

# The Three Faces of Integration

Eric L. Johnson

*The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

Late modernism has had a profound effect on Christian intellectuals. The “integration” term/concept/practice was developed so that Christians could participate in and contribute to American intellectual life with integrity. Three approaches to integration have arisen in psychology and therapy: *dissociated integration*, which, overwhelmed by late modernism, practices according to its rules and so unwittingly maintains an implicit separation between the Christian faith and psychology and therapy; *strategic integration*, which also practices according to late modern rules of discourse, but does so to impact contemporary psychology and therapy as much as possible; and *maximal integration*, which practices according to Christian rules of discourse for the Christian community and seeks to integrate the Christian faith and psychology and therapy to the fullest extent possible. Strategic and maximal integration are both essential to the fulfillment of God’s purposes in the world today.

Unused by previous Christians, the term/concept/practice of “integration” arose in the last half of the 20th century, becoming a virtual shibboleth among evangelicals in institutions of higher learning and the Christian counseling community.<sup>1</sup> Concepts as popular as integration will inevitably be understood and practiced differently by different people. I made a number of distinctions regarding the concept of integration in *Foundations for Soul Care* (Johnson, 2007a), but one cannot say everything one would like to say in one book (though no one can say I didn’t try!). In this essay we will consider three of the most important kinds of integration practiced among Christians in psychology, psychotherapy and counseling.

I bring two potentially contradictory commitments to this essay. As the editor of a book (Johnson (Ed.), 2010) on the most common evangelical approaches to psychology, I am committed to promoting dialogue among them (pp. 299-301). At the same time, I am personally committed to advancing the Christian psychology approach, so I am not neutral regarding them. The dialectical harmony of both commitments is found in Bahktin’s understanding of dialogue as constituting something of the essence of human nature (Holquist, 2002). Far more than the mere sharing of perspectives, true dialogue entails the kind of love and respect that looks to dialogue partners as true friends who have sufficient ego-

strength to handle mutual questioning and even challenge, confident that all will benefit from the process. Shall we begin?

## Integration is a Christian Good

Later in the essay, attention will be drawn to the weaknesses of one kind of integration, so I want to begin by making clear my belief that integration is in principle a deeply Christian ideal. The triune God is the ultimate source of all truth perceived/received by humans—biblical truth as well as the rest of truth found in the created order—so the Christian activity of integration—motivated by a love of all truth that draws together all different kinds of truth—glorifies God and should excite the hearts of all lovers of Christ, who is truth incarnate (John 14:7) and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). Integration is a necessary function of being made in God’s image, beings he designed to be finite representations (or signs) of his infinite understanding and love. The human sciences are gifts of God and fruits of creation grace, a truth that cannot be overturned by its misuse. On the contrary, the wise appropriation of knowledge obtained by those outside the faith and wise collaboration with them in the culture-forming activity of science, in light of Scripture and all that the triune God has done for humanity in Christ, are Christian virtues. Integration then, in principle, is a calling from God.

## A Plurality of Integrations

Integration, however, is also an ideal, and fallen, finite creatures like ourselves will find it impossible to realize the ideal perfectly. Indeed, the Archetype of human integration, understanding,

The author wishes to thank Alan C. Tjeltveit and Mark R. McMinn for illuminating feedback on an earlier draft. Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Eric L. Johnson, Ph.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, PO Box 2381, 2825 Lexington Rd., Louisville, KY, 40222; ejohnson@sbt.edu.

and love is the omniscient and perfectly wise God himself, in whom all knowledge and value are already one—eternally integral—known and felt comprehensively and exhaustively, grasped in perfect balance and in proper relation to everything (including God himself). Our fallenness and finitude guarantee that our integration will forever fall short of the glory of God. There are, therefore, in principle an infinite number of possible integrations that humans could come up with. So it is no surprise that there are many different kinds of integration here on earth. The diversity can nonetheless be categorized according to their common features. In *Foundations* (Johnson, 2007a) I distinguished between strong integration (that takes the task of integration very seriously) and weak integration (which labels itself integration, but shows little evidence of actually doing it). Here I expand on that analysis.

### Two Kinds of Human Science

Abraham Kuyper was an extraordinary Dutch theologian and politician, who wrestled deeply with the worldview and intellectual changes occurring in the West at the turn of the last century. Building on Augustine's belief that humanity was divided fundamentally into two communities: the City of Humanity (which includes all humans by nature, who are alienated from God from birth) and the City of God (open to everyone, but which includes those who have been reconciled to God through faith in Christ, and born again, spiritually), Kuyper (1898) argued that regeneration (the renewal of the Christian mind, heart, and life that begins when one believes in Christ) should lead to the development of a *Christian* version of the human sciences which is based on a Christian worldview, rather than the naturalistic worldview that was becoming dominant in his day.

As a result, a Kuyperian would read the history of Western psychology as originating in the classical psychology of the City of Humanity (e.g., Plato and Aristotle) and the biblical psychology of the City of God, with the latter coming to ascendance over the first five centuries of the Church and dominating Western psychology until the 1800's, when the City of Humanity took over cultural supremacy and began to develop its own psychology, now based primarily on the worldview of naturalism.

Yet Kuyper (1998) also rightly appreciated the good evident in the lives and activities of

those outside the Christian faith through God's common grace (though I prefer the term "creation grace"), such as their ability to understand well many specific aspects of the world, in spite of their lack of grasping properly the all-encompassing spiritual dimension of life. Consequently, integration is necessary for every thinking person who does more than recite the Bible. The major concern about the task of integration concerns the issue of fidelity to the core beliefs, values, and practices of the Christian faith, because of the existence of integration's evil twin, *syncretism*, the gradual undermining of a religious tradition by alien beliefs, values, and practices, a problem that an Augustinian-Kuyperian understanding of the "Two Cities" and their respective human sciences makes paramount.

### An Archaeological Exploration: Aerial Survey

Integration with respect to the contemporary field of psychology is made particularly difficult by the peculiar challenges of late modernism. Adapting Foucault's (1972) concept of archaeology—the study of the discursive practices of an era that unconsciously shape its thought and activities—we will attempt a little archaeological investigation regarding the late modern concept/practice of integration. Unfortunately, we only have time to conduct an aerial survey (see Kelly & Thomas, 2009, for reference to this kind of archaeological research).

In seeking to understand the human sciences of the modern era, rather than focus on the more traditional, modern interest in the Subject of science (the scientist) or the Object of a science (in the case of psychology, individual human beings), Foucault (1972) focused his attention on scientific *discourse* in its historical contexts. He argued that scientific activity is shaped by rules of discourse and practice that regulate what scientists can say and even affect what is conceptually possible, rules that are enforced by designated "authorities" (Gutting, 1989). According to MacIntyre (1990), such rules and authorities in part constitute an intellectual community and its tradition. In light of these considerations, we will examine some aspects of late modernism in order to understand the rules of discourse and practice that operate within the contemporary field of psychology, which in turn shaped the development of the late modern concept of integration.

### Some Features of Late Modernism

The formation of modernism was discussed in my introduction to the *Five Views* book (Johnson, 2010). In reaction to the seemingly intractable religious conflicts of the 1600's, early modernists formed the following assumptions.

