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Christian Counseling as Mission

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Christian counseling has from its inception failed to think missiologically and as a result has been essentially ineffective as a distinctively Christian endeavor within the secular mental health culture. Remembering that Christianity is intrinsically missionary, recognizing the mental health establishment as a non-Christian culture with its own language and customs, and recovering a uniquely Christian Psychology sets the stage for greater impact for the Kingdom of God. The missiological concept of contextualization, examining the interface between Christian Counseling and the mental health culture, can be utilized as a tool to critique and to instruct current models of Christian Counseling.

"Christianity is missionary by its very nature, or it denies its very raison d'etre."
David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission, (1991, p. 9)

Most Christian counseling, as in the world of personal computers with Windows and Mac, has run one of two competing operating systems. The first and most popular, integrationism, basically cuts and pastes Christian principles with secular psychotherapies and packages itself within the secular mental health world: licensure, certification, clinics, agencies, and hospitals. In the same way that there are many Windows-compatible programs available in cyber-world, integrationism is remarkably compatible with many different counseling theories and methods. And like Windows, its security system is spotty so it is not infrequently compromised by the invasion of Trojan horse concepts and methodological viruses that corrupt its system.

The second and much less popular operating system, biblical counseling ("nouthetic" in early versions), takes the Bible as its primary (and in extreme versions, only) text and avoids both secular psychotherapies and the mental health licensing guilds and institutions. Like Mac devotees, biblical counselors are very comfortable in their own world and seem to care very little about interaction with or impact upon other systems. Also, like Apple aficionados, its users are die-hards, absolutely convinced that their system is superior, and they cannot understand why anyone would use anything else.

It is my contention that both of these "operating systems" suffer from interface problems which have impaired their Kingdom impact in the mental health culture.[1] I shall argue that Christian counseling has from its very inception failed to think missiologically, and that as a result, we have been essentially ineffective as Christians in the mental health culture.

Entailed in this proposal is a view of the mental health system as a distinct culture within the City of Man in America. It is, like all cultures, characterized by unique customs and practices, a common language (with various dialects), and a dominant worldview. This worldview includes particular categories and concepts and excludes others, with characteristically modern plausibility structures, methodologies, meta-narratives, and mini-narratives. It is composed of leaders and followers, producers and consumers, like-minded citizens who co-operate by means of an overt or covert consensus, with both written and unwritten rules.

This particular sub-culture is also distinctively secular. Its practitioners and their concepts, methods, and social structures are notoriously, and sometimes self-consciously, nonreligious, at least from their perspective. Early founders of this subculture, such as Freud and Jung, and many who have followed them, have been acutely aware that their developing profession was competing with and displacing pastors and churches in the understanding and care of the human soul.[2] I am proposing that there is good reason from our perspective as Christians to view this mental health subculture as a mission field, or at least as a kind of un-reached people group. I am presupposing that Christianity is "missionary by its very nature" and am contending that our failures to recognize the mental health subculture as pervasively non-Christian, and desperately in need of the Gospel of God, have impaired our impact in that field.

The Mental Health Profession: A Culture in Transition

Oddly, this mental health profession, in spite of its original intent to understand and cure the soul, psyche, or mind, began abandoning its birthright in the 1960's through an externally oriented, mindless behaviorism, continued this abandonment process with the amoral cognitive psychology of the 1970's

(stemming in part from subhuman information processing theories of computer science), and finally left behind any remaining vestiges of the soul in the last two decades of the 20th Century when biological psychiatry and managed care companies urged us all to "listen to Prozac." [3]

This disenchantment of psychology has not lasted, however. It should be no surprise that in the 21st Century the mental health professions, having abandoned the soul and quite literally lost its mind, began looking for it again. Postmodern turns in philosophy and pluralistic developments in culture have provided the context for a re-valuing of the soul and spirit. Religion and spirituality are now recognized by both APAs (the American Psychological and the American Psychiatric Associations) as legitimate fields of investigation (i.e., the psychology of religion) and as a palliative for sick souls and societies [cf. especially the research on the health effects of religious faith by Larson (1994, 2001) and Koenig (1997, 1999, 2001)].

"Spiritual" and religiously and morally loaded forms of psychotherapy (Buddhist, Hindu, feminist, gay-affirmative, transpersonal, and new age) exist alongside all the other "scientific" therapeutic offerings. Increasingly, Christian counseling is no longer the merely tolerated stepchild, but instead is often allowed to have a place in the new mental health family.

It is even becoming more common for the preferred providers lists of health insurers to include a category for Christian Counselors. Early entrants in this re-enchantment of the mental health subculture could be seen in the late 20th Century in the inclusion of 12 Step AA/recovery programs and Christian mental health clinics and hospital programs like New Life, Minirth-Meier, and Rapha.

In other words, the mental health field is no longer a closed country, but instead has begun to open the door, recasting itself as tolerant and inclusive of all religions and moralities. Increasingly, therapists, doctors, and patients no longer have to check their gods at the door before entering. I recently met with the Licensed Professional Counselors board member in my state who oversees educational requirements to consider the possibilities of developing a license-eligible track for students at the seminary in which I teach. I was sure we could meet their course requirements, but wary about the willingness of the licensing board to accept our degree, since it is an M.A. in "Biblical Counseling." To my surprise, he responded to my question about our degree designation without hesitation, "No problem. We've accepted stranger degrees."

Of course, we must continue to expect that the Cross will still be offensive; we will see uniquely post-modern versions of intolerance and exclusiveness, with attempts to censure Christian perspectives with spurious labels like "oppressive," "intolerant," "violent," or "totalizing." Nonetheless, it is a new day, and one that calls us to re-evaluate both the field and ourselves. I contend in this paper that evangelical missiologists provide some insights that are crucial for this task of reevaluation and redeployment.

The Mission: The Subversion and Redemption of Secular Psychology

Up to this point, most Christian counseling has been both modern and correlationist in its methodology: modern in that it has granted science functional parity with theistic revelation, and correlationist in that it has parroted secular methodologies and institutions. Correlatively, pragmatism has dominated our efforts as Christian counselors, which of course is not all bad. As a consequence, however, our attention to the practical elements in counseling has superseded our theoretical and conceptual development. As a result of a confluence of these and surely other factors, the presumed distinctiveness of a Christian psychology is not well developed. Contemplate for a moment how different you might expect a psychology to be wherein the guiding meta-narrative:

1. Claims that the human psyche/soul was originally created to be ruled and loved by a Good King with unlimited power who in his perfect wisdom also created and governs everything else in the universe.
2. Claims that the Good King created these embodied souls to worship, serve, love, and follow him and that He even made them like himself so that they could do this meaningfully and freely.
3. Claims that these souls which were designed for love and loyalty to their King, instead betrayed and rebelled against Him. This brazen rebelliousness was contagious and became a family trait, so that every person since suffers from this contrarian disease, a soul psychosis so pathological that schizophrenia pales in comparison.
4. Asserts that the only lasting cure for this epidemic comes from the Good King himself, who for love and glory sent his Son to live with the diseased on their terms, and then transferred the deadly virus to him. The Good King's Son, after appearing to have been terminated by the disease, rises from death and reigns, inaugurating a process by which he actually reverses and eventually cures the disease.
5. That then proclaims this cure is available, free of charge, to "whosoever will" simply acknowledge

that they are in fact hopelessly sick and then trust and follow the Good King.

This peculiarly Christian narrative subverts the foundational narratives and metaphysical, epistemological, and anthropological presuppositions of the secular psychologies, rather than offering up junior versions of their non-Christian systems. This strange narrative confronts the defensive denial of spiritual realities, so prominent in the regnant psychotherapies, with a divine diagnosis (of both their systems and their patients) and cure for souls. From the perspective of our definitive narrative, the secular psychotherapies are desperately in need of repentance and redemption, not because they are all wrong but because they are fundamentally wrong about the most important things.

Our goal should not be simply to obtain a seat at the psychological table, but instead to invite those who dine in the Mental Health Café to a banquet dinner with fare beyond their wildest dreams: a Chef that offers living bread and living water and even life beyond this one. Would not a retooling of C. S. Lewis' (1980) inimitable challenge in The Weight of Glory be apropos? "We are half-hearted counselors, fooling about with Freud and Rogers and Beck when infinite joy is offered us by Another Counselor, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased" (modified from Lewis, 1980, pp. 3-4).

If the Christian faith is intrinsically a missionary movement and the prevailing mental health establishment is part of what the New Testament calls "the world" or "this present evil age" (Galatians 1:4), then failures in this dimension – at the interface between a Christian psychology and the mental health culture - are central and not incidental. Wells (2006) asserts that "theology, if it is true to its own nature, must be missiological in its intent" (p. 9). I am proposing that Christian counseling if it is true to its own nature must be missiological in its intent, or it denies its very essence, its raison d'etre.

Contextualization: In the World but Not of It

Contextualization is a missiological concept that helpfully describes both the pathogens that have impaired our impact as Christian psychologists and counselors and also commends a cure for them. Missiologists such as Hesselgrave (1991), Hiebert (1994), and Kraft (1979, 1983) have been discussing contextualization for three decades. Simply stated, contexualization is the apprehension and the effective communication of the legitimate implications of the gospel (broadly understood as God's Word in Christ and the Scriptures) for a given situation. Hesselgrave and Rommen (2000) point out that "Christian contextualization can be thought of as the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, Word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teachings of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts" (p. 200, italics added,).

Contextualization is a fruitful concept that has New Testament roots. In Acts 17:16ff, Luke describes how St. Paul engages the Athenians in the public square on their turf and in their terms. He winsomely commends the Athenians for their religiosity and even quotes their philosophers and poets as cobelligerents in his polemical appeal. Early on, Paul is more concerned with establishing a point of contact and gaining a hearing than challenging their idolatry, which he inoffensively reframes as "objects of worship." But he does not stop there. He finds another conceptual bridge in their altar to the unknown theos, whereby he both challenges their false beliefs and at the same time offers genuine fulfillment for the desires of their heart. Paul's method of contextualization begins with a "Yes" to their intractable impulse to worship, which he links to God's creational design, but ends with a clear "No" as he confronts their ignorance and pleads with them to repent of their misdirected, vacuous worship. Paul proclaims both the "No" and the "Yes" of the Gospel.

Saint John the evangelist employs a similar strategy in the beginning of his gospel where he lifts the impersonal philosophical (and religious) term "logos" out of the Greek culture of his hearers and then reframes and redefines it in distinctively personal, Christ-centered terms. John strategically co-opts both their terminology and desire for reason/logic/truth and redeploys them to teach that Christ is the Truth and the Way and the Life. He says "Yes" to their God-given desire for understanding and order, but "No" to their impersonal and Christ-less definition.

Newbigin's (1986) model for communication follows a similar pattern:

1) The communication has to be in the language of the receptor culture. It has to be such that it accepts, at least provisionally, the way of understanding things that is embodied in that language; if it does not do so, it will simply be an unmeaning sound that cannot change anything.
2) However, if it is truly the communication of the gospel, it will call radically into question that

way of understanding embodied in the language it uses. If it is truly revelation, it will involve contradiction, and call for conversion, for a radical metanoia, a U-turn of the mind.

3) Finally, this radical conversion can never be the achievement of any human persuasion, however eloquent. It can only be the work of God. True conversion, therefore, which is the proper end toward which the communication of the gospel looks, can only be a work of God, a kind of miracle – not natural but supernatural. (Newbigin, 1986, pp. 5-6)

Bosch(1991), another missiologist, also wrote about the reinterpretation of life in uniquely Christian terms, "Christians [and I would assert Christian Counselors] find their true identity when they are involved in mission, in communicating to others a new way of life, a new interpretation of reality and of God, and in committing themselves to the liberation and salvation of others. A missionary community is one that understands itself as being both different from and committed to its environment; it exists within its context in a way which is both winsome and challenging" (p. 83).

So, Christian psychologists on mission must "learn the language of the receptor culture" and then seek a distinctively Christian engagement with the mental health profession, and its academy and institutions in a way that is both winsome and challenging, since it is our aim to communicate a new way of life, a new interpretation of reality. Let us no longer allow the prevailing secular paradigms (whether psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioral, family systems, or whatever) to provide the primary cues or structures for our own paradigm. Of course, we should for the glory of God acknowledge His common grace that sometimes shines through these systems, but finally we must persuade them with the truth and beauty and hope of the gospel of a full-orbed Christian perspective. But let us not forget the profoundly spiritual nature of this task as we pray that eyes would be opened to see the glory that shines only in the face of a psychology that delights in our Good King, the Creator and Redeemer of souls.

The Risks of Contextualization

We must be aware, however, as perceptive missionaries traversing cultural boundaries, that contextualization is not a risk-free process. Another benefit of the missiological concept of contextualization is that it alerts us to two types of pathology that can infect the interface between faith and culture, and in our case between the Faith's psychology and the diverse array of other psychologies extant in the mental health culture.

The first type of pathogen is over-contextualization, which is essentially syncretism, and is found most frequently in naïve or weak forms of integrationism. Bavinck's (1960) description of accommodation on a mission field describes this virus well:

It points to an adaptation to customs and practices essentially foreign to the gospel. Such an adaptation can scarcely lead to anything other than a syncretistic entity, a conglomeration of customs that can never form an essential unity. "Accommodation" connotes something of a denial, of a mutilation… The Christian life does not accommodate or adapt itself to heathen forms of life, but it takes the latter in possession and thereby makes them new. (Bavinck, 1960, p. 179)

Noll and Wells (1988) also describe the risks inherent within the process of building bridges between cultures via contextualization:

This interpretive journey from Word to world is fraught with peril even as it is ripe with potential. Bridges built between God's Word and our world are susceptible of carrying traffic in both directions… most of the traffic has been moving in the wrong direction. Twentieth-century people have allowed the cognitive constraints and the psychological conventions of our own day to limit what the Bible may say. This reverses the proper situation. It is the Bible that deserves to prescribe the cognitive horizon for the twentieth century, just as it has been for every century. Much more than the Bible, it is the twentieth century that needs to be demythologized. (pp. 15-16)

The concept of over-contextualization invites us to challenge ourselves, asking if we have assimilated secular theories and methods and accommodated to the secular mental health system to the point that our psychology and counsel has lost its missional, even prophetic edge. Do we understand our vocation, both with patients and the profession, as mission? Are we disseminating more than common grace? Is the Word of God normative and is the Son of God transformative in our counsel? If not, it is likely that we suffer from an over-contextualization virus.

Biblical counseling, particularly in its more traditional or nouthetic variants, carries a second and opposite type of pathogenic risk: under-contextualization. Biblical counselors have been developing distinctively biblical concepts and methods for thirty-five years, but many are decisively "Amish" in their attitudes toward the mental health world and "secular" research. These counselors view any form of cooperation with the mental health establishment as worldly capitulation and ungodly compromise. As a result, meaningful and persuasive interaction is next to nil, and the bits of interaction that do occur

are often characterized by poorly informed critique or condemning dismissal of those whom they view as mere opponents. For these biblical counselors, the secular mental health establishment is a closed country, and unfortunately one that they would just as soon not take the risk of entering. While many integrationist mental health professionals water down their message and methods to the point that they are functionally secular, some biblical counselors tend to retreat and keep their message and methods to themselves. Traditional biblical counselors rarely leave their church and parachurch ministries and are not given a hearing when they do because they speak a language that is more bitter than sweet. The Gospel falls on deaf ears because they fail to contextualize their message in ways that seem conceptually relevant and demonstratively compassionate. As a result, their good news - a practical biblical model of counseling that could be quite useful - is never heard.[4]

What has been absent from both of these operating systems is a missional mindset that drives and informs redemptive engagement, and yet steers clear of avoidant separatism at one extreme, and accommodating syncretism at the other.

To summarize, contextualization is simply the effort to faithfully proclaim and apply Christian concepts and practices to everybody everywhere and in everything. Paraphrasing Kuyper (1998), there is not one square inch of this planet to which the Lord Christ does not say, "Mine." Contextualization is a working out of this notion that the Truth of God is redemptive, as He reclaims and renews everything: purifying that which has been corrupted by sin at all levels - universal (conceptual models and systems, philosophies and psychologies) and particular (real lives and particular problems). Contextualization applied to counseling then would be this process of saying "Yes" and "No" to secular psychology at each level of their model(s):

1. Conceptual, theoretical framework
2. Methods and practices
3. Socio-cultural, institutional delivery system

Let us consider two examples of contextualization. The first begins at level one, the conceptual and theoretical framework, but also carries consequences at level two, clearly affecting counseling methods and practices. Our second example of contextualization will address level three, the socio-culturally embedded delivery system for the practice of counseling. Our contextualizing mission begins with a provisional acceptance of a couple of the primary landmarks found within the mental health landscape: the concept of mental disorder and the institution of professional licensure/certification. We will start with "Yes" and then proceed to "No" and then outline a redemptive contextualization which subverts and converts their concept, practice, and system.

Deconstruction and Reconstruction of "Mental Disorder"

It goes without saying that the purpose of psychotherapy and counseling is to help individuals suffering from mental disorders. That is the custom in our age; if your life is broken and you do not know how to fix it, we have designated experts who have developed a nosological system (a language, in other words) to diagnose the problem. And then, based upon their categorization and conceptualization of your problem, these experts have been trained in logically related methods and procedures to provide a cure for your problem. This is the custom in our culture, and it is embedded in a particular worldview and conveyed by a particular meta-narrative and a unique language. However, missional-minded counselors would remain aware that the language for describing mental disorders is a product of a particular culture with a particular philosophy of life and a particular view about the nature of persons and their problems. Learning the language of mental disorders is not unlike learning the language of another culture. Every language has its strengths and weaknesses, pays attention to some data and ignores others, and in an important sense does not just describe reality but also defines it.

We can easily say "yes" to the observations of psychologists and psychiatrists that people are disordered. There seems to be something wrong with many of us at the level of thought, behavior, emotion, and relationship. Who would argue that people, some more than others, are mentally disordered? Of course, how you help people with these disorders is a direct function of how you understand what is meant by the concept of "mental disorder." This is where the rub lies. In this case, the linguistic questions are the most important: what do they/we mean by "mental," and what do they/we mean by "disorder." Words, especially key words for critical concepts, always carry worldview freight. As a result, careful definition and interpretation is crucial when aiming to interact redemptively with the language of mental disorder, a key concept in the mental health culture.

Dutch missiologist Visser 't Hooft (1967) describes a related process on the mission field in a foreign culture:

> Key-words … when taken over by the Christian Church are like displaced persons, uprooted and unassimilated until they are naturalized. What is needed is to re-interpret the traditional

> concepts, to set them in a new context, to fill them with biblical content…. Words from the traditional culture and religion must be used, but they must be converted in the way in which Paul and John converted Greek philosophical and religious concepts (p. 13).

Johnson (2007) discusses the importance of translating worldview loaded concepts from a "foreign" psychological community which has its own distinct literature and language:

> These literatures may be different enough from each other that we could liken them to two different languages. [Later in this chapter Johnson avers that in some domains, "dialects" may be a more appropriate analogical term, especially where worldview has less impact such as in neuropsychology and memory and types of intelligence.] If that is so, the concept of integration may not be the best metaphor for the task facing the Christian soul care community with reference to modern psychology literature, but translation… =the translation metaphor offers a different, and possibly a more profitable way of conceiving of the Christian psychological community's interpretive task, than the modern understanding of integration. Integration seems to imply that the task is relatively unproblematic; the texts of modern psychology and Christian theology are all equally true; Christians simply need to read and put together the truth, like the pieces of a puzzle. Translation, on the other hand, better conveys that there is a problem here (pp. 227-228).

Deconstruction

Indeed, a careful examination of the concept of "mental disorder" in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) does reveal that "there is a problem here." The definition of this term in the introduction to the DSM-IV-TR (2000) is essentially an apology:

> The term mental disorder unfortunately implies a distinction between 'mental' disorders and 'physical' disorders that is a reductionistic anachronism of mind/body dualism [italics added]…The problem raised by the term 'mental' disorders has been much clearer than its solution, and, unfortunately, the term persists in the title of DSM-IV because we have not found an appropriate substitute (p. xxx).

In other words, the term "mental" is embarrassing to the authors of the DSM - IV because it implies (if not denotes!) immaterial, spiritual, and psychical substances, a product of a dualistic worldview which does not comport well with their monistic, naturalistic, biologically reductionistic view. What a naturalistic monist means by "mental" and what a Christian dualist means by "mental" are categorically different, and far from inconsequential. We are not talking about the same things.

Another obvious question is how do they/we define "disorder"? It should go without saying that the critical starting point for understanding a disorder is apprehending the proper order. What is a properly ordered mind/soul? Secular definitions of "mental disorder" are self-consciously atheistic and amoral, as if the mind is a God-free zone. There is an intentional avoidance of moral and spiritual appraisal. The secular criteria for abnormal or disordered behavior are merely biological, social, or statistical - because they refuse to acknowledge the Divine order and Orderer. Spiritual and moral "data" are ruled out, a priori, as potentially meaningful in the description of mental disorders.

Let me give an example which illustrates how a Christian perspective on "mental" and "disorder" might impact diagnosis and treatment. Suppose twin brothers, Paulo and Pedro Pagan, lose their younger brother Daniel after he drank too much one night and while driving home in his pickup ran off the road and into a tree. Paulo responds to his brother's tragic death with shock and then an existential crisis. His brother's death hits him like a rubber mallet between the eyes. He stands beside Daniel's casket before his burial, views the lifeless body and thinks, "That could be me." Paulo begins to ponder questions about life and death that he had previously avoided. He realizes that someday he will die just like Daniel and wonders about both Daniel's and his own destiny. Is there really a God? If so, am I ready to stand before him? Is this heaven and hell stuff true? He begins waking up at night, worried and anxious. He tries to reassure himself that all is well; there is no reason to worry. However, his fears continue to nag him, and he is unable to repress the mounting anxiety precipitated by Daniel's death. One week later while driving home after work, he has a panic attack. He thinks he is having a heart attack and heads for the emergency room, where he is examined and diagnosed with panic disorder.

Pedro, on the other hand, seems to take his brother's death in stride. No existential crisis for Pedro. After a brief period of shock and mourning, he tells himself that all is well - no problem, you live, you die. He stands before his brother's casket, views Daniel's dead body with sadness, but no anxiety. He thinks, "No heaven. No hell. Don't worry. Be happy." He experiences very little fear and when he does he quells it quickly with various forms of false assurance.

Here is the diagnostic question. If God is real and the Bible is true, and Pedro and Paulo are in fact pagan, which one is disordered? Is not Pedro's lack of fear way out of order? Is not Paulo's anxiety and panic a God-given red light on his emotional dashboard warning him that he has sinned and falls short of the glory of God and that someday he will face that Lord of glory naked, without the protective covering of the robe of Christ? And if this is true would not panic, even terror, be appropriate? Is not Paulo's anxiety the grace of God speaking words of truth?

Here is the treatment question. Would you have helped Paulo if you had merely medicated him or taught him to reduce his anxiety with a cognitive-behavioral counseling regimen? Or would you have just helped him put out a warning light and failed to address the sickness in his soul that was producing a very meaningful danger signal? If emotions are isolated from the "one with whom we have to do," they are inevitably misinterpreted, often misdiagnosed, and sometimes reflexively medicated or otherwise falsely assuaged.

If our emotions do not exist in a God-free zone but instead always occur before the One with whom we all have to do, is not Pedro out of touch with reality and his lack of fear an affective disorder of psychotic proportions? What kind of "treatment" would you recommend for Pedro? Does he not need "help"? Should he be "counseled"?

Reconstruction

Emotions, theorists tell us, are a product of our cognitive appraisals, our concerns and our beliefs – in other words our interpretations of reality form the web out of which we construct our complex of affect and feeling (Arnold, 1960; Lazarus, 1991; Roberts, 2003). While it does seem that our bodies and brains are wired for a set of primary emotions, these visceral responses are shaped by our construal of reality, our worldview - right and wrong, order and disorder, God or no God, heaven and hell, gospel or no gospel.

A Christian psychology re-situates and reconfigures emotions and mental disorders within a divine perspective that changes everything. A Christian psychology says "yes" to the obvious: something is desperately wrong with us. However, a Christian reconstruction of the concept of mental disorders begins by bringing every one of us to our knees. The Bible provides a shocking diagnosis: we are all disordered! The God described in Scripture is an equal opportunity diagnostician, declaring everybody everywhere with a terminal spiritual and moral disease. "Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live," (Ecclesiastes 9:3, NKJV). The biblical account tells us that all creation, including both body and soul, has been infected with a contagious, and terminal psychosomatic virus called sin. Before this Holy and Loving God, every soul is declared insane.

A Christian psychology also says "yes" to the immaterial, unseen reality of the mind, soul, and psyche. In a sense the authors of the DSM-IV are right; we are "anachronistic." We believe that the Ancient of Days has indeed set eternity into the hearts of men (Ecclesiastes 3:11, NKJV). It is here that we are made like him, in his image, but also made for him and are accountable to him. We can acknowledge the possibility that some of our problems may be physiological – all creation has been infected by the sin virus. But, regardless of the relative degree of health or sickness in our bodies, the Bible says that it is our hearts that are the source of our insanities. The body may be sick or diseased, but our hearts are the fountainhead out of which flow all things "mental" - actions, words, thoughts, intentions, beliefs, attitudes, affects, desires, emotions, and delights. A diseased body may cause us to suffer, but it does not make us sin. The Biblical witness, especially in the writings of St. Paul, is that there is something wrong with our minds. They are infected with this contagion that the Bible calls sin. People and patients do not make sense, at least not in any way that is remotely Christian, apart from a proper understanding of this mental disease that the Bible calls sin.

We see in the Pedro and Paulo vignette that a distinctively Christian conceptualization of mental disorders subverts and redeems the secular conceptualization because it is shaped by a distinctively Christian understanding of human reality as pervasively spiritual and moral. As a consequence, how we understand "help" or good counsel or even who needs counseling is radically reconfigured. The view of mental disorders and psychotherapy within the Kingdom of God deconstructs and reconstructs the modern mental health perspective.

A Missiological Reconstrual of Mental Health Licensure

Let us consider another instance of redemptive contextualization: a re-conceptualization of state licensure or certification wherein we examine the possibility of reframing these professional processes as missionary platforms for Christian counseling – a kind of visa on the one hand that grants access, permitting the psychologist or counselor to enter and travel in the mental health world, and on the other, a kind of union card that legitimizes one's work and

right to be heard and to be engaged in meaningful discourse. Let us begin with a Christian deconstruction of the state-sanctioned social delivery system for the care of souls and then consider a reconstruction – a missiological rationale for participation in professional board jurisdiction over soul care in the public sector. In this process we will see the benefits and liabilities of participating in soul care under this modern and secular rubric of licensure.

Deconstruction

Who should sanction and regulate distinctively Christian counseling, the training rites for and the actual practice of soul care? To which institution, the church or the state, should jurisdiction belong for psychology and psychotherapy? Is secular "ordination" really necessary for diagnosing and counseling sick souls, or is it only permissible and tolerated as a legitimate means to Kingdom ends (not unlike Luther's perspective on the relationship between marriage and the state)? Finally, and less optimistically, to what extent is licensure a pagan institutionalization of secular pastoral workers (Freud, 1927), playing the role of priest and theologian (Jung, 1933), thus fulfilling a definitively religious function? The answers to these questions depend upon your view of counseling, of mission, and your understanding of the proper relationship between gospel and culture.

A good place to start is simply to recognize that the regnant American mental health system was not created ex nihilo. There is a logical and sequential flow from a particular culture's psychological (1) concepts and theories which give rise to (2) an emphasis on particular methods and practices which then eventuate in the development of (3) uniquely congruent social structures and institutions for the implementation of its concepts and the delivery of its practices. State licensing and certifying boards are not givens of the natural order (Powlison, 2001). They are jurisdictional entities situated within a particular culture in which a modern, secular, empirical model of psychology reigns and embodies its methods, practices, and players. It has not always been this way, and it is not this way everywhere. Licensure of persons who choose a vocation devoted to understanding and caring for souls is a mid to late 20th Century development in the not so wild, wild West.

To call licensure modern, secular, empiricist, or pagan is not to say that it is all bad. We need not negate the common graces that flow through this human delivery system. However, even though God has ordained culture, insofar as it is secular and pagan, he has not ordered it (Hesselgrave, 1981). His common grace is evident in this mental health culture, but His special grace is essential to re-order it for His greater glory. More succinctly, licensure and certification, just like democracy and capitalism, are not all bad, but they are in desperate need of redemption.

The missiologist J. H. Bavinck (1960) describes non-Christian cultural customs and practices and the intended effects of redemption upon them:

The Christian life takes them in hand and turns them in an entirely different direction…Even though in external form there is much that resembles past practices, in reality everything has become new, the old has in essence passed away and the new has come. Christ takes the life of a people in his hands, he renews and re-establishes the distorted and deteriorated, he fills each thing, each word, and each practice with a new meaning and gives it a new direction. (p. 179)

Reconstruction

Commenting on Christian mental health work in the secular city, Powlison (2000, 2001), editor of the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, cautiously admits, "It is not necessarily wrong for Christians to work within the secular mental health system if they can do so without being forced to communicate false ideas, diagnostically and prescriptively, to those they counsel. Sometimes in God's common grace Christians are given great freedom within an ostensibly secular setting (Powlison 2001, p. 55). He also argues, "No evangelical should object if the guiding intention of evangelical psychologists were to infiltrate the secular mental health system (Powlison 2000, p. 145).

In fact that is precisely what I am proposing - an infiltration, a benevolent invasion of the secular mental health establishment for the Glory of God and the good of men. Invasion and infiltration – aggressive mission terminology – simply acknowledge the ambivalent spiritual realities and the revolutionary nature of the task. Licensure grants us status as resident aliens in the City of Man, but let us never forget that we are above all else agents in God's worldwide, unstoppable redemptive revolution. An army of intentionally and radically Christian psychologists should turn the mental health world upside down because it would announce the arrival of another King.

In this scheme, licensure or certification would simply be one part of faithful and relevant contextualization of Christian Psychology in the public square. Participants would continually remind themselves that they are ambassadors, representing and requiring the empowerment of Another. They would remain cognizant that their primary citizenship is in the City of God, and that even though they have been granted a "visa" and "union card" for

the City of Man, they are strangers and aliens living in the allegedly secular city. They would realize that their legitimacy before God to minister to souls requires no sanction from the state, but also would seek this sanction with a Pauline motive - becoming all things to all people so that some might be saved (understanding salvation in comprehensive, holistic terms). They would be aware that this world is in fact God's stage for redemption and take seriously the charge to be in the world, but also not of the world. They would understand the ongoing temptation toward syncretism, remaining mindful of Paul's admonition to be careful to avoid being taken captive by "persuasive" and "plausible" but empty philosophies that do not acknowledge the treasures of wisdom and knowledge found only in Christ (Colossians 2:3-8, 23). They would understand how to avoid falling in love with the world and the things in it (1 John 2: 15), but at the same time be a friend of sinners (Matthew 9:10-13, 11:19). Rather than seeing licensure or certification as granting bona fide Coram Deo affirmation and validation, they would see it as a legitimate means to partner with God in the Missio Dei, just as Paul did in terms of his public status with respect to the law in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

A Christian reconstruction/redemption of state licensure/certification could also be funded by the concept of a missionary platform. A good starting point in understanding a platform is with the plain meaning of the term: a platform is something you stand on. For modern foreign missionaries, their platform would include their missionary visa, missionary identity, and the work of a missionary. As missionaries began knocking on the doors of "closed countries," however, they found that they were not permitted to enter as missionaries, nor to do the work of a missionary, as it had been previously conceptualized. They began to examine other venues by which they might be allowed to legitimately enter and work within these restricted countries (Rankin, 2006). Paul's adage, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22 NKJV), sanctioned and provided impetus for this new wineskin, that missiologists refer to as a "creative access platform" (Barnett, 2005).

