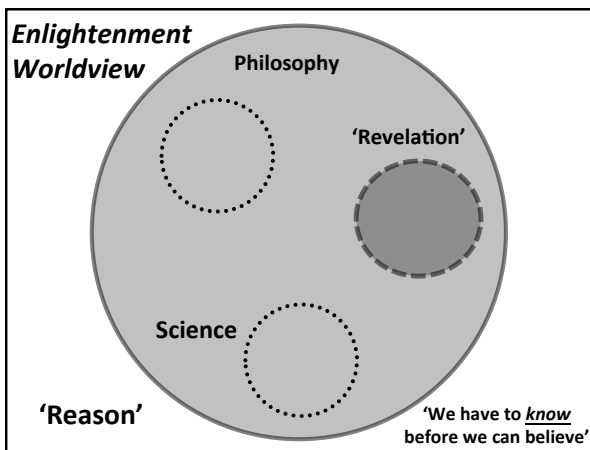
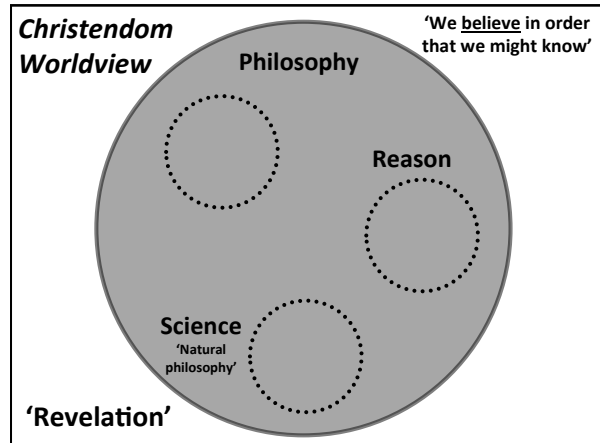


LESSLIE NEWBIGIN
SUMMER INSTITUTE


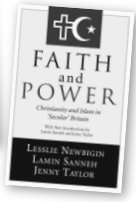
'Newbigin and the Idea of Public Truth' (2)

Rev'd Dr Paul Weston
13 July 2015



Lesslie Newbigin and the idea of 'public truth'


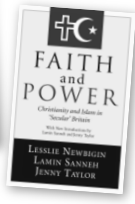
What kind of 'public' space?

(British) society is generally understood to be a secular, multicultural and multi-ethnic society, in which many religions coexist, and should coexist on equal terms. We are, it is generally understood, a secular society.

Lesslie Newbigin and the idea of 'public truth'

What kind of 'public' space?





... 'secular' society is not a neutral area into which we can project the Christian message. It is an area already occupied by other gods. We have a battle on our hands. We are dealing with principalities and powers.

'Evangelism in the Context of Secularisation' (1990)

Lesslie Newbigin and the idea of 'public truth'

What kind of 'public' space?

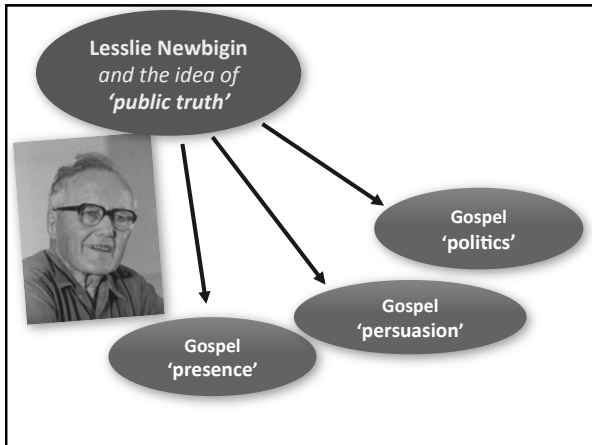


We have learned, I think, is that what has come into being is not a secular society but a pagan society, not a society devoid of public images but a society which worships gods which are not God.

Gospel in a Pluralist Society (1989)

If God is driven out, the gods come trooping in.

Unfinished Agenda (1993)



Lesslie Newbigin
and the idea of
'public truth'

Lesslie Newbigin
Truth to Tell
The Gospel
Public Truth

... the most important contribution which the Church can make to a new social order is to be itself a new social order.

Truth to Tell (1991)

Gospel
'presence'

Lesslie Newbigin
and the idea of
'public truth'

Lesslie Newbigin
Truth to Tell
The Gospel
Public Truth

I understand the role of the Christian as that of being neither a conservative nor an anarchist, but a subversive agent.

