10-2016

Apologetics Without Apology: Arguments for the Existence of God from Business & Economics

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APOLOGETICS WITHOUT APOLOGY: DEVELOPING ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD FROM BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

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Revised July, 2016

Abstract
This paper offers the reader ways for the business practitioner to participate in Christian apologetics. Apologetics is defined. The purpose and tasks of apologetics is described. A case is made for the importance of Christian apologetics. Several tactics are introduced that offer potential for the Christian apologist. A matrix describes the potential opportunities to develop Christian apologetics for the context of business and economics. A discussion follows regarding the implications for business scholars and Christian business school curriculum at all levels.

Key Words
Apologetics, agnostics, atheists, defending the faith, egoism, evolution, existence of God, business, economics, business schools, interdependence, curriculum, relativism, culture, skepticism, systems

INTRODUCTION

Evangelism, one of the spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11) and now a business term with currency even in some secular organizations (Gordon, 2006; Priestly, 2015, Kawasaki, 2015), has taken hold in marketplace ministries. Christians have been traveling to most countries of the world for the purpose of mission. Perhaps the marketplaces of the world, even domestic markets, are the new frontiers for ministry. If this is true, this raises some questions regarding the extent to which Christians in business should be expected to engage in marketplace ministry and to what extent preparation for ministry in the marketplaces of the world should penetrate the curriculum of the Christian business school. This paper will explore this extent in terms of just one dimension of ministry: Christian apologetics.

Some organizations promoting evangelism as an activity appropriate for Christian business professionals have been around for generations. One example is CBMC (Christian Business Men's Connection), founded in 1930 and now comprised of over 700 teams in the USA, a presence in over 70 countries, and claiming to have over 50,000 members. The organization's purpose is to evangelize and disciple business and professional men for Christ (CBMC, 2016). The CBMC *Operation Timothy* training curriculum is designed to help business men learn how to evangelize using their work as the springboard for sharing their faith. The curriculum is mainly about sharing the Gospel, but it also includes a short section applicable to the specialized field of Christian apologetics where the question of the reliability of Scripture is addressed (CBMC, 2016).

In addition to the few organizations with long tradition of emphasizing evangelism in the context of work in the marketplace, new organizations also have emerged with the sole purpose of helping business professionals be effective in evangelism. Christian congregations also are starting marketplace ministries to encourage and equip congregation members to be effective in sharing their faith in the marketplace.

Recognizing that there is variety in biblical ministries (1 Corinthians 12:5-7), some authors who have promoted evangelism as a valid activity in Christian marketplace activities include Silvoso (2002), Gazelka (2003), MacKinzie and Kirkland (2003), Stevens and Banks (2005), Marshall, (2005), Bynes, and Geer (2014) and several others. Other authors who promote intercessory prayer as a ministry in the marketplace include Copeland (2001), Cambell (2005) and Maisano (2007).

In spite of the strong emphasis in sharing the Gospel and sharing personal religious experience in the marketplace, an area of emphasis that appears to have received little explicit attention *for business practitioners* in is that of Christian apologetics.

Chewning and Haak (2002) challenged the Christian business scholars to think that "The practice of biblical apologetics will do more to aid in the development of a Christian (biblically-enlightened) world/lifeview than almost anything else one can do to nurture a Christian perspective on life." (p. 59) They present a few case studies to help students learn how to defend their faith in the marketplace. They said, "When the world presents an issue and the culture’s accepted position on the matter contrasts sharply with biblical truth, it is good for the Christian to be able to formulate a biblical apologetic so that minimally they can discuss it in biblical terms with their brothers and sisters in Christ."

(p. 65) Chewning and Haak go on to suggest that training in apologetics is a “better training tool than other methods.” (p. 65) This means, for these authors, that the work of a Christian scholar who helps students think Christianly in the marketplace “can do nothing better.” (p. 67)

Chewning and Haak make other strong statements. Scholars who want to help students think Christianly will “create opportunities in which students are exposed to Scripture and are required to think about its application to the academic work they are currently confronting." (p. 67) "Biblical ignorance is the bane (killer) of integration. Biblical apologetics confronts and seeks to overcome biblical ignorance. Biblical apologetics provides the Holy Spirit an opportunity to use the Word of God to renovate the world/lifeview of the students.” (pp. 67-68) One might ask, to what degree have Christian business scholars taken seriously this challenge?

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this paper is to offer the reader potential ways for the business practitioner to participate in the Christian apologetics process. In accomplishing this purpose it is hoped that weight will be added to previous voices which have encouraged Christian business scholars to integrate this dimension of faith into the Christian business school curriculum. For some business practitioners and some business scholars (including students), the work of faith integration may not be complete until the issues relevant to apologetics are addressed. Therefore, this paper seeks to encourage readers to participate in the apologetic work of faith integration, without apology.

ORIENTATION FOR THE READER

To accomplish its purpose, this paper will the address following concerns:

- Definition, goals and tasks of apologetics from the perspective of Christian apologists

- The case for why Christian apologetics is important for business practitioners and business scholars
- The need to contextualize Christian apologetics
- The contributions of business scholars to the work of apologetics
- Tactics that offer some potential for the Christian apologist in business
- The limits of Christian apologetics in the business context
- The implications for business scholars and Christian business schools

DEFINITION, GOALS AND TASKS OF APOLOGETICS

Scholarly dialogue regarding apologetics goes back centuries, but in the modern and post-modern eras several scholars have defined and described apologetics. To begin with, the word apology, as used in this context is not the same as the common use of the term when we mean that we regret something or we say we are sorry for something done or said. Christian apologetics is more about defending Christian worldview or justifying the reasonableness of faith in the face of intellectual attacks or criticisms.

In the middle of the 20th century Richardson (1947) offered this definition: “Apologetics deals with the relationship of the Christian faith to the wider sphere of man’s ‘secular’ knowledge – philosophy, science history, sociology, and so on—with a view to showing that faith is not at variance with the truth that these enquiries have uncovered.” (p. 19) For our generation, Craig (1994) says, “Apologetics… is that branch of Christian theology which seeks to provide a rational justification for the truth claims of the Christian faith.” (Craig, 1994, p. xi) “In showing Christianity to be true, therefore, we try to prove that the Christian world view is systematically consistent by appealing to common sense and widely accepted facts about the world.” (Craig, 1994, p. 45-46) It is interesting that Craig and other

Christian apologists ignore "widely accepted facts" of economics and business practice as a context that offers potential for apologetics.

When atheists, agnostics, and skeptics question the authority of the Bible, the problem of suffering, the validity of the biblical worldview for contemporary life, the existence of God, the resurrection of Christ, or the reality of other miracles (traditional challenges to the biblical worldview which Christian apologists have attempted to answer), the Christian apologist attempts to answer the challenges and by answering them reduce or eliminate barriers to saving faith. When the Christian encounters someone who is a self-acknowledged egoist or relativist and who rejects moral absolutes and the moral authority of Scripture, the apologist has a legitimate work to do defending faith in a Supreme Moral Law-giver.

Defining apologetics leads us to think about the goals and tasks of the apologist. Richardson (1947) says, "The task of Christian apologetics may be described as that of preparing to bring their eyes to be touched again by the hand of Christ, so that they may see all things clearly." (p. 28) "If the Christian apologist can show Christian theism to be probable with respect to premises that are either deliverances of reason or themselves ultimately probable with respect to them, then his task is complete." (Craig, 2000, p. 48) Thus, apologetics has a preparatory function for evangelism (more on this will be offered below). The ultimate goal of apologetics is the conversion of unbelievers, moving them to a commitment to Jesus Christ (Groothuis, 2011, p. 39; Beilby, 2011, p. 32). But conversion is not only emotional change of the heart. It also is an intellectual process involving cognitive assent to the truthfulness of certain propositions (Groothuis, 2011, p. 39) Taylor (2006) puts it this way: "…the aim of Christian apologetics is to cultivate Christian commitment among both believers and unbelievers by means of a relevant reservoir of reasons…" (pp. 20-21)

This line of thinking suggests that apologetics is mainly centered on *instrumental* goals, i.e., that its goal is not simply winning an intellectual argument. Defense of the Christian faith is not an ultimate goal in itself but rather, apologetics is used to accomplish a larger purpose, namely the bringing to faith of unbelievers and strengthening the faith of believers. In this way, apologetics is a form of pre-evangelism or pre-ministry. (Groothuis, 2011, p. 28; Beilby, 2011, p. 32)

In this lies an important, perhaps unresolved, tension. On the one hand, faith that accepts salvation completed by God in Christ is not mere intellectual assent to the truthfulness of certain propositions (James 2:19). Among other things, faith is the commitment of the whole heart, the whole being, to following Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:38; Mark 8:34; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9). It involves trusting in the faithfulness of God (Psalm 9:10; 31:14; 37:5; 52:8; Proverbs 3:5). Faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). Faith involves grateful, joyful acceptance of both the grace of God in giving Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 2:8) and accepting the claims of God on our life (Romans 1:5. It involves loving (loyalty to, not merely emotional affection toward) "the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" (Mt 22:37; see Mk 12:30-33; Lk 10:27)

On the other hand, there is a legitimate intellectual dimension to Christian faith, also. According to McGrath (1995), "…what holds many people back from becoming Christians is a genuine lack of understanding of what Christianity is all about, or why it could have any relevance to their lives." (p. 7) When Christians enter the marketplace, they may also face opposition to Christian beliefs or they may simply experience people who could care less about religious beliefs. When someone openly criticizes Christian faith to a business professional who is attempting to integrate their faith into their work, is it sufficient to merely say, "I believe the Bible to be true" and expect that this will properly answer the particular concerns of the skeptic? If an agnostic has intellectual concerns that, for the agnostic, defies solid, defensible answers, it is with this intellectual dimension of faith that Christian apologetics can be helpful.