Just in case some of you are starting to feel uneasy ethically, let me note that platforms must be honest and legitimate endeavors. Missionaries must do what they claim to do. Legally and economically, they must play by the rules of the relevant governing bodies, and yet not compromise their biblical principles and ethics. This means that for psychologists and counselors who choose this vocational road to contextualization, their platform (licensure or certification) must be legitimate and not inherently wicked, just as platforms for missionaries in closed countries must be valid and ethical, a potential vehicle of God's common grace. State licensure and laws, board regulations, and professional ethical codes must not compromise a psychologist's or a counselor's Christian commitments. It also means that they must avoid deceptive "the end justifies any means" motives and crass "bait and switch" strategies.

In addition, the missional counselor should have a genuine sense of calling and gifting as a counselor, along with the relevant training, in the same way that medical missionaries must have the relevant calling, education, and training as a nurse or physician. Barnett's (2005) comments in The Changing Face of World Missions are helpful here. He contends that:

> God provides each believer with a platform from which to serve him and to communicate the gospel. Platforms are a product of God's calling, equipping, and gifting. They provide a legitimate reason and right for sharing the faith among the nations. They are not a cover for covert activities but a basis for living among, interacting with, and communicating the gospel to those around us (p. 211). ...If you are going to hide your purpose of witnessing from the one to whom you were sent by God to be a witness, you will fail in your mission…A missionary who hides her witness is not a missionary (p. 225).

Barnett summarizes the motives for a platform as: accessibility, legitimacy, identity, strategic viability, and integrity. Licensure or certification as a mental health professional does indeed provide access to and legitimize one's presence in an array of settings: hospitals, residential treatment centers, community mental health centers, hospice and nursing homes, etc. It provides a recognized and well-reputed identity that lends integrity to our particular views and voices.

Summary

I hastily note, particularly in view of the deconstructive critique above, that there is an important difference between choosing to teach English or guide tours as one's platform and choosing to be a licensed clinical psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor. That difference is the pervasive and ever-present, albeit often unrecognized, moral and spiritual nature of mental health work. We are not simply teaching second languages or pointing out tourist sites, but diagnosing and mending human minds, teaching people a language to describe themselves and their problems, and pointing out a path for redemption. In other words, choosing counsel-

ing as one's vocation is much more essentially missiological because of the very nature of the work: the care and cure of the human soul.

And, like missions work in foreign cultures, "secular" mental health work brings special opportunities but also poses unique risks. Powlison (2001) elucidates these as follows:

Christians must realize that when they are barred from mentioning sin and Christ, they can only describe problems, but they cannot accurately diagnose them; they can only suggest the outward shell of solutions, but they cannot get to the deep issues that plague the heart. Christians in such settings are still free to know people, to love them and to provide various outward mercies, but they are limited to being relatively superficial and moralistic in the content of their counsel. Unfortunately, in my observation, well-meaning Christians in mental health settings typically are far more profoundly socialized and enculturated than they realize. They fail to recognize that they are working in a radioactive zone, and they absorb faulty diagnostic, explanatory, and treatment models without knowing that they have done so. (p. 55)

Radioactive, yes. Deadly, no. There are risks, but they are not necessarily fatal.

An option that we do not have, in my view and in view of the Missio Dei and the Great Commission, is not to go. We are not just permitted or allowed to go. We have already been both chosen and commissioned to go. How on earth could we keep distinctively Christian care and cure for souls to ourselves by means of either syncretistic over-contextualization or callous under-contextualization? Is there any other truth that can set people free? Does not the love of Christ compel us to go? Did He not die for all so that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who for their sake died and was raised (2 Corinthians 5.14-15)?

Who will go? Who will effectively proclaim the gospel of Christ-exalting biblically faithful counseling in psychiatric hospitals, correctional institutions, residential treatment centers, day treatment centers, group homes, nursing homes, hospices, community based agencies, and mental health centers? Missiologist Hesselgrave (1995) answers:

> Effectiveness is primarily a matter of contextualizing or shaping the Gospel message to make it meaningful and compelling to the respondents in their cultural and existential situation. *Both the decontextualization and the recontextualization tasks are best accomplished by persons who are "expert" in the cultures and languages involved, who understand cultural dynamics, and who ideally are themselves bicultural* (italics added, p. 119).

The remedy I have suggested for our operating system viruses, contextualization, entails becoming bicultural. No small task. But ours is a holy task, a divinely empowered vector rooted in the mission of God himself, who sent the Son, who sends us to counsel Christianly. Christian Counseling must be missionary by its very nature, or it denies its raison d'etre.

Notes

1. For polemical purposes, I have chosen to paint in broad strokes. Surely, there is a spectrum within each of these counseling models/operating systems and between them as well. Johnson (2007) does a good job of delineating two types of integrationism – weak and strong – and two types of biblical counseling – traditional and progressive.
2. Freud (1927) argued, "The words 'secular pastoral worker' might well serve as a general formula for describing the function which the analyst, whether he is a doctor or a layman, has to perform in his relation to the public" (p. 93). Jung (1933) also claimed, "Patients force the psychotherapist into the role of a priest, and expect and demand of him that he shall free them from their distress. That is why we psychotherapists must occupy ourselves with problems which, strictly speaking, belong to the theologian." (p. 241).
3. See Robinson (1995) for further elucidation and critique of the behavioral and biological takeover of modern psychology.
4. It is only fair to note that many non- "biblical counselors" have never read past Jay Adams' early writings in the 70's. While Adams' thought was seminal, the works of Powlison (2003), Welch (1998), Tripp (2002), and other faculty at the Christian Counseling and Education Foundation (CCEF) has extended, nuanced, and sweetened the biblical counseling movement. In addition, Adams' work targeted pastors, while the audience of CCEF is much broader.

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Commentaries on Sam R. Williams' "Christian Counseling as Mission"

***Edification** aspires to be a publication that encourages edifying dialogues on issues of potential interest to the community of Christian psychologists. One attempt to promote that goal focuses on giving commentators the opportunity to respond to an introductory discussion article. In this issue, commentators responded to the discussion article of Sam R. Williams, who then reacts to their commentaries in the next article.*

Christian Counseling as Mission: Reflections from a Missionary Integrationist

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I began reading Sam Williams' article with much anticipation and embraced the invitation to respond to it since the concept of counseling as mission is one that has become personally and professionally meaningful and foundational in my ministry over the past several years. Entering into the article and reflecting on my response, my initial enthusiasm waned after realizing that the direction Williams takes, and my own work in the area of counseling as mission, lead to somewhat different emphases.

From the outset, I entirely agree with Williams' call and challenge to reflect on and put into action a missiological perspective of Christian counseling. This is what the Christian counseling movement as a whole desperately needs. The impetus to link our efforts to a missional perspective parallels much of what is happening in other professions, for example, the medical missions field and even the business field (see www.businessasmission.org).

Despite the promises of modernism and technology, in a world of unprecedented pain and suffering, Christians in all vocations must heed the Great Commission in more passionate, creative, and collaborative ways. As a "missionary kid" and a cross-cultural missionary, this perspective is ingrained deeply in my own vocational endeavors. I applaud any effort that links my chosen profession (counseling and counselor training) to the global call to minister to those who are suffering in many ways and need Christ's forgiveness, redemption, and new life. In line with my particular vocation as a counseling educator, I am excited about the initiatives I have been a part of, along with Gary Collins and Brad Smith, in developing international networks of Christian counselors who all embrace the perspective of counseling as mission. These efforts are focused on developing a "counseling as mission" philosophy of ministry (see www.careandcounsel.org), and as a special interest group in cooperation with the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (www.lausanne.org/lausanne-connecting-point/2008-march.html#4).

In his article, Williams appears to take a narrower perspective of the concept of counseling as mission and applies it to the particular mission field of the secular mental health professions in the United States. Indeed, he is correct in that this is a mission field for any of us even vaguely familiar with the tensions and battles that have raged for over a century between church/theology/spirituality and psychology/sociology and their practical applications. With much of what Williams writes I am in agreement, but I admittedly read it as an integrationist. Williams claims that integrationists have failed in this effort and neither see the secular mental health community as a mission field filled with unchristian worldviews, theories, and techniques, nor have they approached the secular mental health field from the perspective and motivation of missions. However, for decades I have had on my shelf, the early integration books (e.g., Collins, 1977; Cosgrove, 1979; Vitz, 1977), that strongly challenged, from an integrationist perspective, the wholesale endorsement and uncritical acceptance of secular psychology. I disagree that there has been a "failure to recognize the mental health subculture as pervasively non-Christian" and I, my colleagues, and predecessors at Denver Seminary teach about such failures in our counseling program.

Despite earlier articles that explore the missiological dimensions of Christian counseling (e.g., Hesselgrave, 1987), Williams suggests that the Christian counseling as mission perspective is a unique contribution of the Christian Psychology (CP) perspective. In contrast, I see the mission perspective as equally applicable to the full range of biblical – integration perspectives. All of us, given that we affirm the authority of Scripture, and regardless of our position on the exact relationship of Scripture to psychology, must understand ourselves as Christians who are called to be salt and light in a lost, dark world, and seek to fulfill the Great Commission. A CP perspective is not a prerequisite for this mandate.

I agree with Williams that contextualization is central to the missionary call. I appreciate his open-

ness to entering the secular mental health culture and adopting the "language," as needed, in order to relate to and transform the culture. His references to the dangers of over- and under- contextualization are well-documented in the missiological literature. However, the tensions in this regard are extensive and deep. The red flag of syncretism haunts missionaries along with the threat of losing their funding from agencies and churches who do not understand the complexities of the culture and the cultural distance that so many people groups around the world experience when confronted with an American-packaged Gospel. Yet we have learned so much from anthropology, sociology, and missions research. The Gospel is what we need to share, not the cultural trappings with which we were raised.

I sense that CP, along with the traditional Biblical Counseling approach, fear the secular mental health culture and are worried that Christian counselors will lose themselves in that culture. This is understandable in that this "us versus them" perspective is deeply embedded in our evangelical heritage. But, my experience in the contemporary mission community reminds me that what Christ calls for is a radical contextualization, not a holding back in fear of contamination. Our model in this is Christ himself. The incarnation was not a one-foot-in – one-foot-out approach. It was a two-feet-in-the-world commitment to us. Hence Paul's radical statement to be all things to all people so that some may come to know Christ. Yes, Paul also states that we are to be in, but not of, the world, but I think by "in" he meant with both feet.

To support this understanding of contextualization, I, like Williams, will refer to contemporary mission examples. I take my position on this as parallel to some of the fascinating, and controversial, approaches to missions that are being developed and implemented in doing mission in closed access countries and with people groups who have been largely unresponsive to traditional mission methods (see Winter & Hawthorne, 1999; Travis & Travis, 2005). These approaches identify numerous "insider believer" movements within Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and animist cultures. While the theological issues are confusing and the concern regarding syncretism is significant, as Christian counselors these newer missiological methods may be able to teach us some important things about our position and relationships with secular mental health systems.

Williams uses the analogy of finding a "platform" from which to do mission to support his contention that Christians should carefully, and with integrity, become licensed and use the language of *DSM* when needed, in order to gain access to secular mental health systems. I appreciate this openness in contrast to some of the earlier condemnation of such efforts from Biblical Counseling advocates. However, Williams suggests a strategy of using one's platform in order to invade and infiltrate the secular mental health professions. The language of "invasion and infiltration" does not appear in the discussions I have had with missionaries doing creative, critical ministry in Muslim and Buddhist cultures.

My experience of missionaries who do ministry from a platform is that the platform is not just a strategy; it is the basis from which they incarnate themselves into the culture. It often requires language learning, lengthy cultural immersion, focused relationship building, and a radical willingness to leave their former identities and home culture to become a part of the host culture. This is a frightening process with many pitfalls. This is radical contextualization that moves beyond evangelism, crusades, literature distribution, and church planting to living in the culture, learning their way of life, their spirituality, their metaphors and stories, and adapting the Gospel from its first century context, and current predominantly Western worldview, to the host culture. The parallel to Christian counseling might be that Christians should not only become licensed and use the language of the *DSM*, but engage the system from within, as an insider, including the emphasis on evidence-based practice and other contemporary trends that have gained acceptance in secular psychology and counseling.

Contextualization as finding a platform, and contextualization as incarnation are different. I agree with Hill's (2007) and Worthington's (2007) responses to Johnson's (2007a) article on CP, that they are afraid that taking the position of CP will keep Christians from engaging the mainstream of psychology. From the sidelines, adopting a stance of challenge and correction ("invasion and infiltration"), Christians will limit their ability to help transform psychology, or at least have a voice, from within.

My biblical foundation for this is the story of Daniel. I was first introduced to this as a powerful example of integration by Beck (2006). It is very clear in the narrative that Daniel, in captivity, enters into the culture becoming the best of the Babylonians. After being trained for three years in Babylonian language and literature, Scripture states: "In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom" (Daniel 1:20).

Daniel and his friends maintain their faith in the one God, they pray and practice spiritual disci-

plines in their lives, and ultimately they take a stand which could have cost them their lives. However, up to the point where the core of his faith is challenged, Daniel would have been considered a Babylonian, a part of the culture, and ultimately it is from that position that he is able to impact the culture in radical ways. He was more than an ambassador, or a spy. Blomberg (2005) makes a similar point in his in-depth analysis of how Jesus entered into the homes and lives of sinners by eating with them, a cultural sign of significant intimacy and relationship.

The biblical models of mission are clear to me. There is no holding back, there is only such a profound and radical commitment to others and to God that at times there will be confusion about whether a person has defected to the other side, has lost his or her faith, or in the mental health field has become hopelessly compromised by secular beliefs (cf., the critiques leveled against some integrationists). But it is clear to me in Scripture that this is the risk we are called to make for the salvation of the world.

My concern about the missional focus of CP is perhaps best summed up in a quotation from Johnson (2007b). In a parable that concludes Johnson's response to those who commented on his 2007a article, he paints a picture of CP as a ship that has equal right to be on the ocean along with the ship of modern psychology, and other ships as well. He wrote:

> Yet we dream of a day when all the Christian sailors (as well as orthodox Jewish and Muslim and Hindu sailors, among others) are all set free, as free as their secular counterparts are, to work according to their respective worldviews; a time when contemporary psychology defines itself as a fleet of ships, rather than just one ship, each guided by its own assumptions about human beings (p. 46).

While I recognize that counseling as mission was not the focus of Johnson's article, I think this describes the concern I have; in what ways will those different ships interact with each other? Will they lob cannonballs in each others' direction? Will they signal each other with imprecise communication tools? Will they send the occasional emissary to visit and explore each others' vessels? Or, as I am suggesting, will Christians actually sail on the same ship, learning from other worldviews and approaches, working with one another, and influencing them by our lives and our words, leading them to acknowledge that there is a Sovereign Lord who rules the waves?

Let me again affirm that Christian counseling as mission is an idea whose time is long overdue. Regardless of one's position on the relationship of Scripture and theology to psychology, this is why we do what we do. It is our *raison d'etre* and as such, is what I seek to instill in my students as they graduate from Denver Seminary with a CACREP-accredited, seminary degree and the academic requirements for state licensure.

Williams adapted Lewis' words regarding the danger of being too easily pleased with psychology when so much more is to be had when we embrace the richness of Scripture and a relationship with God. Since we all like to use Lewis to support our views, I am aware that he also said (not adapted):

> Christianity has not, and does not profess to have, a detailed political programme for applying "Do as you would be done by" to a particular society at a particular moment. It could not have. It is meant for all men at all times and the particular programme which is suited one place or time would not suit another. And, anyhow, that is not how Christianity works. When it tells you to feed the hungry it does not give you lessons in cookery. When it tells you to read the Scriptures it does not give you lessons in Hebrew and Greek, or even in English grammar. It was never intended to replace or supersede the ordinary human arts and sciences: it is rather a director which will set them all to the right jobs, and a source of energy which will give then all new life, if only they will put themselves at its disposal (1952, p. 75).

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What's New about Christian Counseling as Mission?

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While reading Sam Williams' article, my mind drifted to a recent conversation with a graduate of our program who reported the conversion of a patient in the (voluntary, faith-based) psychiatric unit of the hospital he worked in as a program counselor, and to an email from a another graduate who mentioned in passing that he had led six people to the Lord in her work in a community counseling agency. Yes, Sam, Christian counseling *is* mission.

I would certainly agree that the mental health system is part of a fallen world and mission field that we, as Christians, need to "go into" rather than remain at a disconnected distance. Williams is to be commended for seeking ways to develop a thorough and uncompromisingly biblical model of counseling that speaks to a lost world; however, his article, at times, tends to oversimplify some issues and begs elaboration on others.

Has Christian counseling "from its very inception failed to think missiologically"? Problems arise when we try to pinpoint the beginning of Christian counseling. Is it a twentieth century concept or can we trace it back to biblical times? Also, is it true historically that the missionary enterprise of taking the gospel to the lost in heathen cultures is a missing element in Christian counseling? The theme of Gary Collins's book *How to Be a People Helper*, written in 1976, is "that Christian counseling must be built on the Bible as the Word of God and must be consistent with the Great Commission" (p. 12). Surely that implies a missiological focus. In 1950, William Goulooze (1950) challenged secular psychology and presented an alternate Scriptural pastoral psychology designed to meet the "clarion call from the white harvest fields of burdened souls" and not "divorced from the gospel and the Biblical method of shepherding. . . . for only in this way can we really bring the Bible and Christ's salvation to a lost world and a dying civilization" (p. 23). If we go back over 100 years to the nineteenth century, we find Ian Maclaren (1896) identifying the counseling work of the pastor, "like that of a physician," in terms of "outdoor and indoor; *visitation* and *consultation*" (p. 224). Among his "laws of consultation," which follow basic Christian counseling procedures, he includes the following: "That the pastor will not fail, so far as he is able, to lead every person who consults with him to accept Christ as his Saviour and Friend, so that all the straits of life, its sins, sorrows, disasters, may compel the soul to the faith of Christ" (p. 238). In the seventeenth century, Richard Baxter (1615-1691) believed that pastors, in their counseling role, should be prepared to answer the question "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30): "We must be ready to give advice to those that come to us with cases of conscience. . . . A minister is not only for public preaching, but to be a known counselor for their souls…so that each man that is in doubt and straits may bring his case to him and desire resolution" (Baxter, 1656/1956, p. 48). These are only a sample of references that show how Christians have long seen counseling as mission.

For the sake of his argument, Williams has chosen to "paint in broad strokes" in his descriptions of the counseling "operating systems." Christian counseling is criticized as "both modern and correlationist," granting science an equal standing with biblical revelation and parroting secular approaches. Nouthetic counseling escapes relatively unscathed at this point. The problem with this assessment is, of

course, that people find themselves tarred with the same brush as theoreticians and theologians with whom they would normally find themselves in significant disagreement. In addition, the solid biblical and theological work done by many in the field is ignored. A more balanced approach is reflected in Johnson's (2007) counseling implications of and distinction between the coherence theory of truth and idealism of Cornelius Van Til and the correspondence theory and critical realism found in most historical orthodox theology (e.g., Augustine, Calvin). Each side has something to teach us. Perhaps finding the common ground should begin first with recognizing that it is time to return the terms "Christian" and "biblical" in reference to counseling from a state of opposition to apposition. How did we get to the place in our field where the terms "Christian" and "biblical" stood at opposite ends of a faith-based counseling continuum?

Williams couches his missiological focus within the contextualization approach developed by missionaries. Grant Osborne found similar answers when he went looking for, but could not find, a preaching textbook that engaged hermeneutical discourse in application. Like Williams, Osborne (1991, pp. 318-338) found his methodological answer in the missiological concept of contextualization, particularly as delimited by Hesselgrave and Rommen (1989). Contextualization involves accurately and effectively communicating the gospel, including "Christian concepts and practices," in a specific cultural and historical situation. Such biblical counseling requires learning the *lingua franca* of a particular target culture; however, communication means using language not just in the vernacular sense of understanding the terms and concepts in the secular world, but also in the vehicular language sense of conveying a biblical message to the host culture in a way that is understood. Certainly, the concept of translation, as opposed to integration, fits well in this approach. But, like Williams, I believe that we need to be aware of the problems associated with this methodology, particularly as it relates to hermeneutical discourse and the translation motif.

The phrase *traduttore, traditore* ("translator, traitor") captures the danger of translating biblical truth into a particular culture. In addition to the problems of over-contextualization and under-contextualization identified by Williams, there are additional difficulties and issues that need to be addressed, including examining the implications of source versus target oriented translations (note the parallel controversy between literal and dynamic equivalence Bible translations and distinguishing emic versus etic perspectives in the field of cultural anthropology), "deciding exactly what are the cultural or time-bound elements in a passage and what are the supracultural or eternal principles" in contextualizing Scripture (Osborne, 1991, p. 326), and dealing with such issues as relativism and *sensus plenior*. Osborne addresses some of these subjects in his development of a six-stage process of contextualization.

So, what is new about Christian counseling as mission? On the one hand, there is nothing much. The Church has been engaged in counseling as mission since biblical times. Even the concept of contextualization, Williams admits, is found in Scripture, and reminders of the importance of adjusting the message to the listener are made throughout church history. On the other hand, Williams is reminding us of the uniqueness of our Christian calling to counseling as mission, and to this end, his article is a helpful contribution to what may prove to be a profitable field of inquiry.

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Response to "Christian Counseling as Mission"

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In this paper, as in life, I find myself in agreement and disagreement with my friend, Sam Williams. He should be given credit for thinking creatively and applying missiological insights concerning contextualization to Christian counseling. Yet, these are unfortunately provided in a way that their benefits are easily lost. Since these responses are to be helpful, I will attempt to explain how I think Williams' rhetorical approach hurts his argument.

First, his definition of the problem detracts from his argument. He asserts that Christian counseling has been "essentially ineffective *as a distinctive Christian* endeavor" and thus we have been "essentially ineffective *as Christians*" (italics in the original). Suppose Christian theologians have been ineffective in converting theologians from other religious traditions. Would it be fair and accurate to conclude that for two thousand years Christian theology has been "essentially ineffective *as a distinctive Christian* endeavor" and thus Christian theologians have been "essentially ineffective *as Christians?*" The author's rhetoric has failed to acknowledge that the essentials of the Christian theologian (or of the Christian counselor) include both the multiple essentials of the Christian faith and the multiple essentials related to fulfilling a particular role.

Also, what exactly does he mean by being "intentionally missiological"? Are we talking about helping the church with its outreach, helping prepare missionaries for service, counseling missionaries, executing research so that one might better advise mission boards, participating in missions, leading counselees to Christ, sharing one's faith with other professionals in the secular community, building schools and programs committed to standing for Christ, building clinics that affirm Christ, or writing books and doing research from a Christian perspective that might be read by the secular community? Without a definition of the essentials of Christian counseling and a definition of intentional missiology, his assertion of essential failure appears hyperbolic.

Second, the imbalanced comments concerning biblical counselors and integrationists also distract from the paper. If we in the Society for Christian Psychology (SCP) are to be taken seriously, then we must be highly objective in impartially critiquing everyone, including ourselves. Yet, his comments are curiously imbalanced in favor of the Biblical Counseling Movement (BCM). They are given their preferred name in contrast to integration, which is labeled as some type of "ism." This violates APA style and appears to set up a subtle *ad hominem* argument (American Psychological Association , 2001, p. 63; Capaldi, 1971, pp. 72-73, 80-83, 90-91, and 96). Williams informs us that the BCM has been misunderstood (see his footnote 4), but apparently integration (or as he calls it, "integrationism") has not been, for no similar footnote appears on their behalf. Those in the BCM are defended as being like the Amish, a group of peaceful Anabaptists, while omitting any reference to its more aggressive tradition and its origin among those who have traditionally opposed the Anabaptists. In his admitted broad-stroked description, he places all of Christian counseling on a procrustean bed of "if you are not A, you must be B" in which all middle ground and grey areas are practically eliminated. As he equates all biblical counseling with the movement which started in the early 1970s, he seems unaware that by doing so in the context of only two operating systems he has necessarily denied the term "biblical counseling" to all who consider themselves biblical counselors but who are not part of the BCM tradition (e.g., Dallas Theological Seminary, Capital Bible Seminary, Hope for the Heart Ministries and the Biblical Counseling and Spiritual Formation Network among many others) as well as to anyone else in the first 1,970 years of Christian history. If his point was to appeal to those in the BCM, he may have succeeded. In the process, he may have at the same time caused many others to question his objectivity.

Third, the failure of this paper to cite any missions-related articles from publications such as the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, and *Journal of Psychology and Theology* detracts from his argument. He has also overlooked the counselors who provide member care for missionaries, do missiological research, advise mission boards, and make missionary trips. This is curious. I know he is missions minded. I have been listed in some dusty tome among those who taught missiology, and I teach within a program that is missions minded. Our program has graduates scattered around the world fulfilling their roles as counselors and instructors while functioning in missiological ways. I know integrationists who are very involved in missions, and I know one can find missionary related literature in Christian journals related to psychology with very little effort. Since this bears directly upon his topic, these omissions may suggest to some readers that this paper should simply not be taken seriously. That would be a shame.

Fourth, these problems are rooted in the rhetorical nature of his argument, and this detracts

from his making his important points concerning contextualization. In it, we have a possible problem that is presented as a crisis, while no assessment of the real situation is offered; we begin with only two groups of counselors with no assessment of who else is out there; we have one group that is identified with the Bible and another that is identified with an "ism;" we have no interaction with the missions related literature in the Christian journals related to psychology and counseling; we have no assessment of what Christian counselors are actually doing in relationship to missions; and then after some discussion of contextualization, the first two alternatives are rejected and replaced with Christian psychology. Although Williams offers some very helpful contributions concerning contextualization, those contributions are unfortunately entangled in and devalued by how the paper is argued. I fear such rhetoric will prevent many Christian counselors from hearing his contributions. In addition, I fear such rhetoric will likely mislead others, leaving them with the mistaken impression that Christian counselors have been completely unaware of missions and their responsibility to contribute to the fulfilling of the Great Commission. Thus, I believe his rhetorical approach provides an unhelpful "slant" to the whole paper and detracts from the useful insights offered.

Clearly, one might wonder whether some Christians have so separated themselves from unbelieving counselors and counselees that it is difficult to imagine how they might use their role as a counselor in fulfilling the Great Commission. On the other hand, one might wonder whether others are so involved in the world of psychology that they may not see the need for using their role for fulfilling the Great Commission. Thus, his proposal to urge us to think in terms of under- and over-contextualization is helpful. What is needed, however, is research so we might know whether Christian counselors have failed to be appropriately active in missions or whether this is merely supposition. The first church council listened to what was happening on the ground (Acts 15:4-12) before addressing the issue theologically (Acts 15:13-18) and practically (Acts 15:19-29). There is Godly wisdom in that approach.

Conclusion

In summary, I agree with a call for all of us to be more intentionally missiological. Nevertheless, given God's promise to maintain a faithful remnant and given my own experience and knowledge of missiological work by Christian counselors of various stripes, I have reasons to believe that the problem is not as bleak as the term "essential failure" would communicate. As much as I agree with Williams' desire to call us to be intentionally missiological, it would have been a better paper if he had more carefully defined his terms, had reviewed the literature, had been more impartial in his critique, and had surveyed counselors concerning their missiological behavior. It might be interesting to know whether Christian counselors are more or less missions-minded than the average Christian or the average Christian theologian. It might prove very helpful to know whether over- or under-contextualization is the problem. If one actually collects the data, one might discover that propinquity (or lack thereof) is more of an issue (cf. Worthington, 2007).

Williams, who I value as a friend (one with whom I clearly have some differences), raises a worthy concern. I would encourage others to consider the role of contextualization of the Christian message in Christian counseling, and I would encourage him to pursue his concern for us to be intentionally missiological in light of the evaluation provided above.

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Psychology as Mission or Minefield? A Response to Williams

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Sam Williams raises an excellent question: how might a missiological approach (as opposed to either deconstruction or assimilation) to Christian counseling change how the movement interacts with the larger mental health world? For the first forty or so years of

our movement's history, it would appear that we have battled amongst ourselves over whether over-contextualization or under-contextualization has been the bigger of the two problems. Biblical counselors have been known to accuse "integrationists" (or "Windows fans") of blithely translating secular psychology words into Christian counseling models without observing the theological baggage that comes with the uncritical use of dynamic equivalence translation methods (e.g., unconditional positive regard equals God's gracious love?). On the flip side, some Christian counselors have accused biblical counselors (or "Mac fans") of refusing to acknowledge any positive influence from psychology theory and practice and focusing so much on the sinful heart side of their dualist anthropology that they, in practice, reject valuable insights regarding the physiology of mental disorders for fear of acknowledging that some mental disorders may not be controllable.

Both accusations have merit and in this article Williams seeks to pose a third way—or at least encourage his biblical counseling students and colleagues that missionary contextualization is a risk worth taking despite the minefield of secular ideas. He is right, but before this can happen I think it necessary for biblical counselors to do a little bit more self-critique. Just as the secular mental health culture has its own language, practice, dominant worldview, producers, consumers, etc. (eloquently described by Williams), so do biblical counselors. What parts of their culture are less from the Bible and ancient Christian tradition and more from fundamentalist culture born out of being isolated from the dominant American culture?

I might suggest one necessary self-critique. Biblical counselors are known for their incisive critique of other counseling models. We see through theories and practices to their underlying foundations. And we are known for being quick to point out unbiblical ideas. We lead with our criticisms. But when we criticize first, we miss the chance to listen to the culture we wish to evangelize. Listening first (and for long periods) is not something we biblical counselors are known to do. Why? Do we overly fear the minefield? Do we fear that someone might think we have become syncretistic? Listening first provides three benefits. First, we have the capacity to really understand the many nuances within the culture we serve. Points of contact will not be superficial nor manipulative. They will be real. Second, we humbly recognize that God may use this other culture to point out something missing in our own, fallen, cultural framework. Third, we have the capacity to find the vestiges of the Gospel in every culture. Carl Ellis (1996) speaks of our need to find metaphors of biblical truth within every culture. He asserts that there are no cultures or individuals who have so destroyed the image and knowledge of God as to have removed all vestiges of Gospel truth. When we start with criticism first, we rarely get the opportunity to develop robust points of contact or challenge our own conceptualizations of the world. Williams rightly suggests:

> Of course, we should for the glory of God acknowledge His common grace that sometimes shines through these systems, but finally we must persuade them with the truth and beauty and hope of the gospel of a full-orbed Christian perspective.

Our challenge is not to shortchange common grace (and so deny our need for what we learn through that grace) in our rush to get to the evangelistic call. In my humble opinion, we are most likely to shortchange common graces in the area of practical relief to mental illness. Williams provides the example of two brothers' reactions to the death of a sibling. Paulo, who experiences existential angst leading to panic attacks, might be treated by a secular therapist in ways to eliminate panic attacks. Would this be beneficial from a Christian perspective? Williams' musing seems to suggest it might not:

> Would you have helped Paulo if you had merely medicated him or taught him to reduce his anxiety with a cognitive-behavioral counseling regimen? Or would you have just helped him put out a warning light and failed to address the sickness in his soul that was producing a very meaningful danger signal?

