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# SCRIPTURE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE: INTEGRATIVE CHALLENGES & CALLINGS

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A brief classification of a range of approaches to engaging Scripture in psychology is provided including one non-normative and three normative strategies (Bible as encyclopedia of revealed truths, Bible as a source of theological truths and values, and Bible as divine speech received by providentially situated readers). The implications of each of these for an integrative Christian psychology are discussed. Five issues are examined that require further development by Christians in psychology. If Scripture has authoritative priority then how might this authority concretely function in psychological science? What is the proper scope of Scripture with regard to psychology? What positive contributions to psychology are germinal within Scripture? Can Christian psychological scholarship contribute to Biblical hermeneutics? What improvements in integrative curriculum would facilitate greater attention to the Word of God in the discipline of psychology? These various issues present integrative challenges and callings for current and future generations of Christians in psychology.

What roles can or should Scripture play in psychological science? Even to raise this question may seem strange to secular psychologists who see the emancipation of the academic disciplines from authoritarian arbiters of belief as a *fait accompli* of modern science. In contrast, some posture of deference to the Bible seems incumbent upon psychologists that believe Scripture to be the Word of God. Yet what form can or should this deference take? A variety of possible approaches to interfacing Scripture and psychological science are described below.

## APPROACHES TO INTERFACING SCRIPTURE & PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

A rough and ready classification of some different approaches to interfacing Scripture and psychological science can be offered which captures a broad range of existing options and positions. After discussing non-normative approaches to this task, I will outline a variety of normative strategies for relating Scripture and psychology. A central premise of evangelical and other Biblically grounded faith traditions is that the primacy of Scripture is to be taken as axiomatic by Christian scholars even in the secular disciplines (Helm & Trueman, 2002; Johnson, 2004). I will concede that integrationists or other psychologists committed to a Biblical faith will generally find non-normative strategies inadequate. Yet the non-normative approaches provide a useful didactic contrast to clarify the range of more Biblically deferent strategies that are subsequently presented.

### *Non-Normative Approaches*

One possible way to interface Scripture and psychology is to attempt to simply describe roles that Scripture has played in human life without making any particular normative or theological judgment about Scripture. I will spell Scripture without a capitalized 's' in this section because this strategy implicitly (or even explicitly) denies the primacy of Scripture in the life of the mind. Williamson (2002) has proposed a "new model of fundamentalism" which gives primacy not to scripture itself but the role it plays in the psyche of the fundamentalist. He contrasts the role of scripture in fundamentalist thinking with the "principle of intertextuality," defined as "... the psychological dynamic involved as non-fundamentalists come to an understanding of the sacred text" (Williamson, p. 4). He argues that non-fundamentalists understand their texts in light of a reciprocal

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interaction between the text and a set of 'relative truths' and peripheral beliefs. While the scriptural understanding of the non-fundamentalists is informed by their faith tradition (i.e., "relative truths"), their faith tradition and scriptural understanding is also altered by changes peripheral beliefs. In contrast, according to Williamson, fundamentalists understand their peripheral beliefs in light of more core Scriptural and other 'absolute beliefs'. Contrary to the non-fundamentalists, the fundamentalist core (Scripture plus a body of absolute beliefs) is not altered by the peripheral beliefs. Williamson illustrates his model through an appeal to a case example involving the role of scripture in the beliefs of members of the Church of God of Prophecy. The important thing for our purposes is that Williamson sees this proposal as a psychological one:

As far as the present model of fundamentalism, it seems useful enough to explore the psychological dynamics of fundamentalism involved in a variety of groups. It is unique from other approaches in that it seeks to investigate how it is that fundamentalists construct their reality of the world. To understand fundamentalists, however, requires that attention be given to their sacred text and, more importantly, to how fundamentalists come to take up their text and derive its meaning. (pp. 10-11)

Now, it may be quite proper for Christian social scientists to take up Williamson's call to *describe* the role sacred texts play in the belief formation and belief maintenance processes of a variety of different religious groups. Yet while such a strategy may be adequate for a mere psychology of religion it will fail to reach the evangelical goal of allowing the Word of God to speak to psychology as the *Divine Word*. It is also debatable whether Williamson's model succeeds at a descriptive level in depicting the sorts of engagements with Scripture that currently characterize evangelicals. It is now quite common for evangelical scholars to emphasize the contextuality not only of Scripture but also of the reader who engages Scripture (Bartholomew, , Evans, Healy, & Rae, 2003; Lundin, Walhout, & Thiselton, 1999; Osborne, 1991; Thiselton, 1980, 2002). While some evangelical writers still argue for the text to speak with a single determinate meaning from an objective vantage point (Thomas, 2002), others have emphasized a different view:

