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JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Identification and Treatment of Kierkegaardian Despair:

An Informal Indirect Apologetic Strategy

Submitted to Dr. Sean Turchin,

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Thesis Defense

by

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Contents

Chapter One

Introduction

A person's parting words are significant because that is how they choose to be remembered. Even greater significance should be attributed to a person's parting words if that person is the resurrected God-Man. Jesus chose his last words to incorporate a call to action: His followers are to "make disciples." Likewise, Paul writes in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season."[1] Being ready entails having the right tool for the job and in apologetics, this statement could not be more accurate. Yet, what is the apologetic job being referred to here?

In Kierkegaard's words: followers are to "…to proclaim Christianity—in Christendom."[2] Christendom, for the intents of this thesis, means any society that has a Judeo-Christian historical tradition and is governed by laws derived from these traditions. Therefore, in Christendom, there are people that exist claiming to be Christians and others that call themselves non-Christians. Furthermore, Christians can be further classified as nominal or practicing Christians.

To complicate matters even further, to practice Christianity does not necessarily make someone a disciple of Jesus. Thus, the job that this thesis is taking upon itself is to make disciples from all, from those that are aware they are not Christians all the way to those people that claim to be Christians but are not living up to that claim—i.e., they are not disciples of Jesus, but are, as Kierkegaard put it, "…to be wrested out of a delusion…"[3]

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020).

[2] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XXII, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 56.

[3] Ibid.

Now that the job has been defined, the right tool can be discussed. How does the apologist present the gospel to someone—from a non-Christian to someone that is willing to die for their Christian religion—who is not interested in hearing a presentation of the gospel, for whatever reason? This is where indirect communication becomes the right tool for the job and can be used prior to a direct, full presentation of the gospel. Kierkegaard was so successful at indirect communication that, inadvertently, his works inspired Christians and non-Christians into developing a new philosophical school—existentialism.

From his writings, one can detect many biblical concepts presented as philosophical arguments. However, Kierkegaardian studies are extremely complex, and if becoming a disciple of Jesus was dependent on a mastery of Kierkegaardian thought, Christian religion would be doomed. This thesis proposes that many of the Kierkegaardian themes can be arranged into a simple indirect apologetic strategy that can be used in informal conversational settings.

This thesis will be divided into four chapters. Chapter one will be an introductory chapter and will argue for the simple indirect component of the thesis statement. Chapter two will treat the apologetic element of the thesis statement, by exploring the intersection between apologetics and Kierkegaardian studies. Chapter three will introduce and collate a few Kierkegaardian themes into an apologetic strategy that can be used in informal conversational settings. Chapter four will be the concluding chapter.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

Overcoming resistance to the gospel's presentation is the problem that this thesis aims to address. Framed as a question, the problem could be phrased as follows: how can one present the gospel through indirect communication? More specifically, how can one present the gospel through indirect verbal communication, using themes found in Kierkegaard's writings?

Statement of Purpose

This research paper aims to develop an informal indirect apologetic strategy based on Kierkegaardian themes. By defining these themes (and demonstrating how they can be collated into a simple apologetic strategy), this thesis aims to resolve the problem identified in the previous section.

Statement of Importance of the Problem

In this section, it will be demonstrated how overcoming resistance to the gospel's presentation is a significant issue that is deserving of thesis research. As mentioned in the introduction, Christians have a divine command to make disciples. This task can only be achieved by people who are themselves disciples of Jesus, in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

The identification of one as a disciple of Jesus is a personal one and subjective in nature. There is no empirical test that can be performed on a person to determine whether an individual is indeed a disciple of Jesus. Thus, in practice, the apologist cannot assume that someone is a disciple of Jesus just because someone has been practicing Christianity all his life. Therefore, the target of the apologist is not only non-Christians, but it is both Christians and non-Christians.

The best the apologist can do is to bring someone to a self-diagnosis, since, as Kierkegaard notes, "There is no follower at second hand."[4] If Kierkegaard is correct and a follower of Jesus is one that "stands in an absolute relation to the absolute,"[5] then Christianity

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[4] Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments, Johannes Climacus*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. VII, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 104.

[5] Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling; Repetition*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. VI, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983),

has an institutionalized problem, since many Christian denominations either deny the existence of such a relation, or do not emphasize its fundamental importance. Coming to the realization that Christians need to hear the gospel just as much as non-Christians on its own is reason enough to warrant this thesis.

This subject's importance is further magnified because many Christians associate the practice of Christianity with being a disciple of Jesus. How can the apologist bring someone to an honest and critical self-evaluation to determine if one is indeed a disciple of Jesus, even in the instance where the individual is absolutely convinced that he is, but is not? It is this thesis' position that indirect communication has the best potential to achieve this goal and it will propose a method that the apologist can use to achieve that purpose.

Another aspect of this problem is that throughout history a group within the larger universe of unbelievers has not received their due attention by Christians. This group is made up of people that have objections to the presentation of the gospel itself. In other words, they do not want to hear about the gospel, period. The historical response to this group has been that perhaps they have been predestined to damnation or perhaps that such people are beyond the reach of believers' testimony and only a direct, overwhelming revelation from God would be able to break through their resistance to the presentation of the gospel.

To clarify, this thesis' focus is to overcome a resistance to the presentation of the gospel in general terms. Any underlying reason for this general objection, emotional, rational, historical, needs to be treated after the pre-conditional resistance is overcome and will not be addressed in this thesis.

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Statement of Position on the Problem

        The position adopted by this thesis is that the apologist is called to witness to all, unbelievers as well as believers, regardless of the difficulty, and that a presentation of the gospel needs to be tailored to everyone. This thesis will argue that the best strategy to be used is informal indirect verbal communication. More specifically, by utilizing the themes discussed by Kierkegaard, the apologist can introduce gospel themes in an indirect way by presenting them as philosophical problems without triggering *apriori* objections to the presentation of the gospel itself.

        The apologetic strategy that this thesis will develop begins with a conversation about anxiety, a topic that apparently has no relation to religion, which is a central theme in Kierkegaard's writings. From the many different aspects of anxiety that the apologist finds relevant to bring up one of them will be how anxiety has a paradoxical dimension, at the same time it can either paralyze the individual or compel one to action. The apologist then will adopt another Kierkegaardian theme—despair—and will tailor the conversation in order to establish that despair is an endless cycle, by exploring all the intricacies Kierkegaard identified.

        Many Kierkegaardian themes can be employed in arguing this second point like: the crowd, the public, infinite resignation, leveling, and so on. Once this vast philosophical common ground has been established (between the apologist and his conversational partner), the apologist can begin to look for an opportunity to transition the conversation from indirect to direct communication by proposing rhetorical questions like the following: How can one escape despair? Are we doomed to Nihilism? In responding to his own questions, the apologist will then introduce the themes of divine revelation, how these revelations are often-paradoxical in nature,

how to respond to them, and how faith is the only response that launches the individual out of the cycle of despair.

With these overtly religious themes, the presentation of the gospel goes from relying on indirect communication to being direct in nature. Even if the conversation breaks down because of this transition, the basic points of the gospel will have been presented, along with the necessary philosophical ground, which would have been impossible to do if someone has apriori objections to the gospel.

Limitations/Delimitations

This thesis is in no way an attempt to develop an apologetic strategy that will encompass all of Kierkegaard's writings and ideas. Rather, it is an attempt to understand and explain how some of the themes discussed by Kierkegaard work together and relate to one another, with the ultimate objective of using some of the themes in developing a simple indirect apologetic strategy that can be used in informal conversational settings. Strict adherence to Christian orthodoxy is to be expected as it includes the ultimate authority of the Bible in all truth claims. All the works written by Kierkegaard will be accessed through translations. Articles and books available from online libraries will be surveyed and included (if relevant to the topic at hand).

Method

The research method employed in this thesis was literature review. This review happened in chapters two and three. Chapter one and four were designated as introductory and concluding chapters and thus they have not been addressed in this Method section. The primary literature was accessed using the "Kierkegaard's Writings" package that was purchased from the Logos

Bible Software store: and were described as containing "all of Kierkegaard's writings translated into English."[6] The package contained 26 volumes which were fully searchable.

