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# Towards a Philosophy of Science for Christian Psychology

Eric L. Johnson

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*Most contemporary psychologists, including many Christians, assume that psychology is necessarily a secular discipline — one that must avoid taking any metaphysical or religious positions with reference to their studies — such has been the success of modern psychology in defining the field according to its own metaphysical and epistemological assumptions. Modern psychologists, of course, are entitled to define the field as they wish. However, the philosophical resources of the Christian tradition—particularly the contributions of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas — point towards a very different understanding of psychology. The following is a very preliminary outline of a philosophy of science, generally derived from their epistemology, for a psychology that takes the triune God and his revelation in the Christian Scriptures seriously with reference to a science of individual human beings — a psychology defined according to Christian assumptions.*

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We are living in the aftermath of the greatest intellectual conflict in Western culture since the turn of the West to Christianity during the 3rd to 5th centuries after Christ: the conflict between Christianity and modernism, an intellectual battle, however, that is all but over. There are Christians who continue to act as if there was still a genuine war to be won, people who attempt to resist modernism by mere legislation and polemics — looking a little like Don Quixote in his battle with the windmill — but their efforts evidence a sad underestimation of just how deeply modernism has permeated contemporary thought in the West, including the thinking of the Church.

Is there evidence for such pessimism? Let us consider the dominant evangelical understandings of counseling. It is well known that the formation of psychology as a discipline distinct from philosophy was in part the result of the application of natural science methods to psychology that occurred in the 19th century. Less well understood is the coincident influence of secularism. Modernism is essentially a *secular* intellectual movement (Chadwick, 1975; Hitchcock, 1982; Luckmann, 1967). *Modern psychology*, the version of psychology that pervasively dominated the study of individual human beings in the West during the 20th century, is the offspring of the application of natural science methods to psychology and secularism. So thorough has been modernism's conquest of the field of psychology that most everyone in psychology and counseling —not merely naturalists or humanists, but also most Christians — are convinced that psychology is necessarily a

secular discipline.

At the same time, there can be no question about the enormous contributions of modern psychology. Indeed, modern research in the 20th century in areas like neuroscience, human development, cognition, psychopathology, and social processes, for example, has discovered countless aspects of the human soul, and rendered to all of those interested in human beings an incomparable service. But relishing the valid contributions of modern psychology does not require that Christians should accept all of its assumptions. From a Christian standpoint, far too great a cost was paid in the way modernism has gone about its work, including most importantly the exclusion of considerations about God, his relation to human beings, and his salvation, from the science of psychology. Today, the Christian psychological community needs to learn all it can from modern psychology, while simultaneously re-appropriating its own historic and more holistic vision of human nature, and then develop a wiser and more complex psychology that flows from Christian assumptions about human beings and how best to understand them, that can do better justice to the unique features of human beings, and that can aid in the reformation of humans into Christ's image.

## **What Would an Augustinian-Thomist Philosophy of Science Look Like?**

As a sophisticated and distinct field of study, philosophy of science is of recent origin, so the question above is conjectural. However, Augustine and Aquinas both wrote enough on epistemological issues,

that the basic direction of such an enterprise can be surmised (and has been developed to a small extent; see Jaki, 2000; McGrath, 2001; MacIntyre, 1988, 1990; Milbank, 1993; Moreland & Craig, 2003; Plantinga, 1993b, 2000; Poythress, 2006; Ratzsch, 1986; Stoker, 1973; Torrance, 1989). To begin with, in his approach to knowledge Augustine recognized that everything is fundamentally related to God. For him, faith and reason were deeply interdependent: faith seeks rational explication and leads to the proper understanding of everything else. Some have argued that Aquinas departed significantly from the Augustinian tradition, but as MacIntyre (1988, 1990; among others, e.g., de Lubac, 1998) has demonstrated, Aquinas has been largely misinterpreted by Catholics (and Protestants), from the Counter-Reformation on. Aquinas was genuinely committed to a faith-based theistic epistemology, but attempted to extend Augustine's model, by allowing for a somewhat greater role for rational analysis in the description of reality. Living during the time that Aristotle's works were being reintroduced to the West, Aquinas recognized the value of this massive infusion of knowledge composed by a non-Christian, but he sought to translate the truth in that literature into genuinely *Christian* discourse, so that it would be thoroughly consistent with the Christian faith (as a good Augustinian would!). Aquinas may have been somewhat less suspicious of pagan thought than Augustine, but not so different that one can say they were working on different projects. Later Christians must critique the guiding principles and work of both saints, but together they provide some important stones for the foundation of a theistic philosophy of science.

Indeed, the project of a Christian psychology could be construed as analogous to Aquinas' extension of an Augustinian epistemology, by *its* incorporation of a more empirical research agenda and the valid findings of modern psychology into Christian discourse, with the result that, according to an Augustinian-Thomist philosophy of science, everything in our Christian science of human beings – whether derived from a reading of Christian sources (particularly the Bible) or from reinterpreted secular empirical investigation, as well as philosophical analysis, personal experience, or (eventually) distinctly Christian research and theory-building – is understood in relation to our triune Creator and Redeemer and his agenda for humanity.

In addition, in stark contrast to modern psychology, an Augustinian-Thomist approach would posit that a proper understanding of human beings aims at wisdom (*sapientia*) more than mere factual knowledge (*scientia*). Some kinds of knowledge are better than others, and the best kind is that which is virtuous and especially conforms one to the image of Christ. Consequently, the general goal of a Christian psychology – according to an Augustinian-Thomist orientation – would be the cultivation of humans who more fully resemble God (Charry, 1997). If psychology is to be re-envisioned along the Christian lines suggested by Augustine and Aquinas, what is needed is a broader and less restrictive epistemology and philosophy of psychology than has been acceptable over the past 125 years.

### **Some Themes of a Modern Philosophy of Psychology**

Of those interested in contemporary psychology, a minority – composed mostly of philosophers, historians of psychology, theoretical psychologists, and sociologists of knowledge – recognize that mainstream psychology continues to be built upon a rather narrow neo-positivist epistemology. At an implicit philosophical level, modern psychologists aim at a universal science of human beings, composed of empirically gathered knowledge using procedures that all rational persons can agree on and that deliver the same knowledge outcomes, regardless of the researcher's assumptions (e.g., if the original study was replicated by anyone, the original results and interpretations should be confirmed). Therefore, psychologists may not take towards the object of their studies positions involving metaphysical or religious assumptions that themselves cannot be proven to the satisfaction of all rational parties. In addition, modern psychologists typically hold to methodological naturalism and a corresponding empiricism that require the science be restricted to describing human beings solely in terms of natural processes. Within such commitments, knowledge about human beings is obtained through careful research using inductive and hypothetico-deductive methods and quantitative measurement, the results of which are evaluated with statistical procedures.

Just as modern foundationalism has been roundly criticized in philosophical circles in recent decades for positing too narrow a foundation for knowledge (Audi, 1995; Pollock, 1986), so too, from a Chris-

tian standpoint, is the epistemological foundation of modern psychology too narrow. Such an approach itself is built upon assumptions that cannot be proven (e.g., that all knowledge about humans is solely accessible by means of empirical research procedures applied to human subjects), and it has led to rules for scientific research and discourse that do not permit straying from such restrictions (e.g., certain claims about human beings that involve explicit metaphysical positions—like humans are free agents—cannot be considered psychological knowledge, but determinism can be, see Wegner, 2003). As long as these assumptions and rules go unchallenged by Christian psychologists, they will be prevented from moving beyond empirical research based on methodological naturalism, and exploring human beings in accordance with Christian assumptions.

### Two False Positives

*How* Christians bring the essential information of their faith into psychology is a central problem. One stumbling block to its resolution is the long-standing dualistic assumption that the study of humans and the study of the Bible constitute two separate, fundamentally different disciplines (psychology and theology). This has led to the contemporary assumption—common among evangelicals—that the task of Christians in psychology is to somehow integrate these two disciplines as they are presently conceived. There is not space to address adequately the difficulties here (see Johnson, 2007, for a lengthy discussion), but the limitations of both assumptions are demonstrated in the current lack of a scientifically complex understanding of psychology and counseling that is distinctively Christian.

Given the above assumptions, integrationists have tended to take modern psychology as the definitive version and attempted to integrate their faith into that. To their credit, they have helped to modify the modern version of psychology in certain ways, for example, revitalizing the psychology of religion (e.g., Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 2003), putting horizontal forgiveness on the map as a counseling tool (e.g., Worthington, 1998), raising awareness about religious values in counseling and psychotherapy (e.g., Worthington, 1988), and addressing some community-generic virtues in the positive psychology movement (e.g., Emmons & Shelton, 2002). These are significant accomplishments, but they are still merely adjustments in a version of psychology

that is defined according to secular, neo-positivist rules.

All truth is God's truth, to be sure, but not all texts are equally truth-bearing. By beginning their integrative work with a belief in a division in human knowledge between "general and special revelation" — which must then be overcome — but then accepting *modern* psychology (and its usually implicit secular assumptions) as that general revelation, well-meaning 20th century proponents of integration did not realize that certain Christian lines of understanding human beings were thereby rendered untenable, leading to a final psychology product largely shorn of Christian distinctives. Christian psychological thinking has been decidedly enriched by careful, thoughtful integrationist openness to modern research (e.g., see McMinn & Campbell, 2007), but the paradigm may also be unwittingly responsible for hampering the identity formation of Christian psychology and counseling communities and stifling their own unique intellectual development and creativity.

In contrast, a Christian psychology based on an Augustinian-Thomist epistemology is more holistic, since it defines itself as a single discipline with a single object of inquiry — human beings — and open to a variety of sources of relevant information about it, that together provide the most comprehensive understanding of that object possible for humans. According to this approach, psychology should not be defined according to neo-positivism and methodological naturalism, but redefined simply as the science of individual human beings — whatever the legitimate source of the information — and for Christians, unified methodologically by a Christian *hermeneutics*, as its pervasive, fundamental research framework. Such a hermeneutics would involve the interpretation of human subjects (of course), using a wide range of empirical and philosophical research procedures, but it would also entail the interpretation of the Bible and relevant Christian literature, as well as secular psychology texts. In this understanding of the science of psychology, the Christian community's interpretive task consists of discerning the underlying unity of the field that already exists in the mind and heart of God, by bringing together all available, relevant psychological knowledge into the singular study of individual human beings. If this really is a better way of posing our scientific challenge, the actual greatest problem facing the Christian psychological community is communal, rather

than interdisciplinary. “Which psychology are we talking about?” becomes the main question, rather than “How do I integrate (secular) psychology and the Christian faith?” (see MacIntyre, 1988).

Likewise assuming a fundamental division between psychology and theology, biblical counselors have responded very differently, and developed their own unique, small, but growing literature for counseling that is reflective of the Bible’s (and its theology’s) redemptive agenda. Written mostly for pastors and laypersons, there is not much interest in developing a scientifically based literature that might seriously challenge the current field of psychology. Consequently, a Christian philosophy of science for psychology would likely be deemed superfluous for many in such circles, though this does not necessarily characterize the progressive wing of the biblical counseling movement (see e.g., Kelleman, 2005; Powlison, 2005; Welch, 2004). Many of those in the biblical counseling movement appear to have concluded that they need not take seriously contemporary psychology (or even Christian research on human beings themselves), except to criticize it.

A Bible-oriented approach to counseling has played a useful role in the Christian counseling community – by warning prophetically of the possibility of syncretism with secularism and by underscoring the pivotal role the Bible should play in Christian thinking about humans and soul care. However, the biblical counseling movement has generally tended to be either resistant to or simply not that interested in the development of a distinctly Christian *science* of human beings, preferring to work on what might be called a lay psychology of the Bible, that does not stray far from the express statements of Scripture. Because of the Bible’s pivotal role in Christian thought, such a psychology is foundational to a Christian psychology, but there is more territory to explore.

The current model is an attempt to further Christian thinking in psychology and counseling by building upon the strengths of both the integration and biblical counseling models and avoiding their respective weaknesses. For those interested in a wise science of human beings, an Augustinian-Thomist approach to psychology could help free the Christian psychological and counseling communities from their own “culture wars” and the tendency to favor one side of the debate (and its values) over against the other. An Augustinian-Thomist understanding of knowledge offers a more expansive, wiser, and

more Christian epistemology than modernism and can correct the extremes that modernism has pushed within the Christian community. The following are some basic premises of one understanding of an Augustinian-Thomist philosophy of science relevant for a Christian psychology.

### **Some Postulates of a Disciplinary Matrix for a Christian Psychology**

One of the most influential philosophers of science in the 20th century, Thomas Kuhn (1970, 1977a, 1977b), argued that scientists are guided by what he first called a *paradigm* (1970), and later termed a *disciplinary matrix* (1977b), an elaborate mental structure, shared by members in good standing within the disciplinary community, that includes ontological assumptions, a vocabulary and symbolic generalizations relevant to one’s discipline, standards for good scientific practice, and judgments about what needs to be studied and explained (see Suppe, 1977). A disciplinary matrix is essentially the set of beliefs and conceptual tools most important for scientists in a discipline, those that unify, ground, and give shape to their understanding and practice of the discipline, so it is functionally the scientist’s worldview (Suppe, 1977). The following presents some proposed basic assumptions of a disciplinary matrix for a Christian psychology.

Postulate 1: *There are actually two related, coterminous fields of interest for a Christian psychology: 1) the empirical object of actual, individual human beings and their features—and 2) God’s understanding and appraisal of that object.*

The former field is dependent upon and constituted by the latter, whereas the latter encompasses and supercedes the former. God knows all the ontological features of actual individual human beings exhaustively and comprehensively, but he also knows features of them that are true solely by virtue of his knowledge (e.g., their relative goodness or evil and their actual likeness to him, their union with Christ, justification, and adoption). The Reformed scholastics maintained that God’s understanding is the Archetype for human understanding, which is the *ektype*, and the latter is true to the extent it conforms to the former (Muller, 2003). Stoker (1971) argued similarly that, for the Christian scientist, there are “two levels of interpreters of our created universe: (i) God, who interprets absolutely, and (ii) *man*, who must be a reinterpreter of God’s interpretation” (p.

56). Plantinga (1993a) argues the following: since God is omniscient, for any proposition *p*, it is necessarily the case that *p* is true if and only if God believes *p*, and because God made humans in his image, they are able to have knowledge analogous to his.

Given the foregoing, God's knowledge should be seen as a sort of epistemic ideal for humans. Furthermore, the Creator's knowledge as the omniscient source of all knowledge about the creation entails that Christians should construe human knowledge of an object (like human beings) to be related to and a result of God's knowledge of that object, leading to an equal interest in both the object itself and God's understanding of it.

Modernist scientists (and others) will find the distinction between two co-related fields of interest regarding an object of science fallacious in the extreme, since they consider anything other than the empirical (with the exception of a priori knowledge derived from logic or mathematics) to be beyond knowledge and irrelevant for science. Consequently, they restrict their investigations to empirical objects alone, and they therefore would consider it irrelevant, if not abhorrent, to attempt to take into account the mind of God regarding an object of science. Many Christians also share such assumptions, and limit their considerations only to what is available through the investigation of empirical objects like human beings. However, this constraint has hampered the integration project since its inception, effectively preventing the development of uniquely Christian models of the soul and of soul-care that are scientifically complex, but that also entail a reliance on relevant Christian beliefs for much of their uniqueness.

It ought to be added that the Archetypal goal for human understanding is not merely intellectual: consisting of the *mind* of God alone. The goal of a Christian psychology must also include his *heart*, that is, his appraisals of human nature and its features (his preferences and loves and his dislikes and hates). Many modernist thinkers tried in vain to exclude values from their sciences, but more recent supporters of modernism have greatly qualified this agenda, so that even staunch advocates of modernism recognize that values are an inevitable part of science. This is particularly true of a human science, and especially of such applied sub-disciplines as psychopathology and psychotherapy. In fact, secular philosophers of science like Bhaskar (1986) have argued that the hu-

man sciences necessarily involve normative considerations. Given its canonical documents, a Christian approach to psychology will pursue a science of human beings and their features with respect to God's normative *concerns* (for example, his design plan regarding the flourishing of human beings).

In spite of modernist protests, the positing of the mind and heart of God as an epistemological ideal for a Christian psychology is necessary for the following reasons:

1) It directs Christian psychologists to God at the heart of their knowing. Their knowing is not done in a vacuum — it is relational. In knowing, people have to do with God. This should lead Christians who seek knowledge to prayer and to worship when they obtain it.

2) This assumption posits an ideal for which people can and should strive to realize; it gives individuals something to work towards in their knowledge. While people can never know human nature exhaustively (the way God does), they can know something about human nature, and they can get closer to God's understanding of it (Van Til, 1969). This nullifies epistemological relativism.

3) A further value of taking God's mind and heart as one's epistemological and axiological ideal is that God knows some things about human beings that are relatively inaccessible to empirical research (at least, apart from divine revelation in the Bible). For example, God knows that human beings are made in his image, that they are sinners whose minds are blinded to aspects of God's glory, and that God has justified and adopted those who believe and who then have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Some would say these kinds of propositions belong in *theology*, because they are discussed in the Bible; but for my part, it is hard to see how, from a Christian standpoint, it would make sense to exclude such knowledge from psychology, *the science of individual human beings*. The *source* of these beliefs would seem to have nothing to do with whether the beliefs themselves should be considered "knowledge about human beings," and psychology is the field concerned with knowledge about individual human beings.

4) Humans natively have less understanding regarding what human beings *should be like*, than would be desirable. Empirical methods focused directly upon human beings can reveal the consequences of certain conditions or behaviors, but they cannot always indicate clearly how to evaluate those

consequences. They also cannot provide unassailable trans-cultural criteria for such features as human maturity, psychological well-being, and psychopathology. Yet psychology and especially psychotherapy must assume some normative goals for human beings. Moreover, Christianity assumes that human beings today are fallen, in other words, that they are now all abnormal (Van Leeuwen, 1985) and not the way they are supposed to be (Plantinga, 1995). Because God knows what humans should be like, human science and therapy should be informed by God's understanding of the human *telos*, and not simply by studies on human beings as they currently are.

5) People need to know the significance of a thing and its relation to other things including God, in addition to knowing "the thing itself" (O'Donovan, 1986; Stoker, 1971). God alone knows the significance of all things, and so another basic epistemological/axiological goal from a Christian standpoint is to know God's appraisal of the significance of all things. For example, to know that aggression is influenced by genetics is important knowledge; but to know the significance of that information is another matter. A fact and its significance are found in the mind and heart of God, so the epistemological and axiological goal of a Christian psychology must include seeking to understand how God thinks about and appraises things.

Postulate 2: *Because the triune God is the center of the Christian system of understanding and love, and because he created human beings and knows them exhaustively, a Christian psychology should ideally provide the most comprehensive understanding and appraisal of human beings available.*

The noted reformed theologian, Abraham Kuyper (1898), explained the existence of scientific "schools of thought" as a function of the diversity and complexity of the creation, *combined* with a need for the fallen mind to find in a "school" an ultimate sense of meaning and to fulfill the need for a comprehensive view of reality—for the intellectual key that unlocks all the secrets of knowledge. Ideally, Kuyper argued, Christians have no need for such an ultimate, comprehensive meaning-framework, since they are in a fulfilling relationship with God, the transcendent Creator of the meaning, diversity, and complexity of creation. Therefore, Christians do not have to take sides in debates between proponents of legitimate approaches to human nature, subscribing

solely to a neuroscientific, a social developmental, or a social constructivist position. Christians are in Christ's school, and they find their existential sense of coherence in him. They are his disciples, and not ultimately the disciples of Piaget, Bandura, or Minuchin. Consequently, the approaches of the best legitimate "schools" of psychology should be interpreted as simply diverse, but usually valid avenues to knowledge. Together, they provide finite humans with a more comprehensive approximation of God's understanding of human beings, than any one of them could alone.

Another specifically theistic kind of inducement to a holistic approach to psychology is the fact of God's authorship of human nature, which implicitly justifies all forms of investigation into that object. This gives Christians an additional reason, beyond what a secularist scientist would have, to investigate all available aspects of human nature as thoroughly as possible and to work towards as comprehensive an understanding as is humanly possible, using all available means.

A Christian psychology, then, aims at a comprehensive model of human beings, motivated and exemplified by the ideal of God's comprehensive understanding of human beings. But how can anyone hope to know the mind and heart of God, which is shrouded in mystery and beyond human capacity to fully grasp (Ro 11:28)? Humans are necessarily limited to the existing empirical means available—but this includes, for the Christian, God's personal revelations of his mind and heart.

Postulate 3: *Compared with modern psychology, Christian psychology has an expanded set of what counts as legitimate sources of psychological knowledge.*

It is a widely accepted truism that psychology is an empirical discipline that should be free from influences that cannot be substantiated by universally verifiable and agreed upon empirical means. However, there is really nothing sacrosanct about these rather rigid requirements for scientific knowledge. The accomplishments of modern psychology have certainly been impressive, and its output prodigious. Nevertheless, other possible sets of rules and procedures could be devised to develop a science of human beings that are equally rational and that yield knowledge. Pre-modern Western, Buddhist, and Hindu psychologies, for example, developed according to rules very different from modern psychology—limited as they were to phenomenological, histori-

cal, and philosophical analysis, – and yet they all likely attained some true beliefs about human beings – apart from the use of the experimental method, for example.

At the same time, there is no license here for poor reflection or research. Science requires rigorous standards of rationality and responsible empirical procedures for discovering and validating knowledge. The problem is that the modern scientific restriction of universal verifiability rules out knowledge that is *worldview-dependent*, that is, that requires a certain worldview in order to perceive and accept it. This strict criterion has undoubtedly prevented some falsehoods from being introduced into modern psychology (the influence of stars on humans) and others from being maintained (e.g., the dynamics of Freud's phallic stage). However, it disregards the possibility that *some* standards of rationality and research may be necessarily communally-established – dependent, for example, on the worldview of one's community (MacIntyre, 1988, 1990; Plantinga, 2000). Simply because modernists vehemently reject this possibility does not make it false. Here modernists are in the same position as Christians: both groups hold assumptions regarding epistemic standards that are rational, but cannot be *proven*.

Yet Christian worldview assumptions make it possible for Christians to perceive and accept knowledge about humans (e.g., they are made in God's image and sinners) and specifically Christians (e.g., they are justified in God's sight) that is not universally and publicly verifiable. But this fact does not render these psychologically significant propositions false nor force them into another discipline (theology). Why would it? Psychology is the science that aims at knowledge about individual human beings, and Christians have knowledge about humans that is simply not shared by members of other communities. With an expanded set of epistemological rules, the following would seem to be legitimate sources of Christian psychological knowledge.

3.1: *The Bible is a unique form of divine textual revelation to humans, which includes significant information about humans that makes it relevant and necessary for psychology.*

The Bible's teachings (primarily) and valid teachings from the Christian tradition (secondarily) regarding human nature, its problems, and their cure have a legitimate place within a Christian psychology, because this set of texts contains essential informa-

tion regarding God's understanding and appraisal of humans that is unavailable elsewhere. As a result, all work dealing with human nature in biblical studies, biblical hermeneutics, systematics, biblical theology, and historical theology and church history is intrinsic to the disciplinary activities of a Christian psychology. Contrary to most versions of the integration paradigm, the texts of the Bible and their claims about humans also constitute relevant empirical sources of psychological knowledge (especially about believers) and therefore must be included within a Christian version of a science of psychology (the study of the soul), just as surely as they are relevant to Christian theology (literally and originally, the study of God). There are no valid Christian reasons to define the boundaries of psychology in such a way that biblical texts lie outside its investigative responsibilities; such a definition is nothing more than a reflection of a modern assumption.

3.2: *Because humans are empirical entities, empirical research focused directly on human beings is a valuable source of psychological knowledge.*

This would seem to be a truism in the 21st century. However, because of the great complexity of humans, it is necessary to move beyond the limits afforded by mainstream modern psychology and make use of a variety of empirical methods to most fully document the psychological characteristics of human beings.

### 3.2.1: *Natural science methods*

Since its founding, modern psychology has grown exponentially as a result of a continuing extension of the use of objectivist research methods, derived originally from the natural sciences, in the study of human beings. These methods consequently entail treating human beings as "mere objects" — analogous to the approach of the natural sciences. They perpetuate the natural scientific ideal of the detached observer, who assumes nothing about the object of study, in order to ascertain, as best as possible, the features of the object, free of distortion. These methods include observation, experimentation, the use of questionnaires and scales, and statistical analysis (including measurement analysis). Since Christians believe that humans are empirical objects (though there is debate about the empirical study of the *soul*), there is no reason for them not to utilize objectivist methods in their work. However, human beings also have unique qualities that require more sympathetic and trusting modes of inquiry, as

well as modes that are more skeptical.

### 3.2.2: *Human science methods*

European thinking since Dilthey (d. 1911; see 1989) has distinguished between the natural sciences and the human sciences, assuming that they have legitimate differences between them, including different methods of discovering knowledge. The distinction may be somewhat overstated, since natural science methods continue to be modified and successfully applied to the study of ever more facets of human nature, including most recently, the virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), and since natural sciences methods also require interpretation. Nonetheless, human science methods take more seriously the distinctive interpretive challenges involved in coming to know human beings. They treat humans as active subjects, and they elucidate unique features of human nature that cannot be fully investigated and understood using objectivist methods.

#### 3.2.2.1: *Experiential methods*

Experiential methods involve inquiring of human subjects directly about their own perspective, conscious experience, and internal world, through conversation, interview, shared intersubjective experience, or the reading of texts. A confusing variety of labels and approaches have arisen that undoubtedly overlap in some respects, including 1st-person methods, introspection, phenomenology, participant observation, grounded theory, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, and semiotic analysis, among others. Each approach requires interpretation, but each seeks to be faithful to the communicative intentions of the subject and assumes a trusting stance towards the subject's self-understanding. Experiential methods allow psychologists to better understand unique features of human nature that cannot be studied objectively or understood fully outside of one's own experience of them. These features include, for example, consciousness, relative freedom, authenticity, and agape-love.

#### 3.2.2.2: *Critical science methods*

The "depth" of human beings requires both that they be trusted more as collaborators in the research process than "mere objects" can be, but also, somewhat paradoxically, that they be trusted less. A *critical* psychology assumes that human beings keep some aspects of themselves outside of their own awareness (Fay, 1987; Bhaskar, 1986). This process compromises their self-understanding, and insight into these aspects cannot be uncovered directly, but only indi-

rectly, through a more suspicious hermeneutic. Such problems require the discernment of meaning in the subject, beyond the subject's awareness. Critical science methods were developed in the modern era, largely derived from the insights of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, who all assumed that humans were often moved by important unconscious dynamics. However, long before the 19th century, the Christian teaching on the compromising effects of sin on the human mind and heart laid down a more theocentric foundation for such methods, a critical orientation explored and advanced in the mid-1800's by Kierkegaard (1849/1980).

### 3.3: *Philosophical analysis provides valuable information for Christian psychology*

Logical and linguistic investigation is also a component of a Christian psychology. Thinking and communication are far from entirely or universally accurate, so there is a need to subject psychological concepts, relations, vocabulary, models, theories, and practices to careful, rational scrutiny. Contrary to the radical empiricism of some of the early leaders of modern psychology (and still quite common), such analysis is not optional, but a valuable part of the project of a Christian psychology. Those trained in a philosophical analysis of areas related to psychology are needed for many reasons.

#### 3.3.1: *For Clarification*

Improvement can always be made in the clarity of thought and expression. The complexity of many aspects of human nature is unnecessarily compounded when psychologists think or communicate with ambiguity, contradiction, fuzziness, or out of ignorance.

