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Parameters of a Christian Psychology

Robert C. Roberts

> And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is offered to you ; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. And he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it." Then I ate it; and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.
>
> Ezekiel 3:1-3

Introduction

Psychology's influence on people differs from that of medical technology, which is plenty influential in its own way. Medical treatments of heart disease have given many a new lease on life; we no longer think of heart disease as marking the end of hope. But psychology's impact comes not only from its offer to free us from "problems," to "heal" us, but above all in its promise to edify us, to induct us more deeply into our humanity, by directing us to a richer and more mature life. By-pass surgery may deeply affect our opportunities, but we don't think it makes us different persons, unless we take the experience of surgery to have helped us psychologically. (Perhaps it sobered us about our all-out commitment to money-making, and occasioned a renewed enthusiasm for family and friends.) We may get specific help from our therapist, but we often come away with more than that, something deeper and more exciting. We come away feeling that we have a better grasp on our personal lives.

We have learned from Kierkegaard, with hermeneutical help from Wittgenstein, that the concept of edification is not univocal. An indefinitely large number of outlooks on what it is to be a person and to flourish as a person are possible, each with its own way of diagnosing our troubles, and its own prescriptions for cure. Applying this insight to psychology, we see that there is no such simple thing as "*human* edification," but only Rogerian edification, Jungian edification, Rational-Emotive edification, neo-Freudian edification, varieties of Family-Systems edification—and Christian edification. These edifications bear structural similarities to one another, but they also display, to careful attention, discontinuities and mutual inconsistencies. With Kierkegaard, the Christian thinker will have to say, in answer to each of these psychologies, "either/or."

A psychology edifies by articulating a view of personhood that tells us what makes us tick, by providing encouragement and an "upward call" to a better personality, and by sketching some methods for traveling the distance from where we are as persons to that better state. It gives us a vocabulary, with a distinct conceptual grammar, by which to make sense of ourselves,

to see the goal of fulfilled personality, and to prosecute the tasks of our personal quest. These, it seems to me, are features found in any psychology. In the particular grammars of the various psychologies, further similarities and contrasts are also found, and especially differenes in the individual and communal personalities that will be "built up" through sustained feeding on the vocabularies in question.

I have examined the grammars of a number of psychotherapies and personality theories and displayed some of their continuities and discontinuities with Christianity (Roberts, 1993). Such clarification is important for the life of the church, insofar as its business is to mold *Christian* personality in people, and thus to avoid forming distinctively Rogerian, Jungian, neo-Freudian, etc., personalities. But the critical task is only one aspect of the work of a Christian psychologist. If the church is to speak to the hunger for edification that the contemporary interest in psychology evidences, inside and outside the church, it must have something more to offer than a critique of current psychologies. It must articulate its own distinctive psychology. Here I shall sketch a Christian psychology, using just biblical materials and without much reference to non-Christian theories. Of course I will have the latter in mind as I develop the biblical ideas, since it is the biblical counterpart of those psychologies that I am trying to develop. But I shall try to pull a psychology straight out of the Christian tradition, rather than "integrate" insights from outside the tradition into Christian thought and practice. It should go without saying that the present paper can only be a sketch, meant to be suggestive for further research and reflection.

Elements of a Psychology

A psychology is a systematically integrated body of thought and practice that includes the following five elements:

1. An account of *basic human nature* answers two kinds of questions. First, what is the teleology of human nature? What are the basic directions or needs of human persons? What are we made for, what would our most fundamental yearnings and interests be if they were fully wise and self-conscious, fully in accord with our essential nature as persons? What is the good which, if we find it, will fulfill or complete us, or at least allow us best to cope with life? These questions will normally be answered only by taking into consideration the kind of world we live in. For example, God's existence must be taken into account, inasmuch as our relation to God is part of our fulfillment. Second, How are human persons structured, most basically? What about us must function properly if our needs are to be met and our inbuilt teleology actualized? Alternatively, how do we break down and fail to realize our good? (I am indebted to Maddi, 1980, for stimulation and insights concerning these two kinds of questions.)

