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# CHRIST, THE LORD OF PSYCHOLOGY

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**The lordship of Christ over all of a Christian's life is an assumption basic to Christianity. The acknowledgement of his lordship in psychology is especially problematic today because of the pervasive naturalism and neo-positivism of modern psychology. Nevertheless, an understanding of the kingdom concept in Scripture suggests that Christians are inevitably called to work towards the expression of Christ's lordship in psychology. This occurs as the Christian pursues psychological knowledge and practice before God, aware that all true truth about human nature is an expression of God's mind, that sin and finitude limit one's ability to grasp the truth, that the Scriptures are needed to properly interpret human nature, and that kingdom activity involves a faithful response to Christ's lordship in one's work with others and one's knowing of human nature.**

**W**hen Paul the apostle first came into contact with Jesus Christ, he was asked by Jesus, "Why are you persecuting me?" and Saul responded, "Who are you, Lord?" (Acts 9:5, New American Standard Bible). The voice answered, "I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting," and Saul responded, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:7-10). Saul addressed Christ as "Lord" immediately and this practice continued throughout his life. In all his letters, as well as the rest of the New Testament, the term "Lord" was used to refer to Jesus. Acknowledging Christ's lordship involved repudiating all former gods and submitting to Christ's absolute supremacy over all life (Harris, 1986), and entering into a certain authority relationship with Christ in which the Christian lived in submissive but active obedience to his master: "It is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Col. 3:24).

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Consequently, everything the Christian does is to be done in Jesus' name to the glory of God (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31). Submitting to the authority of Christ in all of one's life was a distinguishing mark of an early Christian and seems fundamental to Christianity.

## THE OFFENSE OF CHRIST'S LORDSHIP OVER PSYCHOLOGY

The purpose of this article is to explore how Christ's lordship relates to the field of psychology. This is a task fraught with difficulties today because the naturalism and neo-positivism that pervade psychology preclude any such use of religion within psychology. Most psychologists would argue that psychology and psychotherapy are disciplines or activities that are relatively neutral with regard to religious issues. As any introduction text suggests, psychology, like any good science, ought to be as objective as possible and all findings and theories should be capable of verification by any interested and knowledgeable party (cf. Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, & Bem, 1990; Kalat, 1993; Wade & Tavris, 1993); therefore, specifically Christian beliefs have no place in the science of psychology. Similarly, while modern psychotherapists acknowledge that the counselor's values cannot be kept out of therapy (Corey, 1991; George & Cristiani, 1990), it is assumed, nevertheless, that the counselor ought not to teach certain beliefs or "direct their clients toward the attitudes and values *they* judge as being 'right'" (Corey, 1991).

In such a context, the concept of the lordship of Christ simply does not make sense. Yet, as many have suggested in recent years, modern psychology and psychotherapy are not nearly as neutral or objective as is popularly assumed. Rather, they are historically-conditioned disciplines and sets of practices that have arisen within the last 100-150 years. In appreciation for their contributions to modern life and awareness, it must not be overlooked that psychology and therapy are situated in a particular time and place in the history of humankind. Therefore to understand them best one must locate them within

their historical context. As both a molder and reflector of 20th century attitudes towards human nature, modern psychology and therapy share the positivism, relativism, individualism, and secularity that dominate modern thought (Buss, 1979; Danziger, 1990; Evans, 1989; Farnsworth, 1985; Gross, 1978; Lasch, 1979; Toulmin & Leary, 1985; Vander Goot, 1986; Yankelovich, 1981). Modern psychology and therapy are simply modern versions of psychology and therapy (though they are versions that have been unusually successful in laying claim to being the only authoritative approach to studying human nature and treating personal problems in the 20th century; Danziger, 1979). As a result, the Christian need not conclude that “only one show can play in this town.” Who says that Christ’s lordship has no place in psychology? Who set up the rules here? B. F. Skinner? Jean Piaget? Hans Eysenck? Why must I share their assumptions about the extent of Christ’s lordship? Perhaps there are different ways of understanding ourselves as Christian psychologists than that prescribed by the reigning secular powers in psychology.

### THE KING AND THE KINGDOM

The belief in Christ’s lordship over the believer is rooted in a theme that pervades the Scriptures from beginning to end: the kingdom of God. To better understand how psychology might be brought under the lordship of Christ, I will first examine the nature of the kingdom of God.

#### *God, the King of All*

The God of the Hebrew Scriptures presented himself as more than the deity of a small tribe in Palestine; he revealed himself to be the God of the universe. In the beginning it was the God of Israel who created the heavens and the earth. The first humans were accountable to him and essentially obligated to fulfill his commands.

Later, in the Psalms, the theme of his universal lordship is clearly sounded. The Psalmist declared that Yahweh is a great king over all the earth (47:2). He called upon the kingdoms of the earth to sing praises to the Lord (68:32) and shout joyfully before King Yahweh (98:6), and he called upon his hearers to say among the nations that the Lord reigns and that he will judge the peoples (96:10). “For You are Yahweh most High over all the earth; Thou art exalted far above all gods” (97:9). The Hebrews were taught that all the peoples of the world were sup-

posed to live for Yahweh since he is the King of the universe and the King of all.

#### *Rebellious Subjects*

However, the Scriptures also teach that God’s authority is being contested throughout the world. The fall of humankind occurred through the deceit of an enemy of God who tempted God’s image-bearers into rebellion. Much of the rest of the Old Testament presents a contrast between those who submit to Yahweh and those who serve other gods. Consider the conflict between Moses and the leaders of Egypt, the conquest of Canaan, the continual fighting against the Philistines, and the contest between Yahweh and Elijah on one side and Baal and his priests on the other. Many of the Old Testament narratives are set up as conflicts between God’s servants and his enemies.

The New Testament likewise asserts that there is massive opposition to God’s lordship on the earth. This is first demonstrated in attacks upon God’s Son. Not too long after the Christ’s birth, a pagan King attempted to destroy him (Matt. 2:13-18). Much later, as he entered upon his adult ministry, the devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and said he would give them to Jesus if he would worship the devil and not God. Christ’s response was an Old Testament quote: “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only” (Matt. 4:8-10). Christ was eventually opposed by the rulers of the Hebrew people, God’s chosen; and the New Testament record of the human opposition to God climaxes in the putting to death of God’s Son by both Romans and Jews.

John sometimes used the term *world* to denote humanity as rebellious and hostile to God. He quoted Jesus as saying that the world hated Jesus (John 15:18) and did not know God (John 17:25). John also wrote that this world has a ruler besides God to whom it submits (1 John 5:18) who was being defeated through Christ’s redemptive actions (John 12:31; 16:11). Paul also recognized a cosmic rebellion. He wrote about “this present evil age” (Gal. 1:4) or “this world” (Eph. 2:2) which is controlled by the “prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). Furthermore, he understood that all of humankind participated in this opposition (Rom. 1-3; Eph. 2:1-3). Apart from God’s grace, all oppose God. Becoming a Christian then involves being delivered from this “domain” of darkness (Col. 1:13).

