts. This begs the question: If an apologetical writer was not deemed to display a high enough education or status or influence, were his writings omitted or abbreviated? This is an unanswerable question in so many ways, with no access to sources for comparison or knowledge of his own access to them, and is potentially a study of enormous scope. We can only ponder the possibility of this here. But if this speculation is even only partially accurate, what effect could this have had on the course of apologetics?

The first effect, which can only be speculative, is that having rejected any and all texts not of a high standard or profile and thus limited the historical range of sources of apologetics in the first three centuries, as shown by Rebecca Denova,[228] Eusebius limited the sources of Early Church writings which speculatively excluded any extant writings of 'ordinary' Christians, being non-intellectual. Eusebius was foundational for some later writers: in the 16th century, 'Eusebius was Foxe's only major source for the history of the early church',[229] limiting the influential reformer's understanding of the topic. After all, some sources have been found or identified only in modern times, including many non-orthodox writings. Thus far it is unknown if this also happened to any texts by or about ordinary, orthodox faithful. Thus, later centuries developed an impression of Early Christianity producing only writings of an intellectual nature and not of 'ordinary faithful'.

The second and actual effect was that he affected the ongoing development of theology from his time onwards: from the early 4th century, his *History* was a foundational source for ecclesiastical history. Historians in the Early Church after Eusebius mostly did not produce their own history of the persecuted Church era,[230] thus leaving Eusebius as the sole significant source. Therefore, the development of Christianity after the persecuted times built an image based upon Eusebius's selective preferences, with him almost like a gatekeeper, and this included the study (preparation) of apologetics which was henceforth selectively intellectual by its available sources. Any preference for the intellectualisation of apologetics was now unavoidable, though contradictory to the universal call of Petrine apologetics.

Framed another way, can we really say that Eusebius relayed all texts available to him, and if not, what texts were omitted, and thus probably lost to history, because they were not considered 'good enough quality'? We cannot presume he was an 'equal opportunities historian'. In the light of the absence of ordinary apologetical texts in

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[227] In the context of experienced persecutions: Eusebius, *History*, 8.2.3, from Schaff and Wace (eds.) version, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250108.htm.
[228] Shown by using several quotes of Eusebius admitting such: Rebecca Denova, 'Eusebius on Christianity', *World History Encyclopedia,* 15th October 2021, 'https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1854/eusebius-on-christianity/.
[229] Gretchen E. Minton, '"The Same Cause and like Quarell": Eusebius, John Foxe, and the Evolution of Ecclesiastical History', *Church History*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (December 2002), https://www.jstor.org/stable/4146190?seq=3, 717.
[230] NJ 1-24-17 [sic], 'Early Church Historians', *Fourth Century Christianity*, 18th February 2017, https://www.fourthcentury.com/early-church-historians/.

Eusebius's *History*, if he had access to any then his focus on intellectual texts meant that he filtered out such texts, thus preventing later access. Of course, we cannot know if they existed in the first place but in simple terms if they did exist then Eusebius omitted them, which affected the history of apologetics.

There is also the important context of contemporary ecclesial events. Eusebius wrote an apologetical letter defending Arius against Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, who had excommunicated him in 321.[231] Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea also sheltered Arius, brought the heretic bishop of Nicomedia (also named Eusebius) into protecting Arius, and his position against Alexandrian theology led to a local Church council which called on Alexander to readmit Arius. The Council of Antioch, led by Constantine's chief theological advisor Hosius of Cordova, in early 325 proclaimed Eusebius and others as heretics,[232] leading to the Nicaean Council (325) as the emperor's direct intervention to attempt to bring ecclesiastical peace and to be seen as reigning successfully over all Christians as well as all pagans as *pontifex maximus*. Eusebius's watered-down creed was rejected and, as most of the Council Fathers stood against Arius' position, almost all dissenters switched sides, including Eusebius.

After the Council, Eusebius returned to Arian thinking, sought to install a more Arian creed as the norm, and used his favour with the emperor to persecute orthodox leaders for his remaining years, especially the key figure of Athanasius of Alexandria. Thus, while his apologetics is generally very well-sourced and, for some, of excellent quality, a serious question remains regarding orthodoxy in his Christology and Trinitology, and also his willingness to make and break agreements.

As Louth concludes,[233] Eusebius's record of sources was of such use that, in spite of his later heretical position and related actions, they continued to be used in his own time and subsequently. There is no reason to question the content of his *History* because all the sources were extant at the time, but his selection criteria may have skewed later understanding of the range of Early Church writings. Unfortunately, Dulles praises Eusebius's use of 'the signs of the times' in apologetics, but fails to mention the bishop's significant ecclesio-theological issues which prevented his canonisation.[234] The Arian heresy nearly overcame orthodox Christianity, and Eusebius's role in this is not mentioned at all, which included persecuting orthodox apologists.

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[231] Part of this was used at the Second Council of Nicaea (787) to prove his heresy.

[232] JCB and PSAM [sic], 'Letter of the Synod of Antioch (325)', *Fourth Century Christianity*, 6th January 2013, https://www.fourthcentury.com/urkunde-18/, 14.

[233] Louth in Eusebius, *History*, Intro, xiii.

[234] Eusebius is not a saint in the Catholic Church, however, he is in other ancient Churches. According to information in Wikipedia ('Eusebius', *Wikipedia*, accessed 25th March 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius.), quoting the credible expert J. B. Lightfoot that he was regarded as a Catholic saint until this was suppressed by Pope Gregory in the later 16th century who had his name substituted – citing an error – for that of Eusebius of Samosata. This decision has not been universally recognised in the Catholic Church as, according to this Wikipedia entry, 'A bone fragment relic of Eusebius within its original reliquary is on display at the Shrine of All Saints located within St. Martha's Catholic Church in Morton Grove, Illinois.' The church's website lists the relics held, including those of both Eusebii named here: 'Relics', *The Shrine of All Saints*, accessed 25th March 2023, http://shrineofallsaints.org/relics-currently-included-in-our-collection.

What we can conclude is that Eusebius bridged the turn from the persecuted Church to the legal and increasingly accepted Church; he was also pivotal in becoming a gatekeeper of Early Church history. His highly selective library and subsequent *History* means we cannot know what was rejected or ignored. Perhaps there were texts that would have been valuable for showing a more ordinary apologetics where a prepared laity responded to others under persecution. However, Eusebius does not present to posterity any such writings and with the destruction of Christian literature by the authorities in general, which did not affect Eusebius's library, we are mostly dependent on his funnelling of sources from the previous times.

2b.3 – Apologetics in the Legal Church

Three important apologetical figures of the post legalisation period reveal a lack of the Petrine call of preparation-response-manner of all the faithful taking place. The particular role of Church Councils in Early Church apologetics is also briefly considered.

Athanasius against Arianism

One of the greatest challenges to orthodox Christianity rose as the faith was legalised. Arianism – a particularly Greek denial of the divinity of Christ – had unknown origins. Possibly stemming from St Lucian of Antioch,[235] canonised as a martyr, it may go back even to Paul of Samosata in the 260s, a bishop of Antioch who lacked morals. It has both similarities and the clear opposites to the fading Gnostic ideas at the time: the splitting of pseudo-divine emanations, the Logos and Christ differentiated, and mysterious complexities lacking shape but also an attempt to rationalise Christ as non-divine. Arianism was of its time, while later Islam, Unitarianism, and sometimes even secular atheism, which all recognise Jesus' humanity, are similar in some ways.

The Libyan Arius, an illicit priest, was removed from Alexandria by Bishop Alexander for heresy then gained refuge in Syria and Asia Minor, including under his co-Arianists the two Eusebiuses, of Nicomedia and Caesarea. Local synods promoting the heresy and much controversial goings-on led to Constantine calling the warring parties together at Nicaea in 325 to solve the problem once and for all, for he sought to show his authority over Christians in the Empire, as he had with the pagans. The vast majority of bishops present were orthodox Catholics: Creeds were written, arguments made, the heretic was slapped by St Nicholas (later depicted as far more jolly), and Alexander's young deacon Athanasius came to the fore as he presented a powerful orthodox argument.

Although most Council attendees adhered to Christ's divinity and him having the same substance as the Father, the conspiracy developed with new versions: that Christ's substance is like the Father's but not the same – only a letter's difference in Greek – and most disturbingly they invented a series of false accusations, particularly against the new Bishop of Alexandria: Athanasius. With the spread of false and deceptive claims, the need for effective apologetics was abundantly clear, for all the faithful to be able to explain the faith to others.

Particularly useful to the heretics was the support of Helena, Constantine's mother, who liked St Lucian, and the emperor's sister who pleaded for leniency for Arius, which influenced Constantine. Also, Eusebius of Caesarea placed himself close to Constantine around the Nicene Council and this surely swayed his thinking – theologically, the emperor had little grasp of such matters and encouraged a compromise of less than a divine Christ, which was rejected by the orthodox Christians. Athanasius was subsequently exiled five times and imperially ordered to give Communion to Arius

[235] Arius referred to himself as a 'Lucianist' and Eusebius of Nicomedia as a 'Collucianist', as recorded in Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. II (Allen TX: Christian Classics, n.d.), 143.

in 336; however, just before the bishop's acquiescence or refusal, Arius died, but even this portent was insufficient for the emperor to alter his position.

Matters worsened. Jerome famously remarked that 'The world groaned to find itself Arian' due to compromise and weakness by inexperienced attendees at the Council of Rimini in 359. However, Pope Liberius rejected the new formula and agreements. This reveals something of the attitude regarding apologetical understanding: there is no indication that the laity understood the idea of orthodoxy other than following the ecclesial elites as the battle amongst bishops and secular authorities seems to have decided the status of all. Time passed, the main characters passed on, and orthodoxy gradually returned. The Council of Constantinople, called by the orthodox Emperor Theodosius, in 381 confirmed the Nicene Creed and reconciled the Semi-Arians with the Catholic Church.

Apologetically speaking, how did Athanasius' apologetics defeat the heresy? It must be concluded that it did not defeat it, for many opponents rejected his moral rights never mind his episcopal authority. But his constancy and perseverance, which outlived his opponents due to his youthfulness at the beginning of the controversy, meant that he remained a figurehead of the Catholic position up to his peaceful passing in 373: he had a credibility that is consistent with the Petrine third element of a good Christian manner. Regarding apologias, Athanasius wrote several ranging from a defence to Constantine (*Apologia ad Constantium*) regarding trumped up charges to lengthy recent histories showing the Arians attempts at usurping beliefs and persons (*Apologia Contra Arianos*), as well as against false accusations (*Apologia de Fuga*). The ad hominem issues – not uncommon in legal and philosophical circles further refocused apologetics away from explaining the faith.

This period, as Christianity became legal and freed from persecution, was when Christian orthodoxy was most vulnerable. While most bishops and others in authority and with good Christian education – preparation – had a voice, there is no record of ordinary Christians rejecting heretical bishops or even secular leaders who professed Arian Christianity. This points to weak or no preparation in the ordinary faithful and an over-reliance on the bishop being a good shepherd. Perhaps there were local voices, tension in dioceses, or perhaps heretical laity were causing problems for orthodox bishops. This is unknown unless records show them, if there even would have been a record of such. It is apparent, though, that there was no clear and significant preparation of ordinary Christians enabling them to respond when anyone, in or outwith the Church, was challenging orthodoxy and the faith.

Unfortunately, Dulles gives marginally over half the space to Athanasius as to Eusebius,[236] but at least he mentions the key apologist against the greatest 4th century challenge to the faith mentioned, unlike Irenaeus, the key apologist against the 2nd century's greatest challenge.

[236] Dulles, *History*, 66-68 and 63-66 respectively.

John Chrysostom

A saint and doctor of the Church from the closing decades of the 4th century, John Chrysostom, the 'golden-mouthed', is considered by many as the greatest preacher. He clearly shows the established and firm divide between the educated, who were mostly ordained faithful, and the ordinary faithful, whose education in Christian matters was far less developed. This meant the faithful's Christian formation was increasingly dependent upon the clergy's education and delivered by catechesis or homilies, and apologetics – the ability to respond to others – was modelled by the clergy, including its manner.

John was most prolific as a preacher before ascending to the seat of Constantinople and its court intrigues and politics. At Antioch, he was appointed as a preacher working with his bishop and developing his skills during 381-397, as deacon then priest. He was a prolific preacher on a variety of themes, most extensively commenting on Scripture: for example, 67 homilies on Genesis, 90 on Matthew, and even 18 on 1 Timothy. Clearly catechetical, they surely developed the faithful's understanding, contributing something to any apologetical preparation. His 21 homilies *On the Statues* notably calmed a potential revolt in Antioch over taxes. But, overall, the focus on apologetical preparation and development seems to have disappeared, perhaps as any perceived need for apologetics presumably diminished with the legalisation of Christianity, Arianism fading, and the failure of Julian the Apostate in the early 360s.

Dulles gives little over a page[237] to Chrysostom, focusing mostly on two apologetical failings. First, his polemic on Julian clearly seeks to rile listeners, thus being poor in manner, for example:

> For when Julian who surpassed all in impiety, ascended the imperial throne, and grasped the despotic sceptre, straightway he lifted up his hands against the God who created him, and ignored his benefactor, and looking from the earth beneath to the heavens, howled after the manner of mad dogs, who alike bay at those who do not feed them and those who do feed them. But he rather was mad with a more savage madness than theirs.[238]

This polemical approach in 382 suggests a lack of experience, certainly not being in the spirit of 1 Pt 3:16. In his eight sermons called *Against the Jews*[239] (or more accurately 'Against the Judaisers'[240]) John around 387 spoke strongly against a return to problems faced in the earliest Church generations (Paul in Acts, Ignatius, etc.), but the tone here is problematic:

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[237] Ibid., 69-70.
[238] John Chrysostom, *On St. Babylas*, 1, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1906.htm.
[239] John Chrysostom, *Against the Jews*, https://tertullian.org/fathers/index.htm#John_Chrysostom.
[240] As pointed out in Dulles, *History*, 69; also in Roger Pearse, 'John Chrysostom, Against the Jews. Preface to the online edition.', *The Tertullian Project*, 28th November 2011, https://tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom_adversus_judaeos_00_eintro.htm.

> What is this disease? The festivals of the pitiful and miserable Jews are soon to march upon us one after the other and in quick succession: the feast of Trumpets, the feast of Tabernacles, the fasts. There are many in our ranks who say they think as we do. Yet some of these are going to watch the festivals and others will join the Jews in keeping their feasts and observing their fasts. I wish to drive this perverse custom from the Church right now.[241]

Dulles confirms the overall approach as negative and damaging in apologetical terms:

> As a preacher trying to stir up his congregation to zealous activity, he engaged in abusive language, accusing the Jews of stubborn blindness, demanding that they renounce their errors, and warning the faithful against their diabolical malice. He even pictures Christ himself as rebuking them: [quote from homily].[242]

Dulles briefly explores the reasons for such polemics, concluding that the negativity towards Julian and mistakenly holding the Jews' continuing existence as a weakness of Christianity were of its time.[243]

But Dulles justifiably credits Chrysostom twice. His seemingly unfinished treatise *Demonstration to Jews and Greeks that Christ is God* (around 381-87) argues that Christianity, if false, could not have succeeded in spreading and converting so many to a better life, the witnesses would never have died for a lie, and that Christ fulfils the messianic prophecies.[244] Also, he recognises genuine Christian weakness in his flock and he tries to deal with this issue: 'But preachers such as John Chrysostom temper this pride [that Constantine converted] with a recognition of the failures of their congregations to live up to the high standards of the gospel.'[245] To deal with this, his *Instructions to Catechumens*[246] is rich with teachings, imparting the mysteries of the faith and building a strong foundation in the listener but again it is catechesis, which somewhat helps preparation for apologetics with 'what to believe' but lacks the 'why believe', which is the focus for apologetics.

Therefore, Chrysostom confirms the general trend away from encouraging and developing specific apologetical awareness and capability in ordinary Christians regarding preparation of why to believe, as well as the call to speak out, and at times with no regard to being appropriate. Also, the ordinary faithful are becoming increasingly dependent upon clergy for input about the faith.

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[241] John Chrysostom, *Against the Jews*, 3.
[242] Dulles, *History*, 69-70.
[243] Ibid., 70.
[244] Ibid., 69.
[245] Ibid., 89.
[246] John Chrysostom, *Instructions to Catechumens*, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1908.htm.

From all the possible approaches to Augustine's apologetics, observing the increasing clericalisation of apologetics apparent in Augustine in particular is helpful here.

Augustine's first writing after withdrawing from life as a Milanese rhetorician to the peace of Cassiciacum (Lake Como) with a few friends was named *Against the Academicians* (386/7). While Part 2b is identifying the intellectualisation of apologetics, distancing apologetics from the ordinary faithful, Augustine was showing the Academy for what it had become – sceptical: 'Now the Academicians emphasized [that 'Truths … reveal their truth by a kind of "manifestation"'], Augustine tells us, precisely in order to say that no truths can be grasped. For they maintained that nothing so manifests its truth that it could not just as well be false.'[247] This over-ripening of academic thinking in overly mature Roman society is redolent of our present postmodernism, meaning Augustine's perception speaks to us still today and can be applied in today's apologetical preparation. He shows the academic claims to be self-refuting, argues that philosophy is not full of uncertainty, and counters the position that the wise will refuse to assent to participate: 'For we are not interested in covering ourselves with glory but in the finding of the truth.'[248] This is the core of apologetics, believing in that in which we have hope: God, Christ, Church, and knowing that truth is fundamental to these. Therefore, in spite of narratives, overbearing trends, popular ('pop') philosophies, and a growing movement against truth in society, Augustine reminds us that seeking and sharing truth are essential in the life of the Christian, as per Peter's call.

Having journeyed through Manichaeism – which claimed to offer truth but increasingly demanded unfounded faith – in his quest for truth, Augustine ironically found truth in Christianity, which requires first faith then offers truth. For any search for truth – making the objective reasonable in the subjective – is an emerging from Plato's Cave on a path that must be trusted before finding something (someone) trustworthy. Finding this path, the apologist should understand, can be through the transcendentals: an ugly truth is not good, and, as such, a deep wariness of gnostic secrecy, cultic suffering, and initiations into nihilistic or power-driven movements and philosophies is ideal but increasingly infrequent in an environment that eschews love, stability, peace, and of course beauty, goodness, and truth.[249]

His conversion was at least significantly through philosophical exploration, aided by peaceful surroundings, as he and his friends extricated themselves from 'busy' urban society. Perhaps Tertullian's divergence – 'What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and

[247] Bernard J. Diggs, 'St. Augustine Against the academicians', *Traditio*, Vol. 7, 1951: 75, https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/54E960D23444DD29A585321D9A3976E1/S0362152900015129a.pdf/st_augustine_against_the_academicians.pdf.
[248] Augustine, *Against the Academicians*, 3.14.30, https://archive.org/stream/ancientchristian027820mbp/ancientchristian027820mbp_djvu.txt.
[249] See ch4.4.

Christians?'[250] – was brought together apologetically in Augustine. Philosophy can be a path to conversion only when Jerusalem – Christianity and the Church – prevails in the end. Rejecting philosophy as inherently pagan, gnostic, and worldly, he also rejected the Church's orthodox teaching that Christ is the Logos, that is, Christianised philosophy; in his drive to purify himself he tried to split the Logos, which denies transcendence.

Augustine with great reluctance was priested in 391, only because of the acclamation of the crowd in a Hippo church he was visiting; in a manifestation of '*sacerdotis subito*', Bishop Valerius ordained him. He was allowed to develop something of a monastic life in Tagaste – preparation as a key element of his development as a Christian, a priest, and an apologist. Despite being reserved to bishops there, Valerius allowed Augustine to preach in his five years as a priest: Augustine was clearly apologetical, particularly refuting the renowned doctor of Manichaeism, Fortunatus, and he spoke at the 393 Plenary Council of Africa.[251] By 396 he was co-adjutor then Bishop of Hippo for a third of a century. In a novel move, he transferred his monastic situation to his diocesan residence and lived in community with his priests – reproducing the Como philosophical retreat but now developing it theologically: the academising was now visibly a clericalising. This led to the foundation of many monasteries by the priests, ten of which became bishops themselves, and a new movement within the Church in Africa: 'Thus it was that Augustine earned the title of patriarch of the religious, and renovator of the clerical, life in Africa.'[252] The movement of apologetics, increasingly Justinian, was being distanced from the Petrine universal aspect.

Thus, the apologist was clearly the cleric, who guided his people but did not enable them to become co-apologists. Irenaeus, formed by Polycarp, was able to combine the pastoral and apologetical role for his fledgling flock by educating them against Gnosticism in particular but the philosopher, theologian, and Apologist Augustine was more of an educator and defender of the faithful. Different environments and norms meant different approaches.

> [H]e was above all the defender of truth and the shepherd of souls. His doctrinal activities, the influence of which was destined to last as long as the Church itself, were manifold: he preached frequently, sometimes for five days consecutively, his sermons breathing a spirit of charity that won all hearts; he wrote letters which scattered broadcast through the then known world his solutions of the problems of that day; he impressed his spirit upon divers[e] African councils at which he assisted, for instance, those of Carthage in 398, 401, 407, 419 and of Mileve in 416 and 418; and lastly struggled indefatigably against all errors.[253]

Some of his teachings against errors was in his writings. Parts of *City of God* are apologetical, against pagan claims that Christianity caused Rome's 410 fall, and his

[250] Tertullian, *Prescription*, 7.
[251] Eugène Portalié, 'Life of St. Augustine of Hippo', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02084a.htm.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid.

Confessions includes explanations. His path to faith enabled him to be the first Church Father to bring together faith and reason explicitly.[254] But his apologetical focus is most apparent in more than nine writings against the Manichaeans, five texts against the Donatists, seven against the Pelagians, three against the Semipelagians, and two against Arianism.[255]

But again we have no way of effectively knowing how successfully his teachings transferred to the ordinary Christian faithful. Were they able to dialogue with others? Could they explain their faith, sowing seeds in others and helping develop one another? If so, was this done appropriately or were they at all argumentative or condescending? The structure of apologetical importance was clear and embedded in the ecclesial structures – a bishop or apologetically exceptional priest wrote and/or gave homilies or catechesis (usually to catechumens) in apologetical matters increasingly in response to formal heresies. While these were undoubtedly of great importance doctrinally and pastorally at the time, and to some extent since then, we remain frustrated for lack of evidence regarding the ordinary faithful and any of their apologetical activity as per the Petrine call.

Early Church Councils

The Church used Councils to decide orthodox teachings to respond to challenges to teachings, as at Nicaea regarding Arianism. This is a type of apologetics as it responds to perceived (potential) error, communicating the truth to others, and is then used in preparing apologetically-capable faithful. They contributed significantly to the growing treasure of the Church's understanding of God, Christ, and Church, that is, theology. The legalised half of the Early Church era contained a third of the Church's 21 ecumenical councils. Lesser, local councils were also important and dealt with a range of issues, including apologetics, but are beyond the general scope here.

The aforementioned Nicaea (325) and First Constantinople (381) dealt with Arianism. The former also solved the Quartodeciman issue of Easter dating, as well as laying the foundation for teaching *homoousion*, that Father and Son are consubstantial; under Constantine, the Arians played with letters, claiming *homoiousion*, God and Jesus are like in substance, leading to 14 councils between 341 and 360 rejecting an array of heretical variations in what can be described in hindsight as a conveyor belt of heresies. The far more orthodox Emperor Theodosius supported the latter Council, which settled the Arian issue and added the Holy Spirit section to the Nicene Creed

The Christological focus continued. Ephesus (381) defined Christ as one Person and Mary as Theotokos against Nestorianism. A rare image of the effect of apologetical matters on ordinary faithful is recorded by the crowd outside the Council celebrating the Theotokos decision: Mary was indeed the Mother of God which meant their faith was

[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid.

valid and they could carry on as before. Ephesus also confirmed the teachings of Pelagius, that good works alone merit salvation, as heretical. Chalcedon (451) defined Christ, who is one Person, as having two natures – divine and human, against Eutyches.

Constantinople II (553) was questionable in its separation of Origen from Origenism and whether it actually found him to be heretical. Having been called rather to deal with the 'Three Chapters' issue, it is best known for dealing with the problematic development of Origenism; however, the course of the Council was initially influenced by the emperor in a part not recognised by Pope Vigilius or by later popes, and some Council records had the Origen issue added to them; to say this was accidental may be generous.[256]

Constantinople III (680-1) condemned monthelitism by defining Christ as having two wills – Divine and human. In this, the main Christological heresies of the Early Church had been dealt with.

The Latin Church moved into the post-Early Church period, whilst the Greek Church continued for longer. Nicaea II decided for holy images, against the iconoclast heresy but this was muddied briefly due to an erroneous translation of the Council. Constantinople IV (869), the final Council in the Greek Church, regarded the Photian Schism in the eponymous patriachate.

Other heresies (Sabellianism, Adoptionism, etc.) were dealt with by lesser Councils, Popes, Church Fathers, and other authorities. It was a time of great developments in understanding Christianity but these remained intellectual, academic, and clerical. There is no evidence they were shared with the ordinary faithful in apologetical preparation to enable explaining their faith to others.

[256] For example, Ferdinand Prat, 'Origen and Origenism', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 11, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11306b.htm.

2b.4 – The Apologetics Trend in the Early Church

It is impossible to identify the extent of apologetics from sources because significant amounts of Christian literature were destroyed in the great persecutions in the later decades of the third century, meaning any hypothesis is somewhat unsupportable. The funnelling of Eusebius's interest in intellectual texts by important figures means any image constructed is already skewed. In particular, the second century and first Christian historian Hegesippus may have furnished us with useful information but we know his works only as references and a few fragments in Eusebius' *History*.[257] Some images can be extrapolated speculatively, such as in Celsus' polemic, or the fact that the North Africans even led by Augustine struggled under the Vandals to maintain their faith or even evangelise. Specialist research may offer more useful details but generally there is a relative vacuum that points to apologetics being reserved for clerics and intellectuals (often the same) after Christianity was legalised. It is unclear whether the Arian episode caused a closing up of apologetics into the intellectual sphere, being so particular and problematic that only specialists and important figures could access it. Nevertheless, by the turn of the fifth century, Chrsysostom was leading the crowds in his teachings and Augustine was developing a monastic specialist clerical system from which apologetics emanated. But it is entirely reasonable that most of any – much, some, or little – ordinary apologetics was oral, not recorded, and thus lost to history. While we are indebted to Eusebius for saving so much in the library of Caesarea that was untouched, what he passed on was Justinian in nature, thus only a particular part of the universal call of Peter.

We cannot ascertain how much apologetics took place in the early Christian generations but at least there were calls, thus the expectation and probably presumption that this took place at least somewhat. The trickle-down of apologetical thinking, never mind practice, of the later Early Church was presumably minimal or not at all. It is quite possible that centuries after Peter's call, the ordinary Christian was taught little more than a few prayers and told to attend the Mass on Sundays. The revival of the Two Ways code that Jesus and the Apostles employed,[258] in the Rule of Benedict of 516 points to the need for almost having to re-establish the foundations in general Christian understanding. It certainly does not indicate a well prepared Christian faithful, ready to explain their faith effectively in a good manner. Some pastors surely were more influential with their flocks and taught them more of the faith but to what extent was such teaching more for the more important people of a diocese or parish and were they really educated to be sufficiently 'always prepared' to defend/explain/respond, and were they able to do so in an appropriate Christian manner?

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[257] Eusebius, History, especially 4.22.

[258] For example, in chapter 2 of the Rule: '6 Let the abbot always remember that at the fearful judgment of God, not only his teaching but also his disciples' obedience will come under scrutiny. 7 The abbot must, therefore, be aware that the shepherd will bear the blame wherever the father of the household finds that the sheep have yielded no profit. 8 Still, if he has faithfully shepherded a restive and disobedient flock, always striving to cure their unhealthy ways, it will be otherwise: 9 the shepherd will be acquitted at the Lord's judgment.' Benedict, *The Rule*, ch2, https://christdesert.org/rule-of-st-benedict/chapter-2-qualities-of-the-abbot/.

When the system based on the Justinian style of apologetics was functioning well, the ordinary Christian received what was needed through the filter of local bishops and priests, and perhaps ecclesially-approved speakers, teachers, and important persons to varying extents. In this paradigm, calls to the ordinary faithful disappear as intellectual and formal apologetics develop and any calls would have been presented in homilies and catechesis as how Christians should behave as Christians. There is a loss of apologetical preparation and the requirement of engagement, thus becoming content on *how* to be a Christian rather than *why* to be a Christian.

This was unsustainable in effectiveness in the unstable centuries to come, meaning either a new apologetical paradigm was needed or apologetics would be poor, at least for the vast majority of faithful, and ineffectual for engaging with others in a time when such engagement would have been very useful. Frankly, the dearth of apologetics meant Christians in general were not prepared for the unstable Early Mediaeval times.

Conclusion

The purpose of this part was to track in general terms how apologetics developed in Christianity through the period of the Early Church after the Apostolic Fathers' second generation, who had direct contact with the Apostles, which later generations did not. The Justinian influence, albeit he may not have been the necessary cause of the developments (Aristides, Aristo?), saw increasing legal and philosophical themes in apologetics, drawing it away from the ordinary faithful. While it was valuable apologetics, Justin and others narrowed the focus and this was a watershed in terms of style and approach. There was often the Petrine elements of preparation, response, in a Christian manner, but the form was entirely different: it was very long and highly technical, therefore intellectual. Although AH was pastoral and long, it was shorter and developed organically, with a theme of participation of the faithful, whereas Justin intended philosophical form and content being applied in Christian apologetics. The intellectualisation reduced access for the ordinary faithful, as seen possibly in Celsus' polemic evidence. Irenaeus' pastoral apologetics, with his strong links to Polycarp, thus John, was possibly the last Early Church offering of significant apologetical preparation to ordinary faithful, at least in writing.

Apologetics was an important part of the early oral tradition (*tradere*, handed on) but this does not supply us with written evidence and it is very difficult to glean much from writings that presented ideas, not records of everyday communication. So the apologists considered in Part 2b have been selected for being well-known and making contributions that affected the perception of apologetics in different ways.

Pre-Constantine apologetics grew increasingly intellectual with Tertullian's poor Christian manner and Minucius Felix's sparse Christian content. The wide range of content was then reduced in historical terms by Eusebius's limited focus on important figures he valued and quoted extensively, but this meant any extant 'ordinary' apologetics was lost because his work was survived the destruction of Christian texts while many others did not. He became the key source for subsequent understanding of the pre-Constantine period and his elitism created a new foundation for apologetics, which was unquestionably Justinian.

The challenge of Arianism after Christianity's legalisation may have reduced the scope for ordinary apologetics further as the focus was increasingly intellectual and the trend was progressively towards clerical apologetics, which was cemented by John Chrysostom and especially Augustine. Valuable apologetics without question, it was now indisputably not for the ordinary faithful, which was not good preparation for the instability and apologetical opportunities that came in the Fall of Rome and the Early Middle Ages. Instead, catechesis – what to believe and how – replaced the why of apologetics. The return of the Two Ways code by Benedict shows how apologetics could have begun again at an ordinary level but this was not seemingly developed beyond the catechetical form as was the aim in the first two Church generations. The universal aspect of Peter's call was not followed as Christianity developed through intellectual apologists who presented some adherence to the three Petrine elements.

Part 2c – Mediaeval Times – Opportunity Lost

Introduction

Dulles' otherwise very useful *History* follows the standard Justinian understanding of apologetics which developed narrowly as increasingly elitist and intellectual in the Early Church, thus omitting the integral Petrine aspect of all Christians learning their faith to be able to respond to others who question or challenge it. His focus reinforces this narrow view by detailing the works of intellectual, academic apologists, which is generally how Mediaeval apologetics has been regarded and recorded. As before, amongst the evidence of intellectual arguments and philosophical debates, this study seeks any signs of wider and more 'ordinary' apologetics or attempts at developing the preparation, engagement, and manner in the Petrine call. Further, looking ahead to apologetics today, opportunities that were not taken or potential change that did not take place are identified. Such themes provide the possibility to develop a deeper understanding of the nature and identity of apologetics in light of the calls of Peter and Vatican II.

This study is necessarily brief and provides only a taste of apologetics in the Mediaeval period. For brevity, the Early Middle Ages are omitted, but the Benedictine Rule included the Two Ways code that establishes a foundation apologetically that can be built on. That it was written in vulgar Latin suggests it was for all to learn from: first we fear God, then we respect him, and finally we love him. To what extent such basic apologetical preparation developed amongst the ordinary faithful is beyond the scope here. Rather, the focus is on High and Late Mediaeval key moments and figures that provide significant information both in how Justinian apologetics developed and how an opportunity was lost for developing apologetics more in accord with the Petrine call.

After considering Dulles's typical approach to apologetics and the scope and need for apologetics in Mediaeval society, this Part observes three specific and important opportunities in Mediaeval Christian history for developing more ordinary, Petrine (and Vatican II) apologetics. These are St Dominic and the response to the Albigensian heresy, the content and implementation of the Second Lateran Council, and how spirituality developed in the faithful before the Reformation, which, it is suggested, may have been avoidable if good apologetical capability had been developed in the Mediaeval period.

2c.1 – Apologetics in Mediaeval Times

The earliest apologetical activity, of Jesus and his followers, involved responses to Jews and Judaism both to believers and non-believers during the formation of Christianity. Later, Islam expanded west through Christian Africa and into Spain, and north through the Holy Land and the Middle East and to Byzantium, while holding an Arian understanding of Jesus' divinity, or lack of, which challenged theology and the stability of the Christian world. Therefore, Judaism and Islam were considered significant problems calling for apologetical responses in certain ways.

Dulles's *History* sufficiently outlines the apologetics of this time. However, this present study requires a different approach, considering the nature of apologetics within a reasonably settled Christian society where the 'danger' is distant, at least geographically. Odd to us now, it is conceivable that many European Christians never once encountered someone of a different faith and culture, never mind facing their questions about or challenges to the Christian faith.

Thus, apart from responding to Jews and Muslims, apologetics had to adapt to remain integral to the development of Christian faithful, and on the theological spectrum – evangelisation, apologetics, catechetics[259] – of passing on the faith: to whom was the faith needing to be explained and passed on apologetically?

The General Apologetics Image

Part 2 aims to show how apologetics' narrow development, albeit part of the apologetics of Peter and others in Scripture, really only answers part of Peter's call that the faithful be ready to respond to others about their faith in a Christian manner. By looking through the Petrine lens, apologetics can be seen as being far more than that which developed over the centuries – and how we perceive this – and continues to define the term 'apologetics' for some today.

Dulles's *History* is certainly revealing of what has been considered apologetics, mapping out its development with many details and insights of what is really Justinian apologetics. While illuminating in many ways, omissions weaken it, such as the sparsity of pre-Justin apologetics and omitting Irenaeus, as well as important Mediaeval apologetical matters included here.

Examples of significant Justinian apologetics that go beyond the standard concept are two Peters – Peter the Venerable and Peter Abelard – and also Thomas Aquinas. These have varying influence even today and were highly important to apologetical development, and can be adapted for 'ordinary' use.[260] Many other notable apologists could have been included here: Anselm and his Ontological Proof,[261] Raymond Lull and his records of debates and even an early aesthetic apologetics,[262] or Bonaventure's

[259] See ch4.4.
[260] See Part 4.
[261] Dulles, *History*, 98-104. Interestingly, Dulles describes Anselm's reference to 1Pt 3:15 as a 'properly apologetic [benefit]' (p 102), as if he is aware of levels of apologetic properness. It presumably is intended to refer to how specifically apologetical this was within the wider frame of theology.
[262] Ibid., 125-6.

'certitude and evidence' that aids our faith.[263] But the two Peters and Thomas provide a sufficient image of apologetics of this time.

For Dulles, the 'most eminent twelfth-century apologist was Peter the Venerable (1094-1156), the last great abbot of Cluny'.[264] Regarding apologetics, his most lengthy and important work was *Against the Inveterate Obstinacy of the Jews*. With important apologetics once again required to be in lengthy tomes, which were apologetically-speaking generally at least preparatory, this instead was a book aimed at Jews themselves, for Peter was 'deeply concerned' about their salvation.[265] Interestingly, he focused on the person – for a Christian, most importantly that person's salvation – rather than reinforcing the us-them paradigm that problematises apologetics. This did not just regard Jews: 'More important than Peter the Venerable's answer to Judaism was his apologetic against Islam. The military action of the Crusades, he believed, would come to nothing unless supplemented by a work of evangelisation.'[266] Realising that reaching out to Muslims required understanding them as well, Peter had important Islamic texts translated into Latin. Dulles rightly praises Peter's approach in *A Book Against the Sect or Heresy of the Saracens*: he 'reassures the Muslims that he approaches them, not "as our people often do, by arms, but by words; not by force, but by reason; not in hatred, but in love".'[267] This fundamentally Christian apologetical approach should be central to every apologetical activity – to use words, reason, love, for God is Love and Jesus is the Divine Logos. However, Dulles's focus on Peter the Venerable's genuine concern for the person remains apologetically in the intellectual sphere rather than the organic, everyday, and mundane lives of all Christian also.

Peter Abelard (1079-1142) held that reason paves the way for faith and that the blind faith of Abraham was unusual: most people need to have some understanding before believing. With the usefulness of portraying, albeit stylised, apologetical communication in *A Dialogue Between a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian*, a 'remarkably modern and unpolemical work', Peter encourages having 'rational grounds for faith'.[268] The Christian is seen as having both faith and reason, of which the philosopher and Jew only have one each: one might recall the Logos, Tertullian's problem, and Augustine's work embodying both.

However, for Dulles, in Peter Abelard there is too much reason in the faith. He explains:

> The contest between Abelard and Bernard [of Clairvaux] has remained vivid in Western memory, for it symbolizes the tension between the two Christian attitudes that recur in every generation – an apologetically inclined mentality, which seeks to find as broad a common ground as possible with the non-Christian, and a strictly

[263] Ibid., 127-8.
[264] Ibid., 105.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ibid., 106.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Both in ibid., 108.

> dogmatic stance, which would safeguard the integrity of the faith even at the price of placing severe limits on the free exercise of reason.[269]

This study approaches apologetics differently from Dulles, who leaves a great chasm between the two positions described: he separates the identity of apologetics ('an apologetically inclined mentality') from having 'a strictly dogmatic stance' – the latter being a not uncommon accusation that apologetics is too strict and dogmatic.[270] He defines apologetics as seeking the greatest amount of common ground with others,[271] which is overly generous and definitely impractical in many situations; this does, however, seem to reflect his more positive defining of apologetics elsewhere.[272] Rather than bending to accommodate others in apologetical dialogue, the apologist should be sufficiently prepared and always safeguard the integrity of the faith, never 'bending the rules' to please another:[273] it is better to sow a seed of truth than to satisfy another's preference. So, more important than focusing on Dulles' Peter vs. Bernard paradigm is to recognise that – in the spirit of Peter the Venerable – the apologist is dealing with a soul created by God in engaging with the other and to avoid a dogmatic approach while retaining a clear and firm understanding of dogma. In other words, while theology is conceptual and systematic, apologetics must be significantly practical, pastoral, and responsive in practice while retaining a conceptual and systematic foundation. This also touches on the objective versus subjective approaches in Part 4.

However, not all Peters then were so open to others: Peter of Blois, a humanist (d. 1202) wrote his *Against the Perfidy of the Jews* as preparation for Christians against the evil ways Jews avoided the evidence of Christianity over them. This approach negates extending in Christian love to dialogue with others, reinforcing the us-them paradigm that develops into warfare tropes (defence, attack, battle…), which are unhelpful and can eventually lead to the great problems like the legend of William of Norwich.[274]

The best-known and most significant of Mediaeval apologists, Thomas Aquinas, wrote his most apologetical work, *Summa Contra Gentiles* around the 1260s; subtitled *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith Against the Errors of Unbelievers*, it typically covers a great number of issues. M-D Chenu claims 'It is rather a whole lot of *errantes* [erring], pagans, Muslims, Jews, heretics, who are examined and censured.'[275] But Dulles is far more positive: 'The *Summa* is an all-embracing apologetical theology drawn up with an eye to the new challenge of the scientific Greco-Arabic worldview',[276] summarising it over 6-7 pages. For Dulles this *Summa* is pivotal in Christian writing:

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[269] Ibid., 109.
[270] Ibid., 109.
[271] Ibid.
[272] The general tone of ch10 of his final book: Dulles, *Evangelization*, 115-27.
[273] John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Humble Apologetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 140.
[274] A boy who died; later, a story developed that Jews had killed him to use his blood in the Passover feast, so he was regarded as a martyr. The cultus was suppressed by the time of the Reformation.
[275] In Dulles, *History*, 114.
[276] Ibid.

> By any standards the *Summa contra gentiles* is a masterpiece. It stands to other medieval apologias somewhat as Augustine's *City of God* does to the output of the patristic age. But Augustine and Thomas are very different in mind and spirit. Where Augustine uses Neoplatonism, Thomas has recourse to Aristotle. Where Augustine argued through the interpretation of history, Thomas depends primarily on metaphysics. Where Augustine uses the persuasion of rhetoric, Thomas uses careful and dispassionate reasoning. The *Summa contra gentiles* towers above all previous apologetic treatises by its absolute clarity, its perfect coherence, balance, economy, and precision.[277]

Notably, Aquinas made a significant definition in apologetics: 'St. Thomas gave classical form to the distinction between two sets of truths – those accessible to reason alone (*praembula fidei*) and those inaccessible without divine revelation accepted by a supernatural act of faith.'[278] This means it is possible, within the Classical form of apologetics, to regard knowledge of God's existence and some of his attributes as solely rational along with some of his attributes, thus joining philosophy and theology, albeit this has loosened considerably in recent decades with a different type of fundamental theology.

Dulles's conclusion to the 'The Middle Ages' significantly shows his understanding of apologetics, particularly when considered in light of the Petrine call. He states that 'At no point did the Middle Ages have ideal conditions for the development of apologetical theology.'[279] This begs several questions: What are the ideal conditions for Dulles? Is this only apologetical theology? Wasn't this an ideal time for developing preparation and practice of apologetics in a more catechetical sense? Why would apologetics need an ideal time? Shouldn't the ideal time be when a Christian is called on to make a response? Assuming he is referring to a lack of obvious challenge to the faith from outside, this understanding is indicative of Justinian thinking because in Petrine terms, a real challenge was to have all the faithful with apologetical capability.

Dulles reveals his idea of apologetics to be vastly different from the original, Petrine apologetics: 'From the sixth to the eleventh century the general level of culture was so low, and the social conditions were so unsettled, that theology had no real opportunity to establish itself as a science.'[280] Dulles, who came from a very well-connected and wealthy family but who generally attempted to be 'pastoral' in approach, clearly regards apologetics as elite and intellectual – merely a branch of theology – and not for those of 'low culture' or the ordinary faithful. Therefore, he categorically isolates apologetics from Peter's general call to Christians while retaining the idea it is about defending the faith, which defines apologetics as necessarily elite, intellectual: only for a few.

In the scriptural calls for the faithful to respond regarding their faith, all faithful are included without any requirement of position or intelligence for explaining to another

[277] Ibid., 120.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid., 142.
[280] Ibid., 142-3.

why one believes in God, Christ, Church. Preparation is the only prerequisite. Indeed, one cannot imagine Peter saying that explaining one's belief in God was only for the intellectually worthy. But if the preparation element of apologetics is elevated beyond the intellectual capability of ordinary faithful then there is an elitist understanding of apologetics. While at least some faithful were catechetically instructed, this regards how to be a good Christian; it does not consider the apologetical why to be Christian. But the apologetical preparation that developed into universities became highly functioning, losing sight of the Petrine purpose of preparation, thus absolving most of the faithful from being called to participate. This begets an us-them divide within the Church even in the most well-meaning of apologists, such as Peter the Venerable. And so the increasing apologetical divide in the Early Church was perpetuated. A key question is then whether and to what extent there was any attempt to disseminate apologetics to ordinary Christians to develop their capability to explain their faith to others when called upon. But within the context of Christendom, what scope and need was there for apologetics?

Apologetics in Settled Christendom?

Any challenge to their faith that Christians ever encountered in Mediaeval times depended heavily on when and where they were from; travel was not usual and very unlikely for the peasantry that was generally understood to compose around 80-85% of society. Most faithful in settled lands, and particularly rural areas, never came across a foreign face or accent, or even language, but it was common for some.

The Church was established in many ways at the fundament of what was later known as Mediaeval society, amongst the increasing uncertainties of a disintegrating Rome; the Church was the stabilising force that linked Europe together, bringing a common bond to local fiefdoms and kingdoms. Certain peripheries experienced change – Vikings challenged the now settled Roman Church in Celtic north-west Europe and armies still defended against pagans in the north and east. And in the south and east, there was the challenge of Saracens or Moors with the religion named *Islam*, Submission. In different growing urban areas, Jews in Europe maintained some place in society, there often being antagonism between them and local Christians. But neither Muslim nor Jew was generally a threat to most Christians in that time.

In general, Early to High Mediaeval society took on an increasingly settled form: peasantry loyal to and dependent upon local lords, who owed loyalty to a king, emperor, or similar. Each land, region, area had its own particular story, and the consistent presence of the Church brought stability. Wars dotted both geographical and chronological landscapes, mainly due to disagreements over land, power, and prestige, but it was mostly increasingly civilised and secure. The Germanic pagans were defeated or converted, the Vikings settled in new lands and intermingled, and Christendom developed – stable, settled, Christian society that was generally civilised and peaceful. And Christians were taught, appropriate to their station in life, how to be faithful by various forms of catechesis.