2. A psychology will sketch, or at a minimum imply, a set of *personality traits that characterize a fully functioning, mature person*. In the psychologies of the ancient philosophers, as well as in the Christian tradition, these traits are called "virtues." Modern psychologies imply their own virtues, even when they are not very articulate about them (see Roberts, 1993, Part One). The grammar of these personality ideals is determined by the view of human nature the psychology espouses. Analysis of the grammar of psychology's virtues reveals, in principle, the structure of the entire psychology. It is especially important for Christian psychologists to notice that psychologies are virtues-systems, since this makes explicit their structural similarity with Christianity, and thus encourages us to articulate a Christian psychology. A detailed exploration of the grammar of the Christian virtues would be a large part of a Christian personality

psychology. It would be the kind of richly detailed, and thus compelling, account of personhood that the church needs today.

3. A psychology will describe the *successful development* of personality. How, given the basic structures of human nature and its basic theology and the environment to which it must adapt, does one develop the traits of a mature person? Although simple physical maturation has much to do with it, no psychology I know of thinks this is all there is to it; the account is always "psychological," and this includes interpersonal interaction and its qualities. Human nature is constituted by the structural features of human personality, such as verbivorousness and agency; see below.

4. The observe of elements two and three is a psychology's *diagnostic scheme*. Corresponding to its list of virtues is a list of vices—neuroses, psychoses, patterns of internal conflict or maladaptation to the environment, dysfunctional traits. And corresponding to its account of correct development is a set of developmental explanations for these vices.

5. A psychology need not actually include a *psychotherapy*—a set of interventions that aim to correct or prevent unhealthy patterns of interaction and traits of personality—but the development of one is natural, and psychologies that arise out of the practices of life can be expected to have at least a rudimentary therapy. Therapeutic interventions do not just come our of the blue, but are implied by, and imply, some account of human nature, some conception of the shape of healthy personality, and an account of development, both healthy and pathological. (Of course in practice the implication may seem to run the other way: one discovers a technique that "works" come from, if not from some at least implicit view of what is proper to human nature?)

Let us turn now to the Bible to sketch the psychology implicit there. We will find information fitting each of the five elements of a psychology; we must interpret these in terms of each other so as to outline a systematic structure regarding the nature, ideals, development, corruption, and repair of personality.

Basic Human Nature

Basic Teleology

The Bible emphasizes three basic directions of human nature: the need to honor, serve, and depend on God as Father; the need to stand in a relationship of mutual dependency and harmony with other human beings; the need to take care of the creation. Thus human nature is basically "relational," our well-being depending on relationships with God, our human fellows, and the natural world that befit the nature of each of these. The Bible does not put these points in terms of "needs"—that is psychological lingo. Rather, it represents God as commanding us to love him with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, and to be faithful stewards of the creation. But it certainly does depict us as created for these kinds of relationships, and as not flourishing in the highest sense when we violate these commands. Thinking psychologically, we would say that the symptoms of dysfunction that follow a disregard for God, or hatred or indifference to one's fellow human beings, or a failure of proper stewardship of nature, come from being at odds with our very nature as persons. These are not just affronts to God, humanity, and nature, but an assault on ourselves, a denial of our true selves and our deepest needs.

Love of God

The need for God is evidenced in the near ubiquity of religious worship among human beings. The Apostle Paul interprets the Athenians' motive for making an altar to an unknown god as a sort of groping after the true God, and he quotes a pagan poet approving as having seen (through a glass darkly, no doubt) that in God we live and move and have our being (Acts 17). The Christian will see evidence of the need for God in the "archaic" demand, that Heinz Kohut notes, for a perfect ideal self object, and in the claims of people like Anselm and Descartes that we are equipped with an innate idea of a perfect being. William James comments:

> the emotion that beckons me on is indubitably the pursuit of an ideal social self, of a self that is least *worthy* of approving recognition by the highest *possible* judging companion, if such companion there be. This self is the true, the intimate, the ultimate, the permanent Me that I seek. This judge is God, the Absolute Mind, the "Great Companion." …The impulse to pray is a necessary consequence of the fact that whilst the innermost of the empirical selves of a man is a Self of the social sort, it yet can find its only adequate *Socius* in an ideal world. (James, 1950, pp. 3115-16)