### *The Coming Kingdom*

It is into this context that the Son of God entered, declaring, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Matt. 1:14f). He came to bring in a new kingdom which was really an old kingdom: He came to bring in the reestablishment of God's lordship over his image-bearers. The good news he preached was that God's reign was returning in a definitive way on the earth; justice and righteousness would finally prevail and God's servants would prosper forever. This preaching included a call to his hearers to repent of their sinful ways and believe in this message of his coming reign. Certain virtues were said to be characteristic of those in the Kingdom (Matt. 5:3,5,20; 18:3,4,23ff; 13:44; 25:31-46). Such virtues demonstrate God's reign over his people through their godlikeness and show that this kingdom is presently a spiritual realm manifested in the hearts and lives of God's people. Importantly, God is revealed to be a King who desires to avoid judgment and to bring his rebellious subjects back to sanity, submission, love, and forgiveness (Luke 15:11; John 3:16; Matt. 22: 1-10).

Yet, Ridderbos (1962) points out that the underlying theme of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom is not primarily the salvation of humans; it is the manifestation and vindication of the divine glory. It is God's kingdom, implying that he is its focus as well as its source. The kingdom therefore is not simply the fruit of human activity, but the accomplishment of God's redemptive power within human life. Christ's kingdom parables often have an individual at the center of the action: a man sowing seed (Matt. 13:37), a landowner (Matt. 21:33-41), a king and a marriage feast for his son (Matt. 22:1ff), and a man and his servants (Matt. 25:14). God is this central figure; he is the king who, having final authority, is ordering the events of his kingdom.

The coming of the kingdom will apparently happen in three stages. The complete coming of the kingdom will happen in the future (Matt. 13:33; 26:29; cf. Matt. 5:5). There will be a consummation of the kingdom that will occur when he returns to earth a second time, in the millennium (Stage 2; Acts 1:6,7; Rev. 20:4) and then forever (Stage 3). Yet, the kingdom was also being established during Christ's first coming (Stage 1; Matt. 1:15); Christ could say that the kingdom of heaven was forcefully asserting itself in his ministry, manifested through his miracles

(Matt. 11:12; Ridderbos, 1962). However, only after his death and resurrection could Christ make the claim that "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth" (Matt. 28:18). Only then did he become the *Lord* Jesus Christ, highly exalted by God, so that in the end "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9,11). In that day, he will be called King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16).

### *The Kingdom and the New Creation in Paul*

Although Paul used the term *kingdom* far less frequently than did Jesus, the concept undergirded his theology. As previously mentioned, he viewed Christ as Lord. In Col. 1:13 Paul stated that God "delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." However, Paul more often expressed a contrast between two ages or two worlds, than two kingdoms (Vos, 1972). He wrote of a present age loved by sinners (2 Tim. 4:10) of which Satan is the god (2 Cor. 4:4), which he contrasted with the age to come (Eph. 1:22). He also wrote of being crucified to this world (Gal. 6:14) and being a part of the new creation (Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17). Paul's understanding of history appears to have been shaped by a contrast between a present, evil existence and a coming, new existence in which Paul was already participating. Because the believer is "in Christ" (Paul's most important soteriological phrase), he or she has already received a foretaste of the coming redemption (Rom. 6:1-11) and is participating now in the coming divine world order.

However, as many writers have pointed out (Ladd, 1974; Ridderbos, 1975; Vos, 1972), according to Paul, while God's ultimate victory has been guaranteed, human history is the playing out of a serious conflict between the two ages which continues throughout this stage. There is a tension between what God has already accomplished (and is accomplishing), and the evil, sin, and weakness that remains the experience of those in the kingdom who suffer persecution from others and from within. Perfect redemption awaits. Nevertheless, in this age God in Christ is bringing about his reign on the earth through his people.

### THE KINGDOM AND PSYCHOLOGY

The kingdom of God is especially important for this essay because the concept is essentially historical. The kingdom is a dynamic, historical movement of God existing throughout this era in various forms,

overcoming evil and extending the reign of God through saved humanity. As an historical process its progress is uneven; much like any social movement, it is characterized by advances and setbacks. However, God will ultimately prevail and bring all things to an end in which he is finally vindicated and glorified. Because the kingdom is an historical process, the concept of the kingdom helps Christians to understand their place in the world and how they are to live during this period.

The modern roots of psychology demonstrate the relevance of this perspective for Christians in psychology. Many of the major figures in early modern psychology were individuals raised more or less within Christian or Jewish families whose life journey involved a moving away from this religious orientation, including such notables as G. Stanley Hall, William James, John Dewey, J. B. Watson, B. F. Skinner, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Jean Piaget, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow. The writings of these individuals, without exception, make clear that they saw their work and the field of psychology as offering more sound alternatives to traditional Judeo-Christian forms of meaning-making. And part of what drove them was likely the excitement that comes with being a cultural revolutionary. Though there are exceptions, much of modern psychology's research and theory-building has grown up within this implicit post-religious dynamic.

Being a Christian in psychology, then, is more than a theoretical enterprise, involving the relating of abstract, a-temporal propositions through "integration." Modern psychology is an historical phenomenon, shaped by psychological, cultural, and religious factors. Throughout the past 100 years, unbelieving individuals in psychology have been living out their lives in largely unconscious yet fundamental opposition to God, and the field of psychology has been shaped to some extent by this underlying anti-spiritual agenda. To cite one contemporary example, most Americans are religious, as well as most people across the world. Religion is very important in the lives of most human beings. Why then has so little attention been paid to religion in introductory psychology textbooks? It is to people's advantage to reckon with the contextual, spiritual realities within which they work. The kingdom concept provides people with theological justification for such considerations, and alerts them to the fact that all intellectual activity is a dynamic, cul-

turally-embedded, spiritually-charged, kingdom-related enterprise.

But how are individuals to understand psychology as kingdom-activity, activity that is an expression of God's reign on the earth? Surely this would at least include doing one's best and conducting oneself ethically. Doubtless, such quality and integrity does glorify God. However, doing psychology to God's glory involves much more. Many non-Christians advocate honesty and quality. The main difference is that Christianity is necessarily theocentric; *that* is why Christians do what they do. God is the greatest being in the universe and the center of the Christian's life. Consequently, doing kingdom psychology necessarily involves recognizing his centrality within the practice of the discipline. Therefore, I will consider six components of the context within which kingdom psychology operates: the King's mind, the King's mind in creation, the influence of sin and creation grace, the kingdom documents, and the servant's response to the King.

### *The Mind of the King*

God knows all things (1 John 3:20; Heb. 4:13). He sees all that people do (Matt. 6:8), even inside the human heart (Jer. 20:12). Bavinck (1918/1951) argued that God's knowledge is not gained through observation or experience but is eternal. His knowledge existed before the world was formed (Eph. 1:4,5; 2 Tim. 1:9), therefore no one can add to his knowledge (Isa. 40:13ff). With regard to the creation, his exhaustive knowledge of its form is due to the fact that he formed it. God knows all possible things as well. He knows what will happen in history (Isa. 46:10) because he ordained it (Eph. 1:11); but he also knows what could have happened, as well as all things that human imagination can construct (Plantinga, 1993). Thirdly, God knows what should be. In a disordered world, there is a gap between what exists and what is the ideal state of affairs. God knows how he intended his creation to be, and so he alone is able to reveal his ideal for it.