Apologetics, however, is a response, a defence, an explanation. If all agree that God is creator and judge, that Christ saves us and is with us in the Mass, that the Church is mother and community, then no disagreement or ignorance exists, and no question or challenge calls for a response. But this is an extension of Justinian apologetics: to present the faith to those who disagree, to debate and argue for Christianity being right and to defend it when any – person, community, society – causes a problem for Christians whether through statement, attitude, law, or accusation. This is certainly an important part of apologetics, for times come when it is necessary to explain and defend against accusation or persecution, but such apologetics becomes surplus when orthodox Christians are the vast majority or even entirety of a community or society. When only peripheral Jews in towns or Muslims at borders are the challenge, such apologetics loses its purpose for most: this Justinian Apologist paradigm is defunct, unnecessary, and antiquated, except for the elite intellectuals who deal with such issues.

For a fundamental understanding of apologetics, it is necessary to return to the sources, *ressourcement*. 1Peter 3:15-16 calls the faithful to:

> Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; **16** and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

With hindsight, it is worth considering several Vatican II documents, particularly DH 14:

> The disciple has a grave obligation to Christ, his Master, to grow daily in his knowledge of the truth he has received from him, to be faithful in announcing it, and vigorous in defending it without having recourse to methods which are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.

From these, the fundamental meaning of apologetics was extracted and condensed into the working definition of this study: for all Christians, preparation, response, and a Christian manner, from which an image can be drawn where the apologetically capable faithful are part of the Church in any society including Christendom.

Hindsight can be misused to judge the past, claiming someone or a group was wrong in how they acted, decided, spoke, etc., or that the Church should have developed in a different way. This is not the intention here. Rather, it is about reinterpreting and exploring apologetics in light of the original sources, Scripture, and how we interpret it now: rather than being a philosophical debate, apologetics is primarily a response, often organic, done in a Christian manner, and made by one who is prepared to do so. It responds to anything from a friendly question to a hostile challenge about the faith.

But when there is no requirement for an explanation, with no question or challenge, as mostly in Mediaeval times, what then of apologetics? The problem is that this presupposes that one's education as a Christian is accomplished, one's ability to respond is fulfilled, and one's theosis is complete. Without sin or temptation, one's earthly journey is complete. But in this world, however, one cannot be assured that one's

life, community, and society cannot be affected negatively. Such arrogance leads to a fall and the Church Militant becomes an un(der)prepared army that will not prevail in battle.[281] Preparation and the application of one's capabilities – with the latter offering an assessment opportunity of the former – is important for the faithful. But most Mediaeval faithful were taught catechetically the basics of the faith and how to steer one's way through life to heaven; there was no perceived need to develop this further. This is clearly against the development of the person and the flourishing of God's graces in each individual. Knowing one's faith means growing closer to the beloved, God.
However, only a small minority received more and better education, leading potentially to theological studies which included developing intellectual apologetical capabilities.

Considering the macro course of history rather than the micro of the individual, what difference would there have been if Christians had been well-prepared to think about and respond to the heretical problems of the Cathars? Robust apologetical capability could have prevented the general fading of Christian ideals in later Mediaeval times – clergy ignoring Church teachings, the Council of Trent forbidding the profitable trade of indulgences too late, the drift in morals, problematic reform movements developed in response to these problems, and even the Protestant Reformation. The Church unquestionably needed reforming but well-prepared faithful responding to others could very well have been the reformation itself, being the fundamental reforming process of each individual faithful, families, communities, society, and Christendom itself. Reforms were called for – at Lateran IV in particular – but they lacked firm effect for they did not sufficiently reach the hearts and souls of individuals.

While the peasantry were taught to follow their lords and masters, those with authority were not following the Petrine call to be prepared. Therefore, in the Reformation more worldly interests were served than the theo-ecclesial ('You are Peter and on this Rock I establish my Church'). Some Reformers broke from the Church for theological reasons – justifiable or not – but others did so for worldly gain, independence, power – Henry VIII for lust then power and financial gain, and many German lords and princes for independence and power – and their people generally followed them, some reluctantly, others not. Apologetically prepared people would not have done so, but then apologetically-prepared leaders would not have tried, or even considered the possibility of breaking with the Church. Instead, reform would have been within[282] – within the Church and within individuals and families on an ongoing basis.

Instead, the elite form and structure of the Early Church period was redeveloped then confirmed and reinforced by the university system as intellectual Christianity of the learned who were mostly clerics. Apologetics developed in them: Aquinas and other great minds truly moved our understanding of God, Christ, and Church forwards. However, in Petrine apologetical terms, from these there should have not just a trickle down to the ordinary faithful but a flow of education and preparation. Instead, the universities often had a tense relationship with local urban people – 'town versus gown' – which overflowed

[281] The military analogy is particularly good here, but it is mostly avoided in this study due to such imagery being overly used in apologetics in the past.
[282] See ch2d.1 with Charles Borromeo.

into violence or protest on occasion.[283] The us-them paradigm displays a fundamental lack of connection between elites and ordinary people; the elite students were usually future clergy but they lacked the formation of a pastoral interest in the ordinary faithful around them.

The development of apologetical preparation was possible. The well-developed parish system had local priests of varying education. Some grammar schools predate the universities: my secondary school was established in 1188 and the first 'local' university in 1451. Later, within the Trivium education system, schools prepared those who would go on to university at around 14 years old. This consisted of grammar, logic, and rhetoric along with the Quadrivium of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music. The university did develop these but focused on the natural sciences, then philosophy, and then at doctoral level on theology, the queen of the sciences. But by embedding more theological content earlier, basic theology could have been included in grammar, the rational (natural and revealed) arguments in logic, and developing dialogue and debate in rhetoric. This would have prepared the educated for apologetical engagement and passing this on to others.

To prepare the ordinary faithful, placing an onus on those already prepared to go out and develop others around them would have been needed. Opportunities existed: workers and their children receiving faith input from the local landed gentry, particularly domestic servants; neighbours who might normally have indulged in gossip could have attended local meetings; inns and public houses, which nowadays have darts or dominoes competitions, could have enjoyed a more theological rivalry perhaps like pub quizzes; and most easily, guilds could have developed competitive debating leagues. With creativity and the desire to implement Peter's call, much more was possible.

Is this merely a pointless and wistful exercise of what-could-have-been? Regarding these as opportunities lost, this can be remedied today,[284] for it is possible to develop the ideas proposed in the ten Second Vatican Council documents that call for and encourage apologetical activity today. It is not so improbable that a large town with several Christian publicans could develop a Christian quiz league for parishioners (and anyone else!) which might lead to debating competitions. Skilful debaters can develop their skills, the faithful may learn their faith more, and debates with non-faithful may take place.[285]

Something similar occurred within the Mediaeval universities. Quodlibets were disputations or debates that took place, named for the Latin meaning 'whithersoever you please'. This was

> An academic exercise in medieval universities. Originally it was a voluntary disputation in which a master undertook to deal with any question raised by any of the participants. The answers were afterwards drawn up in writing and published. In

[283] Harley Richardson, 'The bad-tempered backstory of "Town Versus Gown"', *Learning through the ages*, 2nd September 2020, https://historyofeducation.net/2020/09/02/the-bad-tempered-backstory-of-town-versus-gown/; also 'Town and gown', *Wikipedia*, accessed 26th July 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Town_and_gown.
[284] See ch4.3.
[285] An online version is the Strange Notions forum, at https://strangenotions.com/.

> the 14th cent. it came to be part of the exercise required of a bachelor seeking the licentiate.[286]

These debates, on any chosen topic or theme, with a statement or proposition debated, enabled students to practice their debating skills and these were assessed. It would have been an ideal model for apologetical preparation and certainly could have been used more widely.

Regarding content, this would have been simplified and delivered like catechesis but with the aim of explaining why one believes in whichever particular statement. With training, educators can learn to convert content effectively for learning at any level with appropriate support.

The dynamic in society would have been quite different. Prepared leaders would not have regarded ordinary people with disinterest, or have allowed themselves to act with a poor manner. Kings and emperors would have been more accountable. Selling indulgences and the duplication of relics would not have developed. Unsanctioned scriptural translations – poor and polemical - could have been avoided and both Latin and vernacular editions would surely have been more popular. And if the reforms of Lateran IV had been implemented and developed further, perhaps a reformation within the Church would have led to and included a greater understanding of the issues and a solid theological understanding of the Church's teachings about the Church. Instead, there was a decline in clerical and lay adherence to Church teachings in a number of areas which precipitated the decline towards the Reformation.

Individuals were unprepared for explaining the faith to themselves, perhaps in moments of doubt or temptation, or simply understanding more of their faith; society was unprepared for problematic movements that appeared. Being apologetically prepared would have enabled appropriate engagement with questions or challenges, but the faithful were not developed according to the Petrine call.

This has been about what could have been. What did happen in several key matters is presented below, showing what was and how it was a lost opportunity and why the Mediaeval Christians in different ways were never ready.

[286] 'quodlibet', *Oxford Reference*, accessed 30th May 2023, https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100359494;jsessionid=4945DEAA761471B9847D005CCC6F67C2.

2c.2 – St Dominic and the Albigensians

Dominic offers us today an image of how apologetics can be done successfully, and how to prepare for this. Although he developed and used apologetics within the Order that he began, it was not developed beyond his community, for to do so would have been truly radical as the established image of apologetics was Justinian, intellectual. In seeing a lost opportunity today from the Petrine apologetical perspective, it can be a model for us that could be extended for the wider faithful.

Background

The paradigm shift from being heretics in a pagan empire to toleration, then ascendency to becoming dominance in Roman times, followed by disintegration of the highly structured society led to a rebuilding that was fundamentally Christian. The monasteries gave structure, purpose, even protection, and missionary efforts spread the Christianisation wider. But within the culture, a certain pagan or otherwise 'rural' culture, legends, or myths continued to varying extents. In spite of strong figures – Charlemagne, Albert the Great, etc. – there was always a precariousness: the feeling of slipping back could not have been far away, and Viking raids or non-Christian religious movements were a threat to the faith and the society built on it. With education limited to the rich and those blessed by charitable deeds of the local Church, and society generally lacking in opportunity and vertical movement between social classes, it was sufficient for most to learn the basics: how to follow liturgy and the law. Beyond a basic understanding of Christianity, higher levels of thinking, including apologetics, were reserved for the intellectual, usually clerical, like in the later Early Church.

The Church and society were highly intertwined, and authorities worked together with a certain tension, when they were not outwardly opposing each other. The preservation of each other was the basic norm. Therefore, someone who held, professed, and acted upon other choices, that is, being heretical, was considered a threat to both Church and secular authorities because they put at risk the faithful and civil peace.

Albi – an Old Heresy Presented Anew

Into this milieu as the Early was becoming the High Middle Ages – High Christendom – a heretical idea moved west, probably from the Bogomils (friends of God) of Bulgaria who supposedly had elite knowledge that was Christian thematically and Gnostic in thinking. Variously recognised as having Manichaeist, Paulician, or Marcionite influences, these were the Catharites or *Cathari*: 'the pure ones' or puritans. John Damascene knew the term 'Cathar' from the late 4th century's Epiphanus of Salamis whose *Panarion*, *Medicine Chest* was an encyclopaedic text against the multitude of heresies. They may have had roots in third century Novatianism – also known as *Cathari*,

puritans – or possibly even the Montanism that took Tertullian. With the typical cosmology of dualistic gods based on the two Testaments, trapped spirits in an evil world, and special knowledge and actions to release them, this was an old heretical mythology in a new Christian environment. It settled especially in then-French Albi, but spread in France, Northern Italy and even Cologne.

Their Gnostic dualism forbade sexual relations, thus procreation, which negates both Christian doctrine and society's future. Even 'salvation' was impossible for those who marry and there was no sanctity of life: 'suicide or the *Endura*, under certain circumstances, is not only lawful but commendable'.[287] The danger was significant: 'Had Catharism become dominant, or even had it been allowed to exist on equal terms, its influence could not have failed to prove disastrous.'[288]

Christian Response

The Christian response progressed over time, struggling with the movement's obstinacy. While Pope Innocent III had the Franciscans counter the proclaimed holy poverty of the Waldensians, the Dominicans were 'to preach orthodox concepts in popular terms'.[289] Johnson describes their early remit: 'to provide efficient and orthodox preachers, who could be rapidly deployed in an area infected with heresy.'[290] His medical image to combat disease outbreaks then transforms into the Dominicans being spiritual-intellectual police: 'The Dominicans, for their part, took over the routine conduct of the Church's anti-heretical machinery, especially the inquisition. They also invaded the universities…'[291] His desire to give a negative slant to the Dominican activity is clear. The Dominicans were called to be apologetical, and Johnson's polemics calls for an apologetical response today.

Although Wikipedia's 'Catharism' page is unsurprisingly skewed towards sympathy for the liberalising, alternative approach to spiritual matters by the Cathars, its brief statement on Dominic's encounter with the heretics is illuminating from an apologetics angle, albeit not being supported with a citation:

> Dominic met and debated with the Cathars in 1203 during his mission to the Languedoc. He concluded that only preachers who displayed real sanctity, humility and asceticism could win over convinced Cathar believers. The institutional Church as a general rule did not possess these spiritual warrants.[292]

[287] Ibid.
[288] Quoted in ibid.
[289] Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), 252.
[290] Ibid., 234.
[291] Ibid., 240.
[292] 'Catharism', *Wikipedia*, accessed 30th May 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catharism. The final sentence of the quote is more or less taken from Johnson, 251, as it is cited in Wikipedia; however, it is not in the context of Dominic but that the Cathars were showing 'outward signs of chastity, poverty, ascetism and humility', which many Christians were failing to do.

If true, whether Dominic understood this to be in concert with the Petrine third element – in a Christian manner – is unclear. However, this integral apologetical element was missing and the awareness of this was important, as it is in any apologetics.

Regarding apologetics today, while Johnson and Wikipedia pretend neutrality, which errs to negativity towards the Church in history, it is not unusual to read popular claims online that lack any quality control, such as from a random website on the first page of an internet search for 'Catharism'; one paragraph is sufficient to glean the approach:

> The Cathars—condemned as diabolical heretics by the Roman church—are often hailed as a manifestation of a separate, 'primitive' brand of Christianity. A brand that could be termed as Proto-Protestants or even enlightened harbingers of social and sexual equality.[293]

The problems of the nihilistic approach to life – anti-procreation, pro-suicide – are reframed as good but even the asceticism of more puritanical Protestant sects such as the Free Presbyterians of several Scottish islands still today is fundamentally opposite the Cathar value of life; such content thus requires an apologetical response as it is factually very misleading.

Negativity towards Catholicism at least since the Reformation has included the Cathar response as connected with the Inquisition. John Vidmar, a Dominican priest and academic, highlights[294] the writing of Karen Armstrong, who left the convent after seven years in the late 1960s, was blocked from completing higher level academic studies, and now considers herself a 'freelance monotheist'.[295] Armstrong uses emotive language, describing the Dominicans as 'bloodhounds of orthodoxy [who] sniffed out the heretics'.[296] Using such cartoonish imagery repeatedly, she depends upon the Black Legend of evil Catholics persecuting the poor people who disagreed with them. She perpetuates myths long ago refuted but which are profitable if they are congruent with one's a priori position. This is not reserved to non-academics: Vidmar recalls a History Channel interview of an American academic who 'said that, *despite all the evidence to the contrary*, the Inquisition "is every bit as vicious as it has been painted"'.[297] The various inquisitions have been collated into one image that generally lacks context and truth. It should be said that while any life lost was a terrible failure, inquisitions were of their time and the Church did generally regulate and restrict the far more cavalier approach that secular authorities sought to employ in the various Church-led inquisitions and the secular Spanish Inquisition. Vidmar offers a concise but well-presented survey of the historical facts with academic citations.[298] Of note, the FBI today still use the same

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[293] Richard B. Spence, 'Cathars: The Medieval Progressives', *Wondrium Daily*, 13th August 2020, https://www.wondriumdaily.com/cathars-the-medieval-progressives/.
[294] John Vidmar, *The Catholic Church Through the Ages* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 146-7.
[295] According to 'Karen Armstrong', Wikipedia, accessed 31st May 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Armstrong.
[296] Quoted in Vidmar, *The Catholic Church*, 147.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid., 144-9.

guidelines in their training as developed by the inquisitor Bernardo Gui, who has been painted quite differently by detractors from his restrained and careful approach.[299] However, with the Franciscans exhibiting real humility of poverty and Dominic using words in engaging with Albigensians, the approaches were types of apologetics.

Dominic recognised major issues on his first trip to the region. His response was to engage in debate with the heretics, which they regarded as a strength of theirs. Being very well educated, he refuted their positions, causing them great frustrations which descended into diatribe and threats. He also recognised the challenges for women converting from the heretical movement to orthodoxy, prompting him to set up houses for their physical and spiritual protection; this became second order monastic life. With support by Pope Honorius III, Dominic made plans:

> His own career at the University of Palencia, and the practical use to which he had put it in his encounters with the Albigenses, as well as his keen appreciation of the needs of the time, convinced the saint that to ensure the highest efficiency of the work of the apostolate, his followers should be afforded the best educational advantages obtainable.[300]

Dominic moved to establish his followers in universities; this is clearly synonymous with the idea of preparation in Peter's Call, which may or may not have been a conscious connection made by Dominic.

During the years he spent in Toulouse, working with other Catholics in dealing with the heretical movement, he was recognised as merciful and prayerful during battles, seeking out those who needed help in turning to the Church, rather than fighting on the front line.

Dominic, who was establishing the order widely in Europe, was called upon by Honorius to respond to heresy in Lombardy with a 'preaching crusade'[301] but the pope's plan fell through. Yet Dominic and a small group of his order set off, leading to – it is claimed – 100,000 conversions and many miracles, and the setting up of the Dominican third order.

The response of Dominic stands out as a very effective example of apologetics albeit the focus of preparation was still intellectual. Within the Justinian elite focus, the Petrine elements of preparation, response, and Christina manner are apparent, although the Order developed around a smaller core group educated at a high level in the universities (Albert Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, etc.). From our own context, it was a missed opportunity which calls us today to emulate Dominic's approach while adding the universal aspect highlighted by the ressourcement of Vatican II and a focus on Peter's intentions.

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[299] Ibid., 148-9.
[300] John Bonaventure O'Connor, 'St. Dominic', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05106a.htm.
[301] Ibid.

2c.3 – The Fourth Lateran Council – a Call to Apologetics?

The Fourth Lateran Council[302] was called by Pope Innocent, a keen reformer, and held in Rome in late 1215. It was particularly well-attended and sought to reform many areas in Christian and especially Church life. Particularly of interest here, the Council required the development of education of clergy, other urban Christians, and also the poor; such Church-based potentially universal education points to the possibility of the thus-far missing aspect of apologetical preparation. However, implementation of the Council's many decrees was insufficient, not least because the Pope, the Council's driving force, died the following year, albeit his successor worked to implement many of the Council's decisions. Therefore, again, there was a lost opportunity for the development of a more Petrine apologetics.

Overview

The reasons for a Church council are several, all of them responses: for example, dogmatic or doctrinal points needing clarified or proclaimed, socio-spiritual movements are developing and need guidance, or a perceived need for changing direction in more practical ways. Lateran IV was one of the most important councils in Church history and was called to deal with all three to some extent: several teachings needed clarifying and a new approach to how the laity could practise their faith was needed to fulfil a spiritual need that had been growing organically. Lateran IV was a reaction to what became known as the 'mediaeval reformation' in the 12th-13th centuries and was one of the most significant councils in Church history.

The Council was pivotal for several reasons. It was very well attended: '71 patriarchs and metropolitans, including those of Constantinople and Jerusalem; 412 bishops; some 900 abbots and priors; delegates from the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria; and envoys from the Holy Roman Emperor and several other Christian states'.[303] Also, it made dogma the 'filioque' (canon (c.) 2), that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Father and the Son. And it is well-known for its strong statement of faith which includes the term 'transubstantiation' (c.1) and its significant reform of many clerical and clerical-lay aspects.

The 71 canons begin with the statement of faith and two canons on specific heretics and heresy in general. With such business out of the way, vast swathes of reforms are then presented.[304] Canons 6-13 were on Church discipline, then cc.14-22 regarded clerical morals, followed by cc.23-32 on regulating elections to bishoprics and how benefices were applied and organised, which would reduce corruption. How taxes were

[302] 'Fourth Lateran Council: 1215', *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, 20th February 2020, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12-2.htm.
[303] Matthew Jarvis, 'Councils of Faith: Lateran IV (1215)', *Dominican Friars*, 29th January 2013, https://www.english.op.org/godzdogz/councils-of-faith-lateran-iv-1215/.
[304] Terms used are from the list in the Introduction in 'Fourth Lateran'.

to be extracted (cc.33-4) and canonical suits (cc.35-49) came before marriage laws in cc.50-52. Finally, tithes were regulated in cc.53-61 before simony was restricted (cc. 63-66), then Jews in society were the focus of cc.67-70. And c.71 was a lengthy call, with regulations and guidance, for the Fifth Crusade to recover the Holy Land, after the disastrous events of the Fourth being diverted to Constantinople a decade earlier.

Apologetics in the Council

The reforms of Lateran IV cannot be underestimated in terms of their strength of intention. This was regulation of the Church as never seen before and only comparable to Trent in the 16th century. Examples are many and the following are not exhaustive. Corruption was dealt with in the canons, including simony (cc.63-66) and the selling of relics (c.62), and it restricted 'nepotism' (c.31) and the continence of clerics (c.14). It regulated how secular and religious institutions interacted (c.60), and how these individually were organised and funded (cc.6, 61). The behaviour and presentation of clerics was ruled upon (cc. 14-18) as well as their financial states and how they were supported (c.29), and how they should behave regarding both laity and finances, and both together (cc.42, 56). The last examples are only two of many regarding how the laity should deal with clerics and religious. This was a reform for rooting out corruption and, moving forward, on how to be organised far better as the Kingdom of God on earth. In Petrine terms, it was preparation because Christian manner includes Christian behaviour.

Apologetically, the Council presented several important teachings and regulations. First, c.1 is a particularly useful theological extension of the Nicene Creed, thus an important source for the Petrine preparation element. It is clear, not overly long, and could have been used as a catechetical source developed into exploring the 'why?' of apologetics. As both a statement and an explanation, its potential should not be underestimated in educating the faithful.

Preparing the faithful is most visible in c.10, which decreed that bishops, being overly stretched, were to

> appoint suitable men to carry out with profit this duty of sacred preaching, men who are powerful in word and deed and who will visit with care the peoples entrusted to them in place of the bishops, since these by themselves are unable to do it, and will build them up by word and example.

This was an excellent opportunity for the establishment of supported (financially and with education) preachers in dioceses who would go out and build-up the faithful (preparation), who would then hopefully encourage questions to be asked, leading to an apologetical dialogue amongst people. It also supported the new Dominican style of dealing with a lack of understanding among Christians regarding their faith; the Order itself recognised that while c.13 prevented more orders from being established with new

Rules, by following the Augustinian Rule and supported by c.10, the Dominican Order was able to be established the following year of 1216.[305]

But c.11, 'On schoolmasters for the poor', is of most interest for developing a more ordinary apologetics. It recognises that 'Zeal for learning and the opportunity to make progress is denied to some through lack of means' and recalls the Lateran III (1179) decree (c.18) of there being funding (a benefice) in every cathedral for a teacher of clerics and poor students which was to be extended to 'other churches with sufficient resources'. Although rather open to financial interpretation, it is certainly a highly positive step which could have, given Christian charitable framing, led to such appointments being signs of status to such churches. All such churches from 1215 were to have 'a suitable master elected by the chapter [… who] shall be appointed by the prelate to teach grammar and other branches of study, as far as is possible, to the clerics of those and other churches', while cathedrals were to have also a theologian teaching, who was to receive a canon's income (but not the ecclesial position). Even a cathedral's lack of funding was not to restrict employment only to a theologian for, in such cases, another urban church was to appoint the grammarian. This, therefore, was a very significant step towards the Church educating all faithful and should have developed into a universal model. Such an education would have been imbued with religious themes, thus developing understanding of the faith and preparing the faithful to explain it well when called upon.

Finally, the faithful were now required to attend Confession once a year and also (in normal situations) to receive the Eucharist at least once a year, and more often when possible. This would have called for increased apologetical catechesis in developing the faithful's understanding of both sacraments and how they were to be conducted. Therefore, there were multiple reasons to look positively on the Council as having good potential for developing some level of ordinary apologetics.

Lateran IV is important also today apologetically, for it taught transubstantiation, condemned simony, forbade profitable selling of relics, and regulated religious income. The Church explicitly banned precisely what it was accused of practising by Luther and others. The true nature of the Catholic Church was exactly not what it was accused of but what individuals increasingly did, which led to the Reformation.

Looking through a Petrine apologetical lens – preparation, response, Christian manner – it is abundantly clear that this Council was significant in terms of the preparation element. Its clear theological statement in c.1 and dealing with the problem of Joachim of Fiore in c.2 establish orthodox Christianity and show what it is to be a Christian: orderly, just, merciful, authentic, good… It thus paved the way for developing the third Petrine element, a Christian manner. And the education of and preaching to all strata of society means that Lateran IV was foundational in its decrees for promoting ordinary apologetics. Therefore, the Council can certainly be regarded to some extent as an apologetically-enabling Council, which when joined with the increasing engagements of the Dominicans, would have re-founded Petrine apologetics.

[305] Jarvis, 'Councils'.

So, if the Council prepared the way for apologetics, why did the Reformation happen? Why were the Protestants able to find so much fault with Catholicism? Luther's renowned '95 Theses' predominantly regard indulgences, showing how they were misconstrued at the time. He also wrote on relics, showing grave misunderstanding and plenty hyperbole: two good modern apologias refute his claims that 'eighteen apostles are buried in Germany when Christ only had twelve'[306] and how if all the pieces venerated as the True Cross were collected, they could make up the Ark.[307] In short, there were more Apostles than the 12, including Paul, whom Luther wrote extensively about, and there is no requirement for any saint to be retained complete: after all, there are saints' relics in every Catholic-consecrated altar.[308] And regarding the proliferation of True Cross pieces, while there have surely been false claims, the pieces were distributed with authenticating means, hence:

> In 1870, a Frenchman, Rohault de Fleury, catalogued all the relics of the True Cross, including relics that were said to have existed but were lost. He measured the existing relics and estimated the volume of the missing ones. Then he added up the figures and discovered that the fragments, if glued together, would not have made up more than one-third of a cross. The scandal wasn't that there was too much wood. The scandal was that most of the True Cross, after being unearthed in Jerusalem in the fourth century, was lost again![309]

Such modern responses are possible today but were not apparent half a millennium ago. Apologetics did not develop after Lateran IV to enable the faithful to live more Christian lives in general and respond when questions or challenges arose.

Modern communications technologies, from telegraph to today, obscure for us the difficulties of sending information in the past. Jeffrey M. Wayno provides a very illuminating insight into what went wrong after the Council of 1215. Even though 'Seminal works in a wide array of fields frequently cite the canons – and the ideas that underpinned them – as some of the most ambitious, significant, and even revolutionary of the Middle Ages',[310] it was actually the case that

> bishops, as many scholars have been quick to note, were a mercurial lot. Their independent will, their varying levels of competence, and, indeed, their occasional refusal to bend a knee to Rome, all shaped how – and indeed whether – they sought

[306] Jennifer Freeman, 'Lies about Relics', *Christian History Institute,* 19th January 2017, https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/blog/post/a-relic-is-a-reminder/; also 'Relics', *Catholic Answers*, accessed 26th May 2023, https://www.catholic.com/tract/relics.
[307] 'Relics'.
[308] Ibid.
[309] Ibid.
[310] Jeffrey M. Wayno, 'Rethinking the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215', *Speculum,* Vol. 93, No. 3 (July 2018): 612, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26584641?seq=1.

> to implement Innocent's reforms. Some bishops, as specialized studies have shown, were more conscientious than others.[311]

Long before the printing press, it was the note-taker at the Council and copyists afterwards who passed on the information – 71 canons – finally to individual (arch)dioceses and then for provincial synods to disseminate the decrees to all dioceses, then to chapters, clerics, monasteries, religious, and laity. In a time of vertical dissemination of information, any breakdown in any individual process meant an altered or omitted, or even falsely-created message being passed on, and the higher in the chain each inaccuracy occurred, the greater the impact on more of the faithful. This was not unknown in the Church but, especially with Innocent III having died in 1216, 'the papacy – the architect of the reform program – was aware of this breakdown in communication but was unable to combat the problem effectively, raising questions about how committed the institution was to the reforms Innocent had promulgated',[312] even with his successor, Honorius III, following up on the Council's reforms in many ways. It was not unusual that reforms were less enthusiastically promulgated by a succeeding pope, but the irony is that if apologetics – explaining the faith – had already been more developed, the reforms would have been more welcomed as important. Rather, the lack of apologetical understanding of the faith meant the very reforms meant to develop apologetics were not implemented properly, thus thwarting its development.

Wayno recognises that 'person-to-person communication had obvious benefits',[313] however, it was open to interpretation at each link in the communication chain. Only specialised research on any existing useful documents could shed light on this at a parish or monastery level, but Wayno presents several cases at diocesan or provincial synod level where the canons were passed on in significantly edited form, and he holds that bishops normally passed on only those canons deemed locally suitable. While reasonable, this selection process was susceptible to individuals with specific interests and foci, or with a priori opinions of the reforms. Thus, the faithful received anything from a fairly accurate version of the Council to a watered-down and selected set of decrees that were at times even somewhat fabricated, leading to papal warnings.[314] Therefore, in spite of the common image of an authoritarian Mediaeval Church, there really was nowhere near the authority necessary for the papacy to implement proper change, for 'bishops remained unpredictable, even fickle allies, in the effort to implement reform'[315] because 'Local authority, not the centralized power of Rome, still reigned supreme'.[316]

That Petrine apologetics did not develop from Peter's original call, nor from that of Innocent III, shows that the authority of a papal call is not sufficient; nor is the call of a council sufficient – Lateran IV or Vatican II. It takes an organic yet properly supported

[311] Ibid., 615.
[312] Ibid., 616.
[313] Ibid., 617.
[314] For example, respectively, in Salisbury and Rouen. Ibid., 625-6, 627-35.
[315] Ibid., 626-7.
[316] Ibid., 636.

movement: the participation of the faithful, the desire and agreement of many, and a focus on the developing the three elements in all the faithful.

Canon (71), calling for the new Crusade, paints the typical picture of Christendom coming together to retake the Holy Land by building up the faithful. As a speculative exercise, it is worthwhile pondering how this might have applied to an internal Crusade, focusing on building up the faithful in Christendom, fighting the lack of understanding of the faithful, not like the Inquisition but in Petrine apologetical terms: to become able to answer others' questions and challenges in a Christian manner. The following words can be read through an apologetical-development lens:

> Priests and other clerics who will be in the Christian army, both those under authority and prelates, shall diligently devote themselves to prayer and exhortation, teaching the crusaders by word and example to have the fear and love of God always before their eyes, so that they say or do nothing that might offend the divine majesty.

Such a desire to build up the faithful would have meant true reform taking place, not just theory and words but in practice. What was needed for this to take place? In words not unlike DV 8 and others of Vatican II: 'In order that nothing connected with this business of Jesus Christ be omitted, we will and order patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, abbots and others who have the care of souls to preach the cross zealously to those entrusted to them.' Adapting Peter the Venerable, this should be done 'by words; not by force, but by reason; not in hatred, but in love'[317] instead of leaving the majority of the faithful in uneducated serfdom.

Had the Council's Fifth Crusade call been applied to a crusade for educating all of the faithful to develop the faith within Christendom for the glory of God, Lateran IV could have been a watershed moment in developing apologetics proper and answer the call of the first Pope. There certainly was significant potential for Lateran IV to have developed more Petrine apologetics. The faithful would have then been better prepared for what was approaching – plague, multiple popes, scandals and corruption, and then the Reformation. Some of these could even have been lessened or even avoided. However, insufficient education/preparation for the majority of the faithful, whether due to a lack of interest or will, had a significant effect on the Late Mediaeval period.

[317] In Dulles, *History*, 106.

2c.4 – The Late Mediaeval Period – from Lateran IV to Lateran V

The three centuries between the Fourth and Fifth Lateran Councils (1215 to 1512-17) began with spiritual developments and uncertainty, and the laity particularly seeking change, and ended with change being thrust upon Western Christianity. This was led not to a schism – separation along geographical and theologically-practical lines – but a rupture driven by theological misunderstanding, the poor practice of some Christian figures, and even opportunity. While the former Council was short but extensive thematically with many attendees, the latter was the exact opposite:[318] reluctantly, Pope Julius II eventually called the council he had promised, which was lengthy and poorly attended, mostly by prelates nearby. This diminishing spiritual enthusiasm is symbolic of a period when too many Church figures often focused on worldly matters: a clear result of poor apologetical preparation thus little ability or desire to deal with the increasing questions or challenges.

Christendom had been afflicted by disease and ecclesial-political disruption, and anti-ecclesial feelings were developing. But Christendom was fundamental to most people's lives: one was born into Christianity, lived as a Christian, and died as a Christian – a universal, catholic, thus Catholic culture. Duration was measured by the length of an Ave or a Te Deum, time was reckoned by the Divine Office – after Terce, before Vespers… One's patron saint was called upon to intercede regularly, maybe at a local church with an altar dedicated to the saint. The liturgical year's feasts and holy days regulated the calendar. One's faith and life were bound up together. However, this cultural Christianity was mostly underdeveloped in understanding the faith and being able to explain it when questioned or challenged because preparation, education, was limited to intellectual elites in universities, who became clerics or increasingly legal clerks: lawyers.

Two sons of Cambridge University provide images of pre-Reformation life. Robert Swanson, now Emeritus Professor of Medieval History at Birmingham, offers the more established Protestant view while Eamon Duffy is Emeritus Professor of the History of Christianity at Cambridge. Of Duffy's work, it is said that he 'has done much to overturn the popular image of late-medieval Catholicism in England as moribund, and instead presents it as a vibrant cultural force'.[319] Unsurprisingly, there is a 'citation needed' label attached to this, quite possibly by one regarding his work as problematic because of the Black Legend[320] promoted by Protestant reformers during and since the Reformation.

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[318] 'Fifth Lateran Council 1512-17 A.D.', *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, 20th February 2020, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum18.htm; also Henri Leclercq, 'Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17)', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910), https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09018b.htm.

[319] 'Eamon Duffy', *Wikipedia*, accessed 30th May 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eamon_Duffy.

[320] This is the narrative established by the post Reformation cultural powers that provided all manner of tales, ideas, gossip, etc., that has long been a key area of apologetics in undoing such matters, with anything from the Mediaeval times being anti-science to Constantine inventing the Church.

Swanson's *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515,*[321] which depicts generally a lack of preparation, indeed healthy engagement with one's spirituality, is examined here as is Duffy's *Marking the Hours*[322] which reinforces his general theme that pre-Reformation Europe was heavily Catholic and the Reformation was not a liberation but a disruption to a somewhat spiritually engaged people. Amongst this, the focus here is to identify signs of preparation, or even apologetical engagement in the Late Mediaeval period.

Swanson – a Protestant View

Swanson is clearly looking through a 'reform-lens' at Lateran IV when claiming its aim was a 'pastoral revolution, intended to move the church into the forefront of personal experience and individual existence'.[323] He perceives Lateran V, the period's other bookend, as requiring leadership to extricate the Church from the period. He juxtaposes the two: 'Lateran IV reflects papal leadership and inspiration, a determination to overcome obstacles. Lateran V reflects the stultifying effects of institutionalisation, of lack of enterprise at the top which feared to move for concern about the consequences.'[324] He criticises the institution but the damage was wrought by the lack of upstanding ecclesial figures in Renaissance times. Even today, while the name Alexander VI might cause little reaction, the name Borgia is infamous.[325]

With a somewhat justified focus on reform, Swanson identifies how the changes in religious society before Lateran IV had great potential for looking outward rather than within:

> Following Christ came to mean two things: preaching, and the adoption of poverty. The pastoral and edificatory roles had to be constructed within the world – preachers did, after all, need an audience – and might not be exclusively restricted to those whom the church authorities considered "clerics". The laity increasingly sought to

[321] R. N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), https://archive.org/details/religiondevotion0000swan/page/n7/mode/2up.
[322] Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers* (London: Yale University Press, 2011).
[323] Swanson, *Religion*, 2.
[324] Ibid., 3.
[325] The Black Legend omits Lucrezia's repentance during her third and final marriage: 'She is known henceforth, and till her death in 1519, as a model wife and princess, lauded by all for her amiability, her virtue, and her charity. Nothing could well be more different from the fiendish Lucrezia Borgia of the drama and the opera than the historical Duchess of Ferrara.' In James Loughlin, 'Pope Alexander VI', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01289a.htm. During this period, she even spent time in a convent, but her terrible reputation was cemented for most by the anti-Catholic Victor Hugo's 19th century play which became an opera by Donizetti: see Emma Slattery Williams, 'Lucrezia Borgia: is her bad reputation deserved?', *History Extra*, 1st June 2019, https://www.historyextra.com/period/renaissance/lucrezia-borgia-reputation-adulteress-pope-alexander-vi/.

> share in the reform movements, more and more undertaking and participating in religious lives which had a Christian inspiration.[326]

This included the rise of the Waldensians and the Humiliati – both pled poverty and promoted lay activities such as preaching. However, their outcomes differed: the former, regarded as heretical after 1179, went underground and re-emerged in the Reformation[327] while the latter became a Church Order, as advised by St Bernard.[328] Parallels can be seen in the 1960s with major changes for the laity as 'new freedoms' led both to a greater spiritual development in the faithful – some of the Charismatic movement and apostolates, etc. – and others who drifted from the Church, whether to Protestantism or from Christianity.[329]

However, the lack of preparation necessary for presenting the faith has already been seen because 'Lay rationalisation could itself produce a theology for a religion consonant with experience, regardless of what the church might direct. In the twelfth century the main strand in this direction erupted as Catharism in southern France.'[330] Swanson describes the Church's response with a polemic slant:

> [The Albigensian Crusade] and the Inquisition, operating in both France and Italy, were major forces which contributed to the suppression of the Cathar threat; although contemporary changes in catholicism [sic] – the preaching missions of the Dominicans and the Franciscans, and the new place found for lay spirituality in the thirteenth-century church – were important for reducing the heresy's appeal.[331]

Swanson fails to explain his 'the new place found for lay spirituality in the thirteenth-century church', albeit he later records Homobonus as the first lay married man to be canonised,[332] indicating increasing lay spirituality.

His 'reform-lens' does not require him to support or explain his general anti-Church position, for example:

> Rather than being unified and monolithic, concrete and static, medieval Christianity was incessantly fluid and evolving, often uncertain, and plagued with doctrinal pluralism approaching individualism. Indeed, it could be argued that there was no such thing as *the* Christian faith even if Christendom is confined to the area of the Latin rites – but a multitude of definitions of faith which for convenience can be lumped together as Christianity, but which either voluntarily or by imposition shared a good deal of identity. Acceptance of the kernel, the basic statement of the Creeds,

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[326] Swanson, *Religion*, 11.
[327] Ibid., 11-12.
[328] F. M. Rudge, 'Humiliati', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07543a.htm.
[329] For example, in Daniel Payne, 'Americans' belief in God, heaven, hell continues prolonged decline', *Catholic News Agency*, 25th July 2023, https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/254891/americans-belief-in-god-heaven-hell-continues-prolonged-decline.
[330] Swanson, *Religion*, 13-14.
[331] Ibid., 14.
[332] Ibid., 23; his name sounds like an Everyman legend!

> was generally what was tested; individual reconciliation of those statements with an understanding of what surrounded the kernel was rarely investigated by the authorities, except among academics.[333]

This indicates a foundational catechesis taking place regarding the what and how of the faithful – enough to participate in the liturgy and life in a Catholic society while aiming for salvation, but no capability to explain it if called upon. While Swanson's image rings true somewhat by imagining the gap between the ordinary Christian and his connection with the Church, he does not explain or support his claim of spiritual and intellectual lives filled with far more than that expectable in persons of limited education living a life characterised by employment, entertainment, and socio-personal interactions. The minimal catechesis, sufficient to function as laity in Mediaeval society, did not automatically mean that such a person was not believing and faithful, but just underdeveloped particularly in apologetical terms. However, for Swanson this grows into Reformation tropes of a Pelagian Catholicism, but he does not consider the possibility of the ordinary Christian's engagement with the faith.[334]

Lacking understanding of sacramental Confession – annually required since Lateran IV – Swanson describes it as a 'private inquisition' where the priest could test the knowledge of the faithful's understanding of the faith.[335] In apologetical-preparation terms, this crude assessment conceals what was, while very insufficient, probably a step in the right direction. His description below of the Church-laity relationship is helpful to confirm the apologetical gap but he misunderstands the importance of participation, which was underdeveloped but real.

> A critical aspect of late medieval Christianity is the emphasis on practicality: the religion of the great majority was not one of consideration and comprehension of deep theological matters, but action and reaction to secure salvation. Agreed, there was intense devotion and a strong streak of contemplative religion which could become mysticism, but the emphasis is on action, on *living* the Christian life. This distinction between action by the people as against analyses of doctrine and theology (which could be left to the learned) has stimulated much of the recent debate about the distinctions between 'learned' and 'popular' religion, although the validity of the distinctions is highly questionable. From the perspective of the authorities, what mattered for the majority was that they should willingly accept the definitions provided by the church, and be ready to believe what the Church defined as requiring belief (overall, even if idiosyncratically), rather than become confused or be lost by seeking to penetrate what were essentially mysteries.[336]

On the other hand, it is necessary to note that not all in the priestly state were of an intellectually distinct caste. Some priests had masters degrees from a university education, whereas, especially in more rural areas, a lesser education was required for

[333] Ibid., 17-18.
[334] Ibid., 19.
[335] Ibid., 26.
[336] Ibid., 26-7.

clergy, who were considered a lower degree and were addressed differently.[337] Swanson recognises this more popular faith, and notes possible issues with more rural origins, which hints at superstitions, but then he suggests that such pre-Reformation clerics were not properly Christian with his final sentence, thus indicating a desire to justify breaking from the Catholic faith.

In trying to justify that Catholics are not particularly Christian, Swanson does not recognise the Catholic position of the goodness of Creation confirmed in the Incarnation. But his description of slipping into superstition and 'folk' religion' points to a lack of apologetical preparation and engagement even in many of the partly-educated clergy:

> Even whether the distinction can adequately be between 'lay' and 'clerical' cultures is questionable. Many of the rituals required clerical participation – especially in the blessings of fields, and the distribution of sacramentals. As most of the lower clergy had to survive within, and derived from, a peasant culture, they would have been imbued with its belief and rituals long before they acquired those which went with clerical status.[338]

Remedying the lack of preparation in the mostly under-catechised and poorly prepared faithful at this time would have been a vast project, requiring a substantial catalyst and much subsequent momentum. The weak implementation of Lateran IV prevented potential widespread apologetical preparation and subsequent engagements. But some conciliar calls did cause change and, usefully for this study, Swanson records something of the 'common inquisition' of Confession, in Drury's manual for the sacrament.[339] His somewhat detailed exploration of both the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy gives a taste of the somewhat constructed and formulaic system of understanding one's faith and one's position in the faith with regard to 'being right with God'. As this lacks deeper education of such, their importance, or how to develop one's understanding from them, this approach is really an application of the Two Ways code of apologetics – the simplest form of apologetical preparation which enables simple explanation to oneself, to others in apologetical conversation, and when questioned or challenged.

The good way is described:

> The total package was perhaps most succinctly summarised by the Portuguese friar, Pelagius Parvus (d. *c*. 1250) in one of his sermons: 'Sincerity of faith; charity to God and neighbour; clarity of contemplation; unity of concord; saintliness of mind and mind [sic]; generosity in alms; completeness in confession; true humility; chastity of mind and body.' Translating such ideals into reality produced what could be an extremely demanding programme, which established aspirations, and social rules, even if not everyone would actually attain the goals.[340]

[337] In rural Scotland, for example, the lesser type of priest was addressed with 'Sir'.
[338] Swanson, *Religion*, 187-8.
[339] Ibid., 27ff.
[340] Ibid., 30. Swanson's comment here overlooks God's mercy, perhaps with his focus rather being on a friar named Pelagius listing good works.

The friar's list is a programme for functioning as a Christian, and relating to others – God and neighbour. But it is not a programme for developing understanding and engaging with others who have questions or challenges.

For Swanson, Lateran IV's reform programme failed because the individual was not imbued with an independence of faith that would enable each person to be with God, thus bypassing the Church. In the Council's terms, the reform was insufficiently implemented and developed to equip the faithful with a lively and well-understood faith, leading to a spirited and charitable-thinking faithful. For Petrine apologetics, Swanson shows there was a structure that potentially could have developed apologetics but the preparation was mostly limited to catechetical input at the Two Ways code level and the annual assessment of Confession: far more was needed before the faithful could be apologetically capable.