Carl Jung is famous for exploring universal themes, which he takes to have broadly religious significance, in the mythologies, symbols, and dreams of culturally diverse peoples. The psychotherapeutic power of religious experiences, noted by some psychologists, is also evidence. Augustines's "our hearts find no peace until they rest in you" (1961, Book I, Chapter 1) is the classic statement, and again we have Jung:

> During the past thirty years, people from all the civilized countries of the earth have consulted me…Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook. (Jung, 1993, p. 264)

Never mind that all these evidences can be interpreted otherwise than as supporting a God libido in the human psyche. Never mid that Jung takes his observations, not as evidence of our need for God as Christianity conceives him, but as indicating another "God" that sometimes seems identical with the larger human Self. In underdetermining the conclusion, and requiring certain framework for its evidential force, this evidence is not so different from other evidence in the social and natural sciences. Christians, at any rate, will see these facts and similar ones as evidence of our need for the Father of Jesus Christ.

Love of Fellows

Some need for human fellowship is widely acknowledged even by the most individualistic psychologies. Rarer is assent to a need for the *kind* of fellowship that Christianity calls for—one in which we deeply identify with others, weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice, dying to self in humility for one another's sake, bearing one another's burdens and laboring in harmony, yoked together in the service of one greater than we. Non-Christian

psychologists are likely to see "enmeshment" and an immature lack of "individuation" in the social relations that, in the Christian view, the human psyche needs. (For an exception to this generalization, see Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986.) This disagreement reflects, of course, a different vision of what human beings basically are and need, a vision likely to intimidate Christians if we are not very clear about our own psychology. Is there any evidence for the Christian view? We do fairly often see an approximation to the kind of mutual identification that the Bible calls "love" operating in families, and I think it is pretty clear that a sort of fulfillment exists here, in this belonging and self-giving service, that is lacking in more instrumental relationships (see Martin, this volume). We might also point to the therapeutic power of a biblically faithful congregational fellowship, which often is a powerful kind of psychotherapy.

Nurture of Nature

Christians will see evidence of the stewardship tendency in the familiar circumstance of people taking unpretentious and unacquisitive joy in tending their gardens, growing livestock, and keeping pets. In its most immediate form this stewardship involves hands in the dirt and on the plants and animals. Stewardship can and must take the form of management, but it seems to me that psychologically such management must be based, in the individual memory, on immediate nurturance of natural things. In the Christian psychology, people find fulfillment in this respectful, responsible use of nature because they themselves are natural beings, but are also "little less than God" (Ps. 8:5), quasi-creators themselves, appointed to this responsibility by the Creator. The stewardship need finds fulfillment neither in the worship of nature nor in the heedless rape of it. Romantics who find in nature a vital spiritual force and a source for their own personal vitality are not wrong, though they may recognize less clearly than they ought that the wonder of nature derives from the beauty of God. The capitalist idea that we own our pieces of nature and can do with them whatever we please is a perversion of stewardship. This is dominion, all right, but a falsely absolute lordship.

We will no doubt want to explore other basic tendencies of human nature that are posited or suggested by the biblical witness. The fact that human beings are made in the "image" of God the Creator suggests exploring, in biblical terms, the human tendency to acts of creation—especially artistic and technological inventions. Paul Vitz emphasizes (see Vitz, 1987a) the human fulfillment that comes from pursuing parenthood, biological and otherwise, suggesting that we also image God's status as Parent. And Rebecca Propst (this volume) explores the way that a dialectic between individuality and sociality reflects the relatedness within the Holy Trinity.