In Christian thought, God's understanding of the creation is distinguished from the creation, yet the creation is an exact expression of that understanding (Frame, 1987; Stoker, 1973; Van Til, 1969). Christians interested in human beings therefore have a two-fold primary goal: to understand human nature (a) as it is and (b) the way God does. Yet this is a single goal. Knowing something means knowing it the

way God does because God's interpretation of something logically precedes one's own understanding (Van Til, 1969). Since God knows a thing perfectly and comprehensively in all its characteristics, significance, and relations with other things (Stoker, 1973; Van Til, 1969), a science is valid to the extent that it recognizes God's understanding of a thing. Put another way, for any proposition *p*, *p* is true if and only if God believes it (Plantinga, 1993). A Christian, then, assumes that humans and God can agree about many things, and it is the agreement between the divine mind and the created order *and* the human mind which constitutes true knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Psychology, then, in the Christian framework, is not an independent activity that operates apart from God; it is dependent upon God's mercy to illuminate human understanding and reveal things about human nature through human reflection, research, and creative insight. The Christian psychologist submits to God's lordship in his or her thoughts and beliefs. The assumption that God's mind is the epistemological goal has value for four reasons. First, it directs people to God at the heart of their knowing. Their knowledge of things is not done in a vacuum; it is relational. In knowing, people have to do with God. Therefore, humans should seek knowledge prayerfully. Secondly, this assumption constitutes an ideal for which people can and should cognitively strive; it gives individuals something to work towards

by providing an ideal for human knowledge. While people can never know human nature exhaustively (the way God does), they can know something about it and they can get closer to God's understanding of it (Van Til, 1969). Thirdly, people have limited access to information about what human nature should be like. Empirical methods can reveal the consequences of certain conditions or behaviors, but they cannot clearly tell people how to evaluate those consequences. They also cannot provide trans-cultural criteria for human maturity and mental health. Yet psychology and especially psychotherapy inevitably assume some normative goals regarding human nature. Because God's mind includes what people should be, science and therapy should be informed by God's understanding of the human *telos*, and not simply human nature as it is.

The fourth value of taking God's mind as one's knowledge ideal is that people need to know the significance of a thing and its relation to other things and to God ultimately, in addition to knowing the thing itself (O'Donovan, 1986). God alone knows the significance of all things, and so the goal is to know God's understanding of a thing's significance. For example, to know that aggression has at least some genetic component is very important knowledge; but to know the significance of that information is another matter. A fact and its significance are found in the mind of God, and some of that mind is revealed in Scripture. So, the Christian's epistemological goal is to understand more of all that God thinks about something.<sup>2</sup>

Getting closer to the whole truth about a thing is the explicit goal of science, but the fulfillment of this

<sup>1</sup>Plato believed that there were various "Ideas," or "Forms," universal concepts that really existed. In contrast, the world was filled with inferior copies of these Ideas. According to Plato, the goal for human knowledge was to understand the Ideas, the universal truths untainted by their instantiation in this world. Superficially, it may look as if the position being outlined here is platonic. Both positions assume some extra-empirical reality that is at the basis of human knowledge. However, there are at least four differences. First, Plato's Ideas were in some way ultimate, standing even over God. For Plato, God was subject to the Ideas as much as humans were, for he used them as a model in forming the world (Timaeus). Christianity assumes that God is ultimate. Secondly, Plato was referring to universal concepts. God's mind includes much more than universal concepts. As discussed above, God's mind includes the knowledge of all that is, both universal and particular, as well as all that could be and all that should be. Thirdly, the Ideas are impersonal, ultimate principles. However, I have been talking about God's mind. This is a personal reality; it is God himself in his knowledge. Fourthly, while God's mind is the extra-empirical source of truth (and so is similar to the Ideas), there is no reason for the Christian to disparage empirical knowledge the way that Plato did. Humans encounter God's mind through empirical reality, as well as through reason and the Scriptures, all mediated by the Spirit of God. So the creation is a primary means through which one comes to know God's mind.

<sup>2</sup>The possibility of knowing things as they really are is contested at the present time (let alone the possibility of knowing God's mind!); first, by those who believe absolute knowledge is impossible (skepticism); and secondly by those who have been influenced by Kant (which includes most Western thinkers). Kant (1781/1965) believed that humans could never know a thing as it truly was; only how it appeared to them according to the categories of thought that they project on to the world. Kant did not deny that there was a real world; he simply denied that humans could ever be sure they knew it as it really was. But this position poses an interesting problem for the Christian: if Kant is correct then people cannot be sure about anything they believe, including their knowledge of God.

Recently, some Christians have pursued a very different tack, attempting to give an account of true beliefs as knowledge that results from the working of reliable belief-producing mechanisms (Alston, 1991; Plantinga, 1993). Plantinga (1983) earlier argued that of the whole set of beliefs one has, some are "basic," that is they are assumed in one's thinking and cannot be proven to be

aim really depends upon one's religious framework. Much of Western science appears content to study phenomenal facts, regardless of God and the ultimate significance of those facts. However, science does not have to limit itself to this. Science in the kingdom cannot be so neatly cut off from all of life and from God's purposes for the creation. Of course, holding that human beings can know what God knows does not mean that they *do* know what God knows. This important problem, however, must be left to others with more competence and space than I have to deal with it.

### *Creation: Out of the King's Mind*

The second component of the context for kingdom psychology is the object of that science: human nature. The Scriptures reveal that all the creation (including human nature) has order, and that order proceeds from and testifies to God (O'Donovan, 1986). God created all things and continues to hold them together by the word of his power (Gen. 1; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3). Jesus Christ is that Word of God (John 1:1-14; cf. Prov. 8:12-36). The Word of God, then, is the source of the inherent lawfulness and order that is found throughout the creation (Frame, 1987), and it is that Word which is the creation's intelligibility, expressed in its structure and development, that is the focus of the scientist. Therefore, whenever the scientist encounters the creation, he or she will encounter some of the glory, wisdom, and power of God (Psa. 19:1-3; Rom. 1:20). This witness is evident within the human as well: one's conscience (Rom.

true to everyone else's satisfaction, for example a belief in God's existence. Not everyone will agree with that belief; nevertheless, the Christian may hold that belief, given all that he or she knows to be true. Some of what the Christian knows to be true includes the teaching of the Scriptures understood by the Holy Spirit, and the experience of God working in his or her life. More recently, Plantinga (1993, 1994) has attempted to describe how humans form true beliefs, asserting that they can assume that their cognitive equipment is generally reliable (all things being equal) because it was designed by God for the purpose of obtaining knowledge about things.

Given such Christian assumptions, it is thoroughly plausible that God knows all things, that humans made in his image can truly know some of those things (Plantinga, 1994), and that they should therefore strive to "duplicate" God's thoughts (Frame, 1987). Hume and Kant might not be satisfied with this set of beliefs but the Christian is warranted in holding it.

The Scriptures themselves legitimate such an approach to knowledge for they provide a profound knowledge "test case" (at least a Christian would think so!). The authors of the Scriptures take a common-sense approach to their own knowledge claims.