#### 3.3.2: *Epistemology/Philosophy of Science*

Christian philosophers and psychologists have to work in these areas in order to insure the development of a Christian psychology that is consonant with a Christian worldview and valid scientific principles. Important initial work has been done in this area by Alston (1996), Nash (1988), Plantinga (1993b, 2000), and Wolterstorff (1975). However, this work has not addressed directly the particular problems facing Christian psychological researchers, regarding aspects of human nature that are difficult to understand and study, for example, human freedom, relations between human and divine activity, demonic activity and exorcism, and so on.

#### 3.3.3: *Metaphysics*

Modern psychology was based on an avowed re-

jection of metaphysical concerns. Unfortunately for its proponents, the positivism upon which modern psychology is founded, a version of which continues to influence it, itself constitutes a metaphysical position. It is impossible not to take a stance regarding many metaphysical issues that relate to psychology, including body-soul (or brain-mind) relations; the nature of human beings, including the composition of the soul; the relationship of the human being to God's activity; the emergence of personal agency and ethical responsibility, and the biological and social constraints on both; and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to name a few.

#### 3.3.4: *Axiology and Ethics*

Because of its positivist and natural science origins, modern psychology has largely neglected consideration of values and ethics (though that too is gradually changing), consigning analysis of these issues to the work of philosophers (apart from some merely descriptive studies). Yet, ethical and value concerns permeate human life, and a moral orientation is fundamental to human existence, rendering axiology and ethics fundamental to a comprehensive science of human beings (a stance supported by critical philosophers of science, like Bhaskar, 1986). Questions of values and morality face the student of human nature at every turn. For a Christian psychology, therefore, axiological and ethical reflection and analysis is invaluable with regard to the relation of God to human action, moral conduct, the function of moral principles in human life, virtue, and ethico-spiritual maturity.

*3.4: Because human nature is so complex, it is also desirable for psychologists to engage in interdisciplinary discussions with scientists and others who are investigating or describing features of human life.*

Many different disciplines can contribute to and enrich a Christian psychology, including the biological sciences, especially neuroscience; computer science; comparative psychology; as well as the other human sciences, like sociology, anthropology, economics, history, political science, law, cultural studies, and linguistics. Literature, including poetry, novels, essays, and other artistic media, like graphic art, television, and movies, can also uncover and illuminate psychological dynamics.

Postulate 4: *Christian psychologists should also obtain knowledge about human beings from other communities, particularly in the present, when the vast majority of current psychological knowledge has been*

*produced by the modern psychology community. Because descriptions of complex aspects of human beings are worldview-dependent, however, it is necessary for Christians to carefully interpret the texts of other communities in light of their own worldview and, where worldview assumptions lead to different interpretive conclusions, to translate the knowledge described therein into distinctively Christian discourse.*

As we noted above, the major difficulty confronting the Christian psychological community has to do, not with having two fundamentally different objects to consider (the Bible and human beings), requiring some kind of epistemological recovery (the integration of two kinds of data obtained from two different disciplines), but with the spiritual, socio-historical, and discursive dynamics that have created a fundamental *communal* divide in the study of the one object of psychology: human beings. We have to come to terms with the fact that complex cultures, like the West, are composed of distinct intellectual communities (and their traditions). These communities have different worldviews and disciplinary matrices, as well as different edification frameworks for soul-care, which in a number of areas of interest necessarily lead to dissimilar interpretive conclusions, bodies of psychological discourse, and therapeutic practices. In some areas, the psychological discourse of two communities will be different enough from each other to liken them to two discursive-systems: two languages.

This understanding follows from Augustine's (1950) suggestion that humanity is actually composed of two distinct communities — the City of God and the City of Humanity — and from Kuyper's (1898) conclusion that this fact leads to two different types of science — because of the grace flowing from regeneration that gives believers an openness to divine truth — implying the existence of two distinguishable languages of understanding, at least to some extent. Kuyper pointed out that naturalists perceive human beings as if they were normal, whereas Christians perceive them as abnormal, because of sin and its effects. This basic difference in communal orientation suggests that the main challenge facing the Christian psychologist is more fundamentally a problem of *translation* than of integration.

Such an understanding was put forward first by the Catholic philosopher MacIntyre (1988, 1990) with reference to differences between secular and theistic moral philosophy. Translation requires a

number of important competences, beginning with an “insider’s” familiarity with both language-systems with which one is working, so that they both operate as “first languages” for the “translator” (MacIntyre, 1988). This will mean that the “translator” can understand well what the author of the original text was trying to say *within his or her own linguistic community*; will have an ability to recognize where translation is relatively easy, relatively difficult, and even incommensurable (given the lack of comparable linguistic resources in the two languages); and will display a facility to offer a “faithful” rendering of the original text within the “receiving” language-system, given the assumptions of that linguistic community.

However, it may be that the metaphor of translation implies too negative an assessment of the challenge to the Christian community in psychology, since English-speaking Christians and non-Christians in psychology will share so much psychological discourse in common. For example, both groups can communicate with each other without obvious problems regarding many observables, like neural firing, eye-blinking, and behavior counts; and even many conceptual ideas or constructs, like affect, hallucinations, or extraversion. Because of such commonality in observation and theoretical discourse in some areas of psychology, we should probably consider the linguistic differences to be more like dialects, than languages, since people who speak different dialects can usually understand each other to some extent. But some dialects can still require translation, even when the sister dialect shares a wide vocabulary with its sibling, and, to extend the metaphor further, pronunciation may vary slightly across their respective vocabularies.

The translation metaphor offers a different (and in some ways more profitable) way of conceptualizing the Christian psychological community’s interpretive task than does the modern notion of “integration.” Integration, when understood as the defining metaphor of a Christian psychology, conveys undue and naïve optimism. It implies that the interpretive task is relatively unproblematic: the texts of modern psychology and of Christian theology are all basically true; Christians simply need to read and put together the truth, like the pieces of a puzzle. Translation, on the other hand, suggests that the task facing the Christian begins with differences in communal interpretation, understanding, and expression (including, in some cases, vocabulary) — at least in

some areas — that must be taken seriously for genuine communication to occur. Translation, therefore, takes into account differences that have arisen in particular sociohistorical contexts.

At the same time, Christian psychologists do not want to see differences in interpretation where none exist. Psychological topics vary based on the extent to which their being understood is worldview-dependent. The understanding of some topics appears to be very nearly worldview neutral. In such cases, something like that denoted by the term “integration” will be the appropriate task of the Christian interpreter. We simply read the information and accept it into our thinking (“neurons that fire together are more likely to fire together in the future” although even here Christians will interpret it within the context of their disciplinary matrix, for example, considering again that neurons and the laws that guide them are dependent on God. Perhaps this activity could be termed “theocentric integration,” to distinguish it from “interdisciplinary integration,” since it is the integration of true *psychological* propositions composed by members of one intellectual community into the psychological discourse of another.

On the other end of the continuum, where the understanding of subjects is more worldview-sensitive (e.g., the sources of soul-change), the task of translation may be needed to understand properly the discourse of another community — by questioning and critiquing that material, and re-writing it where appropriate, according to the receiving community’s discursive standards. For example, perhaps a Christian understanding of the highest motivational goal of Christianity should be termed “conformity to Christ” that is made possible by the Holy Spirit, rather than “self-actualization.”

All this suggests that, just as there are works in *biblical* hermeneutics, which expound rules for the proper interpretation of the biblical text, other works are needed that expound rules for a *disciplinary* hermeneutics. Such rules would help in the training of Christian psychologists in the proper *Christian* reading and interpreting of the texts of secular psychology and — where necessary — for translating those texts into the Christian vernacular.

4.1: *The distinctiveness of a Christian psychological approach to a given feature of human nature will depend on the subject matter.*

As suggested in the previous section, worldview assumptions and their interpretive consequences will

have greater or lesser impact on our understanding, depending on the sub-discipline of psychology and even the precise topic of consideration. The study of those aspects of human nature that are the most predetermined genetically, the most elemental, the least existential, and the understanding of which is the least value-laden are the least likely to be influenced by interpretive differences between communities (e.g., neuroscience, cognition, emotion, and organismic motivation), whereas the study of those aspects that are most subject to sociocultural influence, the most complex, the most existential, and the understanding of which is the most value-laden are the most likely to be so affected (e.g., uniquely human motivation, personality, psychopathology, therapy, social dynamics, and religion).

Many Christians have noted that sin is more likely to distort one's understanding, the greater the existential import of the subject matter. Westphal (1990) calls this problem the "law of inverse rationality" (see also Brunner, 1946; Jones, 1986; Moroney, 1999). Communication between interpretive communities, therefore, will be very easy in some areas (e.g., discourse about different memory codes), where little translation is needed and theocentric integration is sufficient; whereas in other areas, it will be severely hampered (e.g., Christian discourse about the work of the Holy Spirit in Christians or secular discourse about the moral neutrality of homosexuality). In such areas, the speech of one community may seem nearly unintelligible to the other, necessitating significant work in translation, before any re-conceptualization can be attempted.

Postulate 5: *Human nature in this age is of such divinely ordained complexity that it can only be properly grasped within a holistic, hierarchical, and interdependent set of orders of discourse: biological, psychosocial, ethical, and spiritual.*

The body (especially the brain and the rest of the nervous system) provides the biological ground for all soul dynamics in this age. The dynamic structures of the soul—behavioral, cognitive, affective, narrative, and volitional—increase in number and complexity throughout childhood and adolescence, mediated by social intercourse, until personal agency emerges in adolescence and early adulthood, when individuals become purposive directors (more or less) of their own development, in relation to and dependence upon God and in relation with other humans. As a result, such individuals become ethical

beings who possess a sense of responsibility for their actions and some awareness of ethical uncleanness—a ubiquitous human experience that all religions and life-philosophies attempt to address. Becoming a Christian—that is, entering the spiritual order according to Christianity—requires the surrender of one's life (one's biopsychosocioethical existence) through a confession of one's uncleanness, or *sin*, to God and a trust in Christ in God to deliver one from that sin.

At least these four spheres or orders of discourse—biological, psychosocial, ethical, and spiritual—are necessary in order to understand human nature, its development, its psychopathology, and its remediation, most comprehensively. The orders are organized hierarchically—the lower ground the higher and the higher fulfill the lower, and the lower can only properly be understood and interpreted within the context of the higher. Ultimately, all of human life is spiritual, that is, it is all related to God.

Postulate 6: *A Christian psychology is necessarily nested within a set of motivational agendas that transcend the search for knowledge for its own sake, the foremost of which is the glory of God.*

While psychological knowledge is intrinsically interesting to humans, a Christian psychology looks beyond the mere accumulation of human knowledge to find its justification and end. The triune God has created all things for his own glory, perhaps especially human beings, made in his image (Edwards, 1998). This recognition puts psychological knowledge in proper perspective, by positing God as its source and end, and justifying the search for such knowledge. Consequently, the acquisition and application of psychological knowledge ought to be conducted by Christians for the sake of magnifying the triune God and his wisdom, grace, and power, and ought to be regulated by God's revealed ethico-spiritual norms. Other related motivational agendas that ought to shape a Christian psychology include the improvement of human life and well-being, the remediation of damaged creational structures of human nature, the undermining of human sin—both personal and societal—the increase of genuine human happiness and virtue through Christ's redemption, as well as the increase of scientific knowledge about human beings.

The human sciences are distinguished by their reflexive potential, since the object of the science is

that which is conducting the science. Consequently, psychology can bring about changes in human beings through its various disciplinary activities. Christians ought always to keep in mind such reflexive effects. Specific transformative activities of Christian psychology will include explicitly Christian research, theory-building, soul care, assessment, teaching and training, peace-making, and ministry to the poor and broken.

Postulate 7: *A Christian psychology must engage its intellectual competitors and contribute to a “cross-communal psychology” (composed of multiple psychologies, where necessary), to enrich itself, to advance its public legitimacy, and to contribute to the increase in human understanding of human beings, all for the glory of God.*

The agenda of developing a distinctly Christian psychology runs the risk of isolating the Christian psychological community from the work of other communities, which could lead to its own “ghettoization” (P.J. Watson, personal communication, September 27, 2005). In the course of its development, proponents of Christian psychology ought strategically to contribute *simultaneously* to mainstream psychology where it can, and play by the rules of the intellectual majority when it must and when it is acceptable to do so by the standards of the faith.

However, Christian psychologists ought also to be advocates for the legitimacy of Christian psychology by seeking to publish psychological studies and theories that exemplify their own unique worldview assumptions and disciplinary matrix. The case for such publications will be made increasingly persuasive through research and intellectual analysis of the highest quality, and sensitive to the suspicions of the audience (though Christian psychologists will likely seek to push the envelope further, here, the exemplary work of strong integrationists like Worthington, 1988, 1998; and McMinn, 2005, 2006; & Domínguez, 2005; among others, will be inspirational and instructive). At first, such efforts will need to be preceded by clear articulations of a rationale for the inclusion of psychological work from distinct, non-modern communities within the mainstream psychological literature, in the interest of developing the broadest possible “cross-communal” psychology. Elements of this kind of rationale can already be found in cross-cultural psychology and in feminist psychology. Gradually, as more of this kind of work gets published, less justification will be necessary.

So far, however, secularist discourse has continued to be an implicit requirement for the inclusion of scholarship within the contemporary publication organs of mainstream psychology. Even in the study of spirituality, authors must generally write as if they were neutral observers, rather than committed believers of any particular religious orientation. This kind of residue from positivism and modernity must be challenged compellingly — as has been done in contemporary philosophy by Alvin Plantinga (2000) and others — if the work of Christian psychology is to enrich the mainstream of contemporary psychology.

One of the ironies of the current situation for the Christian community is that the postmodern shift that currently affects aspects of contemporary psychology calls into question the search for a universal, generic psychology that has been the quest of modern psychology. Postmodernism encourages us to take seriously “local” and communal perspectives, thus possibly legitimating work that exemplifies a Christian psychology perspective. The rigid restrictions of modernism may have been modified enough to make such work acceptable to at least some in the wider psychological community, and hopefully soon, explicitly Christian research and theory will be published in otherwise secular psychology journals. Feminist, cross-cultural, and gay and lesbian psychologists are busy taking advantage of this open door; it is high time for more Christians to come out of the closet as well.

Postulate 8: *A Christian psychology is necessarily a fallible enterprise and can never be more than a limited approximation of God’s understanding and appraisal of human beings.*

Though aided by the Holy Spirit, Christian psychologists are still finite and sinful beings, with finite mental capacities and reasoning abilities, and with minds and hearts that are more or less compromised by remaining sin. As a result, Christian psychologists must avoid arrogance and triumphalism in their teaching, writing, and practice. At the same time, God has created the human capacity to know, and the Holy Spirit can illuminate that capacity and overcome the distorting effects of sin upon it. As a consequence, Christians can trust its deliverances, when there are no good reasons to question the proper functioning of these capacities in Christian psychologists (Plantinga, 2000).

To aid in the project of seeking to understand

human beings more comprehensively and more like God understands them, a Christian psychology will also benefit from efforts to overcome its limitations through the participation of multiple Christian communities and perspectives. A Christian psychology will therefore inevitably and necessarily be composed of many perspectives, for example, Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Baptist, Anabaptist, Wesleyan, Pentecostal, and Charismatic, to cite some of the most common.

### **An Example of Christian Psychology**

To illustrate Christian psychology, let us consider the topic of self-representation, a construct as psychological as one could find. A self-representation is the sum of a person's self-beliefs or self-perceived characteristics, or "how one describes oneself" (Harter, 1999, p. 4). But what of the self-representation of a Christian? Ted perceives himself to be a fairly bright English teacher, hard-working, a decent tennis player, but poor in mechanical aptitude. Yet Ted is also a Christian, and following the teachings of the Bible, he believes that "in himself" he is a sinner, but that he has been declared perfectly righteous in Christ and that he is seated with Christ in "the heavenly places" (Eph 2:6).

How would a modern researcher (or clinician) approach Ted's total self-representation? Are aspects of his self-representation outside the purview of psychology? There may be some, but I know of no modern studies of self-representation that deal with the kind of Christian self-beliefs like Ted possesses. Up to this point, only self-beliefs based on empirically accessible characteristics (like intelligence, physical appearance, and social skills) — and not distinctly Christian self-beliefs — have been examined in research on self-representations. One can hardly blame secularists for not identifying features of self-representations they are not disposed to recognize. But what exactly is the psychological truth, from the standpoint of a Christian?

How might an integrationist approach Ted's self-representation? Perhaps the alleged division between psychology and theology that integrationists assume would lead them to divide Ted's self-representation into *psychological* characteristics (self-perceptions about empirical things: tennis playing and mechanical aptitude) and *theological* characteristics (his standing as a sinner and in Christ), since the latter features of his self-representation have been

derived from the Bible (supposedly the object of the non-psychological discipline of *theology*).

Of course, Ted's self-representation has no such division. Here it seems quite clear that the *sources* of the beliefs that compose Ted's self-representation are irrelevant to their being psychological phenomena. Whether derived from social feedback, personal experience, or the Bible, all of Ted's self-beliefs are *psychological* entities through-and-through — they are all cognitions and the legitimate objects of study for the science of psychology.

The main point being raised here is actually not all that controversial from an empirical standpoint. In fact, Ted's uniquely Christian self-beliefs *are* empirical in at least three ways: (1.) Ted holds these beliefs about himself and can report them; (2.) they are psychological beliefs about Christians that can also be found in the Bible and studied with an empirical method like discourse analysis; and (3.) other Christians can communicate them, constituting a current social source for the beliefs, the communication of which can be documented. As a result, upon reflection, a fair-minded secular psychologist would have no good reason to regard Ted's uniquely Christian self-beliefs as non-psychological. So neither should the Christian researcher. Many interesting empirical questions open up with a more unified Christian psychology approach. For example, does Ted's Christian self-representation give him a sense of mission or calling as a hardworking English teacher? Does it affect his competitiveness in tennis? Are other aspects of Ted's self-representations empirically and fully explicable only in terms of Ted's Christian commitments? As a result, Christian psychologists should seek to investigate such psychological dynamics in their entirety and try to publish studies on them in mainstream journals and books. Openness to such research could be just around the corner.

A more serious problem, however, would arise were Christians to go a step further and suggest that Ted's uniquely Christian self-beliefs are *true* — just as true as his beliefs about his intelligence and conscientiousness (if, in fact, he is truly intelligent and conscientious), since, in this case, they reflect the ontological-epistemological reality of *God's assessment of Ted in Christ*. From a Christian standpoint, Ted's uniquely Christian self-beliefs are *truth-bearing representations about himself* that are announced in the Bible. This is so even though their truth-value with respect to Ted is transcendent and beyond empiri-

cal validation — unlike intelligence or mechanical aptitude. However, since the Bible is considered a legitimate source of psychological knowledge within a Christian psychology, which has as its goal to think about and appraise humans the way God does, the Christian psychologist will have rejected the philosophical assumptions of neo-positivism. The Christian psychologist will argue that uniquely Christian self-beliefs can correspond to reality just as truly as supposedly more “value-neutral” beliefs about one’s conscientiousness and tennis-playing, and that Christians are warranted in believing them — just as they are warranted in holding other Christian beliefs that secularists would not affirm (see Plantinga, 2000). The publication of such assertions in articles submitted to mainstream journals will be far more difficult and problematic, and look to be impossible in the foreseeable future. However, if their quality is sufficiently high, Christian journals should have no problem publishing them.

Assertion of the validity of such beliefs is especially important to Christian soul-care, since Ted’s beliefs about himself-in-Christ need to become more deeply ingressed into the core of his own hierarchically organized self-representation, if he is to become a more mature and healthier Christian. A Christian counselor would want to help him appropriate these beliefs as deeply as possible and — here is the rub — the value of that ingression is contingent upon their being true. So, the truthfulness of uniquely Christian self-beliefs is also a factor of interest within Christian soul care (and so psychology), even though their transcendent validity cannot be established empirically — beyond the declarations of the Bible and Ted’s self-report.

At any rate, it should be clear that a traditional integrationist paradigm, which makes a sharp dichotomy between psychology and theology, would obscure the actual psychological state-of-affairs in the case of Ted’s self-representation. An a priori discontinuity between beliefs derived from the empirical assessment of human beings and an empirical study of Scripture is an assumption derived from modern sociocultural forces that are alien to a Christian disciplinary matrix. Such a discontinuity leads to serious distortions in a Christian’s understanding of the way human beings really are.

But for the Christian striving for integrity and an integrated self before God, the whole truth about Ted’s self-representation lies ultimately in the mind

and heart of God, and it is that whole truth which is the goal of a Christian psychology. But the whole truth lies fundamentally outside the scope of a secular version of psychology. Christian psychologists will allow the scope of psychology to be constrained by the object as it really is (individual human beings as understood by God), and not by methodological criteria established by secularists. If Ted is a believer, he really is righteous in Christ and seated in heaven. That is his *real self* (Johnson, 2000). Paul calls it the *new self* (Eph 4.22-24); and Ted’s self-representation should become more and more “weighted” by such considerations (since facets of one’s self-representation are weighted differentially: Harter, 1999), if he is to mature. We Christian psychological researchers, theorists, teachers, and counselors are called by God to the freedom to think about and appraise human beings in ways that correspond as closely as possible to God’s understanding and appraisal, as best as we can discern them, with all the information at our disposal, regardless of whether our secular colleagues would agree. It’s time to get on with this work.

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# Commentaries on Eric L. Johnson's "Towards a Philosophy of Science for Christian Psychology"

*Edification is dedicated to an "upbuilding" of those scholarly communities who share an interest in Christian psychology. In one attempt to achieve that goal, issues of Edification will often begin with a "target article," followed by a section of open peer commentaries that critically react to the target article. Commentators will develop whatever constructive criticisms they might have of the target article. A constructive skeptical reaction might articulate reasonable grounds for rejecting some or all of the assertions of the target article. A constructive favorable reaction might point toward elements of the target article that seem to require further development. The author of the target article then will have a concluding opportunity to offer an "upbuilding" response to the various commentaries. The overall result, hopefully, will be the creation of "edifying" dialogs that have a potential to build up the perspectives of Christian psychology.*

## The Rigors of "Unscholarly" Psychology: A Kierkegaardian Perspective

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*"Many may find the form of this 'exposition' strange; it may seem to them too rigorous to be upbuilding and too upbuilding to be rigorously scholarly." – Søren Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death*

*"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ." – Romans 12:2 (NASB)*

In his essay, "Towards a Philosophy of Science for Christian Psychology," Eric L. Johnson articulates the outlines of what he refers to as an "Augustinian-Thomist" philosophy of psychology and research program. In brief, Johnson calls for a holistic approach to the study of the human person that is grounded in a distinctively Christian discourse; the particulars of his way of treating the subject matter of psychology are to be derived from the Bible (primarily) and the Christian tradition (secondarily). Furthermore, Johnson proposes that a sensitivity to empirical research findings and a willingness to incorporate the valid insights of modern, secular psychology will also be of the essence of this distinctive psychological approach.

As I maintain, however, Johnson's project will have to be at least as Kierkegaardian as it is either Augustinian or Thomistic if it is to be successful. I will explain what I mean. Søren Kierkegaard begins his preface to *The Sickness Unto Death* (subtitled, "A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening") with a warning: some readers will

find the work too scholarly to be spiritually edifying while others will view it as unscholarly precisely because of its edifying nature. As for the former opinion, Kierkegaard strenuously objects: "if it were true that it is too rigorous to be upbuilding," he says, "I would consider it a fault"—after all, "everything, indeed everything, ought to serve for upbuilding" (Kierkegaard, 1980). As for the latter opinion, however, Kierkegaard gives no defense. But why not, one might wonder: was he untroubled by the fact that his work would be viewed as unscholarly? If so, then was he just not concerned to produce quality scholarship?

The truth is that Kierkegaard was not troubled over his work's being labeled as "unscholarly." To see why, it is helpful to understand that Kierkegaard would have recognized a crucial ambiguity in the term "scholarship." The concept is partly *normative* in that it is used to refer abstractly to those procedures, methodologies, and forms of presentation—whatever they may be—that ought to be employed because they best reveal the truth about some subject matter. A purely normative concept, however, is abstract and empty. In reality, every community of inquiry prescribes particular, *concrete* procedures, methodologies, etc. as constitutive of genuine scholarship because these are *thought* to realize the normative ideals (cf. a related point about "reason" in Evans, 1998). But communities of inquiry can be wrong in their concrete prescriptions; their requirements may actually *impede* good scholarship or—closer to our present concern—*scholarship that is truly excellent may be condemned by such a community as "unscholarly,"* precisely because it does not conform to that community's inferior requirements.

Kierkegaard was very concerned, after all, to

do truly excellent psychological scholarship—so concerned, in fact, that he was willing to endure his work's being labeled as “unscholarly” by those who objected to its faith-based analyses of the human condition. In fact, Kierkegaard humorously made use of this dynamic in the title he chose for one of his books, which can be translated into English as *Concluding Unscholarly Postscript* (see Kierkegaard, 1992). To be sure, Kierkegaard was never afraid to acknowledge that his work was “unscholarly”—from a worldly point of view. But he was also very quick to examine the credentials of that point of view, and finding these less than impressive, he continued his deeply Christian psychology with ever more faithful determination.

My claim is that Johnson's proposed research program, if successful, will be at least as Kierkegaardian as it is either Augustinian or Thomist. I base this claim, in part, on the far greater similarity of our present intellectual climate to that of Kierkegaard than to that of either Augustine or Aquinas. Augustine lived less than a century after Constantine's conversion and Christianity's rise to ascendancy in the Roman Empire. His Christian writings were in the service of a faith that was still in its rise to intellectual prominence. Eight centuries later, Aquinas' scholarship was in the service of a faith that had firmly established its prominence—indeed, its hegemony—in European thought and culture. But seven centuries after Aquinas, the intellectual climate of Europe had come to be dominated by a philosophy that disparaged genuine Christian faith and claimed to have “gone beyond” it in the “scientific” or “scholarly” understanding of reality provided by the Hegelian system. It was in this climate of opinion that Kierkegaard authored his deeply Christian—and therefore “unscholarly”—psychological work.

The particular spiritual needs of the various intellectual climates in which these great thinkers wrote shaped their work in important ways. Given that our intellectual culture is dominated by a secular establishment that disdains deep commitment to Christian orthodoxy, it is important to realize that individuals like Johnson who are interested in fostering a psychological research program that is deeply Christian will—like Kierkegaard—encounter a cold reception, if not outright opposition, from the greater discipline of psychology. Individuals who engage in this Christian psychological project are likely to face a long, uphill battle for whatever de-

gree of respect their scholarship eventually manages to achieve. After all, in the eyes of what Paul would have called “worldly” scholars, such individuals will be operating with a religious picture of reality that has been supplanted by an enlightened, scientific understanding of the world. To be sure, spiritually loaded terms such as sin, salvation, and the soul name conceptual categories that many in the discipline will view themselves as having “gone beyond” so very long ago. And scholarship that is grounded in such distinctively Christian categories will never be heralded by the secular establishment.

Indeed, even within the Christian community there will be criticism, and this from two directions. From one side will come the criticisms of those who are content to operate with a lay psychology of the Bible; this group, which is likely to include some members of the biblical counseling movement, will be composed of those who possess an antipathy toward the scholarly enterprise as such. The dangers of mixing the word of God with dubious “worldly” wisdom will strike these critics as an unconscionable compromising of the truth. To this group, Johnson's project will be thought of as simply too scholarly to be edifying.

From the opposite side will come the criticisms of some psychologists who identify with the “integrationist” camp; particularly, this group will include individuals who conceive the findings of modern, secular psychology as providing the most trustworthy information about the human psyche, and who—at least in practice, if not also in theory—subordinate the role of biblical and theological concepts and categories to those secular findings. The prospect of allowing biblical teachings to control one's thinking about the psyche will strike psychologists of this order as naïve or irresponsible. To this group, as well as to the broader secular profession, Johnson's project will be seen as full of stumbling blocks, as simply too edifying to be rigorously scholarly.