Basic Structures

As I have read the Bible looking for psychology, six basic structural characteristics of human personality have stood out. These are (1) that human beings are verbivorous, (2) that we are agents with limited freedom, (3) that we have an "inward" dimension highly important for personality, (4) that our selfhood is determined by what we love, (5) that persons are permeable by other persons, and (6) that we associate or dissociate ourselves from parts of ourselves. These structures of the psyche will serve to explain how people's personalities develop – that is, how they come, as adults, to actualize their basic teleology or, on the other hand, to fail to actualize it, developing instead perversions of this in-built good.

Verbivorousness

In Deuteronomy 8 Moses tell the people that human beings do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Whoever feeds on the word of God lives; whoever does not take this word into himself, ruminate upon it, swallow it and digest it into his very psyche, starves himself as truly as he would if he quit eating physical food. Moses seems to have God's commandments especially in mind, but it is clear from other parts of Deuteronomy that stories – especially the one about the deliverance from Egypt – are food on which the people of God nourish themselves, come to know who they are, take on the character of God's people, and come to love the Lord with all their hearts and their Hebrew neighbors as themselves. And of course in the Old Testament the commandments and the stories are intertwined with many other forms of discourse: expressive exclamations concerning God's attributes, attitudes, and deeds in the Psalms and elsewhere; prayers, prophetic warnings and promises, proverbs, instructions for specific actions, explanations of people's behavior, allegories, parables, and much more. These are inseparable from what the postbiblical church calls "theology" – more or less didactic comments about God's nature and his relation to the human and nonhuman creation. In the New Testament the emphasis on the formative power of the word of God is just as strong, but now the word is the gospel, the word about Jesus Christ – which again has many of the forms just identified.

In being verbivorous, humans are unique among the earth's creatures. We have a different kind of life than nonverbal animals, a kind of life that we can call generically "spiritual." Since we become what we are by virtue of the stories, the categories, the metaphors and explanations in terms of which we construe ourselves, we can become spiritual Marxians by thinking of ourselves in Marxian terms, spiritual Jungians if we construe ourselves in Jungian terms, and so forth. It is because we are verbivores that the psychologies have the "edifying" effect on us that I noted at the beginning of this paper. They provide diagnostic schemata, metaphors, ideals for us to feed upon in our hearts, in terms of which our personalities may be shaped into one kind of maturity or another.

Our nature as word digesters suggests a partial explanation of our nature as God-needers. In distress about the very nature of the world, Solomon cries, "Vanity of vanities," and offers a diagnosis: He wouldn't feel this way were it not for his *wisdom.* And wisdom, in the book of Ecclesiastes, is the ability to take the world in whole, to see that a generation goes and a generation comes, that what has been is what will be, that there is nothing new under the sun, that all achievement succumbs to oblivion, that everything is swallowed up in death. (That is why his prescription is to imitate the animals: Eat and drink; enjoy your work and your spouse; you won't much remember the days of your life because God will distract you with simple joys. The prescription, however, does not seem wholly successful.) Solomon's yearning for immortality is not the Christian thirsting for eternal life; it is too crass for that, looking more for retention of property and achievements than for the "righteousness" of enjoying God and God's human creatures. There is an incompleteness here. We can see in Solomon's desire a perverse or immature expression of the need for God and his kingdom, whose mature and true counterpart is the hungering and thirsting for righteousness that Jesus refers to. But neither of these desires is possible for a being who cannot grasp its life as a whole, in conception or imagination; and this ability seems to depend on the ability to assimilate words in the construction of the self.

Agency

On the biblical view of persons, we are self-determining agents, but our psychologically real options are bounded by the inertia of character (good or bad) and by facts (in particular, the structures of creation and the acts of God and other people). It is assumed that we are responsible for such "passions" as lust, anger, and covetous desire, on the one side, and love, compassion, and gratitude, on the other. Our actions not only express our character, but also form it, so that we contribute to the inertia of character by our own undertakings. We are thus responsible for what we are as well as for what we do. Our verbivorousness is a ground of our freedom, because possibilities of being and action otherwise inaccessible to us re presented in our speech and in our ruminations and digestions of it. Speech presents objects of love and hate, and reasons for both, and so make real potentialities of our hearts that would remain mere remote potentialities without it. The word of God enables us to see possibilities, without the seeing of which we would lack the real options needed for our freedom. We are liberated from our bondage to sin by a word of grace that declares we have been made righteous in Christ. And thereby actions become open to us that would otherwise have remained in the dark night of pure potentiality.