Truth to Tell (1991)

Gospel
'presence'

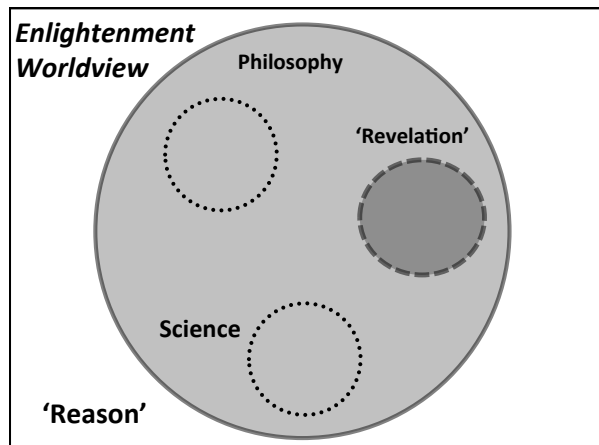
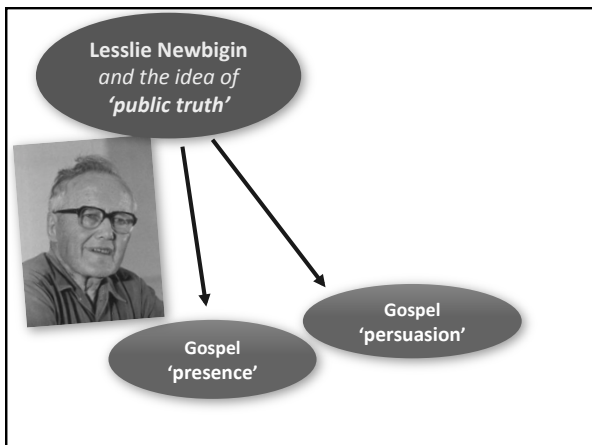
Lesslie Newbigin
and the idea of
'public truth'

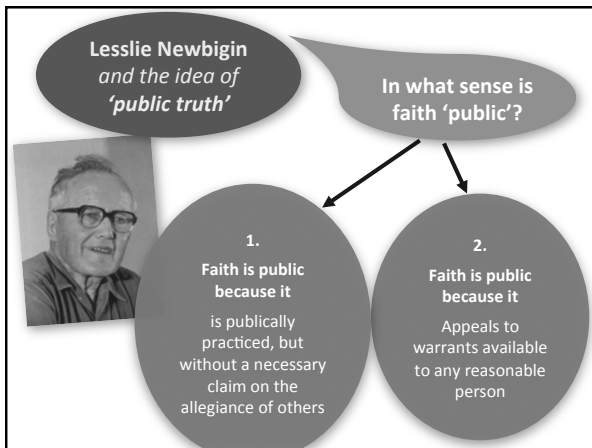
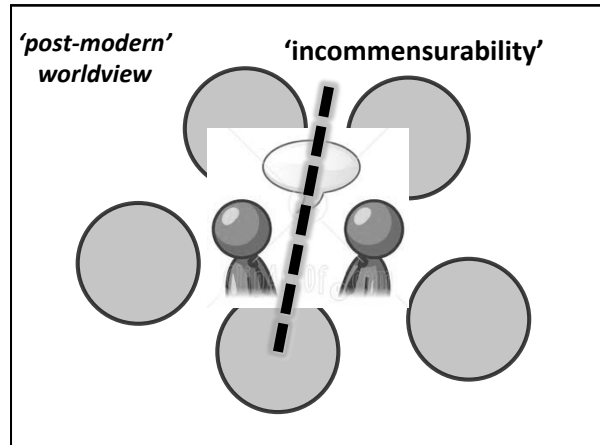
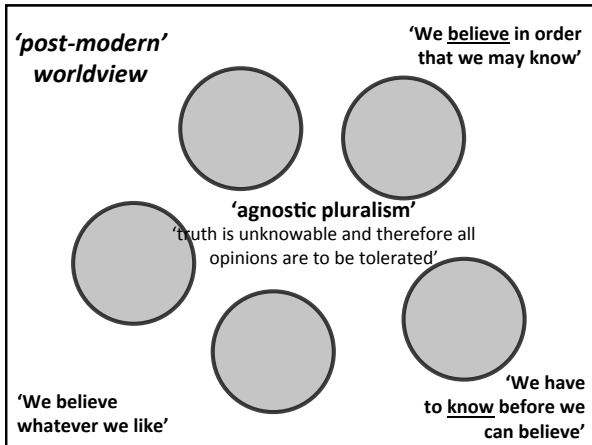
Lesslie Newbigin
Truth to Tell
The Gospel
Public Truth

... undercover agents need a great deal of skill. We do not spend enough of our energies in training undercover agents.