The objective for chapter two was to research intersection points between apologetics and Kierkegaardian studies. In this chapter, Kierkegaard's primary texts were searched for the relevant keywords. The search results were analysed, and relevant quotes passages were included in the thesis. Then Volume 15 of *Kierkegaard Research* was consulted as the first step in the secondary literature review. From there the Liberty University Online Library was consulted for further secondary literature that treated the subjects of Kierkegaard and apologetics together. Volume 10 of *Kierkegaard Research* was also consulted in the attempt to review Kierkegaard's influence on apologetics. For readers unfamiliar with *Kierkegaard Research* the following quotation was obtained from the Editor-in-Chief's website:

> *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources* is a collective research project that began in 2005, with the first volumes appearing in 2007. It represents the work of more than 200 leading scholars from some 50 different countries. The guiding idea behind the project was to create a publication series, which would serve as both a reference work for students and scholars and as a forum for new research. The project attempts to cover all of the main areas of Kierkegaard research in a systematic fashion. This series is divided into three large parts, each of which consists of 7 volumes, which are further subdivided into individual tomes.[7]

The research method employed in chapter three was similar to the one done for chapter two. Having personally read over half a dozen of Kierkegaard's published works prior to starting the research for this thesis, this author was familiar with many of the most prevalent Kierkegaardian themes. To ensure that the apologetic strategy would be as objective as possible, keeping with the simplicity element of the thesis, the following themes were selected: Anxiety,

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[6] https://www.logos.com/product/151096/kierkegaards-writings

[7] https://www.jonstewart.dk/krsrr.html

Despair, the Crowd, Single Individual, Revelation, and Faith. These among other themes were evaluated; however, only these were selected because they functioned well with the objective of this thesis—i.e., to develop a simple indirect apologetic strategy. For a theme to function well as an indirect means of communication, the theme cannot be religiously explicit, otherwise the communication becomes direct. For example, in discussing which virtue is higher, faith or ethics, Kierkegaard concludes that faith is ultimately superior.[8] Kierkegaard then introduces the theme, "knight of faith," which he argues to be an individual who has reached the highest ethical level.[9] However, this individual momentarily suspends[10] his ethics in response to a revelation, thus acting in faith. Nonetheless, the "knight of faith" theme was disqualified based on its theological explicitness. On the other hand, "the crowd," which is a theme that is frequently referenced to in the gospels, is not an explicitly theological term, allowing it to be used in the indirect phase of the apologetic strategy.

With the themes selected, the Logos Bible software was used to search across all the 26 volumes contained in the "Kierkegaard's Writings" package for each of the themes mentioned in the previous paragraph. Each instance of the theme was evaluated with the same criteria that the themes were. The objective was to determine if that occurrence of the theme would contribute to the respective phase of the apologetic strategy that the theme was included in (indirect or direct communication phase) and if it would offer an insight that would enrich the conversation. The review of secondary literature in chapter three also started with an inquiry into Volume 15 of

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[8] Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling; Repetition*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. VI, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 33.

[9] Ibid., 66.

[10] Ibid.

Kierkegaard Research. *Kierkegaard's Concepts* also served as a starting point for further secondary literature that could be incorporated in this thesis.

After both initial steps were taken, further insights were looked for by searching the Liberty University Online Library Database. This third survey was undertaken in other to glean further perspectives on the specific theme being addressed. This final survey often led to a fourth research step, where the bibliographies of these resources were surveyed and analysed for further relevant literature.

If a specific resource thought to contribute to the thesis research was not available in the Liberty University Online Library Database, a request was made for the library administrators to arrange for the access. An example of this request was in relation to some of the Tomes in Volume 15. Out of the six Tomes that make up Volume 15, only two were initially available at the Liberty University Online Library Database. The remaining four were requested and the library administrators arranged for the access. The entire Section II of *Kierkegaard Research*, *Kierkegaard Reception* was not available and requested. However, only Volume 10 and its respective Tomes were made available.

The translation of the Bible that was used in this thesis was the Christian Standard Bible. This translation was accessed through the Logos Bible Software.

Chapter Two: Apologetic

With the arguments made in the previous chapter that informal indirect communication is necessary in many cases, this chapter will focus on the apologetic element of the thesis statement. Chapter Two will start out by reviewing primary literature on Kierkegaard's views on apologetics. The chapter will then survey secondary literature that analyses Kierkegaard's views on apologetics. Then this thesis will present evidence that supports the notion that Kierkegaard was indeed an apologist. Lastly, the chapter will survey Kierkegaard's influence on apologists from various traditions and geographic regions.

In the published works surveyed, Kierkegaard mentions apologist(s) and apologetic(s) a total of about 25 times. In none of these instances does Kierkegaard cast apologetics in a positive light, calling it a "sleeping potion,"[11] the reason why people eventually "give up Christianity,"[12] and a betrayal of the Christian cause.[13] Furthermore, Kierkegaard also had this to say about apologetics: "If one were to describe this entire orthodox apologetic endeavor in a single sentence, yet also categorically, one would have to say: Its aim is to make *Christianity probable*."[14] He went on to write that, making Christianity probable would have "completely cashiered Christianity."[15] According to Thompson, Kierkegaard concluded that making

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[11] Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XVI, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 200.

[12] Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XX, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 68.

[13] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XXII, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 53.

[14] Ibid., 39.

[15] Ibid.

Christianity probable would have reduced the passion of faith to an intellectual accession.[16] The reasons behind Kierkegaard's conclusion will be presented at the end of the next chapter. For now, the reader unfamiliar with Kierkegaard needs to be aware that he understood faith in very nuanced terms, which in many ways set him apart from other theologians. To fully present Kierkegaard's views on faith would be too much of a detraction away from this chapter's objectives – apologetics.

One finds further criticism of apologetics in Kierkegaard's journals. Kierkegaard wrote that Christianity should be understood as "The Opposite of an Apologetic."[17] If apologetics was to be understood in the narrow sense of a systematically, well-reasoned philosophical argument, or legal defense against charges, then Christian faith, according to Kierkegaard, is irreconcilably antithetical. Elsewhere, Kierkegaard proposed that "To "defend" Christianity to Christians is abysmal nonsense."[18] In another way, why would someone who has indeed, truly, and wholeheartedly accepted Christianity need to be presented with arguments in its defense? Requiring a defense implies one is not a Christian. With these passages in mind, the reader can see that, Kierkegaard's aim is to get his audience to think it through what is meant by Christianity, faith, apologetics, etc. … Kierkegaard is questioning the definitions, notions and presuppositions that these terms have come to be associated with.

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[16] Curtis L. Thompson, "Apologetics," in *Volume 15, Tome I: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Absolute to Church,* eds. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald. [71-75] (London: Routledge, 2013), 72.

[17] Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*, vol. 5, ed. by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Alastair Hannay, David Kangas, Bruce H. Kirmmse, George Pattison, Vanessa Rumble, and K. Brian Söderquist, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 77.

[18] Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*, vol. 6, ed. by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Alastair Hannay, David Kangas, Bruce H. Kirmmse, George Pattison, Vanessa Rumble, and K. Brian Söderquist, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 6708.

As previously mentioned, Kierkegaard understands faith to be a passion. He contrasts this passion with belief, which is a rational process. Metaphorically speaking, Kierkegaard used the language of love and lovers to illustrate his point. "I wonder if it would ever occur to anyone really in love to prove the blessedness of love with three basic reasons?"[19] Kierkegaard here leads his readers into pondering if passions are the conclusions of rational processes or if they seem to just happen *to* the individual. Taking this metaphor further, it could be argued that as one falls in love, one falls into faith, or as Kierkegaard often put it, leaps into faith. Moreover, Kierkegaard wrote, "The lover day—in and day—out can extol the virtues and gloriousness of the beloved; but if someone demands that he prove his love or defend it with three reasons, he would regard this as a crazy suggestion and tell the person making the request that he or she does not know what it is to be in love."[20] The preposterousness in the eyes of the true lover arises out of the notion that love isn't something that is only declared—as the proverb goes, talk is cheap. The love Kierkegaard wants his audience to focus on is something that is lived out. In the very words of Jesus: "If you love me, you will keep my commands" (John 14:15). Thus, the true lover isn't the one that merely declares his love, but the one that demonstrates it. Therefore, the true Christian is not the one that simply calls himself a Christian, but it is the one that acts in accordance with Jesus' commands.