The narrative of a life, in the Pauline psychology, is a story of "slaveries" ('Rom.6). Progress, or personal growth, is a movement from one slavery to another: from being slaves of sin to being slaves o righteousness. In between is something like he "free will" so highly regarded by our contemporaries, the power of *basic* self-determination. (I stress "basic" because Paul does not hold that very good or very bad people are *generally* slaves in their agency; both the saint and the reprobate have many options, but they do not have the option of choosing to be good or evil.) In Paul's view moral free will is a transition, helped along by a kind of action that he calls "yielding" ( ), from having unholy "passions" to having holy ones. Having been struck to the heart by the gospel, yet without having been fully sanctified, I am neither a complete slave to sin nor a complete slave to righteousness. My affections are indeterminate enough that I can "go either way" – sin still has its attractions, but so does the life of the kingdom. Thus I have free will with respect to good and evil (though even the good that I choose may be tinged with evil desires). Having one foot in each world, I am in a position to yield to the one *or* the other, in a way that the reprobate, whose mind is totally darkened by sin, cannot, and the saint, who can no longer see any attraction in the life of sin, cannot either.

This demotion of the freedom of moral choice to the status of an interim condition far short of the ideal contrasts with a prominent ideology in our culture, which make the individual, in the ideal case, one who at every moment freely chooses his own destiny and his own self. In the interest of such freedom Sarte (1956) is willing to make us a "nothingness." Rorty (19890 revels in the "contingency" of the constitution of our selves, and Frankfurt (1988) makes freedom of the will a matter of *our* choosing whatever will is to be our own. By contrast, in the Christian psychology we are always a "somethingness" because we are always in love with something, either for good or for evil – to be a person at all is to be formed, to have character, inertia, and dispositions. Our true nature is not contingent, but established in the order of creation and the nature of our God; and perfect freedom is so to love God and his kingdom as to be slaves who "an do no other."

Marital chastity is one way of being a slave of righteousness. The chaste married Christian (as contrasted with the merely self-controlled person) does not choose chastity anew each day, does not decide whether or not she will be faithful to her spouse. Instead, she has been so "gripped" by the vision of life in God's kingdom, she so loves righteousness, the life that God

has called her to, that she finds the prospect of marital infidelity positively repugnant. If she finds it repugnant not just occasionally and depending on circumstances, but steadily and regularly and independently of circumstance, then chastity is a Christian virtue in her. It is part of the constitution of her self, and it means that in this respect, at least, her will is not free: she cannot (psychologically) choose unrighteousness, for she is a slave of righteousness.

The radical behaviorists, in contrast with the radical libertarians, deny that we are agents at all: we are just conditioned responders to the stimuli that impinge on us from our environment. This psychology seems to depend on systematically ignoring that as verbivorous we are seers of options, transcenders of our environment with their stimuli, beings who can "play" with the stimuli, investing them with indefinitely many different meanings.

Inwardness

In addition to an "outward," publicly observable dimension – our body, with is "behaviors" – we have a less publicly observable dimension, the character of which we can often hide, at least in part, from our fellow human beings. In this inward dimension, which the Bible calls the "heart" or "mind," are found our wishes, cares, intentions, plans, motives, emotions, thoughts, attitudes, and imaginings. Jesus is critical of people who put on an outward show of virtue, but who inwardness is corrupt (Matt. 15:1-9), and he commends behaviors that minimize the temptation to do for public display and human praise what should be done out of honor and obedience to God (Matt. 6:2-6, 16-18). God discerns the states of our hearts and rejoices in our pure thoughts and proper motives (I Pet. 3:3-4). God's word (Rom. 10:8), as well as Christ himself (Gal. 2:20), can be "in" a person's inwardness (more on this below). Proper personhood as actualized in the Christian virtues, by consequence, is not merely a set of dispositions to behave properly, but above all a rightly qualified inwardness – patterns of thought, wish, concern, emotion, and intention shaped by the Christian story and the truths about God, ourselves, and the world that follow from that story.