Duffy – Lay Engagement with Scripture

Duffy debunks the general historical consensus, created by 'to the victor the spoils' which includes writing the history. The English-speaking world was Protestant and the remaining acceptable prejudice is anti-Catholicism.[341] The image prevailed at least until Vatican II that Scripture was for Protestants, based on the claim that the vernacular Bible was a Protestant creation.[342] Duffy's aim is to counter the accepted view that Mediaeval society, that is, Catholic culture, was spiritually poor, mostly spiritually ignorant, that people had no real access to Scripture, and that the Reformation freed them from a miserable existence under the Church's thumb. The first two are somewhat arguable in apologetical terms, but the latter pair were not particularly true. Scripture was translated into English numerous times since the 7th century;[343] also, the increased scriptural access perceptibly led not to prayerful growth of the ordinary person in Tudor society, according to Henry VIII himself as he bemoaned the regular profaning of scriptural content 'and how it is turned into wretched rhymes, sung and jangled in every alehouse and tavern'.[344]

Rather, Duffy reveals the proliferation of the laity's interest in the Book of the Hours, the Divine Office of the Church. This is the extensive set of prayers required of clergy and some religious over many centuries, having its roots in the earliest Church[345] and taking place up to seven times a day; it is based heavily on Scripture, most particularly the Psalms.[346] This discipline develops a deep appreciation of prayer through Scripture

[341] For example, a British monarch legally cannot be Roman Catholic, and only in the last decade became able to have a Catholic spouse.
[342] Contra this, see Henry G. Graham, *Where We Got the Bible* (San Diego: Catholic Answers, 1997), especially 69-77.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid., 97. Graham reveals a reality very different from the established narrative regarding Scripture and the Reformation: ibid., especially 95-104.
[345] SC 84.
[346] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) (London: Burns and Oates, 2000), 1176.

and ‘is truly the voice of the Bride herself addressed to her Bridegroom. It is the very prayer which Christ himself together with his Body addresses to the Father.’[347] It is regarded as fundamental to service in the Church:

> Priests who are engaged in the sacred pastoral ministry will offer the praises of the hours with greater fervor the more vividly they realize that they must heed St. Paul's exhortation: ‘Pray without ceasing’ (1 Thess. 5:11). For the work in which they labor will effect nothing and bring forth no fruit except by the power of the Lord who said: ‘Without me you can do nothing’ (John 15:5). That is why the apostles, instituting deacons, said: ‘We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word’ (Acts 6:4).[348]

Joining prayer and the ‘ministry of the word’ can be understood in several ways: liturgy, evangelisation, and also apologetics (apo-logos) by responding to others regarding the faith.

The historical narrative states that access to such texts was not possible before book printing: the costs would be prohibitive. A Bible cost in today’s money around £30,000 or one million Czech Crowns.[349] However, the Book of the Hours was far shorter, thus cheaper, and was sometimes of lesser production quality.

Duffy recognises the significant effect of Lateran IV with a real change in the direction of the laity,[350] which he may be over-simplifying, but the catastrophic 14th century plague that ravaged Europe also caused a major growth in spirituality, including laity being inspired both to own and use Books of the Hours.[351] This was partly economic as the population depletion meant an increase in the wealth of those who survived. Many Books of the Hours were owned by the urban elites.[352] The cost was far more accessible: Duffy gives three prices of second-hand Books,[353] one at 9s (in 1444), another at 6s 8d (also in 1444), and a third that was printed at the accessible price of a sixpence (in 1490).[354] In today’s terms, that 9s was just under £300, the price a cow or 15 days work of a skilled tradesman; the 6s 8d would pay for 11 days of that skilled tradesman; and the later price of 6d was worth only £16.75 nowadays, only three-quarters of a day’s work of a skilled tradesman.[355] Already accessible to some, this increased significantly with the establishment of the printed book market.

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[347] SC 84.
[348] SC 86.
[349] This is approximate calculation is merely illustrative: bfhu [sic], ‘Cost of a Bible Before the Printing Press’, *Bread from Heaven*, 23rd August 2012, https://bfhu.wordpress.com/2012/08/23/cost-of-a-bible-before-the-printing-press/. This explains why Bibles were often chained in churches: to prevent theft, as it was probably the most valuable item there.
[350] Duffy, *Hours*, 6.
[351] Ibid., 11.
[352] Ibid., 21.
[353] The second-hand market was possibly extensive: ibid., 24.
[354] Ibid., 22.
[355] These calculations are from the excellent ‘Currency Converter 1270-2017’, *The National Archives*, accessed 11th May 2023, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/.

But to what extent did the faithful engage with the texts? A partial image may be gleaned. There was a fashion for Books of the Hours prior to the printing press that were small enough to carry in a sleeve or attached to a belt.[356] Duffy records a number of primary sources, such as bequests, including 'a peyre Matyns bookis and a peire bedes, and a rynge with which I was yspousyd to God, which were my lords his fadres'.[357] This was Lady Alice West's bequest to her son, having made a vow of chastity after being widowed. The Books of the Hours (Matins books) and the Rosary beads show 'the religion of bead and book'.[358] There was also a strong market for originals before 1400 in today's Holland and Northern France: 'in the course of the fifteenth century the Book of Hours and the religion it represented ceased to be the monopoly of aristocracy and the upper gentry, and became an integral part of the religious experience of the urban and rural "middling sort"'.[359] And while Swanson would have us believe that the masses were basically ignorant, this was not so in the growing urban people of most classes pre-Reformation: 'But the time of the democratising of the Book of Hours came at the end of the fifteenth century, with the arrival of print. Books of Hours became, in terms of numbers of editions, quite simply and without rival the chief product of the new technology.'[360] The print revolution led to increasingly Catholic content:

> more sacramental, more churchly, more fortified and enhanced with indulgences and pious promises, more than ever, therefore, geared to a religious system in which the intercession of the saints, the centrality of the Mass, and the power of the priesthood to absolve and remit sin were taken as axioms.[361]

The Books previously available only to the most wealthy, with good quality colour illustrations, were now available to 'every prosperous shopkeeper who aspired to devotional gentility'.[362] They were widely owned: 'By 1530 there had been at least 760 separate printed editions of the Book of Hours, 114 of them produced for England alone.'[363] This spread to the ordinary faithful meant 'All these people, then, high and low, aristocratic and plebeian, were using the same book'.[364]

Just because the Books were owned and even prayed with regularly, does not mean the faithful particularly understood what they were praying, never mind why. Other, less spiritual reasons could have included fashion, sentiment, superstition, and obligation, or even expectation in the form of peer pressure. To what extent the faithful could explain appropriately why they were praying in such a way indicate their apologetical capability. However, further research would be necessary to ascertain whether sources showing in any way this exist.

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[356] Duffy, *Hours*, 22-3.
[357] Quoted in ibid., 23.
[358] Ibid., 23.
[359] Ibid., 25.
[360] Ibid., 25 to 28.
[361] Ibid., 121.
[362] Ibid., 30.
[363] Ibid., 36.
[364] Ibid., 28.

The faithful were not ignorant before the Reformation, and seemingly they were at least somewhat spiritually engaged. They were catechised sufficiently to engage with liturgy and to use Scripture prayerfully – mainly the Psalms but not exclusively so; however, the reasoning and ability to explain the faith remained an intellectual exercise. The vibrant cross-class movement using the Book of the Hours was in many ways incapable of responding to the challenges of the coming Reformation. With no real preparation in apologetical terms, while one might have been perturbed at the new faith being foisted upon oneself, family, and community, one was unable to explain to oneself, family, and community, let alone antagonistic and sometimes violent authorities, the reasons for staying true to the Church.

Conclusion

The redevelopment of Justinian apologetics led to universities, elite theology, and intellectual debates that included some Petrine elements but did not reach ordinary faithful. Notable contributions included Aquinas and his significant apologetical writings, Abelard and his recognition that most people need faith to make sense before making a real commitment to it, and Peter the Venerable who emphasised words, reason, and love. In his mapping of Justinian Mediaeval apologetics, Dulles reveals his understanding of apologetics as elite and intellectual. But apologetics is a response. From this understanding, the difference that the development of Petrine apologetics could have made in history is explored, as well as how this could have been nurtured, to the benefit of individuals and society. While quodlibets were used at universities, outside there could have been a cascading of education and preparation enabling friendly rivalries between inns, guilds, etc. Such ideas are adaptable for today.

Looking more specifically but without detail that would be useful but is beyond the scope here, St Dominic responded to heresy with preaching and this could have spread as his approach was successful in many ways. However, the preparation element of his Order moved more into the new universities rather than developing apologetics amongst ordinary faithful. Such a possibility was one of the aims of the Fourth Lateran Council as it required education to be developed among the poor. However, with sometimes poor dissemination and the inertia of too many in the Church, this did not happen sufficiently and this was a lost opportunity. With hindsight, the close cooperation of Dominic and the Council may have led to a more Petrine apologetics growing. But it is clear that a call of Scripture or a Council is insufficient to enact change without the participation of many in the Church.

Lateran IV partly was a response to spiritual movements among the laity and the Protestant scholar Swanson reads particular Reformation themes into this. However, his view of the period before Luther et al. provides useful insight into the return of a version of the Two Ways code which was taught to the faithful and this was used at least sometimes as a framework of one's faith understanding in the annual Confessions required by Lateran IV. Duffy gives a particularly different insight into how the Book of the Hours became popular as it became economically accessible. Many faithful of all classes owned and at least some prayed these set prayers. However, the level of understanding and engagement taking place is not verifiable.

The good conciliar intentions were not converted into Petrine apologetical capability that could have transformed individuals and societies in many ways. The Reformation was on the horizon, caused at least partly by misunderstanding of the Church's teachings. Today, some claim the Church was wrong regarding the Cathars and others, even defending highly problematic beliefs. The need for a Petrine apologetical response is important for every generation.

Part 2d – The Modern Era

2d.1 – Reform Apologetics
2d.2 – Credibility
2d.3 – A Victorian Stepping-Stone to the 20th Century
2d.4 – Early 20th Century Apologetics

This part begins in the middle of the Reformation period because apologetics was now about responding to the new paradigm rather than the old one of responding to problems about Christendom. The apologetical focus was on how to deal with the – sometimes justifiable – points made about problems within what was now becoming distinctly Catholic.

The early responses we know about today are those that were clearly insufficient in the bigger picture. While individuals made their stand and were martyred or otherwise punished, it was not really until the end of the Council of Trent that a concerted effort was being made by the Church to deal with the issues, sometimes with reform and other times with rejection of the new ideas. However, as with Lateran IV, just because the Church proclaimed it centrally did not mean it was particularly implemented locally.

It was figures such as Archbishop of Milan Charles Borromeo, Jesuit founder Ignatius Loyola, and Oratorian founder Philip Neri who made significant changes but again these will be seen to be top-down but not establishing real apologetical development for the ordinary Christian. However, Borromeo can be seen to have developed a pastoral apologetics that was fruitful, in contrast to Edmund Campion's combative approach. Also, the interesting apologetical approach of Blaise Pascal cannot be passed by without comment. Credibility, a form od good, Christian manner, was becoming increasingly important.

The beginning of an apologetical turn can be found in John Henry Newman's writings, from the time when universal education was beginning to be pushed for, and Newman's intellectual apologetics presented Catholicism as a credible. It is hypothesised that apologetics began to take new forms, becoming a wider engagement than its elite traditions, because of the English-speaking world being almost entirely Protestant, thus placing Catholics directly in engagement that was challenging and sometimes asked questions.

And finally, still before the apologetical ressourcement of Vatican II, there was a brief flicker in the English-language sphere of a different kind of apologetics, one which genuinely reached out to all who would listen or read. A number of apologists from educated positions not only presented the faith and explained it to an increasingly sceptical public, but also did so in a way that reached others using different styles, thus encouraging others less educated to participate. Figures such as Frank Sheed, G. K. Chesterton, Fulton Sheen, and Ronald Knox, amongst a number of other, inspired many

in the twentieth century. This occurred during a time when the Church was struggling to decide upon how to move forwards in the increasingly changing world, in the time leading up to the Second Vatican Council, which is examined regarding apologetical nature and identity in Part 3.

2d.1 – Reform Apologetics

The experience of Italian Reform and English Reform was entirely different: one remained loyally Catholic to the Church with Rome at its head, and the other began with a new Anglo-Catholic leader, Henry, had a brief relapse into the Catholic Church under Mary, then became thoroughly Protestant through Elizabeth, not least because as a Catholic she was illegitimate, which would have meant another Mary, Queen of Scots, being on the throne. Nevertheless, while the Roman Church had strayed, it retained the fundamentals that called for a great reform. One reform figure, Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, was arguably apologetical. In contrast, a Jesuit who visited Charles a few days before embarking for England and martyrdom, Edmund Campion, issued a clear and unambiguous apologia into a highly hostile environment, throwing fuel on the strong-burning fire, but Borromeo's was more Petrine apologetics.

Charles Borromeo

Borromeo may be described as an apologist, but this is not common. He is omitted from Dulles's *History* and the online search 'Borromeo apologetics' offers little. The apologetics website 'Catholic Answers' – in an article by Matthew E. Bunson – describes him as 'A saint, reformer, cardinal, apologist, archbishop, and tireless pastor…'[365] but the 'apologist' part is left unexplained. Thus, it is necessary to draw an interpretation from Bunson's short biography and an early quote offers a useful lens:

> For me, Charles Borromeo is the classic expression of a real reform, that is to say, of a renewal that leads forward precisely because it teaches how to live the permanent values in a new way, bearing in mind the totality of the Christian faith and the totality of man . . . he was totally centered on Christ. (*The Ratzinger Report*, 38-39)[366]

An apologist is involved with change at some level. He 'teaches how to live the permanent values' with regard to 'the totality of the Christian faith', confirming Borromeo's role as apologetical to some extent, that is, the extent that was explanation.

One of the key, and justifiable, complaints about apologetics has been its scant attention to the third Petrine element, to engage in a Christian manner. The pastoral aspect has too often been overlooked in favour of the intellectual one, thus apologetics is regarded by most as defending the faith, using legal or military terms too freely, meaning good points are less effectively received.[367] Bunson continues in his introduction, offering Borromeo as a model for today:

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[365] Matthew E. Bunson, 'St. Charles Borromeo: Champion of Reform', *Catholic Answers*, 1st January 2008,
https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/champion-of-reform.
[366] Ibid.
[367] For example, H. W. Crocker III, *Triumph*, (Roseville CA: Prima Publishing, 2001).

> For Catholics laboring to renew the Church today in the face of a hostile culture, Borromeo stands as a champion of authentic renewal, as a gentle but determined saint, and as a powerful spokesman for the reinvigoration of the priesthood through zeal, commitment to the truth, and attracting solid, faithful seminarians.[368]

Thus, the Archbishop – a beneficiary of literal papal nepotism, albeit seemingly merited – was a firm but not abrasive teacher, leader, inspirer (etc.) who can also inspire apologists in their approach today as the Petrine definition widens the definition of apologetics – for all to prepare and thus respond regarding the faith in a Christian manner.

Having worked hard to reconvene and help drive the languishing Council of Trent to a conclusion, Borromeo then worked on the Roman Catechism before being appointed to Milan. Regarding disseminating the faith, he also worked on the 'Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, in order that the children might be carefully and systematically instructed. This work was really the beginning of what is now known as the Sunday school'.[369] Following the death of his uncle, he was part of the conclave that elected his close friend[370] to be Pius V. The new Pope and the Archbishop of the then largest diocese worked with great energy to push through the reforms of Trent, meaning a more thorough implementation than the Lateran IV reforms. Charles' reforms were widespread: liturgy, priesthood, education, instituting the first seminary, general morals, even church architecture, and more. He had the task of reforming the Humiliati, several of whom attempted to assassinate him, which led to suppression of the Order. His decisions were not merely imposed: he was alone amongst Milan's leadership to remain in the city during a plague. Leading by example, 'he opened the episcopal palace to the sick, nursed the victims with his own hands, gave the last rites, helped to bury the dead, and consoled the survivors. He also fiercely demanded that his priests follow his example.'[371] Of apologetics, he 'was active in preaching, resisting the inroads of Protestantism, and bringing back lapsed Catholics to the Church.'[372] An example of this regards his approach to Swiss parts of his diocese that were experiencing various problems:

> [H]e visited all the Catholic cantons, everywhere using his influence to remove abuses both among the clergy and laity, and to restore religious observance in monasteries and convents. He visited Altorf, Unterwalden, Lucerne, Saint Gall, Schwyz, Einsiedeln, where he said that he nowhere except at Loreto, experienced a greater religious feeling (10 September, 1570). Heresy had spread in many of these

[368] Bunson, 'Borromeo'.
[369] William Keogh, 'St. Charles Borromeo', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03619a.htm.
[370] Joseph Lataste, 'Pope St. Pius V', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12130a.htm.
[371] Bunson, 'Borromeo'.
[372] 'St. Charles Borromeo', *Catholic Exchange*, 4th November 2022, https://catholicexchange.com/st-charles-borromeo/.

> parts, and Charles sent to them experienced missionaries to win back those who had embraced it.[373]

His pastoral, rather than aggressive, approach to problematic doctrinal issues is clear in his educating – explaining, responding – those who had chosen a different path regarding faith. In another very problematic case, after dealing personally with the issues in the locality, '[i]t was his especial care to leave holy priests and good religious to guide the people.'[374] This again points to an apologetical approach by enabling an ongoing response to those who had erred, and helping sown seeds grow. And he was a reformer of his diocesan structure, giving purpose and position to his clergy, thus shape and intent – a kind of clerical subsidiarity, where his clergy were given responsibility and communicated with. As Ronald Knox describes,

> That is St. Charles' characteristic legacy to the Church: it was the influence of his example, in great measure, that moulded her organisation on the new model which Trent had decreed. The bishop has got to be the centre of everything in his diocese, and the clergy of the diocese are to be *his* clergy – a family of which he is to be the master. See how fond St. Charles was of synods: the whole of his comparatively short episcopate is a long record of the synods he gathered amongst his clergy. See how enthusiastic he is for the seminary idea; the bishop, henceforth, is not merely to ordain people, he is to know whom he is ordaining. And above all what was characteristic of St. Charles was the institute which he left behind him – a body of secular priests, putting themselves at the disposal of the bishop as absolutely as the religious puts himself at the disposal of his superior.[375]

Therefore, aiming for unity like in Ignatius of Antioch's calls to early dioceses, Borromeo righted the crumbling edifice of the pre-reform diocese: with explanation and education, such change is an apologetical response to a challenge. And not only drawing together the diocesan clergy, this also creates a structure for the now somewhat educated faithful to engage within and develop their ability to respond to others.

Therefore, the elite, well-educated, and intellectually-capable Borromeo valued education in children and sought to educate apologetically those straying from the faith. In a time of great reforms, he was a leader with a pastoral approach who showed that those prepared can apologetically engage in a Christian manner, and his developments pointed towards a universal preparation. Not generally considered an apologist, he was one in Petrine terms; but the extent he encouraged, as a pastor of souls, ordinary apologetics to take place is unclear without further research.

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[373] Keogh, 'Borromeo'.
[374] Ibid.
[375] Ronald Knox, *Captive Flames* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001), 125-6.

Four years before the 1584 death of Borromeo, Edmund Campion visited him for eight days on his way to England. Although they seemingly enjoyed one another's company, Campion's apologetical approach was fundamentally different to Borromeo's.

Campion was one of many who, after Jesuit formation, journeyed to England, not expecting to survive for long. England in the 1580s was deeply steeped in Reformation polemics with a particular antipathy towards Catholics; priests sent from the continent to minister to the few remaining 'Recusant' faithful were the main target for bounty hunters: priest-hunters, who were paid for information or capturing priests. Priests' holes were built into the homes of wealthy but secretive Catholic faithful, who developed networks to aid and nurture the faithful who persevered. The lack of apologetical preparation had meant that the faithful had succumbed to almost forced conversion, through high taxation, legal punishments, and persecution, or had to go into hiding. Martyrdoms were increasing and anyone regarded as aiding or hiding a priest could be executed.

Suspected as a Protestant with too many Catholic leanings, Campion had eventually reached Douay's seminary, then proceeded to Prague and Olomouc. Ordained in Prague, he answered the mission call to help wavering English faithful, thus respond to their weakening faith apologetically. He extended his aim to winning over Protestants also. But, having caused quite a stir, Campion was captured by a spy after a year in England. He was tortured on the rack in the Tower of London, found guilty of treason, dragged across the city to Tyburn, and then was hanged, drawn, and quartered.

Many martyrs died in such a way but Campion is especially remembered due to his powerful apologetic: his *Challenge to the Privy Council* (the royal advisors). His detractors named the brief but powerful text that circulated widely 'Campion's Brag': it included the word 'brag' twice but this really was mocking his attempt. His approach was blunt: he challenged – albeit very politely – Queen Elizabeth to listen attentively to his arguments, which he was confident would have her grant 'us oppressed more equity'.[376] His position was one who has 'taken upon me a special kind of warfare under the banner of obedience, and also resigned all my interest or possibility of wealth, honour, pleasure, and other worldly felicity'[377] for he clearly sought no worldly benefit[378] and so was claiming any charge of treason was missing the point. He sought to explain his position before the Privy Council, academics of Oxford and Cambridge, and lawyers, with the second being 'wherein I undertake to avow the faith of our Catholic Church by proofs innumerable—Scriptures, councils, Fathers, history, natural and moral reasons'.[379] His intention was a response, an explanation to the secular as well as religious positions of Protestant England: clearly apologetical, he nevertheless was very confident, even arrogant and inappropriate. He seems aware of this: 'I would be loath to speak anything

[376] Edmund Campion, *Campion's 'Brag'*, vii, https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/campions-brag-5297.
[377] Ibid., i.
[378] Ibid., ii-iv.
[379] Ibid., v.

that might sound of any insolent brag or challenge…'[380] but he then makes a strong challenge, lacking pastoral Christian manner:

> I know perfectly that no one Protestant, nor all the Protestants living, nor any sect of our adversaries (howsoever they face men down in pulpits, and overrule us in their kingdom of grammarians and unlearned ears) can maintain their doctrine in disputation. I am to sue most humbly and instantly for combat with all and every of them, and the most principal that may be found: protesting that in this trial the better furnished they come, the better welcome they shall be.[381]

His greatest rhetorical statement – thus poorest pastorally – is the supremely confident assertion that

> Moreover I doubt not but you, her Highness' Council, being of such wisdom and discreet in cases most important, when you shall have heard these questions of religion opened faithfully, which many times by our adversaries are huddled up and confounded, will see upon what substantial grounds our Catholic Faith is builded, how feeble that side is which by sway of the time prevaileth against us, and so at last for your own souls, and for many thousand souls that depend upon your government, will discountenance error when it is bewrayed [revealed], and hearken to those who would spend the best blood in their bodies for your salvation.[382]

Perhaps Campion foresaw this as converting readers, and even the addressees; or maybe it was really to strengthen embattled and wavering Catholic faithful. But the Protestants saw Campion as no more than an agitator. His confidence perhaps even surpassed Tertullian's; he had received a vision in Prague that he would be martyred and he may have understood that he was inexorably journeying towards this fate.

[380] Ibid., vi.
[381] Ibid.
[382] Ibid., viii.

2d.2 – Credibility

While Borromeo reformed from within, Campion battled with those beyond – two different apologetical images. Borromeo was pastoral and reforming, bringing a diocese with strong examples of the problems leading to the Reformation. Campion was a crusader without fear, seeking to convert all as he had done. But while Campion is regarded as a great apologist of the Reformation, it was Borromeo who encapsulated the Petrine call more than most. Ratzinger explains:

> Charles could convince others because he himself was a man of conviction. He was able to exist with his certitudes amid the contradictions of his time because he lived them. And he could live them because he was a Christian in the deepest sense of the word; in other words, he was totally centered on Christ. What truly counts is to reestablish this all-embracing relation to Christ. No one can be convinced of this all-embracing relationship to Christ through argumentation alone. One can live it, however, and thereby make it credible to others and invite others to share it. (*The Ratzinger Report*, 39)[383]

As the future Pope Benedict XVI points out, the apologist – one who 'could convince others' – needs to present the other with far more than clever arguments, especially ones intended to 'defeat' the other. Rather, the apologist really needs to be 'credible to others'.

The apologist is a representative of the faith, and thus needs to be credible. The message he gives must also be credible. The Catholic faith in English-speaking nations with the development of the modern era and the alternative narratives in modernism was presented in Protestant societies as non-credible, such as through the Black Legend narrative, etc. To counter this, the apologist and the faith had to be perceived as credible. The Petrine elements more than ever needed to include a consistent and credible manner, which means that an aggressive or overpowering use of reason, no matter how reasoned and reasonable, was now less effective. Rather, seeds needed to be sown and the recipient have time to ponder, perhaps pray.

Finding subjective credibility of the faith was an outcome of a particularly interesting and important apologetic offered by a 17th century figure who himself rejected the importance of reason for believing as he focused on faith as a gift from God.[384] This focus – bordering on fideism – is arguably indicative of Protestant ideas that also include the idea of wretchedness of the person which Blaise Pascal wrote about. He wrote an extensive number of notes that were posthumously gathered into his *Pensées*, the most memorable one being known as 'Pascal's Wager'.

This argument for believing in God[385] particularly speaks to faithful who are wavering or non-faithful who are pondering. It is no rational argument, but rather personalistic – it

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[383] Bunson, 'Borromeo'.
[384] 'Blaise Pascal', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, revised 22nd June 2015, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pascal/.
[385] Peter J. Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Catholic Apologetics* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 91-2; it is assumed this is Kreeft's content as it is on his website also: Peter Kreeft, 'Twenty

calls to the person who is sure neither of God nor of nothing. It calls such a person to experience a faithful relationship with God as it should be, albeit without definitively believing. This is a subjective argument for faith: simply by pretending to be faithful, going through the motions of faith with an open heart, one will find God. Pascal's rationale – 'I should be much more afraid of being mistaken and then finding out that Christianity is true than of being mistaken in believing it to be true.'[386] – can be laid out more clearly as four possibilities.

1. I believe in God; God exists: a good ending.
2. I believe in God; God does not exist: it does not matter.
3. I don't believe in God; God exists: a terrible ending.
4. I don't believe in God; God does not exist: it does not matter.

In blunt terms, this is a poor reason to believe in God – the basest reason for being a Christian is fear but it is a foundational reason: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'.[387] It is perhaps even prior to the Two Ways code – I fear doing wrong; what is wrong? Today, in postmodernity, this can be effective: it is a reason for faith that completely bypasses rational argument with any pretence at objectivity, and thus appeals entirely to the subjective experience of the individual. This was an important apologetic at the beginning of the modern era.

Peter Kreeft reframes Pascal's seemingly poor purpose: 'The Wager can seem offensively venal and purely selfish. But it can be reformulated to appeal to a higher moral motive: If there is a God of infinite goodness, and he justly deserves my allegiance and faith, I risk doing the greatest injustice by not acknowledging him.'[388] Pascal was writing at a time when the cosmological arguments were standing on relatively newly shaken ground (Copernicus, Galileo) and Pascal looked inwards:[389] his proof-that-is-not-a-proof is thus personal (even subjective?). While this seems not to be apologetically rational, Kreeft notes that it is based on Jesus' words:

> Pascal's most famous idea, the 'wager,' is merely an unpacking of one of Jesus' sayings, the most practical sentence any man ever spoke about economics, the science of profit and loss: 'What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?' (Mark 8:36 DRA).[390]

For this change in approach, Kreeft recognises Pascal as the 'first postmedieval apologist',[391] which can be also projected into the first postmodernist apologist. Both

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Arguments God's Existence', *Peter Kreeft*, https://www.peterkreeft.com/topics-more/20_arguments-gods-existence.htm#20.

[386] Peter Kreeft, *Christianity for Modern Pagans* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 292.

[387] Prov 9:10.

[388] Kreeft, *Modern Pagans*, 12.

[389] Peter Kreeft, 'Blaise Pascal', in *The New Apologetics*, ed. Matthew Nelson (Park Ridge IL: Word on Fire Institute, 2022), ch15, epub.

[390] Ibid.

[391] Kreeft, *Modern Pagans*, 16.

Charles Borromeo and Edmund Campion were important figures apologetically in diametrically opposite ways in apologetical terms. One captured the Petrine call in his response to the need for reform while the other took up the pen like a sword and did battle gloriously briefly, as a Justinian apologist. But in theo-philosophical terms, Pascal is indeed the first modern apologist, but apologetics needs to be so much more than theology done in philosophical terms. While the faith had credibility in Catholic societies and apologetics remained Justinian, Catholics were not credible in the hostile environment of Protestant English-speaking societies. The Church in much of Europe increasingly became closed in on itself, justified by intellectual, rational thinking. English-speaking Catholics needed to develop credibility in the minds of potential recipients and this took time: 'Until the middle of the nineteenth century most English Catholic apologists were content to leave to Protestants and Anglicans the general task of establishing Christian credibility and to confine their efforts to rebutting objections to Roman Catholicism.'[392] Although still Justinian in many ways, the Petrine elements were developing.

[392] Dulles, *History*, 244.

2d.3 – A Victorian Stepping-Stone to the 20th Century

John Henry Newman converted from a particularly Presbyterian version of Anglicanism, through the High Anglican – or Anglo-Catholic – Oxford Movement, to Catholicism in 1845. In the middle of his residency at Maryvale, Birmingham (1846-8), he was ordained priest in Rome.[393] He was the first major apologist convert from the Church of England and his writings are significant for apologetics of the time. However, as an intellectual, he wrote for those who could access elite education.

Dulles unsurprisingly gives several pages in *History* to describing Newman's life and works. His first Catholic apologia was *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, where he explains his conversion and provides a clear and detailed exposition of how Christianity developed: a comprehensive history and comparison to other religions, early evidence of the faith, and answers to the objections to Protestants against Catholic teachings. His environment was that although the Catholic Church in England had been legalised,[394] this was against the wishes initially of the Prime Minister and Home Secretary, and had significant opposition throughout the land including from King George IV. Only in 1850 was the Catholic Church legally allowed a hierarchy of bishops, which was regarded as 'papal aggression' by some.[395] Although Newman, as Dulles points out, ultimately recognised 'only two thoroughly consistent religious attitudes'[396] – Catholic or atheist – he also 'Recognis[ed] the the subjective element in all religious inquiry' which means, for conversion, the recipient must receive the message (seed), accept it as credible, and let it grow. To convince the proud and free Protestant Englishman was no simple task and Newman's works gave credibility to the Catholic message. To enable this, Newman went beyond presenting a basic apologia of syllogisms or basic facts: 'The logic here involved is not simply an affair of the mind, but a whole set of tastes and attitudes, a way of approaching questions that, if pursued to its end, will lead one to embrace the fullness of revealed truth or alternatively to reject God altogether.'[397] Overall, the apologia Newman constructs shows abundantly that the Catholic option is the correct one, but it is not an apologia that translates with any ease to ordinary apologetics, supporting the ordinary Catholic faced with a neighbour's or workmate's ire, but it gave credibility to the Catholic message and prepared the way for later apologetics. Also, being suited to preparation for developing a Catholic culture of thinking, it has clear catechetical value.

In the Preface[398] to the 1864 *Apologia pro vita sua*, Newman responded to Charles Kingsley, an Anglican priest and Christian socialist, who had interpreted Newman as

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[393] His bedroom at Maryvale, beside the chapel, had a window in his closet; he prayed there often on a prie-dieu, looking at the tabernacle.
[394] Catholic Relief Act of 1829, or Catholic Emancipation Act.
[395] Walter Ralls, 'The Papal Aggression of 1850: A Study in Victorian Anti-Catholicism', *Church History*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (June 1974), https://www.jstor.org/stable/3163955?seq=1.
[396] Dulles, *History*, 247.
[397] Ibid., referencing Note 2 of John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903), Note 2, https://www.newmanreader.org/works/grammar/notes.html#note2.
[398] John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), preface, https://www.newmanreader.org/works/apologia65/.

claiming Catholic clergy could avoid speaking truth. The response was expanded into his lengthy autobiography, published regularly in parts. Of particular interest, Newman differentiates between actual and sentimental faith: 'From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion: I know no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery.'[399] His faith is built upon a rational understanding that is underpinned fundamentally by the ability to explain it, thus he can explain it to others and function as an apologist. Alternatively, it is not proper faith in God in any true sense if it is only sentiment, for it is self-serving and anthropocentric. There is a significant amount that can and should be developed in one's faith through understanding to avoid a make-your-own-faith approach.

Most apologetical is *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of* Assent (1870), which explores how people form personal convictions about their beliefs. It distinguishes between the theological formulations of academia and the conviction of the believer in statements of faith. In trying to capture Newman's position on the tension between faith and understanding, Dulles reports: 'Newman never believed that it was possible to amass a set of philosophical or historical arguments that would carry the inquirer ineluctably to the conclusion, "I must become a Christian (or a Catholic)."'[400] This again shows the subjective dimension of faith, meaning it must be credible, and thus shown to be credible by the apologist including being credible in manner.

Apologetics was changing at this time, developing a more personal approach – autobiography as apologia! – to presenting the explanations and responses, and this continued in the 20th century. Dulles lauds Newman's contribution to apologetics as developed from Justin's intellectual-philosophical-legalist turn:

> With his remarkable combination of gifts—historical learning, religious piety, psychological discernment, and literary power—Newman unquestionably ranks with Augustine, Pascal, and a few others, among the finest apologists of all time. His apologetic, which reflects his own spiritual pilgrimage, offers endless matter for study and reflection. Not content with subjective desires and presumptions, he candidly faces the objective data in their full complexity and constructs a vast and many-dimensioned synthesis. Avoiding the rationalism, naive biblicism, and philosophical modishness of many apologists of his day, he constructed a work of enduring value.[401]

However, Dulles also recognises a more personalist and developed approach to apologetics:

> Newman felt that this purely objective and scientific approach would be incapable of bringing true religious conviction. In his 'Letter to the Duke of Norfolk' he wrote: 'For myself, I would simply confess that no doctrine of the Church can be rigorously

[399] Ibid., ch2.
[400] Dulles, *History*, 246.
[401] Ibid., 250.

> proved by historical evidence: but at the same time that no doctrine can simply be disproved by it.' For this reason, he avoided making his argument turn on the miraculous occurrences narrated in Scripture, though he was far from denying that miracles had occurred.[402]

The tension between these two quotations is a sign of the beginnings of what can be perceived as an apologetical turn. Newman was appreciative that apologetics cannot be limited to a list of facts/statements/reasons for Catholicism as the true path to God but that it needs to develop a wide range of apologetical content presentable by the apologist depending upon the apologetical context – the question or challenge, and the person of the recipient. If the response does not sow seeds – including removing obstacles to having faith or causing further understanding to be sought, for the recipient or another – then the apologetical opportunity is fruitless.

Newman's contributions were important for understanding the process of intellectual conversion, and thus apologetics. While writing at an intellectual level, he explored how people believe, which is at the core of supporting non-faithful in a journey to finding and growing in faith. This theme is picked up in the next century, not only in the earlier part as seen in the next chapter but also in some ways pre-empting what formed as fundamental apologetics after Vatican II.[403] Regarding the elite and the ordinary, an interesting quotation usually attributed to Newman[404] calls the intellectual to descend from the lofty spires:

> I sought to hear the voice of God
> And climbed the topmost steeple,
> But God declared: "Go down again–
> I dwell among the people."

This reminder of the Petrine call as being to all Christians negates the Victorian norm of valuing high culture. It was necessary for Newman and others to establish Catholicism as credible after centuries of anti-Rome polemic. By establishing Catholicism as credible, it was possible to present then the faith to ordinary people in wider circles and more situations. His work helped lay the foundations for what may be regarded a limited Petrine apologetics turn in the next century.

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[402] Ibid., 246-7.
[403] Juan Luis Lorda, 'The influence of John Henry Newman', *Omnes*, 12th October 2019, https://omnesmag.com/en/resources/arguments/theology-xx-century/the-influence-of-john-henry-newman/.
[404] It is declared apocryphal in Elizabeth Scalia, 'Philip Neri, John Henry Newman, and the Idea of an Oratory', *Word on Fire*, 24th May 2018, https://www.wordonfire.org/articles/fellows/philip-neri-john-henry-newman-and-the-idea-of-an-oratory/.

Early 20th Century Apologetics

As Catholic apologetics was being established as credible in some ways in the English-speaking world, the Church in Catholic Europe remained the establishment Church as it was pre-Reformation, meaning apologetics looked inward, and being Justinian it did not seek to prepare the ordinary faithful to respond to questions and challenges from others in connection with evangelisation or with personal growth but to maintain the status quo.

> From the sixteenth century to the nineteenth [apologetics] practically devoured theology. Not only did theologians write books on apologetics; they tended to give an apologetical slant to almost every theological treatise, as though the reasonable person unfailingly could be persuaded to accept what was being taught.[405]

Modernism with its novel narratives and approaches was challenging the established and traditional thinking in Europe in particular. Traditional apologists sought ways to protect the inward-looking Church which meant using Justinian approaches while others sought new ways to approach faith. As always, while such apologetical approaches should be acknowledged for their merits, the fundamental element of Christian manner is often weak, and the universal aspect is missing. Increasing papal recognition that it was necessary to cooperate with the world outside led to Pius XII opening up the Church to dealing with the world, and he understood that apologetics had to be neither bent to accommodate others nor demand them to be Catholic or reject the message.

By this time, apologetics had been evolving in the English-speaking world. Apologists appeared, relatively independently, and from different situations and backgrounds, with different reasons for developing and presenting apologetics. The purpose was to strengthen the faithful and deal with challenges to the faith – to refute them but also to draw them towards the faith. Four important apologists – G. K. Chesterton, Frank Sheed, Ronald Knox, and Fulton Sheen – are considered here, with each offering something different: from soapbox to television studio, refuting famous names inimical to the Church or passers-by who heckled, to newspaper articles or pastoral homilies, and their many publications, this movement of apologetics reached out to all the laity in accessible ways for the first time since the earliest Church.

The new approaches and why they came about are considered in this chapter.

New Approaches

Catholic apologetics by the 19th century had become 'a dogmatic science, a purely intellectual work'.[406] It was closed off from outside engagement and had become an intellectual exercise that was used practically as a catechetical means of instruction. The

[405] Avery Dulles, 'Preface', 7, in Mark Brumley, *How Not to Share Your Faith* (San Diego: Catholic Answers, 2002).
[406] Jim Blackburn, 'The Twentieth-Century Apologetical Rollercoaster', *Catholic Answers,* 1st September 2013, https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/the-twentieth-century-apologetical-rollercoaster.

International Theological Commission, quoted by Jim Blackburn,[407] describes this time thus:

> Catholic theology reacted defensively against the challenge of Enlightenment thinking. It gave priority to apologetics rather than to the sapiential dimension of faith, it separated too much the natural order of reason and the supernatural order of faith, and it gave great importance to 'natural theology' and too little to the *intellectus fidei* as an understanding of the mysteries of the Faith. Catholic theology was thus left damaged in various respects by its own strategy in this encounter.[408]

Regarding direction, Blackburn quotes Josef Ratzinger: 'Was the intellectual position of "anti-Modernism"—the old policy of exclusiveness, condemnation and defense leading to an almost neurotic denial of all that was new—to be continued? (*Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, 44)'[409]

The modernist Maurice Blondel sought a change in apologetics, pointing out that 'science is incompetent, and metaphysics, at least in its traditional form, is inefficacious when we are trying to bring back the men of our time to Christianity'.[410] Although Blackburn slightly misquotes him, he concisely puts across Blondel's argument: 'He realized that, for apologetics to be successful, more than rational argument was necessary: the dynamics of humanity had to be considered. His proposal was for an *intrinsic* rather than an *extrinsic* approach to apologetics, a "method of immanence."'[411] This was a development of what Newman realised and was growing in the English-speaking sphere.

As too often the case regarding apologetics, and inconsistent with Peter's practical intentions, Blondel was swinging intellectually from one extreme to another, without engaging with the faithful in the middle. His intention to de-philosophise apologetics would make it more accessible but also make it vulnerable to problematic intellectual arguments over time. His intended substitute was problematic – an immanence that was opposed by Pope Pius X and a Thomist resurgence that remained mostly in the intellectual sphere. Again, the debate missed the point of apologetics in Petrine terms: to be ready to explain the faith in a Christian manner when questioned or challenged; meanwhile, unprepared faithful were being left open to many other narratives.

Decades later, Pius XII recognised the validity, and need, for providing apologetical content for the faithful because of the self-propagating erroneous doctrines outside Christianity:

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[407] Blackburn, 'Rollercoaster'.
[408] International Theological Commission, 'Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria', *The Holy See*, 2011, 70, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_doc_20111129_teologia-oggi_en.html.
[409] In Blackburn, 'Rollercoaster'.
[410] Maurice Blondel, *The Letter on Apologetics, and History and Dogma* (London: Harvill Press, 1964), 127, https://archive.org/details/letteronapologet0000blon/page/158/mode/2up.
[411] Blackburn, 'Rollercoaster'.

> If anyone examines the state of affairs outside the Christian fold, he will easily discover the principle trends that not a few learned men are following. Some imprudently and indiscreetly hold that evolution, which has not been fully proved even in the domain of natural sciences, explains the origin of all things, and audaciously support the monistic and pantheistic opinion that the world is in continual evolution. Communists gladly subscribe to this opinion so that, when the souls of men have been deprived of every idea of a personal God, they may the more efficaciously defend and propagate their dialectical materialism.[412]

Clearly a new approach was necessary as the problematic fruits of Blondel's immanentism was not the answer. Similar approaches, seeking to be rid of disagreements on the faith – glossing over differences by claiming a higher motive – and diluting understanding of the faith in the guise of a type of love, are condemned:

> Another danger is perceived which is all the more serious because it is more concealed beneath the mask of virtue. There are many who, deploring disagreement among men and intellectual confusion, through an imprudent zeal for souls, are urged by a great and ardent desire to do away with the barrier that divides good and honest men; these advocate an 'eirenism' according to which, by setting aside the questions which divide men, they aim not only at joining forces to repel the attacks of atheism, but also at reconciling things opposed to one another in the field of dogma.[413]

This 'eirenism' is also rejected in *Humani Generis* (HG) 12 as blocking the true brotherhood in God's creation, in favour of a worldly brotherhood that does not need him; this remains apt today. In HG 16, Pius describes the dismantling of Church teachings as 'dogmatic relativism', being the rejecting or concealing of the Catholic understanding of God, Christ, Church, and man so as to render the faith easier to accept for those with a priori thoughts and feelings. This was the development from earlier trends weakening how the faith was presented as part of apologetics,[414] which is a fruit of trying to make Justinian apologetics more accessible: dilution instead of reframing presentation. As with Newman's condemnation of faith with 'sentiment', it is superficial, the faith is misrepresented, and the seeds sown will not grow to be fruitful (cf. Mt 13). Pius explains why: the Church's teachings are 'replaced by conjectural notions and by some formless and unstable tenets of a new philosophy, tenets which, like the flowers of the field, are in existence today and die tomorrow; this is supreme imprudence and something that would make dogma itself a reed shaken by the wind.'[415]

Pius presents the middle ground by rejecting the old ways and laying a foundation for a new way:

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[412] Pius XII, 'Humani Generis' (HG), *The Holy See*, 12th August 1950, 5, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_12081950_humani-generis.html.
[413] HG 11.
[414] Avery Dulles, 'Preface', 7.
[415] HG 17.

> And as in former times some questioned whether the traditional apologetics of the Church did not constitute an obstacle rather than a help to the winning of souls for Christ, so today some are presumptive enough to question seriously whether theology and theological methods, such as with the approval of ecclesiastical authority are found in our schools, should not only be perfected, but also completely reformed, in order to promote the more efficacious propagation of the kingdom of Christ everywhere throughout the world among men of every culture and religious opinion.[416]

Pius also encouraged the faithful to engage with the sciences and worldly themes while being faithful to the developed Church teachings, as confirmed by the Second Vatican Council.[417] However, preparing the ordinary faithful was not clearly dealt with by the Church hierarchy until Vatican II.

Meanwhile, in the English-speaking world, there had sprung up organically a number of apologists – some clergy, some lay – who sought to develop the understanding of both faithful and others, speaking up and speaking out in written word and verbally. This environment saw Catholics often engage with others outside the faith, and with the world increasingly changing, it was a time ready for apologists to prepare the faithful for engaging with the world, to be able to respond to others in a Christian manner.

Apologetics is more effective and engaging when it answers 'Why believe?', especially in a world of competing narratives, rather than being confined only to co-operating with catechetics, which answers 'What do I believe and how do I do it?', and the credible apologist is more attracting:

> From the time of the Reformation, the Enlightenment, modernism, and various forms of secularization had begun taking hold in Western culture, and religious faith was increasingly gained not as a response to the rational arguments of apologists but to the simple testimony of the lives of devout believers.[418]

This is a more organic apologetics: rather than instructing or listing reasons why to believe, or why the Church should be followed, etc., made simple for general catechetical purposes, apologists who could explain the faith by sharing and recounting were more engaging. In a society that was increasingly varied and changing[419] there was a proliferation of ideas, alternative ways of thinking, changes in movements and fashions, etc. For the faithful, the key beliefs of the faith were now competing with calls coming from alternative possibilities, peer pressure, desires, temptations, etc, that were alien to the experiences of mediaeval Christians, and to quite an extent those who were hidden under the umbrella of the Catholic protection of not engaging with others. It is possible

[416] HG 11.
[417] HG 36 and GS 62.
[418] Blackburn, 'Rollercoaster'.
[419] The Industrial Revolution in particular lead to many working alongside people from other origins, universal education meaning children mixing more, a developing economy and specialisation of shops, the beginning of disposable income for many, etc.

that not since before Justin was the faithful seeking to be prepared to this extent and apologists were helping them develop their faith understanding.