Apologetics deals with the intellectual difficulties that people (believers and nonbelievers) have with the claims of Scripture. Should we expect some business professionals to become skilled at defending the faith when challenges are brought to them? If so, who will train these faithful Christians to be more effective in defense of the faith?

WHY CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC IS IMPORTANT IN CHRISTIAN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

The importance of Christian apologetics is supported by several things: By Scripture, by the close relationship between apologetics and evangelism, by the influences of current culture, by the pervasiveness of egoism and relativism even among Christian business students, by the "theories of the firm" that are taught in Christian business schools and by the needs of Christian believers.

Biblical Support for Apologetics

Defending or justifying faith in God is not a problem that emerged after the formalization of the cannon of Scripture. Scripture narratives provide evidence that apologetics was used by faithful followers of God even in Bible times. When Moses encountered Pharaoh to request the release of Israel, Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go." (Exodus 5:2; See also Exodus 9:16-17) Moses and Aaron attempt to persuade Pharaoh, in part, in response to Pharaoh's claim. Others questioned the identity of Israel's God or the moral authority of Yahweh (2 Chronicles 32:15-19; Job 21:15; Psalm 10:4-13; 53:1; Proverbs 30:9). King David saw his role, in part, to represent the moral authority of God to kings of other lands (Psalm 119:46). The three Hebrew captives engage in a form of defense of their faith in God when threatened by the punishment of the Babylonian king (Daniel 3:16-18). One might argue that Amos, the shepherd/business professional, engaged in apologetics as a prophet when speaking out against the cultural influences of his day that had undermined loyalty to the sign of God's covenant relationship with Israel (Amos 8). The egoist Sabbath-keepers of his day spent the hours of the Sabbath plotting ways to cheat their customers.

Some apologists noted in Scripture were actively engaged in marketplace activities or had previous experience in business before becoming full-time evangelists. The notable example of someone who explicitly engaged in Christian apologetics is Paul, the tentmaker (read: business professional) Apostle. Early in his ministry, soon after his conversion, we see Paul vigorously defending the identity of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:22). We see Paul in action defending the theistic worldview among the philosophers when he visits Athens (Acts 17). He also engaged in defense of his faith in the synagogue and in the marketplace (Acts 18:4, 28). Later, Paul gives a personal testimony regarding his religious experience and uses this in defense (Acts 22). “Apology in its Christian meaning implies the defence of Christian truth. It meets an accusation, explicit or unexpressed, by stating the facts of the case and pointing out the rational conclusions to be drawn from them, as St. Paul did when he made his defence before Agrippa.” (Richardson, 1947, p. 19; see Acts 25-26) In his letter to the Romans, Paul engages in apologetic reasoning in support of the larger message of the Epistle (Romans 1:20-21, 28). In his epistle to the Corinthian church, one could argue, Paul seems to be framing his ministry in terms of apologetics (2 Corinthians 10:5; 15:14).

Jesus and the Apostles modeled apologetics citing Bible prophecy and miracles as evidence for religious faith. Craig (2000, pp. 41-43) cites the following in support: Matthew 11:5-6; Luke 11:20; 24:25-27; John 3:2; 10:38; 14:11; 20:31; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. We might see the whole Gospel of Matthew as an apologetic defense of the identity of Jesus Christ. Matthew draws upon Old Testament prophecy. He shows Jesus in action fulfilling prophecy. Narratives show Jesus answering the criticisms of the religious rulers of the day. The first apology by leaders of the early Christian movement may be recorded in Acts 2:14ff during the preaching of Peter. (Richardson, 1947, p. 19) Here, Peter the former fisherman/business professional and follower of Jesus, preaches an apologetic sermon.

Apologetics is commanded in the Bible (1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3; Titus 1:9). "[All] Christians are called to do lifestyle apologetics. But only some Christians will be called to the task of developing arguments for the Christian faith and being on the front line of the dialogue between Christianity and the exponents of other belief systems." (Beilby, 2011, pp. 151-152) Beilby does not mention the marketplace as a context where other belief systems are dominant. The work of an apologist may not be the calling of every business practitioner. But, this paper holds that there are some Christians in business who are at the front line of marketplace dialogue and who, if skilled in apologetics, can be effective in responding to other worldviews. They can be a support to other Christians in business who lack the skills of an apologist.

Relationship between Apologetics and Evangelism

The importance of apologetics stems from its close relationship with evangelism, a theme introduced above. Beilby (2011) says that apologetics and evangelism are "closely related. Both have a common general goal: encouraging commitment to Jesus Christ...On this understanding, apologetics clears the ground for evangelism; it makes evangelism more effective by preemptively addressing impediments to hearing the gospel." (Beilby, 2011, p. 32) Groothuis (2011), who distinguishes between evangelism and proselytizing, says that apologetics plays a "leading role in evangelism." (p. 28) "Apologetics can be used to remove or diminish intellectual obstacles that hinder people from embracing Christ as Lord; thus it serves as pre-evangelism…" (p 28) "Apologetics… is essential to Christian witness today." (Groothuis, 2011, p. 155) "It [apologetics] prepares the way for that [gospel] invitation to be issued, by helping people to understand what Christianity is about, and why it is so attractive and meaningful." (McGrath, 1995, p. 15) "Even before you can begin to show how Christianity meets the spiritual hunger of men and women, you may find yourself having to prove that there is a spiritual hunger in the first place!" (McGrath, 1995, p. 12)

Context of Marketplace Ministry: An Apathetic, Diversion-prone, Secular Culture

Occasionally "the world" is hostile toward God, but more often it is simply "indifferent to the existence and reality of God." (Gay, 1998, p. 13) McGrath also comments on the issue of relevance saying that "…what holds many people back from becoming Christians is a genuine lack of understanding of what Christianity is all about, or why it could have any relevance to their lives." (McGrath, 1995, p. 7) Contemporary culture is marked by intellectual apathy which has been called "apatheism." (Groothuis, 2011, p. 150) Many in society may not really care what they believe or whether or not their beliefs are intellectually sound. This indifference, while promising as a salve on cultural intolerance, may be one of the greatest barriers to people seriously considering the claims of the Christian worldview.

Traditional apologetics attempts to respond to intellectual questions of skeptics. Perhaps a more pressing problem for those who work in the marketplace is that the marketplace lives as if religious faith is unimportant: If God exists, he is largely irrelevant. Instead of actively challenging the pillars of Christian faith, many simply ignore it all. While these persons may not be atheists per se, their life style and thinking patterns render them essentially "practical atheists." (Gay, 1998, pp. 2-3) "…from a Christian point of view, the crucial threat that the modern world poses to faith does not actually lie in the denial of God's existence, as much as it lies in the tacit repudiation of divine authority. The question modernity raises—even for Christians—is whether or not God possesses any real authority to define our everyday existence." (Gay, 1998, p. 238). Keller (2008) sees contemporary culture in a similar light: "… resistance to authority in moral matters is now a deep current in our culture. Freedom to determine our own moral standards is considered a necessity for being fully human." (Keller, 2008, p. 46)

More than two decades ago Craig (1994) stated that "Christianity is being attacked from all sides as irrational or outmoded, and millions of students, our future generation of leaders, have absorbed this viewpoint." (p. xiii) It seems that this is no less true today. Perhaps it is even true in Christian universities. The need for apologetics for the current generation of Millenials is great. "Many of the most popular notions in our culture are poisonous to the essentials of the Christian faith." (Beilby, 2011, p. 152)

For centuries, perhaps, diversion has been one of the barriers to intellectual hard work of seriously reflecting on one's beliefs and assumptions. Every generation has had its diversions which results in dampening the intellectual curiosities, the cares of this life (Mark 4:19; Luke 14:18; 21:34), the desire for wealth (Psalm 10:3; Luke 8:14; 16:13-14; Hebrews 13:5), the avocational interests of life (Groothuis, 2011, p. 152-153). Gay comments that it is human diversions and fascinations with technology that are heavy contributors to apathy. "If God is largely hidden from view in modern technological society, however, his attributes have resurfaced as the prerogatives of humanity… the human subject has essentially eclipsed God and has emerged as the sole creator of meaning…" (Gay, 1998, p. 103) Given the inglorious past of diversions, even for Christians, it may be safe to assume that diversions will continue to be a problem for the next generation.