Our second basic structural feature of human nature was the fact that we are agents, beings who undertake actions and do so with a degree of freedom and responsibility. Most of the "mental events" that I have mentioned as constituting our inwardness might seem classifiable as passions rather than as actions. But I think the biblical psychology doesn't distinguish strictly here. When Jesus says that it's what proceeds from a person, rather than what enters him, that corrupts (Mark 7:14-23), he seems to suggest that at least some of the evil thoughts, coveting, licentiousness, envy, pride, etc., are states we produce voluntarily. In most cases it would be going too far to say that emotions and wishes are actions, but still, they often result from our actions, and we can intentionally foster or curb them. (Perhaps Paul refers to this when he speaks of "yielding.") Some of these actions will be purely "inward" – not at all behavioral. For example, if I find myself lusting after a woman, and intentionally dispel this urge by reflecting on my marriage vows and remembering some wonderful things about my wife, or by attending to God's presence within me, my action may have no behavioral element at all. On the other hand, if my children (or I) are short on that inward reverence for nature that forms part of the Christian virtue of stewardliness, I may foster it by getting us out into the dirt in the springtime, nurturing a little plot of nature and watching it grow. Here inwardness is served by outward behavior.

The Bible doesn't speak thematically about unconscious mental states, though we might take some encouragement from the fact that dreams play a significant role in a number of biblical narratives. If a chief mark of our inwardness is its potential to be hidden, then unconscious

mental states have a double claim to this status – they are likely to be hidden not only from others but also from ourselves (see Jer. 17:9). A Christian psychology will countenance unconscious mental states because they are so useful in explaining things: emotional phenomena, the effectiveness of self-examination, the unacknowledged drive to worship God, and the phenomena of self-deception that are so important to a psychology of sin, to mention just a few things.

Attachment

The Bible emphasizes that personality is determined by the character of what one loves. This point is most succinctly summed up in Jesus' comment, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21). Your heart is your inward self, your personality, the actual "you"; and what you treasure – what is important to you, what you love, what you are centrally attached to – determines what that self is like. This seems to suggest that a self is not "self-contained," on the Christian psychology, but is essentially oriented to things "outside" itself, whether these be healthy or unhealthy objects of its absorption. If we conjoin this structural feature with the first two basic directions of human nature – the needs to live in harmonious fellowship with God and our fellow human beings – we can see that the double commandment that you shall love the Lord with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself is not just an "ethical" command, but a prescription for psychic health, for fulfillment of our psychological nature. Since the most worthy object of praise is God, it stands to reason that the fully developed self will be oriented to God by a love commensurate with its object; God is the one who ought to orient a person's *whole* life, and is thus the one who must be loved with *all* your heart. A second [commandment] is like it": You shall also be oriented by the goodness that is in your neighbor. The neighbor is of course not good in the way God is; his goodness derives from God's. But each of us seems to have a native disposition to see goodness in himself, and the commandment is saying: See that same goodness in your neighbors; care about them in the way you care about yourself, and in this too you will find yourself.

We can see how central, absorbing attachments have ramifications throughout the personality if we think of personality as dispositions of what I earlier called "inwardness." Emotions are construals of the world in various kinds of terms (depending on the grammar of the emotion in question) *as they impinge on some care or love of the subject* (see Roberts, 1988b; for analysis of how some emotional dispositions enter into the constitution of virtues, see Roberts, 1992a). Desires, urges, and wishes, insofar as they are characteristic of a person, also reflect underlying commitments and directed concerns. Our loves also direct our plans, our thoughts, our imaginings. (For more analysis of the concept of attachment, see my article on attachment, this volume.)