After presenting what appears to be a total rejection of apologetics by Kierkegaard, how can this thesis attempt to defend the notion that Kierkegaard could be associated in any way with apologetics? Thompson responds to this question by warning that what appears to be a total

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[19] Søren Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, assisted by Gregor Malantschuk (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1967), 102-103.

[20] Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*, vol. 4, ed. by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Alastair Hannay, David Kangas, Bruce H. Kirmmse, George Pattison, Vanessa Rumble, and K. Brian Söderquist (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2007), 371.

opposition to apologetics should not "… lead us to conclude that he therefore is not dealing with the issues of apologetics in his own way."[21] Thompson is not alone in his conclusion, as Brunner's opinion was that Kierkegaard was "incomparably the greatest apologist."[22]

Faith, understood as the motivation behind an action, according to Kierkegaard, is the only proof and defense that Christianity can rely upon. Kierkegaard saw in the transformation of the individual, precipitated by faith, an irrefutable proof for Christianity: "This is, after all, an apologetic for Christianity."[23] To Kierkegaard, "This transformation takes place in faith."[24] Kierkegaard points to instances where previously one did not refer to oneself as a Christian, but after undergoing a radical change in behavior, begins to call oneself Christian, as the only real proof Christianity has to show for itself. Nonetheless, this sole proof is a validation that cannot be argued away. When an individual states that he has acted in faith in performing an action, people might try to argue that such an individual is hiding his true motives or is confused in relation to his true motivations. However, in the overwhelming majority of the cases, no evidence can be presented to back up these allegations, which end up being arguments from authority. In Kierkegaard's own words:

> Away with all this world history and reasons and proofs for the truth of Christianity: there
> is only one proof—that of faith. If I actually have a firm conviction (and this, to be sure,
> is a qualification of intense inwardness oriented to spirit), then to me my firm conviction

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[21] Curtis L. Thompson, "Apologetics," in *Volume 15, Tome I: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Absolute to Church,* eds. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald [71-75] (London: Routledge, 2013), 72.

[22] Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1950), 100.

[23] Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*, vol. 4, ed. by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Alastair Hannay, David Kangas, Bruce H. Kirmmse, George Pattison, Vanessa Rumble, and K. Brian Söderquist (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2007), 9.

[24] Curtis L. Thompson, "Apologetics," in *Volume 15, Tome I: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Absolute to Church,* eds. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald [71-75] (London: Routledge, 2013), 74-75

is higher than reasons: it is actually the conviction which sustains the reasons, not the reasons which sustain the convictions.[25]

Kierkegaard's opinions on apologetics are based on how he understood the relationship between faith and reason. Because different Christians throughout history have understood faith and reason to relate in different ways, naturally other apologetic approaches have been developed. As it was argued, Kierkegaard was not opposed to apologetics in principle, as one might have concluded after reading the primary sources mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Kierkegaard used the term apologetics to refer to a specific type of apologetic strategy that he ultimately disagreed with. This chapter will now transition into a discussion about different apologetic strategies and which apologetic system most scholars place Kierkegaard in.

Boa and Bowman concluded that Kierkegaard's preferred apologetic method was fideism, however they go to great lengths to differentiate different forms of fideism.[26] To them, Kierkegaard "…was sharply opposed to the traditional defenses of Christian orthodoxy because he believed they led only to a conceited sense of intellectual triumph among philosophers and theologians and distorted the essence of the Christian faith."[27] Earlier in the chapter, Boa and Bowman identified what they meant by fideism by asserting that:

> **fideism** (pronounced *FID-ee-ism* or sometimes *fi-DAY-ism*) is an approach to apologetics that argues that the truths of faith cannot and should not be justified rationally. Or, to look at it another way, fideists contend that the truths of Christianity are properly apprehended by faith alone. The word *fideism* derives from the Latin *fide* (pronounced *FI-day*), meaning "faith," and so in a general sense means a position that assigns some kind of priority to faith. Although fideists often speak of Christian truth as "above" or "beyond" or even "against" reason, they do not maintain that the truths of Christianity are actually irrational. Rather, by "reason" they mean *human* reason or rationality, the use of reason

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[25] Søren Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, vol. 3, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, assisted by Gregor Malantschuk (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1967– 78), 663.

[26] Kenneth Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 349.

[27] Ibid.

by the human mind. Essential to the case for fideism is the belief that some truths of Christianity are beyond our capacity to understand or express in a logically definitive fashion.[28]

From the primary literature examined in this chapter, Kierkegaard indeed should be classified as a fideist, if one insists on placing him into one of the major apologetic traditions. Boa and Bowman admit that the term fideist is very often viewed pejoratively and often misunderstood.[29] Evans brings clarity to the debate by distinguishing between *Irrational[30]* and *Responsible* fideism,[31] arguing that the former suggests that theological matters should not be approached rationally or logically. On the other hand, responsible fideism, while denying "… that human reason can prove or justify Christian beliefs, they [fideists] do *not* conclude that we should offer no answer to the apologetic questions and challenges posed by non-Christians. … fideists answer those apologetic challenges by explaining *why* reason is incompetent to provide a satisfactory answer and then showing that faith does provide a way to deal with the problem."[32]

Another apologetic tradition that may appear similar to fideism is the reformed tradition. Commentators often disagree on what label should be applied to a specific theologian, fideist or reformed. Boa and Bowman argue that reformed theologians differ from fideists because the former: "…contend that these truth claims are internally consistent and that they can show them to be rational from within a Christian system of thought, based on certain key Christian

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[28] Kenneth Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 348.

[29] Ibid., 337.

[30] C. Stephen Evans, *Faith Beyond Reason: A Kierkegaardian Account* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 52.

[31] Ibid., 55.

[32] Kenneth Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 338.

assumptions."[33] Fideists on the other hand conclude "… that the truths of Christianity at their

core present us with a "paradox" that no amount of rational analysis can eliminate even for

Christians."[34]

Beside fideist and reformed apologetical approaches, there exist classical apologists, who

"prefer deductive, rational tests for determining truth"[35] and evidentialists, who "prefer

inductive, empirical methods used in the sciences and other disciplines."[36] Thus, it can be safely

concluded that Kierkegaard was very likely referring to one of the three apologetic systems

surveyed here when he used the term apologist. As it was shown, despite him not using the term

fideist, one would be hard pressed to find a theological commentator that would attempt to build

an argument showing Kierkegaard's apologetic method to be anything other than fideism.

There remains one aspect that needs to be treated in this chapter, Kierkegaard's influence

on apologetics. There is no doubt Kierkegaard was one of the most influential thinkers of

western civilization. If one searches Google for the term Kierkegaard, there are over 10 million

results. In a search of Liberty University Online Library there are over 30 thousand peer-

reviewed entries on Kierkegaard. These numbers are presented here to show that a full treatment

of Kierkegaard's influence is very far beyond the scope of anyone single person's lifelong work.

Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources is further evidence that Kierkegaard

was a hugely influential individual. Spanning over 20 volumes, this collection is divided up in

three parts: Kierkegaard Sources, Kierkegaard Reception and Kierkegaard Resources. Volume

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[33] Kenneth Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 338.

[34] Ibid., 339.

[35] Ibid., 365.

[36] Ibid.

10 is titled *Kierkegaard's Influence on Theology* and is made up of three Tomes which group theologians in either religious or national lines. Below, some examples will be presented to illustrate how Kierkegaard was received as an apologist and how he has influenced apologists.

Brunner, the Swiss reformed theologian, who already was quoted in this thesis, viewed Kierkegaard as a pioneer in a new type of apologetics, who started a work which needs to be carried further by other individuals.[37] The French-Catholic theologian de Lubac called Kierkegaard a "powerful apologist"[38] who defended the Christian faith from notable atheists such as Comte, Feuerbach, Marx, and Nietzsche.[39] In light of all the evidence presented so far in this chapter, it is submitted here that anyone that denies Kierkegaard the title of apologist has not studied him enough. Theologians from the full spectrum of Christianity, despite not agreeing with all his conclusions, have nonetheless, recognized Kierkegaard's invaluable contributions to Christian apologetics.

Wilke presented the German scholar Emanuel Hirsch as one who was seeking a form of Christian apologetics that was appropriate for his present time.[40] Relying heavily on Kierkegaard, "…Hirsch draws the conclusion that the task is not to make becoming a Christian difficult. He holds that Protestant apologetics should be fundamentally sympathetic to that which is human."[41] Another theologian who gave himself was given the task of making Christianity

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[37] Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1950), 100.