In our self-examination, let us avoid all false dichotomies and admit that we biblical counselors have not always sought effective mercy ministry interventions for fear of falsely assuaging a sinner's fears. We can be effective in reducing suffering *and* we can point people to a better foundation for faith and life. I am grateful for Sam Williams' call to a missional approach. Let us commit to listening and self-critique and remember his gentle reminder that our missionary work is not optional.

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"Faith…makes a dream into a mission"

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It is always a pleasure to read an article that builds on robust foundations while working out fresh implications and relevant applications. Sam Williams' "Christian Counseling as Mission" is just such a pleasure. In the words of James Ward's compelling lyric: "Faith takes a vision, makes a dream into a mission." Williams sees big things, and then he walks it out on the ground. "Christian Counseling as Mission" (CCM) takes an old vision and injects it with a fresh sense of mission.

Williams is persuaded that a truly Christian approach to counseling must have a wide evangelistic and apologetic thrust. It is not enough to learn what we can from secular psychologies and to oppose what we think wrong. Christians can speak constructively to the ideas, practices, and institutions of the mental health world. Neither living incognito within that world ("accommodating syncretism") nor setting up an alternative counter-culture ("avoidant separatism") are enough. He is convinced that believing Christians will do meaningful evangelistic work at a high intellectual level within the secular psychological and psychiatric communities. Simply to address the personal beliefs and morals of individual practitioners (while leaving their counseling theories intact) is not enough. He is right on all counts. CCM places in high relief the need to consciously envision mental health professionals as an audience for the Christian message, because that message is pointedly relevant to them personally, intellectually, and professionally.

As a representative of the biblical counseling movement, and someone cited favorably by Williams in CCM, perhaps I can be helpful by offering further bibliographic suggestions. Historically, biblical counseling has usually been perceived as sectarian and separatist (and it has too frequently lived up to that image). It's worth correcting that image, both where it is a misperception and where it is an unfortunate reality. Here are several resources beyond those works cited within CCM.

First, Ed Welch's "A Discussion among Clergy: Pastoral Counseling Talks with Secular Psychology" (1995) provides an outstanding example of both the conceptual and the professional aspects of the engagement called for in CCM's two case studies. As a licensed clinical psychologist and committed biblical counselor, Welch gained a seat at the psychological table, spoke their language, cited their respected authorities, and offered them a biblical feast. This article sensitively contextualizes the Christian message, and deserves far wider circulation and emulation.

Second, two old articles by Jay Adams show how he also acted and spoke missiologically on those infrequent occasions when he had opportunity to interact with secular mental health professionals. In both "The Christian Approach to Schizophrenia" (Adams, 1976, 1995) and "Change Them… into What?" (Adams, 1978, 1995) he entered the audience's point of reference, cited their sources, spoke to their internal tensions, and then presented hors-d'oeuvres from the banquet table of Christian faith. His effort is not as rich as Welch's either in his knowledge of the psychologies or in his presentation of the gospel. But he does demonstrate that a missiological vision, though only occasionally enacted into mission, existed from the start of the biblical counseling movement.

Third, my article "Crucial Issues in Contemporary Biblical Counseling" (Powlison, 1988) contains a brief early version of the call that Williams is now making far more comprehensively. This article is also of interest as an early example of internal self-criticism within the biblical counseling movement, identifying five trajectories for conceptual and methodological development.

Finally, my article "Is the 'Adonis Complex' in *Your* Bible?" (Powlison, 2004) provides a detail-rich case study that engages both a particular lifestyle disorder (a proposed form of DSM-IV's Body Dysmorphic Disorder) and different representative interpreters of that disorder. The audiences addressed by this article are primarily Christian: both integrationists who tend to reify diagnostic categories, and biblicists who tend to dismiss problems that cannot be tagged with a proof text. It was intended to be heard by Christians of various stripes, but also to be "overheard" by secular mental health professionals who might eavesdrop. If it had been intended specifically for the latter audience, it would have been framed quite differently.

Let me close with a quibble to set up two more significant general comments. When Williams cites my writing, he accurately captures my intentions except in one small matter. He says that I "cautiously admit" that Christians can infiltrate and work within the secular mental health system. I would say instead that I "heartily believe" this to be so. He rightly recognizes a caution in my tone, but it is not a concession wrung unwillingly from someone who wishes he did not have to say so. I *want* Christians to engage the mental health culture constructively. The Welch

article mentioned above was a joy to edit and to publish, and I use it in class every year as an exemplar of missiological cultural engagement in both content and attitude.

My caution arises from two factors that must be borne in mind, even as we issue a hearty call for missiological engagement. First, I believe that our first call is to provide "counseling services" within the body of Christ. Wise practical theology and face-to-face ministry must cohere conceptually, methodologically, and institutionally with the overall ministry of *cura animarum:* "cure and care of souls." Second, such consistency is rare. The strong counter-flow of secular models into the church seriously undermines our fulfillment of our primary calling. Christians are not the only ones who are actively missiological and evangelistic. Secular evangelists have been thoughtfully active for a century (Freud's "The Question of Lay Analysis," cited by Williams, is a particularly charming example). Advocates and practitioners of the secular psychologies have been largely successful in shaping the mind and practice of the church regarding counseling. In contrast, the Christian faith has been relatively unsuccessful even in shaping the church's internal models of counseling theory and praxis. Williams justly issues a call to reach out missiologically to the world. But when the church is not sure of the distinctiveness of her own message and has been largely the borrower from the very people she wishes to reach, then what exactly do we have to give away?

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Building Bridges: A Response to Williams' Christian Counseling as Mission

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Sam Williams, in his piece "Christian Counseling as Mission," brings to us all a piercing reminder of a fundamental truth—we are chosen and called to be on Mission for God. He applies this well-repeated injunction in an arena rarely discussed in Christian counseling circles - the duty of the Christian to exemplify Christ in the professional realm. As Christians we often reflect on how we can impart the Gospel to our clients, but we give little thought as to how we can be ministers of Truth to our colleagues or how we can be influencers on the direction of our profession.

This is certainly worthy of protracted thought. Williams has done us all a favor in reminding us that we are "agents in God's worldwide unstoppable redemptive revolution." He puts out a challenge to us to walk through newly opened doors and speak into organizations in our current day when spiritual concepts are becoming more tolerated and sometimes even welcomed.

Williams does not stop by confronting us with our responsibility, but goes some distance in delineating principles of how one can be effectively involved in mission in the world of psychology and counseling. By looking at the areas of the DSM diagnostic system and licensure from a more biblically informed perspective, he challenges some commonly held views. He alerts us to the spiritual etiology of some symptoms that could confound traditional diagnostic frameworks. With respect to licensure, Williams sees it as simply a platform from which we can work with those in need, but stresses that the true validation of our calling is from God. The perspective that undergirds all his comments is that regardless of how value-neutral mental health work is purported to be, counseling will always have a moral

and spiritual nature.

Unfortunately, some of Williams' valuable contributions could be clouded by the polarizing nature of his presentation. He tends to be somewhat harsh, and therefore discouraging, in his evaluation of current efforts in the field of Christian counseling. Williams does admit (unfortunately in a footnote) that his work has a "polemic" tone and goes on to acknowledge the existence of a large middle ground of clinicians between his stark characterizations of Biblical counseling and integrationism.

We can all easily categorize things in black and white ways in order to make a clear point, but a black and white, polemic stance is usually not congruent with the missionary mindset that Williams is encouraging us all to adopt. Nonetheless, even though his style of presentation at times threatens to overshadow his subject matter, Williams presents a significant challenge to us to think biblically about ways we can influence the state of the profession in which we work.

Williams' application of the concept of contextualization to the DSM diagnostic nosology and to the concept of licensure is instructive, but is not easily translated into further action. What other areas in the American mental health culture today could provide open doors for communication of the truth of the Gospel in the ways Willams suggests?

Sometimes in considering how to reach another culture, it is helpful to identify the core of the culture - what are its strong suits, what makes it tick, where is its heart? Williams discusses this, as he challenges us to be bicultural, becoming an "expert in the cultures and languages involved and understanding the cultural dynamics." Becoming bicultural, or even moving in that direction, is difficult. It entails giving up some of one's comfort, being a learner, trying to think and understand in new and unfamiliar ways, looking for meanings different from our own. For the missional-minded it also means looking for the ways that redemption can be communicated and received.

As a Christian looking for areas in which God's redemptive ways could be communicated into the culture of psychology and mental health, two particular areas come to mind. First is the field of research. Mental health practitioners highly value research and bring forth much quality data. Empirically validated treatments and scientific methodology are highly valued and esteemed. Many, many dollars are spent to document how people function and why. As Christians, we can certainly find ourselves in agreement, saying "yes," in Williams' terms, to the quest to more accurately understand persons and their functioning, while at the same time saying "no" to the view that science is able to determine and define all aspects of the Truth about persons. Christians can engage in research and scientific exploration seeking with psychology to document the principles by which the world works, which are God's principles, even though we know that science can never fully explain him or his ways. Christian counselors can design studies that specifically document the efficacy of grace, forgiveness, commitment, and many other principles of godly living. Research can be a vehicle to show his ways to those who want to see.

Another area where the culture of mental health service and the culture of faith may find a bridge is in the area of compassion for the needy and downtrodden. Mental health service providers are servants. Their job is to help the hurting. Where could the culture of faith find a place of more agreement with mental health providers than here in the ground of compassion? As Christians, we can say a resounding "yes" to this value that says love your neighbor. Surely we also say "no" to the belief that psychological help in and of itself is sufficient to heal a person in the ultimate sense. Nonetheless, when it comes to compassionate involvement, as in the area of research, Christians can move forward alongside nonbelievers to advance God's kingdom and to live out his truth. Those without faith should not outdistance believers in the exercise of compassion. We must find more ways to serve the underserved, the poor, and the voiceless in body, soul, and spirit.

How do we build these bridges? As Williams says clearly, we must become bicultural. We will need to learn how to the translate the language of God and his principles of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and commitment into the language of ANOVA's and empirically validated treatments, into the language of NGO's and sex traffickers. Christians will have to make sacrifices in order to learn to communicate in unfamiliar ways, to be heard in different contexts, to engage people who do not readily understand the things of God. Missionaries have always known that kingdom work is costly. They have also found that it is worth it. May we each find the ways that God has specifically designed for us to heed Williams' (and Christ's) challenge.

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Christian Counseling as Mission: Sharpened

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Iron sharpens iron, as one man sharpens the face of another. Proverbs 27.17

Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Proverbs 27.6

The production of an article, first by grinding ideas down into words in print, and then by contending with even kind editors, is an arduous task, after which one is tempted to follow our erstwhile President with the proud announcement, "Mission accomplished!" And then you realize you are still being shot at and that some (not all, mind you) of the shots are hitting the target.

I am fairly new to this type of engagement and to get into the scholar's ring and be so mercifully challenged is rich with lessons that I would not learn otherwise. Thank you, Mike, Ian, Jama, Fred, David and Phil for the friendly wounds as well as the encouragement. In addition, I would like to thank the editors for their choice of this dialogical style for the journal, as it graciously allows for explanation and clarification.

I will respond by collating and summarizing the criticisms, beginning with those that seem to me most valid and ending with those that seem less so.

First, each of my interlocutors, some overtly and others more covertly, seemed to struggle with my failure to define critical terms, especially the sense in which the article uses the term "mission." The unfortunate consequence was that some (McGuire and Jones) appeared to miss the main point of the article. So, let me re-deploy this term. I should begin by noting that the primary sense of the term "mission" in the article is not exactly coterminous with its most common usage in evangelical culture – something we do to save souls in foreign countries or some type of cross-cultural evangelism. My use of the term "mission" is not less than that, but it is more than that and stems from the concept of the "Mission of God" rather than our current missions activities. When I say that we have failed to think missiologically I do not mean that the gospel has not been proclaimed by Christian counselors to unsaved counselees. And, I do not mean to say that Christian counselors have not been involved in a variety of ways in overseas missions or in providing care and counsel for missionaries. Of course, I am in favor of and, by God's grace, actively involved in all these things.

The article employs the term "mission" and its semantic relatives in the broad and theocentric sense of the *Missio Dei*. Mission is the activity of God in His world through His people to fulfill His mission (Rankin, 2006; cp. Wright, 2007). Mission is defined, energized, directed, and ultimately accomplished by God. The breadth of God's mission and then ours is established by the breadth of His redemption. "Mission is a holistic notion, referring not only to evangelism and discipleship, but also to social engagement and public life…the various callings of the Christian life... It includes Christian sociocultural interaction – our dealings in the arts, the sciences, and the public square" (Ashford, 2007, p. 9).

Mike McGuire further suggested that a review of at least the three major Christian counseling periodicals (*Journal of Biblical Counseling*, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, and *Journal of Psychology and Theology*) would have been helpful. While I agree, a subsequent review of these journals for articles related to mission, missions, and missiology found what I expected – they do not address my thesis in that they address these matters solely from the narrower understanding of missions. Thus the title of the article is "Christian Counseling *as Mission*" not Christian Counseling *and Missions.*

Another weakness in the article, pointed out by Jones and McGuire, was my unsupported assertion that "Christian Counseling has been essentially ineffective as a distinctively Christian endeavor." Surely it is late in coming, but let me offer some justification for this belief.

First, simply reflect on the major contributions in clinical and counseling psychology. A starting point would be the recognition that not one of the most influential meta-psychologists of the 19th and 20th centuries - Freud, Jung, Watson, Skinner, Maslow, Rogers, Ellis, Bandura, Glasser, Perls, Frankl, May – were Christians, and of course neither were their theories and therapies. In contrast to other disciplines, there are no people like Alvin Plantinga or Frances Collins or William Dembski or C. S. Lewis in the contemporary mental health world.

An examination of the regnant etiological explanations for various mental disorders – mood disorders, anxiety disorders, substance abuse and de-

pendence, etc. – finds a stark absence of any distinctively Christian etiological explanation for the most common mental disorders; there are a variety (cognitive-behavioral, evolutionary, social constructivist, psychodynamic, systems/strategic, etc.) of secular explanations, which of course excise the spiritual and moral dimension that we as Christians believe to be crucial to the explanation of all things human, especially the mind or soul. Various figures in the biblical counseling movement, especially Ed Welch, have developed biblical perspectives on addiction, anxiety, co-dependency, and depression, but these have not been written from an academic perspective and have not been published in peer-reviewed journals.

In addition, even though Christians have been providing counseling and psychotherapy, to date there are only two outcome/effectiveness studies of Christian counseling or psychotherapy (Propst, 1980; Wade, Worthington, and Vogel, 2007). Let me say that again…after 50 years of Christian counseling, only *two* empirical studies of its effectiveness.

Furthermore, Wade, Worthington, and Vogel (2007) recently complained of a lack of consensus even in defining the object of their research – Christian counseling or psychotherapy:

> exploring Christian therapy empirically is complicated because there appears to be no clearly demarcated form of Christian therapy. It is defined variously as treatment offered by a therapist who is Christian, therapy using methods consistent with a Christian worldview, therapy using Christian practices such as prayer, or therapy that advertises itself as explicitly Christian. However, Christian therapy in general appears to share at least two characteristics: (a) It is labeled as explicitly Christian in orientation by the therapist or agency despite the fact that it may use many or a few techniques that are explicitly tailored to Christians (e.g., reading Scripture, praying), and (b) it attempts to provide clients who profess a commitment to Christianity with therapists who share that conviction. As a result, we have used these two characteristics to define Christian therapy for the purpose of this investigation. We note that, according to our definition, the therapists might or might not (a) self-identify as Christians (although it is reasonable to suspect that most will) or (b) use techniques that are explicitly tailored to Christians (e.g., quoting the Bible, praying) (p. 94).

So these authors acquiesce to the least common denominator: Christian counseling is defined by fiat, as a merely nominal label without regard for content. Surely, one of the reasons Christian Counseling has been essentially ineffective is that we have yet to achieve any consensus about what Christian Counseling even is. From my perspective, this is not a small problem.

Another concern expressed about the article, especially by McGuire, was an apparent bias for Biblical Counseling and against Integrated Christian Counseling. He complained particularly about my use of the term "integrationism" on the one hand and the adjective "Biblical" on the other hand, to refer to these two prominent Christian counseling models.

My first response to this criticism is sympathetic. The use of labels and category boxes does seem more fitting for cereals and shoes than for people committed to the care and cure of souls. In addition, I can understand how Christian counselors would take offense at the hegemonic use of the term "Biblical." (I can readily recall my reaction to a new friend I made several years ago when he announced that he attended a "Full Gospel Church". I immediately thought, "So, are you implying that my church only has part of the Gospel!") That is not, however, how I intend to use the term. Let me offer a couple comments that hopefully will clarify my intentions.

First, my use of the term Biblical is idealistic rather than triumphalistic. Biblical is an ideal that I encourage my students - and all Christian counselors - to strive for, and not one that "biblical counselors" have fully achieved. Properly understood, the term "biblical" implies humility and a teachable spirit, rather than a proud badge announcing that one has arrived. Of course, in the truest sense there has been only one Biblical Counselor that has set up practice on planet earth – by his grace, we confess him as Christ the Lord.

Second, although labels are inevitably limited, they are also useful and may for that reason carry some validity. It seems to me that the use of universals in a universe of particulars is simultaneously unavoidable, meaningful, and problematic as we attempt to communicate honestly and fairly. There is an important sense in which labels can convey important information. For example, Mike, Ian, and I are Baptists denominationally. We do not mean that offensively in the sense that we believe that we are the only Christians who engage in the practice of baptism, but we do mean it distinctively, in that a particular form of baptism is a crucial aspect of our ecclesiological identity…and, of course, we humbly believe that we practice baptism rightly. Likewise, biblical counselors do not mean the term offensively or derogatorily toward others (or at least should not, and as I have noted above, to the extent that they do so, they are less than biblical). The label "biblical

counseling" is a fair descriptor for a particular type of Christian counseling in which the Bible is understood and utilized in particularly prominent ways in both its theory and practice. It is not to say that "biblical counselors" are using the Bible, and others are not. I would also note that "integrationism" or "integration" is not a negative or positive term, but is instead a descriptor which fairly characterizes particular types of Christian counseling because of the centrality of some method of integration in its theory and practice of counseling. Likewise, this does not mean at the literal level that they are the only ones who integrate (at some level, it seems obvious that all counselors cut and paste), but that integration is central to the model, epistemologically and methodologically.

Correlatively, McGuire is correct in that it would have appeared more balanced and less biased if I would have avoided the term "integrationism." Possibly a better term would be "Integrated Christian Counseling." It is important for readers to understand that my "ism" was not intended to function as a pejorative suffix, and should be understood in the same way that it would be understood in the word "patriotism."

Some of the responders (White, McGuire, and to some extent Monroe) commented that the tone of the article was harsh or discouraging or unhelpful. My intention was that the article would be challenging. Nonetheless, as Monroe points out, there is a longstanding tendency among biblical counselors to be polemical and critical, if not abrasive and bombastic. Surely, Biblical Counselors (and counselors of all stripes!) would benefit from being more intentionally self-critical. McGuire expressed concern that I violated APA publishing standards by displaying bias and prejudice. My greater concern is to avoid the violation of Biblical standards - that we are to speak the truth to one another in love (Eph. 4:15) and that correction should be offered in a spirit of gentleness (Gal. 6:1).

Powlison, who was most commendatory toward the article, also noted that "biblical counseling has usually been perceived as sectarian and separatist (and it has too frequently lived up to that image)." Gingrich picks up on a similar theme, noting that "CP [Christian Psychology] along with the traditional Biblical Counseling approach fear the secular mental health culture and are worried that Christian counselors will lose themselves in that culture" and that an "'us versus them' perspective is deeply embedded in our evangelical heritage."

I think Gingrich is on the right track in calling for "radical contextualization, not holding back in fear of contamination," but at the same time remaining aware that "the concern regarding syncretism is significant." However, he had difficulty with my language of "invasion and infiltration" and contends that contextualization as platform is less radical and not as apropos as an incarnational or insider approach. Then he cites the example of Daniel as support.[1] These are good points, but to some extent mere differences in emphasis, as I am in fact encouraging Christian counselors of all stripes to actively participate in a "good invasion" (cp. Lewis, 1970) of the Babylonian mental health establishment.

Gingrich further notes that Daniel and his cohorts eventually "take a stand which could have cost them their lives" when "the core of [their] faith is challenged." And this is where the rub lies. And where many more conversations are necessary, for (citing Gingrich again) "it is clear… in Scripture that this is the risk we are called to make for the salvation of the world."

Christian Psychology, insofar as it is truly Christian, aims to actively engage the mental health world. In my article, I encourage Biblical Counselors to leave their Essene caves and do the same, as I believe they have developed a repository of good news for counselors and counselees who are mentally disordered, and that the love of Christ compels them to share this news with the Babylonians. At the same time, Christian Psychologists and integrated Christian Counselors must heed the reminder given by Alvin Plantinga at the 2006 Society for Christian Psychology meeting:

> The contemporary western intellectual world… is an arena in which rages a contest for men's souls… in our culture there are deep, predominant, pervasive ways of thinking that are deeply antagonistic to a Christian way of looking at the world… scholarship and science are not neutral in this struggle for men's souls… This scholarship has at least two important parts – cultural criticism, but also the positive application of what we know by faith to the central areas of science and scholarship. We realize, of course, that both of these, but in particular the second, are matters of uncommon difficulty (pp. 1, 10, 32-33).

I am grateful for the opportunity to dialogue with men and women who are my betters, in every way. May the conversation continue. Sola Dei Gloria.

Note

[1] Hesselgrave's (2006) critique of the widespread use of incarnation terminology must also be heard, however. In his view the term "representational" would be better, as there has only been one incarnation, and

it is not something we can imitate in the same way that our Christ, as God, takes on flesh, and for which there is no human equivalent.

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A Framework for Christian Counseling – Applied to Perfectionism

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A framework for Christian counseling must be built on a biblical understanding of human nature. We are creatures of great dignity and profound depravity. These two aspects of our nature need to be explored in several stages and tasks in counseling. We begin by drawing out the person's story of struggle with life. Then we help them to understand their dual nature of being a "glorious ruin" – having amazing dignity, beauty and giftedness because made in the image of God and profound depravity because of Adam and Eve's sin, their parent's sin and their own sin. Counseling involves in-depth exploration of both aspects in the context of a respectful and grace-filled relationship. We listen for how the client has been sinned against and how they have sinned. We enter into their groaning and grief over the damage done by others. We explore the possibility of disordered physiology. As they experience a grace filled relationship they begin to be able to let go of defenses, false beliefs, and destructive self-protective patterns of relationship and hear the "disrupting" questions of the counselor that may expose wrong thinking, dysfunctional relationships, and self centeredness. Godly sorrow and repentance opens the door to being drawn towards new ways of seeing, thinking, feeling and being, towards holiness and health, towards "putting on the new nature" and "putting off the old," and towards groaning for the day when they will be perfected in glory. These stages of counseling are illustrated by the story of a perfectionist.

As someone has suggested somewhat cynically, counseling or psychotherapy is "an undefined technique applied to unspecified problems with unpredictable results… For this technique we recommend rigorous training." It is certainly very hard to describe the nature of counseling and psychotherapy, but I am going to attempt to describe certain essential ingredients from a distinctly Christian perspective. I will illustrate these using Rebecca's struggle with perfectionism. The name and some details of this case description have been changed. Although built around Rebecca's story, it is a composite of several clients who struggle with perfectionism. In some places I have used another person's story as an illustration.

First, some general principles underlying all my counseling. As I sit down with a client in my office I have certain unspoken ideas about people in general that are shaped by a Christian anthropology as opposed to many other competing world views and psychologies of the person. All are trying to find answers to the big questions of life: Where did we come from? Why do we have the problems we do? How can we fix them? What is our ultimate purpose and destiny?

I believe that each person is a unique and precious being, made in the image of God with great dignity and desperate depravity, wonderful beauty and horrible brokenness, and great glory mingled with deep grief. The Biblical drama of creation, fall, redemption, and future glory fleshed out in the numerous, amazing, and graphic biblical stories and in the life of Christ, as well as in the more direct teaching of the epistles and Revelation, gives me this basis for understanding human beings – their origins, destiny, and present state. Beyond Scripture, where it does not speak clearly or exhaustively (as in the area of clinical depression or obsessive compulsive disorder), we may turn to the human sciences of psychology, sociology, and medicine, carefully discerning what is consistent with a Biblical understanding of human nature, for wisdom and practical help. This we call Common Grace wisdom. I have written elsewhere on this theme (Winter, 2005), Scripture is the lens and ultimate reference point by which we evaluate all truth claims. We also have a rich tradition of pastoral wisdom through the centuries in the writings of the early church Fathers, the Reformers, and the Puritans.

With this as the foundation of my view of people and the relationship of Scripture to psychology, I must next address the question: Who is this particular person sitting before me? How can I know them and discover the struggles of their heart? How can I love this neighbor well? How can I help them to love God more, to understand themselves better, and love their neighbor more effectively? How can I help them to understand their purpose in the world and their destiny beyond this world? I have simplified each stage to the Key of D for ease of memory. I acknowledge here a debt to the writings and friendship

of Dan Allender (1990, 1999).

Draw out Her Story

Rebecca came to see me having heard a lecture that I gave on perfectionism and recognizing that much of her perfectionism was unhealthy. But before I tell you more about Rebecca, I will outline some very basic and familiar principles. The first task was to draw out her story. I did this by exploring her presenting problem in the context of her life and story. This meant listening deeply and well. Proverbs tells us that "He who answers before listening, that is his folly and his shame" (Prov 18:13.). Then I needed to practice the art of asking good questions to help Rebecca tell her story and to discover who and what had shaped her into the person she is today. Some people talk easily and need only to be guided by a few comments and questions; others need to be drawn out. Because of my Biblical holistic view of persons, I listened carefully to the different levels of communication in her story. Not only did I hear the content (information, facts) but also the form and the feeling (how she spoke). I often think that this is much like learning to listen to the four different parts in music – the soprano, alto, tenor and base. Musicians do this naturally but others have to learn by experience and patient listening. I listened to Rebecca's words (well organized and systematic), I heard her emotions (fearful, anxious and very controlled), I read her body language (tense and inhibited), and I noted how I was reacting inside (empathy, parental protectiveness, frustration).

Rebecca, on the surface, was highly successful and much admired by others. She had been leader of her Christian group in college, was good at sport, and graduated summa cum laude. But there was a price to pay for her success with much stress, anxiety, shame, and guilt for not living up to her own, even higher, standards. She told me "perfectionism pervades all areas of my life - daily routine, vocation, and even relationships. I thrive on routine and familiar surroundings, because it helps me to be in control, feel competent, and ultimately feel perfect. I do not like new roles and responsibilities, because there is room for incompetence. When I became a teaching assistant for the first time I felt that every lesson that I had to teach needed to be 'perfect.' This was almost debilitating. I would literally sit in my office for five hours and go through files and files on lessons and activities and would not find the 'perfect' lesson to teach. I would just end up winging something last minute."

Discover Dignity and Depravity

Secondly, as we go deep into our client's stories, we discover the complex mixture of Dignity and Depravity in the heart of every person. As I listened to the story of another perfectionist client who was deeply mired in sexual addiction, I found myself appalled at the depravity to which he had sunk. Then I discovered that he was also a very sensitive person, a gifted musician and artist with deep longings for affirmation and approval, who had been rejected by his father because art and music were "for sissies". I felt both admiration and sorrow for him as I caught a glimpse of his dignity.

People usually come to counselors because their lives are in trouble, and they need help so we often hear stories of loss, deceit, betrayal or addiction – stories of the darker side of life, of brokenness, grief and depravity. Proverbs again wisely says, "The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of wisdom draws them out" (Prov 20:5). We do not know our own hearts very well, and we need others to help us to explore; to sort our good desires and dreams from the bad ones, the good motives from the bad ones. We need our gifts and dignity affirmed, and our bentness and depravity exposed. We need help to see how our legitimate God given longings have turned to lust, and our desires have mutated to demands. We need someone to draw out the effects of damage and help us to understand how it has affected our hearts in good and bad ways, to be a gracious accepting presence as we experience distress, despair and "godly sorrow" at our deficiencies, folly and sin. In other words, to be a Godly, gracious presence as we face ourselves more honestly. I think of Jesus with the woman at the well.

Delight in and Dream of Dignity

Thirdly, as I got to know Rebecca over the first few weeks of therapy, I began to Delight in and Dream of her Dignity as someone made in the image of God. We do not find it too difficult to focus on the dark side of life and on weaknesses, for that is what people usually bring to counseling, but it is important to notice strengths and to affirm the gifts and dignity of someone made in the image of God. That image, although defaced and distorted by sin, is still very evident. In everyone we can see glimpses of their God-given beauty and dignity. I often have the image in my mind of human beings as "glorious ruins" (commonly attributed to Francis Schaeffer). I imagine what some ancient ruined castle or cathedral would be like if restored to its former glory.

The recent emphasis of "positive psychology" shifts the focus away from pathology and illness to nurturing character traits of "love, forgiveness, courage, perseverance, moderation, civic sense, spirituality and wisdom." (Vitz, 2005, p.19) Tan (2006) has

written a helpful article on applying Positive Psychology.

I see positive aspects of personality, for example, in artistic or musical creativity, in the ability to carefully organize and plan and in sensitivity to other's pain. I found myself trying to envision Rebecca with her God-given temperament and all her gifts being used to the full and her sinful desires and patterns taken away. I asked myself "what does God desire for Rebecca – now and in the future?" (I think this is what Paul is doing in his great prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23.) I tried to help her reframe her struggle and suffering to be able to see how God was using it to change her character to be more like Christ. Like most perfectionists, Rebecca had high moral standards, a great work ethic, and incredible integrity, and because she was eager to please, she was always extremely helpful to others. She desperately wanted to do what is right and good. This good side of perfectionism should be affirmed and enjoyed. It is part of the diversity of God's good creation that he has made some of us with a love for order and structure and high standards. These are character traits and virtues that are to be encouraged. But as we will see, even these good traits can become distorted and exaggerated as some of the motives behind them become self-centered, self-protective, and sinful.

Discern the Damage to her Dignity

Fourthly, before I moved to help Rebecca see her own sin and depravity, I wanted to discern the Damage to her Dignity that had been done by others' sin. How had she been disappointed in her longings for love and acceptance from parents, siblings, friends, or a spouse? How had she been betrayed and damaged by physical, mental, or sexual abuse, leaving a proneness to shame, anxiety, fear, anger, and lack of trust? How had she been defiled by another's lust and lies? I weep, sometimes openly, more commonly inwardly, as I hear terrible stories of deception, betrayal, revenge, and loss of love and hope. I find comfort in knowing that God's heart is full of grief over the sin and brokenness of the world. "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness had become… The Lord was grieved… and his heart was filled with pain" (Gen 6:5-6). Entering God's grief and suffering over the world and entering into suffering with others, "weeping with those who weep," is part of our calling. As we do this, we have to face the inevitable questions from our clients: "Why is this happening to me?" "Where is God?" and "If there is a God, how can he be good and allow me to suffer in this way?" In Albert Camus' (1948) novel *The Plague,* the central characters wrestle with the painful question of the existence of God when there is so much suffering on earth. Chaim Potok (1966) in *The Chosen*, writes of a Jewish rabbi, who has a brilliant son, crying out to God for a son who had not only a great mind, but heart, soul, compassion and the ability to suffer and carry pain. Counselors need all of these! In fact the Hebrew concept of "heart" as the center of our being includes emotions and thoughts.