1. Special revelation and tradition can no longer be regarded as ultimate authorities, because appeals to such sources obviously cannot resolve the serious religious-intellectual (and societal) conflicts confronting Europe.
2. Human knowledge must be based on a more sure foundation, and that foundation is presumed to be located in human reason especially but also in human consciousness and experience—basically all aspects of the individual self.
3. The goal of human knowledge is universal understanding, obtained by objective means that all interested parties can use, thus privileging no one perspective and granting a functional epistemological equality to all.
4. The natural sciences are held up as the model for human understanding, since they demonstrate the power of human reason and observation (experience) to yield universal knowledge. The natural sciences are characterized by the combination of careful empirical investigation with the application of mathematics (one of reason's most powerful tools), which can yield formulas that correspond to causal relations in the world, as demonstrated magisterially in Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*.<sup>2</sup> (p. 15)

Most of the early modernist thinkers were religious (Descartes, Locke, and a century later Kant). By the time that the natural sciences came to be applied to the human sciences—in the late 1800's—other intellectual currents were added to this stream, modifying it enough to warrant adding the modifier “late modernism.”<sup>3</sup> The most important of these currents for our purposes was secularization. Taylor (2007) suggests that secularization in the West consists of the exclusion of religious discourse from the public square, including science and therapy; the decrease of religious belief and practice; and the increased awareness and viability of belief options other than Christianity. According to Smith (2003), by the mid-20th century a secular revolution had occurred that had successfully taken over the intellectual institutions of the West. Late modern psychology is one child of the union of secular-

ization and the application of natural science methods to the human sciences.

How can Christianity explain the existence of secularism? One of the terrible consequences of sin was the fundamental rupture that occurred between faith in God and his Word and the rest of one's life. Such a fracture originated in the serpent's temptation to think autonomously from God (“Did God actually say... ?; Genesis 3:1b), and it became “normal” for humans after the Fall, when God was rejected as the Lord of our hearts, lives, and relationships. The secularism of late modernism is simply a contemporary cultural expression of this native tendency in a humanity alienated from its Creator.

Another important aspect of late modernism that follows from the secularization of Western culture deserves mention: the centrality of the autonomous Self (Taylor, 1989). In the absence of a sovereign deity who rules over human affairs, religious, ethical, and axiological (values) norms are believed to be ultimately determined by the individual self. According to Christianity, humans are necessarily religious. Made in God's image, humans necessarily live for some ultimate concern(s). The underlying “genius” of late modernism was to explicitly reject religious terminology, while repressing the religious motive and investing it solely but implicitly in the Self.<sup>4</sup>

### How the Rules of Late Modern Discourse Have Shaped the Concept/Practice of Integration

As modern evangelicalism awoke from its fundamentalist slumbers in the mid-20th century, it encountered a post-secular-revolutionary intellectual world where belief in God was being ridiculed as nonscientific and irrational, and in psychology, as infantile or even a pathological delusion. The evangelical concept of integration arose, in part, to help Christians study and contribute to psychology, and practice therapy within a dominant secular culture that was relatively antagonistic to religious faith.

### The Great Psychology-Theology Disciplinary Divide

One of the striking changes in the Western intellectual landscape fostered by modernism has been the fragmentation of human knowledge. The analytic solvent of modern scientific reason that had so successfully broken down chemical reality into its constituent elements was being used on everything. This, combined with the explosion of scientific knowledge, led

to the formation of new disciplines and subdisciplines, and ever greater specialization. Generally speaking more knowledge is good. However, the abandonment of a Christian worldview in favor of a secular, naturalist one gave late modern thinkers no way to order and relate knowledge beyond its aggregation according to mere empirical similarities and differences.

Pre-modern Christians distinguished theology (the study of the Scriptures) from other sciences, but they understood it to be their queen, which together with philosophy (the queen's handmaiden) provided an ultimate framework within which all knowledge is interrelated. In contrast, modernism markedly circumscribed theology's role, eventually relegating it to a poor sister discipline in the late modern university: in secularized universities, it became the study of the world's religions; and in Christian universities, it became the study of the Bible or Christian doctrine, separated from other disciplines. Psychology in turn was redefined in the late modern era to be a natural science (see James, 1890, p. 183; for a Christian model of psychology in the mid-1800's that was deeply informed by Scripture, see Kierkegaard, 1848/1980). (Mainstream psychology still maintains it is a natural science. See arguments for its being considered a STEM discipline (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) (<http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/stem-discipline.aspx>). As a result, the rules of late modern discourse led to two sharply demarcated disciplines.

The evangelical concept of integration arose in the late modern era to join together that which had already been put asunder. Though attempting to bridge the contemporary disciplinary division, the concept of integration simultaneously assumes and so reinforces it. Carter and Naramore (1979), for example, wrote that "Theology represents the distillation of God's revelation of Himself to humanity in a linguistic, conceptual, and cultural medium people can understand," and "Psychology is primarily concerned with the mechanisms by which people function and the methods to assess and influence that functioning," (p. 49). Then, according to Bouma-Prediger (1990), interdisciplinary integration is supposed "to compare and contrast, and if possible, reconcile and unite the assumptions, conclusions, methods, and so forth, of two distinct disciplines so as to combine them in some fruitful way" (p. 24). One of the main reasons that late modern integration arose in the late 20th century was the

God-inspired desire in the hearts of Christians to repair the breach that existed between biblical and theological truth and the deliverances of modern autonomous disciplines that they encountered in secular graduate schools. Nonetheless, one has to ask why, after over 50 years of integration writing, so little distinctively Christian scholarship has arisen from this movement? By assuming a rigid disciplinary division between Scripture study and other disciplines, late modern integration has paradoxically claimed to be the solution, while simultaneously keeping alive that separation.

There are many reasons, however, for Christians to question this dichotomous assumption and the rules of discourse that underlie it (see chapter four of Johnson, 2007a). To begin with, the omniscient God (the Christian's scientific ideal) understands everything fully on its own terms *and* in relation to similar entities (relations which disciplines study) *and* thoroughly interrelated with everything else, so the kind of rigid disciplinary boundaries common in late modern thought are foreign to the unity of God's understanding and God's word that sustains created reality (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). Moreover, according to Christianity, Scripture is God's inspired discourse about God *and* humanity. The integration task is made immeasurably more difficult if one begins with the assumption of a fundamental divide between a psychology based on natural science methods and an unrelated discipline of Scripture study, virtually guaranteeing that Scripture will have limited influence in the education of Christians studying psychology. Far more important than the distinction between two essential sources of information about human beings, Scripture and empirical research, is the redemptive difference between a human science derived from the Spirit's work of regeneration (possible only for Christians) and one based solely on naturalism. Consequently, if one defines psychology in a non-modern way, simply as the study of the immaterial aspect of individual human beings, one can envision a single, more comprehensive, human science transdiscipline with different rules of discourse that permit the use of all sources of psychological knowledge that Christians consider valid (biblical/theological, empirical, and philosophical; see Johnson, 2007b).

What is the main effect of this? *Accepting a rigid psychology-theology dichotomy has paradoxically maintained their separation and led to the production of integrative work that has been*

*shaped far more by secular psychology than by biblical and theological teachings on human beings.*

### **The Great Secularism/Science Confound**

The deleterious effects of the above dichotomy are amplified by the fact that the psychology that Christians have sought to integrate with their theology (or faith or values) is thoroughly secular. Late modern psychology is discourse about human beings that is already a secular interpretation in which their intrinsic relation to God is not even considered. What has proved to be one of the most strategic moves in the founding of late modern psychology was the implicit confounding of secularism and science. "To the facts themselves," was the cry, but embedded within this agenda were positivist rules that excluded reference to God and his activity in humans. Such rules are not themselves scientific, and their validity cannot be proven empirically. On the contrary, if God is indeed relevant to and active in human life, as theists believe, a science of human beings should presumably be keenly interested in describing that relation, regardless of whether natural science methods can measure it (Slife & Reber, 2009).