Johnson's project will require him and those like him to find a way to live with these tensions. Indeed, as I see it, the crucial determinant of the success or failure of the kind of project that Johnson proposes will be whether Christian psychologists recognize their calling to just the kind of rigorous yet “unscholarly” scholarship that I have described as Kierkegaardian above. To be clear: I am not suggesting that Johnson's project will not be either Augustinian or Thomist. To be sure, the Augustinian dimension

will be found in the researcher's deeply committed faith seeking a rational understanding of the human person that God has created. The Thomist dimension will be found in the researcher's sensitivity to the valid conceptual constructs and empirical findings of the larger, non-Christian psychological community. And the Kierkegaardian dimension will be found in the researcher's willingness to live with the paradoxical criticisms of being too edifying for the profession and too scholarly for the church—for, after all, if one is firmly committed to producing truly excellent Christian scholarship one *will* be perceived in these ways.

Three further suggestions:

First, Johnson argues that we should characterize what the Christian psychologist will do with the valid findings of modern, secular psychology (on one hand) and Christian theology (on the other) not in terms of the metaphor of "integration" but rather with that of "translation." As I maintain, however, there is an even better terminology. After all, the language of "translation," especially when applied to discussions of theology and psychology, evokes Paul Tillich's heterodox project of translating articles of the Christian faith into the categories of an existential ontology. The other terminology I suggest is that of "appropriation." In fact, such language has already been proposed by Merold Westphal to describe an alternative to both a total rejection and an uncritical acceptance of non-Christian forms of thought (Westphal, 2001). It is possible, Westphal says, even "to think of such an appropriation as an invitation to conversation" (p. 76). He continues:

"The appropriator, after listening carefully to the appropriatee, responds by saying, 'I find these aspects of your presentation quite compelling and illuminating. But for me they work better when recontextualized as follows. Of course, that changes the project somewhat and involves the abandonment of this or that aspect of your original proposal. But don't you agree that those ideas of yours I find compelling work better in the context I propose, or at least, since they can be fruitfully put to work there, that they are not inherently wedded to the larger goals of your project?'"

Understanding the appropriator as the Christian and the "appropriatee" as the secular psychologist, this attitude holds much promise for fostering excellent Christian psychological scholarship that takes

account of the valid findings of secular research.

Second, I encourage Johnson and others like him to familiarize themselves with the relevant and exciting conversations going on in Christian philosophy regarding psychological issues—or better yet, actually to be in conversation with Christian philosophers who can help to precisify one's language and to bring important conceptual distinctions to one's attention. As a philosopher myself, I see important differences between, for example, a "philosophy of science," an "epistemology," and a "hermeneutic," terms which Johnson appears to treat as roughly synonymous. While I am sensitive to the fact that terminology is sometimes used with different senses in different disciplines, the need for clarity of expression is universal, and philosophers are uniquely appropriate conversation partners for this purpose.

Finally, most important for the development of a truly excellent Christian psychology is the production of modern-day Christian psychological research paradigms—and I mean this term in Thomas Kuhn's original sense of a scientific achievement that provides a model problem and a model solution to a community of researchers and that guides subsequent research (Kuhn, 1970). We need tangible examples of published research that is thoroughly grounded in Christian categories and that appropriates the valuable insights of secular psychology to produce quality exemplars of Christian scholarship. It is my hope that *Edification* will provide a favorable venue for precisely this kind of research. And furthermore, it is my hope that Johnson's proposed research program will turn out to be, not a concluding postscript but rather an introductory preface to a mountain of high-quality Christian psychological scholarship that proves to be as edifying as it is illuminating.

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## Review of Philosophy of Christian Psychology

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Eric Johnson, the primary spokesperson for the Christian Psychology perspective, has done a service to that perspective — both for those who hold the perspective and those who wonder about it — by attempting to place this paradigm within its philosophical traditions. Since the paradigm itself values exploring philosophical issues within the field of integration, the thesis of this article is particularly appropriate.

There are few earlier statements attempting to describe the paradigm, making this article even more valuable. Perhaps the best-known earlier statement is the widely-read chapter by Robert Roberts (2000) in the book *Four Views* (Johnson & Jones, 2000). Roberts' chapter makes some excellent points, but comes across as more negative about contemporary psychology than other writings from within Christian Psychology. For that reason alone, it is pivotal that those interested in the paradigm explore the Society for Christian Psychology website. Half of the articles on this website that specifically focus on defining Christian Psychology are written by Eric Johnson. The paradigm emerged primarily from Johnson's work, and others from a range of disciplines have found that they resonate with his work. Johnson's work is exemplary and deserves wide circulation. It is also imperative, however, that others who engage the paradigm publish their own efforts to define the field, as each contributes distinctive perspectives and priorities.

Johnson also provides, on this website, access to the powerpoint about Christian Psychology which he presented at the 2006 Christian Psychology confer-

ence, [http://www.aacc.net/email/media/scp\\_1.ppt](http://www.aacc.net/email/media/scp_1.ppt). This powerpoint positions Christian Psychology as the fifth paradigm of integration, along with the levels of explanation model, integration model, pastoral care model, and biblical counseling model. If he is correct that this is indeed an alternative paradigm, then Christian Psychology deserves far more attention within Christian circles than it is currently receiving.

Johnson describes Augustinian and Thomist philosophy as underpinning Christian Psychology. The basic outlines of these paradigms are presented briefly and appropriately. Much more needs to be said in this area, however. Johnson contrasts an Augustinian-Thomist perspective with modernism. Appropriately enough, he describes modernism as characterized by a movement toward natural science methodology and, simultaneously, away from the church. He is correct that modernism is essentially a secular intellectual movement. This is nowhere more true than in psychology [see Reed's (1998) *From Soul to Mind* for a discussion of this progression]. Yet Johnson's approach to critiquing modernism is noteworthy. He virtually ignores the postmodern critiques of modernism, preferring instead to critique modernism from the perspective of the historic roots of Christianity. Once again, his choice in writing this article is consistent with the paradigm itself.

Johnson highlights the centrality of wisdom in the writings of both Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. He has long thought it important to research and theorize about wisdom. I remember two articles that Eric published in the *Journal of Psychology and Theology* in 1996 in which he outlines a model of covenantal constructivism that is a significant contribution to the Christian integrative literature and that provides an alternative to the popular but limited cognitive developmental theories of wisdom (Johnson, 1996a, b). I recommend those articles to any reader. They are consistent with the Christian Psychology model and creative. In Augustine and Aquinas, Johnson has found authors with priorities that he himself shares.

I very much appreciate the complexity of this model. Christian Psychology, as described here by Johnson, sees psychology as a discipline that is dually pronged, focusing on the study of human beings and God's understanding of them (postulate 1). Its goal is "the cultivation of humans who more fully resemble God." In this description, he highlights the

relationality that is inherent in humanness and that does not receive enough attention in secular psychology. He also grounds humanness in our God-likeness while simultaneously calling us to be pragmatic in our work. I see this as the greatest distinctive of the paradigm and a postulate that perhaps needs elevating above the others, all of which can be argued to flow from this one.

Recognizing God's perspective allows a comprehensive understanding of the person (postulate 2), expands our sources of knowledge (postulate 3), and encourages our study of persons from other communities (postulate 4). Recognizing God's perspective highlights various orders of discourse: biological, psychosocial, ethical, and spiritual (postulate 5) and various motivational agendas (postulate 6). As we carry out research and theorizing, we are called to communicate with mainstream psychology with competence but independence (postulate 7) and to do all our work with humility (postulate 8). I agree with each of these although I'm not so clear on postulate 5. It seems to me that these can be the areas of exploration (biological, psychosocial, ethical, and spiritual), and that each of them have been acknowledged at least to some degree by contemporary mainstream psychology. But it isn't clear to me what it means to say that these are divinely ordered as sets of orders of discourse.

My biggest concern with this paradigm is its sources of knowledge, and it seems to me that this may be the next article to write. We read: "Such a hermeneutics would involve the interpretation of human subjects (of course), using a wide range of empirical and philosophical research procedures, but it would also entail the interpretation of the Bible and relevant Christian literature, as well as secular psychology texts." This statement covers the whole of C.P.Snow's *Two Worlds*, a broad range indeed.

Despite these postulates, it still isn't clear to me whether I am a Christian Psychologist, in the sense used in this paper. I agree that "the Christian psychological community needs to learn all it can from modern psychology, while simultaneously re-appropriating its own historic and more holistic vision of human nature, and then develop a wiser and more complex psychology that flows from Christian assumptions about human beings and how best to understand them, that can do better justice to the unique features of human beings, and that can aid in the reformation of humans into Christ's image."

Yet I would also place myself with the integrationists. I think the field needs further specificity. Must one match each of the postulates to be described as a Christian Psychologist? Which are the most important?

Similarly, I struggle with where to place the Christian Psychology movement in the integration literature (and here I use the term "integration" to mean the literature that addresses the relationship between psychology and Christianity). It seems to me that the description of the integration model (and here I use the term "integration" as Johnson does to describe one of the five models) does not fairly represent the field or the people whose names are listed as representative. It seems to me that Christian Psychology is "humanizing" science, in the meaning used by Jones (1986), who is described as an integrationist, and that Christian psychology gives place to those who wish to explore embodied or personal integration in a way that is similar to, for example, Tan (2001), who is described as an integrationist. Despite these concerns, I appreciate the effort to place Christian Psychology in a larger context and think that the four categories are heuristically useful for exploring issues that are important in an integrative world.

I laud the efforts to expand our sources of knowledge (postulate 3), but think this too needs a great deal of work. What are acceptable sources of knowledge? Christian Psychology is an umbrella paradigm that includes philosophers, sociologists, and theologians, as well as psychologists and people of faith. If traditional empiricist criteria are no longer useful, what criteria should be used? It is easy to assume that there is one perspective within faith, but there are many. How can we discern truer perspectives from those that are less true? It seems to me that these are pivotal questions for integration in general and for Christian Psychologists in particular. I appreciate Johnson's effort to say that the issue is "communal, rather than interdisciplinary" (p.9). It is hard in practice to know what that means.

The discussion of self-representation illustrates, I think, that the Christian Psychology umbrella is large indeed, and may include the other four paradigms. Consider, for example, the "orders of discourse: biological, psychosocial, ethical, and spiritual." Analysis of these orders seems to me to be very similar to the levels of explanation analysis. Similarly, Johnson visits the integration model when

he explores the findings of psychology in relation to the assumptions of faith. The biblical counseling and soul paradigms also appear. Whether this is true will become clearer as the Christian Psychology model becomes more specific.

Finally, a hermeneutic psychology model provides an alternative paradigm for integration, although not one that is subsumed under the Christian Psychology model. In Johnson's paper, "hermeneutic" is used to mean "interpretation". Alternatively and much more complexly, from a hermeneutic psychology perspective, people's understandings of their own faith would be privileged as a way of understanding virtue and self-representations. Historical understandings of faith would continually be explored in relation to contemporary understandings of faith, not alone, and the contexts of the person are of central importance. These are not priorities widely held within Christian Psychology.

The Christian Psychology movement has led to a paradigm shift within perspectives of integration, a shift that is currently in progress. I appreciate Johnson's presenting a beginning introduction to the philosophical underpinnings of this perspective and think that highlighting the ideas of Aquinas and Augustine is a significant contribution within the field of integration. I look forward to seeing further work from the movement.

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## Christian Psychology: Some Further Considerations

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It is always encouraging to see a discussion of the prospect of a psychology which incorporates the intellectual tradition of Christianity, not the least because that is precisely the mission of the Institute for Psychological Sciences (IPS), where I am a faculty member. So it goes without saying that I found Eric Johnson's article of considerable interest. I certainly applaud his concerns and his approach, and hope that the article is not simply a "call" for the development of such a field, but part of an ongoing process in which he and others are involved; the more individuals working toward the development of such an approach, the richer the eventual product. In this brief comment, I wish to suggest a somewhat different view of the current state of the question, a comment on what I think the project itself will involve, and a very brief example of an attempt to construct just such a framework.

To begin with, I do not believe that the current intellectual climate is nearly as dark as Dr. Johnson paints it. He contends that an intellectual battle between Christianity and modernism is "all but over" and that, essentially, Christianity has lost. I would have to disagree. Recent developments indicate greater opportunities for viewpoints that take religion seriously than at any time since the early twentieth century.

In my view, the turning point in the intellectual landscape was the famous Bergin-Ellis debate (e.g., Bergin, 1980; Ellis, 1980) on psychotherapy and values. There are two striking aspects of this exchange: First, a flagship American Psychological Association (APA) journal published an article in which religious values are presented sympathetically. Second, Ellis, the foremost advocate of the rejection of religion in therapeutic settings, eventually surrendered! "Al-

though I have, in the past, taken a negative attitude toward religion, and especially toward people who hold devoutly religious views, I now see that absolutist religious views can sometimes lead to emotionally healthy behavior” (Ellis, 2000, p. 31).

A similar sea change is occurring in parts of the sociology of religion. Rodney Stark, who in his writings with Charles Glock in the 1960's (Stark & Glock, 1968) predicted the demise of institutional religion has more recently published a series of books on the history and development of Christianity (e.g., Stark, 2006) which can only be characterized as sympathetic (but without being an exercise in apologetics). He has also concluded that the theories of religion of such sociological patriarchs as Weber, Durkheim, and Marx have failed to produce empirical support. He calls in strong terms for their abandonment; “an end to ancestor worship” (Stark, 2004).

There are further signs that religion is establishing a foothold in the field of psychology. In the famous “footnote 4” of its guidelines and Principles for the accreditation of doctoral programs in clinical psychology, APA (2007) allows for religiously-based programs to act contrary to what otherwise would be considered diversity considerations in staffing and maintaining their programs. In another area, the words “Evil,” “Theology,” and even “Soul” have recently been added as PsycINFO index terms; yes, apparently, psychology has officially regained its soul. And the APA book catalogue now includes any number of texts examining religion as a diversity issue and an important component in the training of therapists.

So the field is now more receptive than it has traditionally been to religiously-relevant concepts. Given that, how should those interested in a religiously-grounded theory of the person proceed? Johnson talks about an “Augustinian-Thomist” approach to the topic. But why stop there, with a philosopher from the 5th century A. D., and another some 800 years later? Surely there are any number of other writers, both philosophers and theologians, who have written cogently on the relevant matters; Robinson (1995) provides an excellent overview of some of the developments. Most recently, Pope John Paul II's extensive reflections on the theology of the body (John Paul II, 2006) might well provide useful insights.

In point of fact, if the project for a Christian psychology is widely engaged, there will be no single

“Christian psychology,” due to differing emphases and theological and philosophical developments within the various Christian denominations. But, one can hope that there might be a family of Christian psychologies, which will be able to share their insights, and their views of the human person and psychological functioning with each other. The various biblically based theologies, and Catholic and other Christian spiritualities, are derived from reflections on the nature of the human experience, and all will have insights - and propositions, and hypotheses - to contribute. Christian psychologies will have much in common with each other, but they will also differ; the ramifications of those differences, and the intriguing possibility of their being put to test, awaits the sort of intellectual dialogue and empirical research which Johnson recommends. Just as there is no single “humanistic” or “psychoanalytic” or “cognitive” theory of the person or of therapy, we may well expect, indeed encourage, a variety of Christian psychologies.

In conclusion, I noted earlier that IPS has been attempting to work out the basis for a Catholic anthropology through which a fully developed theory of the person and of the therapeutic process can be derived. After some two years' work and some fifteen drafts, we are now about to submit a statement of those anthropological premises, and an accompanying expository essay, for publication. For interested readers here, in a very telegraphic format, is an outline of those principles.

They begin with three premises of a theological anthropology: Human persons are:

1. *created*: they are good (as is everything created by God); they are created as a substantial unity, a material body and a spiritual soul; and they are created as persons.
2. *fallen*; and
3. *redeemed*

These first three premises constitute the ontological, existential, and teleological reality for all temporal human life. There then follow five premises of a philosophical anthropology: The human person is:

1. *substantially one*: a complete, substantially unified, living being constituted of a material body and an immaterial, incorruptible, spiritual soul;
2. *bodily*: organic living beings; either male or female; sensory and perceptual; emotional; motoric; and historically and environmentally located.

3. *interpersonally relational*: interpersonal, as first developed in the family; capable of friendships: which contribute to human flourishing; and communally situated:

4. *rational*: they are capable of knowing themselves, others and God; the truth of the created order, including divinely revealed truth; good and evil; concrete moral norms; and capable of appreciating beauty. They also have rational inclinations to seek and know the truth and find happiness.

5. *volitional and free*: They are agentic; although they are free, they are limited by multiple factors and to varying degrees; they have volitional inclinations to actualize diverse human and divine goods; and the development of their freedom involves growth in capacity to choose good and avoid evil.

I caution again that this presentation is quite fragmentary; we expect to publish a fuller statement of this framework shortly. I present it as a response to Johnson's exhortation that we should "get going." Work is in progress.

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## How Best to Discern Underlying Unity: An Integrationist Response

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I wish that I could convince Eric Johnson to submit this to *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, one of the journals that subscribe to an "integration" position and of which I am editor. It would be accepted in a heartbeat. *The is that good* and will surely be one of those articles that will serve as a classic benchmark of good Christian scholarship for years to come. Of course, such an offer is made in jest only because here the article serves a most useful purpose of launching a new publication which I warmly welcome and am honored to be invited as a contributor to its premier issue. The significance of my "offer," however, is really much more than a compliment to Johnson's fine work; it is also intended to communicate that much of Johnson's approach affirms what integrationists have long intended and, perhaps, is a needed reminder of what truly good integration entails. Johnson himself believes that he is offering something new and, indeed, he has provided an alternative perspective that he suggests should be deeply rooted in Augustinian and Thomist philosophical resources. While I do not wish to underestimate the importance of such philosophical and theological positioning, I am not convinced that Johnson's position is as radically different from a well-developed integration perspective as he seems to suggest. It is this general premise that will guide three observations which serve as the bulk of my discussion: *First*, the integration position is far less homogenous than what is portrayed here. *Second*, therefore, Johnson assumes far too great a discontinuity between his position and a true integrative position; that is, much of what he has proposed should be heartily endorsed

by the true integrationist. This is not to suggest that Johnson's approach will be embraced by all integrationists for he has provided some differences that are more than mere nuances. *Third*, Christian scholarship can only benefit from multiple perspectives and there is, therefore, room for both the integrationist and Johnson's Christian psychology approach.

### **Integration's heterogeneity**

Perhaps more than anything else, Johnson argues that integrationists have unwittingly accepted a dualist position whereby mainstream psychology is built upon a narrow neo-positivist epistemological footing and that a uniquely Christian understanding is relegated to a back-end analysis that is far too restrictive to be given significant formative weight; in its place, he proposes a more holistic epistemology that will be "unified methodologically by a Christian *hermeneutics*" (p. 7, emphasis his) that would involve "a wide range of empirical and philosophical research procedures, but it would also entail the interpretation of the Bible and relevant Christian literature, as well as secular psychology texts." (p.7)

To what extent is Johnson's claim that integration is best characterized as a narrow neo-positivist endeavor legitimate? I suggest that Johnson has unwittingly succumbed to the temptation to *homogenize the other* – the tendency long identified by social psychologists (e.g., Linville, Fischer, & Salovey, 1989) to perceive individuals belonging to groups other than one's own as all alike.<sup>1</sup> To demonstrate just how subtle this temptation can be, Johnson combined two of the four views from his very own co-edited book (Johnson & Jones, 2000) – a levels-of-explanation view and an integration view – and treated them as if they were identical. I suggest that many of Johnson's objections apply only to the levels-of-explanation view and that, not only did this error result from the tendency to homogenize the other, but it produced an inaccurate and unfortunate generalization (as such homogenization tendencies do) of those subscribing to an integration position.

In contrast, if one carefully looks at the entire spectrum of integrationists, you will find great plurality of thinking, both conceptually and methodologically. Integrationists are hardly a unified group, which is both a strength and weakness, to the extent that they cannot agree on a single term to describe themselves. Though the term "integration" has become the favored term over the past three decades,

there are many (including this author) who would prefer to eschew the term – the problem is that such individuals have not found a better term to describe their eclectic endeavor. Hence, you have "integrationists" like Van Leeuwen (1996) who sees the term as something of a red flag by pointing out that "we cannot separate the conduct of psychology from our faith life (then somehow decide how to 'integrate' the two), because living and learning are constantly filtered through a prior faith-allegiance" (p 152). Though at face value, Van Leeuwen sounds very sympathetic to Johnson's position, she acknowledges – much more in line with an integration perspective – that "common grace is not limited to believers, and pervasive depravity limited to unbelievers" (p. 151) such that "philosopher and theologian Abraham Kuyper could wryly observe, with regard to both intellectual and ethical matters, that the 'world often does better than expected and the church worse' (quoted in Berkhouwer, 1962, p. 186)" (pp. 151-152).

Even more telling, however, is the increasing unwillingness of integrationists to adopt a narrow empirical litmus test. Now you have integrationists like Sandage, Cook, Hill, Strawn, and Reimer (in press) who make the claim – in the mainstream psychological literature – that the *entire discipline* of psychology should consider a hermeneutic perspective in addition to traditional quantitative methods. Though their primary audience is secular and, therefore, they stop short of claiming that this hermeneutic approach must be explicitly Christian, they point out that a hermeneutic approach is most deeply rooted as a Christian theological approach through which sophisticated methods of biblical interpretation emerged. Nor is the movement toward methodological pluralism new; integration journals have often been leaders in publishing articles arguing for methodological breadth (Evans, 1976; Hill, 1989; Van Leeuwen, 1988).

All of this is to suggest that Johnson, in his desire to propose an alternative approach, has painted a picture of integration that is far too narrow and limited. This unfortunate caricature has further implications.

### **Exaggerated Discontinuity**

A favorite mantra of the integrationists is that "All truth is God's truth" and indeed the unity of truth proposition is one endorsed by Eric Johnson. Of

course, the complexity of the unity of truth thesis is greatly expanded when we consider its implications at an epistemological level. Should some epistemological modes be given greater credence than others?

Johnson contends that “the Christian community’s interpretive task consists of discerning the underlying unity of the field that already exists in the mind and heart of God, by bringing together all available, relevant psychological knowledge into the singular study of individual human beings.” In fact, this statement closely resembles Carter and Narramore’s (1979) vision of integration when they argued that the *integrates model* involves “looking for unifying concepts that will broaden the understanding that would come from either psychology or theology in isolation” (p. 104). I know of no true integrationist that is against “discerning the underlying unity of the field that already exists in the mind and heart of God;” (p. 7) it is a goal to which all integrationists should subscribe. But *how* we are to discern that underlying unity is the question at hand. Subscribing to a particular theological tradition, as Johnson has suggested, leaves us perilously open to error in the form of exclusion of other ideas (both theological and psychological) that are not compatible with an Augustinian and Thomist philosophy. As personally comfortable as I may be with any particular theological tradition, I question the extent to which I can believe it alone sets the boundaries by which the mind and heart of God are identified.

### **The Advantage of Pluralism**

Though Johnson frequently acknowledged that the contributions of modern psychology have been enormous, underlying his argument is, fundamentally, a conflict perspective; that is, modernistic psychology is essentially secularistic that employs naturalistic methodologies, that psychology has paid far too great a price (in the form of limited understanding) for its naturalistic allegiance, and psychology would be far better off with an advanced form of knowledge (wisdom versus mere factual knowledge) if it were, in essence, to start over from a Christian (specifically, Augustinian-Thomist) framework. There are, no doubt, times when the assumptions and presuppositions that gird a secular and naturalistic psychology lead the discipline along a path quite disparate from where an Augustinian-Thomist framework would lead and at the end of his article Johnson provides a case example of self-representation. However, be-

side the fact that Johnson has overlooked a small but growing literature in the empirical psychology of religion on religious self-schemas where, contrary to what Johnson says, the sources of beliefs (including Christian beliefs) are *not* viewed as irrelevant to their psychological phenomena (e.g., Hood, Hill, & Williamson, 2005) – a point to which I will shortly return – there is also a wide range of phenomena in psychology that are perhaps not as philosophically sensitive as Johnson assumes. As Johnson notes, there is a wide range of contributions that is not only compatible with a Christian framework (Augustinian-Thomist or otherwise), but are indeed enlightening.

Let me provide an example. A few years ago I was at a meeting of about 15 Christian psychologists – including some with theological training and some of whom would greatly appreciate Johnson’s approach – who challenged themselves, as Christians, to derive additional virtues (or to challenge the conceptualization of existing virtues) to Peterson and Seligman’s (2004) massive publication *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Granted, many in the group (including myself) did not fully concur with the contemporary psychology’s neo-positivistic approach to the study of virtue and, to be sure, there were some minor tweaks to Peterson and Seligman’s edited work. However, what was far more surprising to the group was how much agreement we had with the ways in which specific virtues were, in terms of psychological characteristics, identified, defined, categorized, and conceptualized, even though no virtue was specifically discussed in the context of Christian redemption. We found that secular psychologists can have surprising, though limited, insight even on something as philosophically sensitive as the study of virtue.

This is not to suggest that underlying assumptions and presuppositions are not important. As any good integrationist would recognize, we must look critically at modern psychology – but we must also be open to give it credit when it has done its job well. Though I think Johnson might agree, it is not a message that came through well at all in his essay. Finally, I am convinced that my friend Eric is not chronically guilty of overlooking or not being aware of specific areas of mainstream psychological research, such as his oversight (pointed out earlier) on the neglect of Christian belief in self-representation. However, I do fear that others who would

adopt a specific theological orientation as the sole guiding framework might be guilty of not being fully engaged in the psychological literature (even as Johnson contends that many integrationists neglect theology). The net result could be that Christians, who are just now gaining respect in the psychological community on the basis of what they *bring* to the discipline as a whole (see Hill, 2005), would marginalize themselves into perhaps a coherent but largely isolated and perhaps irrelevant (to the field of psychology) grouping.

### Conclusion

I affirm that we are not, as Johnson points out under his second postulate, disciples of Piaget, Bandura, or Minuchin. Nor are we disciples of Augustine or Aquinas. If we are guilty of finding our “existential sense of coherence” (p. 16) in anyone but Christ, shame on us. Any good integrationist should know better.

### Note

<sup>1</sup> I must admit at this point I feel very uncomfortable on two counts. By stressing the “homogeneity of the other” I am concerned that I undermine an important point that I later make; namely, that Johnson’s position has far more commonality than difference with a true integration position. Of even more concern, however, is the personal issue that I see Eric Johnson as a colleague and friend with whom I have had numerous discussions over many of these very same issues, usually in the context of consuming too many calories. Despite differences, the discussion has always been friendly and productive. “Drawing lines in the sand” is, of course, a subjective perception and to say that Eric and I are of opposing or competing perspectives is of heuristic value only, and one based solely on the polemic drawn in Johnson’s article.

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## Comment on Eric Johnson's "Towards a Philosophy of Science for Christian Psychology"

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First, let me say that I am in substantial agreement with what Eric Johnson says, and in more than substantial agreement with his basic project. The broad outlines of what he says seem to me to be correct, even obvious. From one point of view, the basic idea is really a truism: in investigating a given subject or topic, one should use all that one knows. My neighbor's lawn is full of dandelions; I want to learn why. There are many avenues of investigation: I can take soil analyses, try to find out how many dandelions there were last year, look to see if there are large numbers of dandelions in the yards on either side – and the like; and of course all of this is relevant. But suppose my neighbor has also told me that he purposely planted them (he really likes the color yellow); it would be folly for me to refuse to consider that bit of what I know in my investigation. In conducting any inquiry or investigation, obviously, I should employ everything I know, all the relevant information I have. For if I employ only part of what I know, omitting something relevant, I may very well come out with an inadequate or even wholly mistaken answer. The principle involved here is simple, and, I should have thought, uncontroversial: one should use all one's (relevant) evidence in any investigation. Philosophers sometimes refer to this as "the requirement of total evidence," but it doesn't take a philosopher to see that it makes obvious sense.