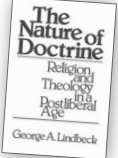
Truth to Tell (1991)

Gospel
'presence'



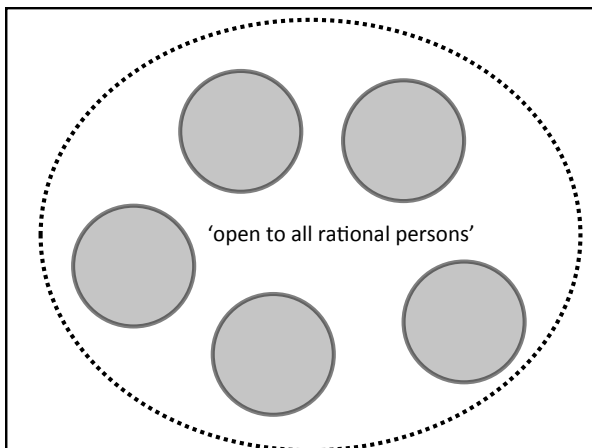


George Lindbeck
 (b.1923)





... genuine bilingualism ... is so rare and difficult as to leave basically intact the barrier to extramural communication

Postliberals are bound to be skeptical ... about apologetics and foundations.




David Tracy
 (b.1939)



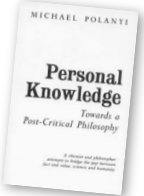

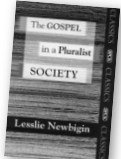
Christians should present the Gospel 'on strictly public grounds that are open to all rational persons.'

'Defending the Public Character of Theology' (1981)



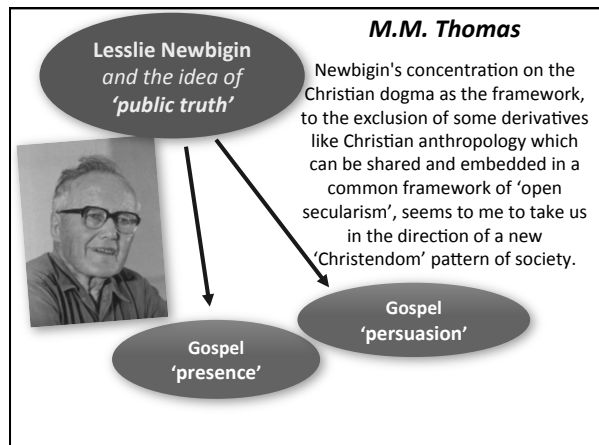
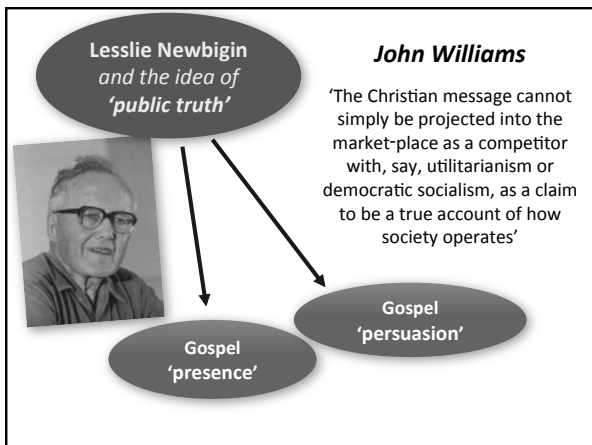
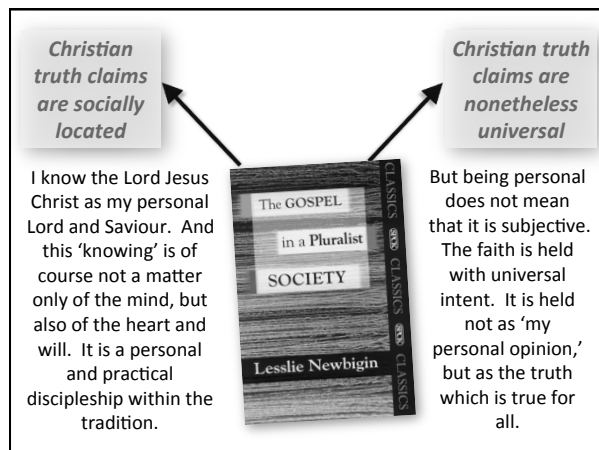
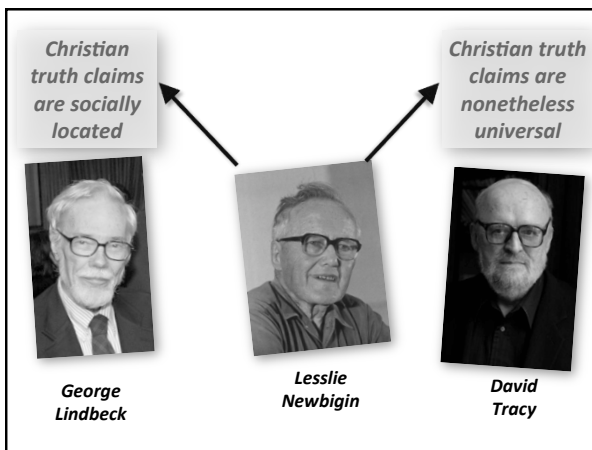
Michael Polanyi
(1891-1976)