... we must also concede that any approach that limits textual meaning to either a single meaning or to a *tightly determinate* meaning in all genres of Scripture in every case will reduce and emasculate the capacity of Scripture to act *transformatively and creatively*. (Thiselton, 2002, p. 115)

Evangelicals do not speak with one voice on how to read their Scriptures (Bray, 1996). They do, however, share a common belief in the trustworthiness of God (Helm & Trueman, 2002). Watson (2002) puts the matter this way: "the correlation of divine and scriptural trustworthiness is regarded as constitute of evangelical identity. What Scripture says is what God says, and to be 'evangelical' is to commit oneself to that equation" (pg. 287). Yet neither Watson (2002) nor the other contributors to a recent edited volume on divine trustworthiness (Helm & Trueman, 2002) assume that understanding Scripture is a matter of objectively receiving a single determinate meaning from the text.

What appears missing in Williamson's model is an option for this more complex state of affairs. These sorts of evangelicals embrace the notion that their understanding of scripture is impacted by pre-understandings or other contextual factors (Bray, 1996). Yet they also would likely reject the depiction of Scripture as just one among several influences on their understanding (Osborne, 1991; Watson, 2002). Scripture has a distinctive, normative significance that cannot be equated in kind with other sorts of influences on beliefs for the evangelical. Despite that fact, they may be open to some reciprocity between the interpretation of Scripture and peripheral beliefs. A descriptive model that captures this more complex situation would more faithfully account for the reality of evangelical hermeneutical practice in the disciplines.

### *Normative Approaches*

*Encyclopedia of Revealed Facts.* Some traditional accounts of Scripture depict it as a reserve of objectively accessible atomistic facts given to us by God. On such a view, the task of integration is to construct a Biblical psychology by systematizing the 'assured facts of human nature' available through Scripture and then fitting in any consistent empirically derived knowledge about areas that are underspecified in Scripture (Thomas, 2002). This model would roughly fit Williamson's (2002) account of the role of scripture in fundamentalism with the caveat that it also conveys a normative endorsement of the primacy of Scripture.

Yet this first approach would not necessarily reduce Christian psychology to Biblical psychology. Several distinctive disciplinary tasks could remain for the Christian psychologist extending beyond the

mere deduction of a Biblical psychology. These would include the fixing of the range of psychological knowledge left under-addressed by Scripture, the working out of a systematic theological anthropology most faithful to the atomistic facts revealed therein, and the resolution of any empirically derived points of tension with the Biblical revelation in deference to Scripture. If very little important information about human psychological functioning was left unaddressed by a Biblical psychology, then there would be little need to train Christian psychologists in the traditional domains of psychological science. Instead of biological bases of behavior and research methods courses like pastoral psychology and hermeneutics should take center stage in their curriculum. Since the existing explicitly Christian programs in professional psychology do not reflect this alternative curriculum model, it can be assumed that they either implicitly reject the “encyclopedia of revealed facts” model of Scripture or assume that many facts about human nature are not fully delineated by Scripture.

*Authoritative Source of Theological Truths and Values.* Individuals who take this approach may retain a belief that the Bible speaks authoritatively, or even infallibly, about matters of faith and practice (McKim, 1983). However, they are likely to deny that the Scriptures are authoritative sources of truth about factors outside of this scope. Cosgrove (2002) explains this under the rubric of the hermeneutical “rule of the nonscientific scope of scripture” (pg. 3). He argues that this principle was developed during the early modern era in response to scientific advances that appeared to threaten Biblical authority. There is both a strong and weak form of this rule:

For some Christians, the exclusion of scientific knowledge from the scope of scripture means that, strictly speaking, the Bible makes no empirical assertions...for others it means that empirical assertions or assumptions do appear in the bible but that these stand outside the purpose of Scripture and thus do not carry the weight of scriptural authority; for still others the rule of scope means that only certain kinds of empirical assertions (or certain ways of taking scripture as making empirical claims) stand outside the scope of scripture. (p. 120)