Consider that, for Christians, being made in God's image is the most defining feature of human beings. Calvin (1559/1960), for example, argued that one's knowledge of oneself is fundamentally related to one's knowledge of God (pp. 1-8). As a result, a Christian approach envisions humans as essentially related to God, and therefore they are impossible to fully understand psychologically apart from him. So, from a Christian standpoint, the self-representation, identity, and personality of human beings is incomplete and even distorted without reference to their intrinsic relationship to God. Christians are rightly encouraged that generic discourse about spirituality has become more accepted in the field in recent years. However, most of the field of psychology is as yet unaffected by this openness, and its generic nature still precludes consideration of religious distinctives (like the differences between theism and monism).

The challenge for Christians would be much lessened if late modernism did not posit itself officially as a "religiously-neutral" framework and its discourse included explicit religious statements that could be easily identified, because the *absence* of something good (e.g., the self's relation to God) is far more difficult to identify

than the *presence* of something bad (Worship yourself!). Such absence requires a disposition to ask continually what might be missing in late modern psychology from a Christian standpoint.

The main effect: *Integration that accepted the science-secular confound has had implicit limits on the degree to which the Christian faith could be integrated with the received psychology, if it was to be considered scientific.*

### **The Great Secular-Individualist Therapy Rule**

It has become widely recognized in the field that therapists inevitably and legitimately have values pertaining to general mental health and therapy and that these values affect therapy (Bergin, 1991; Beutler, 1979; Kelly & Strupp, 1992; Tjeltveit, 1999). However, it remains an ideal of contemporary mental health that therapists are supposed to be worldview neutral and not advocate any values that are *community-specific* (i.e., unique to one worldview community). Evidence for this charge can be found in therapist training programs and textbooks, where they are taught to work solely within the ethical, value, and religious systems of their counselees (except on those narrowly restricted occasions when the counselee could cause harm to self or others) and not to "proselytize," "coerce," or "impose" their own ethics, values, or religious beliefs on their counselees (e.g., Corey, Corey, & Calahan, 2010; Frame, 2003; Richards & Bergin, 2005).

This rule of late modern psychotherapy is so widely (but implicitly) accepted today that it merits a detailed examination of its weaknesses. First, the values that contemporary therapists have unsurprisingly tend to accord with a late modern worldview: self-awareness, self-determination, psychological well-being, self-realization, autonomy, and self-expression, among others (see Johnson & Sandage, 1999, for citations). Second, such values are not worldview neutral but are defined differently by different worldview communities. Consider self-determination. A late modern model views the self *individually* as the ultimate source of his or her action (Ryan & Deci, 2000), whereas a Christian model assumes that human agency is a gift of God and is fundamentally relational (in relation to God and others), so even these generic-sounding values are not as universal and cross-communal as it might seem. Rather than being worldview neutral, contemporary psychotherapy actually



assumes and promotes a secular-individualist ethical and value system (see Johnson & Sandage, 1999; Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999).

Third, all well-developed religions and psychotherapies posit some non-empirically demonstrable ideal of the flourishing human life (Roberts, 1987), and adherents who work with others to enhance their wellbeing inevitably promote their own ideal, whether consciously or not. Fourth, psychotherapy often addresses topics in which modern and other worldview values come into direct conflict (regarding marriage, family, work, ethics, and ultimate concerns). To say nothing about such matters is still to take a stance regarding issues that have great ethical and spiritual significance. As a result, psychotherapists and counselors cannot really avoid taking a stance regarding such issues.

The rule in question also creates an artificial and distorted relational context. As object relations advocates have pointed out, therapy involves *two* fully engaged persons, not just the client (Mitchell, 1988). How can therapists model healthy selfhood, relational skills, and mutual dialogue, if only the therapeutant is free to express life's most important values? If both counselor and counselee were full-fledged dialogue partners, both would be free to initiate respectful exploration of important values. The rule shows that late modern therapy is still essentially client-centered, and its latent individualism unwittingly maintains what some consider to be a biased and unhealthy therapeutic environment.

Finally, by so privileging the counselee's values, late modern therapy subtly underscores the centrality of the autonomous Self and the impossibility that there could be important values outside the counselee's current commitments to which the counselee ought to be introduced. This remarkably untherapeutic stance is at root no more worldview-neutral or empirically-based than the theistic. Tragically, the rule requires all therapists to practice therapy that way.

The foregoing analysis suggests that only secular therapists are being allowed to practice therapy fully in accordance with their worldview and ultimate values (e.g., treating people without ever mentioning God conveys implicitly the message, "God is not needed for your psychological condition to improve"). In fact the system allows secular therapists implicitly to proselytize freely and promote their secular views. As a result, the late modern prohibition on therapists sharing their own community-specific values imposes an

unfair and unjust burden on adherents of worldviews that are more explicit about their ultimate values. Christianity, for example, teaches that humans cannot resolve their most important psychological problem (alienation from their Creator) without God's help and optimal psychological wellbeing is only available through faith in Christ. Consequently, from a Christian standpoint, to be prevented from talking about such matters is profoundly untherapeutic.

To put the problem most sharply: the rules of late modern psychotherapy forbid the advocacy of community-specific worldview values (like theistic), yet that prohibition itself exemplifies the advocacy of a community-specific, non-universally-shared, and non-empirically demonstrable value. While this would seem to be obviously self-contradictory and self-refuting, few in the mental health field seem to be aware of that fact (a blind spot of modernism that many postmoderns have identified. For example, see Levinas, 1980; and Lyotard, 1979. For Christian consideration of these issues see Clouser, 2005; Griffiths, 1991; MacIntyre, 1984; and Moreland & Craig, 2003).

The avowed late modern concern has to do with the "imposition" of therapist values on the vulnerable therapeutant. Christians know that is a valid concern, since their own history provides abundant evidence that the Church frequently misunderstood the implications of its own worldview values regarding human dignity and freedom. The possibility of insensitive and immature counselors misusing therapy to force "conversions" or otherwise inappropriately guide counselees to accept values they are not ready to is a legitimate concern. However, the potential for values coercion in therapy is common to all worldviews, even the late modern—just watch a therapy video of Albert Ellis or Fritz Perls! *Special* vigilance regarding coercive *religious* therapy, at least in the West, is for the most part a red herring. The next step is the development of guidelines and texts that help train counselors to respect both counselee and *their own* values within the therapeutic dialogue.

To be sure, therapists can address many clinical problems and strategies without focusing on issues of ultimate significance (e.g., communication skills in marriage, substance abuse, psychosis, and so forth). In addition, the increasing openness to the discussion of spiritual and religious issues in therapy in our day is moving the field in the right direction. The quandary highlighted in this section is

that late modern psychotherapy discourse rules prevent therapists from carefully and gently advocating community-specific ultimate values, and this requirement is self-refuting, unfair, and ultimately untherapeutic.

The main effect: *Integration that accepted the secular-individualist therapy rule has inclined therapists to inhibit the appropriate expression of their faith in their clinical practice.*

### The Three Faces of Integration

Having considered the impact of late modern rules of discourse and practice with which Christians in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy have had to cope over the past few decades, we turn to consider three different faces of integration which have developed in response to these late modern pressures.

#### The Face of Anxiety: Dissociative Integration

In a classic integration article, Larzelere (1980) pointed out six levels at which the integration task can be conducted, the most basic of which is worldview. However, at the worldview level, the task is not to integrate, but "to clarify the presuppositions of world views used in secular psychology and to compare them with presuppositions appropriate for a Christian world view" (p. 5). The problem for those of us educated within a late modern psychology context is the extent to which—without knowing it—secular worldview assumptions might have influenced our understanding of human beings, while we *consciously* retained our Christian beliefs, since deeply-held worldview beliefs color the rest of our discursive/conceptual system. If this occurred, it could result in some degree of *unconscious* secular/Christian syncretism. How might this happen?