[38] S. J. Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, trans. by Edith M. Riley, Anne Englund Nash, et al. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1995), 111.

[39] Ibid., 109.

[40] Matthias Wilke, "Emanuel Hirsch: A German Dialogue with "Saint Søren,"" in *Volume 10, Tome I: Kierkegaard's Influence on Theology: German Protestant Theology*, eds. Jon Stewart [155-184] (London: Routledge, 2012), 168.

[41] Ibid.

"more relevant to modern considerations"[42] was Franz Overbeck. Despite Overbeck not

possessing any copies of Kierkegaard's primary literature,[43] "Any reader acquainted with

Kierkegaard's thought will be struck by the similarities between Kierkegaard and Overbeck."[44]

Law also points out that "several commentators have drawn attention to points of contact

between"[45] Kierkegaard and Overbeck even if arriving at diametrically conclusions. Among

Catholics, the Pole Erich Przywara who was recognized for having written in *The Mystery of

Kierkegaard*[46] "an apology for a Catholic theology."[47]

Kierkegaard's influence in apologetics can be seen even among Jewish Rabbis. One of

them was, "Rabbi Dr. Joseph Baer Soloveitchik (1903– 93) of Yeshiva University, long regarded

as the leader of Modern Orthodox Judaism in North America … made Kierkegaard safe for the

Modern Orthodox pulpit."[48] Possen informs his audience that "… when Kierkegaardian ideas are

used as Soloveitchik uses them, they no longer compete with, let alone threaten, the theology or

tradition of halakhic legalism. They instead become its handmaidens."[49]

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[42] David Tracy, "Foreword," in Martin Henry, *Franz Overbeck: Theologian? Religion and History in the Thought of Franz Overbeck* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995), x.

[43] David R. Law, "Franz Overbeck: Kierkegaard and the Decay of Christianity," in *Volume 10, Tome I: Kierkegaard's Influence on Theology: German Protestant Theology*, eds. by Jon Stewart [223-239] (London: Routledge, 2012), 234.

[44] Ibid., 232.

[45] Ibid.

[46] S.J Erich Przywara, *Das Geheimnis Kierkegaards* (Berlin: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1929).

[47] Thomas F. O'Meara, *Erich Przywara, S.J.: His Theology and His World* (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 128.

[48] David D. Possen, "J.B. Soloveitchik: Between Neo-Kantianism and Kierkegaardian Existentialism," in *Volume 10, Tome III: Kierkegaard's Influence on Theology: Catholic and Jewish Theology*, edited by Jon Stewart [190-210] (London: Routledge, 2012), 189.

[49] David D. Possen, "J.B. Soloveitchik: Between Neo-Kantianism and Kierkegaardian Existentialism," in *Volume 10, Tome III: Kierkegaard's Influence on Theology: Catholic and Jewish Theology*, edited by Jon Stewart

Kierkegaard was also influential on many anglophone apologists. The Baptist Edward Carnell wrote on "… numerous topics important to apologetics, theology, and philosophy of religion."[50] Morgan recognized that Carnell was indebted to Kierkegaard despite disagreements with his "…theology of existential faith, truth as subjectivity, and critique of Christian culture."[51] Another American, Francis Schaeffer, a Presbyterian apologist, was heavily influenced by Kierkegaard, and according to Roberts, "… Schaeffer is interesting because he provides both a negative example of how not to read Kierkegaard and insight into one source of a widely disseminated and unfounded caricature of him."[52] Lastly, the Anglican John Macquarrie also commented on Kierkegaard. Law explained that Macquarrie commented on "…offense as one of the distinctive features of Kierkegaard's Christology and claims that Kierkegaard has taken the notion of offense directly from the New Testament."[53]

Having surveyed primary Kierkegaardian literature on the topic of apologetics and relevant secondary literature on the topic, it can be concluded that Kierkegaard's position on apologetics is much more nuanced than it is often portrayed. Evidence was presented that Kierkegaard can be safely classified as a fideist apologist, once the effort of differentiating the different types of fideism is employed. It was also demonstrated that Kierkegaard's ideas

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[190-210] (London: Routledge, 2012), 202-203.

[50] Silas Morgan, "Edward John Carnell: A Skeptical Neo-Evangelical Reading," in *Volume 10, Tome II: Kierkegaard's Influence on Theology: Anglophone and Scandinavian Protestant Theology*, edited by Jon Stewart [3-23] (London: Routledge, 2012), 3.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Kyle A. Roberts, "Francis Schaeffer: How Not to Read Kierkegaard," in *Volume 10, Tome II: Kierkegaard's Influence on Theology: Anglophone and Scandinavian Protestant Theology*, edited by Jon Stewart [173-187] (London: Routledge, 2012), 174.

[53] David R. Law, "John Macquarrie: Kierkegaard as a Resource for Anthropocentric Theology K. Faith and Offense," in *Volume 10, Tome II: Kierkegaard's Influence on Theology: Anglophone and Scandinavian Protestant Theology*, edited by Jon Stewart [105-141] (London: Routledge, 2012), 131.

influenced apologetics from virtually every theological tradition, reaching far beyond the

boundaries of Christianity.

Chapter Three: Strategy

In this chapter, the themes selected from Kierkegaard's writings will be discussed. These themes were chosen out of the many other themes because, except for Faith and Revelation, they do not possess religious connotations. Since Faith and Revelation are part of the direct communication phase of the apologetic strategy, they need to be explicit. In employing the strategy, the apologist might choose to use any word to convey the concepts behind these terms, or not even mention Kierkegaard's name, the point being made here is that the gospel, can and should be presented indirectly to people much more often than it has been.

Each section will present the themes' aspects that can be used as indirect communication tools. Explicit connections between the themes and religious concepts will not be included in this sample. Besides the survey of Kierkegaard's writings, secondary literature on these themes will be reviewed for insights on how these themes can be used as indirect means of communication.

Anxiety

The Danish word, *Angest*, "…may refer to a dangerous or difficult situation, as it frequently does in biblical usage… [and] in Kierkegaard's work, is also sometimes translated as *anguish* or *dread*."[54] The first aspect of this theme is the name. As Emmanuel mentioned, *Angest* can be translated in a variety of ways depending on the context in which the term is used. For the purposes of the apologetic strategy being developed in this thesis, the word, anxiety, seems more appropriate, since people in Christendom are more inclined to relate to the term anxiety than to the words anguish or dread.

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[54] William McDonald, "Anxiety," in *Volume 15, Tome I: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Absolute to Church*, eds. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald [59-64] (London: Routledge, 2013), 59.

With the first step in the apologetic strategy being to build common ground, utilising the term anxiety seems to be the most applicable. The apologist could start the conversation about anxiety, by bringing up some statistic one has seen on the news about anxiety and depression, or about a common friend that is undergoing therapy, or even one's own struggles with anxiety.

The second step the apologist will seek to meet is to guide the conversation from one about anxiety in general, to one about Kierkegaardian Anxiety. Again, the objective here is not to lecture one's conversational partner about Kierkegaardian Anxiety, but it is to use a common word as a category for a specific type of Anxiety. To meet this goal, the apologist needs to have a general understanding of Kierkegaardian Anxiety. The first point that needs to be understood by the apologist is that Kierkegaardian Anxiety "…is altogether different from fear and similar concepts that refer to something definite, whereas anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility."[55]

In other words, "… the object of anxiety is a nothing."[56] When Kierkegaard used the term, Anxiety, he was borrowing the "feelings of nervousness or anxiousness"[57] that one normally feels in anticipation of a significant future event such as, a romantic date, a final exam, or a job interview, as an analogy to describe a philosophical category. However, in all the examples mentioned, anxiety has an object, that is, the individual clearly associates the feelings of uneasiness to something, yet Kierkegaardian Anxiety lacks a definite object. So, the individual sometimes feels uneasiness, even if there isn't a clear object or reason for said uneasiness, but

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[55] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, ed. Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson, trans. Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson, vol. VIII, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 42.

[56] Ibid., 77.