If the strong form of this rule is assumed (i.e., that Scripture has nothing authoritative to say about empirical realities) then what sort of role would Scripture play in our integrative psychology? It might inform our axiological and theological commitments (in some demarcated sense) but it would be silent in the face of the multitude of empirical questions that

psychology has explored about human nature. Although perhaps not a pure exemplar of this approach, Jeeves (1997) has offered comments consistent with its general spirit:

As C.S. Lewis put it so eloquently when discussing the ever-present temptation to abuse Scripture by claiming that buried within it, if only we could find it, are specific political theories, social theories, and scientific theories, “that is not how Christianity works. When it tells you to feed the hungry it does not give you lessons in Hebrew or Greek, or even in English grammar. It was never intended to replace or supersede the ordinary human arts and sciences: it is rather a director which will set them all to the right jobs, and a source of energy which will give them all new life, if only they would put themselves at its disposal.” (p. 234)

Notice that Jeeves is claiming a persistent authoritative role for Scripture but not one that functions as an encyclopedia of empirical facts that can provide the content for a psychological science. Rather Scripture should speak to the background assumptions or valuative ends which contextualize science. While Scripture retains an authoritative voice on such a view, its scope does not involve propositional revelations of the empirical facts of science.

A key task for proponents of the “non-scientific scope of scripture” is the theological justification of the rule itself. It is not clear that Scripture itself provides a straightforward basis for this sort of demarcation of its scope (Carlson, 2000). Such demarcations will most likely derive their support from the broader theological traditions in which Scripture is approached (Stendahl, 1982). It is possible that God intended to convey contingent empirical facts about human nature through the special revelation found in Scripture. Unless an adequate theological justification can be offered to contravene this possibility, any attempt to reject out of hand a Biblical interpretation resulting in such contingent, empirical anthropological claims would be question begging.

*Divine Speech Received by Providentially Situated Readers.* Signaled by Thiselton’s (1980) seminal text on hermeneutics, a number of evangelical hermeneutists have embraced the Gadamerian idea that all interpretation occurs within traditions (Bartholomew, Greene, & Moller, 2001; Bray, 1996). Such thinkers are increasingly emphasizing the reciprocal role between the reader’s context and the horizon of the text (or its author) in understanding Scripture. It is of course beyond the typical scope of psychologists to settle debates about whether discerning “authorial-intention,” “reader response,” “textual sense” or other construals of

interpretative meaning are the appropriate goal for our hermeneutic endeavors (Wolterstorff, 1995). But for those evangelicals that view the hermeneutical task as involving some reciprocity between the reader's placement in history and the text, the possibility of a more dynamic theology arises (I intend this in an epistemic sense: not to be confused with concepts such as 'process' theology or 'openness' theology).

Rather than viewing Scripture as a collection of propositional truths standing impassively as Platonic timeless forms, this approach places greater emphasis on the ways the text functions across the plurality of particularities characterizing the readers of the written Word through the ages (Smith, 2000). A representative of this approach, holding Scripture to be the trustworthy Word of God, would attempt to understand the speech-act performed by God through the text recognizing that God knew well and good the *particular* ways that each person and group encountering the text would respond to it. Just as the doctrine of predictive foreshortening suggests that predictive prophecy may have near and far fulfillments, this notion can suggest that God would intend for the Scriptures to be encountered in a variety of ways depending upon the reader's particularity. This does not mean automatically that God would be saying fundamentally different things to different people at different places in history. Rather it would suggest that new understandings could emerge *faithful to the Scriptures* that are inspired by new insights made available from our divergent historical embeddings. So the findings of psychology on biological factors contributing to gender types or sexual preference could potentially be quite relevant to *hearing the Word of God correctly* but in ways that had not previously occurred to other people.

Some evangelical or fundamentalist hermeneuticians may wish to suggest that this discussion is conflating the 'meaning' and 'significance' of the text (Thomas, 2002). Following Hirsh (1967), they may want to say that the unpacking of the implications of the Scriptural teachings for psychology involves the distinct activity of application rather than interpretation. This important but old debate in hermeneutics may be less relevant to our purposes. For even if the significance of a text for psychology is to be distinguished from its meaning, it is through a realization of the significance of the text wherein we will discern the Word of God speaking to psychology. Whether this is construed as part of the process of

interpretation or a distinct phase of a two-stage process will do little to change this.