**The anxiety of worldview conflict.** Atheism and agnosticism are native to the current human condition ("The fool says in his heart there is no God," Psalm 14:1). However, the West has seen a sharp increase in such positions during the modern era. The slow but steady secularization of late modernism has profoundly affected the intellectual leadership of Western culture during the past 150 years. Education was one cultural institution at the center of this shift (Marsden, 1994; Smith, 2003; Taylor, 2007). As a result, Christians seeking undergraduate and graduate education during this time have been challenged ethically and spiritually, as well as intellectually. While some late modern educators and schol-

ars have openly challenged religious belief in their classes and books, most of the influence of secularism has been indirect. By ignoring religion throughout most of the curriculum, the irrelevancy of God to modern life is rendered seemingly obvious.

What happens when late modern psychology is taught in religious contexts, without significant awareness of its implicit worldview assumptions? In a recent cross-sectional study of psychology students at a conservative Mormon university, Reber, Slife and Downs (in press) have reportedly found a significant shift from freshman to senior years in worldview thinking from theism to naturalism. How can such movement occur in a strongly religious environment? In light of available neuropsychological, memory, and social psychology research, let us hypothesize. It appears that information tends to be stored in the brain in different brain regions and neural networks based on conceptual categories (Banich 1997; Markowitsch, 2000; Smith & Jonides, 2000). Let us suppose that the secular psychological information (and its usually implicit naturalistic assumptions) was taught at that Mormon university according to late modern rules of discourse, so that explicit reference was rarely made to God or religious beliefs. Though the professors were likely relatively highly religious and the psychology was being learned by relatively highly religious students, it was being stored in new neural networks that were unconnected to the neural networks where the students' religious beliefs and theistic worldview assumptions were stored, so that they became functionally dissociated. Without someone drawing attention explicitly to the contradictions in worldview assumptions, there would be little or no awareness of the conceptual conflict.

Social psychologists have also identified social pressures that could strengthen this trend in intellectual development (Cialdini, 2009), for example, knowledgeable, likeable teachers advocating a secular approach to psychology and adhering to its late modern rules of discourse, and most peers receiving it all without much question. (Such pressures are likely even stronger for graduate students, whose mentors are also gatekeepers to their future.)

Sealing the dissociation could be some strong motivational dynamics. Consciously-held worldview and religious beliefs are usually integral to a religious person's identity and sense of self. As a result, the more awareness a student has of a

conflict between his strong religious beliefs and the secularity of their studies, the greater the likelihood that some anxiety would be aroused. According to Aronson's (2008) modification of cognitive dissonance theory, threats to one's self-concept can cause discomfort (or anxiety) that can be a powerful unconscious motivator for modifying one's thinking in ways that reduce it. There are various ways to do so. In the present case, one can simply avoid thinking about the religious/secular conflict. Another way is through intellectualization, for instance, by forming a rational and religious justification for keeping separate psychology and one's faith.

**Dissociative integration and the science of psychology.** In Christian circles such justification could be provided, at least in part, by weak versions of the integration concept. The term "integration of faith and learning" implies that one will be bringing together one's faith and one's learning. This rightly resonates with the deep desire Christians have to live their lives integrally related to their God. So labeling a psychology program as integrative, using the term integration periodically, and perhaps including a capstone course on integration can help reassure faculty and students that they are being consistent with their faith, in spite of the fact that very little time in the program was actually spent *practicing* integration. Indeed, one wonders if, in some cases, the integration term may have been used unconsciously to justify why the Christian faith and theology was largely *absent* in the psychology instruction.

As is well known, the "levels-of-explanation" view is an approach to the relation of psychology and the Christian faith which formally separates psychology and theology into different "levels of explanation" that ought not to be mixed together, since they are different disciplines with different methods and aims (Myers, 2010). But what are we to think about a model that actually resembles a levels-of-explanation approach but is called by its proponents *integration*? In such a case, the Christian faith and secular psychology are actually not being integrated, and their autonomous and separate existence is being sanctioned by the term "integration," which in actual fact now means its opposite. This convoluted practice likely reduces the cognitive dissonance and anxiety that greater awareness of the actual contradictory conceptual state of affairs would cause, but it is more accurately labeled *dissociative integration* (DI). Obviously an oxymoron, it has the virtue of alluding to

the confusion and anxiety that may underlie a use of the integration label that enables one to practice a secular psychology implicitly, while still maintaining consciously one's strong Christian commitments.

**Dissociative integration and psychotherapy and counseling.** The late modern therapy ethical norms of discourse that we noted above have convinced many Christian therapists that they may not share their therapeutically relevant Christian beliefs with those with whom they work. As a result, some may conduct months of therapy with people without initiating any discourse about God and the Christian faith. Some of these therapists nevertheless use the term integration to label their approach, perhaps qualifying it with the adjective "implicit" or "intrapersonal" or "ethical." Needless to say, there are entirely valid Christian uses of these adjectives. (See chapter three of Johnson, 2007a, for a more thorough discussion of ethical integration.)

Sometimes this loose appropriation of the label integration is further justified by a metaphorical use of theological concepts. For example, some might call their work "incarnational," since they are manifesting the love of Christ for the counselee, or argue that one's therapy is a kind of "redemption" since counselees are being "redeemed" from their pathology. However, if no mention is made explicitly, in session, of Christ and *his* redemption or resurrection, appropriated by faith by the counselee, such language utilizes a profound Christian *metaphor* for what is otherwise standard secular therapy. This would not seem to qualify as actual *integration*, because it keeps the theological language in theory on one pole of the metaphor while maintaining the psychological discourse in practice on the other.

Perhaps the primary test of whether such dissociation is operative is if the Christian counselor uses Christian resources when working with *Christian* counselees. Christians can debate the advisability and conformity to professional ethics of initiating Christian discourse with non-Christian counselees, given the late modern rules of discourse discussed above. But the gospel of Christ's life, death, and resurrection is the good news of God's great psychotherapeutic intervention, and it provides enormous cognitive, affective, and relational resources for therapy work with Christians. Christian therapists who value



integration should relish counseling Christians, so they can do more integration.

Why is the term integration used by some Christians who practice as secular therapists? A Christian psychodynamic interpretation might go like this: sincere Christians who believe they must conform to late modern rules of therapy discourse, but who want nonetheless to consider themselves legitimately Christian, use the term "integration" to reduce the discomfort and anxiety they feel about the disjunction between their faith and work and to keep themselves from questioning their conceptual and practical dissonance more deeply. If this does in fact occur, it too would seem to qualify as a dissociative kind of integration.

At the same time, critics need to appreciate that in dissociation one is not conscious of what is occurring. As we noted above, dissociative integration is a function of education, training, and credentialing in a social context in which late modern psychology controls what is permissible to say (and hence, to think). As a result, many Christians in the field have a vastly more sophisticated understanding of late modern psychology than they have of the Christian faith and its relevant intellectual resources (reflective of their training), so they are simply unaware of how little integration they are actually doing. Rather than just criticizing (or ignoring) such brothers and sisters who are sincerely seeking to serve Christ in their vocations, we need to figure out how to do a better job of assisting them to fulfill their desire to integrate!

These are serious allegations. Could they possibly be true? I know they are, in my case at least, for I am describing what I have learned as I have worked through my own dissociated integration for decades. I am deeply grateful to God and to Michigan State University for the late modern psychology education that I received. However, I have found it "integrated" with my own native tendencies to dissociate my faith from my daily and professional life. Perhaps some dissociation is an inevitable risk of learning from the best of secular psychology, a possibility for which we must prepare our students.

What can we do to promote the healing of our dissociation? It is similar to those who have been exposed to more intense trauma: as we become increasingly aware of our distorted dispositions, we learn to look for evidence of them, to work on them, and to cry out to Christ for help to overcome them, so that we do not remain a vic-

tim (or a perpetrator), but more and more a survivor, one who takes responsibility for one's remaining blindness and seeks the healing that is available in Christ.