[57] Philip R. Muskin, "What are Anxiety Disorders?" July 5, 2022, https://psychiatry.org/patients-families/anxiety-disorders/what-are-anxiety-disorders.

what causes this sensation? Kierkegaard's answer: "… anxiety is the dizziness of freedom …"[58] Therefore, the individual experiences Kierkegaardian Anxiety at the realization that he can make choices, that those choices have consequences and that the individual is responsible for those choices. In other words, Kierkegaardian Anxiety is the uneasiness one feels when one realizes he has the freedom to make choices.

Now that Kierkegaardian Anxiety has been defined, one of its implications needs to be explored. Much similar to regular anxiety, Kierkegaardian Anxiety is an indispensable force that compels the individuals from inertia into action. Beabout understood Kierkegaardian Anxiety as "… the simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from a future possibility that is not yet. This anxiety is more than a feeling. It is the mark of human freedom."[59] Once the individual is faced with a choice to either do x, or not do x, he will feel Anxiety in relation to the choice. By making a choice the individual resolves the Anxiety associated with that particular choice.

Now that the apologist has a basic understanding of Kierkegaardian Anxiety, he can incorporate it in his apologetic strategy. After starting a conversation about anxiety in general (and building some common ground), the apologist can introduce Kierkegaard's insights about Anxiety with the goal of establishing that Anxiety compels people into action. However, it is up to the individual to respond to that stimulus. Ultimately, people have the freedom to respond to Anxiety's stimulus by achieving none, some, or all of one's potential. If one were to take this discussion about anxiety and apply it to the popular saying: "When life gives you lemons, you

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[58] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, ed. Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson, trans. Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson, vol. VIII, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 61.

[59] Gregory R. Beabout, *Freedom and Its Misuses: Kierkegaard on Anxiety and Despair* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1996), 139.

make lemonade," one could come up with the question: "How many lemons are being left out of your lemonade?"

This is when and where the third step in the apologetic approach takes place: a self-examination. In the same way that there does not exist an empirical test to determine if one is a disciple of Jesus, there is not an empirical test to identify Kierkegaardian Anxiety. To be more precise, the self-examination is not to determine if one is in Anxiety, as it was argued Anxiety is universal to the human experience. The self-examination rather is to bring to the individual's attention how one has responded to Anxiety's drive.

In response to the apologist's prompt for self-examination, the interlocutor could respond that they are satisfied or unsatisfied with their response to Anxiety. The response, regardless of what it is, paves the way for the fourth step in the apologetic strategy, a conversation about Kierkegaardian Despair.

<div align="center">Despair</div>

The Danish word for Despair is *fortvivle*, and in commenting on it, McDonald wrote, "…*fortvivle* would be a ruinous doubting, or doublemindedness."[60] "The Danish lexical meaning is: a condition of deep psychic distress characterized by despondency, hopelessness and grief. It has a secondary meaning of desperation."[61] The dimension of desperation is emphasized in the Portuguese translation of *The Sickness Unto Death,* which has the title *O Desespero Humano* (The Human Desperation) and uses desperation instead of despair throughout the book.

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[60] William McDonald, "Despair," in *Volume 15, Tome II: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Classicism to Enthusiasm*, eds. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald [159-164] (London: Routledge, 2014), 159.

[61] *Ordbog over det danske Sprog*, vol. 5 (Copenhagen: Society for Danish Language and Literature, 1918–56), 1028– 9.

So, which dimension of the concept is most appropriate for the apologetic strategy: Despair or Desperation? The former seems to imply an inertia, which seems to be favored by McDonald's insight, while the latter has an aspect of restlessness. The tension present in the onset of this investigation is relevant because Kierkegaard identified two different forms of Despair: either over *wanting* to be oneself and over *not wanting* to be oneself.[62] Could Kierkegaardian Despair cause the individual to desperately try to hide from oneself the fact that one is in either state of Despair?

If that is the case, as it will be argued below, then the apologist has a very difficult task on his hand—to convince his interlocutor that they are desperately trying to hide their Despair. Before the apologist tries to persuade his conversational partner (step five in the apologetic strategy), he needs to familiarize himself with Kierkegaardian Despair (step four in the apologetic strategy).

Hong and Hong, in the Introduction to *The Sickness unto Death*, stated that despair was a "more advanced stage" of Anxiety.[63] Yet, how could someone be in Despair if they were satisfied with how they were responding to Anxiety? This is the precise diagnosis of Despair over *not wanting* to be oneself. Not being aware of one's Despair is the evidence that the individual has successfully employed their desperation to hide the fact that one is in Despair.

On the other hand, are there individuals who are unsatisfied with their response to Anxiety, in other words, individuals who are in Despair over *wanting* to be oneself? But what evidence can be presented to back up these allegations? Furthermore, how can anyone be

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[62] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XIX, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 14.

[63] Ibid., xi.

convinced that they are in Despair when everything seems fine? The answers to these questions

will be presented in the next section, for now the thesis will continue to examine the theme of

Despair.

Kierkegaard identified Despair as a sickness[64] and a misrelation.[65] Using these terms,

Kierkegaard takes the analogy further and argues that a sick person cannot be relied upon to

accurately diagnose himself, otherwise doctors would not be necessary. Furthermore, the fact

that people at a certain age begin to do periodic check-ups goes to prove the point Kierkegaard is

making:

> …the physician has a defined and developed conception of what it is to be healthy and
> ascertains a man's condition accordingly. The physician knows that just as there is merely
> imaginary sickness there is also merely imaginary health, and in the latter case he first
> takes measures to disclose the sickness. Generally speaking, the physician, precisely
> because he is a physician (well informed), does not have complete confidence in what a
> person says about his condition. If everyone's statement about his condition, that he is
> healthy or sick, were completely reliable, to be a physician would be a delusion. A
> physician's task is not only to prescribe remedies but also, first and foremost, to identify
> the sickness, and consequently his first task is to ascertain whether the supposedly sick
> person is actually sick or whether the supposedly healthy person is perhaps actually
> sick.[66]

Two further points need to be made in this section. The first is that Kierkegaard identified

the cure for Despair as Faith—"The opposite to being in despair is to have faith,"[67] as help that

"… arrives from the outside."[68] These insights will be very important in the direct

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[64] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XIX, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 6.

[65] Ibid., 142.

[66] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XIX, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 23.

[67] Ibid., 49.

[68] Ibid., 52.

communication phase of the apologetic strategy and are only mentioned here preemptively to assist the apologist in orienting himself.

The second point will give the apologist his first diagnostic tool which can be shared with his interlocuter who is to perform a self-diagnosis: "… to will to be someone else, to wish for a new self"[69] is evidence of being in Despair. Thus, if someone wishes to be someone else, another self, it is certain that that person is in Despair. One would be hard pressed in finding a person that at least at one point in their life did not want to be someone else. Nonetheless, "… producing a proof for this is difficult enough … at least on the level of philosophical argumentation."[70]

In summary, the fourth step in the apologetic strategy can be outlined as follows. If someone is satisfied with how they have been responding to Anxiety, they are in Despair over *not wanting* to be oneself. If someone is not satisfied with how they have been responding to Anxiety, they are in Despair for *wanting* to be oneself. In the next section, further evidence will be given that will assist the individual in performing the self-diagnosis to determine if one is in Despair or not.

The Crowd

In step five of the apologetic strategy, the apologist will present his conversational partner with more diagnostic tools, so the self-evaluation can be performed accurately. To recall, the goal of this self-evaluation is to disclose to the apologist's interlocutor that they are possibly in Despair. This section is labeled, The Crowd, and will act as an umbrella term since for

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[69] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XIX, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 52–53.

[70] Michael Theunissen, Barbara Harshav, and Helmut Illbruck. *Kierkegaard's Concept of Despair.* Vol. 49 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 23.

Kierkegaard, "Abstraction, leveling anonymity, irresponsibility, and apostasy are the features that the public shares with the crowd."[71] Thus, as far as the apologetic strategy is concerned, any statements made by Kierkegaard (or found in secondary literature) and in relation to one of these themes will be applied to the Crowd. Again, depending on the conversational partner, the apologist might choose to use any of these terms or other related themes found in Kierkegaard's writings.