Pervasiveness of Postmodern Egoism & Relativism

The pervasiveness of relativism in contemporary culture cannot be underestimated (Gay, 1998; Keller, 2008). "It is a measure of today's timid cultural relativism that hardly anyone anymore speaks of God in public." (Sandelands, 2003, p. 168) Given the current perspective of post-modern business students attending Christian colleges (McMahone, Locke and Roller, 2015), perhaps we should no longer be shocked that so many are egoists and relativists. In the author's experience teaching in a Christian college, 30% to 40% of the Christian students who enroll in the required business ethics course are self-acknowledged egoists or relativists. This proportion has remained stable for over a dozen years. Some, but not all, business ethics texts implicitly encourage readers to take a relativist stance on ethical issues

(Lantos, 2002; see for example, Ferrell & Fraedrich, 2000). Even among Christian denominations, relativism may be having an insidious, even if unintended impact (Stapleford, 1999). Goossen (2004) argues that New Age religion is based on relativism.

Myers and Noebel (2015) say that the fundamental question of ethics is “who makes the rules? God or men?” (p. 230) They assert that the difference between these two is not trivial. It is fundamental to the differences between worldviews. Relativism is at the root of the differences. “The greatest challenge to Christian ethics, in our judgment, comes from the ethical stance promoted by Secularism, Marxism, and Postmodernism… No ethical standards can be known to be absolute: Christians should think long and hard before granting this premise…If there is no absolute beyond man’s ideas, then there is no final appeal to judge between individuals and groups whose moral judgments conflict…” (pp. 246-247) “Cultural relativism says what is right and wrong depends on the culture. But if this is so, culture is absolute, and those who seek to change it—as did William Wilberforce in seeking to abolish slavery—at best have no grounds for doing so, and at worst are in the wrong for imposing their views on others.” (p. 248)

Dominant Theories of the Firm Taught in Business Schools Egoistic

Major theories of the firm are egoistic and are openly contrary to Scripture perspective on moral authority. Yet, these are some of the theories that are taught in Christian business schools. Examples of the dominant theories are the following: The agency theory of the firm (Jensen & Meckling, 1976), neoclassical economic theory (Veblen, 1904), the resource-based theory (Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984), the behavioral theory (Cyert & March, 1963), the evolutionary theory (Alchian, 1950; Chandler, 1992), the transaction-cost theory (Coase, 1937; Williamson, 1971) and the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). These theories, simplified in Table 1, with a few exceptions are predominantly *egoistic* in perspective based on the assumption that business exists for the purpose of building wealth of the owners.

TABLE 1. Dominant "Theories of the Firm" Explicitly or Implicitly Egoistic

Theory of the Firm	Summary
Transaction-cost	Companies are formed for the purpose of producing when economic costs are less to coordinate production internally rather than externally.
Behavioral	Individuals and groups within companies have conflicting interests and goals. The behavior of the organization is a weighted result of these conflicting goals. Economic performance is driven by decisions to satisfice rather than optimize efficiency.
Agency	Owners (Principals) have a difficult time monitoring the behavior of managers (Agents). The structure of the Principal-Agent relationship and the financial structure of the firm's debt and equity are designed to minimize agency costs and maximize economic profits.
Neoclassical Economic	Firms exist to maximize economic profit. A firm's competitive advantage, and its economic performance, is driven primarily by the structure and dynamics of the external environment in which the firm operates.
Resource-based	A firm's competitive advantage and its economic performance is driven primarily by the tangible and intangible resources available to it that are difficult to obtain or copy by competitors.
Evolutionary	Firms exist to the degree that they are able to adapt or innovate at economic costs that are lower than the costs of other alternatives. In turn, this impacts the firm's wealth.
Stakeholder	Companies serve many stakeholders (including shareholders) that must be taken into account when achieving organizational goals. Stakeholders should be identified and treated in ways that result in higher economic performance of the firm.

Representing what might be considered the dominant view of our day, a standard popular principles of finance textbook used in some Christian business schools puts the matter in openly egoistic terms: "The goal of the firm, and therefore of all managers and employees, is to maximize the wealth of the owners for whom it is being operated." (Gitman & Zutter, 2011, p. 10) This idea is offered in the Brealey and Myers (2000) statement that managers of for-profit enterprises are often given a simple instruction: "Maximize net present value." (p. 25) A standard managerial economics textbook takes the same point of view (Mansfield et al., 2002). Similarly, economists Samuelson and Marks (2012) state in their text that although there are other points of view on the firm, "value maximization is a compelling *prescription* concerning how managerial decisions *should* be made." (p. 13) [Emphasis in original] Yes, other stakeholders are briefly acknowledged by these scholars and ethics is considered in such books, but very briefly and superficially. The rest of the content of these and similar books shouts loud and clear, *The* raison d'être *of business is primarily about building the "net present value" of future cash,* i.e., *wealth.* Students in Christian business schools are required to learn from these textbooks. In the author's experience, colleagues celebrate when students score high on national exams that test knowledge of these and related business content. One wonders how high students would score if tested for their ability to defend the biblical worldview.

In the world of business scholarship one might characterize much of the scholarship as a contest among competing theories of the firm to describe reality. Although one or more of these theories dominate the thinking of leading scholars in every business discipline, are Christian business scholars content simply to teach the theories but not critically evaluate the "theory of the firm" in light of Scripture – at least through their published scholarship? A thorough study of the dominant theories would require a multiple-author, book-length treatment since the scope of the issues is broad and the elements that deserve attention are deep. Recent work by Sison and Fontrodona (2012) suggest that the time is ripe for such a thorough study. Their review of the theory of the firm is based on Roman Catholic social teaching founded on the ethics of Thomas Aquinas.

The Needs of Christian Believers

The audience for apologetics is not just atheists and skeptics. Believers, too, sometimes have questions that need to be addressed. "Left unanswered, these can become toxic to continued vital faith. Moreover, in reality, apologetic conversations with skeptics and agnostics compose a relatively small percentage of the total number of actual apologetic conversations. It is far more common to have apologetic conversations with other Christians." (Beilby, 2011, p. 27)

For the person who already believes in God but who has intellectual questions and doubts, apologetics is useful to provide increased intellectual confidence (Groothuis, 2011, p. 39-41). Therefore, apologetics is also post-evangelistic. “Our churches are filled with Christians who are idling in intellectual neutral. As Christians, their minds are going to waste. One result of this is an immature, superficial faith. People who simply ride the roller coaster of emotional experience are cheating themselves out of a deeper and richer Christian faith by neglecting the intellectual side of that faith.” (Craig, 1994, p. xiv) Craig (1994), quoting Charles Malik, emphasizes the importance for youth: “In every high school and college Christian teenagers are intellectually assaulted on every hand by a barrage of anti-Christian philosophies and attitudes… The chief obstacle to the Christian religion today lies in the sphere of the intellect,’ and that it is in that sphere that the issues must be addressed. ‘The Church is perishing today through the lack of thinking, not through an excess of it.’” (Craig, 1994, p. xv) The implication is that apologetics contributes to strengthening and maturing Christian faith that is intellectually plausible and sound.

If Christian apologetics is important function in the Christian community, and if apologetics is important for marketplace ministry, to what degree is it important for some Christians in business to become skilled in apologetics? And, if this is important, wherein lies the responsibility in Christian B-schools to expose Christian business students to the challenges and potential of apologetics? Are we as business scholars simply to send our students out to the market with no awareness and no training relevant to the issues presented here? Are we simply to leave the task of apologetics to the religion faculty members? Bible scholars at Christian universities, notably systematic theologians, do offer some training in apologetics; however, apologetics is typically covered in the advanced religion courses that religion and theology majors take, not necessarily in general religion courses that business majors complete.

CONTEXTUALIZING CHRISIAN APOLOGETICS

Leading Christian apologists have largely glossed over or in some cases ignored economics and business as a potential fruitful context for the work of defending the faith. At the same time some of these apologists recognize the important influence that current culture has on the context for evangelizing. They also recognize the importance of contextualizing the defense of the Christian faith.

McGrath (1992, 1995), a leading Christian apologist, says that the effective apologist is one who listens first and then offers resources tailored to the need of the audience. "One of the most important skills you need to develop is that of identifying the aspect of the gospel which is going to be of greatest importance to your friend [the skeptic]…All you are doing is working out which of the many facets of the gospel will be of particular relevance to their situation." (McGrath, 1995, p. 25) With McGrath's direction in mind consider the question of what facets of the gospel may be of greatest relevance to people in the marketplace. This question has largely been unexplored thus far.