Rebecca, unlike three of her siblings, had perfectionist tendencies from an early age, but these were reinforced by her perfectionist culture and by her parents' focus on her faults and deficiencies, rather than on the many things she did well. The latter were taken for granted! She was raised Korean-American, but was taught traditional Korean values. Many Korean parents expect high, if not perfect academic performance. They will often hire tutors to help their children get A's. Korean parents also want a perfect reputation. "Anything," Rebecca said, "that is shameful is supposed to be hidden or swept under the rug. Even pastors are not exempt from the influence of Korean culture. I know of a case where a teenage girl got pregnant and confronted the pastor for counseling. Much to her surprise the pastor encouraged her to abort the baby. He simply wanted to protect the reputation of the parents."

Rebecca's parents also influenced her. "I recall many times after I finished my chores like sweeping the kitchen floor or vacuuming the carpet, expecting my mom to thank me or affirm me for doing my chores. However, instead of hearing words of encouragement, much to my dismay, she would say things like 'You missed a spot.' This little phrase really did impact me, so that whenever I did the dishes or cleaned my room, I would make sure it was immaculate. Along with my mom, even though my dad is not a perfectionist, he has indirectly influenced me to become a perfectionist. I specifically remember a time when I wanted to arrange a delicious tray of food for him. Somehow my hands slipped, and I managed to drop the tray. All the dishes and food came tumbling down with a loud clatter. Instead of asking if I was okay, I remember my dad scorning me for being clumsy. Since then I have felt the pressure to be 'perfect' and 'flawless.'"

Other clients and students come to mind. John remembers his father as a workaholic and a hard taskmaster who expected his sons to mow the lawn and leave perfect lines as on a Wimbledon tennis court. Suzy remembers her father sexually abusing her when she was a child and having to cover the sense of guilt and shame by pleasing everyone and being the brightest and most beautiful at school lest anyone ever discovered her terrible secret. Michael remembers his parents' quarrels and the constant threats of divorce. In his insecurity Michael created his own very con-

trolled world of symmetry, structure, and order in his bedroom. David remembers his grandmother repeatedly holding him down in a bath of water to punish him for some minor mistake. Believing her lie that he was such a bad person, he worked incredibly hard to get straight A's and dress perfectly so that the punishment would stop. I wept as I heard some of these stories and grieved the wounds and scars.

I often tell my students that we need to learn to be "good groaners" on this earth. We are called to rejoice in the hope of the gospel, but also called to groan because we live with all the terrible effects of the fall, other's sin and our own sin. Paul wrote that the "whole creation has been groaning.... Not only so, but we… groan…" (Rom 8:22-23). Rebecca needed permission to be sad, to grieve, and to be angry. She had become so good at controlling her emotions that she needed help to connect her thoughts with her feelings; to sometimes stay with the feelings and recognize them. Often she would feel guilty for feeling angry or sad. She needed to learn to weep and groan well over sin and evil in the world, but also to be righteously angry and appropriately assertive in relationships, and to distinguish assertiveness from control.

As I enter deeply into the grief and loss of my clients and empathize with the ways in which they have been wounded by the fall and by other's sin, I find that a strange movement occurs in their hearts as they begin to see more clearly how they have contributed to their suffering and the pain of others by their own sin. It is often only after I have listened well to their stories and allowed trust between us to grow that I earn the right to ask difficult questions that may expose sinful attitudes of the heart. David, after telling me about his "evil grandmother," began to face his sadness, rage, and desire that "she would burn in hell." Gradually he was able to move towards forgiveness and leave justice in the hands of God.

As trust grew in our relationship, I could sense that Rebecca was becoming more and more dependant on me. She wanted me to tell her what to do and how to do it. She longed for a good protective parent. I felt the pull of counter transference in my desire to be that good parent at one moment and then felt anger and frustration at her dependence on me and her unwillingness to take risks. She enjoyed the way I accepted her with all her imperfections (her parents had not done that), but was frustrated by my unwillingness to do what they did in giving very clear and rigid guidelines for behavior and life choices. I wanted her to move towards maturity in making her own decisions and being more dependent on God and his guidelines for her life. She was very stuck in all or nothing thinking, a desire for complete control or no control at all. Also, like most perfectionists, having recognized the downside of her perfectionism, she wanted to change, but she still thought in very black and white, all or nothing ways, so change had to be completed tomorrow or not at all! She had little experience of living in the in between world of little by little, day by day, where most of life is lived!

Part of the healing in therapy comes from recognizing this transference and being able to provide a corrective relational experience where I reacted (surprisingly to her) in different ways from her earlier childhood relationships. As I (and others around her) accepted her and showed grace with her very obvious imperfections rather than responding with harsh, critical and legalistic expectations, her old patterns of relationship were disturbed and disrupted and new patterns began to form.

Disturbing and Disrupting Depravity

Fifthly, we moved into the stage of what might be called Disturbing and Disrupting Depravity. I am defining depravity as the damage, distortion, and disorder resulting from Adam and Eve's original sin (the fall), other's sin, and our own sin. This affects every part – mind, emotions, will, and body. God is at work in us, by his spirit, redeeming every aspect of our being, but he often uses or allows difficult circumstances to discipline and bring healing in our lives. Dan Allender (1999) writes, "God promises redemption but his sacred path leads us away from safety, predictability and comfort." (p. 19). When we are insecure, afraid, and angry, our self protective defense mechanisms and the idols that we cling to for comfort and help are exposed.

Mark McMinn (2004), in *Why Sin Matters*, discusses the research that painfully demonstrates how pride makes us terribly blind to our own sin (p. 63-77). He shows how we tend to see ourselves as more capable and better than we really are; how we tend to explain away our failures, taking credit when things go well and blaming others when things go badly. We do not see very clearly how prone we are to weakness and errors in our thinking. We tend to see evidence that confirms our beliefs and ignore contradictory evidence. It is not surprising therefore that we have a hard time taking responsibility for our own sin and folly. As T.S. Eliot (1962, p. 118) said, "Human kind cannot bear very much reality."

We can often see clearly how we have been hurt and betrayed, but it is much harder to see how we have damaged others and offended God by our sinful responses. Our sinful desires and dreams, our wrong thinking and feeling patterns, our self protective style of relationships, our bitterness and desire for revenge, our avoidance of conflict and pain, and our idolatries

are often exposed in counseling.

Cognitive approaches are obviously the mainstay of disturbing and disrupting wrong thinking. Our minds need to be renewed (Rom 12:2). As Rebecca and I talked, I would often point out examples of all or nothing thinking, and I would ask what thoughts might be more reasonable to help her to live in that unfamiliar world between all and nothing, black and white. She also became able to identify the lies she had come to believe about herself and about God.

The effects of the fall may also be felt in the biological sphere. Some people are vulnerable to malfunction of brain cells and neurotransmitters causing depression, anxiety, or sometimes frank psychosis. Medication may be necessary to disrupt and heal this part of depravity. We are beginning to understand much more about the interaction of our thoughts and our brain structure and chemistry, and about the feedback system between the two. Brain activity can affect thoughts and emotions; stress, trauma and our choices can affect thoughts and emotions which in turn affect the brain (Siegel, 1999, Cozolino, 2002). Certain antidepressants are helpful in conjunction with talking and behavioral therapies for perfectionist and obsessive thinking (Roth & Fonagy, 2003; Nathan and Gorman, 2002). Our task is to push back the effects of the fall wherever we find them. Rebecca found antidepressants helpful over a two year period when her perfectionism became more extreme and she became obsessive in her thinking and behavior. Exercise and a healthy diet were helpful too.

I also had to help Rebecca to disrupt and resist the influence of Satan where he had obtained a "foothold" in her life (Eph 4:27). This often happens in areas where our sinful nature is particularly weak, perhaps lust and pornography in one person, or anger and loss of control in another. For Rebecca it was her craving for approval and her desire to be in control of her life where the temptation seemed strongest. I was able to help her to recognize and ignore the devil's voice as he whispered in her ear "You'll never be good enough." "You should never make mistakes." The devil is called the "father of lies." (John 8:44) "You can make sure you are in control in this situation. Make sure you never experience anything that reminds you of that terrifying shame and humiliation again." It is admittedly very hard to know the difference between the devil's voice and the thoughts that arise from our sinful nature. Paul does not have a neat formula for making this distinction. He knew that we are at war with the world, the flesh (sinful nature), and the devil, and that we needed to learn to protect ourselves with armor!

Probably the most powerful means of exposing sinful heart attitudes is to ask good questions. Jesus would often tell stories or ask a question and then walk away! This type of question often acts like a depth charge, or delayed action grenade. It sinks deep into the person's heart and explodes with some critical new awareness or perspective provoked by the question. God asked Adam and Eve in the garden, after they had hidden from him in shame and guilt, "where are you?" (Gen 3:9) He knew where they were, but he wanted them to think about why they were hiding from him. When Elijah ran from Jezebel in terror after his great victory over the prophets of Baal, he hid in a cave and God asked him the same question twice (I Kings 19): 'What are you doing here, Elijah?" To Jonah in his fury at God for forgiving the Ninevites, God repeats another question: "Do you have a right to be angry, Jonah?" (Jon 4:4, 9) The purpose of these questions was surely to provoke heart searching and self-reflection. "Yes, why on earth am I so scared?" "Why have I run?" "What am I doing here?" It is to promote internal dialogue rather than spoon feeding a mini-sermon with all the answers and what-to-dos neatly packaged for consumption! So it is a challenge for any counselor to be creative with such questions in helping people to examine their own hearts and expose their sin. Dan Allender (1999) puts this well as he writes: "My calling is to intrigue, disrupt and invite the other person to consider their own heart." (p. 235)

Over the course of counseling, whenever the context seemed appropriate, I asked Rebecca questions to challenge her thinking. Here are some examples: "What are you afraid will happen if you do not get straight A's?" "How will people think of you if you are not dressed immaculately and your skin flawless?" How important to you is it that everyone likes you?" "Do you remember when you first felt shame like that?" "Can you really keep everything in your life under your control?" "What did Satan mean when he said that Adam and Eve would be like God if they ate the fruit?" "What do you think Jesus meant when he said "Be perfect…" (Matt 5:48) and "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:20)? "What do you think the apostle Peter meant when he wrote, 'Your beauty should not come from outward adornment…Instead it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit' (1 Pet 3:3-4)? "How does God see you? Is he punishing you? Does he accept you with all your blemishes and failures?" "Does God expect that you will never fail or sin after you become a Christian?" "Do you think that your dependence on other people's approval and your ambition to reach the perfect weight and to get straight A's could be seen as a form of idolatry?"

These questions were uncomfortable and challenging for Rebecca, disturbing and disrupting her normal thought patterns, confronting her with her own sin. As we discussed them and unpacked the meaning of Scriptures that she had misunderstood, they had the effect of drawing and directing her towards a different perspective which offered freedom from the tyranny and lies of unhealthy perfectionism. The truth was beginning to set her free from the lies she had believed about God and about herself. What was so important was not just the cognitive restructuring, but the experience of grace in the therapeutic relationship, an imperfect model of God's gracious relationship with her. As another young woman said to me and to her community of believers, "You accepted me with the worst hanging out." Just as experiences of a lack of grace and shame so often lock in perfectionist patterns in the psyche, it is an experience of grace that ultimately unlocks the prison of neurotic perfectionism. She was able to respond to the difficult questions because she knew that I accepted her just as she was – flaws, foolishness, and fragility, the lot!

Draw and Direct

Sixthly and finally, I wanted to Draw and Direct (Allender, 1999, p.200-202) Rebecca towards new perspectives and hope. In a way, from the very beginning of counseling, in how I drew out and understood her story, to how I discovered her dignity and depravity and discerned damage to that dignity, I was drawing her in a particular direction. The Bible speaks of many directions with the ultimate goal of being "sanctified through and through" (1 Thess 5:23), of becoming Christ-like. This involved several things: Sorrow and grief over the damage done by her parents ignorance and sin; repentance and sorrow over her own sinful responses; a growing understanding of herself and of the character of God; working against her sinfulness and fallenness in every area of life; putting off her old nature and putting on the new (Eph 4:22-24); having her mind renewed (Rom 12:2); learning to love God and her neighbor more truly; moving towards true humanness, wholeness and holiness.

I wanted to help Rebecca to understand her own story in the light of God's big story of creation, fall, redemption and future glory. I want to draw and direct her away from the idols of appearance and performance towards the true and living God, away from a life of frustration, despair and legalism, to a vision of gradual change towards who she was intended to be, towards love, faith, truth, and hope, a transformation that would be completed in glory.

Along the way I also shared with her a page from the story of *The Velveteen Rabbit* to illustrate how long, slow, deep, painful, but good the transformation may be. I wrote in my book *Perfecting Ourselves to Death* (Winter, 2005):

> In the story of *The Velveteen Rabbit* we meet the toys in a children's nursery. The old Skin Horse, we are told, was balding and showing some of his seams. His tail was thin where children had pulled the hairs to string bead necklaces. He had seen many other toys come and eventually break their mainsprings and pass on, but being old and wise, he knew about the "strange and wonderful" nursery magic.
>
> "What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender…. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out-handle?" [Appearance and performance] "Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."
>
> "Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.
>
> "Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."
>
> "Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"
>
> "It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand" (Bianco, 1975, p. 16-17).

Mature human beings are more like soft, worn-out, stuffed animals than hard, brittle, mechanical toys that can be made to look shiny and bright and perform well but easily break. Perfectionists often seem more like those good-looking, shiny, mechanical toys. Over time, however, a slow but sure mellowing and humanizing can take place, if only they are willing to take the risk of being involved in relationships, letting go of control, and allowing God to work to change them. They become more like God wants them to be: more human, more real, more like the only perfect man - Christ!" (p. 172-173).

The Healing Power of Relationships

As we talked about the practical ways in which change happens I also showed her a humorous episode from the movie, *Mostly Martha* (Nettelbeck, 2002), to illustrate some of the common grace ways in which God disrupts our lives and pushes us out of our controlling and rigid ways into new and better patterns. The movie also illustrates the common grace healing power of a loving and grace-filled relationship.

Martha is a chef at a high-end German restaurant. She lives a lonely but ordered existence in her immaculate apartment. She is regarded as one of the best chefs in town. She has a very hard time sharing her inner world with people (even her psychotherapist) and takes refuge in the more familiar and secure arena of recipes and food. Her perfectionism serves her well in her job most of the time ("I'm not obsessive" she says, "I'm just precise"), but tends to fly off the handle at the slightest criticism of the food she has so carefully prepared. Then her world is turned upside down by her sister's death, and Martha finds herself caring for her grieving, eight year-old, unhappy niece. This relationship is tense and after one particularly difficult moment, Martha's life script is poignantly revealed as she says to little Lena: "I wish I had a recipe for you that I could follow." Her perfectionism is then further disrupted by a delightful, relaxed Italian chef with whom she now has to share her kitchen at the restaurant. In the context of these two challenging relationships, we see the beginning of a transformation as Martha's warmth, fun, and humanness are drawn out of her. A new reality tests the priority of her rigid routines.

I encouraged Rebecca to get involved more in her local church where she received good teaching, but needed to be part of a small fellowship group where she could hear other people's struggles and hopefully feel safe enough to share some of her own. This proved to be another context in which she experienced grace from other people.

Over the months of our conversations and as a result of all the other positive experiences in her life, Rebecca began to understand the depths of God's grace towards her and to let go of trying to control everything. Her fears of failure and rejection subsided, and the positive aspects of her perfectionism were more evident. She learned to accept her own and other's imperfections and to be able to "groan" about the fallenness of the world and to look forward to the day when everything will be renewed and when we will understand more fully God's purpose for us all. A glimpse of what is to come gave her so much hope and anticipation. I wanted Rebecca to understand that the remnants of glory in the glorious ruin that she is and we all are, will be built on and restored so that she will grow from one degree of glory to the next. We reminded ourselves of the long view in the apostle Paul's writings: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Rom 8:18). "We, who… reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory…." (2 Cor 3:18). "He will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (Phil 3:20). We also read together C.S. Lewis's words in Mere Christianity (1960):

> The command Be ye perfect is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command…. He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what He said (p. 160).

We spaced out the sessions from weekly to every other week to once a month and then to an occasional session to catch up and review. There will probably be times when the negative side of her perfectionism will rear its head again, but she now has the tools and perspective to deal with that much more effectively. Her relationships to God, her family, her friends and her work are all, slowly but surely, being transformed.

Rebecca understands more deeply now that God loves her unconditionally, that she is a precious daughter of the King, a princess in the Kingdom, and because he loves her that much, he does not want her to stay the same. But her motives now for being and doing good have changed. No longer are they driven so much by fear of rejection by God or others, now they are more motivated by gratitude to God for his love and grace. Rebecca has also experienced this reality in her marriage. Now a recovering perfectionist, she wrote "I am slowly overcoming my unhealthy perfectionist tendencies through a very healthy marriage. My husband's unconditional love and constant affirmation have tremendously helped me to tackle my struggles with low self-esteem and an unhealthy desire to hide behind my 'perfection.' In the past, besides my family, I had a hard time opening up to people and being vulnerable. As a self defense mechanism I tried to build a wall in many of my relationships so they would not see any flaws or imperfection. In short, even at the early stages of

my marriage, I feel that I have been healed and freed from negative thinking and view of myself. I have been free to be myself – flawed and imperfect."

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In Dialog with Martin Buber: Toward a Christian Psychology of Interpersonal Relations

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This article offers a contribution to the development of a Christian approach to interpersonal relations. It does so by explicating key metaphors found in the thought of the Jewish philosopher-theologian, Martin Buber and by examining implications for a Christian understanding of interpersonal relationships. The importance of engaged dialog across faith traditions is asserted as critical to the development of a faith-based, intellectually rigorous, and critical approach to the field of interpersonal relationships.

The effort to develop a distinctively Christian psychology is an important expression of an authentic and committed faith that claims the whole of one's life and cannot be simply compartmentalized into secular professional life and private religious belief. Affirming the comprehensive truth claims of the Christian faith and maintaining the integrity of scientific inquiry raise important issues that continue to call forth sustained reflection, research, and discussion. In this paper I offer a contribution to the Christian psychology of interpersonal relations drawn from an exploration of ideas across religious traditions focused on the choice of Martin Buber as dialog partner. While articles continue to be published on the relevance of Buber's thought for psychotherapy (see most recently Watson, 2006) the broader implications of his ideas for the entire field of interpersonal relations have yet to be fully explicated. As this article will suggest, current scientific approaches to interpersonal relations and interpersonal communication fail to do justice to Buber's key concepts and insights rooted in a Judeo-Christian worldview.

Martin Buber is widely considered an intellectual giant of the twentieth century. During his life (1878-1965), Buber made significant contributions to philosophy, theology, and the revival of Hasidic influences in Judaism. He was a multi-faceted religiously committed thinker, writer, educator, and political leader initially in Germany and then in the intellectual and political life of Israel. Buber's work offers the rare combination of a deep commitment to the Jewish faith with a deep appreciation for Christian teaching. He is most remembered for his philosophy of dialog; however, Buber did more than articulate the notion of dialog in his scholarly writings. He carried his ideas into practice through active dialog across religious and cultural boundaries often at considerable cost to his reputation and stature among the more Orthodox in the Jewish community. He was active in promoting dialog and social justice between Israelis and Arabs in the midst of the Middle East conflict that continues to this day.

The importance of Buber's thought extends beyond Judaism, and given its basis in Biblical sources, has much to offer to Christian thinkers as well. While recognizing that Christian psychology has much to gain from a return to its own "classic sources" (Oden, 2003) and to pursue a recovery of its rich conceptual history (Roberts, 1993), as well as recognize the depth of the antithesis between truth rooted in Christ and truth rooted in non-Christian sources, it certainly must also be the case that Christian psychology ought to dialog with other traditions outside of its own self-identified community. Christian psychology can measure its value in part through sustained contact and discussion with "secular" scientific psychology, as Jones (1994) has suggested. Secondly, Christian psychology can discover what is shared in common across traditions and what is distinctively "Christian" through dialog with other faiths. The importance of dialog may be ignored in historical and cultural settings where Christianity has been dominant and its worldview hegemonic. However, the postmodern, global context of our present age increasingly challenges any illusions of Christian hegemony and undermines aspirations to a Christian psychology, if that psychology is based upon discourse purely internal to the Christian community. Christian psychology cannot achieve credibility if its discourse is monological and fails to include dialogue across religious and cultural traditions.

An openness to dialog can be maintained without succumbing to a postmodern relativism, however. When Christian psychologists clarify the role of what Wolterstorff (1976) has described as "control beliefs" in their work, they are properly engaged in rational inquiry that acknowledges the presupposi-

tional character of all reflection. Clearly the project of orthodoxy and of deepening what are distinctive Christian control beliefs in psychology must be pursued vigorously, but to avoid the possibility of Christian psychology becoming a discourse intelligible only to other Christians, the necessity for authentic dialog with other traditions, worldviews, and communities must be pursued with equal vigor.

What makes possible a dialog with other faith traditions? While the movement toward a deepening of orthodoxy searches for resources in Scripture and in the classics of the Christian tradition, a dialogical approach must find ways to move toward the worldview and language of other traditions. In the Reformed Protestant tradition, the work of Abraham Kuyper (1931) has sought to find this balance between "special revelation" and "general revelation" in the life of Christian scholarship. Christian scholarship especially in the sciences acquires greater meaning if it exhibits a dialog between special and general revelation, or in other words, respectfully draws upon insights from a plurality of traditions. The recognition that all "religiously committed scholars" share a similar concern with wholeness and integration of life and faith is a common starting point for dialog. Acknowledging the reality of "general revelation" leads to the sort of openness Miroslav Volf (1996) describes as "embrace" of the Other rather than "exclusion." This tension between exclusion and embrace is found on multiple levels: cultural, academic, political, and interpersonal. This paper reports the results of an interfaith dialog of scholarship marked by embrace rather than exclusion. I will put into practice the principle of dialog by seeking a Christian approach to understanding interpersonal relations in dialog with the thought of the great Jewish philosopher of dialog, Martin Buber. My interest in Buber's thought reflects a long-standing conversation rooted in open intellectual encounter with a thinker outside the Christian tradition and whose work has inspired in me and my students an understanding of ethical challenges and spiritual depth of interpersonal relationships. The choice of Buber as a central dialog partner in developing a Christian approach to interpersonal relations is not accidental. It reflects the close relationship between Christian and Jewish "control beliefs." This connection has led Greenberg (2004) to aptly describe Christianity and Judaism as "covenantal partners in a postmodern world." Partnerships between Christian and Jewish scholars offer enhanced conceptual resources for both traditions in the project of developing biblical wisdom relative to the science of psychology and interpersonal relations.

In this paper, I enter into such a "covenantal partnership" by drawing upon conceptual resources drawn primarily from Buber's classic 1923 text, *I and Thou.* It is my contention that Buber offers significant points of connection with a Christian psychology of interpersonal relations. I would suggest Buber's ontological assertion of the radically relational nature of human being reflects biblical insight, that his analysis of the crisis of human relationship is sensitive to the spiritual roots of our modern condition, and that biblical concepts offer "talking points" for an ongoing engagement and participation in the developing science of interpersonal relations. The paper will conclude with some reflections on connections between Buber's thought and a Christian psychology of interpersonal relations.

Human Being as Relation

The opening aphorisms of Martin Buber's masterpiece *I and Thou* (1923) establish a radically relational definition of human being. In describing human being as fundamentally shaped by two basic relations between self and world, the "basic words" of I-You and I-It establish fundamental modes of existence in which relationships, not individual substances or self-enclosed internal qualities, define human identity. Buber states, "There is no I as such, but only the I of the basic word I-You and the I of the basic word, I-It" (Buber, 1970, p.54) It is this assertion which inaugurates a new vision of human being as located in relationships with others not in the solitary Cogito of Descartes or in the radical individualism of John Locke. The significance of this move is described by fellow philosopher, Emmanual Levinas:

> That valuation of the dia-logical relation and its phenomenological irreducibility, its fitness to constitute a meaningful order that is autonomous and as legitimate as the traditional and privileged subject-object correlation in the operation of knowledge—that will remain the unforgettable contribution of Martin Buber's philosophical labors… Nothing could limit the homage due him. Any reflection on the alterity of the other in his or her irreducibility to the objectivity of objects and the being of beings must recognize the new perspective Buber opened—and find encouragement in it (Levinas, 1993, p. 41).

Buber' claim that selfhood as such did not exist apart from relationships asserted a priority to relational life that demanded a radical shift in orientation to human life not only for modern epistemology conceived largely in Cartesian terms of the subject-object relation. The exploration of a profoundly relational approach to human life continues

to stimulate every aspect of scholarly and practical life up to the present time in theology and ministry, in discussions of multiculturalism, in the politics of recognition and pluralism, and in the field of interpersonal relations. Although Buber was by no means the only thinker of his age promoting the primacy of relations, his voice was marked by its theological profundity, philosophical acumen, and sociological awareness.

According to Buber, contrary to the modern understanding since Descartes and Locke, human beings are not discrete, self-sufficient individuals, but relational creatures in which individuality emerges as a particular stance within a given web of connections between self and other. For Buber human identity is not first of all "in" the individual to which relationships are added, or merely attached like badges or chosen like social roles. Nor can human identity be understood as a composite of two substances, the rational and the material. To use a term developed by James Olthuis (2001), the basic mode of human being following Buber must be characterized as "withing," not as individual, isolated selfhood which then may or may not participate in social roles. The human being is relational "all the way down" to its very essence. The fundamentally relational character of human identity is therefore essential to what it means to understand oneself prior to knowing myself as an "individual" or a part of a larger collective or community. To use a phenomenological expression, the human person is "always and already" found in relations with others before consciousness of selfhood can arise, and it is within a network of relations with others that the individual self must be situated. We cannot describe our individual selves without the use of language imbued with interpersonal and social referents.

Buber further claims that the relational character of human identity is complicated by the "twofoldness" of human relating captured in the distinction between the I-You and the I-It. Although both the I-It and the I-You co-exist in a dialectical fashion in human relational life, Buber clearly points toward the I-You as the ethically and spiritually superior mode of life. For Buber the I-You attitude embodies the realm of the "spirit" which inevitably must appear in human life in specific forms and concrete relationships. The I-It attitude establishes the world of objectivity, the world of analyzable parts, and functional roles accessible to scientific knowledge and practical application. The I-It is characterized by the subject-object relation in which the other appears to the self as a thing among things, an object among objects, a some-thing existing in a network of cause-effect relationships to be manipulated and managed. In the I-It attitude the other is a composite of functions that can be broken down into parts and analyzed in their discrete characteristics.

The I-You on the other hand is an attitude in which the whole of the other transcends its parts, in which the other is not a thing but a person. In the I-You attitude, the whole is greater than its psychophysical parts, or in Kantian terms, the other is not a means but an end in him or herself. Yet the I-You is a mode of relating that can only be understood in a dialectical relationship with its opposite, the I-It. Both attitudes exist in a dynamic and mutually dependent interaction. Still, it is the attitude of the I-You which offers human being its true and enduring destiny in immediate relation with others and ultimately in complex relationships reflected in broader community. Buber states, "And in all the seriousness of truth, listen: without It a human being cannot live. But whoever lives only with that is not human" (Buber, 1970, p.85). To live in a human relational world dominated by the attitude of the I-It is to live in an alienated condition, to live without the "spirit" that makes us truly human. Buber's account of the relationship between the two attitudes often waxes poetic as in the phrase, the I-It is the "cocoon" and the I-You the "chrysalis" or "the sublime melancholy of our lot that every you must become an It in our world." But, he clearly and consistently asserts that human nature is rooted in the necessity of shaping human identity through the character of our relations with others. Buber view of human being as relation is holistic, dynamic, not functional or static. Human beings are essentially relational, but must "realize" true relatedness through concrete forms in history and culture, implying a deeply existential view of personal responsibility for the course of human history, culture, and society. For Buber, both human history and personal development unfold in the dialectical relationship between two ways of being, I-You and I-It as they interact and intermingle in concrete relationships and communities.

Metaphors of the I-It

In *I and Thou,* Buber describes human life in the relational mode of I-It in several dimensions. These dimensions describe in seminal ways the basic modes of alienation found in human relating. These modes of alienation can be distilled from Buber's account of the I-It in terms of what Foucault (1973) has called "operative metaphors." I will identify three such discursive metaphors of the I-It which can be drawn Buber's thought: the metaphor of "superficiality," the metaphor of "emptiness," and the metaphor of "domination." All three of these "operative metaphors" together form a characterization of how the I-It attitude contributes to the loss of humanity and

alienation from a true realization of human possibility in "good" interpersonal relations. I will briefly characterize each of these "operative metaphors" for the I-It attitude.

The I-It is defined by Buber as consisting of planned and purposeful action directed by goals in which others become means toward some end. This mode of relational existence is characterized as yielding what Buber calls "experience" (*Erfahrung*). In the I-It attitude, knowledge of the Other(s) and conduct directed toward Other(s) is determined by their place as objects within specific cognitive schema, plans, and projects. Human relating in the attitude of the I-It constructs Others as objects of use with a certain place and a limited purpose. Human beings become "resources," units of production, roles, etc. In the modern world, the self and other frequently enter into implicit or sometimes explicit contracts in which the goal is an exchange of services, pleasures, or functions is defined by and for both parties. According to Buber, in the mode of the I-It, we engage in a reduction of the other to an object of our experience, and therefore come to know the other only "on the surface" or in a superficial sense determined by the degree to which the Other can be reduced to an object of our experience. Correspondingly, the self or the "I" of the I-It attitude is reduced to an "operator" or "manager," who manipulates and controls this other for specific purposes and goals.

A clear example of I-It relationship defined in terms of superficiality is the type of relationship developed between prostitute and customer. The relationship constitutes a "contract" in which each party has a role to play for the other. Each role has specific rules and boundaries including its own particular etiquette, e.g. no kissing on the mouth. The relationship requires each party to perform certain functions for the other. The customer "uses" the body of the prostitute in order to obtain a sexual experience, a simulation of "making love." The customer "has sex" with the prostitute and evaluates the experience in terms of its thrills, its high, the intensity of the orgasm, etc. The customer may have specific preferences as conditions for sexual arousal that require the prostitute to exhibit a certain look, play a specific role in a sexual drama, speak certain prescribed lines, etc. The prostitute must make her body available and satisfy the desires of the customer in exchange for payment. She may be more or less skillful in giving the customer what he wants and more or less able to play her part in a convincing "performance." Although the existence of prostitution demonstrates the I-It attitude in explicit terms, it is by no means an isolated event in human society. As metaphor, the image of "prostitute" describes well many human interactions in which superficiality, lack of meaningful participation, and purely functional relationships are the actual quality of the relationship. "Prostituting oneself" describes many human interactions where persons contract with others, either implicitly or explicitly, to be used by the other, usually in exchange for some tangible reward. The woman/wife who trades sex for the security of husband, home, and income or the fawning employees who surrender their integrity to win favor from an employer come to mind as relevant examples.