2:12-13) and joy (Acts 14:17) testify of God. All of creation is a sacrament (Torrance, 1969) since every aspect of God's creation points beyond itself to its maker and witnesses to God and his wonder. Because God made everything, every fact, every relation between every fact, and every context within which the facts and their relations are situated, both in general and in specific, historically-contingent contexts are what they are because of where they are in the plan of God (Stoker, 1973). As Spier put it (1954), Everything created possesses meaning. In other words the creation is not self-sufficient. Nothing exists by itself or for itself. Everything exists in a coherence with other things. And every aspect of reality points beyond itself towards the other aspects of reality. The creation does not contain any resting point in itself, but it points beyond itself toward the Creator. (p. 20)

To ignore or leave out this component in science is to misunderstand the creation. Stoker (1973) wrote "No area, no fact can be objectively, correctly, and truly interpreted unless it be seen in its absolute dependence upon God" (p. 59). But how can that be? Many unbelievers discover many things without even acknowledging God. Stoker, however, distinguished between the "horizontal meaning-moment" and the "vertical meaning-moment" of a thing. The horizontal is the meaning of a thing that makes it different from other things, for example, that which makes a tree a tree and not a butterfly. This dimension of meaning can often be studied by any competent human being. The vertical meaning-moment is its God-createdness and divine significance, and to appreciate this dimension of meaning requires faithful knowing.

However, though distinguishable, these two

They assume that what they say about God and about human beings is from God, is true, and should be believed; because God is Lord it must be believed. If in fact God has revealed things about himself and human nature through the spoken or written words of humans, then knowledge about God and humans in the Bible is obtainable; and by analogy if true knowledge is obtainable in one book (albeit a very special book), it is obtainable elsewhere. To believe that the Bible has obtainable truth is to indirectly legitimize other sources of information about God's world.

Contemporary Kantians might argue that to posit God's mind is wholly unuseful for epistemology because even if there was such a mind humans would never have any guarantee that they had agreed with it; positing God's mind gives people nothing except perhaps unwarranted self-confidence. However, this criticism is meaningful only in a Kantian universe. The Christian begins by assuming God. It is appropriate for Christians to assume that God's mind is the source of all truth because that is the actual case, given all the evidence that Christians have at their disposal. Just because a Kantian does not find that compelling is not sufficient reason for a Christian to avoid believing in the epistemological ideal of God's mind.

aspects of meaning are united in the mind of God, and so they should be united in the minds of God's servants. To leave out the vertical dimension is to leave out what is arguably the most important feature of any fact: its God-relation. Obviously an unbeliever can know much about a particular species of tree: the shape of its leaves, the type of bark it has, its fruit; but to leave out the Maker of the tree is to miss the pre-eminent fact of the tree. Suppose someone were to say that he or she knew who the founder of operant conditioning was, that he had worked for the government during World War II, that he did most of his research on rats, that he wrote a novel that illustrated his views on human conditioning, and that his name was Albert Bandura. Could one say that that person knew who the founder of operant conditioning was? Similarly, to leave God out of one's understanding of something is to miss what is most important.

This is especially relevant in psychology where the subject matter is so clearly and directly related to God. In such areas the witness of God helps to shape the content of human understanding of the topic itself. How can one understand human beings in God's image without reference to God, that which is being imaged? How can people properly understand things like human motivation, agency, or self-esteem without reflecting upon human-relatedness to God? So, recognizing God is required for the most comprehensive psychology.

### *The Tendency to Obscure the King's Mind*

That humans see things in biased ways has become a truism in social psychology (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). These biases are due to prior learning and training, as well as a pervasive proclivity to see things in ways that enhance one's positive self-assessment (Myers, 1980). However (perhaps related to this self-serving bias), it is apparent that humans also have a bias against God and all that pertains to him. This bias leads people to resist seeing things his way, insofar as such truth bears on their relationship with and accountability to him; so that the closer the topic is to this vertical dimension, the religious core of human existence (Jones, 1986), the more the truth is obscured. Consequently, the human sciences and especially religion are the most affected; mathematics and physics appear to be hardly affected at all.<sup>3</sup> In psychology, this motive alters perception research very little, but distorts judgments about maturity and abnormality significantly more, since such judgments

are more closely connected to one's relation with God. This tendency to obscure the truth has been termed "the noetic effects of sin" (Nash, 1988; Westphal, 1990).

Though Christians have been set free fundamentally from the power of sin through Christ, they are by no means exempt from its influence. In fact, a perverse side-effect of being reconciled to God can be a false self-confidence that leads them to act as if they have an immunity from error and self-serving bias. The results of such attitudes in the church are as disastrous as they are evident. Yet having been freed from the need to defend themselves, Christians, of all people, should be aware of the sinful resistance of the human mind to the truth (as well as the limitations of the human mind due to the finitude of human beings). This awareness should foster the kind of humility that leads the Christian to submit to the truth wherever found, to weight confidence according to the evidence, to seek new knowledge, and to relinquish false beliefs in the light of further evidence.

### *A Gift from the King: Creation Grace*

But if sin is so distorting, how is it that non-Christians know so much that is true? To begin with, the human race is continuing to fulfill the Lord's creation mandate (Van Til, 1959), given in Genesis 1, to subdue the earth. Science is one way fallen humans continue (unwittingly) to obey their God. However, ultimately all good things come from God (James 1:17), and since he is the source of all knowledge and wisdom, whatever any has must have come from him. Isaiah states that God "instructs and teaches" the farmer the skills of farming (28:24-29). God continues to teach his image-bearers. This mercy partially but significantly restrains the noetic effects of sin, allowing God's image-bearers to understand countless facets of his creation, in spite of their alienation from him. This goodness of God to those who continue to resist his purposes has been termed *common grace* (Murray, 1977; C. Van Til, 1972; H. Van Til, 1959). However, *creation grace* is used here to underscore its unity and continuity with God's goodness in creation. Nevertheless, this grace is unmerited,

<sup>3</sup>Therefore, while Christians in all disciplines are bidden to take them captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), the promise of a distinctively Christian mathematics is much less evident than that of the human sciences, and most obviously religion.

given to sinners who live independently of the giver. Moreover, creation grace is given to lead to redemptive grace (Rom. 2:4; O'Donovan, 1986), and so is subordinate to it.<sup>4</sup> The unbeliever should be humbled by God's goodness and turn to him to be reconciled. Regardless, as a result of the goodness of the Lord of psychology, non-Christians in the past century have discovered many important aspects of human nature. Though sin continues to obscure some of the most important aspects, non-Christians are enabled to discern much of God's mind in the creation order, and those in God's kingdom will be eager to celebrate God's goodness wherever it appears.

### *The Kingdom Documents*

Especially in light of the obscuring motive of sin, people are fortunate that the interpretation of God's mind in creation does not occur in a textual vacuum. God has revealed truth verbally in the Old and New Testaments. For all its perspicuity, the mind of God in creation is not as clear as his spoken word (Crabb, 1981). The verbal revelation found in the Bible furnishes the inspired substance of a Christian world view as well as the king's revealed will for his subjects' thought, heart, and life. Together with the Spirit, they provide divinely inspired "spectacles" (Calvin, 1556/1960) without which people are unable to see the rest of God's word in creation the way it really is. Moreover, the Scriptures are a normative good for the soul. One is commanded to receive them and enter experientially into their truth, for one's own good. While admittedly not written in scientific, technical speech, these documents present themes of tremendous importance to psychology from the standpoint of the kingdom (Johnson, 1992). It is only by becoming thoroughly imbued with a scriptural view of human nature that Christians will be able to offer a real alternative to contemporary, secular psychology that is more consonant with God's views.