Contextualizing is also supported by Taylor (2006), Geisler (2013), Beilby (2011), and Groothuis (2011). "The real problem for the Christian apologist is to find some way apart from the mere facts themselves to establish justifiability of interpreting facts in a theistic way." (Geisler, 2013, p. 87) Beilby states that "…we must be aware of the uniqueness of particular relational situations, and we should seek an apologetic approach that is appropriate to that particular situation." (p. 177) Beilby also argues that the "relational complexities" of each situation need to be understood before effective answers be given to the skeptic. Groothuis says that "Christians need to detect exactly what their dialogue partners believe about reality." (Groothuis, 2011, p. 42) "…People often hold a smorgasbord of beliefs that do not easily fit into any unified worldview…The savvy apologist must shift through this welter of conflicting beliefs through intent listening, as well as caring but challenging responses…Once a person's worldview has been identified, the apologist should work on establishing common ground with the unbeliever in order to move closer to the Christian perspective…we need relational wisdom as to when and how to present arguments for Christian truth." (Groothuis, 2011, p. 43)

The ideas presented later in the paper are examples of how the apologetics work of a Christian in business might be contextualized for business.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO APOLOGETICS BY BUSINESS & ECONOMICS SCHOLARS

Some contributions to apologetics have come from scholars who either write about business and economics or write from the perspective of business and economics. While the reader will think of other examples, these are offered as illustrations.

Publications of the *Christian Business Faculty Association*

A few scholars have encouraged Christian business faculty to engage discussions with students and in so doing, combat notions that are antithetical to Christian thought. The contribution of Chewning and Haak (2002) to apologetics in the context of Christian business schools has been introduced in this paper. Chewning and Haak are unusual in that they explicitly identify their thesis with apologetics. The following are other examples that this author found. Depending on how broadly and loosely the term apologetics is defined, readers may think of still other examples of authors who have essentially offered suggestions for an apologetic treatment of challenges to Christian faith.

McCormick (2004) offers a way to discuss Ayn Rand's egoism with university students. In her propaganda novel *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand portrays in larger-than-life characters how egoism is the answer to mankind's problems. McCormich introduces the novel and shows how the Christian business instructor can contrast Rand philosophy with traditional Christian worldview.

Kellaris (2005) shows how instructors can use classroom demonstrations to illustrate proneness to circumstantial biases that can influence students' ethical judgment. Such a teaching strategy can contribute to counteracting moral relativism.

Hoover (2007) touches on some issues directly relevant to apologetics in his article regarding teaching of ethics giving illustrations of how to engage students in discussion about biblical themes at the same time as exposing them to some traditional hotly contested questions in ways that are relevant to students. Here is an example of an approach to apologetics that is rooted in a particular context, i.e., the perspective of students.

Introducing business students to the writings of C. S. Lewis is something advocated by Shelton (2010). Doing so can be helpful in combatting relativism. Lewis, one of the more notable Christian apologists of the 20th century still has currency today in that he addresses some of the traditional challenges to Christianity. A business ethics course seems to one logical place for apologetics to be addressed, but it is not the only venue as illustrated by some of the authors highlighted here. An objective moral foundation for business can be introduced or reinforced in other courses such as economics, international business, business strategy and management (Cafferky, 2012).

In the process of Brown (2014) exploring the question of why God would create, he also comments on Hegel, arguably the father of post-modern relativism (Craig, 1994, p. 56; Schaeffer, 1998, p. 34), and the philosophical notion of spontaneous order espoused by Frederick Hayek and based on the theory of evolution. Brown offers Christian theism as an alternative explanation for social spontaneity. In so doing, Brown is engaging in apologetics although this term is not used in the essay.

Logue (1999) discusses the presuppositions that seem to be at the root of current university students. He encourages with ways to confront shared values prevalent among some students which undermine Christian faith.

More recently, McMahone, Locke and Roller (2015) present the learning needs of postmodern business students that Christian business faculty meet when teaching faith and business integration. They provide examples of adjustments that may be required of Christian business faculty to meet these needs. Their work contributes to shaping the work of the Christian business instructor in a particular context. Implicit in their article, though the term apologetics is not used, is that Christian business instructors have a legitimate role in serving faith integration efforts by being apologists. Their challenge is in close alignment with the purpose of this article.

Other Contributions to Christian Apologetics

While not a publication of the Christian Business Faculty Association, the book *Business Through the Eyes of Faith* (Chewning, Eby & Roels, 1990) has some elements that one might characterize as being apologetic. The book attempts to portray that Christian faith perspective on business is reasonable and worthy of acceptance.

Gills and Nash (2002) do not engage in a thorough apologetic of Christian faith. Instead, they put forward a "manifesto" of biblical economic thought comparing what they believe to be biblical economic principles with socialism. "The fundamental flaw in socialism was discovered around 1920 by an Austrian economist named Ludwig von Mises. Mises argued that socialism is not only undesirable; it turns out to be an economic system that makes rational economic behavior impossible. The reason is simple: Decisions about whether to buy a good or service require some indication of cost. Without an accurate barometer of how a person will end up after an exchange, one could not make a rational economic decision. The basic indicator that signals when people should or should not engage in an economic transaction is prices. But we cannot have pricing information without markets. And real markets cannot exist in a socialist system." (Gills & Nash, 2002, p. 27) Notwithstanding the problem of asserting that economic decisions are rational (they are not), perhaps in this comparison with socialism we find the germ of an idea which can be used apologetically, namely, that the human need for transparent indicators (prices) of value suggests a complexity of human experience which surpasses what evolution could develop.

The work of other scholars contain elements relevant to apologetics to the degree that they represent the attractiveness of a Scriptural perspective on selected business topics. Examples might include Novak (1981), Griffiths (1984), Nelson (1993), Lee (2011), Long (2000), Grudem (2003), Long, Fox and York (2007) and Wong and Rae (2011). Where these and other authors come up short is usually in extended, explicit treatments of concerns of atheists, agnostics and skeptics toward the biblical worldview.

The contributions of four scholars (Boulding, 1956; North; 1987; Richards, 2010; Sandelands, 2003) come closer to the responses offered by Christian apologists. In the 1950s, economist Kenneth Boulding (1956) proposed the notion that systems (including economic systems) are hierarchical and that the suprasystem under which all other systems exist is best explained by what we would call today Christian theism. Boulding's ideas, which seem to lead to apologetic conversations, have largely been ignored rather than further developed or refined, even by Christian economists.

A generation later, Gary North (1987) has made one of the few contributions to the discussion of how applied economics and apologetics overlap. He attempts to show the weaknesses of modern economic theory to prove "that modern secular economics cannot possibly be valid, given the explicit presuppositions of modern economics." (North, 1987, p. xxxv) Economic emphasis on impersonalism of the market (which he says is a myth) results in avoiding our moral responsibilities. This is in stark contrast to the biblical view of "cosmic personalism." (North, 1987, p. 6)

North, arguing as an economist, attempts to show the weaknesses of Darwinism as a valid set of presuppositions. Darwinism's logical conclusion is that the impersonalization of random selection and adaptation leads to "the absence of any cosmic purpose in the universe." (North, 1987, p. 26) North argues that "because there is an imputing, planning, creative, sovereign God, there can also be an imputing, planning, derivatively creative mankind. Because there is objective value based on the acts of creation and imputation by God, there can be a science of applied economics, and not just solipsistic, subjectivist economic theory which is divorced from all statistical aggregations. There is objective value which is based on the Creator's value standards and the unity of God's comprehensive plan; there are subjective values believed and held among men because each man is a responsible person before God." (p. 65)

If modern economists based their presuppositions on Darwinianism, according to Richards (2010) this logically leads to a social order that lacks purpose. Richards disputes what he believes to be an invalid assumption that order naturally emerges from chaos, a foundation of Darwinism and modern economics. "But has modern science really discovered that order emerges from chaos? In fact, modern cosmologists have discovered just the opposite. Cosmologists of various metaphysical stripes now agree that the initial conditions present at the beginning of cosmic history must have been in a state of extraordinary order—low entropy—with matter conforming to very precise physical laws. It's so orderly, in fact, that it raises the question of who or what caused it all." (Richards, 2010, p. 222) "However generous we are with the Darwinian mechanism, it doesn't illustrate order emerging from chaos. On the contrary, Darwin proposed natural selection and random variation as a *mechanism* for producing adaptive capacity without design. He didn't suggest random variation alone. In fact, he treated mere chance or chaos as to improbable to entertain, and most Darwinists have followed him in that assessment." (Richards, 2010, p. 222)

An explicit attempt to argue for the existence of God comes the essay by management scholar Lloyd Sandelands (2003). Sandelands attempts to "turn the table on that contemporary relativism that puts statements for and against God on the same moral and factual footing." (p. 168) At the same time he illustrates one way to deal with a traditional challenge to the Christian worldview, namely, the existence of God. It is in the corporation that Sandelands sees evidence of the theistic God. He employs three arguments to reason inductively. Sandelands does not answer objections that might be launched from atheists. He positions his arguments within the traditional lines of inquiry / argument laid down by Thomas Aquinas.