Still, this approach could admit a great deal of variability between different scholars in what propositional truth may be the product of that hearing. Similarly, whether such a post-Gadamerian hermeneutical appropriation of Scripture would result in a Christian psychology that was more substantially shaped by the Word of God or a Christian psychology that appeared little different from secular psychology would depend on the *particulars* of the Christian psychologist engaging both *Scripture* and *psychology*.

Another caveat is in order at this point. Postmodernists may feel quite comfortable with a number of these themes. In particular, they are likely to be drawn to the idea that our understanding of the Scripture will be determined by our particularity (Hesse, 2001). However, there is nothing in such an account that precludes the discovery of perennial truths, or perhaps even, dare we say it, *universal truths*. Such outcomes could be the product of the persistent reading of the text by Christians from many different *particular* historical vantage points. That possibility may even be one way to read the broad consensus about basic Christian beliefs that constitute a common core of historic or *mere* Christianity. So the emphasis on the particularity in our understanding of Scripture cannot rule out a priori the possibility of universals being discovered.

I have also argued elsewhere that a hermeneutical realism comports well with a Christian effort to understand the truths of both General and Special revelation (Hathaway, 2002). I cannot adequately unpack this notion here but I will highlight a few of its key features. Hermeneutical realism assumes that the object of understanding is causally productive of the expanded understandings of that object produced in the knowing subject whom apprehends it. This should not be confused with a simple objectivism. Hermeneutical realism grants that our understanding arises from a reciprocal encounter between the horizon of the reader (or knowing agent) and the horizon of the text. While pre-understandings may be the condition of such knowledge, the object of understanding is the determinant cause of the expanded true meanings that result when faithful comprehension has occurred.

The reciprocity between the text and the reader's context in locating the meaning of the text is reminiscent of Williamson's (2002) model of a

'nonfundamentalist' approach to scripture. Yet there is a key difference. If one approaches the Scripture as the Word of God, then one cannot approach it with the same posture than one does any other source of belief. Imagine a conflict arises between a reading of Scripture and a finding from psychological science. If the psychological finding seems robust, Christians may wonder if they are correctly reading Scripture. This could lead them to reexamine their exegetical assumptions and techniques. But if after due diligence they retain a belief in that they are reading the text correctly, they will not be able to simply dismiss the implication of the text in favor of contingent psychological finding. We may be mistaken about our understanding of God's Word but if we believe we are hearing it correctly, we cannot merely dismiss its truth claims without rejecting our entire commitment to its legitimacy as the Word of God.

I believe that hermeneutical realism comports well with the notion of a beneficent God revealing truth to finite creatures that are able to comprehend that revelation in their fallible and limited ways because of their providential design. The Christian hermeneutical realist views the interpretative task with utmost seriousness: the act of understanding Scripture becomes nothing short of a divine call to faithfully receive the Word God that has spoken. The seriousness of this task is amplified by an appreciation for the fallibility of our human knowing processes. God has allowed us to receive the treasure of His Word in the 'earthen vessels' of our finite but providentially prepared human understandings. The correct discernment of that Word remains possible by the grace of God and constitutes a spiritual discipline to be cultivated by the community of faith (2 Timothy 2:15).

## ISSUES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

This cursory examination of some potentially divergent approaches to the interface of Scripture and psychology likely raises more issues than it settles. Even if we grant the evangelical presuppositions of the primacy of Scripture, much work remains in clarifying how Scripture as the Word of God and the discipline of psychology can productively engage each other. Several issues illustrate the extent of work yet to be done on this issue.

*1. If Scripture is the Word of God, and as such has an authoritative priority, in what concrete*

*way can it exercise that authority within psychological science?*

There has been a recurring claim among integrationists that the goal of integration is to integrate "...our psychological understandings of persons with our understanding of the revealed truths of Scripture" (Carter & Narramore, 1979, pg. 16). Collins (1977) early advocated a 'biblical absolutism' within which "...Christianity and science are harmonized not by testing the Bible against science but by testing science against the Bible" (p. 132). Yet integrationists have also acknowledged that we have to reckon with the human context of Scriptural interpretation. Farnsworth (1985) claimed that the Biblical data are privileged but our interpretations of it are not. Faw (1995) pointed out that while God's word is absolute and infallible, we understand it through fallible interpretations:

Evangelical Christians share a common commitment to the Word of God as inspired and authoritative. Consequently, they all have much the same understanding of ... fundamental doctrines ... On less central issues, however, we interpret the same Scriptures in a variety of ways. (p. 17)