Four in particular developed relatively independently and are still recognised for their contributions: the lay Englishman Chesterton, the lay Australian Sheed who came to England then to America, Father Knox, and Archbishop Sheen in America. The first three were converts from Protestantism at least in their upbringing, all were intelligent but could engage with others of different educational levels, and all presented the faith in both print and verbally in effective ways.

G. K. Chesterton – a man of paradox

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was a man of paradox: in his writing style, his approach, his manner, and how his opponents discovered that they really had not thought through their positions. He examined life from a position of faith, in a journey that led to conversion to Catholicism, but he did not hold back in his 'defence of the faith'[420] – 'though the word *apologetics* means literally "defense," Chesterton was never defensive. As one commentator put it, he "wrestled the initiative from the skeptics and presented the historic faith upon a note of triumphant challenge."'[421] His Father Brown detective stories reveal his approach: a small, intelligent man who perceives things differently, noticing that which others do not, pointing out the truth. Chesterton was certainly not small but he liked to think of himself so, challenging the preconceptions of the mistaken, particularly in moral or faith matters.

Chesterton was no standard apologist. He disliked apologetics, even distancing himself from the field: 'I never read a line of Christian apologetics. I read as little as I can of them now.'[422] While conceivably problematic – one must steep oneself in one's field before presenting one's own developed ideas – Wittgenstein rejected reading philosophy and developed original ideas.[423] And it was the Justinian development of apologetics that he was identifying.

The novel approach of Chesterton to apologetics – at a time when Christianity was increasingly unpopular – was fresh and refreshing. It was organic, developing naturally, rather than in a way constructed by Justinian apologetics. Dale Ahlquist, president and co-founder of the American Chesterton Society, captures his approach:

> In the opening years of the twentieth century, nothing could have been considered less fashionable than defending Christianity, and the unlikeliest place to defend it

[420] Pope Pius XI described Chesterton, when he died in 1936, as a Defender of the Faith: Dale Ahlquist, 'Chesterton as Apologist', *The Society of G. K. Chesterton*, accessed 27th April 2023, https://www.chesterton.org/apologetics/. This was the first time for over 400 years that a pope had named a larger-than-life Englishman such, the previous one fatefully having been Henry VIII.
[421] John Warwick Montgomery, 'The Un-Apologist', *Christian History*, Issue #75 2002, https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/chesterton-un-apologist.
[422] G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Rockville MD: Serenity Publishers, 2009), 73.
[423] John Warwick Montgomery, 'Chesterton the Apologist', *Global Journal of Classical Theology*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2003), https://www.bethinking.org/apologetics/chesterton-the-apologist.

> would have been in the daily newspapers. But G.K. Chesterton (1874–1936) rose to fame as a London journalist by doing just that. He provided a striking contrast to the surrounding skeptics and critics, the materialists and the modernists, the intellectuals with their sneering cynicism about faith. He answered them with a good-natured nettling of their doubt, adeptly dismantling their arguments, and showing them—and everybody else who happened to be reading—that faith is fundamental, not just for religion but for everything else.[424]

Was Chesterton's apologetics Petrine – preparation, response, in a Christian manner? He certainly engaged, and in more popular media. But was his preparation of an intellectual interrogation of the faith, and a fairly gruff approach nearer or further away from Peter' call? Ahlquist uses a Chestertonian image from the OT – a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other: the sword bats away one's enemies and the trowel builds, constructs, develops, in this case 'building a case for the faith that is appealing and welcoming, eye-opening and arm-opening'.[425] His content is classical apologetics: for Ahlquist,[426] *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man* are Christian apologetics, appealing to both Catholic and Protestant, while others – *The Catholic Church and Conversion*, *Where All Roads Lead*, *The Thing: Why I Am a Catholic* – are Catholic apologetics, and Chesterton even 'uses St. Thomas in a surprising way: to refute Martin Luther'.[427]

However, his style does not appeal to all. Especially today, Chesterton can seem abrupt, even overly forward, and possibly rude. But one should recognise that this manner was contemporarily normal: post-Victorian-era England expected one to 'stand his ground' with 'a stiff upper lip' around the time of the Great War, as Christianity was regarded as being in a battle against antithetical secular movements. This is not to excuse a style inconsistent with more pastoral apologetics but the Christian was expected to 'stand up for his beliefs'. Ahlquist's sword and trowel image recalls also that in apologetics 'Loving your enemy means not defeating him but getting him to come over to your side.'[428] A balance was necessary – to stand firm and gain respect for your position while softening one's blows enough so as not to turn one's opponent away.

That Chesterton's apologetics was not a development of past apologetics but a response to the need for his faith to be defended, and explained to others so they could stand against secular ideas, points to a new approach being made possible by developments in education and communication that was not necessarily founded on old content and ways: the perception of a response being needed as Christianity was increasingly openly criticised, and responding according to one's capability and resources. This new approach was to develop significantly in the 20th century and beyond.

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[424] Dale Ahlquist, 'G. K. Chesterton', in *The New Apologetics*, ed. Matthew Nelson (Park Ridge IL: Word on Fire Institute, 2022), ch16, epub.
[425] Ibid.
[426] Ibid.
[427] Ibid.
[428] Ibid.

Frank Sheed – in print and on a soapbox

An Australian who developed his apologetics in Britain and moved on to America, Sheed's

> genius was to employ simplicity as a gateway to crystalline clarity. He disdained jargon and arcane philosophical references that do nothing to help the questioning reader. Instead, he used plain English to reveal to the ordinary man and woman the richness of Catholicism.[429]

Kreeft said of him: 'Frank Sheed is the Catholic C. S. Lewis. He simply cannot write a bad or boring book.'[430] But he did far more than write:

> Sheed could easily be seen as the grandfather of modern apologetics. He brought a Protestant sensibility to his new faith — Sheed had a Catholic mother and a Protestant father but found his way into his mother's faith — by standing on a soapbox in Hyde Park in London to explain Catholicism to passersby.
> When is the last time anyone saw a Catholic preaching on a street corner?[431]

Street-preaching is generally regarded as a Protestant, especially Evangelical activity, and it is certainly not a popular option for proclaiming the Gospel. But when combined with apologetics, engaging with any others who choose to dialogue, it can be very effective when one is an ambassador for Christ and not an argumentative cliché. It takes practised skill, which Sheed had according to a primary source:

> He worked on hecklers and skeptics and scoffers the way a chiropractor works on a bad back — probing, searching for the tensed-up muscle, finding it, and going to work on it with precision. He massaged the minds of his audiences, breaking down hardened prejudices against Catholicism, kneading the 'God does not exist!' arguments until they crumbled, and showing atheists the folly of their denials. He made countless converts on the stump.[432]

This highlights the responsive nature of apologetics: it is not about learning particular arguments by rote and presenting them; rather, apologetics needs to be reactive, and also sensitive to the issues of the other, if the other is to be reached and seeds sown.

He emphasises the importance of prayer for our understanding of God. While we can develop our theological knowledge so far with human reason, this is limited unless we engage with God: as Lewis reports, '"I can only state the plain fact that without prayer

[429] Charles Lewis, 'The Writings of Frank Sheed: Here Comes Theology for Everyone', *National Catholic Register*, 1st August 2020, https://www.ncregister.com/features/the-writings-of-frank-sheed-here-comes-theology-for-everyone.
[430] In ibid.
[431] Ibid.
[432] As reported to the well-known apologist Patrick Madrid, in: ibid.

there will be precious little understanding," Sheed writes. "Our minds cannot take God's inner life by storm; we shall see as much as he gives us light to see."'[433]

Sheed writes about the most theologically challenging concepts with a simplicity. His explanation of the Trinity in *Theology and Sanity*[434] is particularly accessible, without sacrificing meaning or simplifying the content into, for example, modalism. The version in his *Theology for Beginners*[435] is recommended for its clarity. He writes without pretension or intellectually-demanding language, yet he is not simplistic or patronising. He draws the reader into areas not normally accessible for non-specialists, or at least the well-educated, meaning they are ideal for catechesis, interested non-Catholics, or particularly apologetical preparation.

He was unafraid to relate to others' possible mistakes. One anecdote displays several important points about apologetics:

> So there's one reason his writing probably resonated with me. He could present the spectrum of Catholic belief along lines that were accessible to people who knew Scripture but also knew mostly caricatures of the Catholic Church. Some of these latter were off base, but some were all too close to the truth. I laughed out loud at his anecdote of attempting to deflect hecklers' accusations that Catholics neglect the Bible. When he cockily told them Pius XI had in fact attached an indulgence to fifteen minutes of Scripture reading, they came right back at him: 'Indulgences are not in Scripture!' they said.[436]

First, cockiness is inappropriate, no matter how tempting even in a challenging debate: here it is a useful illustration of 'Pride cometh before a fall'! Second, answering accurately is necessary: the Pope encouraging Catholics to read the Bible does not refute the claim that 'Catholics neglect the Bible'. And third, 'neglect[ing] the Bible' can mean many things – not enough reading or study, being guided by non-Bible sources, etc. – so it is necessary to reframe the point to establish first that the Bible is not the sole arbiter of what is Christian.[437] The aim is to sow seeds but Sheed shows it is very possible to make mistakes.

Preparation is necessary – learn both content and how to dialogue in a Christian manner. A potential apologist may already be skilled in some ways. Sheed disembarked in London with confidence in dialogue, good intelligence, and some Catholic understanding, but soon his early experiences with the Catholic Evidence Guild – a group of Catholics who street-evangelised and similar, who trained those interested in

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[433] Ibid.
[434] Frank Sheed, *Theology and Sanity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 88-115.
[435] Frank Sheed, *Theology for Beginners* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017), ch4-5, epub.
[436] Carl E. Olson, 'The Evangelistic Brilliance of Frank Sheed', *The Catholic World Report*, 9th February 2014,
https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2014/02/09/the-evangelistic-brilliance-of-frank-sheed/.
[437] Before the Bible, there were oral traditions and the Bible includes some but not all of these. Sola scriptura means those other traditions suddenly became highly problematic, but an exploration of when this occurred is useful – was it the actual writing, using the texts in liturgies, or one of the several times the Church proclaimed the canon?

participating – changed his direction in life. The Guild's activities later spread to America, particularly through a young priest who trained under Sheed in London and then developed it in the American Mid-West, some of which is recounted in a fascinating article[438] showing how apologetics can help struggling faithful and remove from others obstacles to having faith.

In a particularly valuable 1957 presentation to the Second World Congress for the Lay Apostolate in Rome,[439] Sheed shows that a weak understanding of the Trinity, especially regarding Christ's death, means most Christians cannot explain why their faith is not in three Gods or a two-personed Christ. While theological expertise is not expectable of all faithful, it is problematic 'if he cannot talk of [the Church's dogmas] intelligently, conveying enough of their meaning and their importance at least to arouse the other man's interest, and possibly make him willing to go to a priest for full instructions.'[440] Sheed clearly values preparation as necessary, and expects all faithful to be able to explain basic tenets of the faith. This is achievable through good education, and reasonable considering what children are expected to learn in other subjects.

Sheed identifies the 'intellectual/elite' problem why Catholics lack such apologetical understanding: 'We are apt, we of the laity, to console ourselves with the assurance that theology is for the clergy, and that we do our duty by setting a good example.'[441] This confirms the Justinian development of clerical apologetics by Augustine's time, which lack the universal aspect of the Petrine call. Sheed identifies the problematic fruit of apologetics being elite, shedding more light on the matter Celsus complained about, albeit from a different perspective:[442]

> It is of enormous value that we should [set a good example], but by itself it is not sufficient. Unbelievers are frequently impressed by the goodness and kindness and unselfishness of some Catholic who has come their way — impressed to the point where they wonder if his excellence may be due to something in his religion. So they ask him to explain his religion to them. If he answers intelligently and winningly then the result is all good, the episode may end with the unbeliever receiving instruction from a priest. But if he talks nonsense, then the unbeliever can but depart, as sure as ever of that one Catholic's goodness, but convinced that his religion has nothing to do with it.[443]

He shows the importance of knowing the why, not just the what and how of faith. Without apologetical preparation, the faithful can look like shallow, little soldiers who have been

[438] Steven A. Leven, 'The Soapbox Bishop', *Catholic Answers*, 1st January 1996, https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/the-soapbox-bishop.
[439] Frank J. Sheed, 'The Layman in the Church', presentation at the Second World Congress for the Lay Apostolate, Rome, 5th-13th October 1957, https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=7864&repos=1&subrepos=0&searchid=1531319.
[440] Ibid.
[441] Ibid.
[442] See ch2b.1.
[443] Sheed, 'The Layman'.

trained but do not understand why. This is not appealing to the modernist or, especially, the post-modernist non-Christian.

Sheed's mission was to make God more understandable to the faithful and to others. He identified that a lack of apologetical preparation was preventing the faithful from engaging with others, at least so that they would be more respectful to Christianity. He spoke on the streets, on a soapbox in Hyde Park, he toured, and he trained others to be effective apologists in the Guild, as well as writing so that others could be better prepared. Also in the Guild, he met his future wife Maisie Ward; together they formed the Sheed and Ward publishing house, a platform that disseminated many Catholic texts.

Thus, Sheed significantly contributed to pre-Vatican II apologetics that was far more Petrine than Justinian. He explained the faith to great numbers who encountered him on his soapbox, often in Hyde Park, London. When asked what made Sheed so effective, one who converted replied that 'Sheed had a conviction of the truth, an affection for his audience, and an integrity of life that together made for spontaneous combustion. First, he was convinced of the revealed nature of truth and its implications.'[444] Because he had conviction, could admit his failures, and sought to help the other understand, meant he was credible as an apologist.

Ronald Knox – a pastoral apologetical priest

Ronald Knox, a young Church of England cleric and son of a bishop, converted to Catholicism and his subsequent ordination was a significant step in 1920s England. Eton and Oxford educated, he was of the upper middle class, well-connected, and of great intellect. He became an important pre-Vatican II apologist due to his content and ability with language, but also because he sensed change within apologetics, and its purpose and approach. Apologetically, he inhabited an interesting place, both as a teacher of sorts and a companion to his students, which gave him an interesting insight into how apologetics should be developed, especially in a pastoral way.

Knox changed his position's title of 'Catholic Chaplain at Oxford' with a certain humility to 'Chaplain to the Catholic Students at Oxford'.[445] His position was about accompaniment as well as education, walking with his students from their first year through to graduation and sometimes beyond. As his biographer describes regarding the 'conferences' he gave to the Catholic students,

> By coming to Oxford they were entering a milieu that was antagonistic to religion in general and Roman Catholicism in particular. Knox pictured his charges as lambs in the midst of wolves: 'Wolves in sheep's clothing if you like; wolves in Old Etonian ties and so on, but wolves for all that' (p. 220). It was his job to help them defend their faith on two fronts: on the one hand, from the attacks of secular thinkers who viewed religion with contempt, and on the other hand, from the seductive charms of

[444] Olson, 'Evangelistic Brilliance'.
[445] Milton Walsh, *Ronald Knox As Apologist* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 43.

> Oxford itself, which Knox once described as 'the paradise of Anglicanism'. It is not uncommon for students to question, or even jettison, the religion of their childhood when they go off to college; in
> these conferences Knox dealt with their very real struggles in this regard.[446]

Each term, Knox presented apologetical talks on various important matters. Recognising the power of the new temptations, freedoms, and possibilities on offer, he provided an input to support the students' Catholic upbringing and education while equipping them for dealing with life, now and in the future. Almost certainly, he guided J. R. R. Tolkien and possibly in some way C. S. Lewis, who was not a Catholic albeit he appreciated many Catholic themes.[447]

Knox speaks – many chapters are homilies or presentations, adapted into essay form – with the knowledgeable and intellectual language and content of a teacher and the relaxed, kindly tone of an amicable mentor. He both leads and accompanies, and his pastoral approach is unlike typical apologetical texts: it is Chesterton without the bombast, a friendly Newman, a humble Campion. The tone and style could speak to a postmodern student shaped by ideologies that place teenagers at the forefront of culture and self-identification. His interesting, even inviting content is understated yet intellectual, not demanding attention but quietly suggesting it is worthwhile giving it attention. His apologetics is thus ideal for today's well-educated students, to support their teenage journey as Catholics growing into adulthood, or for well-educated non-Catholics who seek richer answers or those with both challenges to the faith and the good will to seek genuine answers.

While emphasising the universal aspect of apologetics, this study recognises the need for apologetics to respond at all levels. The intellectual must not be abandoned and the biographer Walsh recognises 'The contemporary demand for, and impatience with, "the plain answer" has reduced so much of our discourse to the sound bite and the bumper sticker.'[448] Knox too warns of too much simplification:

> In the years following the publication of *The Hidden Stream* Knox gave much thought to attempting a new approach to apologetics. He imagines someone asking, 'Why shouldn't perplexities be resolved by a time-honoured formula from the Catechism?' and he answers: 'I know; it is all utterly preposterous; they ask us for a plain answer to a plain question, and then object to our plain answer because it is not a coloured one. But there it
> is; our answers seem too glib, too 'slick'; there is something machine-made about them.'[449]

Knox expands on the need to maintain intellectual apologetics:

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[446] Milton Walsh, 'Foreword', in Ronald A. Knox, *In Soft Garments* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), ix-x.
[447] It is possible that Lewis's Northern Irish upbringing prevented him from becoming a Catholic more on cultural grounds than on theological matters.
[448] Walsh, 'Foreword', xii-xiii.
[449] Ibid., xii, quoting Knox from an unfinished text published posthumously.

> Am I suggesting that we should haul down the flag of intellectualism? That we should appear in the eyes of our fellow-countrymen simply as one of the denominations, canonized by the antiquity of our institutions and the richness of our culture, but not laying claim, or not manifestly asserting our claim, to possess a more closely reasoned intellectual system than the others? If such a gesture were possible, I would be the last to suggest it. 'An unintellectual salvation' (the phrase, I think, was Philip Waggett's) 'means an unsaved intellect'; and if muddle-headedness is a mood of our age, and a vice of our fellow-countrymen, we, whose traditions are agelong and world-wide, are committed to an attitude of protest. Even for the sake of Christianity at large, we dare not betray, by silence, what is part of our characteristic witness. No, intellectual propaganda we must have.[450]

Knox is correct because apologetics that cannot respond to intellectual questions becomes ineffectual and highly problematic. Today, the education system teaches technical, scientific, literary, and linguistic content at a high level while proclaiming that students cannot learn about religious content that is 'too difficult'. Such 'dumbing-down' of Christian input simply encourages the capable learner to find more interesting and challenging content, rendering Christianity as being regarded as for lesser minds or the easily fooled, which is the conclusion of many today, and not unlike Celsus' claim. Nevertheless, Knox was pointing in the right direction with his 1955 *A Retreat for Lay People*, first published by Sheed and Ward.[451]

Knox's particular apologetical ability was to present content with a good Christian manner that was helpful, pastoral. Although he was in an intellectual environment, his works today are, if not always for direct use, an ideal example of how to approach preparation and dialogue, including for supporting and nurturing post-Confirmation youth in the Church.

Fulton Sheen – an apologetical bishop

Sheen as an altar boy dropped and broke a cruet in front of a bishop, who told the fearful boy prophetically that he would one day be a bishop himself.[452] The boy developed into one of the great Catholic evangelists and apologists of the twentieth century. He had an extraordinary mind, but he addressed the faithful of all levels, reaching many over the years through new media of telecommunications. Universal education fed the masses of children with secular content, and Sheen recognised the need for the faithful to receive Christian content. He was an apologist par excellence who has been somewhat forgotten but his vision for apologetics was certainly Petrine in all ways.

With a vision for breathing new life into the faithful, Sheen's clerical life progressed in relation to his evangelical-apologetical ministry. Having successfully

[450] Ibid., xiii, quoting Knox from an unfinished text published posthumously.
[451] Ronald Knox, *A Retreat for Lay People* (San Franciso: Ignatius Press, 2011).
[452] 'Biography of Fulton J. Sheen', *Catholic University of America*, accessed 13th May 2023, https://fulton-sheen.catholic.edu/bio/index.html.

completed his Louvain studies and returned to America as a parish priest and educator, the

> thirty-four-year-old professor at the Catholic University of America, Fulton J. Sheen, struck just the right note in his 1929 call to the National Catholic Educational Association to 'educate for a Catholic Renaissance,' in which people's faith would be 'vitalized'—fired to become a living reality at the core of their being—and 'integrated' with the rest of their lives.[453]

This was no sudden Pentecostal spark but a vision of embedding Catholic understanding at the core of Catholic society.

> The premise was that Catholicism represented a coherent system grounded in reason that perfectly met the needs of modern society and the spiritual longings of modern humanity. The NCEA listened carefully. Its college and university department in 1935 declared that 'the Catholic college will not be content with presenting Catholicism as a creed, a code, or a cult. Catholicism must be seen as a culture.' Graduates would not merely be trained in Catholic doctrine, they 'will have seen the whole sweep of Catholicism, its part in the building up of our western civilization, past and present. . . .' Finally, 'they will have before them not merely the facts of the natural order but those in the supernatural order also, those facts which give meaning and coherence to the whole of life.'[454]

He perceived education – preparation – at the foundation of reforming Catholic culture in America. For a culture to develop, there must be interaction consistent with the culture that takes place within the culture, and by educating the faithful in the Catholic faith, some of that interaction would naturally be thematically Catholic and therefore develop the Catholic culture; the culture then becomes increasingly self-propagating. This is consistent with Vatican II teachings.[455]

His participation as a priest in educating the faithful included two decades (1930-50) of hosting the evening radio programme 'The Catholic Hour', with four million listeners in the 1940s.[456] In 1951, he became an auxiliary bishop in New York then moved to television from 1952-57, presenting 'Life is Worth Living' with a live studio audience, a blackboard, and no script, with up to 30 million viewers each week.[457] Then he presented 'The Fulton Sheen Program' in 1961-68. This last programme was syndicated, thus had a much larger audience, and he received an Emmy award for Most Outstanding Television Personality twice and was on *Time* magazine's front cover. In 1966, he became the Bishop of Rochester for three years before retiring. He also raised significant sums for charity.

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[453] James Hennesey, *American Catholics* (Oxford: OUP, 1981), 255.
[454] Ibid.
[455] See ch3.2.
[456] According to 'Fulton J. Sheen', *Wikipedia*, accessed 5th August 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulton_J._Sheen.
[457] According to ibid.

An example of Sheen's apologetics, humour, and presentation skills – in a reverential blend of homily with stand-up comedy – is online.[458] It includes an apologia, explaining why we should praise God (responding to: 'How can God be worthy of praise if he needs us to praise him?'); His focus is that we need to praise him, and that God does not need our praise. His strength is in the recipient enjoying the show while thinking about God, religion, etc., for example, he both praises the growing sanctity of nuns and softens any fear of the sacrament of Confession: 'Hearing nuns' confessions is like being stoned to death with popcorn.'[459] But there was also a serious and thoughtful side that was no less perceptive and thought-provoking: 'There are not one hundred people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be.'[460] Probably his most famous quote, it can be perceived as arrogant but that misses the apologetical point: there is such a misunderstanding of what the Catholic Church actually is that it cries out for significant apologetics – it does not claim Catholics to be wonderful but reminds us that the Church is mystical, the Bride of Christ, and the people of God instituted by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit; it also reminds us that apologetics needs to develop this awareness in Catholics also.

Sheen, while a great academic teacher and intellectual, recognised the need for educating the ordinary faithful and used the best means available, somewhat reminiscent of St Paul in both the Areopagus and many a market square, thus covering the wide apologetical range of the Petrine universal aspect. His contributions to Church and faith were extensive and he attracted many converts as well as building up the faithful. His influence and effect as a Catholic cultural icon cannot be underestimated – Ramón Estévez, with Spanish and Irish immigrant parents, even chose his stage surname after the bishop, becoming Martin Sheen, the famous actor.

Fulton Sheen continued to preach until just before his death in 1979 and he was recognised at the highest level:

> On October 2, 1979, two months before Archbishop Sheen's death, Pope John Paul II held an audience at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, where he called him to come forward. Embracing the clergyman, the Pope said, 'You have written and spoken well of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are a loyal son of the Church.'[461]

Sheen also wrote 73 books, including the very accessible and inspirational *Life of Christ*,[462] and many newspaper articles. He was a significant inspiration for developing

[458] Fulton Sheen, 'Bishop Fulton Sheen's Best Talk', *YouTube*, 10th May 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBXbcoNXyQo; it has since been removed for copyright reasons.
[459] Found in 'Fulton J. Sheen Quotes', goodreads, accessed 10th May 2023, https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/2412.Fulton_J_Sheen. This uncited list of Sheen quotations shows the wide range of interesting quotations he produced but also how non-academic readers may access his extensive sayings and wisdom.
[460] Ibid.
[461] 'Cause for Canonization', *Catholic University of America*, accessed 13th May 2023, https://fulton-sheen.catholic.edu/cause/index.html.
[462] Fulton J. Sheen, *Life of Christ* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

the understanding and culture of American Catholics in the last century. He has been described as a 'pioneer of the new evangelization'[463] and the Jesuit *America* magazine described him as 'the greatest evangelizer in the history of the Catholic Church of the United States'.[464]

[463] 'New Evangelization Pioneer', *Catholic University of America*, accessed 13th May 2023, https://fulton-sheen.catholic.edu/evangelization/index.html.
[464] Ibid.

Conclusion

During the twentieth century, leading up to and just beyond the Second Vatican Council, there was a clear and organic movement of apologetics becoming more open to the faithful in general and more accessible in style and comprehensibility in particular. The reasons for this have to be considered as many, perhaps complex, and certainly beyond the scope of this study. What is unchallengeable, though, is that this change in approach was highly significant for many faithful as theology became approachable as it leaked out to the laity, of which a significant number built themselves up in it. Lay authors, lay evangelists, lay apologists sprang up in larger numbers, not as Protestant but for the first time as Catholics. There were both clergy and lay faithful who learned and prepared, then went and engaged with others, in a more appropriate way. That changes were taking place was recognised somewhat by Pius XII in HG. Apologetics was once again, after nearly two millennia, being spoken out by many faithful.

There is little or no perceptible link between the four figures described in this short but indicative study. Others could have been included: C. S. Lewis, who also presented a somewhat catechetical allegory in the Narnia stories, primarily but not exclusively for children; and his close friend J. R. R. Tolkien also offered an imaginary world where many Catholic themes such as sacrifice and fellowship are explored. These books are in themselves forms of apologetics, responses to a culture that was becoming less Christian.

The journey to this point can be traced back as far as Borromeo the reformer and in many ways a Petrine apologist, as a pastor, teacher, guide, participating in the faith by helping the sick, forming new approaches to education, and missions to those erring then supporting them afterwards. Campion was less interested in the third Petrine element as he engaged in battle in one of the most hostile environments in Church history. He may have strengthened the faithful but his approach is not known to have been successful apologetically. It was Pascal who offered a more subjective approach to apologetics to find the objective, thus suggesting new approaches were needed.

Borromeo's caring, pastoral approach developed the Church's credibility, and Newman established this in the intellectual sphere by explaining his conversion and responding to challenges. He created a foundation of some respectability for Catholics that helped later apologists. It was a relatively rich and lively apologetical time in Britain and America, approaching the Second Vatican Council.

Part 2 – Conclusion

The Part 2 journey through Church history from the time of Jesus to recent times, has sought to build an understanding of how apologetics developed by using a Petrine apologetics lens of all being called to prepare, respond, in a Christian manner.

Looking at the earliest Christians and the organic responses being encouraged with Two Way preparation and calls to learn and engage, it was possible to see the Justinian turn that narrowed apologetics to an increasingly intellectual and clerical thinking. Irenaeus encouraged participation, not passivity in the faith. The third element faded to some extent and the faithful were not apologetically prepared for moving into the Mediaeval period – the little evidence we have suggests a return to the Two Ways code by Benedict. Intellectual and elite apologetics developed again but Lateran IV could have restarted a more ordinary apologetics, but this was arguably thwarted by intransigence and insufficient communication. Dominic's apologetical capability and success moved his order into academia, which was very fruitful, but a more ordinary development was always needed, and especially in the more difficult times coming. In spite of common images, there was a movement of prayerful reading with Books of the Hours but this did not lead to understanding of why to believe, only how to do so.

The reforms of Trent were implemented creatively by Borromeo in Milan, offering a view of pastoral apologetics. His credibility as a witness to Christianity was reproduced by Newman in the intellectual sphere in the hostile British environment, presenting a platform for others to speak out in more ordinary ways in a movement that organically sprang up in the English-speaking sphere. It was clear that societal change and new, increasingly non-Christian thinking was developing an environment where apologetics was more obviously suited. While Catholic Europe had been defensive after the Reformation and Justinian apologetics was increasingly calcified and used not as a response but proactively to create an us-them paradigm, the growing calls for reform and engagement with society meant change was approaching, as Part 3 shows.

The development over the centuries was not often in accord with the Petrine call, or with the Vatican II teachings on apologetics. It became increasingly dry, elitist, even antagonistic at times and this image remains for many even today. This was at first intellectual then elite and clerical, meaning the ordinary faithful became dependent upon being taught apologetics or received only instruction on what to believe and what to do about it. Responses require high levels of preparation, education, which was rare, and the Christian manner was too often lacking. Apologetics became an academic field, which was for the few to engage with others, when especially in Mediaeval times the challenge that required a response was an uneducated faithful who could not explain why to believe.

Sources are not easily located, partly understandably for a method of primarily oral communication that then became increasingly written in philosophical and legal frames. Secondary sources tend to presume Justinian apologetics as the norm, particularly the otherwise very helpful Dulles. His other weakness is a desire to avoid Catholic apologetics, which is not only part of the history of apologetics but it also is very helpful for Catholics learning why to believe Catholic teachings. It is evident that more studies

looking at apologetics from a Petrine perspective are needed, especially in Christian history. At times, this study has included sources that are less than academic and may be of lower quality and trustworthiness; however, without depending on them, they do help build an image and particularly provide an insight into what is presented to the faithful and others. Apologetical studies on the narratives presented are beyond the general scope here.

The changes that are seen developing in Part 2d became reform calls that led to the Second Vatican Council and much change for apologetics, as seen in Part 3.

Part 3 – The Second Vatican Council and Apologetics

3.1 – Reform Calls before the Council
3.2 – Apologetics in the Second Vatican Council Documents
3.3 – Apologetics after the Council

The Second Vatican Council was the summit of a reform movement that began not long after the premature close of its 1870 predecessor, under the first post-Papal States papacy of Leo XIII.[465] The loss of secular power arguably freed the papacy, leading to new possibilities and a varied and wide range of developments: 'The call for reform is virtually universal, while the terms of reform are comprehensively disputed.'[466] The decades preceding the Council in 1962-5 (convoked in 1959) saw an ongoing tussle between the conservatives/traditionalists and the progressives/reformers. Within these were many sub-groups, including reformers originally disparaged as *nouvelle théologie*, named such by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange as he disagreed with their own ressourcement description. Yet they included figures such as Hans Urs von Balthasar and Henri de Lubac, seen as modernists and reformers before the Council, but who later strove for an end to the post-conciliar constant ongoing reform.

Balthasar's early 1950s reform call *Razing the Bastions* (RB) does not seek modernist reform. His identification of problems in conservative thinking and call for change had him categorised as a strong reformer, but his *Love Alone Is Credible* (LAC), published early in the Council, also identifies problems with both general approaches and clearly proposes love as the true Christian way. By using Balthasar's words to explore his reform perspective, we can also identify several themes akin to the Petrine apologetical call.

Ten of the Vatican II documents include clear Petrine apologetical calls or themes. From paraphrases of 1Pt 3:15-16 in two, even three documents to clear references to these in regard to education and the laity's role in communities and society, and elsewhere, the Council unambiguously called not for a continuation of Justinian apologetics, common particularly in Europe, but a *ressourcement* to the apologetics of Scripture and the earliest Church. The term 'apologetics' has become so identified with the Justinian narrowing that it was not included in the texts, not even in reference to the somewhat Petrine developments in English-speaking societies, shown in chapter 2d.4. The conciliar calls are embedded within other themes – evangelisation, education, community engagement

[465] George Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism* (NewYork: Basic Books, 2013), 2.
[466] Ibid., 1.

– pointing to apologetics primarily as a method or means rather than a particular academic field. This was a call to return to the original, ordinary, organic apologetics.

Looking partly through Balthasar's lens, the third chapter considers the post-conciliar developments and how apologetics was understood and rejected, with fundamental theology (FT) replacing it. However, FT was in some ways a development of Justinian apologetics and not in line with the Council's Petrine apologetical calls, and also took on some reform thinking that Balthasar moved away from. The popes have at times promoted the Petrine approach and since the 1980s in America there has been an organic development of a more Petrine apologetics. Therefore, the 20th century saw a slow turn back to Petrine apologetics, albeit this is not widely recognised.

3.1 – Reform Calls Before the Council

In the decades preceding Vatican II, the movements, changes, calls, decisions, and much more were many, complex, and varied; the attention of this study is on showing that the Council, in an act of apologetical *ressourcement*, tried to refocus the Church to Petrine apologetics: preparation, response, Christian manner, and for all faithful. This was not a sudden move considering the apologetical developments particularly in the English-speaking world are recognised, and these and the Council's direction was to open up to the world, which requires preparation of the faithful and engagement in a Christian manner – both themes included in the documents.

However, this turn to a more ordinary and less elite apologetics was not taking place in Europe. Weigel sees that

> The renewal of the Catholic mind in the mid-twentieth century also found expression in a transatlantic Catholic literary renaissance. Its key figures in France were the novelists Georges Bernanos and François Mauriac (a Nobel laureate) and the poet Paul Claudel, while across the English Channel Robert Hugh Benson, G. K. Chesterton, Ronald Knox, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, and J. R. R. Tolkien brought a Catholic optic to fiction, journalism, and the art of the essay. Paul Horgan, Flannery O'Connor, and Walker Percy were three distinctive American embodiments of a refined Catholic literary sensibility; O'Connor, like Chesterton and Knox, was also a gifted Catholic apologist.[467]

Most of the above English-language writers were also in some way apologists, whereas none of the French writers were. It is hypothesised that this was a direct result of the English-speaking Catholic experience of several centuries of persecution having been increasingly lifted and Catholic voices becoming allowed, but certainly not often accepted. This offered both a challenge and an opportunity. But while the English-speaking environment was becoming fertile for Petrine apologetical engagement, in Europe the strong Catholic structures of the past, with no significant apologetical-educational development beyond basically catechetical use,[468] stifled the possibility of organic apologetics developing. The English-speaking Catholics could barely avoid openly engaging with non-Catholics, but this was far less the experience in significantly Catholic Europe.

The general Catholic response to growing secularism and atheism in European society from the Enlightenment and revolutionary movements was to reject it and defend the faithful through sufficient catechesis: what to believe and how to carry out one's faith, mainly in prayer and liturgy, and also service. This unpreparedness for engagement meant

[467] George Weigel, *To Sanctify the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2022), ch. 5.

[468] Justinian apologetics was taught in some ways to the educated faithful in narrow forms, but this was not to develop engagement and culture but more as an intellectual exercise and to retain culture, and was certainly not really available to those without formal education. Below this, in the main, apologetics was presented within catechesis – what to believe and how to carry it out; 'why' was not part of the generally one-way communication. It was instruction rather than developing the person.

the developing of an us-them paradigm and 'retreating behind the walls'. By looking through the eyes of Balthasar, who both called for change and cautioned against its dangers, the problems of the Tridentine approach to non-Catholic thinking and those of the worldly, modernist reformers can be seen. The standard position[469] is that Balthasar first called for change as a progressive then rejected it as a conservative, thus upsetting both sides. But he really proposed a third way that was inspirational to and in clear agreement with the Council in many ways, albeit this was not well recognised. Balthasar's initial call in RB[470] was published a decade before the Council commenced, but a year into the Council his LAC[471] is a call to reject the two embattled sides for something far greater.

Balthasar's Reform Call – Razing the Bastions

Weigel sums up Balthasar's contribution to the pre-conciliar journey:

> Then there was the Swiss polymath-theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar. In 1952, he published a small book in German, *Razing the Bastions: On the Church in This Age*, in which he worried that the great Catholic tradition had become fossilized and had 'slipped out of the [Church's] living center of holiness.' The 'great salvage operation' of the Counter-Reformation had been necessary, Balthasar argued, but it was over, and the Church had to get out of its defensive crouch and get on with offering humanity the truth of God in Christ.[472]

Balthasar did indeed call for change in the Church's approach, and his title sought the demolition of the staunch defences put up since the Council of Trent. While necessary in the Reformation environment, their lack of subsequent adaptation in Europe were an obstacle to developing engagement with 'outsiders'. This defensive posture was bolstered by Justinian apologetics which emphasises defeating the other, while lessening the evangelisation aspect, an approach that Balthasar found lacking.[473]

Balthasar's first chapter, 'Departure', recognises a problem of understanding between the intellectual clerical understanding of the faith and that of the ordinary faithful:

> The official representatives of the Church, however, have immersed themselves in lengthy studies in their tradition, they have learned its cautious language and assimilated its cultivated mode of thought, and so they are familiar with the values of the traditional as a whole, particularly as Catholicism uses the word 'tradition' to

[469] Christof Schönborn, 'Foreword' in Balthasar, *Bastions*, 9-11.
[470] Balthasar, *Bastions*.
[471] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone Is Credible* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004).
[472] George Weigel, 'Why Vatican II Was Necessary', *The Catholic World Report*, 19th October 2022, https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2022/10/19/why-vatican-ii-was-necessary/.
[473] For example, in Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord 1: Seeing the Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 123-124, 167-168, 198.

> mean something else as well: the handing-on of Christian revelation through oral tradition. And since the theological determination of what may have been entrusted to the Church as revelation, outside of Scripture, is complicated, disputed and difficult to grasp (especially for laypeople), the laity will always be inclined to equate or confuse the theological principle of tradition with a more general Catholic preference for handing on what already exists.[474]

A fruit of Justinian apologetics is the insufficient, even poor, education of the faithful: Sacred Tradition, referred to as 'tradition' was being understood as simply any tradition, something passed down. While the faithful were receiving better secular education, theological understanding of the non-intellectual faithful was poor, and the worldly narrative that the faith was simply another tale handed down meant ordinary Catholics were being faced with choices (in Greek, heresies). Thus, they were increasingly questioning (in minds, hearts, even voices) the seemingly intransigent Church. Clearly there was a need for effective education – that is, preparation – by those initiated into theological matters. This divide clearly called for change.

After first identifying external and 'violent' means as agents of change, Balthasar recognises the internal:

> The second [possibility] is intellectual and comes from within: namely, the power of transcending; this is the vitality that is the lifeblood of all traditions, the vitality that knows the past and yet is able to separate itself from the past to the extent that this is required by responsibility and readiness for the future. Both means can be grace: the second, a radiant grace […][475]

The second, Christian path of change is obviously preferable: 'this second way contributes the spiritually explosive power of holiness, which is always something more than the wisdom of the tradition: it is the presence of the Holy Spirit for us in today's age.'[476]

After centuries of European change, even upheaval, a movement was stirring within Catholicism:

> Today, a sleeping giant is stretching himself; undreamt-of powers, lying idle up to now like the powers in water not yet brought together to form a dam, and pregnant with primal energies, are beginning to move. Catholic Action has summoned the giant, and in the lay institutes of today and in a thousand individual undertakings we see that the call was heard and that the layman is beginning to take up the responsibility that is his own.[477]

The second chapter, 'Descent', provides insight into the Church's character in recent centuries:

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[474] Balthasar, *Bastions*, 19.
[475] Ibid., 22.
[476] Ibid., 23.
[477] Ibid., 39.

> Two great changes have occurred in this relationship [between Church and the world] since the middle ages, two turning-points: within Christianity, the Western division of the Church with its consequences for ecclesial consciousness, and, closely connected to this, an altered awareness of the non-Christian world.[478]

These changes shook Catholic understanding: the splitting away of Protestants within Catholic Christendom and the discovery that there existed a great unknown world beyond the western ocean. This was not, respectively, a mere internal disagreement and extension of the known world; both caused settled Christendom to be diminished, made more fragile.

The Church's response to such change was to seek continuation of the past order:

> What is called the Counter-Reformation, strictly speaking, was still too dominated by the determination to carry on as long as possible the medieval order, for it to be able to encompass the elements needed for a real mastery of the new situation. The splendor of this salvage attempt has passed away, with its authentic grandeur as well as its theater of appearances, and the world is the poorer for its passing; indeed, only now did the world become truly poor. The person who belongs to the Church today must attempt, painstakingly and gropingly in the presence of God, to interpret the plans of Providence for the Church in today's world, in this as yet unmastered situation.[479]

Within the Mediaeval established order, long supported by Justinian apologetics of proving one's position intellectually correct, great cracks had appeared along with a whole new dimension, and the response was to reemphasise the Justinian approach. Initial significant Catholic engagement with the New World faded in North America, and there was little engagement with those regarded heretical within Europe.

Balthasar identifies two attempted solutions which were both ultimately unworkable. For him, 'The first is the solution of an absolutism of the truth, which does not understand the new situation of solidarity, but wishes to deal with the people of our time on the same level of consciousness that characterized medieval absolutism.'[480] Apologetically, this was the Justinian way: more or less to ignore the 'new peoples' – those of the new lands and new ways of being Christian.

This 'closing off' led to another way which rejected the old paradigm of one true religion as other narratives and explanations gained credence:

> The other is the religious relativism of the Enlightenment: the very understandable and initially unavoidable reaction to that absolutism and to the new situation created by mankind's discoveries in space and time, by the Reformation and the fall of barriers; this reaction now understands all forms of religion as meaningful, justified and complementary to one another on various levels of relationship to a total truth.[481]

[478] Ibid., 47.
[479] Ibid., 51.
[480] Ibid., 52.
[481] Ibid.

Balthasar rejects both, offering a new, third way which opens up but retains the identity of Catholic teachings:

> Now, if the path between these two is to be the correct path, it cannot consist of a compromise between them. It must bring to the surface a truth and an attitude that, as Catholic truth and attitude, display to the world a clear, defined and unmistakable countenance. One must not be surprised that this new Catholic attitude is difficult to understand for the unbelieving world (and often too for the Christian who has not yet adapted to it); and that indeed it contains a mysterious audacity and an apparent paradox, in keeping with the lateness of the hour; and that ultimately it cannot be explained in a perfectly rational manner at all, because all that is Catholic shares in the mysterious character of divine revelation. On the contrary, all this is an aspect of the way things are.[482]

Rather than Justinian apologetics, recalling the apologetics of preparation, response, and in a Christian manner, his second sentence – '[…] bring to the surface a truth and an attitude that, as Catholic truth and attitude, display to the world a clear, defined and unmistakable countenance' – describes the Petrine call, which was developed in Vatican II's documents.

Balthasar with typical theological richness offers 'a rethinking of the ancient axiom rigorously expounded by Augustine, "outside the Church there is no salvation".'[483] He also resolves the lack of comprehension of the issue on the other side: 'When the Enlightenment and religious relativism rejected this dualism, they also threw overboard the above-mentioned axiom. Everyone is to be blessed in his own fashion; outside the Church there is every possibility of salvation.'[484] This issue of salvation outside the Church was to be covered in the Council's LG 16, which states that

> Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life.

LG 16 ends with a call that is more consistent with Petrine apologetics: 'Wherefore to promote the glory of God and procure the salvation of all of these, and mindful of the command of the Lord, "Preach the Gospel to every creature", the Church fosters the missions with care and attention.' By resolving the issues of both sides, and thus taking the third and better way, Balthasar then presents a position that is true to the Church's teachings, being consistent with multiple theological areas, including the three-part structure of classical apologetics – God, Christ, Church:

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[482] Ibid.
[483] Ibid., 53.
[484] Ibid.

> Only now does the genuine point begin to appear: the grace of Christ, which is universal, merited on the Cross for all, is not distributed without regard for the Bride, the Church. Head and Body are One Christ: Augustine himself had laid down this premise. Without Christ, there is no access to the Father. Without the Church, there is no participation in Christ. The Church is this participation, and consequently the mediation of this participation also. This has an internal aspect: the Catholic unity of the 'treasury of grace'; […] 'No salvation outside the Church' means then, in both an interior and an exterior sense, that no salvation is mediated except through the Church. The Church is the instrument of the mediation of salvation to the world, for she is the mystical Body of Christ, into which the Word of God descended for the sake of redemption.[485]

The spreading of this message of salvation is inherent to Petrine apologetics, which has the task of removing obstacles to faith.

Balthasar then considers how the changes are already occurring, which in the Euro-centric milieu is with little actual apologetical engagement (albeit he does not recognise Pius's HG):

> The collapse of the internal unity and the razing of the external bastions have thus not remained without consequences for the Church's consciousness: not only an essential principle about the unity of salvation and Church, but also an existential self-knowledge in the depths of the Church as subject has changed. The theologians seem to sense little of this, since they only rarely and in exceptional cases feel themselves challenged by the truth outside—for example, by what is true in Protestant dogmatics. But the Church as a whole senses more, and the extrapolated awareness effected through the *felix culpa* of the wounds inflicted has created an indissoluble solidarity with the separated brethren, and through them with the world. Now this awareness begins to move with the freshness of springtime among the responsible laity.[486]

His recognition of the 'responsible laity' awakening to their potential participation shows a movement towards the universal aspect of the Petrine call, which was also a focus of Vatican II.