Step six of the apologetic strategy happens when the apologist asks his conversational partner: How much of your true self has been sacrificed in the name of The Crowd? Alternatively, in Kierkegaard's words, "*Are you living in such a way that you are conscious of being a single individual?*"[72] No one can accurately respond to the former question unless one has first understood what the Crowd represents. The Crowd symbolizes any collective that "…smooths out and therefore subverts all differences"[73] that might have existed among the individuals participating in it. Imagine a street riot, a packed stadium, Sunday morning service, or even a small group of friends sitting around at a bar table. To the onlooker, there are not Sam or Suzan; there is just a mob; there are not Mike or Mary; there is just an audience; there are not Andrew or Amanda; there is just a congregation; there are not Tom or Tammy; there are just patrons. Stan stated that The Crowd is the ultimate form of "…abstraction, which follows

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[71] Leo Stan, "Crowd/Public," in *Volume 15, Tome II: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Classicism to Enthusiasm*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald [107-113] (London: Routledge, 2014), 111.

[72] Søren Kierkegaard, *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XV, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 127.

[73] Leo Stan, "Leveling," in *Volume 15, Tome IV: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Individual to Novel*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, Jon Stewart [86-88] (London: Routledge, 2014), 85.

directly from the lack of differentiation among individuals in a mob."[74] To be clear, a collective is not essentially bad or evil or the problem. Kierkegaard's criticism is in relation to the reasons that lead people to join a specific collective.

At this point, the apologist can pose questions like this one to his interlocutor: Why do you do/go/belong/attend such and such place? Furthermore, the apologist could share his own experiences in overcoming the Leveling of the Crowd. For Girard, a person very often joins The Crowd because he: "… desires being, something he himself lacks and which some other person seems to possess. The subject thus looks to that other person to inform him of what he should desire in order to acquire that being."[75]

Bellinger identified a connection between Kierkegaard and Girard and concluded, "Kierkegaard and Girard are both describing the double bind in which the individual places himself as he seeks to become himself by copying others."[76] In writing about the reasons people join the Crowd, Kierkegaard mentioned that "From 'the others' a person of course actually finds out only what the others are—it is in this way that the world wants to deceive a person out of becoming himself. 'The others' in turn do not know what they themselves are either but continually know only what "the others" are."[77]

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[74] Leo Stan, "Crowd/Public," in *Volume 15, Tome II: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Classicism to Enthusiasm*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald [107-113] (London: Routledge, 2014), 108.

[75] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*. Translated by Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 145–6.

[76] Charles K. Bellinger, "'The Crowd Is Untruth': A Comparison of Kierkegaard and Girard." *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 3 (1996): 103–119.

[77] Søren Kierkegaard, *Christian Discourses, The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress*, eds. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XVII, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 40.

A few pages later, Kierkegaard writes that "He is what 'the others' make of him and what he makes of himself by being only before others."[78] The apologist can ask his conversational partner: Who are you? Any response that makes reference to a collective is a very strong indication that the person is in Despair.

The following objections may be raised by people in Christendom: Does not the Apostle Paul call believers to be the body of Christ?[79] Echoing the call of the collective, does not the Apostle Peter call the believer to be a simple stone in the edifice of the Church?[80] In relation to the first question, the second half of the same verse points out "… individual members of it." Furthermore, this verse is presented as a conclusion to a long line of arguments about the individual retaining their individuality despite of being part of a collective, in this case a body.

The second question does not necessarily follow from the verse, but in the case that it did, the previous verse, verse 4, calls the disciple to come to Jesus (the living stone)—not to the church, not to the pastor or another spiritual authority, in the likeness of Jesus (as living stones), as priests. Priests, by definition, were to stand as individuals before God, and just as Jesus came as an individual before God on the cross, so the disciple is called individually, to stand as an individual, before God.

Biblical arguments could be further employed if the apologists' conversational partner happens to be a member of Christendom. The Crowd called for Jesus' execution after hailing him as a political Messiah. The Crowd always followed Jesus, but only heard Jesus' parables,

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[78] Søren Kierkegaard, *Christian Discourses, The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress*, eds. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XVII, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 44.

[79] 1 Corinthians 12:27

[80] 1 Peter 2:5

never his real message. The Crowd was never healed, only individuals were. Even Adam, who related himself as a single individual directly to God, after sinning, hid himself in the biggest Crowd he could muster—himself, Eve, and the Serpent.

Returning to the apologetic strategy, and the question posed at the beginning of this section, now that the Crowd has been defined, reasons for joining it identified, and possible objections addressed: How much of your true self has been sacrificed in the name of the Crowd? If the response turns out to be none, then the person is in Despair over not wanting to be oneself or has progressed into being a Single Individual. The most likely response is going to be an admission that the person has been indeed seeking after the Leveling power of the Crowd in order to desperately try to hide from himself that they are in Despair. The next section will explore what happens when someone can break free from The Crowd.

The Single Individual

In step six, the apologist assisted his conversational partner in a self-diagnosis and most likely got an admission from him that he was in Despair. Normally after a diagnosis is made, the therapist or physician will draw out a treatment plan, to bring the patient back to full health. However, what to do in the case where the patient has never been in full health? Before this thesis presents a remedy for Despair, a task that will take place in the next section, it needs to define what it means to be healthy. Thus, in this section, step seven of the apologetic strategy will outline what it means to be healthy—i.e., healed from Despair. In other words, Despair can be escaped by people who choose to become Single Individuals.

Amir identified that Kierkegaard used the theme of the Single Individual in opposition to The Crowd.[81] Therefore, to be in the Crowd is not to be a Single Individual and conversely to be a Single Individual is not to be in The Crowd. Yet, what does it precisely mean to be a Single Individual? And why should anyone want to be one? Since this thesis is arguing for an apologetic strategy, non-theistic arguments need to be employed here. If the apologist does not hold back and turns the indirect communication into a direct one, he runs the risk of losing his interlocutor's interest. Becoming a Single Individual will be chalked up to being a religious goal, irrelevant to the skeptic or as a religious tradition outside of one's own and thus safely disregarded.

Podmore answers the question posed in the previous paragraph by arguing that people are born with the desire, with the drive—i.e., in Anxiety to become a self as opposed to being a nothingness, an abyss: "…it is in the *relation* of the individual to the abyss that anxiety is located."[82] Thus, to become a Single Individual is to become a self. In other words, it is part of human nature to want to become a self, and the realization that one might end up as a nothingness generates Anxiety, and ultimately places the individual in Despair.

A person unconvinced by the arguments presented here so far, may pose the following objection: If belonging to The Crowd is the most frequent strategy people adopt, it must have its

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[81] Lydia B. Amir, "Individual," in *Volume 15, Tome IV: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Individual to Novel*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, Jon Stewart [1-7] (London: Routledge, 2014), 2.

[82] Simon D. Podmore, *Kierkegaard and the Self before God: Anatomy of the Abyss* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 2.

benefits, and do those benefits outweigh the risks associated with leaving The Crowd? Building

on the work by Horney[83] and Paris,[84] Smith stated that there are different versions:

> …of the self: real, ideal, and actual. … The *real* self, which is a ''possible self,'' cannot develop fully without a positive environment … The *ideal* self arises in response to the anxiety generated by a problematic environment … the *actual* self is the mixture of strengths and weaknesses, strategies and strivings that describe the person's current being in the world. In a good situation, the real and actual selves are close to each other; in a less positive situation, great disparities exist between the two.[85]

The implications of the conclusions listed above are that there exists a real self and the

more one actualizes it, the happier one is. On the other hand, the less actualized the real self turns

out to be, the less happy an individual is. Applying these conclusions to the present discussion, it

could be said that to actualize the real self is to become a Single Individual, while the Crowd

imposes on the individual the fantasy of the "ideal" self.

Ultimately, the person needs to make a choice, to become himself, that is The Single

Individual, or to become The Crowd's "ideal" self. Returning to the questions at the end of the

last paragraph after the insights provided here, they could be reformulated as follows: Is it worth

for someone to stop trying to live up to the Crowd's ideal self at the expense of the Single

Individual's real self, considering all the risks associated with it? A coherent response from a

skeptic or nihilistic person would be that it would be worth it, since assuming that individuals

only have one life, one should take every opportunity to live out their only life the best one

could, and according to the quote from Smith that means actualization of the real self.

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[83] K. Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-realization* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1950).

[84] B. Paris, "Karen Horney's Visions of the self," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 59, no. 2 (1999): 157–166.

[85] Wendy B. Smith, "Karen Horney and Psychotherapy in the 21st Century," *Clinical Social Work Journal* 35, no. 1 (03, 2007): 57–66.