On the subjective side of the I-It attitude, individuals frequently assume the role of manipulator, seducer, consumer, or "player." From this position, relationships function as ego enhancers in which successful manipulation is worn as a badge of prowess and power. One thinks of the "rock groupie" who proudly brags of famous musicians she has "bedded." Such "players" live what Kierkegaard described as the "aesthetic way of life" focused upon evermore exciting adventures, thrills, and ecstasies in their relationships, often with sexuality and conspicuous consumption as the focus of relationships. What the contemporary "hip hop" world has termed "big pimpin" reflects a world of relationships marked by consumerism of things, places, and persons. Such "players" experience sex virtually through the fantasy world of pornography or the actual world of seduction and recreational sex. In either case, the relationship with the Other is defined by the properties of experience itself while other transcendent meanings are excluded, such as commitment, fidelity, and integrity. Full and authentic presence with the Other is suspended, even excluded in favor of pretense, deception, and illusion. The tendency toward inauthenticity displayed in modern relationships has been documented by many social observers in terms such as Fromm's (1947) "marketing orientation," Reisman's (1950) "other-directed character," or Lasch's (1979) "narcissistic personality."

The I-It is not only found in "superficial" relationships, but can be described under the metaphor of "emptiness." Buber locates human relating governed by mechanical routine and functionality within the province of the I-It. The I-It appears where human relationships assume the character of mechanical interactions, and persons become robots, zombies, or androids. The I-It emerges where persons "go through the motions" without fully and genuinely being present with Others. This manifestation of the I-It appears in many modern work environments structured in assembly line fashion, in the bureaucracies of the post-industrial society where humans function like computers processing massive volumes of information about each other, and in the

deadening routines of urban and suburban life, wading through traffic, waiting in lines, waiting on hold, going through security, etc. The modern experience of the I-It is found in the pervasive tendency toward standardization, of being only "one among many," as being a nobody or anybody in interactions with others. The I-It attitude tends toward a preoccupation with policies, procedures, and rules, with analysis and assessment creating a culture of objectification described by sociologist Max Weber's (1958) term "the iron cage." It is this choking application of "rationalization" to every aspect of life in which persons become units of production, cases for bureaucracy and slots in databases that typifies the world created by the I-It attitude and yielding the experience of "emptiness" according to Buber.

The impact of routine and functionality is not limited to the public domains of industry and government, but can be found in "close" relationships as well. The detachment of individuals sitting together in restaurants in stony silence, existing in the same house watching separate televisions, or listening to I-pods with nothing "between" them is found throughout much of the Western world. Division of labor, goal setting, rigid scheduling of time, etc. may allow for economic productivity, affluence, and maximum efficiency in daily life, but such things also create an emptiness and lack of meaning in "close relationships." Therapists working with "close relationships" tell story after story of individuals merely going through the motions of marriage and family, managing their lives in a functional way, but yearning for a deeper and genuine presence to the persons they sense are "distant" or "absent." I think of the husband who takes his dinner and sits in front of the television, or the wife who retreats to her bedroom to watch a romantic comedy while her husband watches sports. Such isolation and detachment is often attributed to the "busyness," stress, and over-scheduling of life, but whatever the causes, the I-It quality of these patterns suggest a loneliness in which each individual exists in isolation rather than relationship, vaguely yearning for a sense of belonging to someone or something greater than the individual's own ego.

A third manifestation of the I-It emerges around the issue of domination in human relating. To reduce the Other to a means, a function of my projects, a role within a social system, or an object creates a differential of power in which the Other as It becomes subject to my control, manipulation, and ultimately abuse. The dynamic here is a variation on the master-slave relationship in which the master is the dominant being and the slave an inferior but useful tool for the purposes of the master. The existential philosopher, Sartre (1953) seemed to regard all concrete relationships between persons as consisting of subject-object relations of this sort. For Sartre "hell is other people" due to the perpetual struggle to make the other an object for me, and thus to establish a relationship of dominance that preserves my freedom from determination by the Other. Buber claimed that the possibility of the I-It rests upon the capacity of human beings to take distance from Others, to bend back upon oneself and assume a "objective distance" toward the Other that is clearly captured in Sartre's analysis of the "gaze" and extended in Foucault's (1979) brilliant description of the Bentham's "panopticon" as the paradigm for the modern practice of surveillance. In the "gaze" of the subject, the other exists as an object captured within the scope my field of vision as a thing for me—I **look at** the eyes of the Other rather than **looking into** them as a spiritual being like myself. The Other as object becomes a thing to be watched, subject to my/our surveillance, prediction, and control. In reducing the other to an object, the Other is not completely exhausted in his/her being for me. There is a remainder that lies in the potential of the Other to react and respond with a freedom and agency beyond the control. This remainder poses an ongoing challenge and threat requiring constant attention and demonstrations of power often leading to abuse.

By reducing the other to an object, the interpersonal foundation for a master-slave relationship is established. The domination of the Other must be established interpersonally through an objectifying gaze that masters the other and puts him/her "in their place." The social relationships and institutional structures marked by domination are established through objectification of the other. Extending this insight has continued to nourish research and reflection in the literature of critical social science aimed toward the raising of consciousness regarding oppression of women, people of color, disabled persons, gays, and wherever the politics of identity is contested.

Metaphors of the I-You

Parallel to the basic modes of alienation marked by the attitude of the I-It, Buber also offers glimpses of the basic features of truly human relation emerging from the attitude of the I-You. The I-You attitude like the I-It can be described by explicating the operative metaphors which Buber offers. Such metaphors are representations of the I-You, that is, language that gestures toward truly human relation and presence. These gestures are both passive and active, a letting the other be other and an active recognition of the Other as not a thing but a person. In Buber's work, I find these markers to be found in his notions

of "relation," "encounter," and "mutuality."

In contrast to the I-It attitude and its quality of superficiality and mere experience of the other, Buber describes the I-You moment as a "turning toward the Other" as a whole being rather than a composite of objective features, properties, or predictable behaviors. In the attitude of the I-You, the Other is recognized directly and immediately without being reduced to an object of use, manipulation, categorization, or schematization. Turning toward the Other as Other opens the field of "relation" which belongs to neither the interiority of self nor to the external objectivity of the other. Buber considers the I-You attitude to be characterized by a presence to the Other as Other in which the I stands firm as a distinct "I" in contrast to the Other. The I-You attitude creates a region of ontology described by Buber as the "between" in which each person participates, but cannot possess. This "between" is the space in which monolog gives way to genuine dialog, where talking at or past the Other becomes a sense of "being with" the Other. Turning toward the Other moves beyond the realm of superficial experience toward greater wholeness and depth. According to Buber, in turning toward the other, a relationship emerges "by grace, it cannot be found by seeking." The You can only become You for an I as a gift of what Volf (1996) calls "self-donation." The Other cannot become a "You" when coerced, obligated, or commanded. The You appears in genuine relation when "all means have fallen away." Thus unlike the I-It which often is the mode of everyday interaction with others and marked by superficiality, I-You relating emerges only when certain conditions are met. These conditions according to Buber are emergent properties of relationships found when human beings recognize each other as whole persons rather than as functional entities performing roles or following programmed, procedure-driven, prescribed interactions. The I-You emerges when human beings stop and engage each other in a way that transcends the concrete demands of the moment, the limitations of each other's self-interested goals, and enter what Olthuis (2001) describes as the "wild spaces," the untamed openness of presence with the Other as Other.

Unlike the I-It attitude in which security, predictability, and control are the guiding themes, turning toward the Other enters the domain of the "between." The necessity of a "recognition" of otherness in order for the Other to become a "You" for me means that the ego must become vulnerable and that scripts for objectifying and functionalizing the Other must be transcended in favor of an openness to a genuine meeting between self and other. Making a relationship truly "personal" requires a "letting go," a kind of "relaxation of the ego" and its natural tendency to objectify, stereotype, and functionalize others. To do so exposes the self to risk, the risk of vulnerability, hurt, and injury. It entails a "dropping of one's guard" physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Buber describes this process "as experiencing the other side," which is a deeper connection than mere empathy, since it entails a going beyond one's self toward the other. In empathy, the individual acquires a cognitive grasp of the other's situation akin to the now trite expression, "I feel your pain." In the I-You encounter, the actual self as a whole is connected with the Other. In the manner of the I-You, such deep entrusting of self to other expands my relation to the Truth beyond the grasp of my ego through a truly "interpersonal" relationship. Relating to the other in this way opens up a spiritual reality analogous to the relationship of self to God in which the boundaries of the ego are let go in favor of the whole being made vulnerable to the Other "by faith." Unlike the superficiality that clings to I-It relationships, entering the domain of the I-You adds depth, immediacy, directness, and reality to the connection with the other. In his essay "Distance and Relation," Buber finds in the I-You attitude the full meaning of our humanity:

> Human life and humanity come into being in genuine meetings. There man learns not merely that he is limited by man, cast upon his own finitude, partialness, need of completion, but his own relation to truth is heightened by the other's different relation to the same truth—different in accordance with his individuation, and destined to take, see, and grow differently. Men need and it is granted to them, to confirm one another in their individual being by means of genuine meetings (Buber, 1965, p. 69).

In the attitude of the I-You, relationships are truly "for real." Through genuine meetings founded in the I-You attitude, the self accepts the Other as an avenue for truth to emerge. Buber describes the process as sharing with the other a common stake in the realization of our truth as human being vulnerable and at risk. In such moments, as promising and vowing, the self and other are placed in deep connection that links the total self to the other. The marriage vow is perhaps the prototype of such spiritual moments in the lives of many persons. The joining of two persons in marriage requires the promise "til death do us part" and once such vows are made, sealed by God as a sacred event, "what God has joined together let no man put asunder." The marriage sealed by God as a sacred covenant resonates at a spiritual depth untouched by the contractual relationship offered at

the local courthouse. For Buber the spiritual depth of the I-You is not to be understood in terms of feelings of liking or attraction on one hand or merely contractual obligations on the other, but as "responsibility." To be responsible is to take upon and into oneself the other's self as a sacred trust, as a holy calling to honor, love, and cherish the other as one honors, loves, and cherishes one's self. To live with this attitude toward the other is to open every relationship to the wholeness of one's self, to connect every relationship to the spiritual meaning of life; that is, to make everyday interaction with others sacred and truly holy events.

The second metaphor associated with the life of true relatedness to the Other can be captured in the notion of "encounter" in relationships. Buber in his dialectical analysis of I-It and I-You relationships described a tendency of the I-You to sink into the emptiness of the I-It. The capacity of finite human beings to sustain the attitude of the I-You is limited and subject to temporal constraints: The individual You *must* become an It when the event of relation has run its course" (Buber, 1970, p.84). Just as it seems human beings have a limited capacity to remain fully in relationship to God, human relationships suffer from the sublime melancholy that "every you must become an It in our world" (Buber, 1970, p. 68). Everyday interactions with others exhibit a complex and frustrating mix of I-It and I-You moments. For Buber, this problem is everywhere human beings are involved together in social interaction. However, the possibility of recovering from the I-It and a return to the I-You is always available in any situation. A "knowing glance" between older commuters on a train who momentarily step out of their isolation to observe a shared moment of recognition when young lovers board the train and lovingly embrace can bring forward, if for only a brief moment, a thawing of the I-It attitude.

In relationships of long duration the "return" to the I-You may emerge in the turning to the Other with a question, as the husband does in *Fiddler on the Roof,* when he asks "Do you love me?" Such moments of "return" or *teshuvah* in Hebrew are drawn from the biblical notion of repentance or "turning back to God," a remembering and restoration of the covenant between God and his people. According to Buber, human relationships require a form of "repentance" as well, a reversal of relating that transcends the mundane quality of the I-It and remembers the true spiritual connection that exists between self and other.

Such efforts toward recovery of the I-You can be described as "relationship work," not unlike the creative work of the artist who must take what is latent and bring it to realization as a form in real time and space. The work of relationships requires the same discipline as any creative effort in its need for focus and attention. Relationship work is not drudgery in the sense of pure labor, but it does demand an overcoming of the tendency toward what is easy and comfortable in functional, routine, and predictable roles typical of the attitude of the I-It. For Buber, human relating is a project which must be re-created over and over through ever new moments of encounter if it is to remain truly human, meaningful, and alive.

The creativity of the I-You attitude is found vividly in young lovers who find any activity together full of surprise and uniqueness. Surprise and uniqueness is not the exclusive domain of the young, however. To create novelty and surprise, to discover the unique moment, or a unique quality displayed by the Other is a powerful avenue by which even simple, everyday moments with Others can be "hallowed" through genuine encounter.

A capacity for affirming the other as a unique being rests upon a basic understanding of human being as endowed with an essential mission, gifts, and purpose, as highlighted in the theme of Rick Warren's (2002) *The Purpose-driven Life*. Such spiritual mantras like "God has a purpose for your life," however trite at times, do touch the reality that "specialness" makes relationships more deeply human. Finding ways to relate to others through surprise and "specialness" avoids the deadening emptiness of functional role-playing, boredom, mechanical routine, and isolation so prevalent in modern life. The feeling of romance so often lost and yearned for in contemporary marriage draws its truth from the deeper connection between genuine I-You relationships and moments of uniqueness and specialness. When Buber states in *I and Thou* the oft quoted phrase, "All actual life is encounter," he touches upon the essential fact that without creative encounter relationships perish. What makes relationships come alive is the presence of creative engagement with the other. As in the metaphor of "turning toward the Other," relational creativity is fundamentally a spiritual act rooted in the basic spiritual nature of human being. Daily life with others can be hallowed when relationships live in the Spirit of creative encounter rather than functional roles and ordered routines.

The third dimension of the I-You is defined by the metaphor of "mutuality". As Buber states:

> Relation is mutual. My *Thou* affects me, as I affect it. We are molded by our pupils and built up by our works. The "bad" man, lightly touched by the holy primary word, becomes one who reveals. How we are educated by children

and by animals! We live our lives inscrutably included within the streaming mutual life of the universe (Buber, 1965, p. 29).

For Buber the shared character of existence is larger than our relationships with other human beings. Although qualitatively unique, we experience a mutuality of sorts with all created entities, including sun and moon, mountains and trees, dogs and cats, as well as human beings. It is with spiritual beings that mutuality comes to its fullest expression. Our relationships with others and with the absolute Thou, in the person of God, are shared most profoundly through language and the experience of being addressed. In considering the realm of the interpersonal, the connection of I-You and mutuality is essential. Without mutuality, encounters with the other become struggles for domination. I become an object for the other, or the other becomes an object for me, as Sartre (1953) has so vividly demonstrated in his analysis of sado-masochism. In mutuality, relatedness becomes more than functional interaction determined by "goal-directed verbs" (Buber, 1970, p.54). The two-sided character of human relating is made present through the process of what Buber calls "inclusion." The practice of inclusion involves "imagining the real," capturing the situation of the Other, and assuming responsibility to and for the other through an openness that gives of self as well as receives the gift of the other's presence. The concept of mutuality is Buber's analogous expression of Jesus' command to "love one's neighbor as oneself". It is this fundamental mutuality which ultimately binds all human beings as "neighbors," no matter whether they live in proximity or far apart. It is mutuality which is the ontological embrace of the Other which Volf (1996) describes as the basis for compassion, forgiveness, and mercy. Buber's notion of mutuality is an ontological force impelling us toward relation, dialog, and presence that trumps objectification, exclusion, and domination.

The marriage relationship can be understood as the exemplar of mutuality. Through the shared reciprocity of marriage, couples come together and become one flesh most vividly incarnated in the fruit of their mutual love, their children. In children, the mutuality of marriage survives even divorce. The children are living testaments to mutuality for which the parents remain legally and morally responsible, regardless of the feelings of the parents for each other or their current relationship status. Mutuality is love at work in the lives of persons who as individuals are drawn into relation and transcend their individuality by entering the "between" that truly creates what Buber calls "actual life." From the mystery of divine relationships to the mundane moments of gazing into the eyes of a common housecat, Buber locates mutuality as the stuff of every genuine relation marked by direct presence and real encounter.

Buber and the Contemporary Psychology of Interpersonal Relations

Buber's writings about psychology were limited and most often critical of the pretensions of psychology to speak with scientific authority on the spiritual, fully human dimensions of personal relationships. Buber, as evidenced by the lack of references to specific research findings in his writings, seemed to have little interest in the work of empirical psychology. Insofar as psychology did become a focus, Buber often equated psychology with the analysis of inner states of consciousness as in his analysis of feelings of love in the first section of *I and Thou.* Love for Buber was first of all a "cosmic force" a deep responsibility of an I for a You that could not be reduced to a specific feeling or state of mind inside the individual. Buber was suspicious of the reductionistic tendencies in the science of psychology, its willingness to break down the wholeness of I-You relationships into functional cause-effect connections between internal states, transformed into things. Such psychological analysis reduces human life to patterns of predictable interaction that describe human action in a mechanical and functional way, precisely what Buber in characterizing the I-It suggested was de-humanizing about the modern world in general.

Two aspects of the contemporary psychology of interpersonal relations can be briefly addressed in relation to Buber's thought. The first aspect can be located in the extensive literature focused upon the field of "interpersonal communication." Discussions of interpersonal communication typically assume a skills-based approach aimed toward improving efficiency in communication and enhancement of self-esteem through greater success in interactions with others. A standard textbook on the topic of interpersonal communication authored by Adler, Rosenfeld, and Proctor (2004) exemplifies this approach. In articulating a basic purpose for learning interpersonal communication skills, Adler et al. appeal to the notion of "impression management" as the means for achieving success in life. The successful person is one who competently manages to control and influence impressions made upon others. While the authors admit this approach may appear to endorse "manipulating others," they claim it can be an "authentic" form of communication without specifying what might distinguish one approach from the other.

Adler et al. (2004) also defines what makes relationships "interpersonal" in two ways. In the first sense, relationships are interpersonal whenever they

involve two individuals. In this sense "interpersonal" simply means "dyadic communication." In the second sense, interpersonal communication is contrasted with anonymous communication. Communication becomes "interpersonal" in a qualitative sense when the unique personal qualities of others are important. Such personal meanings include uniqueness, interdependence, disclosure, and intrinsic rewards. The authors claim that given these requirements, it is likely that truly "interpersonal relationships" will be few in number. Most relationships will fall into a spectrum between personal and impersonal, and consequently, the best course is to seek a balance between the personal and impersonal in every relationship. Balance is the key since according to the authors, "interpersonal communication is rather like rich food—its fine in moderation, but too much can make you uncomfortable (Adler, et al p. 16).

Of note here is the utilitarian presupposition underlying the approach to human relating promoted by the Adler text. For Buber this sort of calculating approach to relationships rooted in self-enhancement through "impression management" or the careful titration of involvement between personal and impersonal dimensions is woefully lacking in authenticity. Its rational and formulaic approach aims toward what may be socially competent and skillful, but lacking in ethical integrity and spiritual significance beyond the self-interests of the individual. Taken on face value, such approaches exemplify the same tendencies toward the cult of self-worship described by Vitz (1977) in relation to humanistic theories of personhood. The "skills-based" approaches to interpersonal relations seem to promote nothing more than what Buber calls "egomania," thereby restricting human relationships to the realm of the I-It. Mastery and control of relationships with others characteristic of the subject-object pattern defines the range of human ethical obligations and ideals. As such the exclusive focus upon skill and competence offers the possibility of highly effective, but largely ethically deficient human beings without a significant sense of what is truly at stake in human relationships beyond self-interest.

A second body of literature addressed to topics related to interpersonal life can be found in empirically based literature often described under the rubric of the "science of close relationships." In a comprehensive textbook entitled *Odyssey of the Heart*, Harvey and Weber (2002) suggest the science of close relationships is of recent origin beginning in earnest in the 1970s. According to Harvey and Weber's positivistic interpretation, the scientific approach to relationships is recent due to the lack of a clear approach to studying such relationships in a rigorous way. They suggest that the scientific approach has a dual benefit. First, it develops objective knowledge of relationship processes and events useful for formulating public policy regarding socially important relationships such as marriage and family. Secondly, it offers individuals an objective knowledge base on which to form opinions and make decisions regarding personal relationships. As such, the science of close relationships trumps the religious and philosophical wisdom of the past concerning relationships. Whereas the utilitarian approach is largely a practical formula for managing relationships, the scientific approach seeks to gather facts and theories aimed toward establishing a body of truth versus mere opinion regarding factors involved in successful, effective, satisfying close relationships. Although the science of close relationships focuses upon knowledge development rather than skill development, the underlying presuppositions are largely similar from a Buberian perspective. The science of close relationships generates volumes of data and theory without addressing the basic spiritual and ethical tensions found in genuinely "interpersonal" relationships. The claim that a scientific reduction of "interpersonal relationships" to objective knowledge offers clear benefits is also endorsed in a recently published text entitled *Intimate Relationships* (Miller, Perlman, & Brehm, 2007). Miller, et al, suggest an analogy between relationships and car maintenance:

> Overall, then, just like cars, relationships can get preventive maintenance that can keep them from breaking down, and they can often can be fixed when they do falter….We hope that, having studied the modern science of close relationships, you are better equipped to create, understand, and manage successful, happy, rewarding relationships that last. We hope that, by shopping wisely, and then making attentive, and thoughtful investments in the care and feeding of your partnerships, you are able to develop and maintain relationships that remain gratifying to you forever. After all some people do (Miller, et al, 2007, p. 478).

Like the never-ending, but ultimately confusing stream of scientific studies reporting correlations between diet and health, the science of close relationships yields many facts but little spiritual wisdom regarding what Buber in his discussion of psychotherapy names as the "call of the abyss," the presence of the uniquely human situations one faces in daily life, where the demand to transcend the managerial attitude of I-It and achieve an authentic encounter between I and You is ever the task before us.

In fairness to the field as a whole, there are texts

in the psychology of interpersonal relations which recognize the limitations of a purely objective, scientific approach and the utilitarian, skills-based approach. The Ninth Edition John Stewart's (2006) *Bridges Not Walls* attempts to approach relationships with a critical awareness by including selections from Martin Buber and other ethically sensitive commentators. Patricia Scileppi's *Values for Interpersonal Communication* (2005) seeks to provide a basis for interpersonal relationships in "universal values" of civility and decency. These efforts, welcome as they are, remain either too pluralistic to really develop a coherent standpoint or too secular to really address the transcendent dimension of what Buber aims to describe in the spiritual dimension of relationships characterized as I-You.

Covenantal Connections: The Judeo-Christian Dialog on Human Relationships

What are the benefits for a Christian psychology of interpersonal relations gained from a close study of Martin Buber's thought? What can be expected from a dialog grounded in the embrace of a shared biblical tradition but aimed toward the truth found in general revelation? The character of the Judeo-Christian dialog is enriched by the sharing of common Scriptures and worship of the same God, but at the same time complicated by different meanings ascribed to the person of Jesus of Nazareth. After encountering Buber in the mode of genuine openness, what meaning has emerged for the Christian psychologist? Are there points of connection that yield a fruitful "covenantal partnership" between Christian and Jewish perspectives on interpersonal relationships rooted in common presuppositions? In my twenty five years of dialog with the thought of Martin Buber, I have found the answer to be "yes!" In the final section of this paper, I will focus on those aspects of Buber's work that establish foundational principles for a biblical vision of what is truly "interpersonal" in human life. For the Christian psychologist, the Judeo-Christian partnership recognizes significant points of harmony while preserving an ongoing tension between the revelation of the first covenant and the extension of that revelation in the new covenant found in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. I will first highlight what I believe are important conceptual themes contained in Buber's thought that must be also found in a Christian approach to the understanding of interpersonal relations.

Perhaps the most important contribution Buber's work makes is the recognition of the spiritual nature of fully human, genuinely interpersonal relations. For Buber, human relating must be understood in the context of human life as a whole, and this wholeness, the totality of existence, is essentially spiritual. For Buber, to be spiritual and to be relational point in the same direction, namely that all of human life consists in relationships rooted in our connection as creatures to the Creator, God himself. Furthermore for Buber, the spiritual meaning of relatedness is not limited to a particular region of direct relationships with God located within "religion,", but all relationships are intrinsically linked with the presence of God. Buber's thought insists upon linking the "personal" with the "spiritual" thereby infusing all interpersonal relations with a spiritual meaning. As Buber states in *I and Thou,* the path of truth in life is "to have nothing besides God but to grasp everything in him, is the perfect relationship" (Buber, 1970, p. 127). Relationships are the heart and soul of human life, not a means toward the end of self-actualization or as a necessary set of technical skills for power and success. Relating is about finding the Other as Other, as a "You" given a distinctly unique identity that transcends my selfhood in an manner analogous to God's transcendence. It is this spiritual recognition which establishes the Other as person in the likeness of God and is shared by Christians, Jews, and all faiths that recognize a relational connection between God and humanity.

A second theme shared by religiously committed psychologists focuses upon method. Buber's methodological approach to relationships is based upon the dialectic between part and whole in that the functional and reductionistic features of modern relationships are placed in tension with the uncompromisingly holistic and ultimately personal meaning found in genuine relationships between self and other. For Buber as for Christians, the modern world must be overcome at its deepest spiritual level while at the same time it remains "our world." The struggle for the interpersonal is against the spiritual power of the modern world to fragment rather than integrate, to elevate superficial experiences over deep fulfillment, to promote control and security over vulnerability and openness. For Christian psychology, the awareness of this dialectic leads toward affirming the functional analysis of relationships in the science of "close relationships" and in the development of effective communication skills, but also recognizing the limits of such analysis and prophetically pointing toward the spiritual horizon that transcends the purely functional and effective. Christian psychologists following Buber can gesture toward what is meaningful, good, and "positive" in human relationships, not in the naïve sense of humanistic optimism about the intrinsic goodness buried in human being, but in the call to struggle for the spiritual truth of life as a whole

found through living interpersonally.

Such a Christian psychology of interpersonal relations may enter the Buberian dialectic between I-It and I-Thou from the starting point of a purely functional analysis of human interaction based upon empirical facts, predictable patterns, and cause-effect connections, but then go the "second mile" and develop reflection upon the moments, situations, and attitudes in which genuine meaning and ultimate purpose can be found in human relationships. Entering the dialectic from the "scientific" door begins with the analysis of the relational world as I-It and then moves to the problem of meaning secondarily. I see this dialectic as similar to the dialectic between special and general revelation found in theology. Likewise the Christian psychologist seeking an understanding of interpersonal relations typically begins with an empirical, functional analysis rooted in general revelation, but then must draw upon the resources of special revelation once questions of meaning and purpose arise. Becoming more common is to approach a given issue from the other side of the dialectic, beginning with theological or philosophical concepts taken from biblical sources. Such psychologists analyze already existing empirical findings from what is now often described as a "worldview" perspective based upon faith principles (see e.g. Van Leeuwen, 1990, Myers & Jeeves, 2003, Olthuis, 2001). In Buberian terms, this would mean approaching relationships through the grid of the distinction between the I-It and the I-You. This values-laden or standpoint approach is often perceived as ideological by Christian psychologists trained in the strictly positivistic tradition. However, under the growing influence of postmodern critiques of science, the boundaries between science and ideology have blurred, thus opening up psychological science to the need for explicit ethical and theological framework/worldviews in which empirical investigations of human relating make sense. Christian psychologists following Buber can claim that what we mean by the "interpersonal" cannot be understood apart from the essentially spiritual nature of human persons.

A third area of shared interest for Christian and Jewish approaches rests upon the importance of ethics in human relationships. Not only are relationships truly the measure of human life and selfhood, but Buber's work suggests that what we mean by the "good life," what constitutes righteousness, is determined by the attitude and the way in which relationships actually are lived. The righteous life is not found in the successful achievement of personal goals or in slavish adherence to duty, law, or ritual. The I-You attitude is an ethical ideal that must be sought through the pursuit of trust, creativity, and mutuality in relationships that are the true virtues of life in the spirit. Christian psychologists interested in interpersonal relations must insist on approaching relationships with a clear ethical vision rooted in a biblical view of personhood and a willingness to consider interpersonal relationships as ends not merely as means. The achievement of true relatedness requires the cultivation of "virtues" that promote ongoing dialog and embrace of the other achievable not simply through rational enlightenment or technical skill, but through the affirmation of the Other as carrying intrinsic value as an image-bearer of God, and realized in relationships marked by mutuality and active sharing of power, responsibility, and respect for each other. Thus Christian psychology must reject any approach to relationships rooted in "egotism" or what Buber terms, "egomania."

Furthermore, a shared biblical starting point rooted in the primacy of persons as relational beings establishes an ontological framework of "worldviewish" presuppositions and control beliefs. The relational elements of a biblical worldview imply critical opposition to the worldview of radical individualism, whether in the epistemological form of the subject-object relation or the socio-political form attributed to Locke. At the same time, following Buber's narrow ridge requires an equally passionate rejection of collectivism whether in the form of fascism or communism, since radically collectivist approaches construct structures of domination that effectively preclude cultivation of uniqueness, dialog with others, and mutuality essential for human community. Christian approaches to relationships reject the superficiality and emptiness of consumer-driven commodification of relationships, as well as the fragmentation of human life into a private domain of close relationships and a public domain of anonymous functional interactions. A full-fledged ethical vision of interpersonal relations envisions an ethic of responsibility to the full range of social communities from marriage and family to church, business, school, and state.

The establishment and abuse of authority/power structures, those that eclipse mutuality in relationships whether in marriage, family, or community, invite Christian scholars to develop biblical critique. Relationships that enslave and dominate, that still the possibility of dialog, whether in home, church, or business, exhibit a loss of the truly interpersonal dimension of human life. Cultish communities rooted in Gnostic religion or charismatic mysticism can threaten the full realization of the deeply dialogical and interpersonal dimension of relationships by collapsing the "I" into

the "You" or vice versa.

A fourth shared perspective concerns the reality of evil, imperfection, and finitude in human relationships. What Spitzberg and Cupach (1998) call the "dark side" of interpersonal relating is an important point of connection for Jewish and Christian approaches to relationships. Human being is responsibility for self and others that often loses its way in the tendency to objectify others in the overextension of what Buber conceptualizes as the I-It. In Buber's analysis, the I-It attitude is not intrinsically evil, but becomes evil due to human fallibility. In our time, when the subject-object mode of relating to others becomes dominant and exclusive, the possibility of evil looms, either on the micro level of abusive dyadic relationships or the macro level of collectivistic and totalitarian states. Regarding the other as merely an object creates relationships between self and other marked by the stereotypical thinking, rigid definitions of social roles, and avoidance of mutuality so typical of fascist and totalitarian communities. Buber's resistance to objectification in human relating likely stems from a deep reverence for the transcendence of the Other revealed in the Judaic prohibition of graven images of God. As interpersonal beings in the likeness of God, human beings lose their transcendence when reduced to objects that abstract from the fullness of human identity. Human beings, like God, are not to be reduced to purely objective functions, nor is their identity exhausted in an objective set of social roles, or a programmed set of functional behaviors. Meaningful human relationships emerge through grace-ful presence and self-giving of one to another. The fragmentation of human life into parts, labeling of others and the objectification of human beings into usable things, and the manipulation of human beings for purposes of control and domination are distortions of true fullness of human being created in the image of God. Truly human relationships are marked by the grace of free self-disclosure not determined exclusively by function or social role.