Balthasar then identifies a lack of development of Christian understanding, which is due to the embedded us-them attitude that was an example of the basic Two Ways code of salvation; this foundational form of apologetics really should be developed into a reaching out to others. He states:

> The immense transformation in Christian consciousness that must come about on the basis of this insight [that many more seek Christ, knowing it or not] is a transformation from possessor to giver, from usufructuary to apostle, from privileged person to responsible person. In the middle ages, and still in the Baroque period, the former attitude was the essential one; the latter followed as a possible derivative at

[485] Ibid., 54-5.
[486] Ibid., 57.

> best. Things could not be otherwise as long as the Augustinian view of predestination—two classes of men from the very outset, one chosen and the other rejected—was seriously taken as basic. One cannot say that the medieval Christian felt himself, fundamentally, and in his very identity as a Christian, responsible for the non-Christian. [487]

He then recognises changes that have led to a better understanding developing:

> Such a feeling presupposes a new stage of Christian awareness, at which the *purpose* of election becomes clear. The medieval Christian's naive, because wholly unreflective, egotism of salvation cannot be reproached; it would have to be censured today, however, now that the bastions have fallen and the element of solidarity makes its appearance for the first time in the awareness of a humanity united.[488]

This is a not-too-subtle prod at the Church hierarchy's approach to such matters and the need for change, which he regards as unstoppable and also very desirable for developing a mature and loving Christian responsibility:

> Rather, because of the barriers that have been pulled down, something has awakened in the Church's consciousness that cannot be rooted and related in the spirit of any other man: the knowledge that his election means being sent to those who are not chosen, means vicarious representation, bearing responsibility, sacrifice. Objectively, this was always the case […][489]

Balthasar leans on the negative-mediaeval trope, placing it contra to the responsible approach:

> Augustine and the middle ages read and understood Romans, chapter nine, and they trembled before the mystery. We read it too, but we find the solution for what makes us tremble in chapters ten and eleven, which the middle ages did not yet perceive in their terribly extensive, exorbitantly demanding, universal significance. The parable of the two brothers, the one rejected and the other chosen, becomes transparent in its reference to the intended truth about the chosen and the rejected people. But now these two stand alternately for one another in a unique dialectic that cannot be illuminated by any other example, a dialectic that is the essence of the Christian theology of history […][490]

He presents a new Two Ways: old and new, defensive and loving. This could extend here to what apologetics too often became and what it ought to have been: Justinian and Petrine. Balthasar's position is unrelentingly clear: change is necessary and desirable, and should be prompt and significant.

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[487] Ibid., 58.
[488] Ibid.
[489] Ibid., 59.
[490] Ibid.

Balthasar sees these considerable changes as 'a return to what is genuine',[491] understanding the ecclesial reality differently: 'Now that the outer shells are falling away, they can be called by their worldly names. Once again, the Church is at the beginning. She was never given the promise of a quantitative superiority.'[492] This is not a discontinuity but a ressourcement, a returning to the sources and origins and looking at them afresh; it does not reject the Church's contemporary identity but renews it in the light of its own origins. After all, if the Justinian turn was a development of apologetics, a Petrine turn back is even more so.

Interestingly, Balthasar considers the post-Reformation ecclesial journey and its defensiveness to have been necessary:

> The limits imposed at the time of the Reformation could very well be understood as the forced return from an illusion to a truth—or at least as an image of this. And the external reduction (paralleled, as has been shown, by an inner and spiritual reduction) was the necessary prerequisite for understanding the new function of the Church as the yeast of the world: a function that quite naturally is understood much better in the diaspora than in Catholic countries.[493]

The Church is more alive in the diaspora than in Christendom, it is a missionary Church, just as Peter called the faithful in the diaspora to be ready to explain their faith in a Christian manner; this is perceptible in the apologetical developments in English-speaking societies at the time, being a type of diaspora. For this study, the faithful can be far better prepared without the intellectual taking over the apologetic; Balthasar recognises the universal responsibility for mission:

> This is beginning to be understood by the Church as a whole, now that she is (like the primitive Church) moving toward a situation of diaspora once again. This is the moment when for the first time responsibility for the world and apostolate takes hold of every member of the Church as something self-evident; what the parish priest, or indeed any official representative of the hierarchy, is no longer able to do must now be done by the layman—and this 'must' falls with the weight of a fundamental duty.[494]

This is a ressourcement of the Petrine call to all the faithful. Jesus called far more than an elite of 12 disciples – Balthasar recognises Christ's call to all:

> A second train of thought enters here. The Lord has said to his Church, 'You are the light of the world.' Light does not shine for itself but for the beginners who need it in order to flourish, to see, to grow, to warm themselves. The light of the abstract, timeless truth is indeed always present; it is never exhausted.[495]

[491] Ibid., 60.
[492] Ibid.
[493] Ibid., 61-2.
[494] Ibid., 62.
[495] Ibid.

However, the faithful need to be supported by academia, theologians in particular, which places the intellectual as integral to apologetics. Balthasar calls for theological development to support the new approach:

> But has theology kept pace with this change, or is not Christian life several leaps ahead of it? Many are ready today to give their life for the Church and the world (and not at all for their own perfection). They would stand in need of a theology that describes Christian existence from the perspective of service, of the commission received, of sharing both in the shining and radiating and in the being consumed.[496]

This would lead to a far more developed Christianisation of the world, which is consistent with a Petrine apologetical vision:

> If such a theology were once clearly thought out and popularized so that it too could take its place in Christian instruction, new power could radiate forth from the Christian communities into the world. Further, how could it be forgotten that the revelation of the riches of Christ has infinitely more fullness than all the concepts and structures of every theology and of every Christian consciousness at any period at all? Let us therefore not cling tightly to structures of thought, but let us plunge into the primal demands of the Gospel, which are also the primal graces, visible and capable of being grasped in the example of Christ, who gave himself for all in order to save all.[497]

This vision is also consistent with that of Vatican II.[498]

Although Balthasar has been critical of the Church's approach since Trent, in his third chapter, 'Endurance', he clearly iterates that the Church's teachings are far greater than the general alternatives, the 'theological consequences' of which need to be understood:

> And those representatives of the Church's authority who summon and welcome the Church's descent and who encourage the laity to join in the work with a professional competence all their own must be clearly aware of the theological consequences of this summons, so that it may not become the invocation of the sorcerer's apprentice.[499]

The reformers need to recognise the theological consequences. He warns, with almost a credal statement, of the danger of becoming just another narrative in a modernist environment:

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[496] Ibid., 69.
[497] Ibid., 69-70.
[498] See ch3.2.
[499] Balthasar, *Bastions*, 71.

> The Church remains at every period what she was: the bulwark and the steward of all truth, for all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ, and no one has access to these treasures of Christ except through the Church. But when she enters into the world and becomes for the world one religion among others, one community among others, one doctrine and truth among others—just as Christ became one man among others, outwardly indistinguishable from them—her truth comes into a communism with all the forms of worldly truth: with the experiential truth of all branches of knowledge, and with the wisdom-systems of the world which attempt conclusive statements about the being of the world and of its truth.[500]

But this challenge to the Church is not new:

> The collision is something given with the very mission of the Church; it happened already in Alexandria in the third century, where Christianity had to try its strength against Plato and Philo; in the thirteenth century, when Aristotle came into theology's sights as the leading star of the rising modern empiricism; in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the entire classical age rose up anew, the sciences developed, the historical religions of the various peoples came into view.[501]

The Church remains foundational. With remarkable prescience, Balthasar outlines the challenges of engaging with the (post)modern world theologically from different perspectives:

> the world as a whole has a different countenance for the natural scientist than for the one who is engaged in the study of the humanities; it looks different from the perspective of the doctor, of the factory worker, of the theologian. The theologian, who once could presume to take an 'overview', stands today, in one specific and not unimportant sense, as one specialist alongside *others*.
>
> This has significant consequences both for the theoretical relationship between the truth of revelation and worldly truth, and for the practical, peaceable coexistence of their representatives.[502]

Thus, preparation for engagement needs to be developed for all.

To approach the challenge, clergy and laity must work together, the Church must guide and be followed, and prayer is central:

> Both hierarchy and laity must unite the two sides in themselves, even if in practice tolerance is more the affair of the laity, and holding fast to the forms and formulas of revelation and tradition is more the affair of the hierarchy and its representatives. The laity, especially today, are the element projecting into the world, and they will more frequently convince the hierarchy to apply a new tolerance. The hierarchy will not so much seek to restrain the conquering troops as to equip them with sufficient knowledge of Christian truth and experience of life. The official Church has of course

[500] Ibid., 71-2.
[501] Ibid., 72.
[502] Ibid., 74-5.

> the right and the duty to lay down certain rules to determine Christian tolerance and its limits. She has always done so, and she has done this anew in her code of canon law and books of moral theology. But these rules, which must be followed, never take the place of the spirit in which they are carried out. And what is at issue here is this spirit: this alert, clear unity of generosity and decisiveness, which can truly be achieved only out of living prayer and is the opposite of a vague, unclarified attitude that confuses things spiritually and intellectually incompatible.[503]

In RB, Balthasar does not shy away, but rather embraces the challenge of opening up to the world. It is necessary that the faithful have responsibility, and this will prepare them for engaging appropriately with a world that renders the faith as 'another narrative', enabling them to bring the Light of Christ, the Logos. This is a ressourcement of the Petrine call.

Balthasar's Reform Reminder – Love Alone Is Credible

A decade later, after the more cautious Pius XII was succeeded by the supposed transitionary John XXIII, Vatican II began in October 1962 and Balthasar confirmed his reform call.

How one approaches such a realisation of one's call to reform, previously only dreamed of, differs. Balthasar's LAC, published in 1963, seems to say: 'Good; now let's do it right!'. Again recognising the two main streams – conservative and reforming – he proposes the third way more clearly: love.

The first chapter, 'The Cosmological Reduction', describes Christianity's development from ancient philosophy and religion:

> Christianity thus stands out against this background as the fulfillment of the fragmented meaning of the world (logos spermatikos), which in the Word Made Flesh (Logos sarx) achieves its unity and fullness and redeemed freedom (Clement and Athanasius). Against this backdrop, Christianity represented not only a fulfillment, but also a call to conversion, insofar as all of the fragmentary logoi absolutized themselves and thus put up a sinful resistance to the true Logos (Augustine in the Civitas Dei).[504]

He further describes how

> This approach was possible because these Christian thinkers took over the identity between philosophy and theology that had prevailed in the ancient cultures as a self-evident fact. Equally evident to them was the unity of the natural and supernatural orders: God has been manifest from the beginning of the world and from Adam

[503] Ibid., 91-2.
[504] Balthasar, *Love Alone*, 15.

> onward, and the pagan world failed to recognize that which is clearly there to be seen (Rom 1:18f.)[505]

Christianity's development as the primary faith is founded in reason, which is of apologetical interest in being rational. He describes that

> Because the biblical Sophia inherited all things in the Incarnation, it satisfied the pagan search for wisdom (philosophia), and it therefore appropriated for itself the intelligible unity and rationality of this search. The transition that fulfilled the philosophical universe in the Christian-theological one granted to reason, enlightened and strengthened by grace, the highest possible vision of unity.[506]

Dulles points out how (Justinian) apologetics overtook post-Reformation theology,[507] and Balthasar indicates similar when reiterating the RB argument for reform:

> The Christian in-fighting of confessional polemics that took its place forced the question of the theological credibility of Christianity as a whole into second place, and, seeing these polemics, the world felt compelled to tread the pre-Reformation path in a much more rigorous and radical way. There is perhaps nothing more disturbing in the intellectual history of the modern age than how imperceptibly the old view of the world passed over into the new: what was or appeared to be theology yesterday has turned today—who can say how?—into philosophy and rationalism.[508]

Balthasar, not present at the Council due to his recent irregular state – a priest without a diocese or order for much of the 1950s, having left the Jesuits – was nevertheless regarded as a great reforming voice. He was grouped with those seeking progressive, modernist reform, albeit he rejects this in RB and LAC's second chapter, 'The Anthropological Reduction'. Rather than stemming from ancient philosophy and religion, this approach was from man himself:

> Next to the cosmological reduction, another was gradually taking shape, one that displaced the locus of verification from the increasingly demythologized cosmos (which was therefore becoming less of a rival to Christianity) to the human being, who recapitulated the entire world in himself. The ancient and patristic image of man as the 'frontier' (methorion) between the world and God was resurrected in the Renaissance, with its frequent hymns to man's dignity. Man is God's partner, and their reciprocal conversation ends with God himself becoming man. Not only is man a microcosm, but, in the emerging natural sciences, he is also the one who gives the cosmos its structure, a cosmos he transcends through reason. This is how Kant describes man, as he brings the Enlightenment to its conclusion.[509]

[505] Ibid., 16-17.
[506] Ibid., 18.
[507] Dulles, *Evangelization*, 116.
[508] Balthasar, *Love Alone*, 22-3.
[509] Ibid., 31.

He focuses on recent developments:

> [man] is a creature that can harmonize his irreconcilable proportions, his dialectical intertwining of *grandeur* and *misere*, only by looking at his reflection in the God-man. Herein lies the beginning of the existential apologetic, or the 'method of immanence'.[510]

The approach changes as a transformation from ancient religion to an increasingly anthropocentric belief system takes place:

> The confessional controversies and the disenchantment of the world cooperate to bring about the abrupt turn to a purely human and predominantly ethical religion. Christianity becomes all the more easily understood in light of this religion, insofar as both make universal human claims and both therefore possess an essential inward drive to universality.[511]

Balthasar describes how this came about through a different fundamental understanding of man in the wider reality:

> This reduction culminates in Kant. For him, everything that is humanly knowable in the strict sense is restricted to the synthesis of sensible intuition and concept, while all the ideas that lie beyond this, in 'pure reason', prove to be 'practical' conditions of possibility of ethical behavior.[512]

This means that an anthropocentric system then moulds our understanding of that which came before:

> For Kant, here lies 'the solution to the problem of the New Man, and even the Bible seems to have envisioned nothing else'; this is 'the teaching of the biblical faith, insofar as it can be deduced from ourselves by means of reason', which is what Kant calls 'pure religious faith'.[513]

Despite Catholic defensiveness, it was inevitable that these ideas would develop within the Church: 'Catholic theology, too, eventually thought that it also had to make use of this method of verification, which had become the modern one, and it did so at the end of the nineteenth century in what became known as modernism.'[514] The fundamental problem for Christianity is that 'the anthropological reduction ends in a human being who understands himself and thereby also lays hold of the world and God'.[515] The human becomes the primary person in the faith relationship: God is rendered the lesser partner, man rises above him, and pride grows as love diminishes. In time, God becomes

[510] Ibid., 31-2.
[511] Ibid., 32.
[512] Ibid., 33.
[513] Ibid., 34.
[514] Ibid., 39-40.
[515] Ibid., 46.

unnecessary, then optional, then problematic, and discarded. The lack of apologetical preparation enables falling away.

The next chapter, 'The Third Way of Love', presents love as the true Christian way. To show the significant difference, Balthasar first recognises the two problematic interpretations of Christianity:

> Neither religious philosophy nor existence can provide the criterion for the genuineness of Christianity. In philosophy, man discovers what is humanly knowable about the depths of being; in existence, man lives out what is humanly livable. But Christianity disappears the moment it allows itself to be dissolved into a transcendental precondition of human self understanding in thinking or living, knowledge or deed.[516]

He thus rejects with Barth the position that apologetical reason is necessary for faith[517] as he sets up the two positions, with the former including teaching the ordinary faithful what to believe and how to perform, rather than why, and the latter to be mistaken:

> Is there thus no path between the Scylla of extrinsicism and the Charybdis of immanentism? Is it not possible to perceive Christianity in such a way that, avoiding both the 'blind faith' of the simple (haplousteroi) and the gnostic pretensions of those who understand (gnostikoi), we could perceive the genuine evidence of the light that breaks forth from revelation without at the same time reducing that light to the measure and laws of human perception?[518]

This Irenaic solution is to imitate the Bishop of Lyons whom he held in high regard by educating the faithful to live the faith by avoiding both blind obedience and prideful temptations. Such a call includes necessarily educating the faithful, as the late 2nd century Doctor of Unity did in the final 'apostolic' apologetic before legal-philosophical apologetics became the norm.

God is not only a greatly important other:

> I can 'understand' a love that has been given to me only as a miracle; I cannot understand it through empirical or transcendental analysis, not even in terms of knowledge about the human 'nature' that includes us both—for the Thou will always remain an 'other' to me.[519]

But he is also the origin and source of perception that grows into appreciation of something far greater than the human person:

> In the experiences of extraordinary beauty—whether in nature or in art—we are able to grasp a phenomenon in its distinctiveness that otherwise remains veiled. What we

[516] Ibid., 51.
[517] Dulles, *Evangelization*, 117; also, Dulles, 'Preface', 7.
[518] Balthasar, *Love Alone*, 51-2.
[519] Ibid., 52.

> encounter in such an experience is as overwhelming as a miracle, something we will never get over. And yet it possesses its intelligibility precisely as a miracle[.][520]

This is the Christian God who both holds us in being and inspires us to reach out to him. And in apologetical terms, he is the God who is presented, explained, and, if necessary, defended. Balthasar, probably without realising it, was offering an apologetical text to guide the Council.

Vatican II came after years of tension between those seeking reform and others holding on to the old image and understanding of God, Christ, Church that had served and held together the post-Reformation Church through the tumult of European history. Balthasar did not simply reject the old for the new; he eschewed the modernist approach that was too anthropocentric. He proposed a third way, a ressourcement, a return to Christianity proper, without the defences or new interpretations. His sort-of-apologia is itself congruent with the re-establishing of the Petrine call for apologetics to include preparation, engagement and a proper and genuine Christian manner, which was to be called for in the Council's documents.

[520] Ibid., 52-3.

3.2 – Apologetics in the Second Vatican Council Documents

While the word 'apologetics', or a variation of it, is not present in any of the 16 Vatican II documents, by looking through the lens of the Petrine call there can be seen an inclusion of apologetics in many documents in terms of the identity and nature of apologetics. Regarding this content, Siniscalchi recognises that 'Vatican II did not elaborate on any *method* of apologetics in detail. But this does not mean the Council Fathers did not see reasoned defences of the faith as unimportant or as irrelevant'.[521]

The reason behind the absence of 'apologetics' is surely that the Council was reforming a theological approach that was heavily imbued with apologetics developed from Justinian thinking, and any use of 'apologetics' would be associated with the traditional understanding regarding Church, faith, theology, etc. Whether a deliberate choice to avoid the term, and whether 'Petrine apologetics' was understood in any way, is unclear. There were many voices around the Council and long after it[522] but no clear message from the Council Fathers themselves.

Recognition of apologetics content in the Council's documents has been very rare. Beyond my own work, I have only found two examples of this, one being in Dulles's *History*: 'The preferred method of Vatican II seems to have been a confident, appealing, and irenic presentation of Catholic doctrine rather than an attempt to prove its truth. Yet the Council did affirm: [quote from DH 14]'[523] The DH quote in Dulles is examined in this chapter along with several others identified by Siniscalchi.[524] The purpose of the Part 1 study of the conciliar texts was to develop a working definition for apologetics but here it is to unpack the meaning of them.

With a more focused examination, it has been possible to identify in ten Council documents various content identifiable as apologetical in Petrine terms – preparation, response to others regarding the faith, and doing so in a Christian manner. These are in four categories:

a. Specific calls to general apologetics in LG, DH, and DV;
b. Educational context in GE;
c. Social context in AA and;
d. Others – CD, AG, NA, OT, GS.

Each of these are examined in this chapter. The examples in the documents in the first group have already been briefly looked at in Part 1 as they helped build a working definition for reference purposes in Part 2 but they will be examined in the wider context here.

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[521] Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 18.
[522] Several years ago, I received a peer review that described the content of Sheehan's book as belonging 'in a theological museum'. It is presumed that the reviewer had not read the updated book.
[523] Dulles, *History*, 325.
[524] Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 17-26.

Identifying 1Pt 3:15-16 in the Documents

There are two ways of detecting the presence of 1Pt 3:15-16 in the Council texts:

1. Identify a direct reference where 1Pt 3:15 and/or 16 is named, or
2. Recognising the language – in terminology and style – of the original scripture.

The first method uses a search (Ctrl-F) of each document, using several search phrases: 'Pet', 'Pt ', '1 P'. Each mention of 'Peter' is also checked for any reference with linked content and naming Peter without a direct reference also. Two references were found: LG 10 and GE 2.[525]

The second method is identifying text sufficiently similar to (any part of) the 1Pt 3:15-16 text regardedable as a paraphrase of Scripture and which fits the context, therefore being no accidental inclusion. For this, I am indebted to Siniscalchi's first chapter which clearly describes several Council document extracts with apologetical links.

It is necessary to bear in mind the words in Scripture that are the foundation of Christian apologetics, and also to understand them in direct language.

1Pt 3:15-16 states:

> **15** […] Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; **16** and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

In simple terms, this is always to be ready to respond about your faith in a Christian manner.

Group a: General Apologetical Calls

Of the three clear apologetical calls in the 16 conciliar documents, two are paraphrases of 1Pt 3:15-6 – the defining scriptural text in this study – and another has clear links to the Letter of Jude. Possible links between Paul's letters and the Council's documents are beyond the scope of this study.

Paraphrasing Peter

Two documents contain a clear paraphrase of the 1Pt 3:15-16 text: *Lumen Gentium* 10 and *Dignitatis Humanae* 14. They differ from one another in wording and somewhat in focus but both are clearly based upon the Peter's apologetical call. Their similarity and any differences can be examined by looking at each element in the three texts.

[525] The online English version of the document has an error, which is not in the original Latin version: the exact reference is '(cf. Peter 3:15)', which has the '1' of '1Peter' omitted.

The scriptural verses contain three basic elements, which are:

1. Be prepared, that is, educated and ready;
2. To explain, defend, bear witness, respond;
3. To do so in a Christian manner.

These can be seen by separating the Petrine text:

1. 'Always be prepared'
2. 'to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you,'
3. 'yet do it with gentleness and reverence; **16** and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.'

While it could be technically argued that there are only two elements – be prepared to do apologetics, and do it appropriately – this study recognises the three elements in turn to decrease the possibility of the active 'doing' element being subsumed into either or both of the other two elements.

Paraphrasing Peter: LG 10

LG (1964) is the earlier document. LG 10 describes how the baptised are a 'spiritual house and a holy priesthood'. Christ has 'called them out of darkness into His marvellous light' and they should both 'persever[e] in prayer and prais[e] God', which references Acts 2:42-7, and in doing so 'present themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God', which references Rom 12:1 where Paul entreats a deep conversion to God. This is to grow as an active Christian, undergo theosis, and love God, while the scriptural references call to mind the Early Church persecutions and a deep dedication to God, not the world.

Then, LG 10 turns to focus outwardly, being conceivably a love of neighbour. Rather than a feasible focus on acts of mercy, the Fathers chose a more direct evangelical activity; however, this is only in one sense, for it is not a specific calling of others but a more apologetical approach in LG 10:

> Everywhere on earth they[526] must bear witness to Christ and give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them.

An initial point of note is the term 'to bear witness', also used in GE 2, which was promulgated a year later. Both specifically apologetical quotes have a footnote reference to 1Pt 3:15. The relationship between these two, whether coincidental or purposeful, is unclear but there is a strong similarity to 1Pt 3:15-16 especially when parsed.

[526] The word 'they' can refer either to the original subject 'The baptized' from the 2nd sentence of the paragraph or 'all the disciples of Christ' in the sentence preceding the quote examined here. For continuity in LG 10, these should be considered synonymous.

The Petrine elements separated above can be partly seen in LG 10's wording:

1. 'Everywhere on earth'
2. 'they must bear witness to Christ and give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them.'

Here, the first element – 'always be prepared' is similar because of the similarity to the universal aspect in 'Everywhere on earth' but there is no specific mention of preparation, which could be considered intrinsic but it is not technically presumable.

The second element is more powerful than the scriptural call because of the strength of the auxiliary verb 'must'; therefore, this should be understood as a command. The use of 'bear witness' can be confirmed in the GE 2 reference as being consonant with a consistent recognition of 1Peter. The use of 'give an answer' also confirms the scriptural call and a clarification of the type of 'bearing witness', which could be arguably only by action or deed.

The original Latin text has the four statements in one sentence: 'persever[e] in prayer and prais[e] God', 'present themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God', 'Everywhere on earth they must bear witness to Christ', and 'give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them'. So, while it is arguable that bearing witness and giving an answer are not synonymous at least to some extent, the latter of the two is definitely apologetics, which is confirmed by the references. The English version has a footnote reference to '1 Pt. 3:15', while the reference in the Latin original is embedded in the text. This puts beyond any doubt the presence of apologetics in the Council Fathers' thinking.

However, a possible interpretation is that bearing witness can include showing, verbally or by example, which regards the third Petrine element. This would mean re-presenting the elements of the LG 10 quote thus:

1. 'Everywhere on earth'
2. 'and give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them'
3. 'they must bear witness to Christ'

In this way, the bearing witness is the appropriate approach and Christian manner of representing Christ. However, this is only one interpretation of 'bear witness' as it has several meanings, most of which are related to giving verbal witness.

Paraphrasing Peter: DH 14

One of the final batch of documents of 7th December 1965 contained the Council's clearest and most developed use of 1Pt 3:15-1, in the second paragraph of DH 14; the first paragraph gives the context.

Bearing in mind the document's religious freedom theme, in DH 14 the Christian should 'be faithful to the divine command, "teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19-20)': a key

message of the Council regarding evangelisation. The first focus is to pray for all people, bringing the mission under God's banner. But then the paragraph continues into the area of preparation, which does not necessarily point to apologetics yet: 'In the formation of their consciences, the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church.' Then comes a powerful statement of the teaching authority of the Church, which again does not necessarily involve apologetics: 'For the Church is, by the will of Christ, the teacher of the truth. It is her duty to give utterance to, and authoritatively to teach, that truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by her authority those principles of the moral order which have their origins in human nature itself.' The evangelistic context is recalled next, even to the point of martyrdom: 'Furthermore, let Christians walk in wisdom in the face of those outside, "in the Holy Spirit, in unaffected love, in the word of truth" (2 Cor. 6:6-7), and let them be about their task of spreading the light of life with all confidence and apostolic courage, even to the shedding of their blood.' This is a strong call to evangelisation.

The blending of evangelisation and apologetics[527] is evident as the focus moves more to the latter in the second DH 14 paragraph, and the subsequent wording is an unambiguous in its paraphrasing of Peter's call:

> The disciple is bound by a grave obligation toward Christ, his Master, ever more fully to understand the truth received from Him, faithfully to proclaim it, and vigorously to defend it, never – be it understood – having recourse to means that are incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel. At the same time, the charity of Christ urges him to love and have prudence and patience in his dealings with those who are in error or in ignorance with regard to the faith.

Using the same framework as before, the text can be broken down as per the 1Pt 3:15-16 model:

1. Be prepared, that is, educated and ready;
2. To explain, defend, bear witness, respond;
3. To do so in a Christian manner.

The DH 14 quote can be broken down accordingly:

1. 'The disciple is bound by a grave obligation toward Christ, his Master, ever more fully to understand the truth received from Him,'
2. 'faithfully to proclaim it, and vigorously to defend it,'
3. 'never – be it understood – having recourse to means that are incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel. At the same time, the charity of Christ urges him to love and have prudence and patience in his dealings with those who are in error or in ignorance with regard to the faith.'

[527] See ch4.4.

While the Petrine structure is clearly emulated here, the language choices are important to note in comparison with the scriptural original:

1. ‘Always be prepared’
2. ‘to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you,’
3. ‘yet do it with gentleness and reverence; **16** and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.’

A vocabulary comparison shows that in line 1. the DH 14 wording is very strong – the Petrine command is a standard order to be in a continuous state of readiness, but DH proclaims the preparedness to be ‘a grave obligation toward Christ’ and that the level of preparedness should continually be improving: ‘ever more fully to understand.’ This indicates a life-long journey ending only at ‘the hour of one’s death’, and not resting having attained an Apologetics M.A., publishing a book, helping convert 10 atheists, or having an apologetics podcast with a million subscribers. Humility and an ongoing desire to improve are key characteristics of an apologist.

Regarding line 2., while Peter calls the apologist to defend/explain/answer/ respond to any person questioning his faith, DH again uses more substantiated wording in two connected statements. Taking the subject from line 1. as ‘truth’, DH calls the apologist (the faithful, being the Church’s ‘children’ in the first DH 14 paragraph) ‘faithfully to proclaim [truth]’ and ‘vigorously to defend [truth]’. The first DH 14 paragraph had established that truth is what the Church teaches; therefore, all faithful are called in DH 14 to proclaim faithfully and vigorously defend the Church’s teachings. This is somewhat reminiscent of the wording used in pre-Vatican II apologetics; this suggests that the departure from preconciliar thinking was not as complete some would have it after the Council, and with DH being one of the final texts then the reason for such a strong apologetical call can only be speculated upon.

As in the Petrine call, DH 14 also modifies the manner of the response. The structure of a short point followed by a longer explanation is used in both texts: DH’s ‘never – be it understood – having recourse to means that are incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel’ is comparable with Peter’s ‘yet do it with gentleness and reverence’. Then in Scripture is v16: ‘and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame’, which is clearly echoed in the Council’s ‘At the same time, the charity of Christ urges him to love and have prudence and patience in his dealings with those who are in error or in ignorance with regard to the faith’. The aggiornamento spirit is perceptible where Peter’s clear rejoinder to avoid poor reactions to social persecution so as to witness to others becomes DH’s call to love and patience which points more to the effect on the direct recipient of the *apologia*. However, neither can be regarded as regarding an exclusively defined audience.

Recalling Jude in DV

Part 1 shows the link between Jude and DV. Further unpacking is useful here particularly regarding the strength of the vocabulary and intensity of the message.

This study of the identity of apologetics has emphasised the word *apologia* as a response but it has often been identified with 'defence', including in some scriptural translations[528] of 1Pt 3:15. The 'response' emphasis here has been to de-emphasise the common Justinian legal/martial connotations of 'defence', which can be unhelpful when focusing on the Petrine elements of preparation, response and a good Christian manner. However, sometimes 'defence' may be the most appropriate. The conciliar Fathers did not shy away from making robust statements about apologetics, which is surprising considering the general interpretation of the Council's attitude towards it (see ch. 3.3).

The Letter of Jude is brief yet powerful in content, wording, and style. It exposes how some godless people (v4), probably Docetic or early Gnostic, have tried to tempt the faithful to immorality by infiltrating them and misinterpreting the teachings. Jude is clear: 'I must write and ask you to defend the faith that God has once for all given to his people' (v3). He is urgently asking that that handed on (tradere) to the present believers be faithfully adhered to in direct contradiction to the temptations on offer. This call is important to the identity of apologetics.

Dei Verbum (8) recalls and cites this verse in Jude:

> Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3)

From DV's chapter II, named 'Handing on Divine Revelation', it focuses on the source of Scripture and it being part of the Tradition of the Church. Handed on from the earliest generation, from the witnesses of Jesus Christ the canon of Scripture developed, giving us today the Holy Scriptures. In itself, DV is part apologetic, explaining the importance of Scripture and Tradition. However, it was perhaps a two-fold surprise for some reformers regarding two – for some reformers, polemical – words: defending Tradition.

DV 8's call was a response to the many decades, even several centuries of Scripture being systematically dismantled with, for example, the historical-critical method and Historical Jesus studies, etc., since the 18th century doubts of Reimarus and Lessing that culminated in the 1980s-90s 'Jesus Seminar', which decided that the Gospels were significantly fabricated.[529]

The strength of language in the DV 8 response with the Jude paraphrase and reference is notable. To avoid losing the essence, the flavour, even the saltiness of the faith, we are called to 'fight in defense of the faith', meaning that 'defense' cannot be situated solely in the legal context but that it can hold a more martial, even violent tone

[528] Including but not limited to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and Revised Standard Version (RSV), but many others (including Douay Reims) use 'answer'.
[529] See also ch2a.1,2.

in fighting for the faith. This even surpasses DH 14's powerful call to 'vigorously defend [the truth]'. Thus, the Council was not overly careful and sensitive regarding the wording of its apologetical calls.

Siniscalchi states regarding the Council that 'the task of defending the faith is commended by the bishops, especially as believers become more accountable to God's standards of discipleship'.[530] In defining apologetics according to the Council's definitive statements, all the faithful are addressed regarding the defending, or more generally *explaining*, the faith. As they mature in the faith, becoming more actualised as Christian disciples – a main Vatican II theme – all the faithful should learn about the faith and use this understanding appropriately when communicating with others, including those who do not share the faith. This should be done in a respectful, loving manner as a representative of Christ and the Church, in a manner indicative of Christian love. To do otherwise is not to act in a Christian way and certainly not be apologetically sound according to the Petrine call in Scripture.

Group b: Educational Context

Focusing on the general sense of education, rather than the more specific apologetical preparation, GE refers to schooling and the education (normatively) of children. Within this is included an apologetical element for children, which extends to adults, meaning that an apologetical dimension of learning should be included in Christian education.

Other than in LG 10, this is the Council's only direct reference to the Petrine call in 1Peter 3:15-16. GE 2 does not as such paraphrase Scripture. The context is important: GE 2, one of the briefer GE sections,[531] is entitled 'Christian Education'. With GE having identified the two ends of education as being socio-economically fitting to society and growing as individual persons, GE 2 is a very powerful statement on Christian education being far more than just general education, that the faithful are duty-bound to ensure children receive such education, and that it is integral to Christian participation in society. This is a practical unpacking of the Petrine and conciliar calls for all to be apologetically prepared to respond in a Christian manner when questioned or challenged about the faith.

Apologetical education in GE 2 is not simply to become knowledgeable but to learn how to use it:

> moreover, that *aware of their calling, they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them (cf. Peter 3:15)* but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society. [Italics mine]

[530] Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 18.
[531] It has 257 words.

Focusing only on the italicised part above, the subject ('their', 'they', 'them') is identified at the beginning of GE 2: 'the baptized', for they are 'all Christians [who] have become by rebirth of water and the Holy Spirit a new creature'. Therefore, all baptised should receive a Christian education which makes them '*aware of their calling*' as Christians. Being aware of their Christian calling, they should receive an education where '*they learn […] how to bear witness to the hope that is in them (cf. Peter 3:15)*'. This states that Christians learn how to be apologetically-capable.

For all to be apologetically-capable, a significant change is necessary from the generally-held identity of apologetics, which is Justinian and thus elite and intellectual, rather than the original, ordinary, even organic. It can be argued that the sea-change in educational access in the twentieth century enabled the Council to call for this change, as GE recognises in its Introduction. However, the fact that the Council chose to specifically reference and partially paraphrase 1Peter is very important to the Council's message concerning both apologetics and education, their identities, and how they merge: apologetics is integral to Christian education because it should prepare the Christian to engage actively in society. And beyond this, preparation leading to apologetical awareness should mean the learner becomes aware of the need for further education as the desire to become more apologetically capable grows. Fundamentally, apologetics is highly intrinsic to fulfilling the Christian calling and the faithful should be prepared for this through Christian education.

The wider context is important – the calling is described further in the whole GE 2 text in seven main statements:[532]

1. 'that the baptized, while they are gradually introduced the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of Faith they have received,'
2. 'and that they learn in addition how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth (cf. John 4:23) especially in liturgical action,'
3. 'and be conformed in their personal lives according to the new man created in justice and holiness of truth (Eph. 4:22-24);'
4. 'also that they develop into perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:13)'
5. 'and strive for the growth of the Mystical Body;'
6. 'moreover, that aware of their calling, they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them (cf. Peter 3:15)'
7. 'but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society.'

[532] See Stuart Nicolson, 'Theology of Education in the Second Vatican Council's *Gravissimum Educationis*', *Theology and Philosophy of Education* 2022, vol.1, no.1, 32–39, https://www.tape.academy/index.php/tape/article/view/10/1.

First, the educational process is shown in theological understanding: more 'knowledge of the mystery of salvation' is connected with increasingly being 'aware of the gift of Faith' given to the faithful. Thus, the relationship with God and a growing desire to be with him and like him is developing, thus also readiness for eternal life with him.

Second, integral to this, the Christian increasingly learns an important part of this relationship: how to worship God 'in spirit and truth', being Christ's prophecy to the Samaritan woman regarding post-Temple worship. The Council emphasises that learning about worship should be 'especially in liturgical action'.[533]

Third, Christian education is a conversion process (see Eph 4:22-24), discarding the old and taking on the new; the journey to God is the faithful participating with knowledge and realising it in their lives, becoming more like him. Two theological elements are emphasised – justice and holiness of truth – which are decreasingly common characteristics in the then modern (nearly postmodern) world. This is the process of becoming more like God 'in but not of the world'.

Fourth, the faithful 'develop[ing] into perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ' clearly describes theosis: Christian development with a teleological focus in the direction of becoming as Christ-like as possible. The Eph 4 text speaks to both individual and Christian community.

Fifth, this community, 'the Mystical Body', is what the Christian must learn to 'strive for'. God is love – the opposite of aloneness – and the teleological task of the faithful is participating in building the Kingdom of God, which gives purpose and meaning to the focus and hard work of the Christian life.

Sixth, the awareness and learning developed in the Christian needs to be used to represent God to others. The Council's focus is significantly pastoral and missiological and it calls the faithful – 'the apostolate of the laity'[534] – to 'bear witness' to Christ when dealing with those in the Church, other Christians, and non-Christians of good will.[535]

Seventh, the Christian is called also to assist in 'the Christian formation of the world' which occurs when in our humanity we understand ourselves and our relationship with God, cooperating with God's grace which benefits all of society, while helping others also to do so – including removing obstacles to the faith. Thus, man with God builds, creates, the world in the best possible way, imbuing it with all that God wills, which recalls that God created this world for man (cf. Gen 1:28) and it is our task to cooperate with God in it.

Thus, Christian education is to develop Christians to be capable and actively doing and being as Christians. They do this by learning about their faith, worshipping God especially liturgically, conforming to justice and truth, growing to be like God (theosis), developing the Church and the faithful, fulfilling their calling through apologetics, and participate in and thus Christianise society. In each of these, the ability to explain,

[533] In SC (see, for example, 48, 115).
[534] AA 1.
[535] AA 27.

understand, and carry out these are intrinsically also apologetical as they are about learning, which involves removing obstacles to not understanding and actualising them.

The seventh statement is the second part of properly educated Christians acting by being '*aware of their calling*'. Here, they are to '*to learn […]* how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society'. This can be for now abbreviated to 'participating' or 'engaging'.

Christian education leads to educated faithful being '*aware of their calling*'. This developing awareness leads to learning about apologetics and participating. When engaging with the world, and thus 'contribut[ing] to the good of the whole society', the prepared faithful are able to explain their position, act as an ambassador of Christ, and help remove obstacles from the path of others' understanding. Therefore, to '*bear witness to the hope that is in them*' is not divided from but integral to the seventh statement, to 'help in the Christian formation of the world'. Apologetical preparation builds the person and continues the proper creation of the world.

Regarding the third Petrine element, a good Christian manner, GE 2 explains this with a similar point, albeit aiming at wider society rather than the recipient and others nearby. This can reflect the wider scope of communication today. While including something of the grace a Christian can bring to his environment, apologetically this includes credibility, the transcendentals and, most of all, love. The Council expresses the Petrine third element as Christian witness being integral to participating in improving society, as well as representing Christ. The third element is comparable in 1 Peter 3 and GE 2 respectively:

> **15** […] yet do it with gentleness and reverence; **16** and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

> to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society.

Both are consistent with Christian love being integral to the participation and engagement. The first is a clear word of warning to those who might easily be unpleasant, aggressive, or self-important (etc.) in their explanation of the faith while the second is far more positive in its focus. Both are fitting to the time and context of the wider message of Peter and the Council. Whether the GE 2 authors deliberately intended this as an interpretation of Peter is unclear; it may have been subconscious linking or a coincidence.

With the scriptural reference, the Petrine language, and the general message, GE 2 is unquestionably a Petrine apologetical text. The Petrine three elements and the universal aspect are identifiable: education and growth as preparation, bearing witness and 'participation' as response and engagement, and a good manner consistent with Christian love; this is for 'all the faithful'.

Apologetics should never be merely for the sake of knowledge but should at least have the potential to bear fruit. As a response (prepared for and done in a Christian manner), it should be caused by a question or challenge: anything from a doubting Christian's internal dialogue or the thorough inquiring of catechetical students, to those with innocent questions or hostile challenges to the faith. In Petrine terms, all apologetical preparation is practical theology in a state of potentiality. Without the practical (sometimes pastoral) element of engagement, that is, response, apologetics is merely a sister approach to systematic theology. For the Council Fathers – as shown above – apologetics is applied communication in the form of responding to others regarding the faith: very much an updating of the original Petrine call. Covered in a wider context regarding society in GS, this is more developed and focused regarding communities in AA.

In a preview and outline of the Council's intentions John XXIII on Christmas Day, 1961 included mention of the 'apostolate of the laity'[536] and stated that the Council's effect would 'pervade all human activities'.[537] This remarkable statement regarding the Church kept for centuries behind its walls meant a sea-change in approach regarding communication and engagement of the faithful within society. While HG had softened the policy and even encouraged Catholic involvement in academia and society, a whole new culture of encounter for the laity is set out in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.

A term used by the Council to express a form of apologetics is 'to bear witness', that is, to carry and present (as a witness) the Christian faith in a way that is apparent to others (i.e., to witness to them); this can be through demeanour, actions, character, etc. GE, presented on 28th October 1965, uses the term with a direct reference to the Petrine call: 'moreover, that aware of their calling, they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them (cf. Peter 3:15)'.[538] Here, 'bear witness' is used as a synonym of respond, answer, defend, etc., and is fundamentally a speaking out, a reply, *apologia*. Weeks later, AA was presented (18th November) and has three applications of 'bear witness', which may point to this idea as a theme of the Council's final period. Using the GE 2 key, it is reasonable that this term in AA should be understood in apologetical terms, that is, preparing, responding, in a Christian manner. The term 'bearing witness' is also included in evangelisation,[539] which is closely related to apologetics.

This study recognises apologetics in the original Petrine terms, including being for all the faithful, rather than the Justinian version limited to intellectuals, clerics, elites. Vatican II purposefully included the laity – thus, all Christians – in its call for apologetics. AA starts with the wider call: 'To intensify the apostolic activity of the people of God…'[540] The first section recognises the earliest lay activity: 'The apostolate of the laity

[536] John XXIII, 'Humanae Salutis', *The Holy See*, 11th October 1962, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/la/apost_constitutions/1961/documents/hf_j-xxiii_apc_19611225_humanae-salutis.html, 10.
[537] Ibid., 12.
[538] GE 2.
[539] For example, in AG 24.
[540] AA 1.

derives from their Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it. Sacred Scripture clearly shows how spontaneous and fruitful such activity was at the very beginning of the Church.' The purpose of this is then given: 'Our own times require of the laity no less zeal: in fact, modern conditions demand that their apostolate be broadened and intensified.' While this study holds that many conditions prior to modern times also demanded the laity's activity, particularly in apologetical preparation and capability, this is a powerful statement of *ressourcement*.

AA 2 has the first clear apologetical call. After describing the role of bishops (by extension, all clergy) in 'teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in [Christ's] name and power' it adds that 'the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.' This recognition is further developed:

> They exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of men.

The laity are included in the evangelisation of society, which includes 'bear[ing] witness to Christ'. One might argue that GE 2 speaks of bearing witness as apologetics and AA 2 as evangelisation, but this would suggest a careless conflation by the Council Fathers and also ignore the fact that apologetics is an intrinsic and integral part of evangelisation: if an evangelist makes a faith statement but cannot then answer another's question about the faith then that is not effective evangelisation.[541]

The laity's role can be evangelising or catechetical, both of which include apologetics:

> an apostolate of this kind does not consist only in the witness of one's way of life; a true apostle looks for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to non-believers with a view to leading them to faith, or to the faithful with a view to instructing, strengthening, and encouraging them to a more fervent life.[542]

This development of the faith within groups of believers is very important to developing a culture of faith, where it is not unusual or uncomfortable to speak of one's faith or to pray together outside of specific situations (liturgy, meals, etc.). As noted in Part 2c, if this had been developed amongst the laity earlier, it can be speculated that the Reformation could have been quite different.

In a very important chapter (III) of AA, the areas of development for lay activity are set out. AA 11 speaks of the family – 'the first and vital cell of society'[543] – and the importance of vertical communication, between older and younger generations, is covered in AA 12. How to participate in Church-life, both local and beyond, is the topic

[541] This is expanded in ch4.4.
[542] AA 6.
[543] AA 11.

of AA 10. When they 'work or practice their profession or study or reside or spend their leisure time or have their companionship', AA 13 considers how the laity should engage with the wider community:

> The laity fulfill this mission of the Church in the world especially by conforming their lives to their faith so that they become the light of the world as well as by practicing honesty in all their dealings so that they attract all to the love of the true and the good and finally to the Church and to Christ.