First, he believes God is implied in almost all of the management advice for practicing managers. Economic behavior provides good illustrations of the dual nature of humans. Humans in the marketplace can show loyal cooperation. They can also display destructive competition and unethical behavior of cheating and stealing. "Nearly every management principle taught in business school is darkened by human imperfection." (p. 169). Yet, business scholars tend not to advocate on behalf of the imperfections. Why? "We teach management the way we do because above and beyond imperfect human motivations and systems, there *is* a higher law: the law of God." (p. 170) "…our most basic ideas of management predicate
God." (p. 170)

Second, the structure of organizations reveals a social order that suggests the existence of God. Hierarchy, and obedience to authority figures (as children to fathers) is an inescapable dimension of all organizing. This social phenomenon, Sandelands argues, "becomes an argument for God." (p. 171) "There must be a father beyond logical reason and beyond human existence that can rescue our human hierarchies from our human anxiety. Standing behind our human fathers or father figures must be the one true and final father—that is, God. Unlike all human fathers, God is the unchosen father, the one we must obey unconditionally, without limit, and without discretion of indifference. Only this unchosen father can reign supreme over our individual hearts." (p. 171)

Third, human interactions (love, play, individuation) in the life of organizations implies the existence of God. Individuation shows that humans are both individuals and interconnected with society. In Sandeland's mind, "Our individual freedom in society—our human ability to exercise free will within the confines of a social life—is very much a godlike power." (p. 174)

In the end Sandelands admits that "As a purely logical proposition, we probably cannot close the deal with God without that faith that welcomes truths that come by revelation in addition to those that come by rational empirical inquiry." (p. 175) Nevertheless, his attempts point the direction that others might take to address concerns relevant to apologetics.

To the contributions to apologetics that these authors have offered, the following seem, prima facie, to offer potential for Christians in business.

STRATEGIES FOR CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS IN BUSINESS

Traditional strategies employed by Christian apologists (e.g., Beilby, 2011; McGrath, 1992; Groothuis, 2011; Keller, 2008, p. 134-147) fall into one of the following strategies each of which, according to Beilby, contains strengths and weaknesses. Some are "**evidentialists**." They attempt to show evidence of God's existence using facts and/or logic of reasoning to show that the biblical perspective is reasonable and justifiable. In some cases, historical evidences may be offered. In other versions, an attempt is to first reason on behalf of the existence of God and then to argue that the biblical theism is the most logical approach. Some evidentialists specialize in particular problems of reason; others attempt to amass together a cumulative collection of arguments and evidence in support of the biblical perspective. "**Presuppositionalists**" deal with the problems of presuppositions using logic and reasoning. They seek to begin with common ground shared with their critics and then attempt to show that the presuppositions of the Christian are stronger than alternative assumptions.

"**Experientialists**" appeal to personal religious experience as evidence of God. The argument from religious experience (see for example, Groothuis, 2011, pp. 364-388) is an argument of inference. If a person seems to have a particular type of experience, unless evidence to the contrary exists, the person should be able to believe that the experience was real. (Groothuis, 2011, p. 365) Furthermore, we assume that people tell the truth about their experiences. Humans, it is argued, experience a deep longing or emptiness that is filled when they have a religious experience. Religious experience is an experience of perceiving a transcendent object outside oneself. This experience results in an existential after effect. Divine encounters are reported in the Bible writers and by others down through history. Some religious experiences are transformational which result in dramatic changes in the life. Others are "**ecclectic**" preferring to use more than one approach.

Considering the traditional challenges lodged at the Christian worldview and the types of strategies that Christian apologists have traditionally developed, Table 2 offers for consideration a matrix describing some of the potential tactics for Christian business apologists to employ and thereby to contribute to the larger, on-going work of Christian apology.

Table 2. Potential Christian Apologetics Tactics for Christians in Business

	SUPPORT FOR EXISTING RESPONSES	**DEVELOPING NEW RESPONSES**
Arguing for the Existence of God: Evidence from human economic experience (the "created order")	Providing illustrations and analogies potentially useful for arguments that Christian apologists have developed and tested. Rationale: Such examples will provide the business professional with a context and application readily understood by others in business.	In collaboration with trained Christian apologists, develop new arguments for the existence of God, perhaps following the structure of arguments developed by Christian apologists; Offering new evidence from economics and business that Christian apologists traditionally have ignored or glossed over.
Arguing for the Existence of God: Evidence from religious experience	Supporting traditional arguments based on religious experience	Offering new arguments based on religious experience of Christians in business.
Supporting a Biblical Worldview and the authority of Scripture	Arguing for the superiority of the biblical worldview of economics: Begin with observable facts and offering a plausible explanation for these facts from a biblical perspective; Alternatively, begin with commonly shared human goals	Offering new arguments for the authority of Scripture, the plausibility that the biblical perspective on business is superior to other perspectives; offering new answers to traditional challenges to the

	of flourishing and argue that the biblical perspective is superior for realizing the ideal.	Bible's authority by pointing to economics and business.
Critiquing Alternative Worldviews	Providing additional support to critiques of alternative worldviews put forward by Christian apologists; critiquing presuppositions that are the basis of Darwinian economics or egoistic management assumptions; critiquing relativism and egoism as they are applied to business.	Developing new critiques of the contemporary secular worldviews; developing new critiques of the dominant "theories of the firm."
Responding to challenges based on the problem of suffering	Contribute to traditional Christian apologetic responses with illustrations from business and economics	Developing new responses to the problem of suffering based on economics and business.

What follows is a series of examples of how the context of business organizations and the marketplace itself might provide additional examples in support of traditional arguments for the existence of God or argue for the plausibility that the Biblical worldview on business and economics is superior to other humanly devised systems.

1. Argument for a Necessary Being as the Cause of the Origin of the Universe: Contingency

Arguments for the existence of God sometimes take the form of a contingency argument, namely, that anything that now exists in the known universe must have a cause of its origin. While cosmologists turn to the galaxies for discussion, we might just as well use business organizations as a way to contextualize the argument. Contingency is well known concept in management. One might argue that because of the sheer ubiquity of contingency, it is potentially a fruitful area to explore in apologetics. If we employ this approach what follows here might be one way to structure the argument.

Every element in the universe is dependent on either a prior action by other elements or is now dependent upon the element's relationship with other elements. This dependence can be logically traced back to an original cause by asking the questions such as, "Why is there anything at all in the

Universe? Where did anything we see on earth or in the heavens above come from?" (Groothuis, 2011, p. 207) Entropy in physical systems shows that a first cause is plausible. (Groothuis, 2011, pp. 225-228) "Entropy increases over time—and not the reverse." (Groothuis, 2011, p. 226) Entropy in economics shows that without intelligent, purposeful action taken by persons, economic systems (and other social systems) move gradually toward entropy or chaos. From this understanding it can logically be argued that the universe had a beginning and that it was created by a "first cause" which Christians argue is none other than God.

Another argument in favor of a first cause is our experience with dependence. Dependence is fundamental to managing scarcity and tradeoff choices. Economic actors experience dependence at all levels. Every organization depends upon outside entities for continued existence (the resource-based view of the firm has highlighted this more than most other theories). Economics begins with questions of scarcity of resources. Economics also shows us that without purposeful, intelligent action, humans would be unable to exchange resources needed for the sustenance and flourishing of life.

Human beliefs are intentional regarding the objects of belief. (Groothuis, 2011, p. 399) Human economic behavior is based on human assumptions anticipating future consequences of economic choice (Gills & Nash, 2002). Valuing is a process that takes place in the context of alternatives and in light of human purposes. Here the relationship between the belief regarding what will happen as a result of one economic choice is always in relation to something that is a referent. Humans need anchors when valuing products or comparing today's prices with yesterday's deals.

Humans also need anchors when grasping the purpose of their organization. Raelin (2006) says that one of the jobs of the leader is to give expression "to what members of the group or organization seek to accomplish in their work together…Meaning-making can come from anyone in the group." (p. 65) Certainly, this is true within a work team as the team looks for a way to articulate what the team is doing or not doing or by "identifying what is missing or isn't happening." (p. 65) However, when it comes to the challenge of expressing the overall purpose of the organization within which each work team and each person frames their own purpose, an anchor is needed which is beyond the confines of the team or the organization. It is the contingent, larger purpose which is the anchor for finding meaning. As the pathways of purpose are traced in *up-stream*, it is inescapable that we come to the question of purpose of the universe. It can be argued that without a first cause by an intelligent being, the universe (including this Earth) has no purpose. That first cause intelligent being plausibly can be God. Said another way, without God as the originator of the purpose of the Universe, humans on Earth have no ultimate anchor to ground their social purposes.

Organizations come into existence and go out of existence. Every year thousands of new businesses are formed. These organizations come into existence because of intentionality and purpose which leads con concerted action by other things or beings that do exist. Whatever comes into existence is not required. It comes into existence because someone or some persons intend it to exist. Not being in existence is just as real possibility as being in existence. But if not being is a real possibility, then it is possible that at this moment nothing actually would exist and if this is a possibility, then the fact that we exist and the organizations we create also exist, then all things that exist must trace their origin to a time when nothing existed.

All things that we see and experience must have a cause outside themselves in order for them to exist. It is impossible for an object to create itself or cause itself to come into existence. Thus, it makes no logical sense to say that the universe created the universe. Logically, this is impossible since in order to create itself, the universe would have to exist. But if it existed before it created itself, then what created it?! The cause must be transcendent to the space and time in which the universe exists.