Finally, the spiritual danger of relationships in the modern world lies precisely in the foreclosure of hope, desperation, and violence stemming from objectification and domination between self and other. Relationships conducted exclusively in the mode of Buber's I-It create a sense of doom, fate, and entrapment that give rise to desperate measures such as the domestic violence, political terrorism, and economic exploitation so pervasive in the modern world. Buber's biblical emphasis upon "return" or repentance as the basis for redemption and blessing in relationships arises from the biblical revelation of God as a covenantal partner who forgives, renews vows, and restores dialog. Christian psychologists can be agents of redemption in partnership with God when our studies and practices develop ways to embody interpersonal relationships in all areas of human being. To restore relationships permeated by blessing and righteousness requires a breaking through from the spiritual bankruptcy of life caught in the attitude of the I-It to a life of dialog and genuine encounter. True relationships emerge when human being "turn away" from the enslavement of the I-It and "return" to fullness of life found in the personalization of life with others.

Not surprisingly, Buber's commitment to Judaism precludes a fully Christian analysis of relationships. In my opinion, this limitation may be found most directly in the absence of what Christians find essential in the life of Jesus Christ, namely the self-denial and radical self-sacrifice of Christ, the emptying of one's self for the sake of the other exemplified in the death of Christ on the cross. The presence of Christ in the self through faith and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, as well as in the Other, expressed through service to the poor, the sick, and the oppressed points toward a deeper ethic of sacrifice and self-denial than can be readily developed from the conceptual resources of Buber's thought. Although the theme of sacrifice as a spiritual act in dialog with a covenantal God is indeed part of the Hebrew tradition, the identification of self and sacrifice found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is radically and uniquely Christian. Paul's admonition to believers to become "living sacrifices" is largely absent from the life of the Jewish faith and practice. The meaning of "sacrificial love" in Christian approaches to relationships carries the discussion beyond the boundaries of this paper, but continues to challenge Christian psychologists to construct an ethic of interpersonal relationships that recognizes not only the revealed truth of human being as created in the image of God, but the need to lose one's life in the service of others in order that life may be found again in a truly higher, more abundant and everlasting life in the Spirit.

Conclusion

The crisis of interpersonal relationships continues to face all who live in the contemporary world. The thrust of this paper has been to demonstrate that the thought of Martin Buber offers a framework for making sense of this crisis and contains conceptual resources helpful in responding to the theological, ethical, and social challenges posed by the diversity of the postmodern world. Buber's thought, rooted in a biblical worldview, encourages a covenantal dialog and partnership between committed Jewish

and Christian believers seeking to integrate their respective "control beliefs" with relevant psychological approaches to human relating. Since both religious traditions share a deeply spiritual and relational view of human being, they have much to learn from each other. The quest for deeply meaningful interpersonal relations essential for the well-being and flourishing of human beings is a shared responsibility that crosses religious traditions much as environmental, peace, economic stewardship, and social justice issues do. A common cultural mandate and a shared commitment to a view of redemption that encompasses the entire creation gives both traditions a common perspective on human relationships as this paper has shown. Christian psychologists can pursue dialog with religiously committed scholars outside the Christian community at the same time we continue to explore the uniquely Christian perspectives rooted in the radical Gospel incarnated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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Guidelines for the Effective Use of the Bible in Counseling

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Though much has been written about the place and value of Scripture in Christian counseling, clinicians do not yet have a body of literature regarding the effective use of the Bible in the act of counseling. This essay provides a brief review of how Christian counseling literature approaches the Scriptures, discusses the risks of its unthoughtful use, and sets out basic guidelines for more effective use—paying close attention to matters of purpose, contextualization, and client/counselor rapport. Three short vignettes are included to illustrate the possibility of diverse use while following the guidelines.

How ought counselors use the Scriptures in the act of counseling? Such a question works from the assumption that counselors can and should use the Scriptures in the therapeutic environment. This is so because the Scriptures are not merely technique, but one avenue to the healing presence of God. Admittedly, it is not the only avenue, and other means may be more effective at any given moment. Still, the question remains. How ought counselors to use the Scriptures in the act of counseling? Given that professional Christian counseling (distinct from the ministry of pastoral care) has been a phenomenon in this country for nearly 40 years, one might think this question long and well answered. It would appear, however, that there is a complete absence of literature regarding the process of using the Bible with counselees. Writings that speak of both the Bible and counseling often fall into two general categories: grand apologies regarding the relationship of the Scriptures to counseling or specific issue essays connecting biblical passages with certain problems of living. In the absence of a robust theoretical and empirical literature, potential for abuse and misuse of the Bible in counseling greatly increases. This essay intends to give a brief review the current relevant literature regarding the use of the Bible in counseling, explore the potential risks resulting from our neglect of this important topic, offer basic process-oriented guidelines to help clinicians, and conclude with a few illustrative case examples.

The Current Status

Again, most counseling related literature regarding the Bible falls into one of two categories: (1) apologies that set out the relationship between the Bible and the science or practice of counseling or (2) specific issue essays focused on a particular problem in living. The apologetic literature tends to be theoretical in nature and usually defends the author's position regarding the Bible's relationship to counseling. Some authors tout the power and sufficiency of the Word to address problems-in-living (e.g., Baker, 1986; Hindson & Eyrich, 1997; MacArthur, 1991, 1993; Mack, 1998; Powlison, 1993, 1999; Welch & Powlison, 1997). The Bible may not speak about every counseling issue, but for these authors, it has something life-changing to say to everyone no matter the struggle. On the other hand, when professional counselors write about the Bible in this larger context, they tend to explore the relationship between special and general revelation as it relates to psychological inquiry (e.g., Carter & Narramore, 1979; Collins, 1981, Crabb, 1981; Hurley & Berry, 1997; Johnson, 1992). These attempts to build integrative models occur less frequently today, in part due to reduced interest in trying to build a single grand model of Christian change. Sorenson, Derflinger, Bufford, & McMinn (2004) suggest that relational attachment to psychology faculty—not grand integrative models—lead students to develop effective practical integration of the Christian faith with their psychological practice.

Biblical and professional counselors alike write about how the Bible describes and responds to specific problems-in-living such as anxiety, depression, self-esteem, boundaries, trauma, and marital discord (e.g., Allender & Longman, 1994; Armentrout, 1995; Jones, 1999; Powlison, 1998, 1999, 2000; Stover & Stover, 1994; Tripp, 1994). In reality, every book, chapter, or article that references biblical support for theories, goals, or interventions fall into this category.

Though many texts refer to biblical passages, we have few examples of how one might use the Scriptures in the act of counseling. How should we bring counselees to the text of Scripture? While a few authors explore how counselors might better interpret the Scriptures when developing or defending a par-

ticular theory (e.g., Cranmer & Eck, 1994; Maier & Monroe, 2001; Schultz, 2001), and a few examine how wisdom literature might be meaningful in counseling settings (e.g., Schultz, 2001; Schwab, 1998, 1997a/b, 1996a/b, 1995), almost nothing exists that analyzes best practices for using the Bible in counseling. Several reasons may explain this neglect. The culture of psychotherapy in the Western hemisphere developed out of modernist assumptions about the necessity of separating faith and science, fact and belief. Scientist-practitioners trained to keep these two worlds separate may have difficulty seeing the use of biblical texts as acceptable in empirically validated therapeutic practice. Second, professional counselors may feel nervous about venturing into an area that is outside their academic training despite awareness of how the Bible has been personally relevant to their own lives. Still others may think that such writing is dangerous given the many misuses and abuses of the Bible by some counselors. Fourth, biblical counselors may assume process articles either manipulate the Spirit's guidance or are of such basic knowledge that scholarly articles are unnecessary. Finally, counselors operating from analytic or affect-focused models of change may not see the relevancy of using the Bible in therapy because they perceive it to be primarily a didactic and exhortational tool. Whatever the reasons, counselors do not now possess a literature on ways to use the Scriptures in counseling.

The Result

Effective counselors understand the *how* and *why* of their interventions (Hill & O'Grady, 1985). They understand how they want to intervene, the reasons for doing so, and an intervention's impact on the client (Hill, Helms, Spiegel, & Tichenor, 1988). Counselors using interventions without exploring purpose, outcome, and/or impact may overestimate the value to the client and miss how the client actually perceives the purpose of the intervention (Fuller & Hill, 1985). Such disconnect and misperception risks damage to the working alliance. Further, when unaware of impact, counselors risk using techniques to serve their own purposes and desires rather than for the particular needs of the client. Intentional or not, self-serving interventions increase the potential for harm to the client. Excluding the obvious problem of misinterpretation of Scripture texts during counseling (e.g., using a text to send a battered wife back to a violent husband), consider the following two serious process problems resulting from the unthoughtful use of biblical texts in counseling.

Distances counselor from counselee. Good working relationships in therapy usually include warmth and understanding. Prematurely enacted interventions may hinder client perceptions of warmth. It is an unfortunate fact, but far too many individuals have easy access to memories where they poured out their souls to another only to receive a hasty answer and Bible verse in the form of a weapon or projectile. Oswald Chambers (1993) warns:

> There is a wrong use of God's Word and a right one. The wrong use is this sort of thing: someone comes to you, and you cast about in your mind what sort of person he or she is, then hurl a text like a projectile, either in prayer or in talking as you deal with that one. That is a use of the Word of God that kills your own soul and the souls of the people you deal with. The Spirit of God is not in that. Jesus said, "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (p. 164-165).

The person seeking help may conclude, "If this confidant does not acknowledge or validate my feelings, perceptions, experiences, they are not safe nor caring of my situation." Sadly, this interaction has been repeated in both lay and professional counseling situations and begs the question: Why are we inclined to shoot Bible "bullets" at those who are suffering? Impulsive responses may serve the speaker's purpose to provide black and white answers. Mentioning a verse or passage may baptize a personal opinion so as to give it greater credibility. Whatever the reason, when a counselor uses the Scriptures in an unthinking and/or self-serving manner, it produces a chasm between counselor and counselee and makes subsequent counsel ineffective.

Hardens hearts to God. The misuse of Scripture not only creates division between people, it also separates people from God. In contemporary Christian culture, we have a tendency to use the Scriptures as a superficial technique to achieve peace and harmony. Some treat the Bible as magic wand, hoping that its words will quickly change our outlook or circumstances. When such a use of the Word does not lead to greater happiness or reduction in suffering, the temptation exists to believe the Bible, and therefore God, does not apply to their struggle. The counselor who uses the Scriptures in an unplanned manner may encourage this kind of client experience and make them less open to future uses of the text—just as a superficial use of behavioral techniques may harden parents from future attempts to use such techniques. And if Chambers (above quote) is correct, such use of biblical projectiles damages not only client souls but also our own.

Why Use the Scriptures?

Christians from all theological persuasions believe passionately that the Bible contains the very words and presence of God. Not only are they God's words,

they are His words *to us*. Thus, we turn to them when we are hurting, confused, rejoicing, or—as Isaiah (26:8-9) puts it—waiting and yearning for God and his renown to be made known to all. Consider the following specific benefits the Bible offers to clinical work.

The Bible instructs Christians how to live. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that God's Word is useful in teaching, training, and correcting us so that we will be able servants of God.

The Bible enables the reader to grow in wisdom. When we study the Bible and own of its message, we gain in understanding and discernment about the world we live in (e.g., Psalm 111:10). The Bible is not like a novel that we read once and then put aside. Rather, we continuously meditate on it so that we are able to recognize good from evil (Hebrews 5:13).

The Bible comforts. The Psalmist tells us that God's Law is a source of comfort (119:52). Paul tells the Corinthians that prophecy (The Word of the Lord) has a purpose: to comfort, strengthen, and encourage believers (1 Cor. 14:3).

The Bible offers reasons for hope. The Bible is to be a comfort, but it is also builds hope—hope that God will deliver and keep his promises. Paul in Romans 15 tells the reader that, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope." Psalm 119 expresses how the Psalmist finds hope in God's Word, and Isaiah suggests that even the islands find hope in God's Law (42:4).

We might sum up the value of the Scriptures as a resource that is able to both comfort and instruct the counselee—which is at the heart of many counseling strategies. We want to comfort and encourage those who are hurting. Yet, we are also interested in stimulating new growth through insight. While not an encyclopedia for every problem, the Bible is rich in its counsel and guidance for God's people as they live in a broken world. It is salve for wounds. It is discipline for the wayward. It is hope for the hopeless. In it, depressed individuals find comfort. Addicts find help for living with distorted desire. Such are the riches of the Bible that it is foolish for Christian counselors to neglect this resource!

Yet we do a disservice to the Bible if we leave our discussion of its value at this point. There is another value by far more profound than understanding, comfort, and hope. The Scriptures exist primarily to connect us to God himself. They are our corrective lenses to see God. They exist not just to tell us about him or to offer us help in our daily lives, but more importantly to usher us into His presence. And what happens when people meet God? They see themselves with new clarity (e.g., Isaiah 6:5; Job 40:4). How might this happen today? A counselee experiencing abandonment and rejection by her family met God in a new way as she read Psalm 56:8. God, she realized, kept a record of all her tears. As she played with that particular image, she realized that God had given her Psalms such as 73 and 88—desperate cries in the Bible—to show her He was near and involved even when it felt otherwise.

Guidelines for the Effective Use of Scripture in Therapeutic Settings

Empirically informed guidelines for the use of Scripture by therapists do not yet exist. Nonetheless, competent care is possible when counselors combine related research (e.g., building working alliances, assessment skills) with clinical wisdom garnered from experience with particular client "characteristics, culture, and preferences" (APA Presidential Task Force on Evidenced-Based Practice, 2006, p. 273). The following set of guidelines for the use of Scripture in counseling settings provide an initial framework intended to bridge the gap until a more substantial literature is available. Of course, guidelines—even those based on clinical trials—are not meant to be followed in a rigid fashion. The Christian counselor ought to remember that these guidelines ought not to be employed as a shortcut to healing. Chambers (1993) warns readers to avoid dealing hurting individuals, "according to any one principle….As soon as we get wedded to a shortcut in dealing with souls, God leaves us alone" (p. 160).

Skilled counselors plan, implement, and evaluate their chosen interventions (Lee, 2007). To do so, counselors consider matters of personal and professional competency, assessment, and client consent. Similarly, the use of Scripture in counseling requires careful consideration of our competency to do so (including potential personal biases), client experience and understanding, our intended purposes, contextual concerns, and consideration of the ability of the Scripture intervention to advance the therapeutic relationship and achieve the purpose for which it was intended.

Competency

Competent care stands as a hallmark of every therapeutic code of ethics (e.g., American Psychological Association, 2002; American Association of Christian Counselors, 2004; Christian Association for Psychological Studies, 2005). These codes call clinicians to obtain training and supervision for the interventions they employ. The APA code (2.01 (e)) further requires, "In those emerging areas in which generally accepted recognized standards for

preparatory training do not yet exist, psychologists nevertheless take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work." Given the lack of a body of literature and clinical training for scriptural interventions, Christian counselors may need to seek out pastoral care and discipleship experts who possess the ability to use the Scriptures well. Such training may include hermeneutical principles and knowledge of the various literary genres, but will necessarily include training in the art of using the Bible to open individuals up to new ways of experiencing God and growing in self-awareness.

Avoiding bias. Part of the work of competent therapists is the ongoing evaluation of personal bias. Biases will always be present, but clinicians ought to understand and minimize their impact on others. The therapist using the Scriptures would do well to review personal experiences with the Bible, especially from the hands of others. How might experiences of abuse of the text impact clinical applications? Further, how do current personal uses of the Scriptures affect clinical usage? Are only certain texts used to the neglect of others? What idiosyncratic beliefs may lead therapists to move from the therapeutic use of Scripture to indoctrination?

The message must go through you first. Competent psychologists possess critical thinking skills and a respect for previously developed knowledge (Lee, 2007). Just as therapists do not rely on superficial knowledge of treatment interventions, neither should they use the Scriptures without substantial familiarity and practice. When therapists use the Scriptures without wrestling personally with its meaning and message, they risk using texts in a superficial manner. Imagine how comfort and hope oriented passages would sound when delivered by one who does not know deeply of God's rich comfort and hope. If counselors are to do justice to God's Word, they must not only read it, but prayerfully consider how it applies to their own life. Such preparation protects counselors from relying solely on personal experience and passing fads. For example, counselors may be tempted to either demand or minimize the need to forgive offenders, based on their own life experiences. Careful study and personal application of forgiveness passages may help inoculate the counselor against knee-jerk responses.

Assessment

Competent clinicians assess contextual issues (e.g., client strengths, needs, and readiness) prior to initiating any intervention strategy. When using the Scriptures in counseling, wise counselors should also consider matters of contextualization: the goal, the person, the contextualized message, and the delivery. Just as the Gospel of Matthew considers the interest of Hebraic readers and just as Paul addresses Athenian culture at the Areopagus, Christian counselors would do well to consider the most helpful ways to communicate the implicit and explicit messages delivered to counselees. Though counselors and therapists are not evangelists in the classic sense, they do attempt to convey a message that will be received and internalized the way they intend.

The goal. A few simple questions may help counselors assess their intended goal. Why do I want to have them read this text? What do I hope to accomplish through it (e.g., to be provoked, taught, comforted, connected to something greater than self, to change one's focal point, etc.)? What barriers might hinder this goal? How might they misinterpret my intention? No matter the particular goal, it is essential that clients understand that the Scriptures are more than an intervention and that they have much greater value than behavior change.

While there may be many useful behavioral change goals, one goal should take priority— that of engaging the person's affective experience in the process of change. Such experiences coupled with strong alliance may lead to greater change (Missirlian, Toukmanian, Warwar, & Greenberg, 2005). Therapeutic stories may provide a way of engaging individuals in ways that bare conclusions rarely do. A good story evokes feelings, images, textures, and colors that connect listeners to the story's subject and message, and thus, changes our own experience. For example, most know that infidelity is destructive, but when listening to a story of an affair, one can often feel the devastation.

The person. Matters of history (spiritual and otherwise), experiences, issues, abilities, and learning styles all provide data for the clinician to review when considering the use of any intervention. For example, Gregory, Schwer Canning, Lee and Wise (2004) review client factors leading to greater success with bibliotherapy for depression. Likewise, certain client factors may make Scriptural interventions more or less effective. Therapists may want to consider how clients understand themselves, their spiritual surroundings, and the divine. Further, what particular experiences with the Bible shape their ongoing view of it? Is it a source of comfort? Does it surface painful memories? How do they tend to learn best? What type of counseling style do they expect and/or desire?

The contextualized message. All clinical care happens within and across cultural and relational contexts. Clinicians contextualize their work by considering matters of culture, current events, history, relational attachments, and transference issues when determining the most effective interventions. The

therapist using the Scriptures will want to determine how these factors influence the types of passages that may be most effective and the means by which clients may hear its message. For example, certain texts might provide comfort for an anxious person within an individualist culture, while other passages might work better for those from a collectivist culture. Does the message of the Scriptures meet them where they are at? Counselors must be wary of the temptation to use the Scriptures only to point people to where they want them to end up (e.g., only using verses to tell the bereft not to mourn as those who have no hope).

The delivery form. The work of contextualization of the biblical message begins the moment that counselors meet counselees to collect background and personal data and continues until termination. The Spirit led counselor humbly recognizes the need to process and pray over the means by which they bring the counselee to the text and ultimately to God. Whether we ask them to read aloud, read silently, act out, meditate on a word, phrase, or image; whether we paraphrase or assign a reading as homework, it is imperative that we consider why we are choosing this particular form. Otherwise, we may fall into an unhelpful myopia.

Follow-up. Effective counselor statements and interventions stir counselees to continued reflection and dialogue. When counselors make speeches or intervene in ways without seeking counselee reflection, they may unintentionally move counselees away from the critical activities of exploring ideas, trying on new perspectives, wrestling with affect, and the like. Likewise, effective use of the Scriptures ought to promote ongoing dialogue between the counselor and counselee. Such discussion forms the basis by which counselors assess the effectiveness of their interventions. For example, counselors may ask, what did you hear? What did not make sense or did not seem to fit your experience? What is your first reaction to this text? While these questions may seem obvious, the shape, spirit, and the rapport behind them are of vital importance. Otherwise, the client will be tempted to revert to "Sunday School" answers (i.e., giving the answer they think you most want to hear), causing counselors to assume the text has had its intended purpose. Missteps or awkward attempts to try out a passage in a session do not necessarily mean failure when the follow-up questions show that the counselor cares about the honest responses and questions of the client.

Follow-up is even more essential when using the Scriptures to teach/correct/confront. Consider the passages in Paul's letters regarding headship and submission in marriage. Both abusers and victims have used Ephesians 5 to excuse all sorts of evil behavior. It would be normal and appropriate for a counselor to want to correct either party's misuse or neglect of these texts. Yet, unless the counselor remembers that the biblical text is not merely a repository of truth, but the connective tissue that links people to Christ, it is unlikely that even the most persuasive arguments will have much impact. So, in this example, it might make more sense to start with the image of God as their true husband (Eph. 5:27) and encourage both victim and abuser to reflect on how God relates to them (e.g., sacrificially lavishing gifts and citizenship [1:8; 2:19] despite their being "objects of wrath" [2:3]) in order to consider how they would treat each other in a similar manner.

Informed Consent

Counselees are more likely to flourish when they have a clear sense of and agreement with the direction, purpose, and methods of therapeutic interventions. If the purpose of using the biblical text is not clearly stated, clients are likely to draw their own—possibly inaccurate—conclusions. Therapists will want to use every opportunity to discuss the value, purpose, and possible impact of using Scripture. These discussions have the possibility of helping clients avoid misunderstanding and misconstruing the purpose for the Bible in the treatment protocol. If we want to enable people in this fast food and extreme makeover culture to see the Scriptures in a different light, we must teach them first. This requires that we not only teach them about our purpose for using the Scriptures, but also what is *expressly not* part of our purpose.

Applying the Guidelines to Three Vignettes

Given the general nature of the above guidelines, I present three short vignettes in order to illustrate their possible clinical application. Though these cases are fictitious, they represent portions of actual cases where these themes were present and where I used similar passages.

Just One-Thing Meditations

Clients struggling with generalized anxiety often find themselves overwhelmed by the possibilities of disaster or failure lurking around every corner of their lives. Joe, a 28 year old graduate student came to me for counseling. He was engaged to be married and trying to wrap up the finishing touches on his dissertation, plan a wedding, and prepare for a cross-country move to a new job. Joe considered himself to be a strong Christian, familiar with biblical teaching, and distressed that he had never been able to get a handle on his worry. Now that he was facing major changes in his life, the intensity of the worry drew him to seek counsel.

Treatment for anxiety-based problems (from a cognitive-behavioral approach) requires both an exploration of the feelings and core schemata that relate to anxious thought and response patterns *and* the teaching of skills to fight repetitive anxiety provoking thoughts and practice replacing distorted thoughts with the truth (Costello & Borkovec, 1992; Barlow, 2000). In many respects, Joe was a quick study. He was able to name the core beliefs that gripped him and articulate alternatives based on Gospel centered truths that he would rather believe and live out of. However, articulation of a desire to change and actual change are not the same, and so Joe struggled to live the truths he wanted to believe. We spent many sessions exploring the way Joe unintentionally shaped his view of life by the things he meditated on. In order to combat his undesired anxious ruminations, we discussed the possible use of meditating on key Scriptures. During this conversation, we discovered that he tended to read the Bible quickly and widely, anxiously trying to make sure he was never avoiding portions that God might use to reveal His will. As a homework assignment, I asked him to consider taking a break from his reading plan and only meditate on just one passage—Psalm 131—every day for the next week. We discussed how anxious he might become when he put aside his typical reading style. Further, I made clear that I had two reasons for meditating on this passage. First, anxious thoughts have ways of confusing the mind. The image of being a child on the lap of his mother—not grasping at anything, but content to sit in the comfort of her lap—is simple and easy to remember and return to when feeling anxious. Given Joe's tendency to experience a flood of "what if" anxious ruminations, he agreed to work to focus on just one simple meditation—or "just one-thing". Second, I wanted Joe to experience another way to use the Scriptures beyond that of grasping for possible messages he might have missed. I also made it clear that Joe might see an increase in anxiety and that the passage was not likely to have an immediate effect.

The following week, Joe and I explored his experiences with the text. He had noticed an increase in anxiety at first, but was able to convince himself that meditating on one part of the Bible was never wrong. The image of peace was powerful and though he did not feel that way yet, Joe decided he would like to continue to meditate on the passage for the next week (which turned into the next 2 months) in order to "take to heart" the images in the Psalm.

Analysis. Though Joe desired peace in his relationship with God, his fear of failure and missing God's guidance hindered his experience of peace and confidence in any part of his life. In making that assessment, I determined that Joe might benefit from stopping his anxious Bible reading and replacing it with one passage evoking positive images of rest in God's protective arms. Such an image might enable him to develop effective thought stopping skills as well as alternatively meditate on the rest available to him as a child of God. In order to make a clear break from his ineffective form of Bible study, we discussed my reasons for this form of Bible reading and of the possible increase in anxiety he might experience when he changed his reading methods. In following sessions, we reviewed his experiences with his passage and its impact on his devotional life.

Provoking Conversation

Michael, 52 years old, married, with 2 children in college, came to counseling due to his struggle with homicidal and suicidal ideation. Not long ago, he lost all that he had invested in his business when his partner took legal control of the business through deception. Michael was fighting this in court, but had already lost a couple of decisions. Michael attended church regularly. The small group he attended with his wife tried to be helpful, but on numerous occasions, he was rebuked for being angry and bitter. At other times, he was encouraged to drop his legal challenge, since God must have been in the situation and wanted him to learn something from the experience. Michael stopped going to church and the group and found himself contemplating how to kill his former partner—which is what propelled him to therapy. During an early session, Michael expressed how angry he was with his church friends for their brushing over the pain he was in and how angry he was with God for not protecting him. But even as he talked about his anger, it was also clear that Michael was confused and wondering if maybe he was wrong and they were right. So, I opened the Bible to the Psalms and read to him the first few phrases of Psalm 89 ("I will sing of the Lord's great love forever…"), 91 ("I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge…"), and 103 ("Praise the Lord, O my soul…who satisfies your desires with good things…"). After reading these verses, I commented that I suspected that it would be hard to connect to these passages. Michael quickly concurred and launched into a long conversation about how he had never felt connected to God's mercy and protection, since he had numerous experiences where he did what was right and in doing so was taken advantage of by others. Michael communicated at the end of the session that he was grateful for the opportunity to talk about his lack of appreciation for God's mercy. He had spent years avoiding the Psalms and did not feel comfortable expressing his true feelings in church

settings.

Before we ended our session, I had Michael read from Psalm 88. He was surprised and heartened to read a psalm that expressed feelings without a happy ending, such as, "My soul is full of trouble….You have put me in the lowest pit….You have taken me from my closest friends and made me repulsive to them….the darkness is my closest friend." Over the course of the next few sessions, Michael reported feeling comfort from the fact that God had given him words of lament in certain Psalms in order to express his true feelings.

During treatment, one of Michael's friends offered him Psalm 55:22, "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall." He brought the verse to the next session. He wondered, "How could this passage be true?" He did not feel as though he had been kept from falling. We explored the larger context of the passage that seemed to contain contradictory images—the Psalmist's cries of distress from the pain of knowing that *God is behind the enemy attack* (v. 12-14). Together, we pondered the same horrors. But, then I asked him to consider why God might have included such a Psalm. Might it be for a situation just like this? Michael derived some comfort in knowing that God had ordained these kinds of questions even if the answers were not readily apparent. In doing so, he stated that he felt less alone and more connected to God.

As Michael gave voice to his own laments and felt more confident in his connection to God, he became interested in understanding how the thanksgiving Psalms and the lament Psalms fit together to paint a more accurate picture of God than either alone.

Analysis. Michael's crisis left him feeling betrayed by his business associate, friends at church, and even God. He struggled to make sense of the world. As a counselor, I wanted to validate his experience and allow him to give voice to feelings that he perceived were not acceptable if he was a Christian—thereby increasing suicidal and homicidal escape fantasies. I discerned that he would not readily believe that comfort verses would apply to him, and so used joyful and comfort passages to give him permission to voice his disconnection with God, the Bible, and others. Later, I used lament passages in a session to validate his anger at injustice, despair, and feelings of abandonment. Given his state of distress, prior hurt over the misuse of Scripture, and the tendency to feel disconnected from God, I did not deem it appropriate to give Bible reading as homework. Instead, I used it only in session to explore how his experiences could be found on the pages of the Bible as acceptable emotions for Christians. Later in the therapy, Michael took the lead in exploring more biblical texts. I understood my role as supporting his exploration and raising questions in order to encourage personal application.

Perspective Building

John and Lisa have been married for 8 years. They were both professionals and heavily involved in church ministry. John and Lisa struggled over differences in how to manage their finances. While both agreed that they lived above their means, Lisa blamed John for not sticking to a budget, and John felt controlled and interrogated by Lisa (who managed the money and gave John a weekly allowance) when he bought "anything at all." John, who made most of the money, agreed that it would be better for them to live more simply, but viewed his purchases as rather minimal (a book here, a shirt there), whereas Lisa bought a car when her previous car was still working. During initial sessions, both John and Lisa exhibited ambivalence over trying out new communication skills that would move them to attend to each other's concerns and dreams. While they affirmed they wanted a better marriage, each felt that if they validated their spouse's concerns, they might never get their own deep concerns heard.

As an attempt to break the stalemate, I asked them to read and discuss with me the story of Acts 6. Prior to reading the passage, I gave them the background of the story, especially focusing on the initial excitement of the time: the tremendous growth in the number of believers, amazing worship, fellowship and miracles, everyone willingly giving up their possessions to benefit all of the believers. Then we proceeded to read the story of the conflict between the dominant culture Hebraic Jewish widows and the minority culture Grecian Jewish widows. We discussed what it might be like to feel ignored, slighted, and mistreated, as well as what it might be like to be a Hebraic Jewish widow who might worry about reverse discrimination if changes were made to the distribution process. Then we read the solution where the dominant culture gave the entire food distribution decision making over to Grecian (minority!) Jewish leaders. We discussed how hard it was to trust someone else with the power to make decisions that impact us. John and Lisa then considered the possibility of approaching marriage counseling by not demanding to be heard first, but rather by trusting God and listening to and validating the concerns and dreams of the other. They considered how their trusting God to protect their interests and concerns was similar to the situation in Acts 6. This illustration stuck with them in a way that enabled each to understand how their spouse might feel vulnerable, which

resulted in both being less defensive and less focused on keeping score.

Analysis. John and Lisa were afraid their hurts and concerns would not get a fair hearing if they softened their stance toward the other. This made it difficult for either to make changes to the couple's relational dance. Both were familiar with Scripture and had heard many sermons from Ephesians where the Apostle Paul discusses optimal relationships between husbands and wives. In fact, they had argued over who was not acting in keeping with those prescribed roles. Because of the significant possibility of arguing over passages, I determined that if Scripture could be used to help them soften and warm their stance to each other, I would have to find a unique and previously unconsidered passage that might enable the couple to see and identify with the other's vulnerability. The story of the widows got them out of the context of marriage and helped them consider how hanging on to power might hinder a Godly outcome. It also provided an image to remember God's concern for injustice when feeling invisible.