Self-association and Self-dissociation, and Permeability

I shall treat the fifth and sixth basic structures together, since they are so closely interwoven. One striking feature of the New Testament psychology is the willingness to multiply selves, to speak of the new self and the old self, the "inmost self" and the "flesh," etc. Another, related feature is that one person can permeate or be "in" another: Christ can be "in" the believer, the believer can be "in" Christ, Christ is "in" the Father, the Father is "in" Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells "in" the believer. At one point, Paul talks almost as though Christ's s elf replaces his own

as he becomes more sanctified: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). But in the sequel he makes it clear that he has not really disappeared, ceding his body to a reincarnated Christ: "And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." So it is Paul who lives after all, but it is a different Paul, who associates himself with Christ who is now "in" him. The Paul who lived independently of Christ has died (though as we will see in a moment, he is still present, dissociated from Paul).

Heinz Kohut's concept of a self object (Kohut & Wolf, 1978) gives us a model for understanding how one person can dwell in another. In interacting with our parents, we take them into our self, into our "heart," to use Paul's word. As potential selves, we are hungry for a sense of our own worth, and in their approval, their empathy, their enthusiasm for us, we see our worth "mirrored." We are also hungry for orientation in "moral space" (the term is borrowed from Taylor, 1989), for a sense of the direction of our life, a sense of what we are to be and do. By identifying ourselves with our parents, we get a free ride on their ideals (see Talbot, this volume). In these ways, we "incorporate" our parents into our psyches. In Jesus Christ god presents himself to us as accepting, merciful, forgiving, nurturing, respectful, empathic – as a "mirroring self object." We come to see our value reflected in God love. Thus we become a self in a quite different way than we would be apart from the gospel; our self is *constituted* of God's regard for us. At least, this is one of our selves, on the Pauline psychology, indeed the truest one, the one with which we ought to associate ourselves. And the bestowal of this self does not just satisfy a generalized need to be loved but the specific need to be loved by God. As God thus dwells in our hearts, we become spiritually his children. In being addressed with God's love and thus identified as God's children, we are also called to do his work, to live a certain life, to pursue certain goals. "…. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, *provided we suffer with him*…." (Rom. 8:17). In this too we identify ourselves, and thus are formed as selves, in his terms. God our Abba becomes to us an ideal-bearing self object as well. We take on God's goals as our own, and thus find in ourselves divine value and divine orientation, a self that was not there before. It is clear that the self object – human or divine – "dwells in" us in this sense through the power of association, because we associate ourselves, identify with, the divine or human parent. As Christians we grow by associating ourselves with the new self that has been created by God's loving address.

We see the phenomenon of self-association at work in marriages as well. A young husband will find that he has two selves, an old bachelor self that is uncommitted, unattached; and a married self that belongs to this particular woman. Each self has its own behavioral – and emotional – response repertoire, its own sense of identity. The young husband may find himself, at certain moments, confused about which set of dispositions to associate himself with and may have to "yield" to the one or the other. This yielding may be by default, or he may quite intentionally choose *not* to "go with the flow" and choose instead to associate himself with his wife and his married self. As the marriage matures, and he matures as a husband, his unmarried self will die or at least fade to a mere ghostly presence. A negative example of the phenomenon is the son who keeps seeing, to his dismay, traits of his father in his demeanor and affect, and consciously dissociates himself from them, saying to himself, as it were, "that's not me, not the *real* me." Part of my point is that this need not be "denial" in the sense of dishonesty; it may, instead, be a creative or constitutive denial, an act that brings about a psychological reality: that these disposition inherited from the father gradually cease to be part of the individual's real self.