Down through the ages, Christians have differed in their views of how to relate the Scriptures (and faith and theology) to philosophy and other academic disciplines. One approach was to see God's word in creation and the Scriptures as fundamentally

distinct. Such dualism assumed that truth could be discovered by one's reason (or the practice of science) apart from the revealed truth of the Scriptures, and this approach can be seen in some of the early church fathers as well as later teachers as profound as Aquinas. However, Christians like Aquinas believed there was still a fundamental relation between truth delivered by reason and by revelation through faith. In the modern period, reason's autonomy is radicalized into a liberation from faith, so that reason's (and science's) autonomy has become an unquestioned assumption of modern epistemology (Schaeffer, 1968a; Van Til, 1969). Faith was relegated to subjective opinion, whereas knowledge was (and is) considered fact confirmed by reason (or research).

Currently, evangelical perspectivalism (e.g., Jeeves, 1976; Myers, 1978) largely affirms the religious autonomy of psychology. This position recognizes the importance of religious belief, but argues that good science requires the bracketing of one's faith-beliefs and placing them on a different epistemological level. Certain versions of the concept of integration have also fostered a separation between faith and other forms of knowing. These versions assume the relative independence of theoretical thought in the sciences from faith/theology and imply that the Christian's primary intellectual task is to integrate their religious beliefs with disciplines that have already been developed. However, in such versions, the introduction of faith into the formation of knowledge inevitably becomes a second order process. Psychology is first created by (mostly) those outside the kingdom (who cannot see things theocentrically); and only then is it related to the Christian faith. The problem is that such versions of integration allow faith to be brought into the project too late to be of much formative assistance. Moreover, though appreciative of the effects of creation grace, such approaches are relatively naive about the noetic effects of sin.

Another ancient approach to the relation of faith/Scripture/theology to philosophy and other disciplines has emphasized the oneness of God's word in creation and Scripture, the dependence of all theoretical thought on issues of faith, and the ultimate unity of human thought in the mind of God. This position maintains that one's ultimate faith-beliefs form a special class of knowledge—beliefs that logically precede and provide the foundation for all other knowledge. Christian thinkers as diverse as Augustine, Bonaventure, Pascal, Kuyper, C. Van Til,

<sup>4</sup> O'Donovan (1986) asserts that the creation order, distorted through the fall, is vindicated and most fully realized through redemption. Creation grace then is necessarily subordinate to and fulfilled in redemptive grace, both proceeding from the one good will of God.



Dooyeweerd, and Plantinga argue (in different ways) that everyone possesses faith-beliefs of some sort and these faith-beliefs may legitimately shape what constitutes other knowledge in one's epistemological project.

A word dualism which separates God's word in creation and Scripture must in some way be overcome if one is to develop a vision of human nature that reveals the unity of these two forms of divine discourse that are already united in God. From the Christian standpoint God's mind is the ultimate concern of all science. Moreover, Christ is the Word of God, the singular expression of God's mind. Consequently, he is the integration of the created and revealed rational orders. God's mind revealed in creation and in Scripture is a harmonious unity expressed through Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). It is, then, misguided to allow a secular understanding of one aspect of God's word (the creation order) to develop autonomously (especially since it is largely produced by those working on a non-kingdom agenda), and then seek to relate it to the other, post-facto.<sup>5</sup> To gain greater consonance with God's mind, it is necessary to do psychology by dialectically relating the two aspects of the one Word continuously, from the start (using a hermeneutical circle, Palmer, 1969). This should foster the realization of Christ's lordship in psychology more thoroughly than a dualistic approach does, by allowing biblical teachings to suggest potentially fruitful courses of research, theory-building, and counseling, and by permitting a more radical critique of secular models in modern psychology, ultimately leading to greater validity in psychology. (The program of Christian psychology does not reject integration, but it also does not see integration as the sole task of the Christian.)

### *Kingdom Responses to the Expression of God's Mind*

The final component of a kingdom psychology is the Christian himself or herself. The Christian is called upon to respond to God and the revelation of his mind as a kingdom member.

***Kingdom knowing and fearing the Lord.*** The book of Proverbs contains the provocative claim

<sup>5</sup>This, of course, also means that theology cannot be done in an experiential or creation vacuum either. The further removed God's word in Scripture is from God's word in creation, the less relevant to one's life it seems.

that the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge (1:7) and wisdom (9:10). Before one can know anything in the comprehensive sense that will be discussed in this section, one must humbly acknowledge and revere the Maker of all things. Von Rad (1972) wrote that the wise men of Israel did not posit a separation between faith and knowledge because they could not even conceive of any reality not controlled by Yahweh. Knowing was an ethical and religious activity for the sage, conducted under the authority of the Lord of life. Moreover, this teaching of Proverbs suggests that the elders of Israel saw that the fundamental danger in the search for knowledge was beginning wrongly, beginning with pride and a neglect of God (Von Rad, 1972). Von Rad goes on to say that

Faith does not—as is popularly believed today—hinder knowledge; on the contrary, it is what liberates knowledge, enables it really to come to the point and indicates to it its proper place in the sphere of varied, human activity. In Israel, the intellect never freed itself from or became independent of the foundation of its whole existence, that is its commitment to Yahweh. (p. 68)

Of course someone might argue that this teaching of Proverbs is referring to common-sense knowledge or moral wisdom like Proverbs, not the sort of scientific reasoning in psychology. However, the wise of Israel were not ignorant of scientific understanding. Solomon, for example, was known for having an immense knowledge of animals and birds (1 Kings 4:29-34). But more fundamentally, Proverbs is explicitly addressing the starting point of knowing. Why would the fear of God be disposed of at some higher, more abstract level of reasoning? If anything, it would seem to be even more important there, to keep one from arrogance. The expression "the fear of God" is simply a short-hand way of describing the inherently theocentric, kingdom-context of all legitimate knowing activity.

This use of the fear of God suggests that a Christian's response in science must be one of obedience. According to Frame (1987), knowledge for the Christian goes hand in hand with obedience. "Neither is unilaterally prior to the other, either temporally or causally. They are inseparable and simultaneous" (p. 43). Similarly O'Donovan (1986) states "Knowledge of the natural order is moral knowledge, and as such it is co-ordinated with obedience. There can be no true knowledge of that order without loving acceptance of it and conformity to it ... (p. 87). Christians obey God by follow-

ing him in their truth-seeking wherever he leads.

*Declare "the Lord reigns."* Simply pondering some of the mysteries in nature (for example, how infants are formed in the womb; Psa. 139:13-15), inevitably produces joyful praise in Christians. The wonder and glory of the creation provokes a response of awe, and an appreciation of the beauty and complexity of the creation as well as its Creator. Given that the tasks of the research scientist, teacher, or counselor include reflecting on such beauty, it would seem appropriate that he or she regularly slip into heart-felt worship throughout the course of a day's activities. Such praise is at least part of what it means to live in God's kingdom.

The absence of such praise in modern psychology provides further evidence that this world is alienated from its maker. Today the Lord of the universe has been banished from his creation and relegated to church buildings and funerals. The Christian is called upon to declare the praises of God among the nations (Psa. 18:49; 57:9; 96:3; 108:3; 96:10). Practicing psychology in the kingdom then inevitably includes sincere declarations of praise and acknowledgements of his lordship.