Conclusion

Guidelines reviewed in this article provide help to therapists as they consider a number of personal, client, and context factors that would influence their manner and method of using Scripture in the context of a counseling session. The focus here rests on therapeutic processes designed to foster client/therapist dialogue regarding the affective experiences of the client. As a result of this focus, there are obvious limitations to these guidelines. For example, they do not give extensive help to those wondering when Scripture use is not appropriate. Clearly, there are times and situations when its use might hinder the development of a working alliance or foreclose essential data-gathering. Further, these guidelines are not intended to assess whether the use of Scripture to connect people to God and/or to more accurately evaluate oneself is the best intervention at any given time. There are other interventions that might have been equally effective in treating the presenting problem in each of the vignettes. Finally, these guidelines do not provide therapists with help in making orthodox interpretations of Scripture passages. To avoid the abuse of biblical literature, therapists should familiarize themselves with the genre, themes, larger contexts, and classic interpretations of any passages used in the therapeutic context.

Despite these limits, these guidelines form an initial attempt to help Christian counselors prepare themselves to use the Scriptures effectively with counselees—just as they would prepare by practicing basic counseling and interpersonal skills. Unthoughtful attempts to use the Bible in counseling may neuter the power of the biblical text, harm the client, or harden their hearts to future attempts by others to connect them to God through the Word. While therapists ought not to delude themselves that they can harness the power of the Scriptures with a few steps, prayerful consideration of context, purpose, continued relationships, as well as personal application, should increase the likelihood of the effective use of the Bible in counseling.

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Self-Control within a Christian Ideological Surround

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Christian psychology requires formal demonstrations of what this approach can add beyond integrationist and biblical counseling models. This study pursued that goal by examining self-control using theoretical insights of Sorokin (1941/1992) and empirical methods associated with the ideological surround model of the relationship between psychology and religion. This analysis made it possible to illustrate how an explicitly Christian Self-Control might make it possible to liberate the religious self through what Sorokin called ideational freedom. Ideological surround methods yielded empirically based insights that would have been unavailable through the integrationist or biblical counseling models, thus documenting the added potentials of Christian psychology.

Systematic attempts to establish Christian psychology must formally explain how Christian commitments can faithfully unite with the discipline of psychology. This is so because contemporary psychology is the product of historical forces that for centuries have moved the West away from Christianity and toward secularization (Johnson, 2007). In this process, modernist conceptual frameworks trumpeted the ability of reason to supply adequate foundations for social life and increasingly relegated Christianity and other religions to the margins. Marginalization challenged the hopes of all religions to have a broader cultural impact. Communities of belief faced the temptation of trying to survive modernist rationality through a defensive insularity that could only strengthen the processes of marginalization. Christian psychology, therefore, might be described as the difficult effort to unite a discipline reflecting the forces of secularization with a faith that those forces tend to marginalize.

Formal theoretical developments seem essential in meeting this challenge. Johnson (2007) recently advocated development of a psychology that places the Christian understanding of God at the center of the discipline. Since God "created human beings and knows them exhaustively, a Christian psychology should ideally provide the most comprehensive understanding and appraisal of human beings available" (p. 10). This "most comprehensive" perspective is revealed in Scripture and interpreted by various theological traditions. Christian psychology could use such resources to "engage its intellectual competitors and contribute to a 'cross-communal psychology' … to enrich itself, to advance its public legitimacy, and to contribute to the increase in human understanding of human beings" (p. 16). This "cross-communal" model conforms to a postmodernism that increasingly "calls into question the search for a universal, generic psychology that has been the quest of modern psychology" (p. 16). A postmodern openness to "local" and marginalized perspectives should make it more possible for Christian psychologists to have their voices heard within the wider culture.

Worthington (2007) disagrees and defends instead the integrationist model of psychology. This approach "(a) addresses explicitly Christian topics, (b) accepts psychological science's methods, and yet (c) subjects psychological science's findings to the higher authority of required consistency with Scripture" (p. 37). He further complains that the "cross-communal model" would encourage a turn toward "non-scientific methods, and the frank incorporation of the existence of truly non-naturalistic phenomena and beings that would ghettoize Johnson's Christian psychology within the discipline of psychological science" (p. 37). In other words, the cross-communal model would aggravate rather than alleviate the problem of marginalization. "The ghetto would not be merely separate," Worthington warns, "but would have barbed wire, high-voltage fencing preventing communication" (p. 37). For the integrationist, Christians can be heard only by maintaining the very highest standards of research acceptable to the "established disciplinary matrix in psychology" (p. 37). For a paradigm shift away from that matrix to make sense, "either (1) there must be a crisis … in which important unexplained phenomena are troubling the majority of scientists or (2) there must be new tools that yield major new data" (pp. 37-58). Worthington believes that neither of these conditions holds true.

The integrationist model has made and will continue to make invaluable contributions to the project of a Christian-sensitive psychology. The same is no doubt true of the somewhat opposite approach of biblical counseling (Powlison, 2000). Proponents of biblical counseling are suspicious of the contemporary social sciences and advocate a more exclusively scriptural framework. In responding to Johnson (2007), for example, Welsh (2007) describes this approach as wanting "to accent the depth and breadth of Scripture and the pernicious ways that the modern church has become psychologized" (p. 36). In other words, biblical counseling seems at least somewhat dedicated to building a high voltage, barbed wire fence that can keep contemporary psychology out of the Church. Marginalization could be the result; and an additional task presumably would be to identify where in that fence to build gates so the Church might still function in, but not of the world.

No good reason exists for demanding an either/or approach to these issues. Different perspectives have a potential to promote insightful dialogues. Indeed, Christian psychology at least implicitly aspires to become an articulate dialogical partner capable of describing a position somewhere between the positions of integration and biblical counseling. The hope would be to discover a middle ground between any polarized tendencies toward secularization or defensive insularity. All Christians in psychology presumably want to nurture an increasingly dynamic tradition that maintains normative commitments to its past through conceptual and methodological innovations capable of meeting challenges of the present. With good reason, advocates of integration and biblical counseling will surely believe that this is what they are doing. The burden of Christian psychology is to prove that it has something to add.

Ideological Surround Model

Added potentials of a Christian psychology may be evident in research associated with the ideological surround model of the relationship between psychology and religion. As defined by MacIntyre (1978), ideologies rest upon foundational beliefs that can be neither falsified nor confirmed through empirical methods. Numerous observations, for example, support the claim that God or that a "big bang" created the universe, but neither perspective is likely to receive definitive proof or falsification any time soon. Such beliefs also have normative implications because they at least implicitly assume that laws of social life must harmonize with laws of creation. Theistic belief systems, for instance, emphasize obedience to the commands of God, whereas naturalistic ideologies tend to move toward some functionalist form of ethics. Finally, ideologies have a sociological dimension because acceptance or rejection of the relevant foundational beliefs will necessarily determine who is and who is not identified as a member of the community. In short, ideology is a somewhat non-empirical system of beliefs that has normative and sociological implications.

Evidence of the unavoidable ideological dimensions of a Christian-sensitive psychology appears in Worthington's (2007) integrationist concerns about Christian psychology. Again, he worries that a cross-communal model would lead to "non-scientific methods, and the frank incorporation of … truly non-naturalistic phenomena and beings that would ghettoize … Christian psychology within the discipline of psychological science" (p. 37). Said differently, his argument is essentially this: a cross-communal openness to foundational supernatural assumptions that can be neither confirmed nor falsified empirically would violate normative methodological and metaphysical commitments that dominate contemporary psychology. Such violations would preclude Christian membership in scholarly communities of the discipline. The issues are thus somewhat non-empirical, normative, and sociological. They are ideological.

Again, Worthington's (2007) position implies that a Christian-sensitive perspective can avoid marginalization only through adoption of an integrationist model that "accepts psychological science's methods" (Worthington, p. 37). Inherent in this position is the modernist presumption that science can use wholly objective methods that are normatively neutral and sociologically adequate regardless of metaphysical presuppositions. Postmodern critiques, nevertheless, make it clear that this secularized position is as ideological as any other (e.g., Millbank, 1990). Science, like all forms of intellectual endeavor, operates from perspectives that invariably reflect some specific interest (Nietzsche, 1887/2000). Historical analysis suggests that modernism emerged as an attempt to escape religious violence associated with the Reformation. The interest then was to develop a "neutral" objectivity that could settle arguments in the absence of prior agreements about God (Stout, 1988). Modernist interests in avoiding theistic perspectivism, therefore, reflect a non-theistic perspectivism that must necessarily have ideological limitations. A Christian-sensitive psychology presumably should be based upon an explicitly Christian perspectivism.

But how is this possible? Integrationists are quite right to emphasize that supernatural assumptions are closed to empirical analysis. Supernatural and related beliefs, nevertheless, exist as a sociological reality in the natural world and empirically define a vantage point from which it is possible to make social scientific observations from a normatively Christian perspective. Instead of attempting to develop a Christian-sensitive psychology by using methods predicated upon an impossible to achieve neutrality, the task instead is to develop methods that are calibrated to an explicitly Christian point of view. The added potentials of Christian psychology, therefore, become apparent by challenging any integrationist argument that fully "accepts psychological science's methods" (Worthington, p. 37). Within the ideological surround of Christian psychology, such arguments reflect a modernist perspectivism that has much to contribute to a Christian-sensitive psychology, but without necessarily being wholly adequate to the task.

Added potentials of Christian psychology may also become apparent when remembering that the modern social sciences arose in response to an inability of the Church to avoid violence during the Reformation by relying solely upon the "breadth and depth of Scripture" (Welch, 2007, p. 36). The breadth and depth of Scripture can surely go unquestioned while at the same time acknowledging the limitations that unavoidably occur in the hermeneutical breath and depth of any particular reading of Scripture. Within the ideological surround of Christian psychology, sole reliance upon the Scriptures will reflect a pre-modernist perspectivism that has much to contribute to a Christian-sensitive psychology, but without being wholly adequate to the task. Social scientific methods may be needed for examining the viability of specific readings of the Scriptures.

Correlational Marker as an Example

Previous studies based upon the ideological surround model have in fact explored an array of methods for constructing an empirically based Christian perspectivism (Watson, 1993, 1994). Among these, the correlational marker procedure is relevant to this study (Watson, Morris, & Hood, 1989). Here, the idea is to examine items from a psychological scale after they have been ideologically calibrated to an empirical marker of Christian commitments. In the only study using this procedure thus far, items from a well-known, humanistic measure of self-actualization were correlated with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation Scale. As described by Allport and Ross (1967), an Extrinsic Religious Orientation represents a largely maladaptive use of religion as a means to sometimes selfish ends, but an Intrinsic Orientation reflects the sincere attempt of believers to actually live their religion. One item from the Allport and Ross Extrinsic Orientation Scale says, for instance, "the church is most important as a place to formulate good social relationships," whereas an Intrinsic item says, "my religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life." Considerable evidence suggests that the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Orientation Scales do in fact record largely adaptive and maladaptive religious motivations, respectively (Donahue, 1985).

In the previous correlational marker study (Watson et al., 1989), some self-actualization items correlated negatively with the Intrinsic Scale and thus defined anti-religious humanistic values. Another subset correlated positively and thus revealed pro-religious humanistic values as well. When made into two separate measures, these anti-religious and proreligious items displayed a significant negative correlation (-.14, $p < .05$). Again, these items appeared within the same scale, and a negative correlation appeared when psychometric standards of internal reliability demand a strongly positive relationship. Correlational marker procedures, therefore, explicitly framed humanistic articulations of self-actualization within a Christian perspectivism. That perspectivism uncovered ideological "fissures" within an instrument that could have introduced bias into any supposedly "objective" attempt to understand the self-actualization of Christians.

In short, the ideological surround model seeks to develop an explicitly normative rather than an impossibly neutral empiricism. Normative empiricism explores innovations that attempt to combine integrationist methods useful in meeting the sociological demands of the present with faithfulness to the breadth and depth of scripture that is the goal of biblical counseling and indeed of all Christians working in psychology. Correlational marker and other ideological surround methodologies may, therefore, illustrate the added potentials of a Christian psychology. Metaphorically, the task is to find a middle ground where it is possible to use empirical and theoretical innovations to build a city on a hill. A city on a hill cannot be marginalized because it rests upon an impossible to ignore prominence. A city on a hill also supplies an unobstructed perspective useful in obtaining reconnaissance about the opportunities and challenges that invariably arise in the sur-

rounding terrain.

Self-Control

The specific purpose of this project was to further develop the ideological surround model by applying correlational marker procedures to a very different kind of issue. In the previous correlational maker study, the focus was on clarifying a humanistic understanding of self-actualization that was potentially incompatible with Christian perspectives (Vitz, 1977). In this project, the attempt instead was to use correlational marker procedures to examine a construct that is clearly consistent with a Christian ideological surround. That construct is self-control.

Self-control is among the virtues recommended by the New Testament. Paul, for instance, identifies self-control as one fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, and his claim echoes numerous other verses (e.g., Acts 24:25; 2 Peter 1: 5-7; see Swartley [2006] for a more extensive analysis). As Wright (2006) recently noted, however, positive evaluations of control in general and of self-control in particular are increasingly under attack, "Indeed … the word *control* is spoken with a sneer, as in the phrase 'control freak,' as though the basic moral norm was for there to be no control" (Wright, p. 25). More broadly, he adds, "We live in a world where politicians, media pundits, economists and even, alas, some late-blooming liberal theologians speak as if humankind is basically all right, the world is basically all right, and there's nothing we should make a fuss about" (Wright, 25).

Geyer and Baumeister (2005) also diagnose a growing cultural rejection of self-control. They attribute this trend to at least two sociological processes. First, the capitalist pursuit of profit and self-interest may undermine societal supports for self-control. They point out, for instance, "Whereas the early Christian church had taught that trying to make money qualified as the sin of greed, today most Christians have no moral qualms about seeking to maximize profits" (Geyer & Baumeister, p. 419). Second, the West became secularized by turning away from traditional beliefs about God and toward selfhood as a central value for legitimating social practices. "It is now considered acceptable," they emphasize, "and perhaps even morally obligatory, to act in the best interest of one's self, whereas, traditionally, morality and religion have sought to restrain self-interested behavior" (Geyer & Baumeister, p. 419). For Geyer and Baumeister, these developments are troubling because self-control is plausibly identified as the "master virtue" that makes it possible to avoid vices and to nurture other derivative virtues.

How is it possible to promote a Christian-sensitive psychology within a cultural context that may diminish the importance of a perhaps central Christian virtue like self-control? Capitalism and universal respect for selfhood have had numerous positive consequences. Any arbitrary affirmation of self-control based upon normative Christian commitments might be compatible with biblical counseling, but would run the risk of being dismissed as reactionary and largely irrelevant to the demands of contemporary life. Any so-called neutral empirical demonstration that self-control has adaptive psychosocial implications might be a useful integrationist exercise, but would run the risk of being interpretively commandeered by one or another increasingly influential functionalist form of ethics. The evolutionary advantages of self-control might be emphasized, for example, in efforts to strengthen the naturalistic ideologies that dominate the disciplinary matrix of psychology.

Relative to the development of Christian psychology, the task would be to initiate a research program that theoretically and empirically defends the value of self-control within an explicitly Christian ideological surround. Given the contemporary cultural climate, a productive theoretical strategy might explain how Christian self-control promotes the central modern value of selfhood. Geyer and Baumeister (2005), for instance, suggest that the religious promotion of self-control "can increase people's sense of self-efficacy" (pp. 426-427). But why might this be so? For Christians, some deeper theoretical justification for this kind of thinking might begin with the suggestion that a self can liberate itself by controlling the self. Justification of this position seems possible in the theory of freedom developed more than a half-century ago by the Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin.

Sorokin (1941/1992) essentially claimed that opportunities for psychological freedom involve a ratio of the total means for achieving satisfactions divided by the total number of desires. Self-bondage results when desires exceed satisfactions, whereas self-freedom reflects the opposite circumstance. A "person can therefore become free in two different ways: either by decreasing his wishes by making them equal to or smaller than the means of their satisfaction, or by expanding his wishes and increasing proportionally the means" (Sorokin, p. 143). This latter circumstance Sorokin called sensate freedom and would be the consequence of, for example, a productive capitalist economy. Ideational freedom is what Sorokin called the first type of freedom and is "rooted in the restraint and control of our desires, wishes and lusts" (p. 143).

Ideational freedom is also the freedom of the

Judeo-Christian tradition. As Sorokin (1941/1992) notes, "It is the liberty of Job, with his imperturbable, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord'" (p. 143). More specifically, Christians presumably would believe that a religious tradition asking them first to love God with all their heart, mind, and soul would reduce wishes to a principal focus on the one desire capable of producing the most profound satisfactions. A secondary command to love your neighbor as yourself perhaps would also tend to embed believers in a community dedicated to the mutual satisfaction of each other's essential desires.

In short, a Christian psychology might explore the theoretical potentials of Sorokin's ideational freedom for defending self-control in a cultural climate that places such a high value on selfhood. Indeed, one recent study correlated the Allport and Ross (1967) Religious Orientation Scales with empirical indicators of a narcissistic desire for money (Watson, Jones, & Morris, 2004). Again, the Intrinsic Scale was used to measure sincere religious belief, whereas the Extrinsic Scale recorded a tendency to use religion as a means to satisfy other ends. In Christian samples, therefore, an intrinsic motivation presumably would promote ideational freedom through a religious control of desire, but an extrinsic motivation suggests a multiplication of desires that would work against ideational freedom. As expected, the Intrinsic Scale predicted reduced tendencies to narcissistically pursue money for the purposes of power and prestige whereas an opposite pattern of results appeared for the Extrinsic Scale (Watson et al. 2004). Among other things, these data revealed that the Intrinsic Scale might be useful as a correlational marker of tendencies toward the ideational freedom of Christian self-control.

At an empirical level, the opportunity for directly examining this issue became possible through recent development of a 36-item Self-Control scale (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). As indicators of Self-Control, this instrument includes such self-reports as "I am good at resisting temptation" and "people would say that I have iron self-discipline." Reverse scored statements of Self-Control include claims that "I lose my temper too easily" and that "I spend too much money."

In the present study, the Intrinsic Scale served in correlational marker procedures to identify those specific Self-Control items that were especially relevant to the religious ideological surround of a largely Christian sample. Self-Control and Religious Orientation variables were correlated with other relevant measures. First, traditional Christian belief systems do not operate from the assumption that "humankind is basically all right" (Wright, 2006, p. 25), but rather that humankind is basically sinful with lusts that must be controlled if the self is to be liberated. The Beliefs in Sin Scale measures Christian beliefs about sin that should operationalize a beneficial form of religious self-control. Second, the notion that self-control might produce an ideational self-liberation was examined through an array of scales that sought to assess the "liberated" functioning of the self. These scales included measures of Self-Actualization, an Internal and External Locus of Control, and Self-Efficacy.

Within a Christian ideological surround, the hypothesis was that Self-Control would correlate positively with an Intrinsic Religious Orientation, Beliefs in Sin, Self-Actualization, an Internal Locus of Control, and Self-Efficacy and negatively with an Extrinsic Religious Orientation and an External Locus of Control. Correlational marker procedures made it possible to evaluate which aspects of Self-Control might be most germane to hypotheses about Christian self-liberation.

Method

Participants

Research participants were 93 male and 138 female undergraduates enrolled in an Introductory Psychology class. Average age was 19.5 (*SD* = 3.65) with the sample being 59.3% Caucasian, 31.2% African-American, 4.3% Asian, and 5.2% belonging to various other ethnic groups. Religious affiliation was 34.2% Baptist, 15.2% Methodist, 6.9% Church of Christ, 6.5% Presbyterian, 5.6% Church of God, 8.2% Other Protestant, 5.2% Catholic, 6.5% atheist or agnostic, and 11.7% other. Participation was voluntary and rewarded with extra course credit.

Measures

Research measures were included in a single questionnaire booklet that first presented the 9-item Intrinsic and the 11-item Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scales. These Allport and Ross (1967) measures were administered according to standard instructions and scored along a 1 to 5 response scale (Robinson & Shaver, 1973). Subsequent sections of the booklet presented the 28-item Beliefs in Sin Scale (Watson, Morris, Loy, Hamrick, & Grizzle, 2007), followed by the 36-item Self-Control (Tangney et al., 2004), the 24-item Multidimensional Locus of Control (Levinson, 1973), the 15-item Short Index of Self-Actualization (Jones & Crandall, 1986), and the 15-item General and 6-item Social Self Efficacy (Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, Prentice Dunn, Jacobs, and Rogers, 1982) scales. Responding to all of these instruments occurred along a 5-point "Strongly Dis-

agree" (0) to "Strongly Agree" (4) Likert scale.

Among the 28 Beliefs in Sin statements were four subsets of seven items each that assessed conceptually different sin-related beliefs (Watson et al., 2007). These subsets sought to measure adaptive beliefs associated with self-improvement (e.g., "when I discover that I have sinned, I feel motivated to make positive changes in my life"), perfectionism avoidance (e.g., "my beliefs about sin free me from an unhealthy and hopeless attempt to be perfect"), healthy humility (e.g., "knowing that I am sinful helps keep me from being arrogant"), and self-reflective functioning (e.g., "my understanding of sin helps me achieve true self-insight"). Analysis of previous and the present data demonstrated that these items did not define distinct factors matching these four conceptual themes. For the sake of clarity and brevity, therefore, the full scale was used as a single indicator of psychologically healthy sin-related beliefs.

Illustrative items from the Self-Control Scale (Tangney et al., 2004) were presented previously. The Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale (Levinson, 1973) included 8 statements defining an Internal Locus of Control (e.g., "I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life"), plus two 8-item subscales for measuring an External Locus of Control. The Chance subscale includes such beliefs as, "When I get what I want, it's usually because I'm lucky." Exemplifying the Powerful Others subscale is the claim, "My life is chiefly controlled by powerful others."

Previous research has established that the Jones and Crandall (1986) Short Index of Self-Actualization operationalizes this construct in a language that is largely compatible with Christian commitments (Watson, Milliron, Morris, & Hood, 1995). An example of what this scale measures appears in the assertion that "it is better to be yourself than to be popular."

Self-Efficacy Scales operationalize adaptive forms of self-functioning that involve "expectations of personal mastery and success" (Sherer et al., 1982, p. 663). General Self-Efficacy includes such items as, "When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work." An example of Social Self-Efficacy appears in the statement, "I have acquired my friends through my personal abilities at making friends."

Procedure

Participants responded to the questionnaire booklet in a large classroom setting. They entered responses to all measures on standardized answer sheets that optical scanning equipment subsequently read into a computer data file. The scoring of all scales focused on the average response per item. Correlational marker procedures correlated each of the 36 Self-Control items with the Intrinsic Scale. Items displaying a positive correlation defined a Christian Self-Control subscale with the remainder recording Non-Christian Self-Control. Christian Self-Control items were further examined with a principal axis factor analysis procedure using a varimax rotation. Tests of empirical hypotheses were then accomplished by examining Self-Control correlations with all other measures.

Results

Table 1 reviews the correlations among all but the Self-Control measures. Lower Cronbach alpha values suggested a possible need for caution in interpreting data for Internal Control and Self-Actualization, but internal reliabilities for all other instruments were generally acceptable for research purposes. These correlations most importantly confirmed the positive adjustment implications of the Intrinsic Scale, which predicted higher levels of Beliefs in Sin, Self-Actualization, and Self-Efficacy and lower levels of the Extrinsic Orientation and the two External Locus of Control constructs. Beliefs in Sin also displayed inverse linkages with the Extrinsic, Chance,

Table 1
Correlations among Religious Orientation, Sin, Self-Actualization, Locus of Control, and Self-Efficacy Measures

Measure	M	SD	α	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Intrinsic Orientation	3.42	.96	.86	-	-.24***	.65***	.16*	-.01	-.28***	-.25***	.23***	.23**
2. Extrinsic Orientation	2.55	.63	.65		-	-.23***	-.17*	.09	.41***	.35***	-.14*	-.21**
3. Beliefs in Sin	2.81	.56	.91			-	.08	.04	-.23***	-.21**	.04	.13
4. Self-Actualization	2.47	.36	.52				-	.20**	-.30***	-.32***	.54***	.47***
5. Internal Control	2.45	.51	.57					-	-.12	-.01	.28***	.26***
6. Chance	1.63	.58	.73						-	.52***	-.30***	-.21**
7. Powerful Others	1.44	.62	.78							-	-.41***	-.26***
8. General Self-Efficacy	2.65	.50	.86								-	.56***
9. Social Self Efficacy	2.39	.64	.68									-

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

and Powerful Others Scales. Negative correlations with Self-Actualization and Self-Efficacy and positive linkages with the Chance and Powerful Others Scales identified the Extrinsic Orientation as a largely maladjusted motivation, as would be expected based upon the previous literature.

Fifteen of 36 items from the Self-Control Scale (M = 2.05, SD = 0.43, α = .86) correlated positively with the Intrinsic Scale. These 15 items defined the Christian Self-Control subscale (M = 2.16, SD = 0.53, α = .77) with the remaining 21 operationalizing Non-Christian Self-Control (M = 1.96, SD = 0.44, α = .77). The correlation between these two subscales was .64 ($p < .001$). The Christian Self-Control mean was higher than average responding on the Non-Christian items [t (230) = 7.29, $p < .001$].

Factor analysis of the 15 Christian Self-Control items yielded the three factors presented in Table 2. Four items defined a Behavioral Control factor reflecting abilities to refuse "bad" things even if they were "fun," to not say inappropriate things, and to not use drugs or drink to excess. Impulse Control was associated with five reverse-scored statements, each of which reflected a lack of self-inhibition. The remaining 6 items formed a Disciplined Consistency factor which recorded an ability to concentrate on longer-term "healthy" goals without getting discouraged or distracted. Relationships among these factors ranged from .30 to .40 (ps < .001). Correlations with the full Self-Control Scales were .60 ($p < .001$) or greater. Linkages with the Non-Christian Self-Control subscale were .48 for Behavioral Control, .34 for Impulse Control, and .61 for Disciplined Consistency (ps < .001).

Relationships of these Self-Control measures with all other scales are summarized in Table 3. All hypotheses for the full scale were confirmed. In other words, Self-Control correlated positively with the Intrinsic, Beliefs in Sin, Self-Actualization, Internal Control, General Self-Efficacy, and Social Self-Efficacy Scales while also displaying negative associations with the Extrinsic, Chance, and Powerful Others measures. Both Self-Control subscales yielded this same pattern of results except that Christian Self-Control failed to display a significant correlation with Internal Control, and Non-Christian Self-Control was unrelated to Beliefs in Sin. Perhaps most noteworthy in data for the Christian Self-Control factors were findings for Disciplined Consistency. This 6-item measure displayed correlation coefficients equal to or slightly larger than those observed for the full 36-item Self-Control scale. Behavioral and Impulse Control each displayed 6 out of 9 significant relationships with the other variables, with each being in the predicted direction.

One final set of analyses sought to clarify the three factors of Christian Self-Control. Behavioral Control, Impulse Control, and Disciplined Consistency served as simultaneous predictors of all other measures in a series of multiple regressions. These

Table 2
Self-Control Statements Correlating Positively with Intrinsic Religious Orientation and Factor Analysis of Items

Self Control Item	Intrinsic Correlation	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Behavioral Control: Eigenvalue = 3.73; % Variance = 24.9%; M = 2.12; SD = 0.83; α = .73				
I refuse things that are bad for me.	.31***	.79		
I do things that are bad for me, if they are fun. (R)	.39***	.76		
I say inappropriate things. (R)	.18**	.66		
I sometimes drink or use drugs to excess. (R)	.31***	.60		
Impulse Control: Eigenvalue = 1.80; % Variance = 12.0% M = 2.11; SD = 0.73; α = .68				
I do many things on the spur of the moment. (R)	.17*		.79	
I blurt out whatever is on my mind. (R)	.17*		.73	
People would describe me as impulsive. (R)	.26***		.66	
I spend too much money. (R)	.14*		.46	
I often act without thinking through all the alternatives. (R)	.13*		.45	
Disciplined Consistency: Eigenvalue = 1.42 ; % Variance = 9.5%; M = 2.24; SD = 0.61; α = .61				
I am not easily discouraged.	.16*			.67
I have trouble concentrating. (R)	.13*			.63
I am able to work effectively toward long term goals.	.31***			.61
I change my mind fairly often. (R)	.22**			.59
I have trouble saying no. (R)	.17**			.42
I engage in healthy practices.	.22**			.40

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001 (R) = Reverse scored statement of self-control

results are summarized in Table 4. Disciplined Consistency was the most consistent indicator of psychological adjustment, making significant contributions to the prediction of all but the Beliefs in Sin Scale. Behavioral Control was noteworthy primarily as a direct predictor of Intrinsic and Beliefs in Sin scores. Impulse Control displayed expected associations with lower levels of responding on the Extrinsic, Chance, and Powerful Others Scales, but it also exhibited a theoretically counterintuitive negative association with Social Self-Efficacy.

Discussion

Self-control is a New Testament value (Swartley, 2006) that religions in general may nurture as a master virtue (Geyer & Baumeister, 2005), Denying the self anything can seem irrelevant or even immoral in an increasingly secularized capitalist context in which selfhood serves as an ultimate value (Wright, 2006; Geyer & Baumeister). Within a Christian ideological surround, the challenge is to identify theoretical and empirical opportunities for faithfully and effectively defending this master virtue. Theoretical insights of the Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin (1941/1992) may be especially useful in light of the contemporary emphasis on selfhood as an ideal. He essentially explained how religious self-control might liberate the self through an ideational freedom that reduces desires while simultaneously enhancing satisfactions. Empirical support for that possibility was in fact obtained in the present project when the Self-Control Scale (Tangney et al., 2004) consistently predicted a healthier form of selfhood. Specifically, this scale correlated positively with Self-Actualization, two forms of Self-Efficacy, and an Internal Locus of Control and negatively with a Chance and a Powerful Others External Locus of Control.

In addition, the Intrinsic Religious Orientation can be interpreted as a sincere motivation to reduce desires to the ultimate satisfactions that may be available through religious ideational freedom. The Extrinsic Orientation instead involves the use of religion as a means to other ends, perhaps reflecting a multiplication of potentially unsatisfied desires that is incompatible with ideational freedom (Watson et al., 2004). As would be expected, therefore, Self-Control correlated positively with the Intrinsic and negatively with the Extrinsic Scales, and these two measures of religious motivation generally predicted adjustment and maladjustment, respectively. Correlational findings for the Intrinsic Scale were consistent, for example, with the suggestion that religious self-control "can increase people's sense of self-efficacy" (Geyer & Baumeister, 2005, pp. 426-427).

Religions can presumably promote ideational freedom through adaptive beliefs about sin that enhance motivations to control lustful, self-interested, and other inappropriate desires. As Geyer and Baumeister (2005) emphasize, for example, "People who are religious may want not only to distract themselves from sinful desires, but to replace those sinful desires with virtuous or spiritual ones" (p. 429). As would be expected, therefore, the Beliefs in Sin Scale in fact correlated positively with Self-Control and with the Intrinsic Orientation and negatively with the Extrinsic Orientation, Chance, and Powerful Others measures.