It is just this requirement of total evidence that underlies Eric Johnson's advice to Christian psychologists. In psychology, the subject of inquiry, the subject of interest, is human beings, perhaps more specifically the human psyche. Christians know a good bit about human beings just by virtue of being Christians. For example, according to Christian belief, human beings are created by God. They have been designed, and they have a design plan. That means that the notion of proper function is appropriate for them: they can function properly, or they can be dysfunctional, broken, not functioning in accord with their design plan. God intended a certain sort of life for them: he intended that they love God and also love each other. Further, they have been created *in the image of God*; this means that in certain

crucial respects, they resemble God. Still further, they have somehow fallen into a deplorable sinful condition that distorts and deforms their relationship with God and with each other.

Now the requirement of total evidence tells us that if any of these truths about human beings are relevant to the sorts of inquiries psychologists pursue, they should be employed in those inquiries. But doesn't it look, at least initially, as if these truths are indeed relevant? For example: is there really such a thing as normality, i.e., normality that goes beyond statistical averages? That human beings have been created, that they have been designed and created by God, suggests that indeed there is. Further: consider the fact that human beings have fallen into sin. Doesn't it look, at least initially, as if that fact will be relevant to investigating such topics as addiction, and the way in which we human beings hurt and damage each other, and our inclinations to selfish and self-centered behavior? Doesn't it look, at least initially, as if our sinful condition is relevant to an investigation into these topics and many more besides? But if so, then clearly the thing to do is look to see whether these truths really are relevant to such investigation, to see just how they are relevant (if they are), and then to employ these truths in such investigations. That seems to be the main burden of Johnson's advice, the gravamen of his case. And on first inspection it seems no more than sober common sense. It seems the default position for Christian psychologists, the basic starting point. Of course there may be countervailing factors that need to be addressed; but Johnson's advice seems, initially at any rate, clearly correct.

There is a second point of view from which Johnson's suggestions also seem right and proper. Following Augustine, Abraham Kuyper, and others, Johnson sees that there is at present a sort of religious contest in our world, and a high stakes contest at that. This contest is between deeply opposed ways of looking at our world, and the opposition is at bottom religious. At present, as it seems to me, what we have is a three-way battle: a contest between metaphysical naturalism, post-modern anti-realism, and Christian theism. These three perspectives are fundamentally religious in nature. I don't have the space to say much about the contestants here,<sup>1</sup> but evidence of the contest can be seen, for example, in the spate of recent books by philosophers and scientists attacking Christian or theistic belief—for ex-

ample, Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion*, Daniel Dennett's *Breaking the Spell*, Sam Harris's *The End of Faith; Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* and *Letter to a Christian Nation* and still others. And of course this is just the visible tip of the iceberg.

Now the point here is that the sciences, in particular the human sciences, get deeply involved in this contest. Here is one way. We have been taught, at least for the last couple of hundred years, that proper science is *methodologically naturalistic*. Methodological naturalism (MN) is taken to be a constraint on science. According to MN, a genuinely scientific hypothesis can't make any reference to God or to any other supernatural agents; one can't, for example, explain a recent outburst of irrational activity in Washington DC in terms of an outbreak of demon possession there. As Hugo Grotius put it, science should be practiced "as if God is not given".

The methodological naturalist, of course, will point out that he is not a *metaphysical* naturalist; he isn't saying that as a matter of fact, there is no such person as God or any other supernatural agents. He is only saying that in doing science, one has to set aside belief in God or belief in other supernatural agents. (*Why* this is so isn't made clear, and in fact I don't believe it *is* so; but this is not the place to argue the merits of MN.) For the moment, let's concede that there is something, perhaps much, to be said for practicing science in this way. But the point is that practicing it in this way is substantially indistinguishable from practicing it from the point of view of metaphysical naturalism—the view, not that the existence of God is not given, but that the nonexistence of God *is* given.

For example: suppose you are investigating altruism, including the sort practiced by people like Mother Teresa, and suppose you observe MN as a constraint on scientific theorizing. You may then quite naturally suppose that human beings have evolved by way of natural selection winnowing some source of genetic variation—random genetic mutation is the usual candidate. Of course (given MN) you can't suppose that God somehow guided and directed this process in such a way as to bring it about that human beings are created in his image. You can't, that is, suppose that natural selection is *guided* natural selection. But if you can't suppose that natural selection is divinely guided, then you will suppose that natural selection will ordinarily tend to weed out altruists; they will ordinarily tend to disappear in

a population. So how is it that there are in fact altruists like Mother Teresa? Indeed, it isn't only spiritual giants like Mother Teresa who display altruistic tendencies: so do most of the rest of us. We do what we can (or part of what we can) to succor the widow and orphan; we contribute substantial sums of money to allay world hunger and disease; we support missionaries to distant tribes. Why does this happen? One suggestion that (given MN) seems about as good as any is Herbert Simon's (1990): altruism is due to two factors. The first is unusual docility, teachableness; society tells us that altruism is a good thing, and the Mother Teresas of the world, being unusually docile, take this to heart. The second factor is "limited rationality;" given that she is afflicted with limited rationality, the altruist fails to see that acting altruistically conflicts with her evolutionary interests, her reproductive fitness.

Now from a methodologically naturalistic stance, this seems not unreasonable; but of course from a Christian perspective, it is wildly off the mark. Mother Teresa's altruistic behavior doesn't for a moment manifest limited rationality; the fact is there is no way in which a human being can act *more* rationally. She is reflecting in her limited way the glorious reality of Christ's sacrifice for the sins of the world, and no doubt laying up treasures in heaven. But now note the following. If science is done from the point of view of MN, it seems plausible to say that altruism *is* due to limited rationality — a conclusion that runs directly contrary to Christian belief, and is perhaps the very conclusion one would come to starting from metaphysical naturalism. And then it looks as if this conclusion has all the weight of the authority of science behind it.

So there are two reasons for the Christian community to want a psychology that isn't constrained by methodological naturalism. In the first place, an inquiry so constrained is likely to get it dead wrong, as in this case. And second, without such a psychology, it looks for all the world as if the authority and weight of science supports a non-Christian view of human nature. I say the Christian community needs a psychology not constrained by MN.<sup>2</sup>

As I say, I am therefore in complete agreement with Eric Johnson's central argument. Still, there are points where he seems to me not wholly correct. One such is with respect to his thought that in working at Christian psychology, the divine knowledge should be an epistemic ideal for us: ". . . God's knowledge

should be seen as a sort of epistemic ideal for humans;” he proposes “the positing of the mind and heart of God as an epistemological ideal for a Christian psychology,” and suggests that “this assumption posits an ideal which people can and should strive to realize in themselves.” This seems to me unpromising. The problem is the great gulf between the way in which God knows and the way in which we human beings know. God is essentially and indeed necessarily omniscient; hence he can’t make a mistake. But then he doesn’t need and doesn’t engage in any of the methods we use to make sure we aren’t making a mistake (for example, double checking your calculations, repeating an experiment, getting the advice of others). Furthermore, God never needs to use deduction; his knowledge (so at any rate we think) is always immediate. And of course he would never have to use such fallible methods as inductive inference, argument to the best explanation, experimentation, and the like. It is therefore not easy to see in what respect we should take the divine knowledge as an epistemic ideal, or pattern our scientific activity on God’s knowledge. Of course we do want to be like God, in scientific investigation, in that we really do come up with knowledge rather than mere guesswork. But when we become a bit more specific, it is hard to see how the advice to use God’s knowledge as an epistemic ideal, something to which we aim to conform ourselves, is good advice. As Isaiah puts it,

8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.

9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8,9)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I say more in the “Twin Pillars of Christian Scholarship” (Plantinga, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> But I *don’t* say that Christian psychologists ought not to engage in psychology that is constrained by MN. If the latter is valuable in its own right, there is no reason why Christian psychologists can’t engage in it as well. All I say is that they, or some of them, should work at a psychology that starts from, takes for granted, the truths of the Christian faith.

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## Response to Eric Johnson’s “Towards a Philosophy of Science for Christian Psychology”

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‘Psychology’ is a term of indeterminate meaning; or rather, what the term means depends on the crowd you’re currently running with. Historians of ideas, or of philosophy, are quite happy to talk about Aristotle’s psychology (meaning either the ideas he expresses in his *De Anima* or the kind we find in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Art of Rhetoric*). Such historians talk just as happily about the psychology of the Stoics, of the Epicureans, of Plato, and so forth. Philosophers in our day have a contemporary discipline that we call “moral psychology,” a largely non-empirical, conceptual discipline aimed at the analysis of concepts crucial to issues of the moral side of the human mind: motivation, intention, emotion, character-traits, and the like. Clinical psychologists think they are trading on some kind of psychology when they deploy various therapeutic strategies, whether or not these strategies derive from careful empirical, statistically worked up accounts of pathology and the effects of interventions. The grand, quasi-philosophical theories that used to be called “personality theories” were thought by some people to be psychology. Some psychologists focus almost entirely on brain anatomy and function, and attend to the subjective correlates of brain activity only by way of concession to the infancy of their discipline. Other psychologists are happy enough to look at subjective experience, but insist that an activity is not really psychology unless it involves controlled experiments. There used to be psychologists who thought psychology’s proper do-

main was behavior in the barest sense and nothing more (nothing of what others would have regarded as alone “psychological” — “inner” conscious or unconscious cognitive and emotive states). And so forth.

Into this rather miscellaneous and zoo-like conversation (or perhaps non-conversation), this cacophony of would-be proprietors, Eric Johnson has proposed to insert a shocking newcomer, albeit one with ancient credentials. Christian psychology, as Eric envisions it, seeks a comprehensive understanding of human nature and functioning. So it wants to know everything that can be known by tapping the special sources that the different kinds of psychology I mentioned above tap, and in addition whatever special sources of knowledge of human nature Christians typically draw on. Eric mentions especially the Bible, but Christians also know things about themselves and others through prayer, the intervention of the Holy Spirit, the practice of various ascetic disciplines, and from the accrual of wisdom that such practices and interactions bring. If beliefs and understandings are winnowed from those sources, organized a bit and critically assessed, surely there will be some knowledge among them that can be called psychology. Certain Christians of the past (and possibly the present) who were unusually successful at tapping these Christian sources of knowledge have put down their thoughts in books that can be carefully studied for Christian insights into psychology.

In general, knowledge comes to us in many different ways, and not just through experimental science, as those whom Eric rightly accuses of suffering from a positivism hangover think. And surely any Christian will suppose that Christianity affords some sources of knowledge about human beings that are not available otherwise. So I can't for the life of me see why any Christian would object to Christian psychology. Eric has not presented it as in strict competition with integration or with empirical work; there may well be integrative moments in the life of a Christian psychologist, and he or she may very well do empirical investigations and incorporate those of others into psychology. Some might worry that Christian psychologists will marginalize themselves by making claims that other psychologists can't verify by the strategies *they* typically use to generate and verify knowledge. But Christians should worry less about being in the mainstream, and more about getting the truth and honoring God. And anyway, as

Eric points out, if the work that Christian psychologists do is good enough, and especially if it interacts with the work of psychologists of other colors, it may after all garner the respect and reciprocal interaction of people who don't buy the whole line.

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### **A Brief Response to Eric Johnson's, "Towards a Philosophy of Science for Christian Psychology"**

Edward T. Welch

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I recently heard a friend of mine introduced with “there is no one with whom I would rather disagree.” After first wondering if this was the double meaning of a veiled adversary, in which case I was ready to rally to my friend's defense, I realized the person doing the introduction was offering praise. Rarely do you find someone who is irenic in tone, is quick to listen, and works together toward a resolution. Eric certainly deserves that introduction during the times I disagree with him. But, writing as a biblical counselor of the so-called “progressive wing,” I agree with much of what he says. For example:

- True knowledge is rooted in our personal of God
- To know the world is to seek God's interpretation of all things
- Humility before God is reflected in humility before other people, and such humility confesses that we are limited creatures who listen to those who differ with us and are different from us.
- “Translating” has merit and usefulness as a way to listen with discernment.

Eric sees valid points at the poles of the Christian counseling spectrum. Integrationists want to troll for useful observations in the psychological literature; biblical counselors want to accent the depth and breadth of Scripture and the pernicious ways that the modern church has become psychologized. His postulates offer a creative and broad platform that reach out to both integrationists and those who tend to be suspicious of the psychological endeavor. While we could endlessly nuance each postulate, most Christian counselors, I think, can see the biblical rationale for each one and have broad-stroke agreement with them.

As useful and worthwhile for discussion as the postulates can be, however, I find something even better in Eric's article. My experience with statements of faith and similar propositions is that there can be broad agreement on them but, when we actually apply these propositions, differences abound. I come from a confessional denomination and teach in a confessional school, so I certainly see the merit in developing systematic propositions that are action guiding, but, somehow, these oftentimes don't achieve the unity and coherence that they were intended to achieve. In other words, postulates, affirmations and denials, and other types of propositions have been less than effective in generating profitable discussion that captures key distinctions. For that, we need to get into the nitty-gritty of what we actually do. In this case, how do we work with psychological data?

Eric enlists the concept of self-representation. *Now* we can potentially have profitable discussion. After all, the propositions we consciously hold are not the same as those that we live out of. If you really want to see what I believe, watch how I live more than what document I sign.

One topic for discussion that could arise from Eric's overview of different approaches to self-representation would be our undergirding anthropology. Here is a topic that continues to be ignored in much of the integration/no integration discussion. For example, at this point I am persuaded that the person is a duality, an embodied soul. That contrasts with the trichotomy that is implicit within much of the integration literature, and it contrasts with the view that we are one substance alone. Also, there is a sense in Eric's discussion that "spiritual" is a piece of the person, albeit the most important

piece. Though Eric is not necessarily saying this, his comments bring to mind the lack of clarity that we bring to our integration discussion about "spiritual" as well as "emotional." For example, emotions tend to be demarcated from spiritual, while, in my own understanding about the person, spiritual – the fact that we always live before God and everything we do is ultimately referenced to God, either for or against – is often revealed by our emotions. The two are deeply connected.

My point is that propositions are interesting and helpful, but it is equally important to discuss what we, in fact, do, and then trace that back to our most cherished propositions.

Two other comments. First, regarding Eric's view that the psychological sciences have discovered "countless aspects of the human soul," my own perspective of the empirical enterprise within psychology is that it has been disappointing. My sense is that the scientist-practitioner model creates either scientists or practitioners, neuropsychology being an exception. Practitioners don't tend to get their cues from the empirical literature, and the empirical literature, if it is going to speak with confidence about anything, must focus on such small units of behavior that they have limited relevance in a therapeutic setting. But these are matters of emphasis.

Second, Eric is throwing out another metaphor that he hopes could kick start the integration conversation. He suggests "translation" over integration. From my perspective, the integration conversation needs new perspectives and metaphors, and this is an intriguing new metaphor. It has the benefit of accessing the cross-cultural, anthropological, and missionary literature. I will ponder it some more. My initial caution is that translating another language is incredibly hard work that demands great skill. Too often we can opt for word-equivalence, which can miss the larger meanings within the culture. I am more accustomed to examining extra-biblical literature with the metaphor of Scripture-as-spectacles by which we see and interpret everything. Like all metaphors, both the translating and glasses metaphors bring new light to the discussion but we also know that neither one can do all the work.

Careful scholarship and bridge-building – thank you Eric.

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## **A Bridge Too Far: Response to “Towards a Philosophy of Science for Christian Psychology” by Eric L. Johnson**

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.  
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Johnson has made a bold attempt to outline a unique philosophy of science for Christian psychology. There are benefits to articulating such a philosophy of science. It helps readers clarify their own thinking and understand what Christian psychology is and might be. I respect Johnson. I think this is an excellent academic work.

For me, the effort does not succeed. There are several reasons.

*First, Johnson’s proposal would marginalize Christian psychology within the field of psychological science.* His postulate 7—*“A Christian psychology must engage its intellectual competitors and contribute to a ‘cross-communal psychology’ (composed of multiple psychologies, where necessary), to enrich itself, to advance public legitimacy, and to contribute to the increase in human understanding of human beings, all for the glory of God”* (his italics)—is a telling proposition. I believe that his proposed system, were it successful, would relegate Christian psychology to scientific ghetto status. He attempts to create a middle ground between integrationists and Biblical psychologists. Integrationists (a) address explicitly Christian topics, (b) accept psychological science’s methods, and yet (c) subject psychological science’s findings to the higher authority of required consistency with Scripture (presumably as understood within the integrationist’s theological tradition). Biblical psychologists reject most of secular psychology’s content unless it explicitly has already been stated in scripture (as interpreted by the Biblical psychologist). They seem also to reject the scientific method as being able to produce findings that legitimately conflict with theology.

Let us think in terms of Venn diagrams. A large circle represents the body of findings from psychological science. Within that circle is a smaller circle representing applied psychological science. The integrationist circle is mostly within the large circle of

psychological science (partly basic and partly applied psychological science). A bit of the integrationist circle lies outside of psychological science—the portion rejected because of direct conflict with Scripture (as interpreted).

On the Venn diagram, the Biblical psychologist is more concerned with Scripture, so most of its area (or much of its area at any rate) is outside of psychological science (and more often deals with applied, not basic, psychological science). The area of overlap is in scripturally revealed areas that secular psychological science confirms or supports (or in non-morally tinged areas such as IQ).

Johnson’s Christian psychology seeks a middle ground. It accepts methods that psychological science does not (i.e., theological methods) except insofar as psychological science accepts that theology could provide concepts that psychology could test as hypotheses. Johnson’s Christian psychology also accepts the reality of supernatural phenomena (i.e., God actually works in the natural world; unseen reality exists containing Satan, angels, etc.; supernatural phenomena such as miracles or healing might occur).

It is Christian psychology’s non-scientific methods and the frank incorporation of the existence of truly non-naturalistic phenomena and beings that would ghettoize Johnson’s Christian’s psychology within the discipline of psychological science. Discourse about such differences between psychological science and a supernaturalist Christian view of existence might be acceptable in the “guild” of Christian psychologists, I believe that such discourse would not penetrate psychology nor secular society. To the contrary, it would further alienate psychological scientists and people in secular society from Christian psychology (as Johnson proposes it). The ghetto would not be merely separate, but would have barbed wire, high-voltage fencing preventing communication.

*Second, Johnson’s proposal does not fall within psychological science’s disciplinary matrix.* Johnson poses the question of which we should choose—Biblical psychology, integration, or Christian psychology—as if they were three equal choices. They are not.

There is an established disciplinary matrix in psychology. Integrationists largely fit within it. Biblical psychology and Christian psychology do not. To replace or to become an equal competitor to integrationists, either (1) there must be a crisis (using Kuhn’s

[1996] term) in which important unexplained phenomena are troubling the majority of scientists or (2) there must be new tools that yield major new data (Galison & Stump, 1994).

There is no crisis. Hence the Kuhnian scientific revolution cannot exist.

Nor do I believe that Johnson provides a new tool that can reveal massive amounts of new data, as did the telescope in Kepler's days. In fact, I believe that this new philosophy of science that he proposes will *not* create new data. Because it takes scripture seriously, it actually runs the risk of deleting (or making irrelevant) as much data as it reveals. Let's consider one (of many possible) instances. As Christians, we believe that the Christian worldview is true. Thus, acceptance of Christian worldview—under Johnson's proposal—seems to eliminate interest in Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and perhaps Jewish worldviews plus secular worldview and non-religious spiritual worldview. At best, interest in those worldviews is for utilitarian purposes, again limiting the focus of attention. Johnson's proposal is unlike the invention of the telescope, which opened the heavens to human observation and provided data without eliminating or making irrelevant other data. Those new heavenly data eventually led to the crisis that brought about Kuhn's scientific revolution in understanding of physics. By Johnson's proposal, the theology ruling within Christian psychology—which of course is not really a unitary theology at all anyway—would subjugate observable data to kneel beneath theology.

Johnson tries to show how Christian psychology can add new information to psychology. See, for example, his case of Ted's self-representation. Johnson suggests that Ted's belief about himself as a redeemed sinner could be investigated by a secular psychological scientist. The secular psychological scientist could describe the effects of Ted's *beliefs* (because having beliefs, values, motives, etc. are psychological). The integrationist might go a bit further than the secular psychologist, argues Johnson, and check the findings for consistency with Scripture (as interpreted within a particular theology). Johnson suggests that the Christian psychologist, however, could go further than even the integrationist and make statements about the *truth* of the beliefs—something clearly outside of investigation using methods of psychological science. So, Johnson argues, we would receive value added from Christian psychology.

I believe this claim is exaggerated. Johnson

chose his example expeditiously. What if—instead of believing himself a redeemed sinner—Ted's belief was in predestination and God's sovereignty as the core of his belief system? As a Calvinist Christian psychologist, I would say this is true. I would address centuries of theology and pastoral practice to support my value-added belief. But, as an Armenian Wesleyan free-will Christian psychologist, I would dispute the truth claim of Ted's belief. (I could have chosen many controversial theological issues here—such as a Pentecostal belief in a second blessing as a requisite for salvation, for example.). Thus, I am arguing that Christian psychology, as conceptualized by Johnson, cannot really add any value about Ted's *truth* claim without presuming one particular theology to be true. I doubt that such an assumption could pass muster even among theologians, much less among psychological scientists. So does Christian psychology really add anything to the integrationist position? My answer is, not enough to justify a scientific revolution.

*Third, Johnson is incorrect in identifying the basic goal of psychology.* I have a few other quibbles with Johnson's project—hardly worth discussing. Yet, let me mention one that might be worth discussion. This is at the core of Johnson's thesis. Johnson argues that we need to include theology in Christian psychology because then can get at *the whole truth* of phenomena. He writes, “[I]t is that whole truth which is the goal of Christian psychology.” He adds, “A Christian psychology, then, aims at a comprehensive model of human beings, motivated and exemplified by the ideal of God's comprehensive understanding of human beings.”

This goal, I believe is incorrect. Psychology is a discipline and exists within a disciplinary matrix that specifies (a) legitimate methods and (b) legitimate questions to study. Psychology is only one discipline that seeks to understand humans. Other disciplines include sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics (just to name the social sciences). Disciplines like literature, religious studies, history, art, fine arts, and Christian theology also seek to understand humans. Johnson's stated goal is thus, I believe, not correctly stated. Rather, psychology's goal is to understand humans *within the disciplinary matrix of psychology*. To this he might add “including interaction with a particular theological tradition.” That tradition might be Christian and specifically Reformed Wesleyan, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic,

Orthodox, etc.

I, personally, would add, instead, “checking the findings against Scripture (also specifically understood within theological context) and using Scripture to generate testable hypotheses.” I am more an integrationist than someone aligned with Johnson’s project.

In summary, Johnson has proposed a bold project. I am not convinced that the value added is worth the cost.

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# Concluding Interaction Regarding a Philosophy of Science for Christian Psychology and a Parable

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What a privilege to have such a terrific group of respondents to one's paper. I'll begin with a very selective summary of their comments and my reactions.

## Michael Cantrell

Cantrell's main point was to underscore the importance of Kierkegaard to the project of a Christian psychology (CP) philosophy of science. He nicely contrasts the practical and theoretical aspects of Kierkegaard's work. The primary purpose of Kierkegaard's psychology was the upbuilding (or edification) of the reader. However, he wrote sophisticated philosophical essays on psychological topics that placed his work beyond most lay people. Cantrell rightly notes that the contemporary project of a CP may similarly alienate both those who reject a science of psychology that strays too far from the lay psychology language of the Bible, as well as others—secularists and Christians who subscribe to their norms of psychological science—who reject the use of the Bible and psychological constructs (like sin) that are not universally empirically verifiable.

Cantrell is not opposed to replacing "integration" with "translation," as the controlling metaphor for the Christian's use of secular psychology, but he prefers "appropriation." Since I borrowed "translation" from MacIntyre, not Tillich, it does not have the same troubling associations for me as it does for Cantrell, and given the linguistic nature of the task, I continue to prefer translation, which conveys the interpretive challenges of reading texts of other communities. Cantrell also recommends becoming more familiar with Christian philosophy. I welcome this reminder—touched on in Postulate 3.3—and look to experts in this area like Cantrell to help us psychologists out, perhaps collaborating with us on research and theory-building. And he also points out the need for empirical research that proceeds from a Christian disciplinary matrix. Of course I agree, and until substantial numbers of such studies are produced, CP will never get more press than a week or two in an upper-level "integration" course.

## Kaye Cook

I'm very grateful for Cook's probing, yet cautiously supportive remarks. One of her biggest concerns seemed to be about the sources of knowledge I include within the CP epistemological arsenal, apparently because they are so broad. She also suggests that I have been somewhat unfair in my characterization of Integration, and that CP overlaps in certain critical ways with Integration, something this author appreciatively acknowledges. To summarize her remarks, she seems attracted to CP, but remains unconvinced that she should embrace it at this early stage in its development, since she believes more work needs to be done spelling out its parameters and distinctives. Cook concludes by suggesting that a hermeneutic approach to psychology provides a superior alternative to Integration and apparently, in her judgment, CP. I agree it contrasts with Integration (which is more modern than postmodern), but I have always assumed that the project of a CP was thoroughly hermeneutic (a point that will be made throughout *Foundations for Soul Care*; Johnson, 2007). Indeed, in the current article, I suggest that "experiential" human science research methods—those which recognize the role of interpretation in the investigation of humans—are legitimate and necessary for CP. So I was mystified as to why she would believe that a hermeneutic orientation (in which "people's understanding of their own faith would be privileged as a way of understanding" psychological features of humans) is at variance with CP, since that seems to me to be exactly what CP is promoting.

Finally, without meaning to be petty, I'd like to call into question the labeling of the CP paradigm as if it were a type of Integration (first paragraph, and throughout the article), particularly when a sub-goal of the article was to contrast the two paradigms. The tendency is very common among integrationists to see all paradigms as types of their own, and it is perhaps especially understandable in this case, since Christian psychologists utilize integration as a *strategy*, and there are significant similarities between the

two paradigms. Nevertheless, as a result of the many important issues she raised, I'm already looking forward to our next chat.

### **Michael Donahue**

In Donahue's generally appreciative examination, he opines that he is more upbeat about the contemporary "intellectual climate" vis-à-vis the Christian faith than I am, and he offers a number of pieces of evidence that encourage him, all of them good reasons to be encouraged that we are in the midst of a major shift regarding religion and spirituality. However, I would suggest that a closer look at the evidence warrants a somewhat more critical interpretation. For example, so far, most of the openness is towards "religion" and "spirituality." Modern psychology tolerates *generic* religion and spirituality—the kind in which relatively few individuals actually believe—because they fit into its aspirations for universal knowledge, without actually affirming any specific metaphysical creed. So while appearing to move in the right direction, it does not compromise one bit regarding the allowance of discourse from alternative worldviews.

So, we need to ask if this "openness" is better for orthodox Christians in psychology, or worse, since such a totalizing approach to religion and spirituality probably encourages the gatekeepers that they have made some major concessions to religion, but without actually delivering anything of substance to the religions to which most people really adhere. Whereas secularists continue to be free to describe psychological phenomena in accordance with their worldview assumptions in mainstream journals and books, psychological beliefs derived from the world's major religions are simply not permitted (except classical Buddhism, in a growing number of cases, which also, notably, has secular assumptions). Consequently, until orthodox believers of the world's other major religions are allowed to speak on psychological topics in mainstream journals and books in light of *their* worldview assumptions (which include unfalsifiable metaphysical beliefs), it may be best to temper our enthusiasm for this interest in "religion" and "spirituality," and advocate (perhaps more gloomily) for greater and more genuine intellectual pluralism in contemporary psychology.