Thus, how does one figure out what their real self is? Especially since the Crowd has been imposing on the individual a distorted notion of selfhood for as long as one is alive. If the arguments here are correct, every person has been hearing their whole life that their real self is x, or y, or z, depending on who you ask; however, in reality, one's real self has always been A. Where would one go to find out what A actually is?

In asking this question, the apologist ideally needs to be ready to discuss two possible answers, one that looks inward to the individual, and another that looks outside of the individual. So far, this thesis has examined propositions that advance the idea that man's search for self should lead him outside of himself and found them wanting. This position is contrasted to existentialism's arguments that posit that the true self is to be found within the person. However, it could be argued that individuals only look outside of themselves for oneself, after one has looked inside of himself and found nothingness.

Nietzsche stated, "When you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you."[86] That is indeed a somber realization and one to sure lead someone into Despair. Nonetheless, Nietzsche's solution to this dilemma was his theory of the *Übermensch* and proposed that "Man is a rope, tied between beast and *Übermensch*—a rope over an abyss."[87] In comparing Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's conclusion on this topic, Hoberman stated, "Nietzsche situates man over the abyss, while Kierkegaard situates the abyss within man."[88]

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[86] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil,* trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, 1966), 89.

[87] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Penguin, 1976), 126.

[88] John H. Hoberman, "Kierkegaard on Vertigo." In *International Kierkegaard Commentary*. *Volume 19: The Sickness unto Death*, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 202.

Contributions from various existential authors could be added to the conversation at this point by the apologist. This is a crucial moment of the apologetic strategy since it is the last step in the indirect communication phase. The apologist needs to be ready to transition from indirect to direct communication once his interlocutor has exhausted all other possible solutions to the problem of actualizing his true self, of becoming a Single Individual, but not a minute sooner. Again, if the apologist acts precipitously and transitions too quickly into the direct communication phase, his interlocutor, even if interested in hearing a biblical answer, will have reason to quickly survey the Christian position on the problem, but will be ready to move on to other possible solutions without the due consideration.

To summarize the strategy so far, the apologist should begin with a conversation about Anxiety and ask his interlocutor to consider how he has been responding to Anxiety's drive. In commenting on the response, the apologist will introduce the topic of Despair and the various forms that it takes. The conversation will naturally progress to a discussion about the Crowd. From there, the apologist should talk about the different selves and why it is more coherent philosophically to look within oneself for one's real self. Once all the different possibilities of discovering one's true self have been explored and refuted, the following question can be asked.

<div align="center">Revelation</div>

What if the individual's true self can only be identified through a divine revelation? More specifically, what if it is a revelation from Jesus? This question marks the beginning of step eight in the apologetic strategy. The question above needs to quickly be followed up with a definition of the terms. Once again, before one can discuss the Kierkegaardian concept of Revelation, one needs to understand what Kierkegaard wrote about Revelation.

Turchin identified that the Danish word that is translated as Revelation to English means:

"… to bring to light or to make known."[89] He also identified five different functions in which

Kierkegaard used the concept of Revelation:

> (I) revelation is necessary for humanity's knowledge of God; (II) revelation exists in a
> paradoxical or indirect manner in order to be received in faith, not knowledge; (III)
> revelation informs humanity of its condition in relation to God; (IV) revelation provides
> the means of reconciliation between God and humanity; (V) revelation is authoritative and
> is thus the sole criterion for Christian knowledge.[90]

For the purposes of our apologetic strategy, the theme Revelation is going to be employed

in arguing that one's true self can only be recognized through a Revelation. In other words, only

a Revelation can display to the individual his true self. All the other presentations to the

individual of a supposed, true self are a disguised, ideal self, constructed by a Crowd.

Actualizing that Revelation—one's true self—will require a Faith response, which will be

discussed in the next section. Yet, how can one distinguish between a Revelation and the

Crowd's ideal self?

Kierkegaard, without the employment of a pseudonym, argued in *The Book on Adler* that

people very often fail to understand what a Revelation is. Kierkegaard demonstrated that even a

theologian, who held the office of pastor in a state church, failed to understand what a Revelation

was. In the excerpt below, Kierkegaard will argue that a Revelation needs to be *new* and cannot

be *perfected* because by definition it is already perfect:

> Adler authentically acknowledges that he does not have anything new; on the contrary, like
> every other ordinary Christian he keeps to Scripture, proclaims Jesus, appeals to the words
> of Scripture as proof texts for what he says—but in that case all the first statement about
> the revelation is essentially revoked.—Adler hopes that later he will be able to present the

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[89] Sean Anthony Turchin, "Revelation," in *Volume 15, Tome V: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Objectivity to Sacrifice*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, Jon Stewart [239-244] (London: Routledge, 2015), 239.

[90] Ibid., 240.

doctrine (*what was revealed* and *dictated to him by the Savior*) better; consequently he hopes for the perfectibility of the doctrine.[91]

On the other hand, to Kierkegaard a "… revelation is the paradoxical fact that passes human understanding…"[92, 93] In responding to the question above, how can one tell if one has received a Revelation?

First, a Revelation is not the product of a philosophical deliberation, it is a conclusion that is received by the individual. Second, a Revelation needs to convey a conclusion that is novel to the person that received said revelation. Examples of Revelations that are exclusive to Christian religion are: the infinite being that created the universe became a man, was executed, resurrected back to a corporeal life, and longs for a relationship with individuals. There is nothing in nature, philosophy or any other religion that remotely resembles this Christian revelation. Furthermore, Christian religion cannot offer indisputable evidence for these claims, and has been accused of being incoherent.

Returning to the argument that one's true self is can only be found inside of the individual, a reasonable objection could be raised: how can a revelation be described as an introspection? In Christianity, there are two types of revelations: general and personal. General revelations are God's self-disclosures to humanity and people choose to either believe or not believe them. To become a Christian, one needs to believe the general revelations. On the other

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[91] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XXIV, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 88.

[92] Søren Kierkegaard, *Without Authority*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XVIII, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 106.

[93] This is an allusion to Philippians 4:7.

hand, to become a disciple of Jesus, one needs to receive a personal revelation from Jesus and responded to it in Faith (more on this in the next section).

In other words, general revelations are something different than the Kierkegaardian concept of Revelation being discussed in this thesis. Evidence for this argument can be observed in Hebrews 11, which links the repeated expression, "by faith," only to individuals that received personal revelations and acted in response to them.

Faith

The first objective of this section is to demonstrate that belief and Faith very often are mistakenly used as synonyms. McDonald commented on this when he wrote: "…these meanings resonate in the Danish *Tro*, which is usually translated as "belief" or "faith.""[94] Further evidence that this theme has a wide range of meanings is attested by McDonald when he identifies six lexical meanings and five categories in which Kierkegaard made distinctions in the usage of *Tro*.[95]

For the purposes of the apologetic strategy presented here, the differentiation between Faith and belief is fundamental. As with Revelation, the definition of Faith has been diluted and individuals in general do not understand what these words mean. Very often, Christian religion ends up dying a straw man's death, because non-Christians use inaccurate definitions of the concepts of Revelation and Faith to attack Christianity. Worse still is the fact that Christians themselves have misguided notions of the concepts of Revelation and Faith and are ill-prepared

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[94] William McDonald, "Faith," in *Volume 15, Tome III: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Envy to Incognito*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald [pages?] (London: Routledge, 2014), 67.

[95] Ibid.

in defending their religion. It is very important that the apologist present Revelation and Faith together and accurately, disentangling these terms from all the other common usages.

So, what is Faith? The author of Hebrews defines faith in Hebrews 11:1 and 2 as: "Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. For by this, our ancestors were approved." Verse 3 lists some general revelations but, beginning in verse 4 the author describes how many people mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures "by faith" performed a task and were approved. It is submitted here that, what was being hoped for, refers to a Revelation received by the individuals listed, i.e., the task that they were being called to perform. It is further submitted that the proof of what was not seen refers to the motivation behind the actualization of the Revelation—i.e., the confidence that led the individuals to perform the task communicated to them by the Revelation. Thus, Faith contains the element of belief, but is much more than just belief. James twice emphasizes the point that belief without action is not Faith.[96] In receiving a Revelation and choosing to not actualize it, the individual chooses to not act in Faith.