There have already been some suggestions of ways that Scripture may play this authoritative role in our Christian psychology found in various writers. Writing from an "anti-integration" Biblical counseling perspective, Welch and Powlison (1997) argue that the Bible provides the gestalt worldview or "lens" through which we understand the world: "The Bible gives the redemptive lens through which we see everything ... The lens pervasively alters vision ..." (p. 305). This perspective seems to reflect a 'meaning holism' in which the way any particular thing is understood is fully determined by the whole meaning framework brought to bear on that element of understanding. In contrast, Collins (2000) has asserted that Scripture "... supplies crucial background assumptions by which we can shape and judge psychological theories and conclusions" (p. 112). While it is not clear that Collins' pro-integration view would commit us to a 'meaning holism,' it does suggest a type of worldview integration in which Biblical outlooks reposition the broad worldview assumptions on which psychology is founded (Collins, 1977). But in providing such worldview contextualizing "background assumptions" would Scripture generate empirical claims about human nature? This brings us back to the question of scope.

**2. *What is the proper scope of Scripture with regard to psychology? Does it provide us with empirical claims or does the Bible speak to psychology in empirically indifferent ways?***

Roberts (2000) has noted the “very special and authoritative place” held by Scripture in the Christian tradition. He described its role as “a fountainhead of Christian ideas, including psychological ones” (p. 159). He asserts, “much foundational work in Christian psychology will therefore be the careful reading of Scripture by people who know what psychology in the twentieth century was and can therefore sniff out the biblical psychology” (pg. 159). He proceeds by unpacking the psychological principles from the Sermon on the Mount.

Yet recall Cosgrove’s (2002) rule of non-scientific scope. How do we deal with apparent conflicts that arise between psychology and our reading of the Scriptures? What about the controversies raging over homosexuality? Gender roles? It seems that at least some of these controversies in religious contexts arise from perceived Biblical implications about contingent, empirical facts. For instance, Christians who claim that homosexuality is ‘unnatural’ sometimes view this as in implication that homosexuality is a ‘psychological disorder.’ This of course is contrary to the prevalent professional nosological systems. Is Scripture silent on what should or should not count as psychological disorder? Does it have anything to say about the contours healthy (or maladaptive) functioning that could inform such discussions?

Much hinges on how Christian psychologists respond to the rule of ‘non-scientific scope’. If this principle is accepted, particularly in its strong form, then Scripture will be expected to engage the discipline of psychology in very different ways than if the principle is rejected. While acceptance of the strong form of the rule may immunize Scripture from modern scientific challenges, this pragmatic benefit does not by itself prove that the rule is hermeneutically correct. For instance, does it not seem that empirical assertions are implied by such Biblical teachings as the notion that character transformation occurs through the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:2) or that in the New Covenant the law is written on our hearts (Jer 31:31-34; Heb 10:7-12)? Admittedly, our understanding of these sorts of Biblical passages will be heavily determined by our broader theological perspectives and the sort of empirical claims, if they are present, are likely underdeveloped as scientific

hypotheses. Yet how can we construe these passages as saying something true about the human condition in a way that is devoid of empirical implications about psychological functioning?

It strikes me that a strong form of the rule of non-scientific scope would push us in the direction of a Gnostic dichotomization of the spiritual and the physical. Somehow these sorts of Biblical teachings about the nature of sanctification or other principles of Christian spirituality would apply only to a “trans-empirical” spirituality. Gnostics tended to construe physical and spiritual functioning as distinct domains of reality. Similarly, some strands of modern thought attempt to demarcate ‘truths of the Spirit’ from empirical facts about human existence through a ‘fact-value’ dichotomy (Keizer, 1997). It is unlikely that many evangelicals will be content to see Scripture simply as a source of axiological truth, yielding all other contingent factual claims about human nature to the domain of science. More importantly, it is not clear that such a dichotomization is Biblically, theologically or philosophically sound (Doeser & Kraay, 1986; Newbigin, 1985; Wood, 1981). At a minimum a proponent of a strong form of the rule of non-scientific scope owes us an explanation of how the apparent psychological claims readily adduced from many corners of Biblical theology can be understood as authoritatively true but yet devoid of empirical implication.

