

# **The Legacy of the Early Apologists**

A.S. Francisco, 1517

## **1. The claim is often made that Christian apologetics is a modern development or a modernist activity.**

- James K. A. Smith's *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism*
- Philip Kenneson, "There's No Such Thing as Objective Truth, and It's a Good Thing, Too," in *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*

## **2. Modern apologists such as C.S. Lewis and John Warwick Montgomery were but two stellar examples of apologists/apologetics whose approach and disposition stretch way back to the New Testament era.**

- Paul at Mars in Hill in Acts 17 and before Festus and Agrippa in Acts 25-26.
- These are biblical examples of what Peter meant in 1 Peter 3:15.

## **3. There is a tremendous history of Christian apologetics ever since the days of the apostles. A brief history of but a few:**

- **To the Greco-Roman world:** Justin Martyr (c. 100-165), *1<sup>st</sup>* and *2<sup>nd</sup>* *Apology*
- **To Jews:** Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*
- **To Pagans:** Augustine (354-430), *City of God*
- **To Muslims:** Theodore Abu Qurrah (c. 750-820)
- **Medieval apologists:** Anselm (1033-1109), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
- **To the world:** Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), *On the Truth of the Christian Religion*

#### 4/ Where do Lutherans fit in this story?

- Martin Luther (1483-1546)
- Otto Zöckler (1833-1906)

#### 5/ What is the legacy of these early (and not so early) apologists?

- Nimble and attentive to context
- Negative and positive arguments
- Revisiting Smith's "Apologetics and Witness in the Postmodern World," in *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*
- Montgomery on apologetics for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

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Almost all the work of the above-mentioned apologists are available for free with a simple google or, if you prefer to purchase hardcopy, Amazon search. Here are some resources for those that are not so obvious:

John C. Lamoreaux (translator), *Theodore Abu Qurrah* (BYU, 2006).

J.P. Heering, *Hugo Grotius as Apologist for the Christian Religion* (Brill, 2004).

A.S. Francisco, "Luther's Use of Apologetics," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 81 (2017): 249-261; available at <https://ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/FranciscoLuthersUseofApologetics.pdf>

Frederick Gregory, "Otto Zöckler, the Orthodox School, and the Problem of Creation," in *Nature Lost?: Natural Science and the German Theological Traditions of the Nineteenth Centuries* (Harvard, 1992), 112-159.

John Warwick Montgomery, *Always be Ready: A Primer on Defending the Faith* (NRP, 2017).

\_\_\_\_\_, *A History of Christian Apologetics* (Audio only; available at 1517.org or Amazon.com)