Kierkegaard identified Faith as a passion when he wrote: "Faith is indeed the highest passion…"[97] Kierkegaard chose to define Faith as a passion to emphasize its difference from belief, which is a mere rational conclusion. Passions further led individuals to act in ways that are often evaluated to be imprudent by onlookers. In the same way, the passion of Faith leads individuals to act in response to a paradoxical Revelation.

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[96]James 2:17, 2:26.

[97] Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments: Text*, eds. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. I, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 132.

Returning to the apologetic strategy after surveying these insights, it could be argued that to escape the Crowd, one needs to respond in Faith to a personal divine Revelation. This marks step nine in the apologetic strategy, and, in other words. it can be said that to escape the ideal self, imposed by the Crowd, one needs to actualize one's true self that is Revealed directly to the individual without mediation of the Crowd or another individual.

Depending on how the individual has responded to the shift from indirect to direct communication, and the introduction of the Revelation and Faith themes, the apologist can chart his next move. In the event that the conversational partner wasn't fond of the switch then the apologist should not insist on the conversation and should try to conclude his presentation promptly. The apologist needs to be prepared for both types of responses, a welcoming one and a antagonistic one before he transitions into the direct communication phase with a plan on how he is going to respond in both scenarios. It will be suggested here that the apologist look for non-verbal clues that his conversational partner is demonstrating and respond accordingly. Throughout the indirect communication phase, even if the conversational partner is a total stranger, the apologist will have the opportunity of observing the base line behavior of his conversational partner, tone of voice, posture, how one responds to the shifting themes, and so on. If it should it happen that the conversation begins to break down at the moment that divine Revelation is introduced, then the apologist needs to define it with one sentence, then introduce faith, define it, and relate it to Revelation in a very objective way similar to this: Revelation is something that happens *to* the individual, it is not a conclusion that one arrives at. Faith is a positive response to the Revelation, where the individual motivated by the Revelation acts in a certain way. It is not only a belief. On the other hand, if the conversational partner is receptive, interested and engaging with the apologist on the direct communication phase, then the themes

of Revelation and Faith can be talked about from different angles, biblical examples can be discussed, personal experiences shared, etc.

Regardless of how the switch to the direct communication phase was received, one last step is required from the apologist, step ten, a presentation of the gospel. Returning to the scenario where the switch to the direct communication phase wasn't well received, the apologist needs to be aware that he could be very quickly losing the attention of his conversational partner. Again, the apologist needs to have a well-rehearsed plan on how to present the gospel in as few sentences as possible. In line with the topics being discussed in this thesis, the apologist can conclude his presentation by saying the following, just after the three sentences mentioned in the previous paragraph: The Bible reveals to humanity that Jesus longs to reveal directly to each individual their true self, so that the endless cycle of Despair can be broken. In the extreme and unlikely event that the person covers their ears and runs away from the apologist, the link between the philosophical themes and the gospel presentation will have been made and the apologist's work successfully completed. Thus, in about four sentences the apologist can go from a conversation about everyday themes to a powerful presentation of the gospel. It cannot be overstated how important the indirect communication phase is crucial. The more engaging the apologist makes the indirect communication phase for his conversational partner, the deeper the roots the presentation of the gospel will have.

Presuming that the apologist's conversational partner doesn't behave as extremely as the example given in the previous paragraph, then the apologist will have much more flexibility to transition to a presentation of the gospel, again, step ten of the apologetic strategy. Regardless if the apologist has been explicitly mentioning Kierkegaard throughout the apologetic strategy, or not, a direct quotation from Kierkegaard fits very well as a transition from step nine to step ten:

"If there is to be any triumphant breakthrough, there must be faith, for faith is a new life."[98]

Kierkegaard in this sentence packs together the idea of breakthrough (out of Despair and The

Crowd) not only with Faith, but dependent on it. Along with the ideas mentioned in the previous

sentence, Kierkegaard explicatively lays out that the breakthrough it into a new life, in other

words, one must be "born again."[99]

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This section is the last part of Chapter three, and it will have two parts. First, it will start

out with a summary of the apologetic strategy presented in this chapter. Then, the apologetic

strategy will be presented in point form.

The apologist should start a conversation about anxiety in general. As the conversation

progresses the apologist should look to apply the feelings associated with anxiety to one's life as

a whole. This existential Anxiety simultaneously motivates individuals into actualizing their true

self, but it generates negative emotions as time passes and the individual realizes that they are

not any closer to actualizing their true self than they were when they began to feel anxiety. This

realization, or worse, the lack of it, is called Despair.

In Despair, individuals adopt an ideal self, presented to them by the Crowd under the

promise that this particular ideal self is indeed one's true self. As time goes on, individuals may

come to realize that their Despair has not been resolved and end up adopting other ideal selves.

This cycle can only be broken once a person, after receiving a divine Revelation from Jesus

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[98] Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, vol. XX, Kierkegaard's Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 120.

[99] John 3:3.

about their true self, respond to it in Faith, and begin to actualize their true selves, becoming a

Single Individual, escaping the Crowd and Despair.

1. Start a conversation about Anxiety in general.
2. Transition the conversation to one about Kierkegaardian Anxiety.
3. Suggest a self-examination over one's response to Kierkegaardian Anxiety.
4. Relate the responses to Anxiety to the two types of Despair.
5. Introduce The Crowd and how it is used to hide one's Despair.
6. Assist the interlocutor in performing the Despair self-diagnosis.
7. Despair can be escaped by individuals who choose to become Single Individuals.
8. Only Jesus can Reveal to someone their true self – The Single Individual.
9. Faith is the actualization of a personal divine Revelation.
10. Full presentation of the gospel.

Chapter Four:

Conclusion

This thesis began by asking the reader to reflect on the well-known calls to action found throughout the New Testament, that is, to make disciples. It was argued that to be a Christian wasn't necessarily the same as being a disciple of Jesus. That conclusion led to the realization that the apologist's efforts to make disciples should not be restricted to non-Christians. The thesis then demonstrated that just as there are non-Christians that are resistant to hearing the call to become a disciple of Jesus, there were Christians who are just as resistant, even if the motivation for the resistance were antithetical. It was proposed, then, that the only way that the apologist had to lead a resistant individual into becoming a disciple of Jesus was through indirect communication. Søren Kierkegaard's success in indirect communication was presented to the reader and it was proposed that many of the Kierkegaardian themes could be arranged into a simple indirect apologetic strategy that could be used in informal conversational settings. In succession, the thesis structure was outlined with a description of each chapter's content.

In chapter two this thesis explored the intersection between apologetics and Kierkegaardian studies. By reviewing Kierkegaard's writings, it was demonstrated that a careless reader could get the impression that Kierkegaard disliked apologetics in general. However, in reviewing the secondary literature, the picture emerged that Kierkegaard's attack on apologetics was an attack on apologetic styles different than his own. This thesis demonstrated that Kierkegaard was regarded as one of the greatest Christian apologists by many significant theologians. Kierkegaard's writings went on to influence Christian apologists that not only agreed with his conclusion, but Christian apologists that disagreed with him. Kierkegaard's

influence on apologetics went beyond the Christian religion and influenced apologists for Atheism and Judaism.

After establishing Kierkegaard's significance for apologetics, the thesis demonstrated that, indeed, themes found in Kierkegaard's writings could be arranged into a simple indirect apologetic strategy. The following themes were selected and arranged into a two-phase communication strategy, the first indirect, and the latter direct: Anxiety, Despair, the Crowd, the Single Individual, Revelation, and Faith. Using primary and secondary sources, a robust yet straightforward strategy was developed that starts with a common conversational topic and leads to a full presentation of the gospel of Jesus. It was argued throughout the chapter that the indirect phase of the apologetic strategy was the foundation or the roots that the presentation of the gospel was going to rely on. The eventuality of an unfavorable scenario was discussed through the employment of an extremely unlikely situation. It was demonstrated that even if the direct communication phase were limited to just four sentences, the indirect communication phase would have the power to multiply the four sentences impact manyfold.

The successful demonstration that many Kierkegaardian themes were arranged into a simple indirect apologetic strategy should encourage researchers interested in apologetics and Kierkegaard studies into building upon this thesis. A suggestion in this area could be the replacement of some of the themes used in this thesis' strategy. Kierkegaardian studies and Apologetics are two massive areas of research that share wide overlap and warrant further exploration. Moreover, the framework this thesis presented can be redeployed in any context the apologist finds relevant to his audience.

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