Balthasar referred to 'the light of the world'[544] but AA unpacks it more, connecting it with credibility, and this recalls the third Petrine element, a good Christian manner. To bear witness to Christ is to live in a good Christian manner, being credible, and not only speaking thus. Then AA 14 considers how the laity should, where possible, participate in wider society, in public matters and responsibilities:

> Catholics skilled in public affairs and adequately enlightened in faith and Christian doctrine should not refuse to administer public affairs since by doing this in a worthy manner they can both further the common good and at the same time prepare the way for the Gospel.

This is Catholic Social Doctrine – also an area for developing apologetics practically.[545] Increased involvement of the laity throughout society is a means of both bearing witness to Christ and an aim of apologetics: Christianising the world.[546]

For this change to occur for the laity, AA 28 recognises the need for qualitative development, in apologetical terms preparation:

> The apostolate can attain its maximum effectiveness only through a diversified and thorough formation. This is demanded not only by the continuous spiritual and doctrinal progress of the lay person himself but also by the accommodation of his activity to circumstances varying according to the affairs, persons, and duties involved. This formation for the apostolate should rest upon those bases which have been stated and proclaimed by this most holy council in other documents.[547]

This statement is – intentionally or not – precisely how to prepare for apologetics as per the Petrine call. Learning a wide range of themes and topics to a significant depth is necessary. This requires long-term learning about theological matters in as many areas as possible – from systematic to practical, ecclesial to canon law, etc, and this must be developed in conjunction with spiritual growth. Rather than being a philosopher or

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[544] Balthasar, *Bastions*, 62.
[545] Beyond the scope of this study, this is explored in Stuart Nicolson, 'Community Cohesion and the Church's Social Teachings in Light of the Virus Restrictions', *Caritas et veritas* 12, no. 1 (Dec 2022): 139-59.
[546] Cf. GE 2.
[547] The footnote here in AA 28 names: LG 9-17, 30-38, 39-42; UR 4, 6, 7, 12; and AA 29.

lawyer, the Petrine apologist is a Christian who represents God, Christ, Church in engagement.

Preparation for Christian life in society in AA 29 is the same as for effective apologetics: it should be based upon the person, not a list of requirements necessary before one can be considered capable:

> In addition to spiritual formation, a solid doctrinal instruction in theology, ethics, and philosophy adjusted to differences of age, status, and natural talents, is required. The importance of general culture along with practical and technical formation should also be kept in mind.

There is a tension between the layperson and the needs of either apostolate or apologetics. In the past, one was judged as either capable or not for apologetics using certain (generally academic) standards. For a universal apologetical development, the approach must regard how to support the layperson in becoming apologetically-capable. At whichever natural intelligence level, a certain understanding of Christianity must be developed. AA 29 promotes a more practical skill that is also important: 'To cultivate good human relations, truly human values must be fostered, especially the art of living fraternally and cooperating with others and of striking up friendly conversation with them.' Also important is being sufficiently able and humble to direct the recipient to another Christian if one cannot capably respond to a question or challenge. By fitting preparation to the person rather than arbitrary standards, it now serves the faithful and enables them according to potential, which is a far more personalistic approach that develops human dignity.

The approach needs to be fluid and fit the person to properly develop potential capabilities:

> Since formation for the apostolate cannot consist in merely theoretical instruction, from the beginning of their formation the laity should gradually and prudently learn how to view, judge and do all things in the light of faith as well as to develop and improve themselves along with others through doing, thereby entering into active service to the Church. This formation, always in need of improvement because of the increasing maturity of the human person and the proliferation of problems, requires an ever deeper knowledge and planned activity. In the fulfillment of all the demands of formation, the unity and integrity of the human person must be kept in mind at all times so that his harmony and balance may be safeguarded and enhanced.[548]

The first half recognises how the personal skills of the layperson must develop to become an effective Church member in critical areas in dealing with himself and others. Then the focus moves to the education/training/preparation itself and how this must be fluid, reactive, even sensitive to the extent that it is always developing because it is interlinked with the development of that most complex and unpredictable thing: the human being.

[548] AA 29.

But always underpinning this are the teachings, standards, morals, and character of the Church in order to become a good representative of God, Christ, and Church:

> In this way the lay person engages himself wholly and actively in the reality of the temporal order and effectively assumes his role in conducting the affairs of this order. At the same time, as a living member and witness of the Church, he renders the Church present and active in the midst of temporal affairs.[549]

Thus, the formation/preparation of the layperson-apologist needs to be both sensitive to the person as well as appropriate to the Christian faith. The content of AA 29 in particular speaks of the lay apostolate but this is identical to the effective apologist in Petrine terms.

Recalling GE 2, AA 30 calls for formation to begin 'with the children's earliest education' which should develop and 'be perfected throughout their whole life in keeping with the demands of new responsibilities' and again with GE, AA 30 states that 'It is evident, therefore, that those who have the obligation to provide a Christian education also have the duty of providing formation for the apostolate.' This is the responsibility of families, faith groups, parishes, as well as schools. This call far surpasses Lateran IV's and is an unpacking of Peter's universal call.

It is difficult not to see Petrine apologetics in AA 31:

> In regard to the apostolate for evangelizing and sanctifying men, the laity must be specially formed to engage in conversation with others, believers, or non-believers, in order to manifest Christ's message to all men.
>
> Since in our times, different forms of materialism are spread far and wide even among Catholic, the laity should not only learn doctrine more diligently, especially those main points which are the subjects of controversy, but should also exhibit the witness of an evangelical life in contrast to all forms of materialism.

The first part focuses on verbal communication, including making responses to questions or challenges; the alternative is to refuse to answer, or to accept the words of one who speaks negatively or erroneously about the faith – a strange way to conduct a conversation about something one values. The second half regards Petrine preparation, calling for doctrinal learning, especially the problematic parts; engagement is thus expected and a good manner – in word and presentation – is required.

Finally, apologetical mistakes of the past are warned against: 'It is imperative also that the freedom and dignity of the person being helped be respected with the utmost consideration, that the purity of one's charitable intentions be not stained by seeking one's own advantage or by striving for domination.'[550]

In the context of lay apostolates, AA presents what is also an outline for the preparation and direction of lay apologists. The parallels are remarkable between the

[549] Ibid.
[550] AA 8.

Council document and the Petrine call that is universal and has the elements of preparation, response, and a good Christian manner.

Other Conciliar Apologetics

The examples here are several but not exhaustive and further research can identify apologetics more, such as in connection with evangelisation or preparing the faithful.

The three Petrine elements are detectable in Christus Dominus 13, which calls on bishops to 'guard that doctrine, teaching the faithful to defend and propagate it. In propounding this doctrine they should manifest the maternal solicitude of the Church toward all men whether they be believers or not.' When seen in apologetical terms historically, especially in light of c.11 of Lateran IV, the following may be interpreted as including apologetical preparation: 'With a special affection they should attend upon the poor and the lower classes to whom the Lord sent them to preach the Gospel.'

Further, in CD 13, bishops, having identified non-faithful willing to dialogue, 'These conversations on salvation ought to be noted for clarity of speech as well as humility and mildness in order that at all times truth may be joined to charity and understanding with love.' The final CD 13 paragraph calls bishops to use 'various media at hand nowadays for proclaiming Christian doctrine', from traditional methods of preaching and catechesis to educational establishments and journalists. These without question include apologetical themes and would include removing obstacles to the faith in recipients.

Regarding missions, *Ad Gentes* in several places promotes evangelisation of non-Christians,[551] dialogue,[552] preparation,[553] bearing witness,[554] and not being a 'stumbling-block',[555] all of which are inherent to apologetics – after all, without preparation, response regarding the faith, and a good Christian manner, missions would not be possible because apologetics is the response in engagement. Therefore, AG can be read with an apologetical lens to be Petrine; Justinian apologetics would likely not be so useful in such contexts. A full study of apologetics in the mission environment is beyond the scope of this study.

In dialogue with other faiths, *Nostra Aetate*, calls Christians to engagement with those of other faiths, which undoubtedly requires sufficient Christian preparation, leading to engagement with a good Christian manner. In general,

> The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to

[551] AG 30, 39-40.
[552] AG 16, 34, 41.
[553] For example, AG 16, 25-26, 39-41.
[554] AG 24, 40.
[555] AG 41.

> the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.[556]

Regarding 'Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.'[557] While there is no specifically apologetical call, these require Petrine apologetical elements to be in place.

The same applies to priestly formation in *Optatam Totius*. What the Council calls for is related to or imbued with the Petrine elements but are not explicit Petrine apologetical calls, for example,

> [students] are therefore to be prepared for the ministry of the word: that they might understand ever more perfectly the revealed word of God; that, meditating on it they might possess it more firmly, and that they might express it in words and in example; […] that they might know how to make Christ present to men, […] and that, having become the servants of all, they might win over all the more (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19).[558]

Finally, *Gaudium et Spes* includes several different apologetical inclusions. Siniscalchi identifies several apologetical themes. The most general, referring to a Christian response, is:

> […] the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come […][559]

Sinisalchi also identifies how man can know God through reason,[560] and that the Church's task includes 'repudiating, sorrowfully but as firmly as possible, those poisonous doctrines and actions which contradict reason',[561] with particular reference to 'modern atheism'.[562] As 'The Church "courteously invites atheists to examine the Gospel of Christ with an open mind."',[563] the role of apologetics in ensuing dialogue is surely integral. However, GS 62 speaks strongest to apologetics in three particular statements to academics:

> theologians, within the requirements and methods proper to theology, are invited to seek continually for more suitable ways of communicating doctrine to the men of their times

[556] NA 2.
[557] NA 3.
[558] OT 4.
[559] GS 4; cf. Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 19.
[560] GS 12 and DV 6; cf. Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 20.
[561] GS 21; cf. Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 20.
[562] GS 20.
[563] GS 21, quoted in Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 20.

> […]
> the deposit of Faith or the truths are one thing and the manner in which they are enunciated, in the same meaning and understanding, is another.
> […]
> In pastoral care, sufficient use must be made not only of theological principles, but also of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology, so that the faithful may be brought to a more adequate and mature life of faith.

This call to integrate different academic fields where possible is confirmed by Pope Francis, who adds that 'with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility, a creative apologetics […] would encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all'.[564] Therefore, it is the role of theologians to assist in the apologetical preparation of the faithful and also to engage with other academics apologetically. How the faithful can develop and use their apologetical capability in society is unpacked significantly in AA, unlocking the potential of original apologetics in the modern world. It is repeatedly clear that this is not an option for a few but a call to all. Various other documents touch upon apologetical themes, to clergy, in evangelisation and mission, and engaging in dialogue with other faiths. Without question, Vatican II valued and promoted apologetics according to the Petrine call, which confirms the proper nature and identity of apologetics.

[564] Francis, 'Evangelii Gaudium' (EG), *The Holy See*, 24th November 2013, 132, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

3.3 – Apologetics after the Council

Looking forwards with a lens of Petrine apologetics – preparation, engagement, and a Christian manner by all the faithful – from the perspective of the Vatican II documents provides a vision consistent with Balthasar's third way. Instead, the reform movement was strong and the post-conciliar period was a time of great changes, most obviously in the liturgy. There was no space for a Petrine lens in the two competing ways described by Balthasar – conservatism or progressivism, tradition or modernism. Particularly in the European sphere, apologetics was identified as Justinian and was thus deemed old and outdated, being seen to have been embedded in the old European system.

This chapter looks at change after the Council, which included apologetics, and, from the perspective of apologetics, at the development of FT to replace it. The post-conciliar popes have taught about apologetical matters, showing a development, and the organic apologetical spring in America is briefly considered.

Change after the Council

Changes enabled by the Council began long before the Council ended. Without question, regardless of one's preferences or politics, certain agendas drove much of the change, for example, liturgical changes that far outstripped not only SC but even the position of the very reform-minded Council set up by the new pope Paul VI in early 1964.[565] Such changes were described by conservatives even as iconoclasm,[566] but seen by others as progress: 'We don't do that anymore.'[567] Conversely, some conciliar impulses have not been properly implemented into ecclesial life, such as evangelisation,[568] despite strong promotion by Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*[569] and as the New Evangelisation by subsequent popes.

Identifying the ongoing reform as becoming problematic, Balthasar, amongst others, sought a different approach:

> The foundation of the journal Concilium in 1964 represented the most notable attempt to spread the message of Vatican II by a group of scholars representing the vast majority at Vatican II (Hans Küng, Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx). By 1970, the group had already had important defections (Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Joseph Ratzinger), signaling a rupture in the theologians' attitude toward Vatican II. A new international review, Communio, was

[565] Michael Hodges, 'The churches chewed out by Vatican II', *Catholic Herald,* 1st May 2021, https://catholicherald.co.uk/the-churches-chewed-out-by-vatican-ii/.
[566] Dwight Longenecker, 'Wrecking Churches: Iconoclasm or Continuity?', *Crisis,* 30th January 2015, https://www.crisismagazine.com/opinion/wrecking-churches-iconoclasm-continuity.
[567] Nicholas Frankovich, 'When They Take the Catholic Statues Away', *National Review*, 1st September 2017, https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/09/san-domenico-school-catholic-statues-removed-protest-tradition-domestic-church/.
[568] Cf. Dulles, *Evangelization*, 3-12.
[569] Cf. ibid., 14-23.

> founded in 1972 by Joseph Ratzinger (elected Pope Benedict XVI in 2005), Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Henri de Lubac as an attempt to offset the progressive Dutch-based journal Concilium and to 'scan the turmoil and confusion of battling ideologies and the clash of philosophies of life at the present day'.[570]

There was division regarding apologetics. The Petrine approach was overlooked after the Council as apologetics was defined according to what might be described as the straw man of Justinian apologetics in the closed European arena and was banished. During the Council, it was clear that this apologetics was being ushered off the theological stage and was now unwelcome, as described unhappily by Professor Gill in 1963: 'Gone are the days when Christian apologetics held a prominent position in theological endeavour.'[571]

The change in approach and mindset is captured well by Sr Maureen Sullivan:

> [An important] shift that had a significant impact on the way we do theology came in the way we *taught* the faith. We might label this the move from the 'apologetic' approach to the 'foundational' approach in teaching the faith. […] An apologetic approach to teaching is one that focuses on stating and defending the truths of the faith, often at the neglect of explaining what they mean.
>
> Anyone who received religious education in the US prior to Vatican II would have experienced the apologetic approach in the *Baltimore Catechism.* Good as it was on many levels, this catechism focused more on saying what the truths of the faith were and less on what those truths might mean in our everyday lives. And, given the world we lived in in the 1950s, that approach worked very well. We did not question our parents, police officers, or —heaven forbid—our religious leaders. We simply accepted the truths as given. But the 1960s ushered in a new way of thinking. What might have worked in the 1950s—that something is right because an authority figure said it was right—was no longer viable. The 1960s brought about the 'What does it mean?' generation. Now the task of theologians was not simply to reiterate the truths of the faith. No; now their task was to provide the foundation for the faith.[572]

Frustratingly from the Petrine perspective, she describes apologetics as defending the faith and not explaining it: the Justinian approach had become too catechetical and authoritative when it was applied non-intellectually. The development she and others sought was the explanation of Petrine apologetics, however, this was not recognised and new approaches were developed.

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[570] Massimo Faggioli, *A Council for the Global Church: Receiving Vatican II in History*, 1517 Media, 2015, 17, quoting Balthasar, https://ms.augsburgfortress.org/downloads/9781451472097_Chapter%201%20excerpt.pdf.
[571] J. H. Gill, 'The Possibility of Apologetics', *Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol 16, Issue 02 (June 1963), 136, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/scottish-journal-of-theology/article/abs/possibility-of-apologetics/2816322A05E5270CBB2DFE7BFB56B235.
[572] Maureen Sullivan, 'Paradigm Shifts after Vatican II', *Where Peter Is*, 6th October 2021, https://wherepeteris.com/paradigm-shifts-after-vatican-ii/.

Apologetics in the Wake of the Council

With the omission of the word 'apologetics' (or any derivative) from the conciliar documents, the widely-held consensus was that apologetics had ended, in spite of the Petrine apologetical content. It was not the only Council message that failed to be carried into the post-conciliar time, as Pope Benedict pointed out.[573]

In the theological sphere, the message was proclaimed by the French professor Claude Geffré:

> [T]he term 'fundamental theology' is now preferred to describe Christian apologetics. It is not simply that in an age of dialogue the word 'apologetics' is discredited. It is rather, and more profoundly, that we have become conscious of the weakness of apologetics when it pretends to prove the fact of revelation on historical grounds. We can only be sure of divine revelation within the experience of faith.[574]

His image, that apologetics 'pretends to prove the facts', exhibits both his focus on subjective 'truth', as predicted by Balthasar,[575] and a narrowing of apologetics to be 'winning an argument'. This is a polemic against the Justinian image.

Dulles describes briefly how several theologians (Latourelle, Bouillard) attempted to retain an apologetical space in theology[576] but without particular support. However, an alternative understanding remained, which Balthasar encapsulated in 1975:

> the last decade has reinforced this fundamental conviction of mine: You do good apologetics if you do good, central theology; if you expound theology effectively, you have done the best kind of apologetics. The Word of God (which is also and always the activity of God) is self-authenticating proof of its own truth and fecundity.[577]

However, in the main, the German Heinrich Fries describes apologetics' newly allocated position somewhere within the new approach:

> apologetics 'remains an ever-valid dimension of theology which, for its own sake, must attend to its encountering and creatively coming to terms with the spirit of the historical epoch in which it finds itself. The term "fundamental theology" is intended to express that the apologetic task can and should be integrated into a comprehensive theological reflection: in the believing reason's self-examination of its foundations and presuppositions.'[578]

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[573] CNA Staff, 'Pope: media helped spread misinterpretations of Vatican II', *Catholic News Agency*, 14th February 2013, https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/26582/pope-media-helped-spread-misinterpretations-of-vatican-ii.
[574] Claude Geffré quoted in Dulles, *History*, 326-7.
[575] In ch3.1 regarding postmodernism.
[576] Dulles, *History*, 327-8.
[577] Balthasar, *My Work*, 100.
[578] Quoted in Dulles, *History*, 328.

This subsummation reduced apologetics to a shell, certainly on the European continent, in favour of the rapidly expanding FT. But this was an adaptation of elite, intellectual, Justinian apologetics rather the returning to the original, ordinary, and more organic Petrine (and now conciliar) approach of preparation, response, and a loving Christian manner.

Fundamental Theology as a Replacement of Apologetics?

The significant rise of FT was an academic expression of post-conciliar change but it does not cover the Petrine conciliar calls. With a more scientific-theological focus it 'explores the conditions for the possibility of belief'.[579] David Tracy in 1974 described 'five theses':[580]

1. 'The two principal sources for theology are the Christian fact and contemporary experience',[581]
2. 'The theological task will involve a critical correlation of the results of the investigations of the two sources of theology',[582]
3. 'The principal method of investigation of the source "common human experience" can be described as a phenomenology of the "religious dimension" present in everyday and scientific experience',[583]
4. 'The principal method of investigation of the source "the Christian fact" can be described as a historical and hermeneutic investigation of classical Christian texts',[584]
5. 'To determine the truth-status of the results of one's investigations into both common human experience and into the Christian fact the theologian should employ an explicitly transcendental or metaphysical mode of reflection'.[585]

Clearly intellectual, and thus far beyond the ordinary faithful that the Council called to be active, it is difficult to reconcile these themes with AA or GE, never mind the general calls in LG or DH. Granted, the above are valid theological topics, however, none are particularly identifiable with the important conciliar aim of the faithful becoming able to engage with others about the faith and explain it. Therefore, in reality, the updating (*aggiornamento*) of apologetics did not include the faithful because FT does not bridge the gap of preparing the faithful to be Christians in the world. Simply, while traditional apologetics in a catechetical sense at least provided the faithful with some understandable

[579] Weigel, *Evangelical*, 204.
[580] David Tracy, 'The Task of Fundamental Theology', *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan. 1974), 13-34, 13, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1202007.
[581] Ibid., 14.
[582] Ibid., 16.
[583] Ibid., 19.
[584] Ibid., 22.
[585] Ibid., 29.

input, FT remained on the elite level regarding theological content while delivering to the faithful theology based on the experiential. The effect of this is seen in ch4.1.

In rejecting Balthasar's traditional way, it arguably adopted much of the opposite. FT 'became an increasingly subjective study of man and his faith experience with God'.[586] Dulles warns against the one-sidedness: 'Fundamental theology, I suggest, must ask not only how we get to God but how God comes to us. It must maintain a theological as well as an anthropological focus.'[587] FT moved too far towards a theological anthropology, and even an anthropocentric exploration of how God should relate to us; at worst, it can become an anthropomorphic god's inclusion in our lives. While on the surface it is a valuable exploration into how God and man interrelate, it must be asked how we can define man when he is no longer within the framework of the creator, when there is no structure of God's creation with man firmly ensconced within it; and how man can define God when he immediately walks away from rational understanding of God's existence, and how he must – reasonably – be understood regarding attributes. When man gets to define God, what does he base his ideas on if not reason? He certainly can only call on his experience and this rapidly descends into anthropomorphism.

Therefore, FT must be founded upon, firstly, that God exists because of our rational understanding as found in the praeambula fidei, which tells us of our fundamental reasons to acknowledge this necessarily. And secondly, these point necessarily – philosophically-theologically – to the basic attributes of God, that is perfection, eternity, love, goodness, etc. Only with these established as a fundament can FT then proceed with certainty.

However, O'Collins's very title – *Rethinking Fundamental Theology* – in 2011 points to a losing of purpose and direction, and FT needing to reorient itself, which is in contrast to the growing apologetics in the same period as will be seen. Disappointingly but unsurprisingly, though, O'Collins's understanding of apologetics is Justinian, with a mention for the obviously apologetical content in Acts.[588] This means that O'Collins's (and much of FT's) image of apologetics is limited by the historical developments that were intellectual, clerical and elite, ignoring or unaware of the Vatican II teachings in light of the Petrine call.

O'Collins distinguishes between apologetics and FT in three particular ways but first offers a very generalised overview of their similarities:

> They both come from those who personally share Christian faith and operate within the believing community and at its service. They both aim to respond to objections raised by critics and to offer a credible account of central beliefs about such matters as the existence of a personal God, the divine self-revelation in Jesus Christ, and the nature of faith.[589]

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[586] Stuart Nicolson, 'The Field of Apologetics Today: Responding to the Calls of Scripture and the Second Vatican Council', *Heythrop Journal* 59, No. 3 (May 2018): 410–423, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/heyj.12985. DOI: 10.1111/heyj.12985.
[587] Avery Dulles, *Craft of Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 53.
[588] Gerald O'Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-4.
[589] Ibid., 4.

This simple correspondence is followed by his defined differences, based, albeit seemingly fairly positively towards apologetics, upon the Justinian development over the centuries. First,

> Fundamental theology, however, must deal not only with [specific standard questions] but also with many other questions. Its agenda […] constitutes a whole theological discipline in its own right. As a branch of theology, it is an exercise of 'faith seeking understanding' over a coherent and cohesive range of topics. Along with its apologetic function, fundamental theology embodies the study of various central Christian doctrines, like divine revelation and human faith.[590]

But this is covered in, for example, Sheehan's early 20th century *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*.[591] His originally two-year course for high school students today was updated and serves now as an excellent source at university level. While FT might look deeper, it is unhelpful to claim apologetics did not cover such themes.

O'Collins' second difference is that

> fundamental theology frequently has a wider range of readers in mind: believers who wish to grasp the reasons for and the implications of their religious beliefs and so deal with difficulties they encounter about their faith; students and teachers of theology and religious studies; and interested outsiders who want to examine in depth the truth of basic Christian beliefs.[592]

However, setting aside Vatican II calling for apologetics for all the faithful, and O'Collins understanding apologetics as intellectual, the three categories above are identical for Justinian apologetics.

And O'Collins' third difference is that

> polemics (in the good sense of that word and not as mindless ranting) belong to the exercise of apologetics. [Examples are offered.] The tone of fundamental theologians, even when rebutting objections to Christian faith, is or should be more expository and less polemically inclined to illustrate defects in opposing positions.[593]

Properly done apologetics includes a good Christian manner, the third part of the Petrine call (1Pt 3:15-16). Failure in this means apologetics is a mere intellectual exercise or indeed a polemic. To make the third distinction is to miss the Petrine and conciliar calls.

So, while there is an attempt to distance FT from apologetics, it is arguably not greatly different, nor is it cognisant of the apologetics of Scripture or the Council.

Later, after attempting to define FT in light of other potentially overlapping academic branches, O'Collins lists important areas for the field:

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[590] Ibid., 5.
[591] Michael Sheehan, *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*, revised and ed. by P. M. Joseph (London: Baronius Press, 2009).
[592] O'Collins, *Rethinking*, 5.
[593] Ibid.

> As its name suggests, fundamental theology studies foundational or basic issues. These have frequently included: (1) the revelation of God in the history of Israel and Jesus Christ; (2) the conditions that open human beings (in particular, their experience in its deepest aspects) to accepting in faith the self-communication of God; (3) the testimony that puts us into contact with the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ and that makes faith in and through him a credible option; (4) the transmission (through tradition and the inspired Scriptures) of the experience of God's self-communication; (5) the founding and mission of the Christian Church; (6) questions about theological knowledge and methods, including issues arising from the interpretation of texts. Some exponents of fundamental theology have also (7) rightly attended to world religions, their claims, the reasonable credentials that commend them to their followers, and the impact on them of the risen Christ and his Holy Spirit.[594]

While all of this has theological importance, FT should guard against either leaning too heavily towards religious studies in removing the faith element or towards too much focus on how to fit faith to be suitable for the human person, the believer, which was a problem developing in the last century.[595] Such subjectivity can become anthropocentric in adapting the Truth for human consumption, rather than supporting the person to be able to accept – now or later – the Truth in their souls, minds, hearts, lives.

Therefore, FT is about how a person can or does believe whereas apologetics is about why a person should believe. FT is about the person whereas apologetics requires the apologist to be ready, to present the Truth, and do so appropriately. FT is about helping a person walk, but apologetics is about directing him to the right path, helping him stay on it, and why to do so. FT is about developing the person in a spiritual way using Christian content but apologetics is about lovingly teaching, correcting, and guiding the (proto-)Christian to/on the right path.

However, FT's negative image of apologetics is displayed by O'Collins:

> Apologists have *frequently argued* that God *(for mysterious, 'higher' reasons)* allows such evil to happen but does not directly commit it. In cases where innocent people suffer *atrociously* for *seemingly* no good reason, apologists have *pressed the argument* that, whereas non-believers cannot point to any positive reasons for such suffering and leave us to face 'absurd' evil, believers can hope that in their future life with God they will be provided with an explanation.[596] [Italics mine]

The italics mark the disappointing inclusion of emotive, even polemical language; each instance can easily be omitted or replaced with neutral 'scientific' language. Apart from criticising the supposed methods of apologists ('frequently argued', 'pressed the argument'), the parenthesised 'for mysterious, "higher" reasons' not only mocks but it also ignores the fact that God is higher and has his own reasons for his (in)actions. Such

[594] Ibid., 15.
[595] Dulles, 'Preface', 7.
[596] Ibid., 21.

problematic comments suggest that some in FT define it negatively against what it seeks to avoid: the traditional image of apologetics.

While retaining the non-Petrine features of elite, intellectual studies and writings, FT often explores the nature of faith from the human point of view. In contrast, apologetics is a response, a presentation of the Christian faith in a context defined by the other person, the recipient. The apologist serves first God and then the other, in a sense being their mediator, as both God's representative and as one helping the other in (potentially) understanding the Christian perspective better. Therefore, it can be respectfully suggested that, rather than apologetics being an FT subset, FT should provide academic support for the wide-ranging possibilities of apologetics based upon the Petrine and conciliar calls, as John Paul II stated: 'Theological science responds to the invitation of truth as it seeks to understand the faith. It thereby aids the People of God in fulfilling the Apostle's command (cf. 1 *Pet* 3:15) to give an accounting for their hope to those who ask it.'[597]

Popes Since the Council

Despite the post-conciliar move to FT, the popes have taught about apologetics to some extent. Within each of their own foci, apologetics has not been ignored but included.

Paul VI called for evangelisation, which is supported by apologetics. He recognises that 'love speaks and defends the truth',[598] just as Jesus rejects sin but embraces the sinner (Jn 8:11):

> When the Church distinguishes itself from humanity, it does so not in order to oppose it, but to come closer to it. A physician who realizes the danger of disease, protects himself and others from it, but at the same time he strives to cure those who have contracted it. The Church does the same thing.[599]

Regarding other beliefs, there is an unmentioned need for apologetics in engagement as 'honesty compels us to declare openly our conviction that the Christian religion is the one and only true religion, and it is our hope that it will be acknowledged as such by all who look for God and worship Him.'[600] Regarding preaching, which overlaps with apologetics, and reflecting Peter and the Council: 'We must return to the study, not of human eloquence of empty rhetoric, but of the genuine are [sic] of proclaiming the Word of God.'[601]

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[597] John Paul II, 'Veritatis Splendor' (VS), *The Holy See*, 6th August 1993, 109, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html.
[598] Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 29.
[599] Paul VI, 'Ecclesiam Suam', *The Holy See*, 6th August 1964, 63, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam.html.
[600] Ibid., 107.
[601] Ibid., 90; two typos online should read 'genuine art'.

John Paul II also contributed to apologetics. He confirms Paul's position on sin and sinners[602] but most obvious is his *Fides et Ratio*, which solves Tertullian's dichotomy. Siniscalchi identifies in it several themes important for apologetics, including what is knowable naturally, the relationship between faith and reason, evidence, Christian witness and credibility, and empirical understanding and faith.[603] Directly apologetical, Sinisalchi recognises that 'The imperative to do apologetics is not extrinsically imposed upon believers by the magisterium, but is a natural consequence of having faith', and quotes *Veritatis Splendor* (VS) 109. Further apologetical themes regard the modern loss of faith,[604] the need for missionary activity,[605] and the importance of not diluting the Gospel to aid conversions.[606]

Pope Benedict XVI highlights how love and truth connect: 'To defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity.'[607] Also, he recognises how they combine in contradiction to postmodern societal thinking:

> Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the 'economy' of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practised in the light of truth. In this way, not only do we do a service to charity enlightened by truth, but we also help give credibility to truth, demonstrating its persuasive and authenticating power in the practical setting of social living. This is a matter of no small account today, in a social and cultural context which relativizes truth, often paying little heed to it and showing increasing reluctance to acknowledge its existence.[608]

Consistent with Peter's third element and opposing the preconciliar experience of Justinian apologetics for some, he states that 'Those who practise charity in the Church's name will never seek to impose the Church's faith upon others. They realize that a pure and generous love is the best witness to the God in whom we believe and by whom we are driven to love.'[609] Elsewhere, he also touches on natural apologetics.[610] However, there is something of a tension in Benedict's understanding of apologetics: in an audience dedicated to Justin Martyr, Benedict explains that 'The word "apologist" designates those ancient Christian writers who set out to defend the new religion from the weighty

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[602] VS 95.
[603] Siniscalchi, *Retrieving*, 30-33, 36, 38.
[604] VS 106.
[605] John Paul II, 'Redemptoris Missio', *The Holy See*, 7th December 1990, especially 1, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html.
[606] John Paul II, 'Ut Unum Sint', *The Holy See*, 25th May 1995, 36, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html.
[607] Benedict XVI, 'Caritas in Veritate' (CV), *The Holy See*, 29th June 2009, 1, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html.
[608] Ibid., 2.
[609] Benedict XVI, 'Deus Caritas Est', *The Holy See*, 25th December 2005, 31, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html.
[610] CV 74.

accusations of both pagans and Jews, and to spread the Christian doctrine in terms suited to the culture of their time.'[611] Yet he also states, 'I have often affirmed my conviction that the true apology of Christian faith, the most convincing demonstration of its truth…are the saints and the beauty that the faith has generated.'[612] While the former quote is in the context of honouring Justin, and it is accurate in the wider understanding, one might have hoped for a mention of Peter's scriptural call.

Pope Francis recalls GS 62 regarding 'an encounter between faith, reason and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility, a creative apologetics which would encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all.'[613] This develops the credibility of theology and the preparation opportunities available to the apologist as ideas develop and cooperation grows, as well as bring engagement opportunities. He also recognises the postmodern challenge and how to effectively respond:

> The light of love proper to faith can illumine the questions of our own time about truth. Truth nowadays is often reduced to the subjective authenticity of the individual, valid only for the life of the individual. A common truth intimidates us, for we identify it with the intransigent demands of totalitarian systems. But if truth is a truth of love, if it is a truth disclosed in personal encounter with the Other and with others, then it can be set free from its enclosure in individuals and become part of the common good. As a truth of love, it is not one that can be imposed by force; it is not a truth that stifles the individual.[614]

And his guidance on approach also applies to the apologist: 'truth leads to humility, since believers know that, rather than ourselves possessing truth, it is truth which embraces and possesses us. Far from making us inflexible, the security of faith sets us on a journey; it enables witness and dialogue with all.'[615] This is preparation to engage apologetically with others.

The post-conciliar papal journey of apologetics shows how both Church and society has developed. From Paul's positive yet unrequited call for evangelisation to John Paul II's academic impulses that sought to give structure and content to the engagement between Church and the world; and from Benedict's teachings on love and truth to Francis' recognition of postmodern challenges and opportunities for apologists. It is thus clear that the post-conciliar popes recognised, albeit sometimes without naming it, that apologetics which is Petrine is of great importance to the Church and her mission.

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[611] Benedict XVI, 'General Audience – St Justin, Philosopher and Martyr (c. 100-165)', *The Holy See*, 21st March 2007, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20070321.html.
[612] Matthew J. Ramage, 'Pope Benedict XVI's Theology of Beauty and the New Evangelization', *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, 29th January 2015, https://www.hprweb.com/2015/01/pope-benedict-xvis-theology-of-beauty-and-the-new-evangelization/#fn-12952-1.
[613] EG 132.
[614] Francis, 'Lumen Fidei', *The Holy See*, 29th June 2013, 34, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html.
[615] Ibid.

Renewal in the 1980s

A very significant movement began organically in 1980s America and continues to develop and spread. Dulles mentions this, briefly in comparison with several pages on several post-Vatican II intellectual apologists, including John Paul II.[616] He wrote:

> In the past quarter of a century there has been a strong revival of Catholic apologetics in the United States. Some of these new apologists, such as Karl Keating and Patrick Madrid, are 'cradle Catholics', but many, such as Peter Kreeft, Sheldon Vanauken, Thomas Howard, Dale Vree, and Scott and Kimberly Hahn, are converts.[617]

The preponderance of converts is important for him. He mentions one very effective book from one such lay convert and a priest:

> Kreeft, together with the Jesuit Ronald K. Tacelli, has composed a standard textbook defending orthodox Christianity without going into arguments for the Catholic Church. Within its limits, this book is remarkably complete and orderly. It takes into account the importance of a realistic epistemology.[618]

The brevity of the inclusion of this apologetical movement in his *History* is then explained:

> Much of the output of this group of apologists takes the form of works intended to persuade Protestants to become Catholics. Although this genre includes many works of merit, it falls beyond the scope of this survey, as does the Protestant literature urging Catholics to convert to make the opposite decision. The present work is concerned with apologetics for Christianity rather than with inner-Christian controversial literature.[619]

While the exclusion of classical Catholic Apologetics is understandable, it nevertheless leaves significant gaps in any 'history of apologetics' and the book should reasonably be regarded as 'a history of Christian apologetics'. Catholic Apologetics is not just aimed at Protestants; it also serves to support the understanding of Catholics regarding the specifically Catholic aspects of their faith. It is also misleading to claim that the movement since the 1980s has been mostly focused on Catholic converts explaining their conversions as the general content covers the whole range of apologetical possibilities.

Crucially, this group's content is generally accessible, using language that does not presuppose any specialist knowledge beyond a general reading ability and a basic knowledge of Christian matters. This appeal to ordinary faithful is an important step in responding to the Petrine and Vatican II calls.

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[616] Dulles, *History*, 338-43.
[617] Ibid., 343.
[618] Ibid.
[619] Ibid., 344.

Dulles also mentions an important work that focuses on the third Petrine element – how to deliver apologetics:

> Mark Brumley, himself a convert to Catholicism, gives some salutary warnings to apologists in his *How Not to Share Your Faith*. Committed as he is to a theologically responsible and honest apologetics, he warns his cohorts against overweening rationalism, 'sacred dishonesty', and reductionist accommodationism.[620]

Dulles offers a final paragraph that may be linkable to this movement, making a point that the two further mentioned apologists are 'lay theologian[s]'.[621] This is a missed opportunity to show an organic development as the movement predominantly consists of laypersons –converts and cradle Catholics, albeit more of the former – who, arguably (as was I) were assisted in finding the Catholic faith to be less problematic than previously supposed, meaning they have experience apologetically of being recipients before explaining the faith to others.

In particular, Dulles's omission of the most significant apostolate of the movement is disappointing. Catholic Answers[622] began in 1979 when Karl Keating left Mass to find a Fundamentalist Christian leaflet on his car replete with misinformation about Catholicism. He wrote a rebuttal, imitated the delivery method, and opened a Post Office box, which was soon full of all manner of responses. This grew to newsletters, articles, and in 1988 became a full-time apostolate, including book-writing, and then it embraced early the internet's potential with the high-profile url of 'catholic.com'.

The great changes that occurred were not generally as Balthasar hoped. The reform principle was strong in some areas but not particularly developed in evangelisation and apologetics. FT is not a proper expression of the Council's apologetical calls but an evolution of what was Europe's apologetics, which was suppressed by being omitted from the documents and removed from the majority of academia, its Justinian domain. Therefore, there remains a significant space for developing Vatican II's apologetical calls for the return of original, ordinary, and even organic, that is, Petrine apologetics.

This possibility is confirmed by the observable trajectory in papal writings that both challenges the postmodern slide into relativism and calls for a Petrine apologetical response in some ways. The mostly American growth of apologetics has certainly been more Petrine, but this can be significantly developed.

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[620] Ibid. Dulles wrote the Preface in this book.
[621] Ibid.
[622] See 'Why the World Needs Catholic Answers', *Catholic Answers*, accessed 11th August 2023, https://www.catholic.com/about.

Conclusion

Approaching the Council, Balthasar offers us a clear image of the cosmological traditional way, including Justinian apologetics, and the anthropological reform, which focused too heavily on man and thus rejects Justinian apologetics. His third way – 'love alone is credible' – is congruent with Petrine apologetics, where the apologist acts as a mediator between God and person, loving the sinner and hating the sin, to appropriately respond, explain, bear witness.

These were the apologetical themes of the Council, being a remarkable ressourcement of early Christian (Petrine) apologetics, confirming the original nature and identity of apologetics. References to and paraphrases of 1Pt 3:15-16, and parts of AA, point to a return to Petrine apologetics with preparation embedded in Christian education. GE 2 presents a theology of apologetics within education bringing out the fullness of the person in theosis while preparing the person to contribute to society. AA contains much to be further unpacked regarding how prepared Christian should engage with society, including apologetically. Together, GE 2 and AA can offer a rich theological underpinning of how to develop Petrine apologetics. As such, they are developments of the Petrine and similar calls in the conciliar documents. However, academia rejected the apologetics of the cosmological reduction, and FT is too much a development of Justinian thinking and the anthropological reduction. Rather, FT can offer support for developing original Petrine apologetics for all with preparation, response, and a Christian manner.

The American apologetical revival gives hope. Its organic development, often working with and in academia but seeking to spread apologetics far wider, has far more developed Petrine elements. But as in finding the third way, the challenge for Petrine apologetics is to find ways that the apologist can base his apologetics on a Christian love which is credible and seeks a conversion of the recipient of his apologia that is based on a real understanding of God, Christ, and Church.

Part 4 – Apologetics Today

4.1 – Apologetical Preparedness Today
4.2 – Apologetics Today – the Need for New Apologetics
4.3 – Elements of Apologetics
4.4 – Distinctions in Apologetics
4.5 – Important Voices Contributing to New Apologetics
4.6 – Moving Forwards – Accessibility and Usability for All

Introduction

In seeking ways to implement the apologetics calls of Scripture and Vatican II, it is only right to return to the heart of what apologetics is – a response. It should be planned and designed only so far as preparation takes place, a response is made, and done so in a Christian manner. To do this here, this final Part first examines briefly the state of Christian understanding, the initial element of apologetics, and finds it lacking as seen in the results of two recent surveys. The regular inclusion of apologetical content in Sunday Gospel Readings[623] is not sufficient for apologetical preparedness and much more is necessary. This challenge requires a response regarding the identity and nature of apologetics today through consideration of different elements, distinctions, and important voices in these times. Guided and formed by these, in the light of the calls from Scripture and Vatican II – to be ready to respond in a good, Christian manner – it is possible to look forwards and work to develop a New Apologetics that takes the best of what was, is, and what can be apologetical and seek to enable all faithful to learn, engage, and bear witness to God, Christ, and Church: to one's faith.

By finding apologetics in GE 2, and identifying the calls to preparation within its apologetics, an outline of how to develop preparation can be found. Having been prepared, AA points to how the faithful should engage with society, having the Church, the parish at the centre of activity, both within the communities of the Church and wider society.

These are no isolated calls of the last century but have been repeated in some ways by the most recent popes.

[623] See ch2a.2.

4.1 – Apologetical Preparedness Today

A standard understanding of Christian teachings is needed for preparation for explaining the faith to others, and also oneself, when questions or challenges come. Over half a century after the Council's call for significantly increased lay participation, including the preparation element of apologetics (GE 2, AA, LG, DH), it is clear this has not been developed, but rather the opposite – a diminished understanding of the faith. Visible in many ways, it can be seen in survey responses. Two surveys of American Christians are particularly noteworthy: a 2019 Pew Research (PR) survey including 1,835 Catholics, and a 2022 survey by 'The State of Theology' (SoT) including 737 Catholics. Although those identifying as 'Catholic' can include cultural Catholics, lapsed Catholics, or catechised and active Catholics, the findings are indicative generally of 'ordinary' Catholics and show they are not being prepared well in their faith. The surveys are extensive and cannot be comprehensively presented here, but examples are indicative of significant apologetical problems: one obvious finding was that the more religious education Christians receive as children, the more questions about Christianity they can answer as adults.[624]

Of the Catholics surveyed by PR,[625] only 31% believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and 69% regarded the bread/Body and wine/Blood as symbols; out of the 31%, 29% knew this was Church teaching but, concerningly, 2% thought the Church teaches it as symbolic only. Further findings regarding the Eucharist – 'the source and summit of the Christian life'[626] – include:

- 50% knew the Church's teaching on the Real Presence and 45% believed the Church teaches symbols;
- Of the 69% believing in symbols, 22% knew but rejected the Catholic teaching and 43% thought the Church taught symbols;
- 63% of weekly or more frequent Mass attendees believed in the Real Presence;
- Of those aged under 40, 23% both knew and believed Church teaching, 27% knew but rejected it, and 50% did not know what the Church teaches;
- Overall, 28% both knew and followed Catholic teaching.

This shows basic Catholic teaching and understanding as weak, thus apologetically problematic: few are able to respond accurately regarding their faith.

More general but just as concerning are the SoT survey findings. A list of 35 statements, some more slanted to Protestant thinking, were responded to with five

[624] 'Christians who spend time learning about their religion get more questions right about Christianity', *Pew Research Center*, 22nd July 2019, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2019/07/23/what-americans-know-about-religion/pf_07-23-19_religiousknowledge-00-010/.
[625] Gregory A. Smith, 'Just one-third of U.S. Catholics agree with their church that Eucharist is body, blood of Christ.', *Pew Research Center*, 5th August 2019, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/05/transubstantiation-eucharist-u-s-catholics/.
[626] LG 11, quoted in CCC 1324.

possibilities: strongly or somewhat disagree, not sure, and somewhat or strongly agree.[627] Too extensive to cover comprehensively here, several of the findings are pertinent to this study (statement numbers are in brackets).

Regarding basic theology, only 22% of self-defining Catholics regarded God as a perfect being (1) while 67% believed God learns and adapts (4); even more concerning is the 60% who regarded belief as 'a matter of personal opinion', thus not objective (31). Moving from subjectivism to postmodern gender ideology, 8% did not agree that 'God created male and female' (8). Also, only 67% believed God is interested in the faithful's daily decisions (29). And 28% could not agree that Christ's Crucifixion was the only way to atone for one's sin (34); albeit a possible objection to the statement is the good works of participation with God in one's salvation, the disagreement is more likely from a form of Pelagianism or Universalism – a weakness of this survey format is that such a disagreement with the Protestant-focused statement stems from either a good or problematic understanding of Catholic teaching, which follow-up questions would have clarified. However, the problematic is more likely, being consistent with other concerning data showing poor basic Catholic education in traditionally-sound basic teachings regarding God.

On Trinitology and Christology, the poor basic catechesis worsens as only 91% believed in the Trinity of Divine Persons (2). Arianism has developed again as only 20% disagreed that 'Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God' (6) and 52% agreed that 'Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God' (7). Docetic/Gnostic beliefs return also as only 79% believe in the physical Resurrection (5). Regarding the Third Person, 70% believed the Holy Spirit rather to be a force (9), who for 23% can tell the believer to do something forbidden in the Bible (11), albeit the latter is true for OT ceremonial or dietary laws.