All things must have had a beginning point, without which nothing would exist. In other words, whatever begins to exist must have some cause for its existence. If the first thing that came into existence from nothing actually came into existence, then there must be something that existed before that that is not dependent upon anything else for existence. The first thing that came into existence must have existed because of whatever it was that has always existed, i.e., a being that is necessary to exist and upon which all other things are contingent. In terms of the universe, cosmologists believe, is in a dynamic of expansion. Expansion is not eternal. Instead, it had an absolute beginning at a point in time. The Big Bang "event" that cosmologists speak of represents the origin of the universe from nothing. Before the universe exists there was nothing. Then, it came into being from nothing (*ex nihilo*). This necessary being or force that brought the universe into existence must be an intelligent being capable of purposeful, intentional action. This being we call God.

If atheism is true, the universe has no explanation for how it came to be. Most people will agree that the universe exists but for the atheist it has no explanation for why it exists. By saying that the universe has no explanation is to imply that if it does have an explanation, then God exists and the atheism argument is false.

2. The Design Argument: The Analogy of the Marketplace

This traditional approach attempts to argue from the beauty of nature back to an original designer who had purpose in mind, i.e., Intelligent Design. This argument is not an out-and-out proof of God's existence. Rather it is an attempt to show that belief in God is the most plausible given all available evidence in nature. Perhaps, illustrations of this can also be seen among social groups who exchange things of value in the marketplace.

This argument attempts to say that the fine tuning of the universe is due to either physical necessity, to chance or to intelligent design. Nothing has been found to support the idea that the universe requires fine tuning. Nothing has been found to support the idea that fine tuning occurs by chance. Thus, the only option available is that the fine tuning of the universe is due to design.

Just as in the natural physical world where beauty exists, so also imbedded in social groups we see imbedded an aesthetic beauty in the fundamental paradoxes group life, i.e., the individual – group tension and the short-term – long-run tension. It is plausible that these fundamental tensions resulted from the work of an Intelligent Designer rather from chance and adaptation. Adaptation does play a role as persons and leaders of groups make choices for adjusting the degree of emphasis on either the individual needs or, alternatively, emphasis on the community needs.

We see around us in the marketplace the presence of intelligible design and order everywhere. We also see recurring regularity of behavior in the marketplace in the way that humans and groups relate to others outside themselves.

- People make decisions for how to organize themselves for the productive purposes.
- Leaders delegate to subordinates to authority to take actions which move the organization toward accomplishing the intended purposes.
- Human endeavors for achieving social and economic goals occur not by chance but by design.
- Design comes only from intelligent beings who make plans, implement these plans and then check to see to what degree purpose-filled goals have been achieved.
- These intelligent beings take responsibility to make adjustments when purpose-filled goals are not achieved to the desired degree. Performance improvement efforts in work task processes do not occur by themselves. Improvement occurs only by intelligent design.

If both physical nature and social nature of economic behavior occurs not by chance and with purposeful design, then the universe must exist because of the presence of an Intelligent Designer.

The complexity and the regularity of behavior of living organisms has been used as evidence of a Supreme Intelligent Designer. Furthermore, the arguments of Darwinianism and the evolutionary origin of the species, have been countered with illustrations and the application of probability that the complexity of DNA, biological cells and human organs is extremely remote. The length of time it would take is enormous (some would say beyond belief) for the so-called processes of random selection and adaptation of first individual atoms and then individual molecules to transform themselves into living organisms to eventually produce the levels and degree of complexity we now see in animal and human social life. (Groothuis, 2011, pp. 240-265; Keller, 2008, p. 134-147)

Keller (2008, p. 134-147) provides some “clues” (but not absolute proofs) from general revelation: The regularity of nature and beauty. Both suggest the existence of a theist conception of God. Both have potential support from the world of business and organizations. For example, the human tendency to establish standardized work procedures in order to achieve economic efficiency produces a regularity inside organizations which is, to a great degree, predictable. Here the work of Charles Perrow (1970) and other organization theory experts may be worth exploring. To achieve organizational goals, creative solutions to new customer problems is valued. But, at the same time, solutions that can be standardized and even programmed for greater efficiency also is desirable. Thus, in Perrow’s view, managers are concerned about the ability to analyze tasks needed to create value for customers. They are also concerned about the variability of tasks when repeating them many times. Work units may differ inside the same organization in terms of the task analyzability and variability. The work of the top-level managers (who themselves may face high variability but low analyzability tasks) is important for monitoring and adjusting the structural characteristics of the organization. This complex ability to monitor and adjust the structure of the organization as response to the various types of tasks, it could be argued, illustrates the complexity of the tasks needed to create the known universe. Because of the enormous complexity of the universe and its systems, it might be argued that it is a remote probability that chance and extremely long time period is the origin of all life as we know it including plants, animals and humans.

3. The Argument from Market Demand Pointing to the Plausibility of Theism

Things that humans want to obtain in order to foster a flourishing life or enhance happiness correspond with real objects or real persons or real relationships with persons and other living things outside themselves.

Humans are willing to place a value on the things they desire. When they are willing to exchange something of value for the things they desire, this creates what the market calls “demand.” Humans express demand for things outside themselves. Humans have desires for something that is beyond things in the marketplace for which no object or person or human relationship can fully satisfy. Some things we desire are common to all humans worldwide. Other things we desire vary from person to person, cultural group to cultural group.

There must exist something beyond the marketplace, beyond human experience, humans and their relationships with each other which can satisfy this desire. The most plausible explanation for this is that it is a Supreme Being, called God which is there to satisfy the unfulfilled human desire. While we may not know everything about this Supreme Being that we want to know, we at least know that God exists.

4. The Moral Argument from the Marketplace

Moral arguments also have been employed in attempt to strengthen the plausibility that God exists (see for example, Groothuis, 2011, pp. 330-363). In order for humans to survive and thrive together, they must take responsibility for contributing to the welfare of others. Perhaps both theists and atheists agree with this. Since these are responsibilities to other humans (and to the physical environment), one might argue that they are *moral* obligations.

Morality is either the result of human species adaptation and chance over an enormous amount of time (an atheistic, Darwinian view) or the theistic argument (that a Supreme Being called God exists) is correct. The atheistic, Darwinian argument does not require moral obligation. There is no foundation, no ultimate reason for morality. If God exists, objective moral principles and duties exist. But, if God does not exist, then objective moral standards also do not exist. Even the relativist (who claims that absolute objective moral standards do not exist) believes that everyone should be tolerant of what others believe. For the relativist it is objectively wrong to impose one's own moral values on other people. So at least this one objective standard exists.

If humans must take some responsibility for the welfare of others, there must be a universal, objective standard which is beyond any given person. This standard must be, at minimum, applicable to the wider society of which individuals are a part. The best way to account for this is the proposition that God exists and is the originator of such a standard.[1]

Beyond the issue of being tolerant, it might be argued that more than one objective moral principle and more than one duty exists. Objective standards are those that are true independent of whatever people might think of them, i.e.., certain principles of right and wrong regardless of what people might think they are. Therefore, it is plausible that God exists.

5. **The Unseen but Believable in the Market: Analogy of Belief in Unseen Realities**

One of the challenges brought by atheists is that God cannot be seen. Since God cannot be seen, it is doubtful that he exists. The marketplace may serve as a source of support for arguing in support of Christian theism. The marketplace is filled with things that are unseen but that are believable. In technology we find many "things" that exist but cannot be seen with the eyes (without the aid of other technology):

- Radio waves and other types of electromagnetic forces including microwaves
- X-rays
- Gamma rays

- Protons
- Ultraviolet light
- Infrared light waves
- The presence of color in visible light waves
- Polarization of light

Moving into the arena of psychology we find other “things” that are invisible but clearly present:

- The sense of awe in the presence of beauty
- The intrapersonal ethics process
- Biases in managerial judgment and decision making
- Being attracted to an opportunity or to a person
- Risk (which can only be *estimated* based on previous experiences or similar experiences)

Moving into the arena of social interaction in social groups such as business organizations, we find still other “things” that are invisible but are believed to be present:

- Trust and faith in others (an unseen force that is at work in the lives of humans in social settings)
- Hundreds of paradoxes of organizational life.
- Competitive and cooperative dynamics inside organizations and between organizations. Competitive advantage and resource dependency are *estimated*.
- Price elasticity of demand; price elasticity of supply. (Elasticity can only be *estimated* after large groups of customers and suppliers interact in the marketplace)
- From our experience with empirical research, we know that some factors which explain a change in the dependent variable are unmeasurable but nevertheless believed to be there based on the results of statistical tests.
- The sense of community in social groups inside and outside of work.

6. **Knowledge of God from the Created Order**

From physical objects that can be observed (things on Earth and things observed beyond Earth), we can, Christians believe, know somethings about God's nature (Romans 1:19-21). From the existence of humans in social relationships we can reasonably believe that the simplest explanation for how social groups work is derived best from the assumption (faith) that a Supreme theist (God) created us with fundamental human needs which are best met in the context of social interaction and exchanges, of giving to others and receiving from others, whereby we meet the needs of the community as a whole.