Donahue (along with Cantrell) suggests adding to the list of philosophers who ought to contribute foundationally to the project of a CP philosophy of science, citing Pope John Paul II as his candidate.

This too is a fine idea, but I must mention that part of the reason I picked Augustine and Aquinas was because they have been so influential on much of Western Christianity, and therefore, they would seem to provide a very broad basis for the project of a CP, and not just a Catholic or Baptist or a Lutheran psychology (admittedly, I'm still leaving out the Eastern Orthodox tradition). But this leads us to Donahue's next point, that CP will likely be composed of a variety of *psychologies*, for example, a *Catholic* psychology (something likewise asserted by the author in Postulate 8). Obviously, John Paul II's relevant contributions to psychology would be of special interest to Catholics (just as John Bunyan's might be to Baptists). But another benefit of a Christian psychology is that it provides opportunities for all Christians to be enriched by the psychological thinking of Christian traditions with which they are less familiar, and. I'd love to learn more about John Paul II's personalist philosophy.

Finally, Donahue provides some tantalizing suggestions for the outlines of a CP that is guiding his work and that of others at the *Institute for the Psychological Sciences*. As one who has long admired the *Institute* and its potential to contribute to CP, I look forward with eagerness to more such expressions of the psychology of the Catholic tradition.

### **Peter Hill**

My long-time friend, Peter Hill, begins by arguing that CP is not so distant from Integration as I have suggested, but along the way he offers quite a few reservations about the project in the article. The following is my count: 1) There was a confounding of the Integration approach with the Levels-of-Explanation approach; 2) proponents of Integration actually fall along a broad continuum; contrary to the "homogenizing the other" that characterized the treatment of integrationists in the article. For example, he notes that some integrationists have advocated a hermeneutic approach, in addition to the use of quantitative methods favored by mainstream psychologists; 3) integrationists share CP's goal of discerning an underlying single truth regarding human beings; 4) Eric's CP approach favors one theological orientation over others (Augustinian-Thomist), and this would seem to limit its comprehensiveness; 5) Eric's CP model assumes a conflict perspective towards the field of psychology, whereas there are many areas of psychology in which Christian and non-Chris-

tian psychologists can agree, even regarding virtues, where one might have supposed there would be considerable differences; 6) Christians ought to appreciate when modern psychologists have done their job well; 7) the example of self-representation was illegitimate because modern psychology of religion researchers have acknowledged that religious self-schemas may include Christian beliefs; and 8) there is a grave danger of marginalization with the CP approach. Wow! At the end of his discussion, I wondered if Hill finished his response thinking that CP and Integration are as distinct as I do. Let me respond to what I consider the most important of these concerns.

1) I appreciate that the Levels-of-Explanation and Integration approaches are in fact different positions, but Hill rightly detected that I believe they share some foundational modern assumptions that I think have compromised the Integration project (whereas they don't compromise the Levels-of-Explanation project, since it does not aim at faith-learning integration). Most importantly, the proponents of both models generally share the same basic understanding of the disciplinary boundaries and rules of modern psychology. As a result, they all seem to want to affirm the ideal of a universal science of psychology that rejects explicit reference to psychological features of humans that are unique to a Christian perspective. For example, modernists, Levels-of-Explanation proponents, and Integrationists have all done research on human-to-human forgiveness. But Christianity teaches that such forgiveness ought to be directly related to divine forgiveness in Christ. Can that be allowed in modern psychology? A Levels-of-Explanation advocate would probably say no—that's theology. What would an Integrationist say? I suspect that at least some would sense the relevance to psychology, and might even discuss it in "integration articles," but would agree that talking about divine forgiveness belongs in theology, not psychology. However, from a CP perspective, the human experience of divine forgiveness, *including the acceptance of its divine basis*, is necessarily psychological (as well as theological). The fact that Levels-of-Explanation proponents and most Integrationists tend to exclude psychologically relevant biblical and theological teaching from the field of psychology most clearly distinguishes both from CP.

2) It is true that some broad strokes were used in painting Integration. However, I also recognize

that there are differences among integrationists. In fact, I present a number of such differences in *Foundations* (Johnson, 2007), where I had more space. There I point out that some integrationists are closer to the Levels-of-Explanation framework (I call them *Weak* integrationists) and others are closer to the CP framework (I consider them *Strong* integrationists). But my goal in the present article was to identify some common features that seem to me to characterize all integrationists. Making generalizations is dangerous business, but I'm not convinced that identifying similarities among integrationists, that also happen to fit Levels-of-Explanation proponents in some ways, necessarily "homogenizes the other." Whole milk, 2%, and skim are all milk. But more on this in the conclusion.

3) At the same time, CP and Integration also share many assumptions. I fear that my appreciation for Integration was not clearly enough spelled out. In fact, the contemporary CP project is unthinkable without the contributions of those working within an Integration paradigm, and I think that the many integrationists who take the faith seriously in their work are working on *the same project as we are*. Our differences mainly concern a) the greater degree of suspicion CP has towards modern psychology (not rejection, but suspicion, given its modern, secular assumptions), b) a greater concern about the corollary implicit constraint secularism puts on the utilization of Scripture and Christian conceptualizations on Integration work, and c) their different spheres of calling (the primary calling of CP is to the Church and Christian contexts, whereas it seems that the *primary* calling of Integration is the public square, both in terms of the context of scientific writing and the field of public mental health).

7) It seems to me that Hill did not catch the main point of the example of Christian self-representation. The topic of "justification by faith in Christ" has been traditionally relegated to the field of theology. However, a little reflection reveals that the self-representation "I am justified by faith in Christ" is just as much a psychological phenomenon as "I am married" and "I am a hard worker." Moreover, its validity has huge implications for counseling. The example illustrates that the division between theology and psychology traditionally assumed by Integration is, at least in that case, false and misleading. I am glad to find out that there are some psychology of religion researchers who reject the Integration di-

chotomy between theology and psychology.

8) CP certainly faces the danger of marginalization, both by its advocates talking solely among themselves, rather than also speaking with the broader psychology community, and by the secular community rejecting its seemingly parochial concerns. However, as the postmodern implications of modernism really take hold in psychology, it may become increasingly self-evident that all of psychology that deals with worldview-dependent concerns (e.g., motivation, personality, psychopathology, psychotherapy, and social relations) is necessarily community-bound. It is hoped that CP will help to advance the meta-disciplinary discussions of contemporary psychology in this way.

In spite of the concerns that Hill raised, I appreciated very much the sentiments of his opening remarks and their significance did not escape me. He has helped me a lot over the years, and he has done so again.

#### **Alvin Plantinga and Robert Roberts**

I will forego interacting with Alvin Plantinga's and Robert Roberts's responses, mostly because they were so supportive, there is not much to address. Truth be told, my work is little more than the attempt to extend and elaborate theirs in my areas of interest. I simply note that Plantinga thinks it unpromising to posit the mind and heart of God as epistemological ideals for Christians (a position, interestingly, for which I have also been chided by Bob!). I will give this some more thought.

#### **Ed Welch**

Of special interest is Ed Welch's reaction, since he is the lone responder from the biblical counseling approach. He confirms my "suspicions" about him: he seems cautiously open to the CP perspective. Consistent with his approach, he considers himself less enthusiastic than I about the accomplishments of the psychological sciences (I confess too much relish in the irony that Donahue and Hill read me as too pessimistic and Welch too optimistic), but I don't sense any of the antagonistic spirit that often accompanies the work of some of the less "progressive" of that approach. As some of his critics have noted, this biblical counselor does some solid integration. I think biblical counseling is specializing in a foundational kind of CP, so I think we're really working on the same project too.

#### **Everett Worthington**

Lastly, Ev Worthington raises some of the most serious criticisms regarding the CP project of all the respondents. Echoing Hill, he is especially concerned about the marginalization of Christian psychology within the broader field of psychology. He believes that it is illegitimate to use "non-scientific methods" and make reference to "the existence of truly non-naturalistic phenomena and beings" such a shift would quickly alienate Christians in the field of psychology, for it amounts to an abandonment of the "established disciplinary matrix in psychology." The only reasons to abandon that disciplinary matrix, he says, would be an intellectual crisis "troubling the majority of scientists" or new research tools (akin to the telescope) "that yield major new data," neither of which is true in the present. He objects to my use of the example of self-representation, because I argue that a healthy Christian self-representation requires the affirmation of Scripturally-based truth about Christians, since he believes that the *truth* of one's self-beliefs are "clearly outside of investigation using methods of psychological science." To support his point, he cites some beliefs that many Christians disagree about and suggests that if even theologians don't agree about such matters, how wise is it to import such vagaries into the science of psychology? Lastly, Worthington rejects the notion that psychology should aim at a *comprehensive* understanding of human beings. It has its own aims, prescribed by its own legitimate methods and self-imposed limitations regarding the questions it is supposed to study. Let *all* of the disciplines, he says, together with psychology, provide the comprehensive picture. But that is not *psychology's* responsibility.

All Christians in psychology are indebted to my friend Ev Worthington for his many substantial contributions to the field. Now I am even more indebted, because of a response that so well clarifies the differences between the Integration and CP paradigms (Worthington is a recognized leader of the Integration approach) and makes plain just how much the assumptions of some of its proponents are reflective of modern thought. Fundamentally, what is at stake is the definition of science. Worthington's allegiance to modern assumptions about science is evident at every turn. Psychological science just is what is acceptable to current understandings of mainstream psychologists. So, he says CP accepts

“methods that psychological science does not (i.e., theological methods),” these methods are “non-scientific,” “There is an established disciplinary matrix in psychology” that specifies “legitimate methods” (and “Integrationists largely fit within it”), and an intellectual crisis in the field exists only if a “majority of scientists” are troubled.

But there is a vicious circularity regarding these unfalsifiable assumptions. Who established psychology’s current disciplinary matrix and sanctioned its preferred methods? A majority of *secular* scientists (going back to the founding of modern psychology in the late 1800’s). And why were theological methods ruled as invalid? Because they are not considered legitimate sources of truth *according to a modern worldview*. Only publicly-verifiable methods used by those who strenuously avoid making any metaphysical claims are permitted. But can modern psychologists *prove* that *only their* methods yield truth? They cannot. Some of the most basic beliefs that all humans assume (like beliefs in the general reliability of one’s perceptual and reasoning abilities) cannot be proven (Audi, 1998; Plantinga, 1993, 2000). But that does not mean they do not yield truth. On the contrary, they are some of our most important means of obtaining truth (used all the time by scientists!). Even so, for the Christian, reading the Bible yields truth about human beings that is foundational to a Christian understanding of human beings. Why can it not be used?

Of course there is a circularity in Christian thinking about these matters too. The point here is that more and more Christians recognize that some circularity is necessary for finite human beings. Rather than attempt to avoid all such circularity (but then import it in unwittingly, like modernists do), Christians can acknowledge it and encourage others to acknowledge it as well. A science of human beings that purports to describe human beings well cannot ignore the most important beliefs about human beings there are. At least, we Christians ought not to continue letting this happen.

Worthington is right to sense that CP creates a scandal for contemporary psychology (though he fears the scandal would fall upon the Christian community). For over a century, positivism created a nice, well-run laboratory for a secular psychology, devoid of any metaphysical disputes, using assumptions that have so dominated thinking in the field that Christians themselves defend them as if they

were self-evidently valid. But with the advent of post-modernism, that era is drawing to a close. The self-criticism and egalitarianism foundational to modern thought has led inevitably to postmodern pluralism and a skepticism regarding a single universal system of truth (like modernism). Without subscribing to secular postmodernism any more than secular modernism, Christian psychologists are uniquely poised to capitalize on a growing postmodern sensibility in the 21st century and help pave the way for a just and even-handed revolution in psychology in the years to come.

It is precisely because of Worthington’s acceptance of modern philosophy of science that he has been able to influence the field as much as he has, an influence for which I am so grateful. He is, in my eyes, a giant. However, I think there are better reasons for doing what he has done, and I remain confident that it will be possible to influence contemporary psychology in the future without leaving behind distinctly Christian worldview beliefs at the door of the psychology lab.

### **A Concluding Unscholarly Postscript**

Before finishing with a parable, I’d like to summarize some of my thoughts at the end of this exercise. To begin with, I am so grateful to all the participants. Their comments were gifts to me, and I would do another draft of the article, if the editors would let me! As Michael Cantrell noted, Kierkegaard is so important to CP that I think the platform of its philosophy of science should be expanded to incorporate some of his insights. And it occurred to me that a philosophy of science for psychology that is truly representative of Christianity should also reach into the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Peter Hill points out that Integrationists are a varied lot, and this experience proved it. I was especially struck by Hill’s and Cook’s endorsements of a more hermeneutic approach (which Cook surprisingly offers as an *alternative* to Integration) that does better justice to worldview differences, in contrast to Worthington’s more traditional methodological stance. I would be interested in hearing the three of them dialogue about integration, since Worthington sounded to me more like a Levels-of-Explanation proponent and less “integrative” than either Hill or Cook. Their three responses may explain why Hill sensed I engaged in some homogenization, and why some of us perceive a lack of coherence regarding integration

among those subscribing to the label. But of course the same can be said of any group organized around a complex concept like integration, including CP! I will strive harder not to misrepresent integrationists, but the integrationist responses themselves seemed to me to vindicate the generalizations made about them in the original article.

In addition, while committed to a hermeneutic approach myself, it must be acknowledged that hermeneutics can also be generic and totalizing. Consider Richardson, Fowers, and Guignon (1999), for example. A hermeneutic model for psychology that does not address the peculiar community-specific, worldview-dependent beliefs about human beings that characterize Christianity would seem to me to be little different from the universalism of modernity. But the more willing integrationists are to practice a “thick description” of human beings that utilizes distinctive Christian beliefs derived from the Bible and the Christian tradition in their research, theory-building, and clinical practice, the more it sounds like we are working together on the same project: one that is empirically-oriented and culturally-minded. And the more biblical counseling proponents critically engage with and benefit from the findings of empirical research, regardless of the source (like Ed Welch does), the more it sounds like we are also working on the same project with them: one that is Bible-oriented and Church-minded. I think God has a very big tent into which we can all fit.

### **A Seafaring Parable**

To conclude, let us liken modern psychology in America to a ship. A beautiful ship, a schooner, let us say, called the “U.S.S. Secularity.” It has been built into its current form over the past 130 years. I was trained on that boat in the 1980’s, receiving a Ph.D. in educational psychology. However, I admit that I have jumped ship (along with others involved in the CP project, if I may speak on their behalf).

Why have we done so? For one thing, we have in our hands a mariners’ book called the Bible, considered illegitimate by the modernist sailors who trained us. However, it has what seems to us a great deal of common sense about navigation, and it has told us about significant lands not seen on the modernist maps and strenuously avoided on modernist travels.

Furthermore, we have been encouraged by phi-

losopher-prophets like Alvin Plantinga and Robert Roberts (and Steve Evans, while we’re at it) as well as theologian-prophets like Ellen Charry and Ray Anderson, who have challenged us psychologists and counselors to be more radically Christian in our psychological thinking and practice and more true to our Christian heritage. And they and others have told us tales of previous Christian psychology ships, captained by gifted old salts like Augustine, Aquinas, Kierkegaard, and Pope John Paul II, among many others. And as we came across accounts of their travels, some penned by their own hand, we were emboldened to jump ship and follow their lead and set out for other, more exotic lands than we were permitted in our modernist training. Though we knew that most of the psychology ships of the Christian tradition had long since sunk—after all, one could find relatively little serious Christian psychological scholarship in the 20th century—we became convinced that great treasures lay within their holds. But as 21st century psychologists, we really are more committed to sailing than diving. So ultimately our search for ancient treasure (with the help of better divers than ourselves, including philosophers, theologians, and church historians) was primarily to finance our real interest: the building of a new seaworthy vessel, able to hold its own with any contemporary ships out there. That is, we are committed to the development of new, scientifically sophisticated Christian psychological theory, research, and clinical practice.

Of course, our modernist colleagues tried to dissuade us from leaving. They told us the old Christian ships were disreputable vessels, that carried nothing of value, and that they had been guided by small and superstitious minds. They told us that the soul physicians on those ships did little more than try to cast out demons of mentally disturbed people or burn them at the stake. We admit we were intimidated by their talk. But bolstered by the prophets we read, and the mariners’ book called the Bible, we nonetheless eventually found the courage to leave the ship of modern psychology.

Admittedly, other Christians are content to remain on that ship and are making the most of it, and they have accomplished some real good (some of the most influential of which are Ev Worthington and Peter Hill), even shifting the course of the ship in areas where they could, given the strictures of modernism (like psychology of religion, values in psychotherapy, virtues, and human-to-human forgiveness).

This is extremely valuable activity for Christians to do. In fact, there is something humble and beautiful about Christians submitting to the intellectual restrictions of modernism for the sake of science and the possibility of influencing the field, for God's glory, which I applaud. They are my heroes and my superiors in many respects, and they remind me of other heroes in our mariner's book, like Daniel and Esther, who similarly served in other regimes.

I would argue, however, that these Christians on the modern psychology ship are not totally free sailors like their secular peers, but are bond-servants, for they are not allowed to work according to their own Christian worldview but are required (implicitly forced) to teach, research, write, and practice according to the discourse and research rules of modernism. The secular sailors with whom they work, of course, fully and gladly embrace these rules—which forbid reference to distinctly Christian concepts and strategies—but a psychology that proceeds according to those rules can never adequately describe human beings Christianly (or comprehensively). Perhaps the activities of our Christian colleagues on that ship can be likened to a kind of espionage for the Christian underground: working undercover to influence the field surreptitiously.

But according to postmodernism and the sub-discipline of cross-cultural psychology, and because of the complexity of human beings, part of the progress of a human science like psychology will actually entail the proliferation of research, theory, and clinical practice that cannot be universally agreed upon. On the contrary, an increasingly valid human science will have to become pluralistic, because the investigations of the psychological features of all kinds of people require the incorporation of the worldview assumptions of those they study, in order to detect the features of human beings under examination. This is a pillar in the CP disciplinary matrix, and is certainly necessary if Christians are to develop a psychology that comports with their worldview. Though CP is by no means a product of secular postmodernism, it has some sympathies with its deconstruction of modernist ideology.

On the other hand, if all Christian psychologists do is leave behind the modernist ship, just to sit on the beach of some island and complain about secularism, or simply continue telling ourselves the tales of previous Christian sailors, over and over again, the history of this re-born movement will amount to

nothing more than a very poor episode of "Lost."

But our goal is far more adventurous than that, perhaps even swashbuckling! We wish to build and sail a new ship, in our day, constructed from some of the material of the sunken ships that we have found, as well as from what we have learned from the modernist sailors we will continue to read—they are, after all, very good sailors overall and have written much about their travels across great regions of previously unexplored territory. Building a new Christian psychology schooner that is really seaworthy (and not simply a landlocked vessel available for weekend tours for Church groups), will involve a great deal of comparatively novel research and the creation of innovative Christian theories and distinct clinical practices. We want to build this ship, not to be contrary, but to sail according to our own calling. Our mariners' guidebook as well our intuitions (as Roberts reminds us) tell us of things completely ignored by modernists, and we believe that at least some of us ought to be about the task of building a different boat than modernism has built, and sailing it wherever the wind of the Holy Spirit blows us (I couldn't say *that* currently in the *American Psychologist*).

Yet we dream of a day when all the Christian sailors (as well as orthodox Jewish and Muslim and Hindu sailors, among others) are 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.

Why would Christians endorse a pluralist model of human science? Because of the gospel, the Christian belief in the noetic effects of sin (Moroney, 1999; Westphal, 1990), and our own history, we know that we ought not to mandate compliance to worldview beliefs (even Christian worldview beliefs) that, by the nature of the case, must be freely and rationally embraced. A pluralist model is therefore actually fairer, more reasonable, and more just than the current system, and it is the one most likely to enable contemporary Christians to understand human beings in ways more analogous to the way we think that the triune God does.

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# Pride and Self-Contempt: A Controversial Issue in Psychology and Theology

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*Social psychologists and clinicians have frequently debated the issue of whether pride or low self-esteem is the “primary problem” of the human condition. Agreeing with an Augustinian emphasis on the primacy of pride, many social psychologists have alerted us to the dangers of a self-serving bias and excessive self-regard. Clinicians such as Heinz Kohut, however, often argue that this so-called self-serving bias is but a cover for a much deeper problem involving an injured, low estimation of the self. Kohut can be placed within the theological anthropology of Irenaeus rather than Augustine. This essay lays out the major differences in this pride versus low self-esteem debate before using the work of Karen Horney to demonstrate how pride and low self-esteem usually co-exist, and are, in fact, two sides of the same coin.*

In a previous publication, I examined two opposing perspectives concerning the issue of self-esteem and its relationship to sin (Cooper, 2003). The dominant perspective in the Christian tradition has been heavily influenced by Augustine, who argued that pride is the primary problem of the human condition. We human beings tend to over-value ourselves and inflate our own significance. In fact, we tend to place ourselves at the center of life, a form of idolatry which throws the rest of our lives completely out of balance. Low self-esteem is hardly the problem; instead, undue self focus and exaggerated claims about the self represent our most basic dilemma. This Augustinian tradition was central for the Protestant reformers and has been powerfully re-stated in the work of Niebuhr (1964), Gilkey (1966), and other contemporary theologians. And perhaps even more significantly, it has become a central position among several social psychologists (Myers, 1980; Myers & Jeeves, 1987; Moroney, 2001; Kernis, 1993; Baumeister, 1997), who argue that a self-serving bias and over-estimation of ourselves causes far more problems than the more common diagnosis of low self-esteem.

Many clinical psychologists, on the other hand, strongly disagree that our problem is one of pride or excessive self-regard. In fact, they believe the exact opposite: Beneath what may appear to be self-inflated posturing is a deeply insecure self. The problem, they say, is not that our self-esteem is too high; instead our self-esteem is fragile and not well grounded.

In this essay, I wish to investigate these two schools of thought more thoroughly before offering

some suggestions as to how they might offer valuable insights for each other. In order to accomplish this, I will first lay out the central argument that pride or excessive self-regard is the primary human predicament. I will then question these findings before moving toward a description of the low self-esteem argument. And finally, I will conclude by making specific suggestions concerning how these approaches might be reconciled.

## **Pride as Primary: From Augustine to Niebuhr and Social Psychology**

It is commonly thought that Augustine believed the source of human sin resides in the *rebellious behavior* of Adam and Eve. This is actually not the case. Augustine was far too insightful to attribute the human dilemma to a strictly behavioral problem. Instead, the real source of sin came from the couple's desire to be the source of their own lives, and therefore replace God. It was the emergence of this unwarranted self-sufficiency, this arrogance, which prompted disobedience. Put another way, the “Fall” began in Adam's mind long before he ate the forbidden fruit. As Augustine (1984) states it: “This then, is the original evil: man regards himself as his own light, and turns away from that light which would make man himself a light if he would set his heart on it. This evil came first in secret and the result was the other evil, which was committed in the open” (p. 573). Thus the external behavior grew out of an internal process of self-inflation.

This Augustinian understanding has been brilliantly re-stated in the theological anthropology of Reinhold Niebuhr (1964). Following Kierkegaard

(1980), Niebuhr argues that in the face of ontological anxiety, we place undue focus on ourselves. Further, in an attempt to establish security, we often do very destructive things to each other. While Niebuhr de-literalizes the story of the “Fall” and reads it as an allegory about each of us, he nevertheless retains the Augustinian focus on how pride and distrust of God are two sides of the same coin. Langdon Gilkey (1991), Niebuhr’s student and an outstanding theologian in his own right, put it this way: “The symbol of original sin does not explain our predicament by assigning to it a cause; it discloses that predicament by uncovering its hidden but destructive features and by revealing unsuspected new possibilities for renewal despite our apparent bondage” (p. 207). Gilkey argues that it is because we are destined for infinity, or built for a relationship with God, that we desire an infinity of possessions. This inordinate drive to possess, find security, and be the center of our own universe threatens others, ourselves, and the environment. A restless desire for ultimacy propels our selfish fixations. This attempt at self-mastery is doomed for failure because the self cannot provide its own ultimate meaning and security in life. Thus, a self-serving bias colors all that we do. Without centering our lives in God, our minds will be occupied with a series of idolatries which promise an ultimacy that they cannot deliver.

Social psychologists such as David Myers (1980, 1987) believe that the Augustinian emphasis on pride is confirmed through psychological research. This research points toward a self-serving bias in human thought. Put simply, this research suggests that human beings credit themselves when they do well and blame others when they fail. Self-evaluations are highly skewed in a favorable light. For instance, if students receive an “A” in a class, they usually believe they deserve it. However, if their grades are poor, they typically report that the test or the professor is unfair. Similarly, professors also tend to overrate their performances with as many as 94% claiming that they are above average (Myers, 1987). Our reason, then, is biased by this self-serving tendency. Contrary to much of pop psychology, we suffer much more from a superiority, rather than inferiority, complex. Myers’ (1987) observation is quite direct:

Note how radically at odds this conclusion is with the popular wisdom that most of us suffer from low self-esteem and high self-disparagement. We are, to be sure, strongly motivated

to maintain and enhance our self-esteem and we will welcome the message which helps us do that. But most of us are not groveling about with feelings that everyone else is better than we are. Preachers who deliver ego-boosting pep talks to audiences who are supposedly plagued with miserable self-images are preaching to a problem that seldom exists (p. 24).

While there are a few people who suffer from low self-esteem and show up at a psychotherapist’s office, these therapists should not over-generalize the problem and assert that it is typical of the larger population. For Myers, it is very bad science to proclaim that the under-valued self represents our primary problem. Thus, contemporary psychological research supports the traditional Augustinian position that pride or excessive self-regard is the primary culprit of the human condition.

### **Does Pride Tell the Whole Story?**

The question which must be addressed, however, is whether this excessive self-regard or pride provides a comprehensive picture of the human dilemma. Many clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychoanalysts do not think it does. Their objection, in part, concerns the very nature of the social psychology research. Social psychology “findings” come largely from questionnaires and interviews which reveal only the surface level of an individual’s self-perception. This flattering self-report may indeed be compensatory for much deeper feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. Perhaps those questioned tell researchers what they believe they should say and believe about themselves. Are we to always take these self-reports at face value? Psychotherapists could well argue that this research is quite shallow and inappropriate for probing a deeper self-understanding beneath the surface.

Thus, a key issue here is how seriously one takes the unconscious. Clinicians often hold a highly different view of the human condition than social psychologists because their methodology is so much different. In working with individuals in the privacy of psychotherapy, they believe they are allowed to get behind the surface defenses and arrogant claims to see the much more prominent world of insecurity and self-doubt. Certainly a history of narcissistic injury can appear on the surface as conceit. Responding on a quick questionnaire that one “likes oneself” certainly does not make it a reality. Most of us fre-

quently tell others that we are “doing fine” when in fact we might not be at all.

Evangelicals, as a general rule, have been heavily influenced by the Augustinian position concerning the primacy of pride. Further, many evangelicals have focused on the research findings of social psychologists and their emphasis on the self-serving bias (Myers, 1980, 1987; Moroney, 2001). Conversely, mainline and liberal branches of Christianity have seemed to pay more attention to the unconscious, as groups such as the American Association of Pastoral Counselors have been historically dominated by a psychodynamic perspective. At least in my estimation, evangelicals have produced better academic and research psychologists than they have clinicians. Further, the hard-hitting dialogue between psychology and theology has been more impressive in evangelical circles than anything mainline circles are producing. Don Browning and I (2004) have offered reasons as to why mainline and liberal pastoral psychology need to pay more attention to evangelical contributions. Surely it is time for greater ecumenical dialogue in psychology’s relationship with theology.