### **The Face of a Minority: Strategic Integration**

Most previous discussions of the contemporary challenge of integration have tended to view it as a disciplinary and conceptual problem that is the responsibility of the individual Christian. One goal of this article is to frame it as more cultural than disciplinary, more social than individual, and more linguistic than conceptual. Let us consider the following: Christians in the field form a minority subculture within a majority secular culture, and each has its own self-constituting discourse rules.

If so, such Christians experience dual allegiances that affect their identity. Such tension is inevitable whenever one has more than one role in life. However, as human science research has taught us, being a minority can be traumatic and contribute to certain pathological effects, for example, the undermining of one's subcultural identity and "voice" and the defense of "identification with the oppressor." Recall the Clarks' studies of African-American children in the 1940's (since repeatedly replicated) who were found to prefer white dolls over black, and viewed the color of their skin as lighter than it actually was (see <http://www.apa.org/research/action/segregation.spx>). Dissociative integration is likely fostered in part by minority pressures, which can lead to dual identities that are "split off" from each other.

**Developing a strong and healthy minority identity.** Different Christians appear to respond differently to such pressures. For example, highly committed undergraduate Christians in secular universities can actually be strengthened in their Christian faith (see Hunter, 1993). Intriguingly, a few decades ago *racial* integration became a cultural ideal. In contrast to *assimilation*, which encourages the cultural subjugation of one culture to another, eventuating in the loss of minority identity (analogous to syncretism at the worldview and conceptual levels), the *social* concept of *integration* encourages the interaction of minority and majority cultures while allowing all peoples to retain their cultural identity. The development of "black power" in the 60's and 70's was part of a black subculture rejection of majority domination and oppression and the reassertion of its own subcultural identity. Being

a minority can be a formative experience. Perhaps the Christian intellectual community would be helped by developing its own "identity politics," in which they self-consciously embrace and legitimate their minority identity, strengthen their voice, and seek to enhance their distinctive influence within their larger culture.

Such considerations are especially relevant for those who work in or seek to contribute to the public square, for example, in a public mental health facility, a public university, or the American Psychological Association. Outsiders to a community have to earn the right to participate in and speak to it. This only occurs if the outsiders are willing to adopt the customs of those to whom they wish to relate and live according to their rules. To impact contemporary science, Christians must learn how to do this, without subverting their own identity and highest loyalty. Other Christians not living in such tension must interpret the actions of those who do with charity, barring flagrant assimilation, appreciating how much more difficult it is to do so, than to work solely within one's own community.

**Strategic integration and the science of psychology.** Strategic integrationists live and work within the majority culture and use its rules of discourse in order to remain active communicative participants, but also to subtly advance a Christian agenda, as much as the majority secular culture will allow. There are many examples of this kind of minority influence in psychology where Christians have impacted the contemporary field of psychology for good while playing by late modern discourse rules, in some cases making important contributions to the current field, in areas like the relation between religion and psychology (Jones, 1994), religion and psychotherapy (Aten, McMinn, & Worthington, in press; Hathaway & Walker, in press), and religion and health (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001), Freudian studies (Vitz, 1988), psychoanalysis (Sorenson, 2004), values in psychotherapy (Tjeltveit, 1999), same-sex attraction (Yarhouse, 2001), and psychology of religion (Emmons, 1999); and in other cases helping to bring new psychological topics into the field, like forgiveness (Enright, 2001; Worthington, 2006), gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2004), humility (Worthington, 2007), advanced cognitive development (Reich, 2010), theistic psychology (Slife & Reber, 2009), and even Christian therapy (Wade, Worthington, & Vogel, 2007), and many others not listed. Christians are consciously shaping

the contemporary field of psychology in accord with implicit Christian values, while adhering to late modern rules of discourse. It is strategic precisely because it is both conscious and implicit.

This means, of course, strategic integration (SI) will not use distinctly Christian discourse, for example, making reference to the psychological activity of the Holy Spirit or appealing to Scripture to justify its claims. As a result, SI ought not to be considered the exemplary model of conceptual (or discursive) integration, because what integration of that sort does is so constrained by the rules of late modern discourse. Rather, SI is more akin to racial integration. It is a discerning kind of living with and loving one's secular neighbors, done consciously unto God.

**Strategic integration and psychotherapy and counseling.** Christians need to conform to the ethics and rules of the majority community, when working in public mental health settings with persons who are not members of the Christian community. However, in contrast to the dissociated integrationist, the strategic integrationist is willing to use Christian discourse and bring up Christian beliefs appropriately and respectfully. For example, one can ask about religious and spiritual issues on intake forms, make clear one's Christian orientation on informed consent forms, and if the client is willing, "sensitively point clients to Christ" in therapy (Tan, 2011, p. 334).

Pursuing an SI agenda in public mental health should also include promoting greater worldview awareness, recognition of the biases of late modernism and its discriminatory practices, and the legitimacy of referral when working with counselees on issues in which their values are seriously at odds. The most important long-term goal should be to help the field move beyond the current, modernist system that demands universal values and uniform practice, towards a principled pluralism that more truly respects the worldview beliefs of all Americans (see Johnson, in press; Skillen, 2009).

Critics should keep in mind that SI exemplifies many Christian virtues, like wisdom, courage, and patience, and it manifests the glory of God by contributing to the creation grace activity of science and advancing the field in the direction of greater conformity to the mind and heart of God.

**Distinguishing dissociative integration and strategic integration.** Both DI and SI participate in majority secular psychology and label what they do as integration. How can they be distinguished?

- 1) SI is evident by its subtle interjection of distinctly Christian values, beliefs, or practices into the public square, where possible, whereas DI is more content with the status quo.
- 2) Conscious awareness of one's strategic activity done for God can help to distinguish SI from DI.
- 3) DI may be evident when one unconsciously avoids sources of information that might bring to light one's dissociation, for example, reading relevant theology or philosophy books, or biblical counseling or healing prayer materials; or when one experiences confusion, anxiety, anger, or other emotional discomfort when encountering Christians who are more skilled or interested in explicit integration than oneself; or when one ignores or derides them.
- 4) Strategic integrationists are perhaps most clearly distinguished from dissociated integrationists by how they conduct themselves in Christian contexts, where they no longer *have* to submit to late modern rules of discourse. Dissociated academics still make little substantive reference to Christian beliefs in their teaching or scholarly work *even when teaching in Christian environments*, and dissociated therapists make little substantive reference to Christian beliefs or practices *even when working with Christian counselees*. Strategic integrationists, by contrast, are eager to bring in Christ and the Christian faith to whatever extent possible.

### **The Face of a Child: Maximal Integration**

Where does the desire for integration come? The Holy Spirit, who draws God's children into the unity and communion of the Father and the Son (John 14:26; 16:13-15; 17:11, 21-24; 1 Jn 1:4; 1 John 1:3), into conformity to Christ's image (2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:29), in one's mind, heart, actions, and relationships. This involves becoming more whole and integrated in Christ and healed of our fragmented and dissociated sinful existence, and it occurs through the triune God's establishing his centrality in our lives and undermining our self-centrality, primarily through worship and love of our Father. An important goal of the Christian life, then, is greater and more pervasive integration, a robust version that we will call *maximal integration* (MI).