In short, these data most importantly suggested that a Christian-sensitive psychology might defend self-control as a master virtue useful in liberating the self through religious ideational freedom. Such conclusions would have been obvious in a project that limited itself to the assumptions and methods of the integrationist model. The added potentials of

Table 3
Correlations of Self-Control Measures with Religious Orientation, Sin Beliefs, Self-Actualization, Locus of Control, and Self-Efficacy

				Christian Self-Control Factors		
Measures	Self-Control Scale	Christian Self-Control	Non-Christian Self-Control	Behavioral Control	Impulse Control	Disciplined Consistency
Intrinsic Orientation	.33***	.44***	.18**	.40***	.26***	.33***
Extrinsic Orientation	-.25***	-.28***	-.17**	-.15*	-.22**	-.28***
Beliefs in Sin	.14*	.29***	-.01	.28***	.22**	.17**
Self-Actualization	.31***	.30***	.26***	.14*	.08	.44***
Internal Control	.15*	.10	.17*	.02	.03	.16*
Chance	-.38***	-.42***	-.29***	-.24***	-.30***	-.41***
Powerful Others	-.25***	-.28***	-.18**	-.09	-.21**	-.32***
General Self-Efficacy	.52***	.44***	.50***	.22**	.14*	.63***
Social Self-Efficacy	.18**	.16*	.16*	.06	-.06	.36***

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Christian psychology, nevertheless, became apparent by empirically placing these issues within a more explicitly Christian ideological surround. Methodologically, this objective was accomplished when the Intrinsic Scale served in correlational marker procedures to identify items useful in defining a specifically Christian Self-Control. With a sample in which over 80% reported affiliation with one or another Christian denomination, 15 of 36 Self-Control items correlated positively with the Intrinsic Scale to form a Christian Self-Control measure with the remaining 21 statements making up a Non-Christian Self-Control Scale. Average responding to Christian Self-Control measures was in fact higher than to the Non-Christian version, supporting the validity of this measure within an overwhelmingly Christian sample. Additional evidence of validity appeared when the Christian but not the Non-Christian Self-Control Scale correlated positively with Beliefs in Sin.

Further advantages of the correlational marker procedures became apparent when the Christian Self-Control items were factor analyzed. In correlational findings, a mere 6 items defining the Disciplined Consistency factor were as effective as the full 36-item Self-Control Scale in predicting healthy religious selfhood. Multiple regression analyses further confirmed Disciplined Consistency as a more noteworthy and reliable predictor of healthy selfhood than the Behavioral and Impulse Control dimensions of Christian Self-Control.

These Disciplined Consistency data, perhaps more than any other findings, documented the added potentials of a Christian psychology relative to the integrationist model. Correlational marker procedures formally rejected the typical presumption of contemporary psychology that it is possible to achieve neutral objectivity through empirical methods. Within an increasingly postmodern cultural context, the suspicion is that empirical methods are invariably employed in the service of interests that reflect some socially constructed perspective. Within a Christian ideological surround, therefore, the task is to forthrightly construct an empirical perspective that explicitly reflects the somewhat non-empirical, normative, and sociological beliefs of Christianity. By moving beyond the integrationist model, the advantages of a normative rather than an impossibly neutral empiricism should become obvious. In this study, for example, it was possible to focus on those 15 statements that were especially noteworthy in the social construction of Christian Self-Control, and then to narrow the focus even more to 6 items that seemed to be centrally important in explaining Self-Control data for this largely Christian sample.

Data for the other two Christian Self-Control factors yielded additional insights that would have been unavailable through sole reliance upon the integrationist model. Multiple regression data revealed that Behavioral Control was uniquely relevant to understanding the Beliefs in Sin Scale. In these analyses, Beliefs in Sin was the only measure that Disciplined Consistency failed to predict, and Impulse Control also did not contribute to the prediction equation for this variable. Adaptive Beliefs in Sin may, therefore, be especially relevant to attempts to understand the behavioral dimension of Christian Self-Control.

Impulse Control also seemed useful in understanding Christian attempts to avoid an Extrinsic Religious Orientation and an External Locus of Control. On the other hand, Impulse Control, when analyzed in the multiple regression procedures, also

Table 4
Multiple Regressions Using Christian Self-Control Factors to Predict Other Variables

			Behavioral Control		Impulse Control		Disciplined Consistency	
Measures	Multiple R	F	β	t	β	t	β	t
Intrinsic Orientation	.45	19.63***	.29	4.37***	.08	1.22	.21	3.23**
Extrinsic Orientation	.31	8.01***	-.01	-0.19	-.14	-2.01*	-.23	-3.34**
Beliefs in Sin	.31	7.90***	.21	2.93***	.12	1.75	.06	0.81
Self-Actualization	.45	18.84***	-.01	-0.02	-.06	-0.83	.46	7.13***
Internal Control	.16	1.98	-.03	-0.40	-.01	-0.10	.17	2.36*
Chance	.45	19.20***	-.05	-0.73	-.17	-2.63**	-.34	-5.29***
Powerful Others	.35	10.40***	.07	0.95	-.14	-2.06*	-.30	-4.48***
General Self-Efficacy	.63	50.60***	.02	0.35	-.07	-1.18	.64	11.52***
Social Self-Efficacy	.40	14.40***	-.02	-0.23	-.18	-2.68**	.42	6.32***
Non-Christian Self-Control	.68	65.59***	.26	4.83***	.10	1.90	.49	9.29***

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

displayed the liability of being a least somewhat incompatible with Social Self-Efficacy. A recent study found that individuals in high Self-Control were evaluated as being less spontaneous and less extraverted (Zabelina, Robinson, & Anicha, 2007). This inverse association of Impulse Control with Social Self-Efficacy may, therefore, have been relevant to individual differences in spontaneity and extraversion.

Added potentials of Christian psychology also seemed apparent relative to the biblical counseling model. These data suggested, for example, that biblical counselors might find it especially worthwhile to develop Scriptural foundations for nurturing Disciplined Consistency. Broadly predictive of healthier psychological functioning, Disciplined Consistency was clearly consistent with Intrinsic Christian commitments. The measures of healthier functioning associated with Disciplined Consistency were also congruent with the wider cultural embrace of selfhood as an ideal. Biblical counseling based upon Disciplined Consistency might, therefore, have the added advantage of using a language of selfhood that is well suited to survive the ideological challenges of daily life in an increasingly secularized capitalist culture. For essentially the same reason, the language of Disciplined Consistency might also be especially useful in attempts to reach out in an inviting way to those who live completely outside the Church.

Again, Disciplined Consistency did not predict Beliefs in Sin in the multiple regression procedures, but Behavioral Control did. In these analyses, Behavioral Control also predicted higher levels of the Intrinsic Religious Orientation, but not of any measure of healthier selfhood other than Non-Christian Self-Control. This pattern of results perhaps revealed that the language of sin may be especially useful in strengthening behavioral self-control in those who are already secure in their faith. Such an effect would be worthwhile, but it might also be important for biblical counselors to realize that maximal counseling benefits could require supplementary interventions that promoted even healthier forms of Christian selfhood through Disciplined Consistency.

Impulse Control may be another important counseling objective for advocates of the biblical counseling. Multiple regression data demonstrated that understandings of this form of self-restraint could have a role in overcoming tendencies to use religion for extrinsic purposes and in avoiding an External Locus of Control. At the same time, however, multiple regression analysis also suggested that Impulse Control might at least sometimes work against Social Self-Efficacy. Biblical counselors presumably would want to know about the possibility that one value consistent with Scripture might have empirically problematic consequences when framed within the context of other values also consistent with Scripture. Such a result would in no way challenge commitments to a formal reliance upon Scripture. Instead, such data could make obvious a perhaps unsuspected need to return to Scripture in order to avoid possible iatrogenic effects of counseling. In short, empirical data based upon the ideological surround use of social scientific methodologies appeared to spotlight specific Scriptural themes that might help biblical counselors be of even greater assistance to those who seek their care.

Two caveats are most important when interpreting the results of this project. First, Christianity is a tradition characterized by immense diversity in theological interpretation, denominational belief, and personal background. The present data were based upon an overwhelmingly Christian sample that reflected a very specific mix of background characteristics. Different results might have been obtained if participants had been sampled from other Christian populations. Second, the Intrinsic Scale was used in correlational marker procedures in conformity with the previous research literature (Watson et al., 1989, 2004). Different and even more striking findings might nevertheless be possible if a different measure served as the correlational marker. The specific results of this study, therefore, demand to be interpreted cautiously. The more important point, however, is that regardless of limitations, the present data clearly illustrated the added potentials of an ideological surround approach to Christian psychology relative to both the integrationist and biblical counseling models.

In conclusion, this investigation appeared to support the project of a Christian psychology at both more specific and more abstract levels of interpretation. At a more specific level, Self-Control appeared to be a master virtue of relevance to the research and practice of all Christian psychologists. And more abstractly, these data suggested the theoretical potentials of speculation about an ideational form of freedom and the empirical potentials of a normative rather than an impossibly neutral empiricism for placing research questions within a more explicitly Christian ideological surround (Watson, 1993, 1994). Future Christian researchers, therefore, may find it useful to further develop Sorokin's (1941/1992) theoretical insights about freedom and to employ correlational marker and other ideological surround methodologies to explore the relationships between psychology and religion.

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On the Importance of Christian Spiritual Emotions

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Robert C. Roberts (RCR) is Distinguished Professor of Ethics at Baylor University. Formerly he taught at Wheaton College, with part-time assignment to the program in clinical psychology. He writes primarily on issues in moral psychology. Recent work includes Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology (Cambridge U.P., 2003) and (with Jay Wood) Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology (Oxford U.P., 2007). He is currently working on the sequel to the first of these books, Emotions and Virtues: An Essay in Moral Psychology. Joshua D. Walker (JDW) is completing his PhD in Educational Psychology from The University of Texas at Austin with a focus on learning, cognition, and instruction. He is interested in personal epistemology and the integration of faith and learning. Starting this year, he will also be serving as the Assistant Director of Residence Life at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas.

JDW: To begin, I'd like to talk about one of your most recent books, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (2007; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company). To the person who hasn't read it yet, how would you convey the essence of this book?

RCR: *Spiritual Emotions* is an attempt to give an account of the nature of emotions and their place in the spiritual life. In the first two chapters, I develop an account of the nature of emotions that is very friendly to what is said about them in the New Testament. The next four chapters are about the kind of concern or care or interest that a person has to have if he or she is going to experience distinctively Christian emotions (believe it or not, emotions can be Christian or non-Christian!). The last six chapters are devoted to six Christian emotion-virtues: contrition, joy, gratitude, hope, peace, and compassion. I emphasize the importance of Christian doctrinal teaching as well as experience in life for the development of these virtues.

JDW: When I went to Amazon.com to buy this book, I noticed that one reviewer claimed that it "will be in this decade for the Christian thinker . . . what *Emotional Intelligence* was in the last decade for the secular thinker." Considering this comparison, in the context of "emotion-virtues" or "passions" – categories used in your book, when would "emotional intelligence" be relevant?

RCR: One of the aspects of the conception of emotions that I develop is that emotions are perception-like. For example, when we experience joy in our salvation, we get a "taste" of its goodness; when we experience contrition for our sins, we get a vivid "look" at their nastiness and destructiveness and our need for forgiveness and cleansing. In this way, emotions help us know things, and so they are a kind of intelligence about the things of the faith; they "bring home" truths about ourselves and God and what God has done that would otherwise remain just "intellectual." So there is a kind of discernment or wisdom in the emotions that can't be had without them. To become emotionally developed in the way that genuinely sanctified people are is to become spiritually smart. So we might talk about spiritual intelligence that depends on a proper refinement and development of the Christian emotions.

JDW: Elsewhere you write about this "epistemic importance of emotions" for the development of the intellectually virtuous life. Is it necessarily the case that the affective precedes the cognitive on the way toward transformation? If it could ever happen that a soul rationalizes itself into feeling properly, would that contradict an understanding of such dispositions as fruits of the Spirit?

RCR: Psychologists and philosophers have tended to think that "the affective" and "the cognitive" are two cleanly distinct mental categories, but when their claims are subjected to careful examination,

the distinction gets very fuzzy. One of the aims of my work is to show how the affective really is cognitive, and the cognitive really is affective. There are many paths to Christian maturity. Some are rather un-"intellectual," but among human beings, I doubt that the path is ever completely devoid of thought; and some are rather "intellectual," but among human beings, I doubt that the path is ever entirely unemotional. The Holy Spirit can bear his fruit on a surprising variety of vines and trees.

JDW: One of the first things that struck me about the title, *Spiritual Emotions*, was how it harks back to Jonathan Edwards' treatise on *Religious Affections*. You mention Edwards' work, along with Schleiermacher's, Otto's, and James' as earlier, if not different surveys of similar subjects. If your book is to be "a beginning for a renewal of theological and pastoral inquiry into the emotions" (p. vii), can you say a bit more about how it will stand in distinction from or in conjunction with these earlier works?

RCR: My thought about emotions is much more akin to Edwards than to the other authors you mention. Edwards' treatise examines the "signs" that indicate (or fail to indicate) whether an affection is genuinely spiritual. And by "spiritual" he means true to the apostolic faith, thus the work of the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and Jesus Christ, the Father's only Son. The treatise is the most mature of several that Edwards wrote in response to the dual errors of an emotionless Christianity and a revivalistic "enthusiasm" that mistakes emotional intensity for the work of the Holy Spirit. So, for example, the presence of lots of physiological perturbations is an unreliable sign of spiritual genuineness, while the fact that a religious affection shows itself in a long-term disposition of character, or issues in the steady fruit of properly Christian behavior, are reliable signs of genuineness.

The other authors you mention are all, in their own ways, looking for what is generic in religious emotions. Even though Schleiermacher and Otto are Christian theologians of a sort, they aren't really interested in clearly distinguishing properly Christian emotions from emotions belonging to other religious outlooks. They are more interested in religion in general. For example, the focus of Schleiermacher's "theology" is the "feeling of absolute dependence" which according to him is a universal human experience. James' famous theory of emotion is that an emotion is a feeling of bodily change (pulse rate, tensions in various muscles, sensations in the abdominal area, sensations of the movements of one's body, etc.) where the whole response is initiated by some environmental event or factor. This contrasts with my view, which is that an emotion is a perception, not of the subject's body, but of situations in the world, including such "situations" as that God has redeemed us in Jesus Christ, or that we have sinned against God.

JDW: So are you saying that the set of Christian emotions is fundamentally different from that of secular emotions, or are the emotions at base the same, only contextualized differently?

RCR: Emotions come in types. So joy is a different type of emotion from anger. But the types can be divided further into more specific types. Thus, malicious joy is a special kind of joy, and righteous anger is a special kind of anger. In the various chapters of Part 3 of *Spiritual Emotions*, I try to specify what distinguishes Christian joy from other kinds of joy, and what distinguishes Christian compassion and gratitude from other kinds of compassion and gratitude, etc. In general, what distinguishes the Christian emotions from non-Christian ones is that the propositional content of the Christian ones makes reference to the theology that comes down to us from the Bible. For example, in Acts 5:41, the apostles are said to have rejoiced about having just been beaten up because they had been "counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name [of Jesus]." Their joy makes no sense apart from a particular theological outlook. And all distinctively Christian joy will be, in one way or another, about the goodness of God.

JDW: Then, to extend your earlier metaphor, while the Holy Spirit can cultivate fruit from a variety of vines and trees (i.e., by way of both intellectual and emotional means), those that fully ripen for the Christian always flow with the common nectar of the gospel, thus distinguishing the variety of Christian emotions from those of another crop. If I haven't completely pulverized your analogy, "Christian" emotions refer to those that are interpreted through the proper theological grid, but also to those that would not have been experienced otherwise (e.g., joy in suffering because of the hope of the gospel). What would you say is the most difficult challenge of developing these habits of heart and mind toward becoming emotionally and intellectually virtuous?

RCR: Mature Christian emotions are the product of balanced disciplines of accessing what the church has called "the means of grace." As I have said, they have a doctrinal dimension that needs to be nurtured by a regular diet of the words of the Christian tradition — primarily Scripture, but also the words of the pro-

found Christian thinkers from across church history — Saint Augustine, Luther, Mother Teresa (I would recommend the recent compilation of some of her spiritual letters *Come, Be My Light*). The emotions are not only formed by the intellect, but also by the body — by getting actively, physically involved in the church's life of worship and service. As Paul says, "Present your *bodies* as a *living* sacrifice, which is your *spiritual* worship [service]." My book is very reflective, but it is possible to become too "intellectual" about spiritual matters. A big part of being spiritual is putting one's body on the line — doing things for Christ, pouring one's time and attention into other people's lives, putting oneself beyond what is physically comfortable.

JDW: In the preface, you mention that *Spiritual Emotions* is a "descendant" of a twenty-five year earlier work of your own. Where does this most recent articulation fit within the development of your ideas on this topic across your career?

RCR: The current book is much better written, and better informed about the literature on emotions, than *Spirituality and Human Emotion* (Eerdmans, 1982). The basic view, that emotions are concern-based perceptions and can thus incorporate basic Christian theology in their very structure, is the same as in the earlier book. But the first two chapters do a much more complete job of expounding the basic view. In the second part of the book, where I offer an account of the development of a passion for the kingdom of God, I have added a chapter on the basic and universal hunger for a relationship with God. In the third part I have added chapters on contrition, joy, and peace, and the chapter on gratitude is thoroughly rewritten. So despite the fact that there is some overlap with the earlier book, *Spiritual Emotions* is really a new book.

JDW: How did you initially come to be interested in studying and writing about the topic of emotions?

RCR: My interest in the emotions, as a dimension of the moral or spiritual life, goes way back to my training at Yale University. Paul Holmer, who taught in the Divinity School and the Department of Religious Studies for about 25 years in the last third of the last century, influenced my thought more than any other living person. Well before "virtue ethics" and the academic study of emotions became the rage, as they have been from the 1980s until the present day, Holmer was teaching courses with titles like "Emotions, Passions, and Feelings" and "Virtues and Vices" at Yale Divinity School. I heard him speak one snowy night at Princeton Theological Seminary, and decided there and then that I wanted to go to Yale to study with him. His way of thinking struck a chord in a very special way. It happens that his thought was very influenced by Søren Kierkegaard, who has also been a great source of inspiration for me.

JDW: Of the six Christian emotion-virtues delineated in Part III (contrition, joy, gratitude, hope, peace, compassion), are any particularly meaningful for you personally? (For example, is one especially poignant for you? Do some uniquely tap certain experiences or memories? Was one more difficult to write about?).

RCR: I find that thinking about virtues and vices in connection with Scripture and the Christian tradition is always "poignant" if by that you mean something like "edifying" or "up-building." In I Corinthians 14, the apostle Paul urges the Corinthians to speak in such a way that their speech builds up the Christian community and strengthens the Christian character of its members. It seems to me that a lot of our theorizing in philosophy, theology, and psychology doesn't measure up very well by this standard. One of the things that struck me about Paul Holmer's speech, something that set him apart from other professors at Yale Divinity School, was that his thought and speech *challenged* the hearer, not just intellectually, but as a human being whose task was to do a good job of *being* a human being. And I think the study of the Christian virtues lends itself to a mood of personal challenge and edification. This is not to say that it can't be done in a dry, academic, and purely "intellectual" way, but this is a bit harder when you're studying gratitude, hope, and contrition: the study of these things tends to grip you in a different place than some other academic topics.

I find all of the Christian emotion virtues challenging and up-building, but if I had to choose one, I'd probably pick gratitude. To become a thoroughly grateful human being is to get outside oneself in a very healthy way, and it is an important key to self-understanding and to one's relationships with God and one's fellow human beings.

JDW: I was recently challenged by this very notion in my devotions, how prayer so powerfully proves our dependence and limitedness. A grateful heart is humble and honest – able to acknowledge its source. For those who have opportunity to foster the development of these emotion-virtues in others (e.g., pastors, parents, counselors, teachers, etc.), what do you see as the biggest challenge facing them today? How would you encourage them?

RCR: The market of ideas is replete with offerings these days, and much of what is offered is narcissistic and, by Christian lights, unhealthy. I would encourage Christian pastors, parents, counselors, and teachers to inform themselves about what the Christian tradition teaches about personal formation and to develop discernment about ideas that may resemble Christian ones in seductive ways, without being the genuine article. *Spiritual Emotions* is an attempt to contribute to such understanding and critical discernment.

JDW: Where do you see the remaining work to be done in the field of spiritual emotions? Are there any aspects of this construct that remain underdeveloped or where you plan to turn your attention next?

RCR: While the Christian emotions have a broad structure specified by Christian orthodoxy, there is no single definitive account of any spiritual emotion. The scriptural and historical sources that may inform an account of them is very deep and unlikely to be more than partially plumbed by any single writer, thinker, or preacher. The contexts in which they can be discussed and the attitudes with which they may be instructively contrasted are virtually endless. So there is always room for new reflection, just as there is always room for an excellent, but new sermon on any given scriptural text. The discourse of Christian psychology is ongoing and needs to be retrieved and given fresh expression in every generation.

JDW: We will look forward to hearing more about that. Thank you for sharing your intellect and emotions with us.

Review of Rolnick (2007)

Person, Grace, and God

Bryan N. Maier, *Edification* Book Review Editor, Biblical Seminary, Hatfield, PA

Invitation:
Readers of *Edification* are invited to submit reviews of books that they have found stimulating and that fit into the discussion of Christian Psychology. Please contact the book review editor to explore this possibility. His email address is bmaier@biblical.edu.

Featured Review

Rolnick, Philip A. (2007). P*erson, Grace, and God*. 270 pages. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. Pp. 270, $28.00. Reviewed by Alan J. Tjeltveit, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA.

An important contribution to Christian psychology, *Person, Grace, and God* is a carefully crafted, well-documented, and lucid exploration of human persons and personality, understood as inextricably connected with God and grace.

Philip Rolnick begins by clarifying terms (including a use of personality that differs from psychology's emphasis on traits and/or temperament) and by reviewing the history of Christian thought about persons and personality. The extensive theological reflection that led to the doctrine of the Trinity (God in three persons) and the two natures of Christ (one person, unifying his fully divine nature and his fully human nature) was eventually extended to our understanding of human beings made in the image of that God, understood (in a richer sense than before) as persons.

In developing a rich, complex understanding of personality, Rolnick also takes seriously, draws on, and critiques the challenges to Christian understandings of persons raised by evolutionary biology, neuroscience, and postmodernism.

In the theological understanding he reviews and develops, personality and personhood have to do with personal uniqueness, the unity of an individual human being, relationships (with others and with God), our status as natural beings who transcend nature, the spiritual, ineluctable mystery, a *telos* (end) beyond nature, and grace. Let me address each in turn.

Personality, Rolnick contends, has to do with the distinctiveness of each person, that which is "utterly particular" (p. 4) and incommunicable (the theological concept of *incommunicabilis*). This "sacred particularity" (p. 221), "a uniqueness that can neither be generalized nor replicated" (p. 5), stands in stark contrast to psychologists who claim that all knowledge about human beings must be generalizable and replicable. Rolnick does not challenge the contributions derived from such efforts, but contends that they fail to grasp something essential about persons and personality.

Personality also has to do with the unity of a person, the unity of nature and grace, of genes and culture, of the material, intellectual, and spiritual. This challenges levels of explanation approaches to relating psychology and theology because personality—in Rolnick's theological psychological view—both includes other discipline-derived understandings of human beings and is unified. "In distinction from animals, angels, and the Trinitarian God," he asserts, "we are twofold beings—animal nature and spiritual gift—joined in a single personality" (p. 230).

Relationships—with others and with God—are integral to personality, Rolnick explains. Such relationships are between unique persons, however, rather than simply being an amalgam of multiple, interacting organisms, "a web of relations" (p. 209), or social roles. Again, much of social psychology—when ignoring the uniqueness of persons, "the wholeness of personhood, … willing, feeling, … and, most importantly, its relational purpose" (p. 232)—fails to capture this understanding of relationships, and, hence, personality.

Persons have an indisputably natural origin, but also transcend nature. There is more to us than nature. In understanding human beings, we are properly concerned with *what* (including genes, traits, and character, Rolnick asserts), but we also need to understand *who* a person is, including our relationship to the God who created and creates us. "In a finite context that was solely biological," Rolnick notes, "personhood would make no sense. But in a creation, in a realm that originates in response to the purpose of its Creator, we have come to discover a continuing freshness of the finite, its novelty, its

inherent openness to human intellect and will, [its] openness to the participation of persons" (p. 167). This transcendence of nature is crucial to personality; the fact that many postmodern and biological accounts reject the possibility of transcendence requires psychologists to make a choice about transcendence, a choice with profound implications for our understanding of persons and personality.

Because we are in relationship with the God who transcends us, we are spiritual beings. Personality, properly understood, is thus, in part, spiritual. In contrast to the voluminous empirical research on generic spirituality that remains pointedly agnostic about questions of transcendence, Rolnick contends that "claims of human spirituality apart from the Spirit are no more than delusions" (p. 217). That personality has to do with unification avoids, Rolnick asserts, the problematic quality of some dualisms (or trichotomies) that include human spirituality.

If we are made in the image of the Triune God, and the Trinity is a mystery, then it is not surprising that there is an ineluctable mystery about personality. To some extent, but only to some extent, we are indefinable. As Rolnick notes:

> Because human persons are made in the image of God, there is something mysterious even about our personhood. Mystery, in both the divine case and ours, does not mean that nothing can be said or understood, but that knowledge gained leads to greater reverence … the reality exceeds the concept (p. 221).

This contrasts sharply with claims that psychology will soon explain, predict, and control human behavior.

Grace constitutes persons, through creation and through redemption. Without the personhood of God, there would be no grace; without God's grace, there would be no human personality. Personality is "the unsurpassable gift which allows us to relate to God and to one another in freedom and love, and increasingly to appreciate that the universe in which we find ourselves is itself a gift of unimaginable generosity" (p. 169). This Christian understanding of personality is quite different from that found in contemporary personality psychology texts.

Finally, personhood has an eschatological dimension, since it includes an end or *telos* to human existence. This contrasts with the claim, in science, that ends have no proper role in explanations about human beings. "The *telos* of human personality," Rolnick contends, "is realized only as persons are stretched beyond the flat confines of human nature in relation to God, as persons are increasingly made in the image and likeness of God" (p. 256). There is thus an ultimate purpose to our lives: We are called "to become the sons and daughters of God, and thereby take on the eternal identity that confers inexhaustible meaning and purpose on human personalities" (p. 256).

This understanding of person and personality is only fleshed out fully by the end of the book, since Rolnick develops it in dialogue with the history of Christian thought, contemporary theology, neuroscience, evolutionary biology, and postmodernism.

Rolnick is open to relevant findings from evolutionary biology and neuroscience; he does not, however, accept all the philosophical claims made by those who draw on those scientific fields. For instance, he acknowledges the (partial) correctness of evolutionary perspectives that maintain that apparently egoistic motivations may underlie some "altruistic" behavior, pointing out that some measure of support for self-love is found in Jesus and theology. He ultimately maintains, however, that genuine altruism is possible, that genuine gifts exist. Indeed, without gifts, without grace, persons in the sense he describes would not exist. He cites approvingly Aquinas' slogan that grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it, and that "the practice of loving others [can] transform biological self-love" (p. 61). There is more to human beings than the biological.

Rolnick appears somewhat bewildered by how some otherwise well-informed scholars address the contentious issue of the relationship of body and soul. The concept of the person has—since Chalcedon in 451 A.D.—been used by Christians to oppose dualism, yet those who reject dualism often fail to engage with that person-unifying tradition, which includes Christian thinkers like Aquinas who advocated "a very tight linkage between soul and body" (p. 243). In any adequate solution to the body–soul debate, Rolnick contends, "two things will be present … some form of *twoness* and a way to *unify* the twoness" (pp. 246–7). He notes that many traditional Christian understandings of the soul include its spiritual capabilities. Scholars like Nancey Murphy, however, in her nonreductive materialism, leave out the spiritual dimension of the soul when they reject the soul, Rolnick notes, "in order to engage neuroscience on its own terms" (p. 242). Rolnick thinks this exclusion is not necessary for engagement with neuroscience, which raises the question of whether Murphy's way of engaging with neuroscientists comes at too high a price. Rolnick notes that she and others do appear to slip something like spirituality back into their understandings of human beings when they talk about higher levels of causality or top-down influences, but fail to clarify the nature of the reality of those influences. More pointedly, he asks whether there is not in her thought "an incon-

sistency between the physicalist ontology … and the higher goal of a relationship with God" (p. 248). The division between those who include neuroscientific findings in their understandings of human beings, but employ an exclusively *physicalist* world view, and those who include neuroscientific findings in their understandings of *unified* human beings in a way *includes spirituality* (in relationship to the Holy Spirit) is profoundly important, Rolnick contends, because "it is the latest variation of an even older fractal divide—that between the allowance or rejection of transcendence in understanding the finite" (p. 247). Murphy's position, Rolnick concludes, "parallels the postmodern denial of transcendence" (p. 247).

Postmodernism comes in for its share of critique from Rolnick. Again, however, the critique is accompanied by a deep appreciation, especially for Levinas. At times, Rolnick contends, postmodernism offers "a prophetic word that theologians and people of faith need to hear" (p. 146). When we are too settled into particular, problematic ways of understanding people, or hold our views too rigidly, postmodernism can profitably shake us up. Some of our views need deconstruction: Our naïve assumptions about the goodness of our generosity may need to be unmasked, for instance, so we see that much gift-giving is, in fact, egoistically motivated, damaging to the recipient, and/or a disguise for the exercise of power. And postmodernism's critique of modernist claims to fully explain human beings finds a parallel in Christian thought about the person: "Given its theological provenance, we should expect person to exhibit a degree of mystery and to be inherently elusive to conceptual mastery" (p. 92).

In several significant regards, however, Rolnick finds much of postmodernism problematic and questions "the hegemony of the critical stance" (p. 121). In contrast to some Christian postmodernism enthusiasts, he recognizes that postmodernism's rejection of grand narratives is deeply problematic for a Christian faith that is incomprehensible without its grand narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and the age to come. Rolnick likewise rejects radical postmodern suspicion about the existence of a self, a subject, or a person, and about the possibility of gifts (grace) that are genuine, do not harm others, and are not surreptitious exercises of power. This, of course, is consistent with his assertion that persons exist, through grace, as the creation of the personal God with whom we are in relationship. Finally, many postmodernists deny the existence of "any sort of larger transcendent context" (p. 122) in which persons need to be understood. From Nietzsche on, the assumption has been: "The finite must be on its own" (p. 164). This, I suspect, most psychologists believe. Rolnick rejects that view, affirming that "the relation to God as center positions us in the grandest of grand narratives, wherein persons are dynamically oriented by faith" (p. 122). Given our status as persons, "neutrality [about transcendence] is not an option" (p. 122).

A brief review cannot do justice to the nuanced ways in which Rolnick presents his compelling argument. The book is rarely easy to read, but more than rewards careful reading. I did find myself wishing he had added to his engagement with biology and postmodernism an equally astute and detailed engagement with psychological perspectives on personhood and personality (addressing especially what personality psychology, social psychology, and psychoanalysis have to say) and the distortions of persons produced by sin and psychopathology. That is clearly beyond the scope of this book, however, and it will remain for other psychologists to extend Rolnick's fine work in those directions. We need more of this kind of work.

We need more careful psychological–theological explorations like this excellent book, in part because we all ultimately face a profound choice in understanding and working with persons, a choice which Rolnick presents unstintingly: Do we or do we not need to see human beings in relationship with God? In contrast to the vast majority of psychologists who think an optimal psychology can, and (for many) *must*, be developed in isolation from God (or understandings of God), Rolnick develops in depth and with sophistication a view of persons and personality that requires grace and God.