The enquiring scientist's intimations of a hidden reality are personal. . . Yet they are not a subjective state of mind, but convictions held with universal intent.






'The scientist who commits himself to [a] new vision does so – as Polanyi puts it – with universal intent. He believes it to be objectively true, and he therefore causes it to be widely published, invites discussion, and seeks to persuade his fellow scientists that it is a true account of reality.'

The Gospel in a Pluralist Society (1989)



Lesslie Newbigin
and the idea of
'public truth'




There is . . . a very proper exercise of reason in showing the coherence which is found in the whole of human experience when it is illuminated by the gospel

Gospel
'presence'

Gospel
'persuasion'

'Religious Pluralism: a Missiological Approach' (1993)

Lesslie Newbigin
and the idea of
'public truth'




but this is to be distinguished from the supposition that there are grounds for ultimate confidence more reliable than those furnished in God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ, grounds on which, therefore, one may affirm the reliability of Christian belief.

Gospel
'presence'

Gospel
'persuasion'

'Religious Pluralism: a Missiological Approach' (1993)



Lesslie Newbigin
and the idea of
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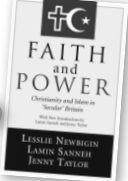
Gospel
'politics'

Gospel
'persuasion'



Gospel
'presence'

1. The failure of Western liberalism

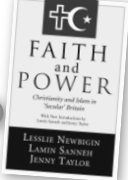




As long as the claim for the rights of every human person is grounded in the gift of the divine Creator, they have a firm basis in reality.

1. The failure of Western liberalism

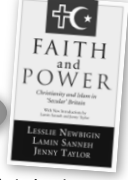
But if belief in the existence of God ceases to be part of public truth, if nothing exists except the totality of what is accessible to observation and reason, there would seem to be no grounds for affirming the rights of an individual against the collective, or of a minority against the majority.







2. The recovery of Christian democracy

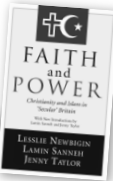
'The toleration which a Christian is required to exercise is not something which he must exercise *in spite of* his or her belief that the gospel is true, but precisely because of this belief.'

'It is the gospel itself which authorizes freedom of practice of beliefs which are contrary to the gospel'



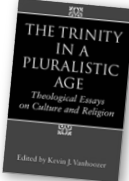




2. The recovery of Christian democracy



‘Taken together then, the cross and resurrection assure us that while the final triumph of God’s reign is not an event within history (public history) it is nevertheless the final reality, a reality with which everyone will finally have to reckon.’

If the confession of Jesus as the one Lord and Saviour of the world is withheld from the arena of public discourse and reserved for the privacy of the home and the sanctuary, then the only image of God present in the public square will be a unitarian one, whether the increasingly powerful image of the Allah of the Qur’an, or the shadowy and ineffective God of a Christendom that has lost its nerve.

‘I think we have to recognise that until the second coming of Christ we live in a world where the truth can only be affirmed in conflict. What we must pray for is that we may learn to engage in this conflict exclusively with the weapons of the Spirit.’

‘On the Gospel as Public Truth: Response to the Colloquium.’ In *Leslie Newbigin Papers, Library Special Collections, The University of Birmingham, U.K. 1996*