When we observe detail of human interactions over centuries, and when observations have been recorded and passed down from generation to generation for further consideration, we find that some types of social interactions tend to produce flourishing while other types of interactions detract from flourishing. From this we might reasonably believe that social interactions were designed by a loving God. And, if we believe God exists, then we have reason to believe that the types of social interactions which tend to produce flourishing is the ideal established by God. We might also argue that since there is a variety of human behavior, some foster flourishing while others detract from flourishing, the best human behaviors must ultimately come from God who exercises the same types of behavior which tends to produce flourishing.[2]

The fundamental tension in all organizations, the tension between individual needs and community needs, can be argued to be an aesthetic beauty on par with any other thing on earth (Cafferky, 2012, p. 390). Sandelands (2003) also sees the potential in this for arguing on behalf of the existence of God. While it may be possible that this tension can be explained in terms of evolutionary theory, it may also be explained as a product of intelligent design. The individual-Community tension shows that it is a delicate balance that needs to be continually managed by humans who intentionally make adjustments to the tension as needed. Without the delicate balance maintained, one might argue that human social life would degenerate into destructive chaos. This social phenomenon is on a large scale and is more complex than physical structures where delicate balances are needed to preserve life. This balance is the only way that large scale groups can survive and thrive. The probability that key human organs and human systems needed for social interaction came as a result of adaptation, natural selection and chance are remote. The eyes, ears, nervous system involving the sense of touch, taste, voice and speech are complex systems in themselves. Add to this the complexity of human freedom to choose from among many behaviors in any given situation and the overall complexity of the individual-community tension is massive.

7. Systems theory

In systems theory we find several strands of thought pulled together from the human experience (some of which have been highlighted above) which suggest the existence of something bigger and greater than what we observe (discussed in Cafferky, 2012). Five elements in the human experience point to or suggest the existence of a supra-System that operates at a level higher than observable human existence (see Grenz, 1994, pp. 170-173): Ambiguity, Ability, Adaptability, Dependence, and Transcendence.

Ambiguity. Compared with other species, humans have no single, discoverable, unambiguous biological niche. Our biological role cannot be specifically defined in a way that explains the purpose of our existence. Our role is broad in scope, varied in experience. The purpose of our existence is very likely beyond the biological level.

Ability. Humans have abilities that go far beyond what is required for biological survival. The ability to invent a musical score, perform it and then symbolize it with a system of graphic characters on a page is one example. Another is the ability through drawings, painting, sculpture, pottery and other means to visually represent the physical locations, objects, actions, social situations and many other dynamics of our life. But this ability goes beyond the mere depicting facts in a rational way. It includes the ability to convey the emotional content and social meaning of life's objects and events. A third example is the ability to speak, read and write attaching significance to verbal sounds and visual marks we make and there by convey information and meaning. A host of other abilities could be discussed here including: tool making, mathematical problem solving, conceptual thinking, strategic planning, economic exchange, etc.

Adaptability. Humans have learned to adapt to a variety of climates, geographies and situations. This adaptability has resulted in humans being open to the world in a way unlike other animal creatures (Gottfried, 1995, p. 16). This openness to the world suggests the possibility that humans are dependent upon a reality that transcends our own ability to alter our world. Fulfillment, if possible, lies beyond what we create as we adapt.

Dependence. We are dependent upon each other and upon the larger earth-environment for survival. Humans have, to a large degree, learned how to harness the physical and social resources to obtain want- and need-satisfying values. While there is competition for scarce resources, the competition is offset by human willingness to cooperate with each other. While examples of individuals can be identified who have learned to survive as a hermit, these are the exceptions. The typical person is dependent upon one or more groups for survival. This is really *interdependence* which has driven the development of the marketplace systems where we exchange things of value with each other. Interdependence has come to mean that when considering just human beings on this planet, we are part of one another in a community (Gottfried, 1995, p. 13).

Transcendence. Humans have the ability to transcend the world of systems, objects, and social groups that we create. We can focus our consciousness on a center that is beyond the world of space and time. We can make anything we see, hear, touch and otherwise experience – even ourselves - the object of thought. This thought can be at the pragmatic problem-solving level or it can be at the sense-making level where the questions of our very existence and purpose come into play.

These elements help us understand some of why humans are never completely satisfied with what we can make and do. Humans, it appears, are on a never-ending search for something new which surpasses what we now have as we continually shape and reshape our environment. We are dependent but our dependence is greater than what we can create in this finite world. This elusive fulfillment suggests that something greater than this world is necessary for deep, long-lasting meaning and purpose.

Open systems as a framework for thinking about organizations is applicable "to any dynamic recurring process, any cyclical pattern of events that occurs in some larger context." (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 752). The Christian tradition takes a hierarchical view to open systems that allows for a context larger than what is considered in the traditional humanistic approach to physical and social sciences. A Christian world view includes the belief that life is lived within a divinely-created supra-System that encompasses all human and physical sub-systems. As such it includes a theological parameter not measured directly by empirical science but nevertheless believed to exist as demonstrated in the recurring patterns of religious experience across many cultures and times. Because of this the Christian worldview assumes a completely open system which embraces everything – including the existence of God.

This concept of hierarchy to systems is not new though it has fallen into disuse and has never been a part of the mainstream of scholarly discussion of systems theory applied to organizations. When he proposed it in the 1950s as one classification of systems in a hierarchy, the economist Kenneth E. Boulding described this as "transcendental systems" that was at the pinnacle of all other systems. (Boulding, 1956, pp. 197-205). More recently others, using the frameworks of humanism, have attempted to show the connection between religious beliefs and the systems at work in human existence (Scott, 1961; Gottfried, 1995; de Raadt, 1996, 1997, 2005, 2006; Eriksson, 2003).

A Christian world view holds that genuine meaning is achieved when managers are open to the divine influences of the supra-System and see their work in the larger context of all Creation in its relationship to God. This presents the Christian manager with an opportunity to be a recipient of and a channel for *redemption* to encourage openness to spiritual and moral realities allowing them to break through into the elements of our social systems.

Christians believe that all systems observable on this Earth operate within a larger context of *creation-fall-redemption*. There are those who believe that the idea of Something beyond the finite, temporal human experience is nonsense. The other alternative accepted by Christianity and many other religions suggest that true fulfillment lies in the existence of God a Supreme Being who is at the foundation of our existence and ultimately our reason for being (Genesis 1:1; 1 Chronicles 16:26; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 8:3; 33:6-9; 89:11; 102:25; 104:24; 136:5; Proverbs 3:19; 16:4; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 37:16; John 1:1-3; Acts 4:24; 17:24; Romans 1:19-20; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:10; 11:3; 1 John 1:1; Revelation 14:7).

We might not be able to observe God directly in a scientific manner but He observes us, the Earth, and everything in it (2 Chronicles 16:9; Job 34:21-22; Psalm 22:28; 66:7; 103:19; 104:14; 145:14-15; Proverbs 5:21; 15:3; Jeremiah 16:17; 23:24; 32:19; Matthew 10:29-30; Hebrews 4:13). His existence must be factored into considering everything that happens on Earth. Christians hold that "within the cosmos we are the restless creatures that look beyond the material universe for ultimate fulfillment. We are designed to find our meaning and identity in relation to, and only in relation to God." (Grenz, 1994, p. 173)

God also created social *community* for service. Acting in His image we create social organizations to serve each other's needs. We can think of these as interdependent social systems. We are part of an interdependent relational community forever linked with each other around the globe and with all other life forms on our planet. As members of this larger community we have the divinely appointed responsibility to care for each other regardless of whether or not the other person is a member of the same community of faith. This notion is expressed in the Biblical principles of inclusively loving your neighbor as yourself (Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:10, 33-34; 25:35; Deuteronomy 10:19; Matthew 5:43-44; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 6:35; 10:25-37; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:13; James 2:8-10).

While we each enjoy a limited degree of independence from each other as separate individuals, individuality does not mean we have absolute and complete autonomy. We belong to and depend each other. We choose to cooperate, support, and defend each other. We do not live alone; we are our brother's keeper (Genesis 4:9). The answer to Cain's question implied in the story is "Yes, you are your brother's keeper!" (See also Gal 6:10) Those who are placed "in charge" as managers and leaders also are part of the communities they serve. Human life in our communities, including the life of service as a manager for the community at work, is lived in response to God's actions.

LIMITS OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS IN BUSINESS

Christian apologetics does not offer a perfect solution to all challenges lodged against the biblical worldview. Apologetics comes with inherent limitations which should be recognized.

Level of Skill Needed to be Effective

To become an effective apologist is not easy. For example, defending the Bible's authority is difficult (Groothuis, 2011, p. 70). The intellectual skills needed to grapple with difficult philosophical problems requires high-level critical thinking skill mixed with the skills of a logician. Business scholars, business students and business practitioners all have limited time and resources and yet are expected to respond to the business issues that demand immediate attention. Developing the skills of an apologist may require an unsavory tradeoff in how some spend their time. The more time spent developing abilities as an effective apologist, the less time is available for developing other business skills.