**3. *Does Biblical theology offer any constructive or “positive” contributions to psychological theory building?***

If we assume that it’s possible that Scripture provides us with at least germinal claims about psychological adjustment or maladjustment, are there any research programs that could be particularly informed by these sorts of aspects of a Biblical psychology? Tjeltveit (2004) has called attention to recent psychological scholarship inspired by the positive psychology movement on the value of ‘virtues’. He commented on a recent APA text that included chapters shaped in part by Biblically informed traditional notions of virtuous character (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The text includes an account of four types of ‘strengths of transcendence’ including appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude/hope, humor, and spirituality. Tjeltveit (2004) provided a Christian critique of some aspects of the model of virtues offered in the text. He noted that the APA text

sought to include only those broad virtues around which there is universal appeal across human cultures rather than particular or distinctive virtues consistent with one tradition, Christian or otherwise.

Still the approach reflected in the text leaves open the possibility that a research program may emerge which explores positive views of wellbeing inspired in rather straightforward ways by Scriptural thought and Christian theology. Tjeltveit (2004) outlined a strategy for one such research program focusing on a psychology of love. He pointed out the relative neglect of love as an area of serious psychological study and illustrated some potential lines of development that we might take in unpacking this notion, both as Christian scholars and psychological scientists. He suggested that a methodologically heterogeneous strategy might be necessary to do justice to the topic. Although very promising, it is likely that this sort of Biblically informed psychological scholarship would require large portions of the careers of Christians in psychology to begin to achieve its promise.

*4. Are there contributions psychology can make to our ability to accurately understand the Scriptures as the "Word of God" or to effectively respond to its message?*

The foregoing discussion suggests that part of what it would mean to seriously engage Scripture in the discipline of psychology would be the formation of Biblically guided research programs. It is also possible that psychological research programs could be developed by Christians that result in benefits for Biblical hermeneutics. Hermeneutics has been increasingly informed by related fields in the social sciences. For instance, the field of linguistics has informed hermeneutical thought (Cotterell & Turner, 1989). The 1990s witnessed an increasing number of hermeneutical scholars that have argued for the relevance of 'speech-act' theory in understanding how Scripture functions as a 'divine communicative activity' (Wolterstorff, 1995). While speech-act theory is primarily a product of philosophy, much of the work done in this domain involves description and categorization of the types of actions performed in speech. For instance, speech may be used to represent but it may also be used to create obligations as in a promise. Such descriptive categorizations of the actions performed by speech suggest empirical models that are open to challenge and revision.

The formation of meaning through interpersonal communication involves processes that have long been studied by psychology and related social science disciplines. Perhaps Biblically committed Christian psychologists could increasingly study the way that Christians hear the Word of God. For instance, under what circumstances does intersubjective agreement arise about the meaning of a text? What degree of inter-rater reliability is present when individuals attempt to understand passages from the different types of genre contained in Scripture? What sorts of systematic distorting biases, if any, are detectable among people who read Scripture? Are there certain types of calibration techniques that improve agreement on the meaning and/or significance of Scriptural texts? If so, is there any way to gauge their validity from a theologically defensible vantage point? Can the sorts of meanings people say they derive from Scripture be reliably clustered into meaning categories? Are there psychological responses besides meaning formation that result from an encounter with Scripture? How do person and/or group variables moderate such relationships? It is not difficult to envision how existing psychological research methods could be applied to these questions.

*5. What suggestions might we formulate for an integrative curriculum in psychology that would give greater attention to Word of God in our discipline?*

This discussion suggests that more work needs to be done in Christian psychological scholarship to promote enriched engagement with Scripture in our discipline. It also has implications for the curriculum offered in integrative programs that may seem obvious on first glance. We should offer dual training to our Christian psychologists in Biblical studies and psychological science. But the matter is not so simple. First, multidisciplinary training does not by itself guarantee interdisciplinary thinking. Second, it may be pragmatically unfeasible. The length of time required to master just the secular discipline of psychology is already quite imposing. Since Christian integrative programs are offered in private institutions, this is also a costly endeavor for students. Some more efficient ways of seriously engaging Scripture within the training and ongoing practice of Christian psychologists needs to be formulated. Perhaps this could be fueled by a subset of specialists who see it as their distinct task to be proficient in both domains.

## SUMMARY

The current article has summarized some different approaches that might be taken in relating Scripture and psychological science. Along the way numerous issues were raised that await more development. Assuming the primacy of Scripture in Christian worldview formation is an important first step. The fleshing out of a Christian psychological scholarship is a complex but demanding enterprise that will require the career investment of generations of Christians in psychology. Yet for those psychologists who view Scripture as the Word of God this integrative challenge is also a sacred calling.

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