Why is this important to God? Because it manifests God's glory. God's glory is the sum of God's beautiful perfections. Scripture reveals that the triune God desires to manifest His glory, and that He created people, sent His Son to earth, and now redeems people, so that they would manifest His glory (Isaiah 43:7; see Edwards, 1998; Balthasar, 1982-91). As we noted above, God's perfect knowledge and love are unified and comprehensively interrelated. Being images of God means humans are supposed to represent God's form on earth, and the basis for doing this now is the believer's union with Christ and his life, death, resurrection, and ascension (Romans 6:1-11; Ephesians 2:4-10; 4:22-24). In Christ, believers are gradually being experientially integrated, by means of the Holy Spirit and faith, into the new creation that Christ himself has begun. Because of their union with Him, believers love Him and desire to be more like Him and so to become more and more conformed to His mind, heart, activity, and relationships. The power of the Spirit draws them into an integrative journey in which their autonomy from God and their native dissociation from Him and His purposes are more and more undermined and they come to think, feel, and act more and more like Christ's unified, wholly interrelated understanding, love, and life. The goal of MI is to be like Christ. As Christians become more whole and like Christ themselves, they participate in and manifest more and more of God's glory and fulfill the end for which they were created and redeemed. "God is the one to whom all other things relate, as creatures to Creator" (Vanhoozer, 2010, p. 227). God alone provides the basis for integration, since He is the ontological ground for the unity of all things, and all things point to Him: "for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever." (Romans 11:36).

**The scope of maximal integration.** So the ideal of MI is a deeply Christian goal; pursued by, within, and for the Christian community; and is unconstrained by the rules of late modernism. Christian thought and life aims at integrity—a soundness and completeness that seeks to correspond (in a finite and fallen way) to God's consummate glorious unity. So MI is an ideal, a teleological concept, a gradual process, that draws us into conformity to Christ. Let us consider its enormous scope.

*Individual maximal integration.* Individual integration is part of Christian maturation. Purity

of heart is a blessed state (Matthew 5:8), a goal of sanctification (Psalm 24:4; 51:10; Proverbs 22:11; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:22; James 4:8), where head and heart reciprocally consent to God's ways and His revelation in Christ and Scripture (Johnson, 2007a), where one's internal conflicts and dissociations generated by sin and brokenness are gradually being overcome and an inner harmony of the soul's created components grows by means of the Spirit (Galatians 5:17-23; see James 3:1-10), and where virtuous character is realized as one's will conforms to the will of God (Ephesians 6:6; Hebrews 10:7; 13:21; 1 John 2:17; Bonhoeffer, 1955).

Tan (1987) calls this *intrapersonal integration* and includes within it a striving towards internal self-consistency regarding one's professional practice and theory and one's faith and way of life (what Bouma-Prediger [1990] refers to as *faith-praxis integration*) and within oneself as a result of a degree of healing through one's personal relationship with God (Bouma-Prediger distinguishes this as *experiential integration*). Coe and Hall (2010) make this spiritual maturational process central to their transformational version of Christian psychology.

Late modern psychologists have described some of the created, biopsychosocial aspects of individual integration. According to developmentalist Heinz Werner (cited in Salkind, 1985), the growth of all human capacities first begins with a state of indistinct, unformed potentiality (e.g., a zygote), proceeds next into increasing differentiation (development of organs and bodily systems), and ends in the realization of a hierarchical integration (with organs and systems working together). At the neurological level, individual human development is grounded on the integration of neural networks, cortical and limbic regions, and right and left hemispheres (see Cozolino, 2002; Siegel, 1999). At the psychological level, human maturation involves the increasing coordination of perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and volitional capacities, enabling one to realize one's goals. It also entails the integration of the episodes of one's life into a coherent, cohesive narrative (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002; Siegel, 1999). We now know that this integration is especially important for people who have suffered trauma and who dealt with the pain and anxiety by disassociation. Healing in such cases requires bringing dissociated material into awareness to form a more integrated consciousness and life-story that has unifying

meaning and significance. The Christian version of individual integration in adulthood is distinguished by a *dipolar* synthesis of these created, biopsychosocial processes. It is dipolar, because the believer internally integrates in dependence on the triune God by means of union with Christ, relating more and more of his or her inner life and story to the meaning found in Christ and the story of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension (Vanhoozer, 2010).

**Communal maximal integration.** *Interpersonal integration* occurs as Christians learn how to relate lovingly with one another, intersubjectively, through conversations, mutual care, and empathy, and working together on various projects, by faith in Christ, so that they "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Let us extend this ideal and imagine the church universal constituting a broad, integrated field of Christian soul care, increasingly unified in the knowledge and love of God, beginning in the local church with pastoral and lay ministry, spreading along a continuum of care involving licensed professionals who are as biblical and Christ-centered as the pastors, but have more advanced training to address the most complex difficulties, and finally reaching into the public mental health field, to the extent that distinctly Christian soul care is permitted.

**Maximal conceptual integration.** So MI is a personal-communal activity integral to the Christian faith. With respect to psychology, it involves the unification of knowledge about human beings, but *according to Christian rules of discourse*. As a result, it is free to integrate all the sources of knowledge about human beings that are available.

Rejecting the late modern division between psychology and theology, maximal conceptual integration *begins with* Scripture, which has authoritative primacy over all other texts (Bloesch, 1978; Johnson, 2007a), since it gives us a fixed, divinely-inspired interpretation of reality. With Calvin (1559/1960), we might liken the Bible to "spectacles" through which we can properly interpret reality, including other texts (Coe & Hall, 2010). Christians also need to become familiar with the psychology of the Christian tradition, since it has dealt with many

psychological and soul-care topics in its classic texts. In MI Christians consider how the teachings of the Bible and the Christian tradition bear on those areas of psychology that they broadly address, for example, motivation, personality, psychopathology, therapy, and social psychology (in contrast to those areas where they have comparatively little to say, like neuroscience, animal learning, and cognition—though such areas are still related to God). These “lay psychology” materials are foundational to the construction of a maximally integrated scientific psychology. However, it must be made clear that *maximal integration will result in a psychology significantly different from late modern psychology only where Christianity has something distinctive to contribute.*

It might seem to be ideal if this foundation-building work could be done *before* encountering late modern psychology, because such work also trains one how to interpret that psychology *Christianly*, but such “purified preparation” is rarely possible, and even if it were, it would stifle the provocative stimulation that engaging other traditions provides. This is especially the case with late modern psychology, given the enormity and value of its theory and research. Nonetheless, reading late modern psychology texts Christianly is more challenging than many realize, because its biggest limitation is not its errors, but its omissions—what it leaves out (and excludes) in its accounts of human beings. For this reason (and because of the dangers of dissociative integration), I prefer the term *translation* over integration to describe the complex interpretive process of reading non-Christian psychology texts (see Johnson, 2007a, ch. 6). Here, we will consider only two aspects of such translation. First, because all of reality bears the stamp of divine authorship, whatever is truly described has an ultimate significance that points to God (Stoker, 1971). So everything valid in secular psychology, from neuroscience to social psychology, has a divine signature that Christians can recognize, that inclines one to praise. Second, Christians are to identify and translate the valid research findings, theoretical constructs, and clinical strategies into Christian discourse, that is, articulate it in a way consistent with a Christian worldview. Sometimes this will involve simply utilizing late modern psychology terms/concepts directly; other times, Christian elaborations and explanations will be necessary; and in some cases, Christians will want to reject the late modern terms, because of worldview

bias, and substitute different Christian terms/concepts (e.g., Christiformity rather than self-actualization).

In addition, MI involves relating closely associated psychological dynamics. For example, ego development, moral development, psychosocial development, and cognitive development are interrelated, so they need to be integrated conceptually. Associated psychological dynamics studied in different subdisciplines ought also to be brought together into a more comprehensive conceptual whole, for example, neuroscience, genetics, development, and cognitive science (Bouma-Prediger [1990] calls this *intradisciplinary integration*; much of this, of course, is currently being done in late modern psychology).