Presuppositions Require Faith

The theory of evolution, the foundation for Marxism, the premises of egoism, and other worldviews all require that the presuppositions be taken by faith. The same is true for the Biblical worldview. Additionally, faith in the Bible's authority does not resolve all mysteries that the believer confronts. Some discussions of competing worldviews does come down to faith. Evolutionists hold that there are plausible reasons justifying faith in evolution's presuppositions. What does the Christian theist offer as reasons for faith?

The Marketplace Not Always Conducive for Christian Apologetics

Groothuis also says that the best atmosphere for effective defense of the faith is "one in which there is silence and time to reflect and discuss things that matter most. This ambience should be as free as possible from distracting stimuli… and the hurried harried atmosphere of contemporary culture." (pp. 43-44)

If Groothuis' thesis represents the best atmosphere for defending the Christian faith, what hope is there that the marketplace is an appropriate setting for apologetics? On the other hand, if the marketplace is the only place where some Christians interact with atheists and skeptics, but the marketplace is not the ideal setting for conversations that are defending the faith, what is the Christian in the marketplace to do? If contextualizing the defense of the Christian faith is important, in what ways, if at all, do the relational complexities of the marketplace (employer-employee, customer-supplier, strategic partners and so forth) help or hinder the Christian apologists to be more effective in defending the faith? If the marketplace is an important context for ministry, to what degree do Christians in business enter the marketplace equipped to justify the biblical worldview? Are there particular concerns expressed by atheists, agnostics, and skeptics in the marketplace that the Christian can answer using the context of business and economics? If so, on what basis can Christian business scholars legitimately ignore the challenges to the biblical worldview that graduates will face after graduation? The marketplace is not always conducive for conversations on apologetics. In contrast, the Christian business school classroom represents a positive opportunity.

Lack of Unified Interpretation of Scripture Record Regarding Economics

Some notable examples of apologists can be cited as illustrations of contextualized approaches dealing with contemporary challenges to Christian worldview (McGrath, 1992; McDowell, 1999; McDowell, 2009; Keller, 2008; Zacharias, 2008). What is lacking is a comprehensive treatment of the major challenges as seen through the lens of Christian apologetics *and* applied economics. For the business professional and the business student who have concerns or are faced by others who present challenges, little is available by way of a systematic treatment. One reason for this may be that there are widely divergent views on economics among Christians (Gills & Nash, 2002; Cafferky, 2012). Economics is an illustration of the lack of unity of belief among Christians. Even where unity of belief is lacking, there still may be opportunities through discussions of economics and business practice to support a Christian theistic worldview.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to offer the reader potential ways for the business practitioner to participate in the Christian apologetics process. In accomplishing this purpose it is hoped that weight will be added to previous voices which have encouraged Christian business scholars to integrate this dimension of faith into the Christian business school curriculum. For some business practitioners and some business scholars (including students), the work of faith integration may not be completed until the issues relevant to apologetics are addressed. Therefore, this paper seeks to encourage readers to participate in the apologetic work of faith integration, without apology.

The paper began by drawing upon the perspective of Christian apologists to define and describe the goals and tasks of apologetics. The paper uses Christian apologists' perspective to make the case for why apologetics is also important for business practitioners and business scholars. It reports what Christian apologists say is the need to contextualize Christian apologetics. The paper also reports some of the contributions of business scholars directly relevant to the work of apologetics, work upon which we can build. Following this, the paper presented seven tactics that hold some potential for the Christian apologist in business. A matrix was offered for consideration showing some of the potential for how Christian apologists in business can contribute to the larger effort of Christian apologists. Finally, the paper presented some of the limitations of Christian apologetics as this relates to business and economics.

Richardson (1947,) mentions economics as one of the fields of "experience or research" where philosopher must fulfill his responsibility by extending "analogically" and used to "express statements about the universe as a whole, or the external world, or human destiny, or ethical values." (p. 34) No Christian theologian-apologist that this author could find has taken Richardson's idea and developed it fully. Perhaps Christian apologists need to collaborate with Christian business or economics scholars to help complete the work of apology.

Personal correspondence between the author and a few leading apologists resulted, in all but one case, the Christian apologist admitting that little or no thought had been given to economics or business. Perhaps economic behavior, on the surface, seems to be too remote from religious experience or the concerns of atheists and agnostics. Are we as a faith community living such intellectually fragmented [rather than integrated] lives that the concerns of economics are not raised when we explore the intellectual challenges to Christian faith? In this regard, the dialogue between natural sciences and theology is far ahead of the dialogue between business and theology.

Keller (2008) claimed that "…despite the secularism of most universities and colleges, religious faith is growing in some corners of academia. It is estimated that 10 to 25 percent of all teachers and professors of philosophy in the country are orthodox Christians, up from less than 1 percent just thirty years ago." (p. x) If this is true, are some Christian universities suddenly behind the curve, trying to imitate successful secular institutions' success while secular scholars have increased their search for understanding of faith?

Are Christian business scholars to leave the task of managing doubt to the pastors, Bible teachers, religion professors and religion classes? Business students also have hard questions, some of which they may not feel comfortable raising in religion class. They carry these questions away with their diploma into the marketplaces of the world. If business scholars don't provide a safe place to wrestle with the tough questions relevant to Christianity and business, questions that normally would be addressed by an apologist, where will this occur?

Why do we not see more contributions among Christians in business to the traditional problems addressed by apologetics? One reason, suggested above, is that the work of an apologist requires skills in philosophy and logic. Let's face it: Apologetics is difficult work for those of us who are not highly trained in philosophy. Additionally, business scholars and practitioners both focus more on practical business skills and knowledge. Philosophy of business is not greatly encouraged perhaps because of the unpleasant tradeoffs which might result, i.e., leaving off important tasks traditionally expected of those in business.

For their part Christian theologians who have specialized in apologetics, with a few exceptions, lack in-depth training in economics and business. With few exceptions, business scholars do not have regular and sustained scholarly dialogue with theologians. Some of the traditional concerns of apologetics do not appear relevant to the particular concerns of business and economics. Economics may be seen as peripheral by trained apologists to the central concerns of defending the faith.

A few interesting and helpful materials have been produced to help business scholars engage students in the apologetics process (cited above). As important as apologetics is for marketplace ministry, there is a great need for training materials and sharing materials for business professionals who have an interest in apologetic conversations in the marketplace. Another great need is to develop tactical approaches for Christians in business to respond to the silence (apathy?) of the market toward the claims of Christianity.

Gills and Nash say that economics is the missing link in the Christian worldview (Gills & Nash, 2002, p. xi). Could it also be said that apologetics is the missing link in current emphases in marketplace ministries? Could it be that the economic perspective is an important missing link in the larger work of Christian apologetics?

Considering the issues raised in this paper brings us to normative questions relevant to Christian business education at all levels including terminal degree programs: Is apologetics a business *skill* for the marketplace that should be taught to both business students and Christian business professionals? To what degree does it rank high on the priorities of business skills as do other skills taught in accounting and finance, marketing and management?

To the degree that Christian business students are exposed to apologetics in religion classes, the business instructor can support this by showing how the biblical worldview for business is plausible. One problem may be that business students are not all exposed to apologetics in religion classes even at Christian institutions. Some business students have not heard of some of the leading Christian apologists, cite here, who have made intellectually accessible the challenges and Christian responses. Furthermore, even among religion instructors at Christian universities, not all are experts in apologetics.

Apologetics is important for defending the Christian worldview. But, if economics issues are an important dimension of the Christian worldview, then apologetics must include economics. If this is valid, then apologists must not ignore economics. But if trained apologists are not trained in handling economics issues, then Christians trained in economics and business have a responsibility to dialogue with them and even collaborate with them to add economics to the list of concerns of the apologist.

Which business scholar is best positioned to contribute to apologetic skill development among business students? Ethics instructors, economics instructors, management instructors, accounting instructors? This paper suggests that opportunities exist in all of these business disciplines to expose students to the challenges to the Christian worldview and potential responses to these challenges.

If the dominant theories of the firm which are taught in Christian universities are not challenged in the classroom or through online discussions, where will students at Christian business schools be exposed to both the challenges of atheists and agnostics and a biblical response?

During the last decade the number of doctoral degree programs in business and leadership offered at Christian universities in North America has expanded. To what degree are doctoral students in Christian terminal degree programs in business exposed to the philosophical questions relevant to apologetics and the biblical foundations for business? Just as in the undergraduate curriculum and in the MBA degree curriculum, when we face the claims of Scripture and a cultural context largely devoid of solid biblical foundations, the choices that must be made regarding what is put in the curriculum and what is left out are excruciating. Additionally, if the Christian universities that offer terminal degree programs do not contribute to the progress which is needed in developing biblically-based, Christian responses to the current challenges to the Christian worldview on business, who will do this?

If Christian theologians with specialized training in apologetics are not taking the lead in advancing the conversation (or apathetic lack thereof) in the marketplace, who will if we don't? If Christian business scholars, so busy teaching the secular business skills to students, do not help students with the biblical foundation for business, in effect even if unintentionally, we let "the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." (Mark 4:19 New American Standard Version)

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[1] The author is indebted to Christian apologist Dr. Jim Taylor at Westmont College for crafting ideas portrayed in this paragraph.
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