The biblical literalism underpinning Scripture statements is unhelpful here but can suggest some Protestant ideas having mixed with poor Catholic learning. This is apparent in the 55% who agreed that the Bible is not literally true (16) and the 54% who agreed that the 'Bible is accurate in all that it teaches' (17): these statements do not fit simply into a Catholic understanding of the Bible. Clearly problematic, however, are the 31% who believed science disproves the Bible (18).

On morals, there was also a mixture of issues in 'ordinary' Catholic beliefs. Perhaps anthropocentric and sentimental but nevertheless a cultural Catholic majority of 82% agreed that despite sinning a little, most people are good (12) while a rather Montanist 20% regarded the smallest sin as meaning eternal damnation (13). The Lutheran sola fides regarding righteousness was held also by 60% of Catholics surveyed

[627] The results (filtered for Roman Catholic affiliation) are presented in a series of webpages: 'Data Explorer' [US], *The State of Theology*, accessed 3rd July 2023, https://thestateoftheology.com/data-explorer/2022/1?AGE=30&MF=14&REGION=30&DENSITY=62&EDUCATION=62&INCOME=254&MARITAL=126&ETHNICITY=62&RELTRAD=16&EVB=6&ATTENDANCE=254. The relevant pages can be found by typing the statement number in place of the '1' that is located in the url after '2022/' and before the question mark, or alternatively by clicking through to the required statement number.

(14) but Original Sin was set aside by 86% who believed we are born innocent in God's view (15).

Regarding sexual ethics, modern societal norms have overtaken Catholic moral understanding: only 54% regarded extra-marital sex as sinful (25) and 40% could not agree that abortion is a sin (26). Moral-loosening has enabled ideas such as choosing one's gender as only 51% rejected this possibility (27) while only 43% believed the Bible's condemnation of homosexuality still applies (28).

On salvation, only 50% stated predestination is not the case (19) while 32% could not state eternal damnation is possible (21). The Second Coming and Final Judgement was in the future for 75% (21) and 58% considered only those who believe in Jesus Christ alone to be able to be saved (35), against Vatican II's teachings.[628] These findings clearly indicate a distinct lack of preparation in the (self-identifying) faithful for explaining the faith to others.

Finally, on the Christian life, only 67% considered regular Church attendance as required (22) rather than worshiping at home. Further, 50% stated that Christians are obliged to 'join a local church' (24); technically, Catholics can attend a distant parish, but this may not be the likely reason for disagreeing. And a rather concerning 32% regard it as true or possible that Catholics should have no voice in politics (23).

One statement (33) was directly connected to apologetics, albeit with a rather E/evangelical tone:

Table 5: SoT survey – Statement 33

No.	Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Not sure	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
33	It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior.	19	23	0	31	27

This statement points to the Great Mandate ending Matthew and Mark, as well as reflecting the spirit of the Petrine call. It speaks to all faithful having this responsibility – a universal call, like the Vatican II call for all faithful to speak up about the faith,[629] rather than the more Justinian clergy-alone model. These different approaches are arguably evident in the range of responses – two in five excuse themselves from such Christian responsibility, however, nearly a third accept the responsibility and more than a quarter take on an evangelising role.

Although three in five are positive towards sharing their beliefs with others, which includes apologetics, the overall data shows a clear problem with understanding the faith – apologetical preparation. This means erroneous understanding is more likely to spread

[628] LG 16.
[629] LG 10, DH 14, DV 8, AA (several).

rather than be resolved apologetically. While these are American surveys, SoT found similar results in a 2018 UK survey.[630] Such findings indicate that change is necessary regarding preparation – education, catechesis – of the faithful in order that they can not only explain, defend, and bear witness to the faith, as they are called to do in Scripture and the Vatican II documents.[631]

While a specifically-targeted Catholic survey, including data regarding attitude to one's faith such as Mass attendance, would be far more useful here, the above surveys offer an image of 'ordinary' Catholics which is informative regarding the understanding of important teachings. PR also shows that Mass attendance is no guarantee of understanding or following Church teaching, which is a further issue. Therefore, it is clear that the post-conciliar reduction of catechesis in favour of a more experiential education has led to a reduction in ordinary faithful understanding the faith.

[630] Again set for Roman Catholics: 'Data Explorer' [UK], *The State of Theology*, accessed 3rd July 2023, https://thestateoftheology.com/uk/data-explorer?AGE=30&MF=6&REGION=30&EDUCATION=30&INCOME=254&MARITAL=254&ETHNICITY=62&RELTRAD=4&ATTENDANCE=126.
[631] Especially GE 2.

4.2 – Apologetics Today – the Need for New Apologetics

In light of the survey findings of Catholic faith understanding, even accounting for the basic and non-Catholic focus of the survey's statements, there are substantial problems in the rudimentary understanding of Catholic teachings among 'ordinary' faithful. This indicates – at best – that education of non-clergy is particularly ineffectual, and possibly that some clergy may also mistaken in their theological understanding of content or their responsibilities for the faithful. The latter would then impact on seminaries and academia, meaning a lack of passing on (tradere) the faith to younger generations; assessing this is beyond this study's scope but is worth bearing in mind.

What is certainly missing from the faith passed on from the earliest Church, and now the last Church Council, is the call for the faithful to speak out about their faith, hope. It has been integral to the faith that such communication should be shared by all, to any other appropriately, since Jesus' final mandate, and explicitly the calls of Peter, Paul, and Jude (Parts 1 and 2a). This is in direct contrast to the later intellectualisation, even clericalisation of apologetics – explaining the faith – that developed from the 2nd century and was concretised by the 5th century (Part 2b). Intellectualisation developed into academia meaning the faithful were unprepared for the culmination of the mediaeval period (Part 2c) and beyond. Apologetics was then retained as intellectual, elite, and often clerical, albeit in the English-speaking world, probably due to its particular Protestant-Catholic dynamic, space opened up for a partial, somewhat organic redeveloping of Petrine apologetics (Part 2d) while the Justinian version continued in Europe.

Peter's call connected three elements – prepare, respond, in a Christian manner – and addressed all the faithful in the diaspora, the going out to the world:

> Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. (1Pt 3:15-16)

Paul also instructed on and demonstrated apologetical communication, Jude was forceful on this, and the Apostolic Fathers instructed the Church on being apologetical. This call has not been revoked, albeit many faithful regard it as someone else's task (ToS 35). Rather, this call was restated and definitely emphasised by Vatican II, which was again about going out to the world. In particular:

> The disciple has a grave obligation to Christ, his Master, to grow daily in his knowledge of the truth he has received from him, to be faithful in announcing it, and vigorous in defending it without having recourse to methods which are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.[632]

[632] DH 14.

These are particularly similar in wording and mostly the three elements to Peter (see Part 1). But, with Jude, Vatican II also calls for the faith to be handed on faithfully and with care, which the surveys show has not been the case:

> Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3)[633]

Therefore, there is a duty and responsibility of all faithful to pass on the Catholic faith to younger faithful and also present it to others including in response to questions, the sharing of erroneous understanding, and deliberate challenges to Christianity.

This includes many factors, elements, and developments, which are already existent in today's Church but only in limited ways. The universal aspect of the calls of Peter and Vatican II should be a priority for the Church and the faithful – to develop an appropriate understanding of the faith in the faithful and to share this with others: fellow-Catholics, other Christians, and non-Christians.

Vatican II offered foundational teachings on developing this, for example, in education (GE 2), in society (AA), and in academia (GS 62), but they have been only partially implemented at best. The range of content of apologetics must widen to respond to the wide variety of questions and challenges. As post-Christian society has developed increasingly non-Christian thinking, opinions, and positions, apologetics needs to respond appropriately to these, just as some Catholics learned to respond to Protestants earlier in English-speaking societies. But this must take place on a significantly greater scale.

Developing apologetical perspective is necessary amongst the faithful. The experienced apologist Patrick Madrid recalls one non-believing caller to his phone-in radio show who asked if he could perceive how arrogant the claims of the Church sounded (God exists, Jesus saves, the Church is the true Church…); Madrid agreed it did sound arrogant, but then asked: 'But what if they're true?', and, if so, would they still be arrogant claims?[634] He encapsulates the problem: 'many people nowadays have never encountered this body of convincing evidence. No one has ever presented it to them! Or if they did stumble across it, it wasn't explained in a way that they could understand.'[635]

What is preventing the widespread embedding of apologetical communication is two-fold. First, this study has recognised that the image of apologetics is often negative, being based on the exclusivising nature of Justinian apologetics that over time was used too often as a demand and even an enforcement. And the second is regarding it as

[633] DV 8.
[634] Patrick Madrid, 'Preface' in Dwight Longenecker, *An Answer, Not an Argument* (Greenville SC: Stauffer Books, 2019), 4.
[635] Ibid., 5.

someone else's task.[636] The short article cited here also explains how parishes are not directed to learning and speaking out about the faith. But it is necessary to begin somewhere. By setting apologetics as Petrine and conciliar, and encouraging people to learn and speak about the faith, while developing education about apologetics for all, it will grow organically while being tended by the gardeners, who are also the shepherds of the flock.

It is necessary to develop ways of responding to the scriptural and conciliar calls in today's context. The remainder of Part 4 explores the apologetical elements, applications, useful distinctions, and recent voices in what may be loosely regarded as New Apologetics but which needs to be developed far more.

[636] Marcel LeJeune, '5 Reasons Why Catholics Don't Evangelize', *Catholic Missionary Disciples*, accessed 7th July 2023, https://catholicmissionarydisciples.com/news/reasons-why-catholics-dont-evangelize, especially point 4.

4.3 – Elements of Apologetics

The three Petrine elements – preparation, response, and a Christian manner – are unpacked here, particularly in regard to the contemporary context.

Preparation

The purpose of preparation is to enable the apologist – one who responds to another about the faith – to respond in a Christian manner, or to develop his own faith. The better that one is prepared, the better the performance, and this applies particularly in apologetics, where the performance is often critically assessed: 'when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame' (1Pt 3:16). The more thoroughly one is prepared, the more effective one is apologetically; the more widely one is prepared, the wider the effectiveness. This ideally entails maximising ones' understanding in as many areas as possible, and fulfilling one's potential regardless of ability level.

It was widely thought that post-conciliar education of the faithful meant rejecting old catechetical ways and replacing them, if at all, with a more experiential approach.[637] The ability to name, for example, the Gifts of the Spirit is now unusual.[638] To do so does not make one a better Christian but it provides a platform for developing the understanding on how to become a better Christian, and to help others to do so also. The Church recognised a new approach to catechesis, more focused on presenting and proposing[639] in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC); a decade after its publication, Ratzinger explained its purpose and identity, including, having just cited Irenaeus: [natural law] is an important trait in the ethics of the *Catechism*: it was the call to reason and to man's ability to understand'.[640]

Catechesis contributes to preparation:

> there are different concrete tasks for catechesis. Amongst these mention must be made of: […] presenting the Christian message in such a way as to prepare those who are to proclaim the Gospel to be capable 'of giving reasons for their hope' (*1 Pt* 3,15) in cultures often pagan or post-Christian: effective apologetics to assist the faith-culture dialogue is indispensable today.[641]

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[637] This is from my own experiences providing child and adult catechesis in England. Also, see several examples in: Barbara Nicolosi, 'Repenting of the Failure of Parish-Based Catechesis: Time for An Old Idea', *Patheos*, 29th May 2013, https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/education/catholic-contributions/repenting-of-the-failure-of-parish-based-catechesis-time-for-an-old-idea.html.

[638] Cf., for example, ibid.

[639] Raymond de Souza, 'Why the Church needed the catechism after Vatican II', *Catholic Herald*, 28th October 2017, https://catholicherald.co.uk/why-the-church-needed-the-catechism-after-vatican-ii/.

[640] Joseph Ratzinger, 'Current Doctrinal Relevance of the Catechism of the Catholic Church', *The Holy See*, 9th October 2002, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20021009_ratzinger-catechetical-congress_en.html.

[641] 'General Directory for Catechesis' (GDC), *The Holy See*, 11th August 1997, 110,

To counter 'the scandal of banal catechesis',[642] Nicolosi proposes a 'recommit[ment] to content and rigor', the use of actual teachers to teach the faith, and for those with some theological training/catechesis to tutor/assist one or two people at a time. Thus, those having learned at a higher level assist those younger (in age or faith). This would enhance both content and delivery of catechesis, making it more suitable, inspiring, and apt. Pope Francis recognises the need for 'a lay ministry such as that of Catechist [that] will emphasize even more the missionary commitment proper to every baptized person'.[643] However, many practical considerations need to be resolved, for example:

> How will we train catechists? Will we be content with the catechist staying one chapter ahead of the student in the religion book? Or will we require some kind of educational program? Who will run it? Dioceses? Catholic colleges or universities—the same institutions whose theology departments have largely declared they are "independent" of the teaching Church?[644]

It should be recognised that older catechetical texts and formats are still useful for some faithful. Equally, the riches of Justinian apologetics must not be set aside but rather counted as part of the much wider scope of Petrine apologetics. The Church Fathers since the second century answer many questions and challenges from today, pointing to both a failure to embed the responses in wider society's understanding and that some questions are always fundamental when the world approaches God and his people, such as why evil exists. The riches of the Mediaeval apologists, particularly Aquinas and even the two Peters, offer both reference and grounding for apologists today. And the development of classical apologetics alongside systematic theology, especially in Sheehan,[645] is remarkably deep and accessible, with Sheehan's two-year course written for 16–17-year-olds being valuable even at postgraduate levels today. While apologetics was narrowed and intellectualised, it was also developed to a very high level within this scope, and the apologist should be prepared by studying or at least accessing as much of it as reasonably capable.

However, there is a need for a greater development of resources, opportunities, and support in apologetical preparation. The past riches must be updated in applicability,[646] and sometimes information, such as scientific progress, as well as being made more accessible for many more readers: so far, there are some useful books making Aquinas's works more focused and/or readable for a wider range of non-academic

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https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[642] Ibid.

[643] Francis, 'Motu Proprio – Antiquum Ministerium', *The Holy See*, 10th May 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20210510_antiquum-ministerium.html.

[644] John M. Grondelski, 'The Confusing New "Ministry of Catechist"', *Crisis*, 4th January 2022, https://crisismagazine.com/opinion/the-confusing-new-ministry-of-catechist.

[645] Sheehan, *Apologetics*.

[646] As done with Sheehan's text by Peter Joseph.

readers, therefore apologists.[647] Also, there are resources – online and in print – that present up-to-date content regarding debates such as religion and science, moral arguments, and the ever-increasing dealing with controversial current affairs, such as woke ideology, the abuse crisis, or the restitution money received by the Catholic Church in Czechia. Useful online articles can be found in aggregators such as New Advent.[648] And for comprehensive and accessible apologetical information there are resources like Kreeft and Tacelli's very usable *Handbook* or the *Catholic Answers* website. For better access for use, Kreeft and Tacelli's *Handbook* was later condensed into the *Pocket Handbook of Christian Apologetics*,[649] the CCC into the *Compendium*,[650] and then the *YouCat*,[651] for example, and other resources are written specifically in condensed form.[652] Regarding ability level and intelligence, many apologists require texts that are not so challenging to read. Certain authors such as Scott Hahn offer very accessible theological texts, while the retired Anglican bishop N. T. Wright offers his important academic texts in far more accessible form as authored by Tom Wright. Such accessibility must be expanded because each apologist – preparing and active – must continue to develop his understanding by keeping up-to-date and locating new sources.

One issue in preparation for apologetics is learning how to engage with one who questions or challenges. Studies in apologetics, like with my own MA in 'Pastoral Theology – Apologetics', do not include a praxis element, such as in Social Work studies or Teacher Training. In the past, an apologist was well-educated, including in rhetoric, and probably had a well-connected and elite background. It is a short step from rhetoric to Justinian apologetics but a long step from universal education to Petrine apologetics. Learning from, for example, Justin's *Trypho*, might be helpful in preparing to be capable for engagement, and reading allows studying it without the time element being a factor. Also, beginning with an online forum means a response can be thought out rather than rushed, and there is no necessity to make follow-up posts; studying the debates at, for example, *Strange Notions*[653] is an excellent way to learn this format. Therefore, opportunities, support, and safe 'sandbox' environments to engage with others are necessary. After all, Peter himself was no public speaker pre-Pentecost. However, having opportunities to increase such skills are important, including in families, education, parish activities, catechesis debates, social activities, etc., and encouraging and increasing these should be a focus for improving preparation.

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[647] For example, Peter Kreeft, *A Shorter Summa* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993) or Edward Feser, *Aquinas* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2009), or even G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas 'The Dumb Ox'* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), where the Chesterton starts (p. 11): 'This book makes no pretence to be anything but a popular sketch of a great historical character who ought to be more popular.'
[648] Daily updated, at https://www.newadvent.org.
[649] Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Pocket Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).
[650] *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2012).
[651] *Youcat* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2011).
[652] For example, Marcus Holden and Andrew Pinsent, *Apologia* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2010); or on aesthetic apologetics, Marcus Holden and Andrew Pinsent, *Lumen* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2011).
[653] At https://strangenotions.com.

Developing apologetics within the culture of the faithful is very important, partly to develop individuals, but also to build a culture of speaking openly about the faith. For individuals, this is to increase understanding and the ability to explain, and to counter the questions or doubts that all have in some way; this would stem the flow of faithful falling away as they mature – many have questions, or are fed questions and challenges by others, that they cannot solve and so seek answers elsewhere. For groups, this is to develop the ability to assist one other and grow as a faith community; besides support, friendly rivalries can be exercised in quizzes, debates, etc., in a variety of environments.

Nicolosi's words regarding teachers also apply to apologists: 'There are two key aspects to being an effective teacher. The first is to know your subject. The second is to know how to communicate, translate, and "make enthralling," your subject.'[654]

Response

Peter used the word *apologia* – the response to the accusation, *kategoria* – around the time when the Greek logos was being fused with Judaism's monotheism, leading to understanding of the Logos, the Word sent out by God. In response to the other, Peter called on all Christians to speak out, just as the Father 'spoke out': theologically, this is participation in the Divine Word going out (cf. Is 55:11) and the Great Mandate (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-18). By being ready, prepared, the Christian can respond to another who questions or challenges Christians or Christianity by presenting the faith: explaining, defending, bearing witness.

The apologetics format, situation, or context extends far beyond the academic paper: for example, family conversation, chatting with friends, school or workplace discussion, argument in the pub, online news forum, making a video or film, online debate, giving the faith perspective in local community meetings, giving a homily, creating a 'learn-about-the-faith' parish group, university course work, or creating/adapting a university course in response to secular trends. Many more scenarios can be extrapolated from these examples as each is simply giving a response to a question or challenge regarding the faith. And sometimes the method can be not to answer directly but to use the Socratic method of intelligently questioning the other to lead him to the answers.[655]

The range of possible apologetical encounters is wide and diverse in theme:[656] for example, a parent explaining to a child the importance of going to church or a Catholic friend being reminded why Mass is more important than fishing on a Sunday morning; a parent explaining to a headteacher why secular sex education is problematic or a catechist explaining to a Confirmation class why to be chaste; a worker explaining to a co-worker reasons not to promote Pride events or a CEO explaining to the media the same; a priest

[654] Nicolosi, 'Repenting'.
[655] As exemplified in Kreeft, *Jacob's Ladder*.
[656] Austen Ivereigh, *How to Defend the Faith without Raising Your Voice* (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2012), 5.

explaining to parishioners that some use of Latin in the liturgy is a Vatican II teaching or a bishop explaining to his priests the importance of preparation in apologetics; a child explaining to schoolmates why he won't graffiti the toilets with them or the pub customer explaining that the Church allows divorce if necessary but not to break the marriage vow, and why; the academic who explains why God and science are fully compatible or that theology offers an important perspective in today's society and related research. While the word 'explain' has applied to the above, other scenarios exist where 'defend' would be more apt: each scenario above where there is hostility, accusation, ridicule from the other(s). However, when 'defend' is more apt, the Christian manner must be more apparent. Indeed, the apologist must 'bear witness' to the faith and to God in how the apologia is presented.

Peter's communications experience was almost exclusively verbal – one-to-one, small groups, large crowds. Today, the written equivalent has become, for some, more common: for example, I have written much more to explain apologetics than speak of it, thus far. The apologist must be ready to engage in either form. Speaking to one or a few enables personal engagement, with eye contact, expressions, gestures that are all part of the communication. The written form lacks many of these natural communication aspects, meaning it must compensate, usually with far more words, and is often better structured and organised. But misconstruals are more difficult to remedy. This is because spoken engagement is an immediate form of dialogue – words are spoken and the reaction is immediately received, so problems of understanding can be dealt with, particularly when good will exists. However, written issues are distanced in chronological and geographical terms, a response may not be made to the words, and any erroneous first impressions will become embedded problems that are more difficult to solve. Additionally, the spoken word is more personal, even to a larger crowd, than the written word. After all, listening to a good story is preferable to reading one, if the story-teller is skilled and engaging. But the benefit of the written word is that the writer has time to formulate and control the words far more and should not express content without careful thought, which can be far more of a challenge in a spoken conversation. Overall, the spoken word is more personal, engaging, imminent, and human, but it also requires more developed skills and confidence. The modern innovation of recording the spoken word suffers from the negatives of both above, especially when it cannot be edited, meaning this is a particular challenge for 'getting it right'.

In the past, Justinian apologetics aimed to 'win the argument'. As a presentation of the truth, and theology being the Queen of the Sciences, thus the greatest truth, this is initially obvious. But a pair of opposing problems can occur. Either, as Sheed warns, one 'goes for the win' and focuses on a strong argument, while side-stepping more contentious or weaker areas that are pertinent; this 'set[s] up barriers for the Holy Spirit in that person's heart (not to mention your own).'[657] Or making the faith more palatable

[657] Mark Brumley, *How Not to Share Your Faith* (San Diego: Catholic Answers, 2002), 71.

by withholding teachings more difficult to accept is misrepresentation and disingenuous, even if one's intentions seem good.[658]

Rather, it is really a presentation of the truth to a subjective person or persons with a priori thinking. Even one who is objective in thinking is still subjective in humanity and few are open to admitting being wrong or naïve without having time to ponder and – for some recipients – to pray. How often does a debate participant immediately admit 'defeat' and accept the position of the other, especially in important matters?

Time, however, provides opportunity for considering new, even unwelcome ideas. The first step of apologetics ideally is to pray, to be with God, and to seek to do his will. Instead of trying to win the argument, the apologist must focus on presenting the faith in which he has hope. This is the task of the Sower (Mt 13), and the apologist participates in this task, to give God the opportunity to nurture the seed sown and to work on the person; indeed, the apologist's words may be only part of a multi-faceted process of God's plan for a person to convert to the faith or in developing and refining his faith. The apologist should not seek to win souls: he must simply present the faith, in whichever way (prayerfully) seems best. Instead of fighting for victory over another, the apologist's task is to participate in God's work of winning souls. And afterwards, it is the responsibility of the apologist to pray for the recipient(s).

Finally, the apologist needs to be adaptable to the recipient(s), for it is about the objective truth of God meeting with the very variable subjective understanding of the person: 'Only by paying careful attention can I possibly get to know the real person or persons before me. Only then can I hope to communicate with that audience in a way that will give them a gift they can recognize and accept as such.'[659] Scripture displays this: 'Not even the Bible demands starting every conversation with the Bible. To pagans, Paul quoted pagan poetry (Acts 17:28), talked about the weather (14:17), and commented on their own secret suspicion that their idols could not save (17:23).'[660] Without placing an emphasis on both message and recipient, apologetics remains only a self-centred monologue rather than participating in the Great Mandate, the Word going out.

Christian manner

The apologist is a representative of Christ, Christianity – an ambassador. He may even be the only potentially positive figure in the life of the recipient(s), or the deciding factor in a balanced situation. But at all times the apologist is claiming to know and have something better – understanding of faith in God, Christ, the Church – and if the fruits of this 'better thing' are not apparent, perhaps it is not a 'better thing'. And if the fruits are not apparent, perhaps the motives of the apologist are not so good. Indeed, it is a temptation for the apologist to feel superior and for this to transform into anything from pride to power over others, as the past can testify. Rather, the apologist is a servant of God, of the truth, and

[658] Stackhouse, *Humble*, 140.
[659] Ibid., 144.
[660] J. Budziszewski quoted in ibid.

of the recipient(s), and needs to be humble: 'Apologetics, like any other Christian activity, must be undertaken first as an act of love to God. In particular, we must be sure not to compromise God's mission, God's law, God's message, or God's love in our zeal.'[661]

The third element of 1Peter 3:15-16 – 'yet do it with gentleness and reverence; **16** and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame' – has two points: do so in a Christian manner for that is appropriate, and do not give detractors evidence, of hypocrisy or poor attitude, to use against you. It is excellent advice, particularly for one who claims to be 'good', because 'bad behaviour' is remembered over good words. Mark Brumley's book, *How Not to Share Your Faith*, is particularly helpful for understanding a good Christian manner.

Another excellent source from Austen Ivereigh focuses on reframing the question or challenge, and not staying in the negative framing of the questioner/challenger. His book,[662] based around the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Britain in 2010 and his group 'Catholic Voices' which trained individuals to speak to a somewhat negative media, provides preparation content for dealing with likely apologetical questions and challenges. Assuming the intention of having a good manner, nine likely areas and typical frames are reframed and explained, thus preparing the faithful for making a peaceful and calm response without being 'cornered' or lacking useful knowledge of the issues. In the final chapter[663] Ivereigh offers 'Ten Principles of Civil Communication' which support maintaining a good Christian manner. His main points are listed below with my paraphrases.

1. 'Look for the positive intention behind the criticism.' The other will usually have good (subjective) reason for the question or challenge, which should be acknowledged.
2. 'Shed light, not heat.' The intention to represent Christianity and Christ helps to maintain a calm demeanour.
3. 'People won't remember what you said as much as how you made them feel.' This is central to good apologetics. Ivereigh warns: 'Intellectuals and theologians, beware. Erudition is the opposite of communication, which uses simple words to explain complex ideas. It's not just about the lucidity of your arguments. It's about the effect that your words have on others.'[664] A strong display which leaves the recipient feeling broken or embarrassed is apologetical failure.
4. 'Show, don't tell.' Offer stories, anecdotes, illustrations, descriptions, experiences over dry information and claims of dry facts without interesting evidence; be an enthusiastic believer, not a pedlar of academic information.

[661] Stackhouse, *Humble*, 140.
[662] Ivereigh, *Defend*.
[663] Ibid., 153-60.
[664] Ibid., 154.

5. ‘Think in triangles.’ Messy dialogue can lose sight of the point but by first selecting three main points to convey, it is possible to relate these wherever the conversation goes.
6. ‘Be positive.’ It is easy to find a negative slant to the message of the Church but, by reframing to what the Church is ‘for’, it is possible to show the ‘positive vision’[665] which the Church has for man and explain this.
7. Be compassionate.’ It is not difficult to lose the compassion which Christians are expected to have when challenged, or even attacked, regarding what we hold as important, which may be being portrayed wrongly or even insulted. Responding in a robotic manner is also problematic: a sign of ‘brain-washing’ to the cynic. Rather, listen, sympathise where appropriate (see no.1), speak of experiences, and be human while explaining the Catholic position.
8. ‘Check your facts, but avoid robotics.’ Use statistics rarely, contextualise information, use your knowledge wisely and selectively, and be clear and concise.
9. ‘It’s not about you.’ Pray for peace, the right words, and the Holy Spirit to help. Do God’s work. The apologist’s task is to bring God, Christ, Church to the recipient(s). Do what you can and do not worry about the rest: give it to God.
10. ‘Witnessing, not winning.’ The apologist’s task is to leave an impression on recipients that God can then work with; it is very unlikely that the ‘loser’ in an apologetical debate will suddenly convert. But leaving the other(s) with nothing negative about the Christian representative is a seed well sown.

Reframing the issue enables the apologist to present an explanation that represents the Catholic position. But as Ivereigh emphasises, the manner of the response is often more important than the actual words, albeit a coherent and rational answer is necessary.

This is the credibility that was present with good apologists in the past – Sheed, Borromeo, Sheen, etc. – and was recognised as necessary by Balthasar. In a good, loving Christian manner, love is central to being credible to others.

[665] Ibid., 156.

4.4 – Distinctions in Apologetics

Distinctions have been made in apologetics, particularly in modern times. Protestant apologetics especially is split into different categories,[666] and Dulles in a useful projection of general trends in apologetics includes some of these;[667] however, his overall image of apologetics remains Justinian, albeit opening up towards more recipient-oriented methods.

There are other important distinctions that apologists should be aware of that assist using methods at any intellectual level. These include how apologetics relates to evangelisation and catechesis (EAC), the use of transcendentals (BGT), and the levels of agreement (GCC), which are somewhat unpacked in this chapter.

Evangelisation – Apologetics – Catechesis

In a way, all three forms are evangelisation,[668] but distinguishing apologetics and catechesis from this is very important as they differ significantly within the general calling and developing of souls as Christians.[669] Also, catechesis is described as including the other two.[670] A simple process can take place: the evangelist calls a non-faithful other, who then questions specific matters that are problematic for him, then the response removes the obstacles for the person, who converts to Christianity and develops his faith through catechesis. The three forms can be viewed as a spectrum in the order of evangelisation – apologetics – catechesis: EAC. There is an overlap between E and A, and also A and C, while all three also exist independently.

The Christian as evangelist calls the non-faithful: a proactive action. When the reply is a question or an erroneous statement, the Christian becomes an apologist: a reactive action. The two roles (EA) are intrinsic to the dialogue that occurs at any level between the faithful and non-faithful: 'Evangelization and apologetics, when pursued with charity and humility, are complementary. To evangelize is to offer an invitation. Apologetics helps open the door; it clears away misconceptions, questions and false notions.'[671] Olson highlights the Catechism's (1303) universal call to the faithful:

> every Catholic who has been confirmed is called to proclaim and explain, since the Sacrament of Confirmation 'gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread

[666] Brian K. Morley, *Mapping Apologetics* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 9-26, especially 14-15.
[667] Dulles, *Evangelization*, 121-4.
[668] Paul VI, 'Evangelii Nuntiandi', *The Holy See*, 8th December 1975, 24, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html; also GDC 47-9.
[669] How they are integral to education is explored regarding AG in Nicolson, 'Theology of Education', 38.
[670] CCC 6.
[671] Carl E. Olson, 'Apologetics, Catechesis and Evangelization Today', *Simply Catholic*, accessed 12th July 2023, https://www.simplycatholic.com/apologetics-catechesis-and-evangelization-today/.

> and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross'[672]

The AC connection occurs when the faithful who are learning the faith more deeply – whether in self-learning or organised catechesis (homily, catechism class, etc.) – encounter a problem with a teaching or event, such as in Scripture. The Christian may question, object, or seek answers, and catechesis thus includes an explanatory response to this: 'a catechist may need to argue for certain doctrines (or against falsehoods also) that then can help clear the way for a disciple to grow closer to God.'[673] Similarly, a self-learner can seek an explanation from a different resource or person.

Olson imagines EAC as a three-legged stool that loses stability without all three 'legs':

> when one is ignored, or even pushed aside, the other two suffer; the stool falls over. Without catechesis and a resulting depth of faith, Catholics aren't able or willing to evangelize. Without evangelization, Catholics won't grow in their mission to share the love of Christ and the joy of the Gospel. Without apologetics, Catholics are often prey to attacks and falsehoods.[674]

This is a useful image, for the catechised Christian is also prepared for evangelical and apologetical activity, but the spectrum image also shows the blending between adjacent pairs, as they do in reality. By bearing in mind that apologetics 'does not compel faith, but rather removes obstacles on the way to faith',[675] the place of A in the EAC spectrum is a clear and often necessary step.

However, some apologetics recognisably does not occur as blended but is distinct when it is a response to a spoken or written statement that has error regarding God, Christ, Church. This can be in any context: family, friends, colleagues, pub argument, public debate… The style can be from friendly explanation to robust rebuttal. Here, there is no particular connection to evangelisation or catechesis but it is more a defence of the faith where an accusation or misrepresentation has been made. Of course, this is also an opportunity for sowing seeds as obstacles to having faith may be removed from the primary recipient or others.

Therefore, apologetics may occur with evangelisation or catechesis, or as a stand-alone, depending on the context of the recipient (potentially) coming to or developing faith, or making erroneous statements. Both types of response can be generalised usually as a type of explanation.

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[672] Ibid.
[673] Marcel LeJeune, 'The Relationship Between Evangelization, Catechesis, and Apologetics', *Catholic Missionary Disciples*, accessed 12th July 2023, https://catholicmissionarydisciples.com/news/the-relationship-between-evangelization-catechesis-and-apologetics.
[674] Olson, 'Apologetics'.
[675] LeJeune, 'Relationship'.

Beauty – Goodness – Truth

The transcendentals are becoming increasingly important with apologetical framing. They point to the highest, according to Plato, being 'universal, in the sense of that which is not confined by but goes beyond (transcends) all particular categories.'[676] Traditionally they were being, unity, truth, and goodness,[677] and Aquinas arguably added beauty.[678] These were trimmed to Kant's order of truth-goodness-beauty, for whom 'transcendental' meant a priori knowledge about something that is learned: 'I call all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our a priori concepts of objects in general.'[679] This became established: Transcendental Thomism also 'begin[s] […] epistemological reflections by examining human subjectivity from within – on the basis of what has been called the "I"-"I" relationship.'[680] However, 'such a rationalist subjectivising of the transcendentals, it can be argued, leads to the risk of returning to Plato's Cave, where the world beyond is not perceived properly, or at all.'[681] As subjective postmodernism relativises truth, and even good, making them bendable to one's preferences, truth ironically cannot effectively be the starting point in apologetics and a different approach is increasingly needed to establish the usefulness of the transcendentals.[682]

Balthasar's 16-book 'Trilogy' proposes reversing the order;[683] beginning with beauty directs the 'I' to engage with the other, that is, 'I'-'you' or 'I'-'he/she/it'. Nichols explains that this 'puts the human subject – and that by virtue of its created nature – in immediate relation with the truth that lies outside itself'.[684] Oakes explains the result of this:

> The order of the trilogy is crucial, [Balthasar] insisted. One must first perceive Christian revelation as beautiful and only then would one's soul be prompted to follow Christ in a dramatic life of Christian discipleship. Finally, once inside that life of obedience to Christ, one comes to see how and why Christianity is true. If one starts with the question of the truth of Christian revelation, one must

[676] Aidan Nichols, *A Key to Balthasar* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2011), 1. Italics are in the original.
[677] Wouter Goris and Jan Aertsen, 'Medieval Theories of Transcendentals', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/transcendentals-medieval/.
[678] This is a fair conclusion from Thomas Aquinas, ST I, 5.4, ad 1 and ST I-II, 27.1, ad 3 as shown in, for example, Travis Cooper, 'Is Beauty a Distinct Transcendental According to St. Thomas Aquinas?', *Thomas Aquinas College*, 2013, https://www.thomasaquinas.edu/about/ beauty-distinct-transcendental-according-st-thomas-aquinas.
[679] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 133, https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/5/25851/files/2017/09/kant-first-critique-cambridge-1m89prv.pdf.
[680] Nichols, *Key*, 2.
[681] Nicolson, 'Rethinking', 56; also argued in Peter Kreeft, *Doors in the Walls of the World* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2018), 13, 15.
[682] Nicolson, 'Rethinking', 55-6, 59.
[683] Balthasar's clearest comments on this are in Balthasar, *My Work*, 116-117. See also Nicolson, 'Rethinking', 62-5.
[684] Nichols, *Key*, 2.

> engage in apologetic arguments. But for Balthasar, argument just gets in the way of the contemplative gaze necessary for the first movement of perception. The spark of delight moves us to seek God.[685]

Oakes is thinking of Justinian apologetics here, which culminates in argument which may offer as much offence as defence, neither of which being helpful in Petrine apologetics. Balthasar originally rejected apologetics as not conveying Christianity well[686] but by 1975 had a different understanding:

> Nonetheless, the last decade has reinforced this fundamental conviction of mine: You do good apologetics if you do good, central theology; if you expound theology effectively, you have done the best kind of apologetics. The Word of God (which is also and always the activity of God) is self-authenticating proof of its own truth and fecundity […][687]

Clearly a step in the right direction, Balthasar, however, still did not recognise that apologetics should not be reserved for the elite and intellectual but is for all: a method of communicating the faith, not just 'doing good theology'.

However, Balthasar's fundamental step was reversing the transcendentals, and also recalling unity. By placing beauty first, apologetics when dealing with postmodern thinking can side-step the new subjectiveness of morality and veracity. The call of beauty becomes primary:[688]

> Any claim to know objective truth or attempt to propose objective goodness tends to meet now with incredulity at best and defensiveness at worst: 'Who are you to tell me what to think or how to behave?' But there is something less threatening, more winsome, about the beautiful.[689]

Beauty (*kalos*) and calling (*kaloun*) are intrinsically linked:[690] we are attracted to that which seems pleasing to the senses, which is then further sought. The person seeks that which pleases, meaning the apologist can focus on responses based upon the source of beauty because

> the truly beautiful is an objective value, to be distinguished from what is merely subjectively satisfying. This means that the beautiful does not merely entertain; rather, it invades, chooses, and changes the one to whom it deigns to appear. It is not

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[685] Edward T. Oakes, 'Reason Enraptured', *First Things*, April 2013, https://www.firstthings.com/article/2013/04/reason-enraptured.
[686] For example, Balthasar, *Glory*, 123-124, 167-168, 198.
[687] Balthasar, *My Work*, 100.
[688] Nicolson, 'Rethinking', 65-7.
[689] Robert Barron, 'Evangelizing the Nones', *First Things*, January 2018, https://www.firstthings.com/article/2018/01/evangelizing-thenones.
[690] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite notes the similarity in the two Greek words in 'Divine Names', ch4, sec 8 in *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite Part 1*, trans. John Parker (London: James Parker and Co., 1897), 40, https://archive.org/details/worksofdionysius00dionuoft/page/n13/mode/2up.

> absorbed into subjectivity; it rearranges and redirects subjectivity, sending it on a trajectory toward the open sea of the beautiful itself.[691]

The truth of Christianity can be expressed in the form and splendour (Balthasar), the *integritas*, *consonantia*, and *claritas* (Aquinas) enjoyed by the recipient, before being presented with any moral (goodness) or statement (truth). Once the recipient is called by the beauty perceived and it is accepted as good, the subjective thinker then becomes open to agreement with the source of beauty existing, and having goodness and truth, and even unicity:

> All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, most especially man, created in the image and likeness of God. The manifold perfections of creatures – their truth, their goodness, their beauty all reflect the infinite perfection of God. Consequently we can name God by taking his creatures' perfections as our starting point, 'for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator'. (Wis 13:5)[692]

More than ever before, understanding of the subjective person is required in apologetics to remove obstacles to knowing the objective truth of God, such as in Kreeft's range of arguments in the next section.

In some situations, aesthetics apologetics is a useful approach.[693] This presentation of the beauty of God's creation, Christian faith, and the Church today and past can become boastful[694] or be seen as such.[695] Properly done, this approach shows the fruits of the faith respectively in nature, growth of the person and community in love and respect, and the Church's contributions to humanity and society. However, where subjectivity is primary, old objective authorities must be presented carefully. Examples include: respect for women, children, and slaves in the Early Church; support for the poor and sick leading to hospitals, health care, and social work; education in universities and schools; the scientific method; and much more. In respect to the sensitivity necessary for this, at least partial use of the Socratic method of asking questions is recommended.

The apologist must be well prepared in more than just knowledge: 'Theology should not become mere information or theory, and the theologian who loses sight of the bigger picture, or loses the ability or desire to pray, quickly loses sight of the beauty and the perception of the goodness that accompanies the truth.'[696]

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[691] Barron, 'Evangelizing the Nones'.
[692] CCC 41.
[693] Excellent resources include: Thomas E. Woods, Jr., *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, 2005); Holden and Pinsent, *Lumen*.
[694] Crocker, *Triumph*.
[695] A Czech theologian shared this opinion with me regarding Woods, *Built*.
[696] Nicolson, 'Rethinking', 70, referencing: cf. Stratford Caldecott, *Beauty for Truth's Sake* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 125.

Objective – Subjective

This is a spectrum of apologetical approaches, arguments, and styles, a good example being Kreeft's series of 20 arguments 'proving' the existence of God from objective to subjective.[697]

Kreeft ranges from nine objective or 'cosmological',[698] arguments through five hybrid arguments,[699] to six subjective or 'psychological'[700] arguments, including Pascal's Wager, which is acknowledged as an argument for faith rather than God himself.[701] There is a clear 'journey taking place'[702] through the 20 approaches: from Aquinas's five Proofs to more recent objective proofs, then Miracles; various hybrid approaches then include Consciousness, Truth, Anselm's Ontological Proof, and Morals; then the subjective ones are Conscience, Desire, Aesthetic Experience, Religious Experience, Common Consent. Theoretically, there is enough here to approach any position, albeit adaptations to the recipient are always needed. The range itself suggests another proof:

> Such a range of arguments has a certain momentum due to their variety pointing to one thing: God's existence. As they call upon human experience and logic in different ways, one may ask whether this shows that God made us to know him in many ways, giving us an insight into his essence, which is an added benefit of these arguments. Also, as God reveals himself in so many ways, this suggests that he seeks to reveal himself to all. An elitist God might limit his knowability to reason and philosophical arguments, known only by those understanding the objective arguments alone. Or, if known only in the subjective types, God's existence would seem more the fancy of wishful thinking: an anthropomorphic deity. And having only the middle group of partially both types would lack a robust grounding as well as a convincing personal connection to many a sceptic. Therefore, the range of different arguments should be known by the apologist.[703]

Learning different approaches is part of apologetical preparation. The faithful should know at least some of these to the best of their ability, especially if involved in caritas and diakonia activities.[704] A Christian teacher or social worker, for instance, should be prepared for questions or challenges regarding faith within working encounters:

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[697] Kreeft and Tacelli, *Handbook*, 52-92; see also Nicolson, 'Objective', and Stuart Nicolson, 'Responding to Clients and Students Regarding the Existence of God', *Caritas et veritas* 9, no. 1 (Mar 2019): 179-91, https://www.caritasetveritas.cz/pdfs/cev/2019/01/16.pdf.
[698] Kreeft and Tacelli, *Handbook*, 54-71.
[699] Ibid., 71-79.
[700] Ibid., 79-92.
[701] Ibid., 91-2.
[702] Nicolson, 'Objective', 129.
[703] Nicolson, 'Objective', 130-1.
[704] Nicolson, 'Responding', especially 179-82.

> To be comfortable with reading and passing on several of these in an understandable way is certainly sufficient. Obviously, however, it is better to know more of the reasons and even how they can work together effectively, showing consistency and depth – together, they become a more convincing reason for believing in the existence of God.[705]

For apologetical-pastoral reasons, using 'reasons for believing' or 'argument' is more helpful than 'proof'. One with a stubborn a priori position that God does not exist cannot accept a proof regarding the opposite position. Especially in postmodern thinking, claiming proof is considered presumptuous, creating a greater obstacle to faith. Rather, the a priori position needs to be reduced, through time or another approach.

Each individual is unique and should be treated thus, and the apologist in Christian love should seek to find a way to reduce and even remove obstacles to having faith.

God, Christ, Church

The apologist should seek to ascertain the a priori positions held by the recipient before presenting apologetical content. An empirical, classical structure in apologetics is Natural Apologetics, Christian Apologetics, and Catholic Apologetics, focusing on arguing for – or removing obstacles from – belief in God, Christ, and Church: GCC. By selecting effective apologetical content, pointless dialogue can be avoided for two possible reasons.

First, if apologist and recipient agree on a specific theological point, focusing there has no apologetical value because it is confirmation: a Catholic will agree with a Protestant on Jesus being the Son of God (albeit, consideration of what this means may be useful); agreement exists with a Muslim regarding God's existence, (but exploring this may help define his attributes). Therefore, finding points of agreement in GCC is necessary: in simple terms, first God, then Christ, then Church. Then engagement can focus on further points.

It is not possible to establish agreement sufficiently without agreement on a more foundational level. In basic terms, first, God must be agreed upon, then Christ, and then the Church. An example is theologically explaining the sanctity of life to a secular atheist: this requires an agreement that God exists and that Christ sanctified creation and saves souls; this is because the sanctity argument is foundationless if sanctity has no meaning to the recipient. Rather, there needs to be an agreement upon, for example, the value of human life and that life starts at conception, both of which are key points in the ongoing debate.

One extra dimension is that, with good will, the atheist can suspend his disbelief as the apologist's position is presented. While not convincing the atheist, this allows the cogency and consistency of the theological reasoning to be exhibited, and hopefully explored. An 'inversion' of the Socratic method of questioning can be used – the recipient questions the apologist regarding his beliefs to find the supposed 'error', to 'prove it

[705] Ibid., 190.

wrong', which means the recipient examines the theological reasoning and (hopefully) finds it secure and coherent – a certain type of beauty – if the apologist is well prepared. It is likely that the recipient will claim that a common error, such as tautology, is the problem but this should be answered sufficiently by a well-prepared apologist.

So, by agreeing on a foundation, this empirical approach avoids simple confirmation or where a foundation is missing regarding a specific point, exploring it in other ways can be effective.

