



# Kierkegaard's Pastoral Dialogues

*George Pattison, Helle Møller Jensen*

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"Kierkegaard's Pastoral Dialogues" takes a selection of Kierkegaard's most insightful spiritual writings and transforms them into a series of dialogues between two friends, a believer and a nonbeliever. In this way, some of Kierkegaard's complex religious thought is made accessible to a wider readership, so as to provide a resource for individual or group study in pastoral, counseling, or spiritual direction contexts. Each dialogue is accompanied by a commentary and questions to help discussion by groups or application by individuals. Finally, there are three responses from, respectively, a philosopher, a theologian, and a hospital chaplain, looking at how the dialogues may be relevant to these different fields of practice.

"Kierkegaard is a profound, Socratic, and dialogic thinker. Sometimes this dialogue is implicit in his work, and other times explicit. 'Kierkegaard's Pastoral Dialogues' offers a way into this thinking that makes the dialogical element both explicit and attentive, relating Kierkegaard's dialogue with his reader to a contemporary pastoral context. A good book that presents, not learning about, but from Kierkegaard."

—Eberhard Harbsmeier, Professor, Aarhus University

"In these imaginative dialogues, Pattison and Jensen have captured the pith of Kierkegaard's thinking on matters of life and death. They have done so without bowdlerizing or oversimplifying the texts. It is an achievement in the art of communication that Kierkegaard himself would have smiled upon!"

—Gordon Marino, Director of Hong Kierkegaard Library, St. Olaf College

"Can Kierkegaard comfort the anguished—acknowledging wounds and also ways to staunch them—through reflection and also through posture and bearing? This book is an utter success in bringing Kierkegaard's 'Lilies of the Fields and Birds of the Air' into immediate resonance with believer and nonbeliever alike, addressing aching questions, not as aberrant, but as profoundly and touchingly human. It provides heartfelt pastoral dialogues on sorrow and delight that a reader will find transforming."

—Edward F. Mooney, Professor at Syracuse University

"This is a most welcome book, full of fresh and vibrant vistas on faith, prayer, virtue and Christian character. Pattison and Jensen's adaptation is richly complemented by essays from John Lippit, Simon Podmore, and John McLuckie, who provide helpful and illuminating reflections on Kierkegaard's extraordinary pastoral wisdom. This is an outstanding book that will both challenge and nourish all who study pastoral theology."

—Martyn Percy, Ripon College Cuddesdon

George Pattison is Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at the University of Oxford and has written extensively on Kierkegaard and modern religious thought. His most recent books are *Kierkegaard and the Theology of the Nineteenth Century* and *Kierkegaard and the Quest for Unambiguous Life*.

Helle Møller Jensen has a doctorate in Systematic Theology from the University of Aarhus. After eleven years of experience as a hospital chaplain, she is currently a parish priest in the Danish People's Church and is also a military chaplain to the Danish Royal Lifeguards.

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