Again, the controversy concerning pride and low self-esteem is based on fundamentally different views of the psyche, with each favoring particular research methodologies. If the “primacy of pride” group is grounded in Augustine, perhaps the “primacy of low self-esteem group” is grounded, at least indirectly, in the theological perspective of Irenaeus. I will turn to this tradition in Christian thought and psychology before offering suggestions for reconciliation between these opposing camps.

### **From Irenaeus to Kohut**

Irenaeus (1981), probably the most significant theologian of the second century, presents a theological anthropology quite different from that of Augustine in the 4th and 5th centuries. Irenaeus separates the words “image” and “likeness” as he refers to the *imago Dei* within human creation. Image refers to bodily powers, freedom, and reason - qualities with which we are born. Image is automatically given, and hence, does not have to be cultivated. The word “likeness,” however, refers to a gradual process by which we take on more and more of God’s character. Irenaeus (1981) puts it this way:

A mother, for example, can provide perfect food for a child, but at that point he cannot digest

food which is suitable for someone older. Similarly, God himself certainly could have provided humanity with perfection from the beginning. Humanity, however, was immature and unable to lay hold of it (p. 23).

Thus, Adam was born carrying the image, but not the likeness, of God. Contrary to what Augustine would later argue, Adam was *not* born perfect because he could not have handled perfection. He needed to grow toward perfection. Because Adam was not born in a state of perfection, the “Fall” is not as traumatic for Irenaeus as for Augustine. Adam was immature, became tempted, and fell. By contrast, Augustine interprets the fall as completely inexcusable. In Adam’s pre-fallen state, he did not experience concupiscence or exaggerated desire. There was absolutely no reason for him to have eaten of the forbidden fruit. This made his disobedience all the more dastardly.

It is not too much of a stretch to say that Irenaeus takes a much more compassionate view of Adam’s plight than Augustine. While Augustine sees this horrendous act as so vile that it corrupted nature as well as humanity, Irenaeus connects it with humanity’s immaturity. Suffering is not so much the awful consequences of the first rebellion as the means by which we spiritually mature and advance. In fact, the punishment for the first sin can be interpreted as God’s compassion and guidance more than God’s wrath and condemnation. Suffering can be a means of growing up, of moving toward the character of God. In fact, by gradually moving into virtue, we will appreciate it more than if we simply had it from the beginning.

Many contemporary theologians from Schleiermacher (1928) to Hick (1968) have re-claimed Irenaeus’ view for a variety of reasons. One reason is that it is far more easily reconciled with evolution. The traditional, literal, Augustinian fall points toward a “golden era” of perfection and non-violence in nature which no longer seems likely. Rather than regressing from a higher state in our collective past, it seems that we are emerging to more complex life forms. While this evolutionary process hardly guarantees moral progress, it cannot be disputed that we have evolved from a lower, not higher, plane of existence.

Irenaeus offers a possible theological resource for the under-valued self thesis. From this perspective, human beings struggle psychologically with the

pains of growing up. We are often immature, self-doubting, and insecure. We may cover these feelings with compensatory external behavior, but this outward appearance does not discount the underlying anxiety.

Within this broad theological framework, one could place the work of Heinz Kohut (1971, 1977, 1984), whom many consider to be the most innovative psychoanalyst since Freud himself. Kohut spent most of his adult life focusing on the issue of the fragile, insecure self and its relationship to grandiosity, narcissism, and what Myers calls the self-serving bias. Kohut believed that he had uncovered the underlying structure of a self-disorder.

Freud took a negative view of narcissism, arguing essentially that it refers to excessive self-love, entitlement, and grandiosity – a condition which makes psychoanalysis impossible because one has not developed the appropriate relationship connections to fuel the transference process. Put simply, one loves oneself too much to care for anyone else. Kohut, on the other hand, understands this focus on the person's grandiosity as only half the problem. It is extremely important to also examine the vulnerability and insecurity beneath this grandiosity. The grandiosity, in fact, reveals an earlier narcissistic injury, a fixation at an earlier stage of development in which one's self was insufficiently acknowledged and affirmed. The *current* narcissistic craving represents an older need that was never met. The narcissist missed what every child needs – namely, the chance to be exhibitionistic and experience mirroring. At the age-appropriate time, the child did not receive the needed attention; now, at an inappropriate time, the adult still demands the attention missing from childhood.

In healthy development, the child's parents offer attentiveness, availability, and a type of emotional soothing which the child can later incorporate into his or her own self-care skills. Kohut frequently calls this ability to internalize the care-taking of the parents "transmuting internalizations." When healthy development does not occur, the child does not get an opportunity to be on stage and perform to an audience. The person then develops a "mirror hunger" as he or she enters adult relationships. David Augsburger (1996) describes this process very well:

If the person experiences the subject in the surrounding world as unavailable, nonempathic, and withholding understanding, the hungry self

develops voracious narcissistic needs. When the rejection is extreme, the compensation for it by the empty self is also extreme. The unfulfilled needs leave gaps in the formation of the self, missing pieces in the self-structure (p. 75).

Thus, the unmet mirroring needs of childhood can work to sabotage adult relationships because one expects the other to serve the function of an adoring audience. No parent does this perfectly, nor do they need to. In fact, the empathic failures of parents, *if* they have focused adequately on their children, will serve as a reality check and reminder for their children that the world will inevitably frustrate some of their needs. This is frequently termed "optimal frustration." Parental failures, however, must be accompanied by successes in meeting the young child's need for mirroring.

The other crucial aspect for the child's development is the ability to idealize the parent. By idealizing a parent, the child is allowed to feel strong as a result of an identification, a sort of vicarious mastery of life. The child is in dire need of feeling part of something *greater than him/herself*. For Kohut, it is very important that a parent accept the child's idealization. Again, the child will draw strength from it. Stated another way, the child needs to "borrow" the parent's strength of self in order to develop his or her own more robust sense of self. The parent's fallibility will eventually be realized as the child's sense of self becomes stronger.

When this process of mirroring and idealization does not go well, the narcissistic self tries desperately to substitute excessive attention and flattery for what is developmentally missing. As Augsburger (1996) puts it:

The self-centered behavior of the narcissist arises from too little self-esteem and self-valuation, not from too much. It is the impoverished self that hungrily grasps for attention and affirmation (no matter how smoothly presented or artfully expressed (p. 76).

The attempt to compensate for earlier deprivation is doomed for failure. While the adult narcissist may occasionally find someone willing to serve as adoring audience, most individuals will run out of patience rather quickly. Narcissists rarely have an awareness of the needs of others. They have very poor perspective-taking skills. Even in the process of psychotherapy, it can be difficult for clinicians to deal with this sense of being completely ignored as

the narcissist seeks more and more attention. Adult narcissists want narcissistic supplies, not relationships. Other people are used as instruments of attention.

In his work with patients, Kohut found that empathy, more than confrontational interpretation, became a key factor in allowing the patient to re-experience some of the earlier needs for mirroring and idealization. Kohut was hardly the first to suggest that effective psychotherapy offers a kind of corrective emotional experience for the injured self. Gradually, of course, the patient will realize that the analyst is not a perfect listener, omniscient, or always available. The patient internalizes some of what the analyst offers, thereby providing him or herself with the self-soothing important for mature development.

### **Extending Kohut to the General Population**

At this point, one might be most tempted to say: "Well, of course *some* individuals have a personality disorder known as narcissism, but this hardly means that the over-valued self thesis does not describe *most* people." In other words, one might argue that the particularities of narcissistic patients and their underlying insecurities may not be the norm. Instead, arrogance rules the day. Yet Kohut believes that we all struggle with narcissism to some degree. In fact, early narcissistic injuries are the primary contributors to most of our psychological problems. For Kohut, the Freudian drives of sex and aggression represent disintegrative by-products of narcissistic injury. Injuries to the self are deeper than sexual and aggressive conflicts (Kohut, 1996). Aggression, argues Kohut, is primarily a reaction to narcissistic injury. Similarly, sexual promiscuity points toward a wounded self beneath the external behavior.

Kohut would no doubt say to Myers and other supporters of the "over-valued self" model that what he sees with profound cases of narcissism is helpful in understanding the more general problem of narcissistic injury in the human community. An injured self is at the root of many relationship problems, including ones in which a person appears to have excessive self-regard. Further, simply chastising individuals for their self-centeredness and excessive self-regard helps no one. Rather than merely treating narcissistically-oriented individuals with judgmental contempt and seeing them as arrogant, Kohut pushes us to see the depleted self beneath all the posturing.

Thus Kohut, in his estimation of the human condition, differs quite drastically from the portrait presented by Myers and other social psychologists who emphasize the problems of the inflated self. No doubt Myers, Baumeister, and others would argue that Kohut's sample is far too limited and does not account for a wider range of people. And Kohut, as well as other psychotherapists, would respond that the research of social psychology is too shallow to account for a true picture of the human condition. Perhaps these clinicians would argue that the depth of their work means more than the results of questionnaires and surveys which only get at the surface of things. I doubt seriously that this argument will go away soon.

### **Can These Two Views Be Integrated?**

The differences between this "over-valued" and "under-valued" self argument came to an interesting head in the mid-fifties when Carl Rogers (1956) reviewed Reinhold Niebuhr's book, *The Self and the Dramas of History* (1955). Rogers noted Niebuhr's insistence that human beings tend to value themselves inordinately and hence engage in selfish acts. Rogers responded that his experience as a psychotherapist had shown him the exact opposite to be the case. Rather than thinking too highly of themselves, most persons struggled more with self-contempt than with too much self-love. For Rogers, only a superficial understanding of human nature would insist that our primary problem is pride.

Yet to many, Rogers' optimism about the human condition seemed to minimize the very serious issue of human destructiveness. While Thomas Oden (1966) made a very interesting case that one could argue for a notion of sin based on Rogers' concept of incongruence, many believed that Rogers, and humanistic psychology generally, held an excessively positive position concerning the human condition.

I have previously argued (Cooper, 2003), along with Don Browning (2004), that Rogers' primary optimism revolves around his notion that ontological anxiety is not potentially destructive. For Rogers, anxiety results strictly from threats imposed from our relationship with others. If we experienced supportive, nurturing, and empathic relationships, our anxiety will simply not be a threat to our well being. Anxiety is instead related to our experience of incongruence, an inward division brought about by trying to meet the "conditions of worth" in the

external world. There is nothing *within us* which tempts us to act destructively. We are born with a unidirectional motivation toward self-actualization. This biological tendency toward growth has no competitor.

What Rogers fails to recognize from his mentor Kierkegaard is that ontological anxiety - the anxiety which simply accompanies self-awareness - tempts us to act in destructive ways even if our support systems are strong. Human finitude produces a natural anxiety which tempts us to act in self-centered ways. Self-consciousness carries anxiety all on its own. As we reflect on our own precarious position and fragile existence, we are tempted to obtain a form of security at the expense of others. For humanistic psychology, we experience destructive anxiety only when something is done to us. To this extent, the humanistic slant of Rogers fails to embrace the existential understanding of anxiety of such colleagues as Rollo May (1977, 1989). More existentially-inclined thinkers, from Kierkegaard forward, argue that destructiveness is always a "live option" in our psyches because we cannot eliminate ontological anxiety.

### **Some Help from Karen Horney**

Karen Horney (1950) has argued that pride and self-contempt frequently co-exist in a dialectical fashion. Her position offers an interesting way around the impasse I have been describing.

First, Horney readily accepts the general psychoanalytic and Rogerian point that a great deal of insecurity and self-contempt frequently underlies grandiose exhibitionism. Healthy self-esteem and neurotic pride are quite different. Arrogance, or neurotic pride, is built on a fragile, shaky self which covers its sense of inadequacy with unrealistic claims. This neurotic pride is based on what Horney frequently calls the "idealized self" rather than the actual self. Put simply, it is a product of the imagination. Thus, Horney's general unpacking of the insecurity beneath arrogant displays is in line with typical neo-Freudian explorations of narcissism.

But Horney adds an additional insight. In the same way that insecurity pushes self-inflation, so self-inflation often propels low self-esteem. This may at first seem contradictory, but after more careful consideration, it offers an interesting portrait of the relationship between pride and self-contempt. When individuals experience low self-esteem because they are often "down on themselves," it fre-

quently points toward an unconscious pride system which tells them they should match their idealized self. If individuals are perpetually self-berating, they may well need to examine the implicit (and arrogant) assumptions with which they operate. Perhaps they expect themselves to be above the traffic of ordinary human problems, immune from the struggles of others. This at first might sound brutal, but an individual with chronic low self-esteem may need to be asked, "Just who do you think you are?" These individuals may well be working with an underlying pride system which demands that they be above the fray of personal struggle. The internal demand to not make mistakes *assumes that one is capable of living a perfect life*. While we normally take a sympathetic stance toward such rigid self-expectations, perhaps it is important to unpack the pride beneath these demands. This pride system may be based on an arrogant expectation of faultless living. So the point is this: *Just as insecurity may underlie displays of pride, so pride may underlie what appears to be low self-esteem*.

While clinicians may be quick to spot the sense of inadequacy beneath grandiosity, they may not be as quick to challenge the grandiosity beneath expressions of inadequacy. Yet the exposure of underlying grandiose claims may help a person become released from chronic self-criticism. A common example might be the individual who becomes deeply upset with the discovery that another person does not like him or her. A natural therapeutic approach might well be to help build the person's self-esteem so that he or she can tolerate this realization. Yet perhaps, on some occasions, the counselee should be invited to examine the somewhat arrogant assumption that everyone who knows them *should like them*. In other words, is not part of the reaction based on a subtle claim that one is universally "likeable?" This inflated claim may be driving part of the low self-esteem.

Thus, in Horney's view, pride and low self-esteem frequently travel together, one as foreground and the other as background.

### **Anxiety and Insecurity: Christian Resources**

In addition to Horney, there are Christian sources which may help with the bridging of the pride versus self-contempt debate. As we have seen, there is a strong tendency within the tradition to understand arrogance as the primary sin. However, other perspectives focus more on the insecurity beneath this pride. Kierkegaard (1980) argued that a fragile, in-

secure self often overwhelmed by anxiety is precisely what often drives human beings to act in self-inflated ways. While narcissists may appear to defy finitude and live from an exalted plane, the reality is that anxiety, and therefore insecurity, still exists. While Kierkegaard is careful to not identify this anxiety as sin, it is certainly the precondition for sin. We have the option of trusting our Source in the face of this anxiety or trying desperately to manage our own lives as we attempt to “conquer” our anxiety problem.

I earlier mentioned Niebuhr as a champion of the Augustinian position. Yet a close reading of Niebuhr reveals a very nuanced position on this pride versus self-contempt debate. Niebuhr wrote during a historical period full of egomaniacal dictatorship. However, Niebuhr is more psychologically sophisticated than we may realize at first. He knew very well that pride emerges from an underlying ontological anxiety, insecurity, and distrust in God. Niebuhr rigorously challenged obvious forms of pride because they are so destructive. Thus, he provides a very helpful survey of the pride of power, intelligence, morality, and self-righteousness (Niebuhr, 1964). Yet Niebuhr’s view of pride involves far more than an analysis of the boisterous self. Niebuhr also discusses – though he does not develop it very much – the sin of sensuality, which can involve the failure to be a self, the sin of self-abnegation. Here, self-inflation is not the primary problem. Instead, a sense of sloth or lack of self-assertiveness dominates. Even though this does not *look* like pride psychologically, it *is* a form of pride theologically. How so? Because one is attempting to resolve the anxiety problem by one’s own resources rather than trusting in God. When one places the “solution” to one’s life in one’s own hands, this always involves – at least theologically – pride. For Niebuhr, human beings simply cannot resolve ontological anxiety on their own. When they attempt to do so, whether it takes the form of pre-tentious self-flattery or debilitating self-contempt, it stems from a sense of self-mastery which is ultimately rooted in pride.

So again, the condition of pride or excessive self-regard must be seen as the “flip side” of a distrust in God. Without this basic trust, our anxiety pushes us to exaggerated self-preoccupation. Self-inflation often moves from feelings of inadequacy, emptiness, and incompleteness to compensatory feelings of self-righteousness, pride, and even contempt for others. The grandiose self is also the fragile self.

Some social psychologists (Baumeister, 1997) try to address this issue by distinguishing two types of self-esteem: those with a strong internal picture of themselves and those with a *high but fragile* image of themselves. Yet surely any clinician will argue that the latter is not genuine self-esteem at all. In fact, calling it “self-esteem” is highly misleading. Again, this is what Horney has called neurotic pride rather than genuine self-confidence or self-esteem.

## Conclusion

Perhaps the best resolution to the pride versus self-contempt debate is to see that these two polarities often travel together as figure and ground. Surely much insecurity fuels grandiose claims of individuals trying desperately to hide their vulnerability. But by the same token, some of what at first appears to be low self-esteem may be propelled by a pride system driven by the idealized self – a portrait which is above the traffic of human finitude as it assumes a God-like status. Knowing when to support a person’s low self-esteem and when to challenge the inflated self is a very delicate clinical matter. However, it is helpful to realize that these two tendencies do not exclude each other.

Just as theological anthropology can benefit from the voices of *both* Augustine and Irenaeus, so a psychological portrait of the human condition needs to include the insights of *both* Kohut’s injured self and social psychology’s self-serving bias. Pride and low self-esteem usually co-exist. While one is typically in the foreground, the other is in the background.

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# Beliefs about Sin: Adaptive Implications in Relationships with Religious Orientation, Self-Esteem, and Measures of the Narcissistic, Depressed, and Anxious Self

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*In contrast to at least some secular therapeutic frameworks, Christian traditions suggest that an awareness of sin should promote adjustment. Preliminary versions of Beliefs about Sin Scales dealing with Self-Improvement, Healthy Humility, Perfectionism Avoidance, and Self-Reflective Functioning were developed and administered to an overwhelmingly Christian sample of undergraduates (N = 510). All four scales correlated positively with an Intrinsic and negatively with an Extrinsic Religious Orientation, suggesting that they reflected sincere religious commitments. They also were associated with greater Self-Esteem and lower Narcissism, Depression, and Anxiety. Multiple regressions revealed that Self-Improvement supplemented Religious Orientation in predicting mental health while simultaneously reversing the negative potentials of Healthy Humility. Feminist theorists sometimes suggest that Beliefs about Sin are adaptive for men, but maladaptive for women. Correlations for the Beliefs about Sin Scales, nevertheless, were similar for the two genders. This study supported the Christian assumption that Beliefs about Sin can have adaptive psychological implications.*

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Beliefs in the reality of sin present a clear challenge in all efforts to integrate traditional Christian commitments with the theory and practice of contemporary psychology (Watson, Morris, & Hood, 1988a, 1988b). The often-extreme and general psychotherapeutic rejection of sin was perhaps best illustrated in the claim of Ellis (1962) that the “concept of sin is the direct and indirect cause of virtually all neurotic disturbance” (p. 146). This negative assessment emerged from his broader theoretical assumption that “shoulds” directed against the self and others operate as pathogenic irrationalities that cause emotionally distressing interpretations of life experiences. “People largely disturb themselves,” Ellis (1980) argued, “by believing strongly in absolutistic shoulds, oughts, and musts, and most people who dogmatically believe in some religion believe in these health-sabotaging beliefs” (p. 637).

Christian psychologists often responded to such criticisms by emphasizing “dogma.” Adams (1970) articulated an early rejection of a growing psychotherapeutic influence within the Church when “he taught that genuine Christian counseling is based

solely on the Bible and focused on sin (the cause of most psychological problems)” (Johnson & Jones, 2000, p. 36). Subsequent Christian commentators similarly and consistently emphasized the centrality of sin in producing psychological and behavioral dysfunctions (e.g., Vitz, 1977; Carter & Narramore, 1979; Kilpatrick, 1983; Roberts, 1993; Plantinga, 1997). The overall tendency was to see “sin as the rational diagnosis and Christ as the rational cure” (Powlison, 2000, p. 210).

Christian and psychological perspectives on sin, therefore, can sometimes seem so polarized that meaningful integration appears to be impossible. Recently, however, Cooper (2003) offered an analysis of the question that sought to defend traditional beliefs about sin while simultaneously remaining sensitive to the concerns of prominent psychological theorists. Three aspects of his detailed and extensive arguments are most relevant to the present project.

First, at a basic descriptive level, Cooper (2003) demonstrates how contrasting perspectives on sin can be organized along a single continuum dealing with the self. Anchoring the orthodox pole of this con-

tinuum is the Augustinian emphasis of Reinhold Niebuhr on the centrality of pride in sin. Humanity necessarily confronts the tension of being both nature and spirit. The result is an anxiety that “sets us up for two options: (a) trust in God or (b) trust in self” (Cooper, p. 36). Sin results when trust is placed in the self, and for Niebuhr, “Distrust in God and human pride are always two parts of a single process” (Cooper, p. 63). Humanistic psychologists like Carl Rogers define the opposite pole when they argue that too little rather than too much trust in the self is the fundamental human problem (Cooper, p. 98). Intermediate between these extremes is the feminist theological position that excessive pride in the self is more the problem of men, whereas too little trust in the self is the “sin” of women (Cooper, pp. 73-87).

Second, Cooper (2003) accepts the psychotherapeutic assertion that all psychological disturbances reflect the functioning of an enfeebled self. This diagnosis is appropriate even in the case of narcissism in which symptoms of arrogance and a sense of entitlement seem most obviously related to Augustinian pride. “Clinicians treating narcissism have convincingly pointed toward the fragile, vulnerable self beneath the attempts at exaltation.” Such observations clearly support the humanistic claim that “insecurity underlies pride” (Cooper, p. 146).

Third, however, Cooper (2003) emphasizes how psychologists have usually failed to understand how pride also underlies insecurity. Again, Niebuhrian pride cannot be equated with arrogance, but rather with trust in the self rather than in God. If the fundamental ontological condition of the self is anxiety, then the self can find no trustworthy foundations within itself upon which to establish secure functioning. The narcissistic self masks its insecurity with arrogance. The more obviously vulnerable self manifests its insecurity in anxiety, depression, and other more straightforward symptoms of fragility. Relying upon the work of Karen Horney, Cooper explains how the functioning of the manifestly vulnerable self rests upon the prideful self-establishment of an idealized self as its goal. Inevitable failures to achieve the ideals associated with this “pride system” lead to the more blatant symptoms of insecurity (Cooper, pp. 112-147). The depleted self of depression and anxiety is as trapped within the sin of pride as the arrogant self of narcissism.

In summary, Cooper (2003) describes a continuum of positions on the self that is defined by under-

standings of sinful Augustinian pride at one pole and of humanistic self-actualization at the other. Symptoms of the narcissistic self can seem to support the Christian emphasis on pride, whereas problems of the manifestly vulnerable self seem to confirm the humanistic perspective. But, this is only the superficial situation. Humanistic theorists are quite right to emphasize the latent insecurity of even the narcissistic self, but at the same time, they fail to understand how the deeper dynamics of sin underlie all form of self-vulnerability. The pride of sin is not arrogance, but rather trust in the self rather than in God. This is as true of the depressed and anxious self, as it is of the narcissistic self.

Within a Christian framework, therefore, the ontological condition of the self is such that it can never save itself. Salvation must come from outside. The unconditional positive regard of a humanistic therapist may serve as a secularized form of grace that helps heal a patient’s self (Cooper, 2003, p. 197). Yet, the self of the therapist is as ontologically vulnerable as that of the patient. In the absence of a religious solution to the problem of sin, the self-acceptance of the therapist must rest upon the acceptance of some other human self, which has the very same ontological vulnerabilities. A purely humanistic response to the problem of sin is thus trapped within a near infinite regress of acceptance by ontologically vulnerable other selves. A securely functioning self ultimately requires awareness of sin. Beliefs about sin are essential in reminding the self to place trust, not in itself or in some other ontologically vulnerable self, but rather in the grace of God.

### *Present Study*

Cooper’s (2003) arguments clearly suggest that sincere Christian beliefs about sin should be associated with adjustment. This is true because such beliefs should work against the pride that underlies all forms of insecure self-functioning. Indeed, the positive mental health implications of these beliefs should be as evident for the anxiety and depression of the manifestly vulnerable self as for the narcissism of the blatantly prideful self. Moreover, such findings should be as obvious for women as for men, since pride theoretically is central to all forms of disturbed psychological functioning regardless of whether the symptoms might be more common in one gender or another.

The present project sought to develop at least

preliminary scales that would make it possible to test these hypotheses. Previous data have supported the idea that beliefs about sin can predict mental health, but these results were based on instruments that had clear psychometric and conceptual limitations (e.g., Watson et al., 1988a, b). Measures that operationalized more detailed and specific Beliefs about Sin were an obvious need.

Cooper (2003), for example, argues that healthy Self-Esteem occurs when the self “pursues goals in harmony with one’s true being and potential” and “accepts responsibility for oneself” (p. 142). Implied in these traits are Beliefs about Sin that motivate *Self-Improvement*. Cooper further claims, “If pride is the sin, then humility is the cure” (p. 74.) *Healthy Humility* based upon Beliefs about Sin would, therefore, seem to be centrally important. Healthy Self-Esteem also results when the self “recognizes and accepts moral limitations and fallibility,” “acknowledges and accepts personal faults and liabilities without losing self-respect and self-love,” and “recognizes the activities of one’s personal ‘dark side’” (Cooper, p. 142). Beliefs about Sin that foster *Perfectionism Avoidance* should, consequently, have adaptive implications. Moreover, healthy Self-Esteem “is based upon a realistic assessment of oneself” (Cooper, p. 142), an observation suggesting the positive impact of Beliefs about Sin that encourage *Self-Reflective Functioning*.

Again, the hypothesis was that *sincere* Beliefs about Sin would predict adjustment. The assumption was not that Beliefs about Sin would have a psychological efficacy among nonbelievers, or that all “believers” would necessarily be “sincere.” Only individuals who had at least a moderate interest in religion, consequently, served as the research participants. Attempts were made to assess the sincerity of religious commitments by using the Allport and Ross (1967) Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scales. Much research has supported the conclusion that individuals scoring high on the Intrinsic Scale sincerely try to live their religion, whereas those with high Extrinsic scores use their religion as a means to sometimes selfish ends (Donahue, 1985). Individuals with an Extrinsic faith would thus seem more likely to place faith in their self rather than in God, whereas the opposite should be true of an Intrinsic believer. In other words, adaptive Beliefs about Sin should correlate positively with the Intrinsic and negatively with the Extrinsic Scale.

At the same time, the assumption was that the

specific *content* of Beliefs about Sin would be psychologically efficacious among believers. Hence, linkages of Beliefs about Sin Scales with mental health should not be fully mediated by general dimensions of religious commitment. This more specifically meant that Beliefs about Sin should continue to predict psychological adjustment in the second step of multiple regressions after the Allport and Ross Scales had been entered in on the first step. In other words, the Beliefs about Sin Scales should display incremental validity.

In short, preliminary Self-Improvement, Healthy Humility, Perfectionism Avoidance, and Self-Reflective Functioning Beliefs about Sin Scales were created and then correlated with the Allport and Ross (1967) scales and with mental health as measured by Self-Esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), Narcissism (Margolis & Thomas, 1980), and Depression and Anxiety (Costello & Comrey, 1967) Scales. Four basic hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: Beliefs about Sin Scales would correlate positively with the Intrinsic and negatively with the Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scales.

Hypothesis 2: Beliefs about Sin Scales would correlate positively with Self-Esteem and negatively with Narcissism, Depression, and Anxiety.

Hypothesis 3: Beliefs about Sin Scales would supplement Religious Orientation Scales in predicting mental health (i.e., would display incremental validity).

Hypothesis 4: Beliefs about Sin Scales would predict mental health in women as well as in men.