*Contending for the King.* Kingdom psychology also involves contending against that which is opposed to the King. While God is seeking all to join his side, his will continues to be resisted on earth. Human history consists of a fundamental communal struggle which will endure until Jesus comes again (Berkhof, 1979; Plantinga, 1990; Schaeffer, 1968b). During this era Christians are called to participate in this supernatural conflict. The Christian psychology teacher, student, researcher, and counselor are clearly implicated in the contest. The field of psychology is not neutral; it belongs to God. Yet, modern psychology demonstrates a pervasive alienation from its master; God is not in any of its theories or practices. It is a set of systems almost completely secular in its ultimate beliefs, interpretations, and conclusions.

Paul recognized this contest at the level of knowledge. In 1 Corinthians 1-3 he distinguished between two kinds of knowing: the wisdom of the world or of men (1:20; 2:5; 3:19) and fleshly knowing (3:3) on the one hand, and the wisdom of God (1:21) and words taught by the Spirit (2:13) on the other. He warned the Colossians not to be taken captive (a war metaphor) "through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than

according to Christ" (Col. 2:8). Apparently they were exposed to certain errors that Paul saw were heretical. He told them to avoid capture by the thinking of the old age (truth that comes strictly from fallen human sources) and to be rooted in Christ who is the source of the new wisdom. You died with Christ, he wrote, to the elementary teachings of the world (2:20); live new in Christ, confident that your new self "is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (3:10). The kingdom has a new wisdom and to participate in the kingdom means to submit to that wisdom and reject the wisdom of this age/world (Dennison, 1985). In 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, Paul makes quite explicit the challenge facing the believer:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ ...

Paul called his readers to resist unbelief wherever it appeared and to examine every thought, in order to submit all rebel thoughts to the "obedience of Christ." For the Christian psychologist this would include wrestling with the theories and interpretations of research that make up modern psychology and sifting out the ungodly speculations and prideful independence that are woven into the modern version of the discipline, often so subtly that little that is directly subversive will be apparent to the untrained eye. However, assumptions like humans are no more than organisms or computer-like thinking machines, humans are largely not responsible for their behavior, morality is biology, the highest goal of therapy is self-determined happiness, and normality cannot be absolutely determined, pervade the writings of modern psychology. The kingdom psychologist is called upon to pull out such threads in the tapestry of psychology and reweave the discipline with God's assumptions.

Abraham Kuyper, theologian, founder of the Free University of Amsterdam, and prime minister of Holland (1904-1908) gave much thought to the constructive place of the Christian in the world. He argued (1898) that thinking minds have been separated into two distinct camps because of *regeneration*, the change in the Christian due to Christ's salvation. According to Kuyper, as the power of regeneration is realized, it leads necessarily to the formation of two kinds of science: one founded on unbelieving principles and inevitably misshapen by sin, and the other

founded upon faith in God and submissive to Scripture. He believed that the regenerate and unregenerate are working on essentially two different projects, each going in different directions. Religiously speaking there cannot be any ultimate unity of science because the existence of God's kingdom has created a different set of sciences (kingdom-sciences?) that are conducted to bring glory to God and that are shaped by different assumptions and a different agenda than are sciences created by the non-Christian. The assumptions of the two groups may so differ that even what constitutes grounds for argument may not be shared. Following Augustine, he believed that regeneration leads inevitably to a fundamental antithesis between the city (or kingdom) of God and the city of Man.

Yet Kuyper (1898) recognized that unbelievers can obtain truth. He wrote that scientists practicing the two types of science will not differ in measuring or observing; likewise logic and language are formally the same for both groups. Consequently, many theories and interpretations of data will be valid. (His work on common grace is more extensive than perhaps anyone in the church's history, H. Van Til, 1959. Unfortunately, most of it remains in Dutch.) However, Kuyper believed that the noetic effects of sin predispose unbelievers to obscure the truth at key points, thus resulting in sciences that are proceeding in a non-theocentric direction.

According to Kuyper, then, part of contesting for God's truth in his kingdom involves identifying the truth used in the service of other gods and claiming it for its true source and owner. However, a great difficulty remains: How does the believer discern what is valid as he or she contends for the faith within psychology? This task is incredibly difficult in the present situation, given the profound social pressures and constraints on Christians at the academic power centers of modern culture to think secularly and suppress Christian interpretation. This context can lead to compromises with secular thinking, a result termed *synthesis* (Runner, 1982). Through education and exposure to non-Christian thought, before and after becoming a Christian, the believer inevitably mixes truth and error. However, Runner argues Christians are called to the task of purifying, or reforming, their thinking from secular or pagan influence to increasingly closer conformity to the word of God in creation and Scripture. Part of our task as kingdom-psychologists would therefore include self-criticism, so that we resist our own ten-

dency towards synthesis with non-Christian thought, even while we take advantage of all that is truly good in secular psychology.

What are some psychological topics that should be contended for as Christians interact with those in modern psychology? Because of different assumptions, some topics would be nearly futile to discuss (e.g., sin or the Holy Spirit). However, conversation could occur (and has) on a variety of other subjects, including topics like an emphasis on personhood across the discipline (Van Leeuwen, 1985), values in counseling (Tjeltveit, 1989), the positive contributions of one's family and social tradition to self formation, the importance of narrative for moral development (Vitz, 1990), ethical criteria for establishing abnormality and psychological well-being, the influence of individualism and capitalism on the counseling profession (Dueck, 1995), the validity of evil and guilt, the reality of volition and the impact of human choice on neurochemistry, and the value of religion for psychology (Jones, 1994).

It should be underscored that the Lord desires that this conflict not be engaged with worldly weapons of slander and arrogance, but kingdom "weapons" of love, humility, and respect for all God's image-bearers. The kingdom is not antithetical to a principled pluralism that listens respectfully to and learns from others, from the standpoint of the faith.

*Cooperating with those outside the kingdom.* Related to the previous point, many Christian psychologists are working in areas that are relatively uncontentious: e.g., the construction of achievement tests, vision research, treatment of mental retardation, or employee adjustment. Such work usually involves cooperative activity with non-Christians. Though obvious, it should be stated explicitly that such activity, when conducted by faith, consists in a faithful participation in God's creation grace and is legitimate and valuable kingdom work. Such endeavors are no different than teaching at a public school or working in the health services. Christians ought to cooperate fully with all who are working with creation grace. Wariness is only justified when the activity threatens the higher good of redemptive grace.

*Developing a Christian psychology.* As part of the Christian's response to God's mind in creation, he or she is called to be re-creative. Christian psychologists have more to do than parasitically sift the writings of their secular colleagues. The Christian faith has its own agenda that may or may not resemble the agenda of any secular psychology. Within the king-

dom of God, the Christian psychological community is set free to chart new territory in psychology. By becoming immersed in Scripture and the Christian tradition, Christian psychologists may be enabled to discover new facts and theories, devising new lines of research to more accurately understand human nature the way it really is, the way God sees it. Christian psychologists are free to take more seriously the reality of human choice and personal responsibility; agape love, hope, joy, humility, and other distinctively Christian virtues; sin and its development, guilt, and hypocrisy; the demonic; biblically-influenced definitions of abnormality and maturity; spiritual formation according to grace; the indwelling and power of the Holy Spirit; the development of saving faith; the impact of union with Christ on one's self-understanding, self-efficacy, and locus of control; and theocentric motivation; to name a few. Doing so would likely lead to a body of research and theory that is qualitatively distinct from the production of modern psychology. Christians in psychology must do more than simply contribute to the field of psychology as it is. They have an obligation to God and his people to work towards a psychology that is thoroughly consistent with a Christian framework, regardless of its acceptability by secularists. Because of its difficulty, this part of the task has been little realized thus far; however, some promising work has been done in various quarters (e.g., Adams, 1979; Anderson, 1990; Benner, 1988; Crabb, 1988; Evans, 1989; Narramore, 1984; Oden, 1990; Powlison, 1988; Roberts, 1990, 1993; and others).