The apologist must be prepared in a range of ways to be capable. Apologetical methods and content must vary according to situation, person(s), approaches, points of agreement, etc. Apologetics functions sometimes with evangelisation or catechesis, or sometimes alone. Especially in postmodern times, beauty can open the door to goodness and truth, which uses the subjective impulses that are increasingly common today – knowing a range of approaches/arguments, the apologist is prepared for a variety of engagements. And selecting apologetical approach and content by recognising foundations of points of agreement is very helpful. All of these considerations make apologetics more responsive and effective, and the removal of obstacles to faith more possible.

4.5 – Important Voices Contributing to New Apologetics

Particularly in America, a groundswell of voices has contributed to and even encouraged a more organic development of apologetics in recent decades. Regarding approach and identity, three figures are particularly helpful for recognising new ways of thinking that are more Petrine apologetically. These are Cardinal William Levada, Bishop Robert Barron, and Professor Peter Kreeft. Each contributes something different to the changing picture which is increasingly called New Apologetics (NA).

William Levada

In an especially insightful and timely overview of the NA development, Levada, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in 2010 gave an address that is available on the Vatican website: 'The Urgency of a New Apologetics for the Church in the 21st Century'.[706] This was seminal in its official Church recognition for NA and its importance.

Referencing Benedict XVI, Levada recognises that 'apologetics has a double place in theology', that is, in the *praeambula fidei* and 'in pastoral theology, where theology
is "inculturated" (to use a popular post-conciliar term) in preaching, catechesis and evangelization'. He confirms that in 'both of these areas apologetics has all but disappeared', recognising a particular reason: 'If apologetics was criticized and largely abandoned in the wake of the Second Vatican Council for being too defensive or too aggressive, it is perhaps because the admonition to proceed with "courtesy and respect" had too often been ignored.' Nonetheless, 'the project of defending one's faith, of explaining the reasons for belief, is a perennial one'.

Levada at times understands apologetics through Dulles, which is valuable but mostly Justinian, but gives even more attention to Cardinal Francis George (Chicago), who pinpoints an important post-conciliar gap: 'Apologetics is important first of all within the Church herself. We need to give reasons for the faith not only to enlighten those who do not share it but also to strengthen those within the household of the faith.'[707] Recalling his own experiences of the suppression of apologetics, Levada sees how this led to

> the likes of Richard Dawkins and his fellow apostles of the so-called 'new' atheism addressing thousands on college campuses, with books caricaturing the doctrines and philosophy of the Christian tradition on the best seller lists. How ripe the times are for a new apologetics!

[706] Unless stated, all quotes from this section are from: William Levada, 'The Urgency of a New Apologetics for the Church in the 21st Century', *The Holy See*, 29th April 2010, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20100429_levada-new-apologetics_en.html.
[707] Francis George quoted in Levada.

As he stated earlier, 'a "new" apologetics is not only timely but urgent from both the scientific and the pastoral point of view.'

Recognising the old range of apologetics from Ronald Knox – 'The existence of God, the Old Testament as prophecy, the Person of Christ, the New Testament as a reliable record, and the Church as authorized teacher'[708] – to Aquinas, Levada widens the scope for NA: a 'scientific basis in a renewed fundamental theology, where faith and reason, credibility and truth, are explored as necessary foundations of the Catholic Christian faith. But the faith must always be newly thought through when it has to engage new situations, new generations, new cultures.' He refers to John Paul II, who called Canadian bishops to 'engage people of today in a dialogue which embodies four indispensable qualities – clarity, humanity, confidence and prudence. He suggested that these should mark the project of a "new apologetic".' Benedict XVI, like Balthasar, is noted as focusing on beauty and witness:

> for him 'art and the Saints are the greatest apologetic for our faith.' He calls the Saints a 'great luminous trail on which God passed through history.' About Christian art and music, he suggests that 'in a certain way they are proof of the truth of Christianity: heart and reason encounter one another, beauty and truth converge …'.

Expanding on this, Levada again quotes George:

> During the Synod for America [1997], I suggested that an integral part of the new evangelization must be a new apologetics – a loving and nondefensive but nonetheless clear response to the arguments against the Catholic faith. These include arguments raised on the one hand by those who misrepresent God's Word by reading the Bible as a code, and on the other hand claims by others that all religions, but especially Catholicism, are an illusion that destroys personal happiness and critical scientific intelligence.[709]

The words 'a loving and nondefensive but nonetheless clear response' are unquestionably Petrine apologetics in being faithful to truth and love. It is rational: 'In an effective apologetics, reason finds itself strengthened in its dialogue with faith, and vice versa'.[710] Levada's urgency is because 'today's task requires an ever greater coherence between faith and life by the one who "gives an explanation or defense" of his belief and hope in Christ'.

The themes of beauty and eschatology meeting the Church's activity have apologetical purpose:

> A new apologetics for the new millennium should focus on the beauty of God's creation. For this apologetic to be credible, we must pay greater attention to the mystery and the beauty of Catholic worship, of a sacramental vision of the world that

[708] Walsh quoted in Levada.
[709] George quoted in Levada.
[710] Ibid.

> lets us recognize and value the beauty of creation as a foreshadowing of the new heavens and the new earth envisioned in 2 Peter and the Book of Revelation.

But this must be expressed in real, practical, and pastoral theology that develops AA and GE 2:

> The witness of our lives as believers who put our faith into practice by work for justice and charity as followers who imitate Jesus, our Master, is an important dimension of our credibility as dialogue partners in a time of a new apologetics. Our solidarity with our fellow citizens, whose sense of responsibility may be partial but real – expressed in causes for the environment, for the poor, for economic justice – is important. At the same time, our ability to articulate the full vision of truth, justice and charity is essential to ensure that such witness and action is not just a passing phase, but can make a lasting contribution to the creation of civilization of love.

Apologetics is thus not only integrated with the Church's mission and teachings being lived but intrinsic to these. He explains the need for a reorientation of culture carried out by Christians engaging effectively with others:

> A dialogue about the meaning and purpose of human freedom is essential in today's culture. If freedom is directed toward reinforcing the individualism of a 'me-first' culture, it will never realize the potential offered by the One who made us in his own image and likeness as free to respond to the great gift of divine love.

Additionally, Levada calls for increased 'dialogue with science and technology', recognising that many scientists are Christians. He also acknowledges the value in the pre-conciliar – 'A new apologetics can also learn from the "old" apologetics' – and finds in C. S. Lewis 'a key theme for apologetics: the longing for the good, and its related themes of a natural moral law and of the validity of human reason common to all humanity.'

He criticises the post-conciliar preference for minimising Christianity being presented to others:

> a new apologetics must take into account the ecumenical and interfaith context of any dialogue about religious faith in a secular world. I do not agree with those who suggest that the time for a specific **Catholic** [sic] apologetics has passed. But questions of spirit and faith engage all the great religious traditions and must be addressed with an openness to interfaith dialogue.

This ongoing problem of concealing Christ and Christianity has led recently to a then-future cardinal, the head of World Youth Day 2023, stating that 'We don't want to convert the young people to Christ or to the Catholic Church or anything like that at all'.[711] This

[711] Walter Sanchez Silva and Natalia Zimbrão, 'WYD is an invitation to young people to experience God, explains future Portuguese cardinal', *Catholic News Agency*, 10th July 2023,

is not consistent with Christ's mandate or Vatican II's teachings which include apologetics. On this theme, Levada quotes Dulles:

> Many Catholic theologians, unclear about the importance of the faith that comes through hearing, have been reluctant to align themselves with the call to proclaim the Gospel. […] Yet the Catholic Church, with its rich intellectual and cultural heritage, has resources for evangelization that are available to no other group. We need a more outgoing, dynamic church, less distracted by internal controversy, more focused on the Lordship of Jesus Christ, more responsive to the Spirit and more capable of united action[712]

Levada recognises the reality but also a possibility: 'The spirit of contemporary society is skeptical of truth, of the claims to know the truth, even – or especially – of truth revealed by God. The relativization of truth is not the necessary precondition of real dialogue; the desire to know the other in the fullness of his or her humanity is.' Recalling Peter, Levada describes the apologetical vision: 'For this is the challenge given to apologists throughout the history of the Church: to let people know the reason for our Christian faith and hope with all courtesy and respect (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).'

Levada recognises the rejection of apologetics, and the reason for this; he also shows that this has left a vacuum. He proposes new approaches to old problems in a new context. This new and enriched apologetics focuses on love, the transcendentals, dialogue, and to a good extent Petrine apologetics. However, he is focusing on more intellectual apologetics, which lacks the universal aspect of Peter's call.

Robert Barron

Barron is a key figure in evangelisation and apologetics. For a Church figure, he has a high media profile, while fulfilling his past archbishop's words above about giving 'a loving and nondefensive but nonetheless clear response to the arguments against the Catholic faith'.[713] His online presence is substantial, with over 1,200 YouTube videos and more than 650,000 subscribers,[714] as well as popular social media accounts.[715] He lectures regularly, is a commentator on several news media channels, secular and religious, and is a guest in many different media interviews. Such a presence is reminiscent of Bishop Fulton Sheen.

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https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/254764/future-portuguese-cardinal-on-wyd-we-don-t-want-to-convert-the-young-people-to-christ. He tried to clarify the remark but the message remains: Filipe d'Avillez, 'The rise of Bishop Américo Aguiar', The Pillar, 12th July 2023, https://www.pillarcatholic.com/p/the-rise-of-bishop-americo-aguiar.

[712] Dulles quoted in Levada.

[713] George quoted in Levada.

[714] 'Bishop Robert Barron', *YouTube*, 5th July 2023, https://www.youtube.com/@BishopBarron.

[715] 'Robert Barron', *Wikipedia*, accessed 5th July 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Barron.

Barron responded to the above PR survey:[716] it shows a 'massive failure on the part of Catholic educators and catechists, evangelists, teachers' and is a 'deeply disturbing statistic'. He recognises that 'something has gone substantially wrong' and that 'there are those in the Church today […] that want to drive a wedge between apologetics or catechesis or the intellectual on the one hand, and then being friendly and reaching out to people on the other hand.' He asks, 'How's that worked out for us?' and describes the outcome: 'What we're seeing is the bitter fruit of it. That's what happens when you utterly bracket the apologetic, the catechetical, the intellectual.' He blames 'himself, bishops, priests, everybody'.

Barron has authored over 20 books; in particular, the aesthetic apologetics in his 2011 book and video documentary series *Catholicism* shows the beauty of the Catholic Church in its buildings, traditions, stories, artwork, liturgy, etc.

His pastoral-apologetical approach is evident in his 2014 keynote speech to the very progressive REC,[717] where his message was received very positively as he can engage with a wide range of people while presenting NA themes and teachings. Within minutes he was explaining the Balthasarian approach of beauty as today's key to the transcendentals: in cathedrals, helping the poor in Calcutta, how the novel *Brideshead Revisited* works, and the joy of his first baseball game – how its beauty led to the goodness of playing and the truth of learning the rules to play it properly and well. To the educators, he calls: 'Don't dumb down the message!' while reflecting on how doing so has meant many drifting away; he asks why lawyers and doctors now expect a simplified, basic faith. He recalls how he was asked after an interview responding to the 'New Atheists', 'Father, would you at least admit that Christopher Hitchins got you Catholics thinking about these things for the first time?' This grindingly portrays the image of the faith held by many others, and also some faithful. Barron calls us to preach with ardour, fire, enthusiasm, that removing the bastions at Vatican II was to let the Catholic faith out, not let the world in: not to focus on sociology or worldly morals but to bring the Risen Christ into these. He goes on to emphasise the OT in contrast to the relatively Marcionite Christianity of modern education, describing Christ in his context in salvation history. A lengthy but captivating explanation of this leads to the point that any good person can serve but who can genuinely say 'Jesus is Lord'? On weak Christian education, he notes that children can detail the Star Wars narrative and so should not be underestimated in learning about the faith. He quotes Irenaeus: 'God became human so that humans may become God.' He calls this 'the Gospel in a nutshell', which contradicts the atheist message that one must be freed from God to become fully oneself. The faithful must become better at explaining the faith to children, who are inundated with the atheist, secular message. He recommends Augustine for children: 'Our heart is restless until it rests in thee', then promptly references Bruce Springsteen (that 'we all have a Hungry Heart') and U2 ('I Still Haven't

[716] Robert Barron, 'Bishop Barron on Catholics Misunderstanding the Eucharist', *Word on Fire*, 6th August 2019, https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/video/bishop-barron-on-catholics-misunderstanding-the-eucharist/24800/. Further quotations in the paragraph are from the embedded video.
[717] RECongress, 'REC 2014 | Keynote | Rev. Robert Barron', *YouTube*, 20th March 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRzDBro3FiE.

Found What I'm Looking for'); to present theology in an approachable way, without flooding the recipient but embedding intellectual ideas in conjunction with existing knowledge structures, is highly effective in reaching ordinary faithful and other recipients, and hearing such songs again may even trigger thoughts of Augustine. Using Elijah and G. K. Chesterton, Barron points to love and service – giving, not taking. Finally, he recommends reading before sharing, which is preparation. He calls for a renewal of what Fulton Sheen did, with the new tools available (internet, etc.). He warns that online engagement will cause many children to become atheists if the faithful don't share the faith on social media, etc.

Barron's Erasmus Lecture (2017), 'Evangelizing the Nones',[718] is a more intellectual version of the above REC speech. He recognises the growing number without religious affiliation: 'Nones'. There is more on Balthasar's BGT approach, Paul Claudel's conversion, von Hildebrand, Diotoma, and many more, contrasting the iconoclasts. He focuses more on the Catholic intellectual renaissance of the early to mid 20th century and again condemns the 'dumbing down'. He recognises, citing George, that the New Atheists came about partly because 'the effective disappearance of philosophy as a mediating discipline between science and religion has had a deleterious effect on epistemology in general': to be able to reason and explain the faith. He points to the Marcionite element of modern Christianity in Schleiermacher, Kant, Tillich, Bultmann, Rahner as they can be separated from the OT foundation. Again he recontextualises Christ in the OT but with greater depth and different examples, images. Although he includes the Star Wars comparison, it is much more on point here. He compares the New Atheists to several medieval philosophers and finds the former wanting. Interestingly, his use of Irenaeus and Augustine is significantly reduced, but he includes many other Early Church Fathers. Overall, his conclusion is less rousing but he directs the recipient to Paul and being on mission.

Barron returned as a speaker at the 2018 REC,[719] presenting something of a blend of the above two examples – still approachable but clearly more detailed. Notably, he expands the iconoclast theme, pointing out that the Church 'always needs to reform itself', but 'when we start destroying beautiful things, you know that a legitimate reform has become a corruption'. He explores far more deeply how beauty calls for (deeper) conversion in the faithful and others, including several such as Pope Francis and the *via pulchritudinis*, Balthasar's BGT reversal, and then describes the transcendentals in baseball terms again. While more intellectual than the 2014 speech, he still mixes the popular with the intellectual, and explains the latter in an engaging way.

The three overlapping presentations contain clear apologetical themes – significant preparation, which he certainly has and calls for, engagement with faithful and others, and he does so in a warm, even friendly manner. These are aimed at different intellectual levels, and meant for passing on, not merely consuming. This use of NA approaches encapsulates much of his message, which is actualised through his Word on

[718] Barron, 'Evangelizing the Nones'.
[719] Bishop Robert Barron, '"Catholicism and Beauty" // 2018 LA Religious Congress Talk', *YouTube*, 26th March 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUBNTNiqn60.

Fire Catholic Ministries.[720] This extensively produces videos, other media productions, the Strange Notions online forum[721] for intellectual apologetical engagement and debate, and much more.

Word on Fire published a series of essays[722] on a wide range of NA themes: it is divided into new audiences, new approaches, new models, and new issues, the last covering science and faith, psychology and anthropology, theology and philosophy, and atheism and culture. It is an excellent exploration and presentation of various important NA themes from many key figures in apologetics today. Of note, the new models are adaptations of mostly past figures, from Socrates to Josef Ratzinger.

Barron's 'Afterword'[723] sums up the NA identity. The problem is:

> Innumerable studies over the past ten years have confirmed that people frequently cite intellectual reasons when asked what prompted them to leave the Church or lose confidence in it. These concerns remain crucial stumbling blocks to the acceptance of the faith, especially among the young.

He gives the solution:

> I realize that in some circles within the Church, the term 'apologetics' is suspect, since it seems to indicate something rationalistic, aggressive, condescending. I hope it is clear that arrogant proselytizing has no place in our pastoral outreach, but I hope it is equally clear that an intelligent, respectful, and culturally sensitive explication of the faith—giving a reason for the hope that is within us, as St. Peter exhorts (1 Pet. 3:15)—is certainly necessary.

He outlines the four sections in the book then recalls Jesus' apologetics on the Road to Emmaus. He finishes by sharing his vision:

> My hope is that it helps to inaugurate a new era of intellectual vigor for the Church, one in which an army of apologists both walk and talk with those on the road, offering—with 'gentleness and reverence' (1 Pet. 3:16), but also boldness and intelligence—a reason for their hope. This, I trust, will set wandering hearts on fire.

Barron offers a concise image of the problem, the solution, and the manner that should be intrinsic to apologetics: the desire to help, support, explain, and share the faith. While he shows how to approach different intellectual levels with his content and delivery, and he calls for children in general to learn more about the faith, the need to develop apologetics in all the faithful could have been emphasised more. However, his message is a major step towards this.

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[720] *Word on Fire*, https://www.wordonfire.org.
[721] *Strange Notions*, https://strangenotions.com.
[722] *The New Apologetics*, ed. Matthew Nelson (Park Ridge IL: Word on Fire Institute, 2022), epub.
[723] Robert Barron, 'Afterword', in ibid.

Kreeft, a professor of philosophy, contributed to *The New Apologetics* with a three-page essay on Pascal,[724] concluding with 'Pascal is the single most effective apologist I know. Why? Just as the only answer to what a novel is about is the novel itself, the only answer to that question is the *Pensées.* Read them, and weep, laugh, and leap into faith.'[725] He highlights Pascal's ability to capture the reader:

> As a professor, I'm very sensitive to many different levels of quiet in the classroom (I distinguish five) because they are levels of attention. 'No breathing' is the rarest, the quietest, and the most valuable of the five. I have taught philosophy for sixty years now, and I have never found any other philosopher who can do that to class after class of ordinary modern pagan students.[726]

Kreeft's style captures the intellectual and re-present it in interesting, engaging, and more approachable ways, for example, 'Pascal does not construct screens, or masks, or systems; he removes them. He is not an engineer, a builder. He is a spelunker, a cave explorer. He moves down and in, not up and out.'[727] Kreeft frames complexities helpfully: '[Pascal] is not a reductionist. Like Augustine, he lives among paradoxes, and loves them.'[728]

With over 80 books published, he has covered a vast range of topics. Typically, he presents the challenging as approachable, such as *A Shorter Summa* for beginners.[729] His philosophical works cover a vast range, but as an apologist of many years, developing in effectiveness, he has produced valuable works with approachable and usable content, albeit still with a somewhat well-educated slant. With Tacelli, his *Handbook* and *Pocket Handbook* is very usable and informative. And his *Jacob's Ladder* conceivably honours Justin – the author of *Trypho*, the earliest extant Christian non-scriptural dialogue – whose conversion was inspired by conversing with a stranger on a beach by using this setting for his dialogue. In 10 chapters, the dialogue themes travel from relativism/scepticism to Catholic faith in a process: Passion-Truth-Meaning-Love-Principles-God-Jews-Jesus-Catholics-Authority. This empirical progression incrementally establishes each position before it founds the next, thus showing the Catholic faith as rational as well as demonstrating apologetical engagement.

The *Handbook* offers many apologetical tools covering many themes: the aforementioned 20 Arguments for the existence of God and the Trilemma regarding Christ's divinity[730] – he was either Lord, liar, or lunatic,[731] also known as bad, mad, or God.[732] He describes the general debate before exploring the solutions and how to

[724] Kreeft, 'Blaise'.
[725] Ibid.
[726] Ibid.
[727] Ibid.
[728] Ibid.
[729] Kreeft, *A Shorter Summa*.
[730] Kreeft and Tacelli, *Handbook*, 51-92.
[731] Ibid., 158-79.
[732] Redford, *Bad, Mad or God?*.

respond; the content is both detailed and very readable, thus being helpful to generally-educated readers. Kreeft and Tacelli recognise the importance of effectively preparing the faithful to engage with others appropriately:

> An introduction to apologetics usually deals with methodology. We do not. We believe that nowadays second-order questions of method often distract attention from first-order questions of truth. Our intent is to get 'back to basics'. We have no particular methodological axe to grind. We try to use commonsense standards of rationality and universally agreed principles of logic in all our arguing. We collect and sharpen arguments like gem collectors collecting and polishing gems; readers can set them into various settings of their own.[733]

This is important for NA as it moves beyond the old, constricting structures and expectations and once again becomes a tool, a method of communicating: by the prepared, in response to others, in a Christian manner.

Kreeft is a highly intellectual professor who nevertheless is able to convert his understanding into approachable and relatively easily understandable content in apologetical forms which can be used by the reader with others. It is the faithful's task to use his 'gems' to explain the faith to others who question or challenge, as called for by Peter and Vatican II.

Of these three voices, Levada establishes NA at the highest ecclesial levels by outlining much of its purpose and characteristics. His well-sourced text is consistent with Petrine apologetics except it retains the intellectual level that is typically Justinian. Barron adapts his message to the perceived audience and presents intellectual themes and content in more approachable ways: intellectual capability is not necessary – a standard education is quite sufficient. Kreeft is able to present his vast and varied understanding in equally an engaging manner. His description of Pascal could feasibly be applied to him:

> Most philosophers' writing styles are notoriously unreadable: ponderous, technical, wordy, abstract, difficult, and dull. But not Pascal's. He is never platitudinous, pandering, patronizing, preachy, or pacifying. He jabs, jokes, and jibes. His words are not soft; they are lightning-like lasers. They hit you in the head and the heart at once.[734]

His *Handbook* and *Jacob's Ladder* are excellent preparation and inspirational for adapting for engaging with others.

All three figures agree on the importance of a particular Balthasarian approach nowadays, as summed up by Barron:

> Any claim to know objective truth or attempt to propose objective goodness tends to meet now with incredulity at best and defensiveness at worst: 'Who are you to tell

[733] Kreeft and Tacelli, *Handbook*, 25.
[734] Kreeft, 'Blaise'.

> me what to think or how to behave?' But there is something less threatening, more winsome, about the beautiful.[735]

Implicit in all three voices are the three Petrine elements: preparation, response, and a good Christian manner. However, while Barron and Kreeft make their content accessible to a much wider audience as it does not require intellectual abilities, there remains something of a gap before it can be said to be universal and the challenge remains for apologetics to be a method of communication usable by all faithful, at whichever level.

[735] Barron, 'Evangelizing the Nones'.

4.6 – Moving Forwards – Accessibility and Usability for All

With a significant emphasis on the previously frequently absent third Petrine element – a Christian manner – apologetics of recent times, particularly in America, has been far more consistently Christian in displaying love for neighbour; this witness helps particularly in disarming the presumption that Christian are hypocrites when engaging others. Christian culture also develops an increasing openness to engage with others, which is far more evident in America than in Europe. Attitude to openness really should not reflect secular cultural norms: after all, Christians should automatically be counter-cultural.[736]

Of preparation, resources are plenty in the English language: many published books (Kreeft, Sheehan, Barron, etc.) and the internet provides a plethora of quality resources for apologetics to develop. A major obstacle to universal apologetical communication at all levels and abilities, that is, normalising apologetics as called for by Peter and Vatican II, is developing preparation (and thus confidence to engage) in those with less education and perceived to have lower natural capabilities. To be blunt, apologetical content needs to be developed for all intelligence and social abilities levels.

While there are attempts to make apologetics information more accessible, it is necessary for developments in education and how social communities are approached.

Existing Resources

Some resources are available for preparation of those who require more approachable or supported learning. After the CCC and the *Compendium*, *Youcat* – the *Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church* – was published in 2011 and copies were distributed en masse at the 2011 World Youth Day. It is an excellent and robust apologetical resource that is both highly informative and very approachable, with or without support, even for capable post First Holy Communion children. The aforementioned adapted books are also very helpful.[737]

The highly readable *Catholic Answers* is the best-known internet resource but it remains a challenge for those with lower abilities or little prior understanding of the faith. However, their apologist Jimmy Akin's writings range from studies of the Church Fathers[738] to regular offerings on basic information about, for example, important liturgical days.[739] The latter develops one's own learning and enables readers to explain to others, for instance, the importance of attending Mass on a Holy Day of Obligation.

For general up-to-date news, topical articles, and some theological/apologetical content, news aggregators such as *New Advent* are useful. Content on current topics or

[736] Cf, for example, Acts 17:6.
[737] See ch4.3.
[738] Jimmy Akin, *The Fathers Know Best* (San Diego: Catholic Answers, 2010).
[739] Jimmy Akin, '8 Things to Know and Share About Pentecost', *National Catholic Register*, 31st May 2020, https://www.ncregister.com/blog/8-things-to-know-and-share-about-pentecost.

news is often useful for apologetics in responding to others, but they lack the foundational and structural permanence that apologetical preparation primarily needs.

A particular challenge is to avoid making the content too challenging or alternatively too patronising. This means knowing the audience – the recipient – for learning apologetics is often done by reading or listening to apologetics. Courses and progressive guides should be developed for preparation using easily available resources, where the learner is directed to a range of quality sources on particular topics or themes at different levels.

Education

Universal education has meant largely entrusting the education of the young to the state and doing something about religion at home; the fruits of this are in the PR and SoT surveys above. In light of the increasing child-based learning in education, Stratford Caldecott explains that

> While part of the problem with modern education has been an extreme tendency to center everything on the child to the exclusion of actual instruction (the problem of content-free, pupil-centered learning), it is true that education is about the human person, and finding ways to enable that person to flourish through a certain quality of attention.[740]

Education begins at home, and the young child should be raised into good habits which are then explained, and the child taught the reasons for matters such as morning and night prayer, Mass on Sunday, saying 'sorry'. The ubiquitous 'Why?' of the three-year-old should be answered even if only to show that a reason, an explanation, exists.

Later the child should if possible be educated in a genuinely Catholic school (not 'in-name-only')[741] or home-educated.[742] If the former, parents must participate in education at home also in any way possible, to maintain the important parent-education link. Parish participation is necessary to link to the Church, especially liturgically.[743] Catechesis at home and in the parish is necessary, and both should cooperate well; the parish must support parents in every way to achieve this. Catechesis needs to be understood as preparation for the journey that begins after First Holy Communion, Confirmation, rather than the sacrament being the journey's end; ongoing catechesis/learning/participation between official sacrament preparations is vital. Such learning must include both knowledge and activity stemming from it: prayer, debate, support, service, etc., and especially being able to explain one's faith when asked in

[740] Caldecott, *Beauty in the Word* (Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press, 2012), 31.
[741] For example, GE 3, 5, 8.
[742] For the benefits of this, see Stuart Nicolson, 'Homeschooling as an Alternative Option in Light of the Virus Restrictions', *Caritas et veritas* 11, no. 1 (Oct 2021): 219-33. https://www.caritasetveritas.cz/pdfs/cev/2021/01/19.pdf.
[743] GE 2.

different situations. The child should neither be raised to think he is either normal in society (many people are not Christian) nor that the faith must remain secret (unless clear danger exists). These will allow the development of faithful able to explain their faith as called for by Peter and Vatican II.

This is no catechetical school of thought, or 'brain-washing' as some would accuse. Using the Balthasarian transcendentals beginning with beauty allows the development of awe and wonder and an appreciation of God and good and, in time, truth:[744] 'Beauty is the radiance of the true and the good, and it is what attracts us to both.'[745] The child should learn that this is because 'Everything, in other words, is true, good, and beautiful in some degree or in some respect'.[746]

GE 2 explains education theologically, but reading apologetics in education in GE 2[747] should develop into identifying education within the apologetics in the text: how can preparation be developed in apologetical terms from GE 2? The following GE 2 words should also be understood apologetically (numbered for clarity).

> 'A Christian education does not merely strive for the maturing of a human person […] but has as its principal purpose this goal: that the baptized,'
>
> 1. 'while they are gradually introduced the knowledge of the mystery of salvation,'
> 2. 'become ever more aware of the gift of Faith they have received,'
> 3. 'and that they learn in addition how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth (cf. John 4:23) especially in liturgical action,'
> 4. 'and be conformed in their personal lives according to the new man created in justice and holiness of truth (Eph. 4:22-24);'

Therefore, Christian children should be raised by developing knowledge of salvation (hope), the gift of Faith, that they learn how to worship especially liturgically (feasibly beauty), and that they mould their lives according to justice (goodness) and truth. This is preparation by understanding the core of Peter's call ('account for [explain] the hope that is in you'). Two results are that

> 5. 'they develop into perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:13)'
> 6. 'and strive for the growth of the Mystical Body;'

These are the outcomes in the self and the wider Body, the Church; one of Christ's tasks was apologetical in explaining and bearing witness,[748] and this fulfilment of Christians

[744] Nicolson, 'Rethinking'.
[745] Caldecott, *Beauty for Truth's Sake*, 31.
[746] Ibid.
[747] Nicolson, 'Theology of Education', 35-7.
[748] See ch2a.2.

develops the Church as they strive, including apologetically. This occurs through the maturing (preparation) of the faithful, who are

7. 'aware of their calling, [so]'
8. 'they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them (cf. Peter 3:15)'
9. 'but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society.'

The prepared Christian thus learns to engage apologetically but also to participate in forming the world in a Christian way, which is when the Christian uses his capabilities to contribute to the community and society. Therefore, the apologetically-prepared person should speak and act as a Christian in engaging with others, and this is possible through a good Christian education and upbringing.

Whether educated at home or in an appropriate school, children should be raised not only to contribute to the mission of the Church but also to society ('the good of all society')[749] so that 'they can become actively involved in various community organizations, open to discourse with others and willing to do their best to promote the common good'.[750] Without developing such education, which should be adapted appropriately for adult converts and under-catechised (unprepared) faithful, it is difficult for Christians to bear witness to Christ in their communities, particularly when a response regarding their faith should be made. This means education is an indispensable part of apologetical preparation.

Community

In ch3.2, AA was established as apologetical. As noted there, AA's intention is 'To intensify the apostolic activity of the people of God…'[751] and its first section ressourcement recalls the eponymous apostolic activity in the Church's first generation: 'The apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it. Sacred Scripture clearly shows how spontaneous and fruitful such activity was at the very beginning of the Church.' It recontextualises this to the modern sphere: 'Our own times require of the laity no less zeal: in fact, modern conditions demand that their apostolate be broadened and intensified.' How this can be applied and developed apologetically today is briefly unpacked here.

AA 2 (numbering added) presents the image of embedded apologetics as connected with evangelisation:

[749] GE 2.
[750] GE 1.
[751] AA 1.

‘They exercise the apostolate in fact by’

1. ‘their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men’
2. ‘and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel.’
3. ‘In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of men.’

Thus, the prepared faithful should aim towards supporting others becoming Christian. The secular world should be Christianised.[752] And this should be done by engaging with others – which inevitably includes responding to questions and challenges – in a good Christian manner. This is Petrine apologetics applied and embedded.

This begins in the family, with an emphasis on the vertical relationships there,[753] which are greatly neglected due to the effects of modern education and modern media, especially online social media.[754] The laity’s mission is to ‘infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws, and structures of the community in which one lives’,[755] which is possible ‘by conforming their lives to their faith so that they become the light of the world as well as by practicing honesty in all their dealings so that they attract all to the love of the true and the good and finally to the Church and to Christ’.[756] And for those who can,

> they should make the weight of their opinion felt in order that the civil authority may act with justice and that legislation may conform to moral precepts and the common good. Catholics skilled in public affairs and adequately enlightened in faith and Christian doctrine should not refuse to administer public affairs[…][757]

Through actualising the preparation and engaging with others who have questions about or challenges to the faith, the transcendentals intrinsic to Christianity can be increasingly perceived and better understood, which removes obstacles to faith and enables others to become Christians themselves, who in turn prepare other faithful through catechesis and participate in Christianising their communities and the world.

Catholic Social Teaching[758] explores many such themes further. The recent societal lockdowns showed in many places the lack of community, thus it was an opportunity for such developments.[759] However, the focus on ‘back-to-normal’, and blaming specific failures by compartmentalising rather than recognising systemic issues,

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[752] GE 2.
[753] AA 11.
[754] AA 12 recognises problematic trends even in the mid-1960s which have grown substantially since then.
[755] AA 13.
[756] Ibid.
[757] AA 14.
[758] ‘Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church’, *The Holy See*, 2004, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.
[759] Nicolson, ‘Community Cohesion’, especially the sections on Subsidiarity, Participation, and Solidarity.

is a lost opportunity for exploring subsidiarity, participation, and solidarity in local communities.

But how can this begin and develop? It begins with those who can: 'the laity with the right apostolic attitude supply what is lacking to their brethren and refresh the spirit of pastors and of the rest of the faithful'.[760] A transformation needs to be managed, from the internal activity in church to the external in society, for often there is the will but not the means: 'Strengthened by active participation in the liturgical life of their community, they are eager to do their share of the apostolic works of that community.'[761] This cannot simply be the token gestures of a few. With an apologetical lens, the emphasised words (my italics) show preparation within the community:

> The parish offers an obvious example of the apostolate on the community level inasmuch as it brings together the many human differences within its boundaries and merges them into the universality of the Church. *The laity should accustom themselves to* working in the parish in union with their priests, *bringing to the Church community their own and the world's problems as well as questions concerning human salvation, all of which they should examine and resolve by deliberating in common.*[762]

The parish must be the centre of the activity, with the priests as the anchor; the laity must seek ways to strengthen this structure as activity develops, and the questions and challenges of the world regarding salvation – hope – need to be brought to the community, led by the priest, to be dealt with. This is 1Peter 3:15 actualised: 'to account for the hope that is in you'.

Such parish developments require clergy formation according to AA's evangelical-apologetical vision. Priests must be supported and educated in this,[763] to implement it by educating the faithful (preparation) and organising them. Such education will be personal before practical: that one understands the call to participate and this involves being prepared and engaging with others with a Christian manner. This is no evening course for two months but preparation through learning and practising engagement, similar to educating children to be apologetically capable, but contextualised appropriately.

Therefore, AA lays out the foundational ideas for embedding Petrine apologetics – preparation, response, manner – in today's society, fixing it in parish activity that is anchored in the parish priest. It is not an overnight process but one that is rooted in the Petrine and Vatican II calls.

[760] AA 10.
[761] Ibid.
[762] AA 10
[763] As a specific development of PO 9.

Recent Papal Calls

The two most recent Popes have called for apologetics to be renewed and developed in ways consistent with the vision of GE 2 and AA.

Benedict XVI said in a 2010 homily in Scotland: 'I appeal in particular to you, the lay faithful, in accordance with your baptismal calling and mission, not only to be examples of faith in public, but also to put the case for the promotion of faith's wisdom and vision in the public forum.'[764] Also, in a 2012 address to U.S. bishops Benedict stated:

> Here once more we see the need for an engaged, articulate, and well-formed Catholic laity endowed with a strong critical sense vis-a-vis the dominant culture and with the courage to counter a reductive secularism which would delegitimize the Church's participation in public debate about the issues which are determining the future of American society. The preparation of committed lay leaders and the presentation of a convincing articulation of the Christian vision of man and society remain a primary task of the Church in your country.[765]

Pope Francis states in *Evangelii Gaudium* 132:

> Proclaiming the Gospel message to different cultures also involves proclaiming it to professional, scientific and academic circles. This means an encounter between faith, reason and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility, a creative apologetics which would encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all. When certain categories of reason and the sciences are taken up into the proclamation of the message, these categories then become tools of evangelization; water is changed into wine. Whatever is taken up is not just redeemed, but becomes an instrument of the Spirit for enlightening and renewing the world.[766]

And very recently, on patience and not seeking quick results, Francis said, 'Let us never forget: when proclaiming the Word even where nothing seems to be happening, in reality the Holy Spirit is at work and the Kingdom of God is already growing, through and beyond our efforts.'[767]

With papal recognition of the urgency described by Levada, apologetics should be focused upon for development but this study calls for it to expand beyond the Justinian narrowing to all the laity, who are prepared by appropriate and vigorous preparation in both knowledge and engagement experience and underpinned by prayer.

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[764] In Ivereigh, *Defend*, 10.
[765] In ibid.
[766] EG.
[767] Francesca Merlo, 'Pope at Angelus: Never tire of sowing goodness, following Jesus' example', *Vatican News*, 16th July 2023, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-07/pope-francis-angelus-prayer-never-tire-sowing-goodness.html.

Conclusion

The apologetical calls of Peter and Vatican II have not led to apologetics, or even preparation, from being embedded within the faithful, but rather the opposite as shown particularly by the two surveys. As much as ever, the development of Petrine apologetics is needed within the Church and spreading out into the world, with preparation enabling the faithful to respond to questions and challenges about the faith, and to do so in a good, Christian manner.

Helping structure apologetics, several distinctions are made: the overlapping spectrum of evangelisation-apologetics-catechesis; the transcendentals of beauty, goodness, and truth, objective, hybrid, and subjective approaches; and the empirical hierarchy of God, Christ, and Church. The voices of many fill these apologetical structures and make it about being an ambassador of God, helping and serving others to understand his love and how to relate to him.

Establishing the nature and identity of Petrine apologetics is the beginning of a journey in original, organic, ordinary apologetics, and three areas stand out for particular development. Regarding preparation, resources need to be identified and presented to the faithful in usable ways, including programmes and sources, and the call of GE 2 needs to be unpacked further in actual preparation of the faithful. Of engagement, especially response, a deeper understanding of the theology of GE 2 and an implementation in parishes of the AA calls need to develop. Finally, little mentioned but fundamental, and particularly helpful in Christian manner, prayer must be integral to apologetics – aiming towards the fullness of faith and reason joining together in the faithful.

Conclusion

The original Petrine call to apologetics, which is shown to be mostly consistent with Paul's and Jude's calls, was repeated in an act of conciliar ressourcement at Vatican II. However, as the general understanding of apologetics was in Justinian terms, apologetics was rejected after the Council as outdated, and even fit only for a 'theological museum'. However, organic apologetics has grown since, especially in America, and New Apologetics offers new approaches.

This study established the Petrine call as the original call, which is to all faithful that they are prepared to respond to others in a Christian manner. It is impossible to build any significant picture of how this developed in the early generations, albeit Scripture gives many examples. The Apostolic Fathers were concerned with the preparation element and used the Two Ways basic method. Ignatius provides much insight into preparation themes and he calls the faithful to be active. Irenaeus later called his flock to participate in the faith. But between these, apologias were addressed to the emperor, Justin introduced philosophical content and style, and later lawyers and philosophers moved apologetics into a narrower definition: intellectual, elite, and clerical. Eusebius established apologetics as intellectual through his selective interests and later Fathers solidified apologetics as being for the few, while the many were often taught little more than what was necessary to believe and act as a Christian.

Had Lateran IV been implemented properly, had Dominic chosen a different path, perhaps the Justinian narrowing could have been rejected and apologetics turned back to Peter's original approach. These opportunities were lost and history moved towards the Reformation. The image often portrayed, at least in the English-speaking narrative, has the faithful oppressed by a controlling Church, but the Lateran IV reform canons pre-empted most of the later problems and it was a lack of following the Church's teachings, while not being prepared to explain them, that meant Catholics could not explain their faith to others when the challenge was no longer on the periphery but in their midst.

Borromeo showed how to be credible in the Catholic reforms. Pascal showed how to reach even the most subjective person. Newman established a Catholic intellectual credibility in spite of the hostility, and organic apologetical developments took place which continued up to, and a little beyond, Vatican II.

Balthasar showed the old European Catholic defensive approach to be ready for removing, which Pius XII began to do, and that the strong reform calls were overly anthropocentric thus also problematic; he proposed a third way where *Love Alone Is Credible*. Consistent with the Petrine call, this was the Council's thinking apologetically too. However, FT developed, taking on Justinian and anthropocentric aspects. It is suggested that, instead, FT can help support the development of Petrine apologetics, similar to John Paul II's words in VS.

There is certainly a need for more academic involvement in Petrine apologetics – in scriptural, historical, and conciliar terms as well as practical and pastoral theology.

Current resources tend to be online and not at an academic level, albeit many are of a good quality. Further studies into Petrine apologetics and how this can engage with other fields certainly would help fulfil the calls of GS 62.

Poor Christian education and preparation, in spite of GE 2, has caused poor understanding as seen in the two surveys of Catholics. New approaches, preferably in Petrine terms, are needed. New Apologetics is developing. This study calls for further theological unpacking and exploration of the Petrine elements and several distinctions that can structure apologetical thinking and research. The three voices focused upon offer examples and insight, as well as helping establish NA as credible in the current environment. By establishing the original Petrine definition and identity, it is possible to show that Justinian apologetics, albeit at times fruitful, was not the proper development of apologetics, which is really a method and approach to speaking out about the faith when it is questioned or challenged. In terms of which approach, the fiery Tertullian or the dove-like Minucius Felix, the best of both should be used – being well prepared and explaining the faith with a passion contained within a good, Christian manner.

The goal of apologetics is to remove obstacles from oneself and others who may doubt. It is a reasonable way of understanding faith, and it really should be joined with prayer. Removing the misunderstanding about apologetics is important, especially in today's postmodern world which offers many opportunities to engage with others. But this requires the participation of the faithful in preparation and engagement in order to fulfil the calls of Scripture and the Second Vatican Council.

Peter called for the faithful to be ready to respond as Christians when questioned or challenged; this was not developed properly in Christian history; there is not only a need for the faithful to respond to others today as much as ever, and the opportunities are plenty, but the calls of Popes, Councils, and Scripture are not enough. An organic development of original apologetics can only occur with the participation of the ordinary faithful.

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Abstract

Apologetics in recent times has had for many a negative value, and the term 'apologetics' did not appear in the Second Vatican Council documents. However, by returning to the sources in Scripture and the Early Church, especially Peter's call (1Peter 3:15-16) for all the faithful to be ready to respond when questioned or challenged about their faith, and to do so in a Christian manner, apologetics can be understood as far more original, ordinary, and organic than how it is often defined. It was originally an integral part of Christians speaking out about their faith, participating with the Logos.

Through a Petrine lens, apologetical calls and content can be identified in 10 of the 16 Vatican II documents, including two clear paraphrases of Peter's call. This indicates a problem in how apologetics is identified and understood. Part 1 provides a working definition for Petrine apologetics in order to identify its development through Christian history.

Part 2 present a brief and selective history of apologetics. Petrine apologetics is observed and explored in Scripture in Part 2a, including in Jesus' ministry and the first Church generations. In Part 2b it is shown how a second century apologetical turn, particularly through Justin Martyr, reinforced by Eusebius of Caesarea, and concretised by several later Early Church Fathers, narrowed apologetics into becoming elite, intellectual, and clerical – not for all the faithful but the few. The Mediaeval period (Part 2c) could have seen a return to more universal Petrine apologetics, especially through the Fourth Lateran Council, but weak dissemination of the conciliar teachings meant the opportunity was lost. After the Reformation, in Part 2d, Charles Borromeo's pastoral apologetics stands out, as well as a growing movement based upon credibility in the English-speaking sphere where apologetics was becoming part of organic engagement of Catholics in Protestant societies.

Part 3 focuses on Vatican II. The entrenched Justinian approach in Catholic Europe eschewed engagement with others, leaving apologetics as overly catechetical at best. Balthasar identified and rejected both the old paradigm and the main reform ideas, calling instead for a new approach: *Love Alone Is Credible*. Many conciliar apologetical themes are congruent with his reform call, and with Petrine apologetics. In addition to clear apologetical calls, the Council shows that apologetical preparation should be embedded in Christian education (*Gravissimum Educationis* 2) and how apologetically prepared faithful should engage with society (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1, 2, 11, 29, 31, etc). However, the Council's apologetics calls were not developed and apologetics was mostly replaced by fundamental theology, which has problematic features from Justinian apologetics and the reform ideas Balthasar rejected, and is not related to the apologetical calls of Peter or Vatican II. However, there has been an organic development of apologetics since the 1980s.

In Part 4, the problematic current state of Catholic understanding in the ordinary faithful is evident in two recent surveys. It is necessary to respond to this. By reframing apologetics according to the original Petrine call and its Vatican II confirmation, a New Apologetics can be developed that emphasises Peter's elements of preparation, response,

in a Christian manner, for all the faithful. These Petrine elements are unpacked in today's context and several distinctions are explored, including objective and subjective approaches, and also the spectrum of evangelisation-apologetics-catechetics. Three 'voices' are shown to have particularly contributed so far to New Apologetics: William Levada, Robert Barron, and Peter Kreeft. All intellectual and two being clerics, they have the insight and ability to guide developments. Looking forwards, the two named conciliar texts are explored in how they can be unpacked for developing an embedded apologetics of preparation, response, in a Christian manner: original, organic, ordinary apologetics.

Keywords

Apologetics,
Apostolicam Actuositatem
Avery Dulles
Balthasar
Christian manner
Education
Engagement
Gravissimum Educationis
Justinian apologetics
Laity
New Apologetics
Ordinary apologetics
Organic apologetics
Original apologetics
Participation
Pastoral apologetics
Peter's call
Petrine apologetics
Practical apologetics
Preparation
Reframing
Response
Ressourcement
Second Vatican Council