## Method

### *Participants*

Research participants were 207 male and 303 female undergraduate volunteers. All received extra credit in an Introductory Psychology course in return for their contributions to this project. Average age was 19.5 years (SD = 3.2). These students were retained from a larger sample of 588 because they expressed at least a moderate interest in religion. Participants were 68.4% Caucasian, 27.6% African-American, 1.2% Hispanic, and 2.8% various other racial groups. Religious affiliations were 44.9% Baptist, 11.8% Methodist, 8.0% Presbyterian, 6.7% Catholic, 5.5% Church of Christ, 4.1% Church of God, and 19.0% various other, mostly Protestant forms of commitment.

**Table 1***Correlations among and Internal Reliabilities and Descriptive Statistics for Measures Beliefs about Sin (N = 510)*

Measures	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Self-Improvement	-	.51***	.71***	.79***
2. Perfectionism Avoidance		-	.61***	.56***
3. Healthy Humility			-	.74***
4. Self-Reflective Functioning				-
<b>Scale Statistics</b>				
Internal Reliability ( $\alpha$ )	.75	.67	.75	.76
Mean	3.08	2.70	2.89	2.97
Standard Deviation	0.56	0.62	0.61	0.59

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

All measures were included in a single questionnaire. The first page obtained background information involving age, gender, race, and religious affiliation. Also presented on this page was a question for assessing religious interest, "How interested are you in religion?" Responses ranged from "not at all interested" (0) to "extremely interested" (9).

Allport and Ross (1967) Scales then appeared in first section of the booklet. The 9-item Intrinsic and 11-item Extrinsic Scales were administered and scored along a 1-to-5 scale as defined by standard procedures (Robinson & Shaver, 1973).

The second section included 40 potential Beliefs about Sin items, with 7 to 12 statements per scale. Reverse as well as positively scored statements were included. Responding occurred along a "strongly disagree" (0) to "strongly agree" (4) Likert scale.

Subsequent sections contained the 24-item Margolis and Thomas (1980) Narcissism, the 10-item Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem, and the Costello and Comrey (1967) Depression and Anxiety Scales, which contained 14 and 9 items, respectively. The Margolis and Thomas Scale used narcissistic (1) and non-narcissistic (0) forced-choice options to assess a clearly maladaptive form of narcissism (Soyer, Rovencor, Kopelman, Mullins, & Watson, 2001). As in a previous investigation (Ghorbani, Watson, Krauss, Bing, & Davison, 2004), one item displaying a negative item-to-total correlation was eliminated to maximize internal reliability. A 4-point "strongly disagree" (0) to "strongly agree" (3) response format was employed with the Self-Esteem Scale. The Costello

and Comrey measures used the same Likert scale as the Beliefs about Sin items. All of these measures have proven to be valid in previous studies examining religious issues (e.g., Watson, Morris, & Hood, 1987; Watson et al., 1988b; Ghorbani et al., 2004).

*Procedure*

Questionnaire booklets were administered in large group settings. Participants entered responses to all items on standardized answer sheets, which subsequently were read by optical scanning equipment into a computer data file.

The first step of the data analysis involved the identification of individuals with sufficiently strong religious interests to qualify for inclusion in the final sample. Previous studies have established that ratings of four or higher on the 10-point rating scale serve as a useful criterion for this purpose (e.g., Batson & Gray, 1981).

Next, items were chosen for the preliminary Beliefs about Sin Scales. The goal was to create four equal-sized measures (1.) that displayed acceptable internal reliabilities for research purposes, (2.) that controlled for acquiescence response sets, and (3.) that were usefully short. Statements expressing content consistent with the meaning of a scale were included in a single internal reliability analysis. Seven-item scales were constructed based upon the pattern of item-to-total correlations observed across these analyses. Three or four statements in each measure were reverse-scored, with the remainder directly expressing the relevant Beliefs about Sin: *Self-Improvement*, e.g., "beliefs about sin help me see my faults

**Table 2**

*Correlations of Beliefs about Sin with Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious Orientations and with Measures of Psychological Adjustment (N = 510)<sup>1</sup>*

Measures	$\alpha$	M	SD	SI	PA	HH	SRF
Intrinsic	.84	3.62	0.81	.55***	.30***	.48***	.53***
Extrinsic	.63	2.53	0.61	-.20***	-.36***	-.20***	-.32***
Self-Esteem	.87	2.17	0.53	.24***	.10*	.10*	.19***
Narcissism	.71	0.23	0.15	-.31***	-.25***	-.25***	-.31***
Depression	.92	0.68	0.60	-.40***	-.26***	-.31***	-.37***
Anxiety	.79	1.60	0.71	-.14**	-.06	-.03	-.13**

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

<sup>1</sup>Beliefs about Sin include Self-Improvement (SI), Perfectionism Avoidance (PA), Healthy Humility (HH), and Self-Reflective Functioning (SRF) Scales

so I can correct them and become a better person;" *Perfectionism Avoidance*, e.g., "my beliefs about sin free me from an unhealthy and hopeless attempt to be perfect;" *Healthy Humility*, e.g., "my awareness of sin helps me maintain an appropriate humility;" and *Self-Reflective Functioning*, e.g., "my understanding of sin helps me achieve true self-insight." Full scales appear in the appendix.

All instruments were scored in terms of the average response per item. Correlations among measures were examined first and followed by the multiple regression procedures. Again, Allport and Ross Scales were used in the first step of these multiple regressions to predict each measure of mental health, and then all four Beliefs about Sin Scales were entered simultaneously into the second step. Finally, Beliefs about Sin correlations were examined separately for men and for women. Gender differences in all variables were analyzed as well.

## Results

Beliefs about Sin Scales displayed robust positive correlations with each other (see Table 1). Internal reliabilities ranged from .67 for Perfectionism Avoidance to .76 for Self-Reflective Functioning. As Table 2 makes clear, each Belief about Sin Scale did, as expected, predict higher levels of an Intrinsic Religious Orientation and Self-Esteem and lower levels of an Extrinsic Religious Orientation, Narcissism, and Depression. Self-Improvement and Self-Reflective Functioning also displayed negative relationships with Anxiety.

In the first step of the multiple regression procedures, Allport and Ross Scales explained significant amounts of variance in all four mental health measures. Multiple  $R^2$  values ranged from .02 for Anxiety to .13 for Narcissism [ $F_s(2/507) > 3.84, ps < .05$ ]. The Intrinsic Scale was associated with greater Self-Esteem ( $\beta = .15$ ), lower Narcissism ( $\beta = -.29$ ), and lower Depression ( $\beta = -.29, ps < .01$ ). The Extrinsic Scale predicted higher levels of Narcissism ( $\beta = .14, p < .05$ ). Beliefs about Sin Scales increased the variance explained in the second step of each analysis.  $\Delta R^2$  values ranged from .03 for Anxiety to .08 for Depression [ $F_s(4/503) > 3.58, ps < .01$ ]. Self-Improvement clearly exhibited adaptive implications in its linkages with Self-Esteem ( $\beta = .28$ ), Depression ( $\beta = -.27$ ), and Anxiety ( $\beta = -.18, ps < .05$ ). Associations with lower Self-Esteem ( $\beta = -.19$ ) and greater Anxiety ( $\beta = .20, ps < .01$ ) unexpectedly identified Healthy Humility as a predictor of maladjustment. No other significant effects were observed in these analyses.

In zero-order correlations, Healthy Humility was a correlate of adjustment. In multiple regressions, the transformation of this measure into a predictor of maladjustment could have been explained by variance associated with Religious Orientation on the first step or with the other Beliefs about Sin on the second step. A second set of multiple regressions clarified this surprising result by using only the Beliefs about Sin Scales to predict mental health. In these analyses, Self-Improvement was associated with greater Self-Esteem ( $\beta = .30$ ) and lower Narcis-

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics for and Correlations of Beliefs about Sin with Religious Orientation and Psychological Adjustment in Men (N=207) and Women (N=303)<sup>1</sup>*

Measures	M	SD	SI	PA	HH	SRF
<b>Men</b>						
Intrinsic	3.47	0.87	.59***	.31***	.48***	.58***
Extrinsic	2.48	0.60	-.19**	-.36***	-.15*	-.27***
Self-Esteem	2.16	0.57	.26***	.15*	.20**	.22**
Narcissism	0.20	0.14	-.35***	-.32***	-.33***	-.33***
Depression	0.76	0.65	-.45***	-.28***	-.42***	-.41***
Anxiety	1.35	0.67	-.13	-.02	-.04	-.07
<b>Women</b>						
Intrinsic	3.73	0.75	.50***	.29***	.47***	.47***
Extrinsic	2.56	0.62	-.24***	-.37***	-.24***	-.37***
Self-Esteem	2.19	0.51	.21***	.06	.00	.15**
Narcissism	0.18	0.14	-.26***	-.19**	-.20**	-.28***
Depression	0.63	0.55	-.35***	-.24***	-.18**	-.31***
Anxiety	1.76	0.70	-.23***	-.10	-.07	-.23***
<b>Beliefs about Sin Scales Descriptive Statistics</b>						
Male	Mean		3.00	2.68	2.90	2.82
	Standard Deviation		0.63	0.62	0.64	0.66
Female	Mean		3.13	2.72	3.02	2.93
	Standard Deviation		0.51	0.61	0.56	0.56

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

Sub-scales of Full Scale (FS) include Self-Improvement (SI), Perfectionism Avoidance (PA), Healthy Humility (HH), and Self-Reflective Functioning (SRF).

sism ( $\beta = -.17$ ), Depression ( $\beta = -.31$ ), and Anxiety ( $\beta = -.17$ ). Healthy Humility once again displayed an inverse relationship with Self-Esteem ( $\beta = -.18$ ) and a direct linkage with Anxiety ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $ps < .05$ ). No other significant outcomes were observed.

Table 3 reviews the correlational data for men and women separately. The differences between the two genders were minor. Perfectionism Avoidance and Healthy Humility were associated with greater Self-Esteem in men only, whereas Self-Improvement and Self-Reflective Functioning correlated negatively with Anxiety in women only. Only the relationships of Healthy Humility with Self-Esteem ( $z = 2.23$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and with Depression ( $z = -2.93$ ,  $p < .01$ ) proved to be significantly stronger in one gender than another, and in each instance, men displayed the more robust association. Results of a MANOVA revealed overall gender differences in the scales used in this project [Wilkes Lambda,  $F(10/499) = 10.52$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. One-way ANOVAs demonstrated that men

scored higher on Depression, but women were higher on the Intrinsic Religious Orientation, Anxiety, Self-Improvement, Healthy Humility, and Self-Reflective Functioning Scales [ $F_s(1/508) > 4.42$ ,  $ps < .05$ ].

## Discussion

At least some secular therapeutic frameworks identify belief in sin as a cause of psychopathology (Watson et al., 1988a, b). Traditional Christian perspectives suggest instead that an awareness of sin is essential in avoiding the psychological disturbances of a pride that places faith in the self rather than in God (Cooper, 2003). The present study tested the Christian hypothesis by offering a preliminary operationalization of four Beliefs about Sin. All four scales displayed relationships that were direct with an Intrinsic and inverse with an Extrinsic Religious Orientation, and thus reflected sincere forms of commitment in this overwhelmingly Christian sample. These measures also correlated positively with Self-Esteem and nega-

tively with Narcissism and Depression, and two of the four predicted lower levels of Anxiety. Evidence, therefore, supported the Christian hypothesis. Beliefs about Sin Scales did in fact have adaptive implications.

Self-Improvement proved to be a centrally important Belief about Sin. Like Self-Reflective Functioning, this scale correlated in the expected direction with all four indices of personality adjustment. In multiple regressions, Self-Improvement was the only Belief about Sin to supplement Religious Orientation in predicting greater mental health. Multiple regressions also suggested that Self-Improvement explained the adaptive implications of Healthy Humility. Healthy Humility was associated with adjustment in correlations, but maladjustment in multiple regressions. Supplementary analyses demonstrated that this transformation occurred even when the Religious Orientation Scales were not entered in on the first step of multiple regressions. Healthy Humility, therefore, appeared to be “healthy” only when framed within a dedication to Self-Improvement as a personal goal.

Findings that Healthy Humility could predict maladjustment offered at least some support for the secular therapeutic assertion that Beliefs about Sin promote psychopathology. Again, this particular Belief about Sin was connected with poorer mental health even when Religious Orientation Scales were not included in the multiple regressions. Healthy Humility, therefore, was associated with diminished psychological functioning, even among those who were sincere in their religious motivations. In addition, this project operationalized only some possible Beliefs about Sin. Other beliefs relevant to sin must surely predict maladjustment, even in correlational data (e.g., McConahay & Hough, 1973). Any conclusion that Beliefs about Sin can have positive mental health implications, therefore, cannot mean that such beliefs have absolutely no negative potentials.

Complexities in Healthy Humility data may be especially useful in illustrating how issues at the interface of psychology and religion probably cannot be resolved through easy appeal to brute empirical “facts.” Research findings will likely operate within the ideological surrounds of different interpretative frameworks (Watson, 1993, 1994, 2004, 2006). Within the faith of a Christian ideological surround, solutions to the potential liabilities of Healthy Humility and of all other Beliefs about Sin presumably

would require an internalization of missing psychological structures of orthodox belief. Those structures would then transform potential maladjustment into adjustment. The Christian therapist, for example, might promote development of Self-Improvement in clients who are struggling with a sense of guilt based upon Beliefs about Sin.

Within a secular ideological surround, however, evidence that Christian Beliefs about Sin can have positive mental health implications would not dictate “conversion” to a religious worldview. Instead, the “faith” of a secular psychology would likely reside in a confidence that additional research would document how even apparently healthy Beliefs about Sin have liabilities and how even clearly positive consequences are fully explicable in naturalistic rather than in “supernaturalistic” terms. In addition, it would probably be quite easy to demonstrate how purely secular therapeutic interventions could alleviate problems sometimes associated with Beliefs about Sin.

Probable failure of brute “facts” to fully resolve ideological conflicts in no way undermines the importance of research. Indeed, the ideological nature of contemporary social life may paradoxically make empirical research more, rather than less important. Within an increasingly pluralistic world, the viability of any particular community of belief presumably becomes stronger to the extent that it can express itself in some preferably nonviolent “language” that has credibility across communities. In addition, a community must cope with constantly changing cultural circumstances by using methods that help deepen its own current self-understandings and by discovering new ways to articulate resources that have yet to be actualized within its traditions. Empirical methods have a clear ability to accomplish these goals, especially in light of the influential role of rational and scientific “languages” in the world today. The suggestion, therefore, is that integrative, though necessarily ideological empirical research could make an invaluable contribution to the viability of Christian communities.

Arguments framed within a feminist ideological surround sometimes suggest that the pride of sin is a problem of men, whereas women struggle with a fragile self that would be further weakened by orthodox Beliefs about Sin. Self-assertion rather than awareness of the sinful self is theoretically what women really need (Cooper, 2003, pp. 73-86). Data

from the present project challenged this perspective in two ways.

First, feminist arguments can seem to imply that fundamental problems of the self are fully obvious at the level of manifest symptoms. The pride of sin is presumably apparent in the arrogance of Narcissism, and men can in fact display higher levels of Narcissism (e.g., Watson & Biderman, 1994). A maladjusted lack of pride in women is supposedly clear in the Depression and Anxiety of their fragile self, and women in the present sample did indeed self-report greater Anxiety. The further suggestion is that awareness of sin should help heal the masculine pride of Narcissism, but worsen the fragility of women by aggravating the inadequate “self-pride” that underlies their stronger tendencies toward Depression and Anxiety.

In this study, however, men were not significantly higher in Narcissism, and they also exhibited greater Depression. Even more importantly, Beliefs about Sin correlated negatively with manifestations of *both* the prideful and the fragile self. Such data questioned the critical interpretative significance of at least these particular manifest symptoms. Within the religious self, the dynamics of sin apparently operate at a deeper level that is as relevant to Depression and Anxiety as to Narcissism. Correlational data further revealed that those deeper dynamics applied to healthy Self-Esteem as well.

Second, and more importantly, feminist perspectives on the sinful self can seem to imply that Beliefs about Sin should operate differently in the two genders, promoting adjustment in men and maladjustment in women. Gender-specific correlations yielded no noteworthy support for this idea. Observations that Healthy Humility correlated more robustly with greater Self-Esteem and lower Depression in men did perhaps suggest that arrogance exerted a more influential role in male self-functioning. A similar interpretation also could explain why Perfectionism Avoidance and Healthy Humility predicted greater Self-Esteem only in men. However, only women exhibited significant relationships of Beliefs about Sin with lower Anxiety. For the vast majority of correlations, gender differences were not observed, and the few significant contrasts that did appear involved relatively minor differences in degree. In short, Beliefs about Sin were associated with adjustment in both women and men.

To question specific interpretations of sin in

no way represents a fundamental challenge to the overall feminist ideological surround, nor even to its associated assumptions about the self. Again, the feminist argument is that the fundamental problem of women is insufficient self-assertion. In some ways, multiple regression data supported this idea by demonstrating the importance of Self-Improvement in overcoming the potential liabilities of Healthy Humility. Self-Improvement was associated with such self-reports as, “accepting the reality of my own sinfulness has given me a positive sense of self-control” and “when I discover that I have sinned, I feel motivated to make positive changes in my life.” Such beliefs imply a form of self-assertion. Feminist arguments, therefore, may be correct in emphasizing the role of self-assertion (also see, Capps, 1993). The present data do, however, suggest three caveats. First, Beliefs about Sin are not incompatible with at least certain forms of self-assertion. Second, the dynamics of sin and self-assertion apparently operate more deeply than at the level of manifest symptoms. And finally, those dynamics are as relevant to men as to women.

Numerous limitations, of course, characterized this study. First, only certain Beliefs about Sin were operationalized. Many additional scales may need to be developed before the beneficial and problematic implications of Beliefs about Sin can be fully understood.

Second, the four new scales had internal reliabilities that were roughly acceptable for research purposes, but improvements seemed possible. An unreported, preliminary factor analysis also revealed that these scales did achieve the ideal of describing four discrete dimensions of Beliefs about Sin. A psychometric strengthening of these scales, therefore, appears to be a possible goal for future research. Indeed, this study examined these four Beliefs about Sin Scales as only preliminary instruments useful in offering an initial assessment of theoretically important issues. After additional preliminary assessments, more definitive final scales may need to be constructed.

Third, only selected measures of mental health were examined. Negative implications of even these beliefs might become obvious when other measures of adjustment are examined.

Fourth, university students served as the research participants. Beliefs about Sin might operate differently in clinical samples.

Finally, the conclusion that Beliefs about Sin promote adjustment was based on correlational data, and of course, correlation does not mean causation. Clinical interventions that promoted Self-Improvement as the independent variable in order to remove disturbed Christian self-functioning as the dependent variable, therefore, could be especially useful. In short, these and numerous other potential limitations suggest the importance of additional research.

In conclusion, the present data offered clear support for assumptions framed within a Christian ideological surround about the deeper dynamics of sin (Cooper, 2003). In response to anxieties associated with its ontological vulnerabilities, the self must save itself by losing itself. The self, in other words, must turn away from a prideful faith in itself and toward a saving faith in God. Such notions will at least initially make little or no sense within secular ideological surrounds. For Christian scholars, however, empirical research could be useful in expressing such beliefs in a “language” that would be more understandable within other ideological frameworks. More importantly, however, such research could help the Christian community discover new, but faithful ways to articulate and actualize its traditional understandings of sin and the self.

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## Appendix

Listed below are the positively and the reverse-scored (-) items from the four scales measuring Beliefs about Sin. For positively scored items, responses ranged from "strongly disagree" (0) to "strongly agree" (4).

### Self-Improvement

- My beliefs about sin have helped me work on my weaknesses.
- If you believe in sin, you will never think you can really improve yourself. (-)
- When I discover that I have sinned, I feel motivated to make positive changes in my life.
- Beliefs about sin help me see my faults so I can correct them and become a better person.
- I refuse to believe in sin because I don't need to change anything about myself. (-)
- Belief in sin promotes pessimism and defeats all efforts to make positive changes in life. (-)
- Accepting the reality of my own sinfulness has given me a positive sense of self-control.

### Perfectionism Avoidance

- People who believe in sin are just avoiding their responsibility to achieve perfection. (-)
- Beliefs about sin have harmed our ability to realize our destined perfection. (-)
- Believing in sin is just an excuse for avoiding the very highest standards of excellence. (-)
- By admitting my sinful nature, I have been able to accept my imperfectability as a fact of life.
- The purpose of believing in sin is to achieve perfection. (-)
- Knowledge of my personal sinfulness has lifted the burden from my shoulders of trying to be perfect.
- My beliefs about sin free me from an unhealthy and hopeless attempt to be perfect.

### Healthy Humility

- Knowing that I am sinful helps keep me from being arrogant.
- My awareness of sin helps me maintain an appropriate humility.
- I reject all belief in sin because I know I am good. (-)
- My beliefs about sin have helped liberate me from prejudice and insensitivity towards others.
- My understanding that all human beings are sinful reminds me that I am not really better than anyone else.
- If I allowed myself to believe in sin, I would never achieve the superiority I have over other people. (-)
- People who believe in sin are just insecure and lack

the strength to rise above others. (-)

### Self-Reflective Functioning

People who believe in sin needlessly think too much about their own lives. (-)

Believing in sin causes you to think too much and enjoy too little. (-)

My beliefs in sin encourage me to be more self-aware.

My understanding of sin helps me achieve true self-insight.

My beliefs about sin have made it possible for me to be more objective about myself.

If you believe in sin, you think too much when actually all you need to do is to live spontaneously. (-)

I can't worry about sin because I believe you need to just live and have fun. (-)

# Interview with James K. A. Smith.: Radical Orthodoxy, Secularity, and the “Roots” of a Christian Psychology

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*Christian psychologists work within an increasingly dynamic cultural environment. James K. A. Smith (JKAS), a philosopher on the faculty of Calvin College, has recently analyzed two influences within the contemporary intellectual environment that seem to present Christian psychologists with new challenges and opportunities, postmodernism (Smith, 2006) and Radical Orthodoxy (Smith, 2004). Dr. Smith discusses those influences in an interview initiated by Paul J. Watson (PJW), one of the Executive Co-Editors of Edification.*

**PJW:** My perhaps mistaken assumption is that Radical Orthodoxy has much to say in opposition to the dominant contemporary social scientific perspective in psychology, which I would “caricature” (perhaps somewhat unfairly) in the following way: Most psychologists operate within secular frameworks that largely dominate the contemporary social sciences. Religion in general and Christianity in particular are dismissed as wholly irrelevant and perhaps detrimental to the scientific progress that naturalistic approaches to behavior and social life now make possible. As Freud (1927/1961) once said, nothing can withstand the “reason and experience of science.” Everything else is an “illusion.” The time of religion is past. No new philosophical developments can challenge the triumph of secular rationality.

**JKAS:** What’s also interesting is the way in which “Christian psychologists” adopt the same assumptions regarding their science. In other words, they often (not always) assume that the supposedly “neutral” and “objective” findings of psychological research just tell us “the way things are.” Thus what I find most frustrating is a kind of naïve empiricism even amongst some who’ll talk about “integrating” faith and learning—in which case “integrating” usually means finding those points where what the infallible magisterium of “empirical evidence” declares is in agreement with what Christian faith proclaims. But this assumes both a fairly naïve notion of the role that theoretical commitments play in observation, as well as a lack of appreciation for the role that basically religious commitments play in theory-formation. In other words, I’m worried that Christians

working in the social sciences are still assuming an antiquated notion of “science” that has been roundly criticized in the wake of Kuhn, Lakatos, and others.

**PJW:** This point seems to roughly parallel your critique of “correlational theology” in your recent book on postmodernism (Smith, 2006, p. 123-124). What is “correlational theology”? Are you essentially suggesting that many contemporary Christian psychologists operate within such a model?

**JKAS:** I’m not out to make pronouncements or denouncements in this regard. But you’re absolutely right that this model of “integration” parallels what I describe as “correlational” theology. By a “correlationist” model, I mean one that grants *authority* to the non-Christian, cultural resource in question. For instance, I think this is very starkly seen in the contemporary configuration of the science/theology dialogue. “Science” is taken to be a neutral, ‘secular’ arbiter of what counts as true, and thus the “authority” for what *could* be true. The “theology” side of the conversation then comes up to science, hat in hand, and asks what theological tidbits can be admitted to the dance. Or, to take Milbank’s example, liberation theology would be another case: what counts as the Gospel is “positioned” by the supposedly “scientific” findings of the social sciences (in this case, Marxism), and then the truth of the Gospel is correlated with that (that is, made to conform to the plausibility structures laid down by the cultural phenomenon). Theology becomes “correlationist” when the given cultural authority is assumed to be neutral and secular, and actually *trumps* the theological tradition.

Paul Tillich would be the poster-child for this, I think; but it's intriguing to see how often "conservative" evangelicals mimic the same strategy.

**PJW:** Your critique of correlational theology is framed within a broader appreciation of postmodern philosophical developments. Such developments, you essentially imply, present Christians in all disciplines with an opportunity to confidently and explicitly operate from within their own perspectives.

**JKAS:** Right. Obviously my critique of correlationism does not rule out robust, even positive engagements with cultural and scientific sources. As you note, the very fabric of my postmodernism book takes such interaction very seriously--and even finds lots to affirm in the non-Christian cultural sources. But at the end of the day, it's a fairly strong sense of the church's tradition which trumps Derrida *et al.* This is a marked contrast, for instance, from my doktorvater, John Caputo, for whom Derrida is the final authority and whatever of the church's teachings don't correlate with the Derridean canon are tossed out without much regret.

**PJW:** You also point toward Radical Orthodoxy to illustrate how Christians might respond to this post-modern opportunity. What exactly is Radical Orthodoxy? Who are its key theorists and key texts?

**JKAS:** You'd think I'd have a decent, thumbnail answer to this question by now! Let's try this: Radical Orthodoxy is a theological sensibility that one finds manifested across a loose-knit network of theologians, philosophers, and increasingly, theorists in other disciplines. Some of the key theorists include John Milbank [whose *Theology and Social Theory* (Milbank, 1990) deserves more attention from social scientists, even if they disagree], Graham Ward, and Catherine Pickstock—all of whom are British. But there are American sections to the choir as well, including me, D. Stephen Long, William Cavanaugh, Daniel Bell, and some other folks related to Stanley Hauerwas.

But just what is Radical Orthodoxy? What are the elements of this "sensibility?" As a first shot across the bow, I would say that Radical Orthodoxy asserts that all theory is ultimately confessional. As such, it rejects the regnant orthodoxy (sic!) regarding the supposed neutrality and objectivity of the sciences. At the same time, it asserts that, given this situation, Christian scholars ought to theorize from the platform of Christian theology.

Perhaps we can unpack this by getting at the conjunction of "radical" and "orthodoxy." To many

this seems like an oxymoron--orthodoxy can never be radical! But I think this shows a lack of imagination. We must think of "radical" in terms of its Latin origin, from the word *radix* which refers to the "roots" of something--the basis or foundation. Radical Orthodoxy simply says that if all of our thinking about the world is ultimately informed by basic commitments or beliefs about the world, and that *everyone*--even an atheist like Richard Dawkins--starts from some set of basic beliefs, then Christians must theorize about the world from the basis of Christian confession. In other words, the "root" (radix) of our theory should be "orthodoxy"--the riches of Christian revelation and tradition.

In this respect--I guess I should have checked with Chris on this first--I would suggest that a sociologist like Christian Smith, particularly in his methodological book *Moral, Believing Animals* (Smith, 2003) is very, very close to the sensibility that I'm describing here under the banner of "Radical Orthodoxy," even though Smith isn't in any way connected to the usual suspects associated with Radical Orthodoxy.

**PJW:** Is it fair to say that Radical Orthodoxy is a "new philosophical development" that challenges the regnant social scientific perspective [described above]?