*Integrating within the kingdom.* None of this means that integration is unnecessary. However, it should be seen as secondary, rather than primary; subordinate to the task of developing a framework, body of research, theory, and practice more submissive to God's whole mind than what is acceptable to modern psychology. This priority suggests a shift from traditional notions of integration which have viewed it as fundamentally interdisciplinary rather than intercommunal. The kingdom psychologist does not seek to integrate faith with psychology, for psychology, as all of life, is an expression of faith. Rather the goal is to figure out how to make use of psychological work produced by different faith communities (e.g., the modern). The problem is not a category problem as much as a translation problem (cf. MacIntyre, 1988). This type of problem requires one to work at understanding what that community means before translating or reconceptualizing their

psychological work into what Christians mean (as opposed to the traditional view which accepts a text's meaning as relatively unproblematic). When integration is seen as the primary duty, a fateful (dualistic) step has already taken place: a rift has occurred between faith and reason/science that integration then attempts to bridge. Though strangely compatible with modernity, this view of integration unfortunately undermines the interpretive role a Christian framework should play in one's thought. In addition, it increases the probability that Christians may unwittingly synthesize unexamined secular assumptions into their belief-system. Lastly, it limits the Christian's creativity, making it impossible to move conceptually beyond the work of other communities.

Nevertheless, having said all that, the research and theory of those outside God's kingdom should be received thankfully as due to his creation grace, to the extent that it accurately reflects the created order. This perspective is especially necessary today since the majority of good psychological research is being done by non-Christians. Consequently, integration, properly conceived, remains an important task.

Integration within the kingdom involves at least five steps. The first step is simply the activation of one's Christian evaluative framework (including faith-beliefs like the Christian story—creation, fall, redemption, and consummation—and other beliefs that relate to human nature, e.g., personhood). Activating this world view schema is a prerequisite for Christian critical thinking; otherwise, one's faith beliefs form a ghetto in one's minds, providing no evaluative influence on the secular material one reads. Second, the attempt is made to understand the finding or concept that is the focus of integration. This understanding will involve reference to the ultimate framework of the author/school in order to adequately interpret its full sense. Third, the finding or concept should be assessed in terms of its compatibility with the Scriptures as well as whether it meets other validity criteria, including theoretic support, statistical procedures, research design, sampling, empirical evidence, and so forth. Problems like sampling or extreme heterodoxy (e.g., the assertion that all humans have a god-self within), would undermine confidence in the finding and could necessitate its outright rejection. This step has long been recognized as essential for Christians in psychology (e.g., Crabb, 1977). If the concept passes this test, its degree of theoretic complexity and, correspondingly, the level of integration that is involved (Larzelere, 1980) will need to be assessed. Simple

physiological facts require little in the way of reinterpretation (perhaps simply acknowledging their createdness), whereas therapeutic facts may require a more radical transformation. Lastly, depending upon these prior judgments, the task of Christian translation or reconceptualization follows. This step entails making sense of the original finding or concept according to a Christian evaluative framework and grammar.

As a first example, consider the relation of positive illusions and mental health. Self-deception has been found to result in better adaptiveness and greater overall happiness, which has led some to conclude that some self-deception is essentially good (Taylor, 1989). A Christian can appreciate such correlations however and still recognize that self-deception is usually an evil, so that the good consequences of such cognitive activity are only relatively good, but do not necessarily bring glory to God. Here, integration involves a reassessment of the moral evaluation of a finding. Contrary to positivism, such moral evaluations are a part of psychology (as evidenced by secular evaluations of self-deception like Taylor's). As another example, the naturalistic orientation of locus of control (LOC) research has led to the assumption that there are but two LOC orientations that form the ends of a continuum: internal and external. However, a sophisticated Christian understanding is necessarily more complex. God can be viewed as the ultimate source of one's goodness with that knowledge serving to increase one's sense of self-efficacy. A Christian can then be both strongly external and internal in relation with God. In this example, integration involves the assumption of modern LOC concepts along with the recognition of a Christian's unique, dependent relation with the Creator, which results in more complicated LOC schemata (Stephens, 1985).

Maslow's concept of self-actualization requires even greater care in integration. From a distance, the notions of self-actualization and sanctification appear somewhat similar. However, upon closer examination, one sees that Maslow's notion was expressed within a linguistic community and naturalistic framework in which the self is seen as the supreme, orient-

<sup>6</sup>This is not to equate self-actualization with a crude narcissism. That there is qualitative difference between the two processes is beyond doubt. Nevertheless, Maslow's view of human maturity and the people he selected as exemplars both preclude the possibility that orthodox Muslims, Jews, or evangelicals be seen as self-actualizing. It also seems beyond doubt that Maslow's concept is as much an expression as it is a documentation of 20th century American individualism.

ing principle in human life (Maslow, 1954, 1970).<sup>6</sup> For the Christian, however, relationship is prior, preeminently one's relationship with God. Because God is the center of the universe, Christians throughout the ages have believed that the highest motivational state of which a person was capable necessarily involved experiencing one's Creator/Redeemer. While one may recognize similarities between the peak experiences of true Christians and non-Christians, Maslow himself did not believe dogmatic religion was compatible with self-actualization. Christians, too, should be careful not to equate formal similarity with actual identity. Baboons and humans have many similarities, but the differences are quite profound and are the reason they are grouped in different families. Overlooking such differences would not be tolerated in biology. The problem is even more serious with psychological concepts like self-actualization because considerations regarding the ultimate motivation principle of human life are so dependent on socially-constructed formulations that involve fundamental world view, moral, and theological commitments. Translation here may require leaving the term self-actualization to the humanists. The integrative task will lead the Christian community to learn from Maslow's research regarding the highest form of human life that modern humans outside Christ attain and to note similarities with Christian experience; yet one may need to label the Christian correlate as Christ-actualization or something similar, communicating the inherent theocentric relational base of the highest level of human motivation from a Christian standpoint, and attempt to describe its unique features.

Because of God's creation grace, the vast majority of the theory and research of non-Christians will be valuable. Rarely will any seriously proposed psychological finding or theory have no truth-value. When error is found, it is usually a parasite on truth. Consequently, along with any modification, the translation will require the preservation of whatever conceptual material is deemed valid. (It should be added that throughout the integrative process, there is always a need to be open to having one's evaluative framework corrected within certain theoretic, theological, and epistemological bounds).