Maximal integrationists are not restricted to reading the natural science research that characterizes late modern psychology (e.g., measurement, experiments, statistical tests), as valuable as that is. MI will also be open to qualitative research (e.g., discourse analysis, phenomenological studies, participant observation); critical and psychodynamic investigations; philosophical analysis; historical, art, cultural, technological, and literary studies; as well as the biblical and historical studies mentioned above (including exegesis, biblical and systematic theology, historical theology, pastoral theology, biblical counseling, and spirituality). The full ideal of integration with respect to human beings lies outside the framework of any single contemporary discipline. The ultimate knowledge goal of MI is an enormous “human science *transdiscipline*” the most comprehensive, synthetic description of human beings possible for human beings, that best corresponds to God’s understanding and appraisal. This project, of course, can never be completed.

**Maximally integrative expression.** Since the manifestation of God’s knowledge, wisdom, beauty, and glory is such an important aspect of why he created and redeems humans, the *expression* of that glory is central to the Christian calling. Consequently, the more that MI is conscious and rendered explicit, the better. That means it is good to talk about God in Christ and His ways in our psychology, especially to God and among ourselves. Even neuroscience declares the glory of God, so expressions of thanks and praise to God regarding the wonder of the brain is part of this expression. Other areas, like social psychology and therapy, warrant even greater spoken reference to God, because God’s glory in Christ is so manifest there. Maximal integrationists also



look for opportunities to share—wisely and win-  
somely—with those outside the faith. That too is  
integration.

**Distinguishing strategic integration and  
maximal integration.** The following is some-  
what oversimplified, but because of its strategic  
orientation, SI will tend to focus on created psy-  
chological dynamics that all humans have in com-  
mon, whereas MI will also address the  
psychological dynamics of human sinfulness and  
redemption, and will be explicitly Christ-centered.  
McMinn's recent work exemplifies both. McMinn  
& Campbell (2007) used the notion of the image  
of God (a creation concept) as the central con-  
struct of their integrative psychotherapy, which  
serves as a great example of SI. McMinn (2008)  
himself followed up that book with a more maxi-  
mally integrated book for the Christian commu-  
nity that addressed sin and grace.

Without using the terms, Marsden (1997) has  
argued for the necessity of both kinds of Chris-  
tian communal activity. Both are important and  
both contribute to the glory of God. MI, for the  
most part, will only be of interest to the Christian  
community (and perhaps other theistic commu-  
nities); whereas SI permits Christians greater par-  
ticipation with late modern psychology, because  
of its adherence to late modern rules of dis-  
course. However, the value of that sociocultural  
influence is balanced by the recognition that MI  
is ultimately of greater significance, because it  
more fully reflects God's understanding and  
appraisal, it works with God's redemptive  
resources for the benefit of God's people, and it  
seeks to help all people with the resources of  
Christ, so it results in more explicit glory. When  
SI is prioritized over MI, the Christian commu-  
nity's focus is directed primarily to this world and  
its fallen politics, inhibiting the potential impact  
of the kingdom of God and the redemption  
available to all through Christ. At the same time,  
God calls different Christians to different voca-  
tions, and some folks, somehow, are able to do  
both. Most will have time only to contribute to  
one agenda. Yet all Christians should pray for  
and work towards the day that mainstream psy-  
chology will allow Christians to contribute as  
*Christians* in a more pluralistic human science.

### Conclusion

Integration is an extremely rich and complex  
concept, but it has come to mean many differ-  
ent, even opposite, things. Pressures in the late

modern era can influence Christians in the field  
to practice a *dissociative integration* that ironical-  
ly maintains a deep, implicit *separation* between  
one's Christian faith and one's psychological  
understanding and practice. *Strategic integration*  
recognizes that the Christian minority must  
adhere to late modern rules of discourse in order  
to be integrated socially into contemporary psy-  
chology, but it does so faithfully/consciously,  
seeking *conceptually* to integrate as much of the  
Christian faith into mainstream psychology as is  
permissible and legitimate, recognizing that  
much more integration is possible among the  
Christian community.

That much more—*maximal integration*—is  
enormously wide-ranging in scope, arguably the  
most important human activity there is the unify-  
ing movement of the community of Christians,  
working together in dependence on the Holy  
Spirit towards an in-Christ incorporation of ever  
more aspects of reality into a larger and more  
comprehensive faith, seeking to most conform to  
and reflect God's mind, heart, and action and so  
participate in the greatest manifestation of His  
glory possible on earth. Pursuing this end for  
which we were made requires that the Christian  
community, consciously and explicitly, works at  
relating all things to the triune God. Christians in  
the fields of psychology and therapy pursue this  
end most fully by practicing maximal integration,  
where they can use Christian rules of discourse  
within the Christian community to become as  
maximally integrated as possible.

To be the genuine item—either strategic or  
maximal—the integration has to be conscious,  
but it is appropriate that it be regulated by one's  
communicative agenda (one's dialogue partners):  
strategic if one is dialoging with persons outside  
the Christian community, and maximal if one is  
dialoging within it.

So let us integrate, brothers and sisters, as  
much as we can down here, in all areas of  
thought, heart, and life, as long as we live, such  
that the interrelationship of all relevant knowl-  
edge and practice in the glorious triune God are  
revealed, so that we may know and love, more  
and more like our God.

What is the relation of all this to Christian psy-  
chology? CP, as I understand it, is another name  
for maximal integration, the end of which would  
seem to be a distinctly Christian version of psy-  
chology, in the many areas of psychology where  
Christian belief and practice would make a differ-  
ence, thoroughly informed by the psychological

work of other communities—Christianly interpreted—but shaped primarily by Christian understandings of human beings and psychological theory, research, clinical practice, and teaching that flow from those understandings, rather than the secular, naturalistic understandings that currently dominate mainstream psychology. At the same time, CP is also whole-heartedly committed to strategic integration, with the perhaps distinctive hope that mainstream psychology will someday open itself up to the perspectives of non-naturalistic worldviews, allowing Christian psychology in to a pluralistic, more diverse, and more representative field of psychology that respects the distinctive worldviews of all the communities that make up the human family.

### Notes

1. Christians, of course, have done something analogous to integration since the first centuries after Christ. My point here is that the *term* integration is of rather recent vintage. My point below will be that its contemporary usage cannot be easily separated from certain themes of late modernism.

2. For the record, I recognize that modernism contributed some notable goods to the West, including the promotion of objectivity and democracy. However, from a historic Christian standpoint, its framework for promoting these goods and its trajectory overall has to be seen as deleterious.

3. Nonetheless, most histories of the psychology of the past 130 years simply refer to it as modern psychology.

4. Within a theocentric universe, the created self and its motives are understood to have been created good, so long as they are properly subordinated to God's will. So, the self is not intrinsically problematic. It is the Self, set "free" from the good will of its Creator. See Charry (2010).