**JKAS:** Radical Orthodoxy--insofar as we can use the term as a heuristic umbrella--describes a theological sensibility across several traditions. And while it extensively engages both philosophical questions and figures, I wouldn't describe it as a "philosophical development;" but the reasons why are instructive. First, I would be hesitant to describe it as primarily "philosophical" because that misses the fundamentally *theological* purview of Radical Orthodoxy. However, because methodological questions in the disciplines are always wrapped up with philosophical issues regarding knowledge and the nature of reality, the theological sensibility immediately informs a philosophical framework.

Second, this might seem like nit-picking, but I don't know that I'd want to describe it as a "development" either. It's not really an innovation, but rather a creative re-appropriation of key aspects of the Christian theological tradition, as well as key voices such as Augustine and Aquinas. In this respect, it might be helpful to recall a tension in the middle of the last century in Catholic theology, particularly around Vatican II. At that time, there were a couple of "parties" vying for the life of the church: the *aggiornamento* folks were most interested in "updating" the Catholic faith and getting it "up to speed" with

modern thought and sensibilities; the *ressourcement* party thought the key to the future of the church was to return to its sources in ancient and medieval Christianity. Radical Orthodoxy falls pretty squarely in the *ressourcement* camp, but with just a dash of *aggiornamento* insofar as it is important to engage the currents of contemporary thought. That's why in Radical Orthodoxy you get Augustine and Foucault, Aquinas and Derrida. But the conjunction is not a matter of turning Augustine *into* Foucault, but rather grappling with the challenges that Foucault poses and then seeing the resources in Augustine to answer those challenges.

Now, how does this challenge the regnant perspective in the social sciences? I think that this cuts across the grain in two ways. First—and it is perhaps here that some might dismiss Radical Orthodoxy as “postmodern”—Radical Orthodoxy calls into question the supposed neutrality and objectivity of empirical observation. It is not opposed to empirical observation as such, but it is very critical of a naïve empiricism that imagines itself just reading off the “facts of the matter.” Rather, it would emphasize that all empirical observation is, in some important way, affected by theoretical commitments which precede and drive the observation. (Radical Orthodoxy would make the same point with respect to the “hard” or natural sciences.)

Second, Radical Orthodoxy ramps up this critique to another level: while empirical research is in some significant way conditioned by theory, Radical Orthodoxy would also emphasize that theory is driven by, or is the product of, pre-theoretical commitments which are ultimately religious in character. (One might note that Thomas Kuhn said the same thing.) In other words, even naturalistic theories are themselves rooted in *pre*-theoretical commitments which are more akin to religious beliefs than to objective conclusions. It's at this point that Radical Orthodoxy levels the playing field and says: if all theory is informed by pre-theoretical faith commitments (or what Nicholas Wolterstorff calls “control beliefs”), then that means everyone comes to the table with their faith. And therefore Christians should be able to come to the scientific table with the thickness of their Christian convictions as a legitimate platform for generating theory that can then be “tested” in the arena of empirical observation.

**PJW:** In doing this, Christians working within contemporary psychology will need to respond to the largely secular assumptions already operating within the discipline. Does Radical Orthodoxy offer any explicit suggestions about how they might respond to those assumptions? In other words, how does Radi-

cal Orthodoxy understand “secularity” and its relationship with the “sacred”?

**JKAS:** Radical Orthodoxy rejects the notion of the “secular” insofar as that has been a shorthand to describe a neutral, objective standpoint. In this respect, the myth of secularity has been powerful in politics (as if, in Rawlsian fashion, we could carve out some public space where a whole host of “control beliefs” don't play a significant role) as well as in the academy—and especially in the sciences. Radical Orthodoxy is not alone in rejecting this dogma, but it is quite singular insofar as it marshals this for a specifically theological re-ordering of the sciences.

However, we should immediately note that this is not about some kind of re-Christianization of the university. Radical Orthodoxy is decidedly pluralist: when it asserts that all theorizing is funded by basic, religious commitments, it is not saying that all theorizing is (or even *ought*) to be informed by fundamentally Christian commitments.

Or, to try this another way, Radical Orthodoxy might say that all is sacred, but that does not mean that all is *Christian*. It recognizes Dawkins' scientific atheism as its own religion and form of life, for example. (Radical Orthodoxy does think that Christianity can *outnarrate* Dawkins' vision of the world, but that's a different matter.) What Radical Orthodoxy is calling for, then, is just a leveling of the playing field: for too long the priests of secularity have sought to exclude religious perspectives as *un*-scientific. But if all science and theory is driven by basically religious commitments, then what has paraded itself as “secular” and “neutral” is, in fact, just some particular religious vision excluding all competitors. Radical Orthodoxy just wants to unveil this situation and then request a seat at the table for distinctively Christian theorizing and scientific investigation.

**PJW:** Does Radical Orthodoxy supply even more specific resources for Christian psychologists coping with secularity? What alternative metaphysical, epistemological, and anthropological assumptions does Radical Orthodoxy propose? For example, what is the “metaphysics of participation” and what might it say about the materialism that is associated with most modern scientific approaches?

**JKAS:** Here I think Radical Orthodoxy is fighting on two fronts. You're right, the “metaphysics of participation”—the sense that the material world is “suspended” in and from transcendence, that the very “thickness” of the material stems from the fact that it is *more than* material—has important implications for the sciences, including the social sciences.

And our understanding of the human person would be a site where this is crystallized. But as I say, Radical Orthodoxy is prone to make everyone unhappy: against rabid materialists like Daniel Dennett, Radical Orthodoxy asserts that one can only be properly materialist by affirming transcendence. This idea, incidentally, is more forcefully articulated by John Milbank (2005) in an essay entitled “Materialism and Transcendence.” The only way to really affirm the material is to see it as more than material—otherwise it flattens out into nothing. But on the other hand, and contrary to certain currents in American Christianity, Radical Orthodoxy affirms the *integrity* of the material, and thus has no time for Gnostic spiritualizing tendencies that would discount the rigors of good biology. So while Radical Orthodoxy is staunchly critical of naïve naturalism, it would be equally critical of what we might call gnostic supernaturalism. On that front, I think the “incarnational” ontology of Radical Orthodoxy would challenge a lot of assumptions common to some streams of Christian psychology.

**PJW:** Of course, a Christian psychology is not just an intellectual project, but operates in counseling and therapeutic settings coping with the challenges of day to day social life. Do the philosophical assumptions of Radical Orthodoxy have implications for social life? What criticisms of contemporary social life does Radical Orthodoxy suggest? What kinds of transformations of social life does it recommend?

**JKAS:** We could go into a lot more detail, but perhaps suffice is to say that Radical Orthodoxy is very critical of the atomistic picture of human persons inherited from modernity—a picture of humans as individual and essentially isolated cognitive machines who only incidentally are in bodies and relationships (yes, that’s all a shot at Descartes). Graham Ward (2000) takes this on most forthrightly in his book, *Cities of God*. Drawing on the wisdom of the Christian tradition, especially Augustine (and with surprising convergences with “postmodern” thought), Ward argues that we need to understand persons as essentially embodied and relational. Clearly this would have implications for discussions in psychology and counseling (not to mention the worship life of our churches!). What constitutes a “healthy” person must take seriously the creational ideals of embodiment and relationality.

**PJW:** Could Radical Orthodoxy supply a conceptual foundation for the research programs of Christians working in psychology?

**JKAS:** Well, I would not say Radical Orthodoxy “supplies” such. But I would say that Radical Orthodoxy offers a picture of distinctively Christian theory and practice that invites us to imagine an integrally Christian psychology. This would mean beginning with a model of the human person that is informed at *root* by biblical and theological wisdom, while at the same time taking seriously the findings of empirical research (since the created world—the world of empirical exploration—is the creation of the same One who provides wisdom through Scripture).

In other words, while some might worry that this would be a very “top-down,” *a priori* project, I would see it as one that is bold enough to not be afraid of being tested by empirical verification. And it also wouldn’t be afraid to say that this is what happens with all the regnant paradigms in psychology (and all theory): scientific communities begin from basic, *a priori* assumptions which are in a dialectical relation to their empirical explorations. Why shouldn’t Christian theorizing be given the same opportunity? In this respect, Radical Orthodoxy simply seeks to level the playing field in the sciences. [As a more playful way to think about this, I would invite readers to enjoy Walker Percy’s (1999) novel, *Love in the Ruins*. I think it captures, in a really remarkable way, some of the sensibilities of Radical Orthodoxy, particularly with respect to the human person.]

**PJW:** How could the assumptions Radical Orthodoxy lead to productive work in psychology? In other words, what issues might deserve emphasis? What methodological approaches would be encouraged?

**JKAS:** I’m a bit timid to name trajectories here, because of my own ignorance. But I would venture the following: First, I think explorations in this direction should be undertaken with a *team approach*. I have become more and more convinced that the kind of interdisciplinary program we’re talking about here can’t be sustained or carried out by individuals. It’s just impossible for a single individual to have all of this in one head! What I think we should encourage are collaborations between psychologists, philosophers, and theologians, thinking together from their expertise.

Second, it seems to me that the unique emphasis of Radical Orthodoxy on a “participatory ontology,” with its notion of the material world being “charged with transcendence,” points to a kind of third way for understanding the human person—and thus perhaps a third way between crass, biologicistic materialism and naïve, supernaturalistic dualism. But we need some psychologists who are intrigued enough by this vision to come alongside us and help us imag-

ine what that might be.

**PJW:** Finally, for those interested in better understanding Radical Orthodoxy, where should they start reading?

**JKAS:** I still think of Milbank's (1990) *Theology and Social Theory* as seminal—but I have found that many find it to be just about impenetrable. Perhaps as a gateway my book *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy* (Smith, 2004) could map the territory and help those interested to discern where they'd like to go deeper. The beginning of each chapter suggests related, primary source readings for just that purpose.

**PJW:** So as a way of summarizing this interview, perhaps it would make sense to return to one of your earlier points. You previously said, "I would say that Radical Orthodoxy asserts that all theory is ultimately confessional." You also have rejected "correlational theology." Would this, therefore, be a reasonable conclusion for Christian psychologists to reach based on this interview? They should more confidently pursue a confessional theology that promotes the development of confessional theory-building, confessional empiricism, and confessional therapeutic and counseling practice.

**JKAS:** I don't want to appear as pie-in-the-sky here. I recognize the challenges and limits of working out of an explicitly Christian framework in the disciplines, and in certain sectors of therapeutic practice. So let me say a couple things in this regard:

First, the perspective I'm endorsing—of "confessional theory"—is *not* a license to retreat into Christian ghettos or to fail to engage "secular" social science. I hope "Radical Orthodoxy" is not coming off as if it were some kind of "Bible-only" approach to the social sciences. I find Southern Baptist Seminary's recent jettisoning of pastoral counseling to be deeply disturbing and not at all in line with what I'm suggesting. One of the things I fear is that the rhetoric of Radical Orthodoxy would fall into the hands of the fundamentalists! Radical Orthodoxy is critical of the reigning "secular" orthodoxy, but not so that it can retreat to some pure "Christian" space; rather, it wants to level the playing field to create a genuinely *pluralistic* space.

Second, in order for Christians in psychology to pursue an unapologetically confessional research program and mode of practice, the discipline needs to be convinced by the critique of "objectivity." And I'm not at all sure that is the case in psychology today. In fact, one might suggest that psychology is retrenching itself by adopting a notion of "science"

that is a last gasp effort to ward off the critique. In other words, because the social sciences have been so keen on legitimating themselves as "science," one finds them clinging to the objectivity of science more than ever. And it seems to me that this is especially the case in psychology (though I could be wrong). So Christians in psychology would do well to first try to level the playing field in order to make space for them to pull up a seat at the table. One must be wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove here: it will be important to be a bit cagey and strategic, finding ways to open up spaces so that perhaps the next generation is able to work from an unapologetically confessional stance.

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## Review of Maier (2006)

### *The Separation of Psychology and Theology at Princeton, 1868-1903*

Timothy A. Sisemore, *Edification* Book Review Editor, Psychological Studies Institute, Chattanooga, TN.

#### Invitation:

Most issues of *Edification* will feature reviews of contemporary or classic books that further the dialog regarding Christian Psychology. Given the broad perspective represented by the journal, volumes from psychology, theology, philosophy, sociology, Christian education, pastoral counseling, and other disciplines will be appropriate.

We invite readers of *Edification* to submit reviews of books they have found stimulating and that fit into the discussion of Christian Psychology. In the future, we hope to develop a board of book reviewers and send books out for review that we receive from publishers. For now, we invite our readers to submit reviews independently. A good review will be one that goes beyond summary to a critique (in an edifying manner) and to an attempt to relate a book to the Christian Psychology approach. These reviews should be written in APA-style and be 1,000 – 2,000 words in length. Interested persons should contact the book review editor regarding a possible title for review to see if it is appropriate before submitting the review (tsisemore@christianpsych.org). Please give serious consideration to contributing to *Edification* in this manner.

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### *Featured Review*

**THE SEPARATION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND THEOLOGY AT PRINCETON, 1868-1903: THE INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENT OF JAMES McCOSH AND JAMES MARK BALDWIN.** Bryan N. Maier. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd. Pp. 162, \$95.00. (Reviewed by Philip G. Monroe, Biblical Seminary, Hatfield, PA.)

Contrary to popular myth, some evangelical Christians played a significant role in shaping the field of clinical psychology, as we know it. Given that psychologists today tend to be less religiously committed than the general public, one might speculate that people of faith must have been forcefully cast aside by secularists looking to extricate psychology from related studies of theology and metaphysics. How else could we explain the marginalization of people of faith in the social sciences?

With this book, Bryan Maier, Associate Professor of Counseling and Psychology at Biblical Seminary, challenges our tendency to blame non-theists for the loss of theological reflection within the scientific community. His dissertation-turned-book tells the story of James McCosh, president of Princeton

University from 1868-1888, and the role he (unintentionally) played in exiling God from psychology. What makes Reverend McCosh's story even more interesting is the mentorship he provided his student, James Mark Baldwin, one of the early presidents of the American Psychological Association. Maier shows us how the baton was passed from McCosh, the pastor/scholar/philosopher who thought religiously about psychology to Baldwin, the scholar/thinker who, free from the rigidity of theological enquiry, thought psychologically about religion.

Maier's introduction enables the reader to gain quick access to the intellectual landscape of the mid nineteenth century and the epistemological shift then underway from metaphysics to materialism in the study of both theology and psychology. What follows is Maier's attempt to show how McCosh's work helped bring about the transition whereby his students could maintain their personal religious commitments while pursuing scientific psychological studies independent of that faith.

As the story unfolds in chapter one, the reader quickly learns how theological students like McCosh faced a looming chasm: they could seek intellectual

respectability via scientific methodology (then Scottish realism, Baconian inductivism, and the promotion of the human faculties as an accurate way of discovering truth) *or* they could defend their beliefs by appealing to religious authority. McCosh took the former route, defending his philosophical psychology and theology of persons through intellectual arguments that rarely, if ever, appealed to Scripture or biblical theology.

Maier uses his second chapter to show McCosh's attempt to ride the wave of transition from philosophical psychology to that of physiological psychology (1868-1878) while maintaining his view that materialist views of persons could not fully explain the human mind or soul. Though McCosh had some misgivings about the materialist assumptions behind the studies of physiology, he maintained his position that new discoveries in science should not be feared or viewed with suspicion—sounding nearly like the “all truth is God's truth” slogan of the early years of the integration movement. Maier deftly illustrates this position with several McCosh sound bytes,

McCosh boldly states, “Our first inquiry, when an asserted discovery in science is announced, should be, *not is it consistent with Scripture, but is it true?* If it be true, all who have an implicit faith in the Bible are sure that it cannot be unfavorable to religion.”

Once again, McCosh was claiming it was safe to study psychology with the Bible closed (68, emphasis in the original).

Chapters three and four direct the reader's attention to James Mark Baldwin, first as student of McCosh, then seminarian, and then later as professor in his own right. Maier details how Baldwin learns the lesson of defending Christianity with scientific arguments alone (and helped launch a national interest in the study of psychology of religion), disdains systematic theology, and rejects McCosh's evangelical faith for a subtle form of pantheism. In the end, psychology becomes a tool to understand religion rather than the reverse.

In the final chapter, Maier argues that this compartmentalization of knowledge, encouraged by McCosh and Baldwin, helped provide the final nails in the coffin of theologically driven psychological studies. By making scientific enquiry the first priority, biblical theology was marginalized in the study of human nature, thereby making the task of reconciling the two fields impossible even in religiously-

founded educational institutions. Though he does not make a full argument here, Maier does imply that the present-day attempt to integrate psychology and Christianity suffers from just the same problem—an over-emphasized scientific focus coupled with an ignorance of presuppositional biases leading to avoidance of the inclusion of biblical studies in the development of a Christian psychology.

This is a useful book for students of the history of psychological and religious thought. First, it provides some important historical development just prior to the rise of the modern profession of clinical psychology. Second, it provides a deeper look at that key transition period just prior to the fundamentalist/modernist crisis at the turn of the twentieth century. Christians were not surreptitiously dismissed from institutions of higher learning. On the contrary, some people of faith helped the process along by marginalizing their own faith and source of theological understanding from their intellectual endeavors. Maier's footnotes provide a wealth of primary sources for those interested in looking more deeply at the relationship between scientific and religious thought during this period. Those not familiar with key philosophical terms, reformed theological frameworks, and historical antecedents of the unfolding American mindset of the nineteenth century may need some preliminary introduction to these concepts as Maier's text does not give details about these background arenas.

One weakness of this text is that Maier does not give much space to how McCosh and Baldwin were influenced by evolutionary teaching. Though Maier makes note of Baldwin's use of evolutionary thought in his psychology of religion, it would seem both men would have been interacting with and shaped by Darwinian ideas regarding the nature of persons.

Throughout the book, Maier does a thorough job bringing together data from private correspondence, public writings, and later memoirs to show the human side of McCosh and Baldwin. Though it is clear that Maier does not appreciate the choices and outcome of their decisions, he treats them with respect and allows them to speak for themselves with ample use of pithy quotations.

## *Additional Reviews*

**MAKING JUDGMENTS WITHOUT BEING JUDGMENTAL: NURTURING A CLEAR MIND AND A GENEROUS HEART. Terry D. Cooper. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Pp. 137, \$13.00. (Reviewed by P. J. Watson, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga, TN.)**

Terry Cooper has written a book about judgmentalism that has a potential to offend everyone. In other words, he has written a book that all Christians should read, especially Christian psychologists. Judgmental attitudes, he argues, reflect a condemning and destructive self-righteousness that rests upon two forms of superiority. The first involves a moral superiority that ignores the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:1 that we should “judge not.” The second is associated with “a deep sense of intellectual superiority insofar as we believe we are capable of evaluating the entire context of another’s life” (p. 20). This moral and intellectual superiority encourages the development of an arrogant authoritarianism that can infect a community with unhealthy shame. None of this is compatible with the grace and compassion made known to us through the Bible.

In offering this description, Cooper is not being judgmental. Judgmentalism is an unavoidable feature of the human condition. “The world is not simply divided between judgmental and nonjudgmental people. Everyone is judgmental in some ways and nonjudgmental in others” (p. 16). Yes, “conservative” Christians can sometimes be dogmatic, fanatical, intolerant, and rigid, but “liberals” can also “become dogmatically opposed to dogmatism, fanatical about fanaticism, intolerant of intolerance, and rigid about rigidity” (p. 18). And those who adopt some supposedly more moderate position in between presumably must struggle with their own tendencies to be judgmental toward the “extremists.”

Judgmentalism cannot be overcome through more judgmentalism. Shaming others for shaming others can only spread the shame. “Our only hope... is to regularly remind ourselves of the grace that has been given to us and to allow that grace to extend outward” (p. 24). This is a difficult task. We must learn to avoid a defensive, emotional reactivity and develop instead the ability to respond thoughtfully in all our dealings with others (pp. 67-77). Christians more generally must nurture a “community of grace”

that practices the empathy of a “generous heart” (pp. 121-134). “This community is crucial in providing us with insulation against judgmentalism” (p. 123).

But neither can judgmentalism be overcome through a refusal to make judgments. Evil is a reality within the self and the world, and this reality requires that we all learn to make appropriate judgments. A healthy sense of guilt, in other words, should not be confused with an unhealthy sense of shame (pp. 79-104), nor should authoritative judgments be equated with authoritarian judgmentalism (pp. 105-120).

Cooper usefully describes two ways in which authoritative judgments can be differentiated from authoritarian judgmentalism (pp. 25-41). First, he suggests seven criteria through which it should be possible to differentiate healthy from unhealthy processes of judgment. An extended description of each criterion makes it clear why a sincere concern for and trust of others, openness and tolerance, judicious and fearless deliberations, and an emphasis on evaluating behavior rather than the whole person are essential in avoiding judgmentalism. Second, he offers a briefer, though still important, explanation of how *critical thinking* is necessary to avoid the destructive potentials of *thinking critically* about others. Critical thinking is “careful thinking, rather than *negative* thinking,” whereas thinking critically about others is the product of “sarcasm, cynicism and, ultimately, nihilism” (pp. 37-39). Only through careful thinking can we move toward authoritative judgments.

Especially useful for Christian psychologists will be Cooper’s attempt to explain the causes of judgmentalism (pp. 44-66). Here, he recounts an earlier analysis (Cooper, 2003) and attempts to explain how the manifest sense of superiority that energizes judgmentalism actually reflects a defensive maneuvering which masks unconscious anxieties and shame (Cooper, 2003). Social psychological and personality research may suggest the widespread existence of a “superiority complex” in which almost everyone appears to self-report high levels of self-esteem (p. 46). However, clinical experience, especially observations based upon Kohut’s psychoanalytic psychology of the self, indicates instead that the superiority of judgmentalism emerges from the narcissistic grandiosity of a vulnerable self. Actually, this is one area in which the quantitative research literature increasingly supports clinical assessments (e.g., Baumeister, Smart,

& Boden, 1996; Fein & Spencer, 1997; Sedikides, 1993). All kinds of evidence increasingly leads to the conclusion that “the grandiose self is also the highly fragile self” (p. 55).

Understanding that judgmental superiority can reflect narcissistic self-vulnerability has important implications. The judgmentalism of others can be difficult to take and can trigger the reactivity of our own judgmental attitudes. But here again, the judgmentalism of other people and of ourselves cannot be overcome through more judgmentalism. More constructive responses may follow if we realize that we all are to some degree narcissistic and that “narcissists have sometimes become the psychological lepers of our day, the ones for which we have no compassion” (p. 53). But Christian tradition should remind us that “lepers” should be healed. Those traditions should also make it clear how such healing should occur. Christians will surely know that “what narcissists desperately need is the internalization of grace, a deep sense of acceptance, which can free them

from their own painful self-preoccupations” (p. 53). Cooper has written a book that deserves the careful thinking of everyone. This is so because he helps us better understand the graceful compassion that can heal us all of our own painful self-preoccupations.

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**MORAL, BELIEVING ANIMALS.** Christian Smith. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 164, \$29.95. (Reviewed by P. J. Watson, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga, TN.)

Only rarely do theoretical developments in the social sciences move in directions that are favorable to Christian Psychology. Sociologist Christian Smith has written an important little book that represents one of those rare developments. In opposition to the hegemony of a social scientific “objectivity” that ignores or explains away religious and other forms of so-called “subjective” commitments, Smith argues instead that “we cannot really come to terms with human beings ... until we come to understand human persons as fundamentally moral, believing animals” (p. 4). By “moral,” he means “understandings about what is right and wrong, good and bad, worthy and unworthy, just and unjust, that are not established by our own actual desires, decisions, or preferences but instead believed to exist apart from them, providing standards by which our desires, decisions, and preferences can themselves be judged” (p. 8). Until the social sciences realize the central importance of the moral orders that organize human life, “our theories and analyses, our understanding of human

action and culture will be impoverished” (p. 11).

Impoverishment is evident in the discipline of psychology. Smith complains, for example, “Social psychology, it appears, has no clue about humans as moral animals but appears to prefer to think of humans as mere cognitive information processors” (p. 14). Needed instead is an approach that understands social life in terms of the “liturgies” of a vast array of diverse moralities reflecting “complicated normative systems that carry some weight of history and tradition, that are meaningful in terms of some believed narrative” (p. 20). Liturgies, of course, are relevant to religious institutions, but are not limited to them. Corporations move toward the liturgies of quarterly reports and annual meetings with shareholders. Educators move toward the liturgies of graduating their students. The military organizes liturgies of training and battle. Families annually repeat liturgies of birthdays, holidays, and vacations. The examples are innumerable. In short, psychology and the other social sciences should focus more on how normative systems maintain the “liturgical” social life of humanity.

All kinds of implications follow from a perspective that emphasizes the essential role of personal “faith in a set of unprovable cosmological, metaphysical, and epistemological assumptions and

commitments” (p. 25). Human personality will, for example, require interpretations that appreciate the complexity of relationships that must exist between the individual and processes of being socialized into a diverse array of moral orders (pp. 26-33). Among other things, this will mean that no self can be fully understood without some insight into the manner in which a self holds itself accountable to its own commitments. Self-consciousness, in other words, will be important, and an emphasis on self-consciousness will challenge influential reductionistic approaches to morality like those found in sociobiology and evolutionary psychology (pp. 33-43).

The idea that human selfhood rests upon “unprovable” commitments will also mean that “beliefs are ‘justified,’ but they are not ‘justifiable’” (p. 46). Social life will not have foundations in rationally indubitable mechanisms and processes, but rather in non-rational allegiances to the sacred. “The sacred may center on the fatherland, liberty, science, the party, the proletariat, the environment, equality, the nation, sexual-fulfillment” (p. 56). In other words, a social science that begins with an understanding of humanity as “homo credens,” humans as believers, will begin with a postmodern skepticism of strong Cartesian foundationalism (pp. 45-61). The implication will be that social scientific “research programs that are fundamentally naturalistic, utilitarian, antimentalistic, or noncultural will inevitably fail to understand human persons, consciousness, actions, and institutions” (p. 49). Successful research programs will instead need to develop deeper expertise in understanding the diverse “living narratives” that structure human life (pp. 63-94).

Unsurprisingly, a social scientific focus on the liturgies and sacred commitments of moral, believing animals will see the profound importance of religion (pp. 95-123). Religions supply the “superempirically referenced wellsprings of moral order” (p. 104) and are “very basic to, perhaps constitutive of, the life of human animals” (p. 106). They also are as adequate as any other “justified” but “not justifiable” perspective in serving as a point of departure for social scientific developments. Here, for example, Smith proposes a “truly controversial, daring, and radical” theory for organizing social scientific work: “human religions have existed and do exist everywhere because a God really does exist, and many humans – especially those not blinded by the reigning narratives of modern science and academia – feel a

recurrent and deeply compelling ‘built-in’ desire to know and worship, in their various ways, the God who is there” (p. 109). This kind of theoretical approach will obviously lead to conceptual frameworks that are very different from those that dominate contemporary social scientific discourse (pp. 125-145).

In the end, Smith notes, “This book is written out of dissatisfaction with current influential theoretical systems purporting to explain human action and social life powerfully and comprehensively” (p. 147). Christian psychologists will share that dissatisfaction and will discover enormous potential in Smith’s theoretical perspective. They will surely agree that psychological attempts to “answer questions of human personhood and motivation” will be misleading if based solely upon prevailing forms of “Western social theory. What we need instead is to face and to embrace the fact that we human beings are moral, believing, narrating animals and to rethink our social theories and analyses in that light” (p. 158).



# EDIFICATION

## Journal of the Society for Christian Psychology

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Manuscripts in the following categories will be considered for publication:

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3. Reviews of books relevant to the goals of the Society for Christian Psychology.
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2. Follow the guidelines on format, style, and submission procedure in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (1200 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Washington, D.S. 20036), including the use of non-sexist language.
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6. Include the following current vita information for each author: address, title, degree(s) and institution(s) where earned, and specialization(s).
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