Not everyone in the kingdom, however, agrees about the value of integration. Those in the biblical counseling movement question the merit of receiving insights from non-Christians regarding the soul, particularly psychotherapeutic insights (Adams, 1973, Bobgan & Bobgan, 1987; Ganz, 1993; MacArthur &

Mack, 1994; e.g., Master's College does not have a psychology major). Admittedly, their primary concern is counseling; and it is here that their criticisms are the most compelling. They have sounded a needed alarm in the kingdom about the lordship of Christ in counseling, particularly in their concern that a secular confidence in the self or human strategies is replacing faithful confidence in the power of God to bring healing to the soul. The biblical counseling movement has seized upon what are arguably two of the most important issues in human life: who shall be Lord and how shall one change into his likeness? However, out of reaction to the synthesis of many well-meaning Christian therapists; and because of an extreme emphasis on the antithesis and sin; poor, unsympathetic scholarship; and in some cases a lack of biblical charity (e.g., Bobgan & Bobgan, 1989), their critique of modern psychology and integration has greatly oversimplified the interpretation of secular psychology texts and led to much confusion among God's people. Though there are differences in this group (e.g., Adams, 1986, has acknowledged that psychology can be legitimate), their general approach borders on the fundamentalistic and reactionary. They are guilty of not taking seriously enough God's creation grace and seem largely ignorant of the ways God has designed genuine knowledge-formation to proceed in a pluralistic culture. Non-Christian bias has influenced the content and practice of modern psychology, but it is also the case that God has revealed so much about the brain, learning, human development, motivation, social influences, forms of abnormality, and even helpful counseling practices through the labors of secular psychologists. The Lord reigns, and he uses even those who oppose him to bring glory to him (Van Til, 1972). In full agreement with biblical counseling's demand for an increasingly theocentric orientation, kingdom psychologists should, nevertheless, gratefully use God's gifts to non-Christians, through the Christian critical thinking process known as integration, in a subordinate way that reconceptualizes the truth under the authority of God and his word.

*Viewing humans multidimensionally and hierarchically.* Humans are extraordinarily complex; "The inward thought and the heart of a man are unsearchable" (Psa. 64:6). Only God has exhaustive knowledge of human beings. To know human nature as fully as possible, it is necessary to explore it from many different vantages, including the biological (genetic, hormonal, neurological, morpho-

logical), environmental (physical, interpersonal, economic, cultural), behavioral, cognitive, affective, motivational, volitional, biographical, characterological, ethical, and religious; and using many different methods, including observational, case study, cross-cultural, comparative, experimental, statistical, narrative, discursive, deconstructive, and phenomenological. Many of these perspectives and methods have obviously been explored and used in modern psychology. Yet because of the complexity of the task and because of neo-positivist and naturalistic assumptions that limit the explicit use of values within the discipline, modern psychology has neglected some perspectives and been unable to provide an overall evaluative framework within which to interpret, place, and relate the myriads of facts that have been found thus far. However, knowing things like God knows them requires seeing as much of their multidimensional complexity as possible and also means understanding them in their hierarchical interrelations. All perspectives on human nature are important, but some are more important than others, for example, the specifically human and especially the religious dimensions. As an example, biological and behavioral findings need to be interpreted within a larger person-centered framework that recognizes human choice and responsibility, and this framework, in turn, should be interpreted within a theocentric framework in which all humans are understood before God. Progress in the articulation of such an interpretive framework can be seen in the work of Evans (1989), Farnsworth (1985), and Van Leeuwen (1985).

*Working towards the King's mind.* Lastly, kingdom psychologists are to attempt to realize God's understanding of the human *telos* (or goal) through their activities within the field. God knows what humans should be like. Through Scripture, experience, and research people can come to an understanding of God's desires and ideals for humankind. Serving the Lord requires the Christian psychologist to implement God's revealed values and norms in his or her own life, to help others become what God desires them to be, and to do what he or she can to bring in justice for those who suffer. Consequently, Christians in psychology will by faith be drawn closer to God's will in their personal lives: dealing ethically with others, avoiding biblically-defined immorality and deceit, and helping others self-sacrificially (what Farnsworth, 1985, has termed "embodied integration"). Going further, the Christian researcher might

be drawn to do research that focuses on the needs of the poor or handicapped; while the psychology teacher would avoid condoning homosexual behavior when teaching on sexual orientation, and yet foster awareness of the sin of homophobia. Envisioning the human *telos* for his counselees, the Christian psychotherapist would counsel according to God's understanding of human maturity by wisely and lovingly, but inevitably, seeking to foster a deeper, richer relationship between God and their clients, as appropriate. Also, it would seem that therapists in the kingdom would not allow financial considerations alone to dictate caseload but would reach out to those who have no insurance and cannot pay middle-class rates (Dueck, 1995).

Obviously, this kind of work has been done for decades. However, a distinction should be made between kingdom activity that deals in redemptive grace: done in and for the church within an explicit Christian context; and kingdom activity that deals in creation grace: ministry to others that does not address the religious core of their life, at least not directly, done within a broader cultural context than the church. The former type of kingdom activity includes developing a Christian psychology, teaching psychology at Christian institutions, counseling Christians, assessing and counseling of missionaries, writing to the Christian community, and training families or lay counselors in churches, all with overt reliance upon the Bible and the Holy Spirit. Kingdom activity that deals in creation grace, on the other hand, includes things like helping parolees stay employed, assessing the educational needs of learning-disabled children, doing vocational counseling, teaching at secular institutions, counseling disaster victims, helping families learn to communicate, writing for the secular community, or administering medication to alleviate depression without an ongoing, explicit acknowledgement of the Bible or God's presence. Such work fundamentally is a good that testifies of God's goodness and manifests God's love through Christians to their neighbors.

Yet, as I indicated above, there is an underlying unity between creation and redemptive grace in that the former is given to lead to the latter. Creation grace kingdom activity ultimately serves God's redemptive purposes because it points to the One who is the Savior of all (1 Tim. 4:10). Moreover, Christians need to be strategically placed and wisely involved in the life of post-Christian culture. Christians ought to be prayerfully committed to this type

of work, so long as it does nothing to contradict the program of redemptive grace.

The problem is that Christians in psychology may unwittingly work with non-Christians in ways that go against the agenda of redemptive grace and God's creation order. For example, a counselee might seek to alleviate guilt feelings he suffers because of his ongoing extra-marital affair. To help the counselee quell his conscience without addressing the sin would, from a Christian standpoint, be unethical and anti-redemptive. Living in the kingdom requires psychologists to do all they do for God's glory, even if it goes counter to the ethical norms of non-Christians. According to the fundamentally individualistic, secular counseling community, counselors must work within the value-system of the counselee. However, in some cases, the clients' difficulties are a function of the pathology of their values. With such persons, the best thing the kingdom-minded counselor could do would be to help them to find better values: the values of the kingdom. Of course, this must be done with integrity, wisdom, and respect for the counselee. Moreover, this may have economic implications, for a respect for the client will sometimes lead to the recommendation that a client find another counselor who shares more of his or her values. Nevertheless, the kingdom-oriented counselor cannot contribute to a client's journey away from the kingdom. Much counseling about issues relating to moral choices, motivation, guilt, purpose in life, interpretation of stress, and self-acceptance has an essentially religious core. Great care must be exercised by Christian psychologists that they not directly or passively confirm counselees in a non-theocentric direction. Whether acting primarily with Christians or non-Christians, the kingdom psychologist seeks to help others move as much in the direction of God's mind regarding human normality and maturity as is possible and to do as little as possible that would unwittingly promote movement further away from God.

The believing psychologist is called upon to participate in the kingdom of God. The secular powers that basically control psychology's standards, journals, and educational institutions will make such work difficult; it makes even the understanding of such a task difficult, especially for those trained in such a context. However, the Christian psychologist who is participating in the kingdom of God will be moved to call into question the assumptions of this age and resist conformity to it, and seek transforma-

tion by the renewing of the mind, heart, and life, to joyfully serve the Lord of psychology.

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