### References

- Aronson, E. (2008). *The social animal* (10th ed.). New York: Worth.
- Aten, J., McMinn, M., & Worthington, E. L., Jr. (Eds.) (in press). *Spiritually-oriented interventions for counseling and psychotherapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Balthasar, H. U. (1982-1991). *The glory of the Lord: A theological aesthetics*. (Vols. 1-7). San Francisco: Ignatius.
- Banich, M. T. (1997). *Neuropsychology: The neural bases of mental function*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Bergin, A. E. (1991). Values and religious issues in psychotherapy and mental health. *American Psychologist*, 46(4), 394-403.
- Beutler, L. E. (1979). Values, beliefs, religion and the persuasive influence of psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 16(4), 432-440.
- Bloesch, D. (1978). *Essentials of evangelical theology, Vol. 1: God, authority, and salvation*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Bonhoeffer, D. (1955). *Ethics*. New York: Macmillan.
- Bouma-Prediger, S. (1990). The task of integration: A modest proposal. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 18, 21-31.
- Calvin, J. (1960). *The institutes of the Christian religion*. Philadelphia: Westminster. (Originally published 1559)
- Carter, J., & Narramore, B. (1979). *The integration of psychology and theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Charry, E. T. (2010). *God and the art of happiness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: science and practice* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Clouser, R. (2005). *The myth of religious neutrality* (2nd ed.). Sound Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Coe, J. H., & Hall, T. W. (2010). A transformational psychology view. In E. L. Johnson (Ed.), *Psychology and Christianity: Five views* (pp. 199-226). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- Corey, G., Corey, M. S., & Calahan, P. (2010). *Issues and ethics in the helping professions* (8th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Thomson Brooks Cole.
- Cozolino, L. (2002). *The neuroscience of psychotherapy*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Edwards, J. (1998). The end for which God created the world. In J. Piper (Ed.), *A passion for his glory* (pp. 125-251). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.
- Emmons, R. A. (1999). *The psychology of ultimate concerns*. New York: Guilford.
- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2004). *The psychology of gratitude*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Enright, R. D. (2001). *Forgiveness is a choice*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E., & Target, M. (2002). *Affect regulation, mentalization, and the development of the self*. New York: Other Press.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge & the discourse on language*. New York: Pantheon.
- Frame, M. W. (2003). *Integrating religion and spirituality into counseling*. Pacific Grove, CA: Thomson Brooks Cole.
- Griffiths, P. J. (1991). *An apology for apologetics: A study in the logic of interreligious dialogue*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Gutting, G. (1989). *Michel Foucault's archaeology of scientific reason*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hathaway, W. L., & Walker, D. F. (Eds.) (in press). *Spirituality-oriented interventions in child and adolescent psychotherapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Holquist, M. (2002). *Dialogism* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Hunter, J. D. (1993). *Evangelicalism: The coming generation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- James, W. (1890). *The principles of psychology*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- Johnson, E. L. (2007a). *Foundations for soul care: A Christian psychology proposal*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- Johnson, E. L. (2007b). Towards a philosophy of science for Christian psychology. *Edification: Journal of the Society for Christian Psychology*, 1 (1), 5-20.
- Johnson, E. L. (Ed.). (2010). *Psychology and Christianity: Five views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- Johnson, E. L. (in press). Embeddedness, Majority-Minority Relations, and Principled Pluralism. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*.
- Johnson, E. L., & Sandage, S. J. (1999). A postmodern reconstruction of psychotherapy: Orienteering, religion, and the healing of the soul. *Psychotherapy*, 36 (1), 1-15.
- Jones, S. L. (1994). A constructive relationship for religion with the science and profession of psychology: Perhaps the boldest model yet. *American Psychologist*, 49, 184-199.
- Kelly, R. L., & Thomas, D. H. (2009). *Archaeology*. Florence, KY: Wadsworth.
- Kelly, T. A., & Strupp, H. H. (1992). Patient and therapist values in psychotherapy: Perceived changes, assimilation, similarity, and outcome. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 60 (1), 34-40.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1980). *The sickness unto death: A Christian psychological exposition for upbuilding and awakening* (H. V. Hong & E. H. Hong, Eds. and Trans.) Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1848)
- Koenig, H. G., McCullough, M. E., & Larson, D. B. (2001). *Handbook of religion and health*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kuyper, A. (1898). *Encyclopedia of sacred theology*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Kuyper, A. (1998). *Abraham Kuyper: A centennial reader* (J. D. Bratt, Ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Larzelere, R. E. (1980). The task ahead: Six levels of integration of Christian and psychology. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 8, 3-11.
- Levinas, E. (1980). *Totality and infinity*. New York: Springer.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1979). *The postmodern condition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After virtue*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- MacIntyre, A. (1990). *First principles, final ends, and contemporary philosophical views*. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press.
- Markowitsch, H. J. (2000). The anatomical bases of memory. In M. S. Gazzaniga (Ed.), *The new cognitive neurosciences* (pp. 781-796). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Marsden, G. (1994). *The soul of the American university*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Marsden, G. (1997). *The outrageous idea of Christian scholarship*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McMinn, M. (2008). *Sin and grace in Christian counseling*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- McMinn, M., & Campbell, C. (2007). *Integrative psychotherapy*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- Mitchell, S. (1988). *Relational concepts in psychoanalysis: An integration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Moreland, J. P., & Craig, W. L. (2003). *Philosophical foundations for a Christian worldview*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- Myers, D. G. (2010). A levels-of-explanation view. In E. L. Johnson (Ed.), *Psychology and Christianity: Five views* (pp. 49-78). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- Reber, J. S., Slife, B. D., & Downs, S. D. (in press). A tale of two theistic studies: Illustrations and evaluation of a potential program of theistic psychological research. *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*.
- Reich, K. H. (2010). *Developing the horizons of the mind: Relational and contextual reasoning and the resolution of cognitive conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, P. S., & Bergin, A. E. (2005). *A spiritual strategy for counseling and psychotherapy* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association: Washington, DC.
- Richardson, F. C., Fowers, B. J., & Guignon, C. B. (1999). *Re-envisioning psychology: Moral dimensions of theory and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Roberts, R. C. (1987). Psychotherapeutic virtues and the grammar of faith. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 15, 191-204.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78.
- Salkind, N. J. (1985). *Theories of human development* (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Siegel, D. (1999). *The developing mind*. New York: Guilford.
- Skillen, J. W. (2009). Christian counseling in the public square: Principled pluralism for the common good. *Edification*, 3(2), 5-11.
- Slife, B. D., & Reber, J. S. (2009). Is there a pervasive bias against theism in psychology? *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 29, 69-79.
- Smith, C. (2003). Introduction: Rethinking the secularization of American public life. In C. Smith (Ed.), *The secular revolution: Power, interests, and conflict in the secularization of American public life* (pp. 1-96). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Smith, E. E., & Jonides, J. (2000). The cognitive neuroscience of categorization. In M. S. Gazzaniga (Ed.), *The new cognitive neurosciences* (pp. 1013-1022). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Sorenson, R. L. (2004). *Minding spirituality*. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press.

- Stoker, H. (1971). Reconnoitering Cornelius Van Til's theory of knowledge. In E. R. Geehan (Ed.), *Jerusalem and Athens* (pp. 25-70). Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed.
- Tan, S.-Y. (1987). Intrapersonal integration: The servant's spirituality. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 6(6), 34-39.
- Tan, S.-Y. (2011). *Counseling and psychotherapy: A Christian perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.
- Taylor, C. (1989). *The sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, C. (2007). *A secular age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Tjeltveit, A. C. (1999). *Ethics and values in psychotherapy*. New York: Routledge.
- Vanhoozer, K. (2010). *Remythologizing theology: Divine action, passion, and authorship*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Vitz, P. C. (1988). *Sigmund Freud's Christian unconscious*. New York: Guilford.
- Wade, N. G., Worthington, E. L., Jr., & Vogel, D. L. (2007). Effectiveness of religiously-tailored interventions in Christian therapy. *Psychotherapy Research*, 17, 91-105.
- Worthington, E. L., Jr. (2007). *Humility: The quiet virtue*. Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Worthington, E. L., Jr. (2006). *Forgiveness and reconciliation: Theory and application*. New York, NY: Brunner/Routledge.
- Yarhouse, M. A. (2001). Sexual identity development: The influence of valiative frameworks on identity synthesis. *Psychotherapy*, 38(3), 331-341.

### Author

*Eric L. Johnson is Lawrence and Charlotte Hoover Professor of Pastoral Care, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (KY) and the Director of the Society for Christian Psychology. His current research interests include Christian developmental, personality, and social psychology.*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.