I think that Kohut's neo-Freudian psychology can help us understand one person's indwelling another, but the biblical concept also differs significantly from his. The Gospel of John talks volubly about the Father being in the Son and the Son in the Father, and the Father and the Son being in the disciples, and the disciples in the Father and the Son. But the one relationship that is not described in terms of indwelling is that between ordinary human beings; in the NT, indwelling always involves at least one divine person. We do not hear of Paul being "in" Barnabas, or anybody's mother or father being "in" him, etc., though of course Christians are "member one of another," and this comes close to some idea of being "in" one another. I think we have to admit that the parent does not *really* indwell the child; it is rather the child's *impression* of the parent, in the form of impressions of memory, that is carried off by the child, and with which the child may or may not associate himself. This impression is a disposition of construal, disposing the child to construe himself, as well as both is actual parent and other "parent figures," in certain ways. When Jesus (John) and Paul speak of Christ dwelling in us, or us dwelling in Christ, or Christ dwelling in the Father or the Father in Christ, the expression is not metaphorical. It is Christ who is in the Father, and the Father himself who is in Christ, and it is Christ himself who dwells in us. This is possible because Christ is God, and God can be literally and always present to or in anyone; while human beings, when they are absent from one another, can only be "present" to one another in some metaphorical sense. Thus the indwelling of Christ or the Holy Spirit is a kind of fellowship, a real present relationship between god and the believer.

Indwelling, then, seems to have the following characteristics: (1) it is a positive relationship between two or more distinct individuals; (2) in Pauline and Johannine usage, at least one of the individuals must be divine, though we can imagine a metaphorical extension of the concept to relationships between mere human beings, (3) the identity of each individual is profoundly and centrally affected by the indwelling (or "indwelling") of the other(s); (4) somewhat more speculatively, the indwelling is conditioned on the indwelt person's associating himself or herself (voluntarily or involuntarily, consciously or unconsciously) with the indwelling person.

Thus Christ indwells people who associate themselves with him, and thus with the new self that loves Christ and regards itself as loved by him. But when Paul speaks of sin dwelling in him (Rom. 7:7-25), he dissociates himself from it. Two Pauls coexist here, one that delights in the law of God and wants to do the good, and another that is in servitude to sin and lacks respect for the law. The one Paul is a "body of death" to the other. But there is no doubt which one is the real Paul: "I myself serve the law of God." He even goes so far as to suggest that he himself is not sinful, but is derailed by an alien power: "Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells in me" (v. 20). Most of us do not experience sin as such an alien principle, because we do not dissociate ourselves so radically from the sin as Paul does. We "dwell in" it, uneasily perhaps, or with only one foot; but we identify with it to some extent. And the reason for this, I think, is that we do not associate ourselves as strongly with Christ as Paul does. It is Paul's passionate seriousness about Christ, and the strong sense he has of belonging to Christ, of being "in" Christ, that gives him the impression that sin does not belong to him – that is, not to the real Paul, not to Paul's "inmost self." And this is not just Paul's "impression," but a true perception of Paul's situation, a perception of it from God's point of view.

These six features – verbivorousness, agency, inwardness, attachment, association/dissociation, and permeability – are among the central "structures" of personality as

it is conceived in the Bible and especially in the New Testament. These are the “mechanisms” by which personality is formed, for better or worse.

Maturity

In addition to an account of basic human nature, any personality theory will have, or at least imply, a description of the ideally well-formed personality. Since a personality is made up of traits, this description will in essence be a list of ideal personality characteristics, traditionally known as virtues, along with an account of the particular "grammar" of each of these traits. In the Christian psychology, these traits are faith, hope, love, joy, peace, gratitude, compassion, contrition, tenderheartedness, patience, meekness, truthfulness, forgivingness, forbearance, contentment, kindness, gentleness, self-control, humility, confidence, obedience, holiness, hospitality, wisdom, stewardliness, perseverance, generosity, peaceableness, and others. Since these virtues fit a person to live a proper human life, and since that life must always be lived in some context or other — in a "world" which presents particular problems of living — the traits will be at once actualizations of basic human nature, and modes of adaptation to the setting in which one's life is lived out. For example, if one of the basic psychological needs of human nature is loving communion with God, a number of the traits of mature personality will involve and facilitate this love relationship. But equally, if the world in which we are to live out this communion is frequently characterized by dangers, temptations, offenses, and irritations, then the mature person must be equipped with courage, self-control, forgivingness, and forbearance, as modes of adaptation to these features of the world. The Christian virtues adapt us for life in two contexts: the kingdom of God, and this present imperfect world. Hope, for example, is a partial realization of our need for divine and human love; but it also has central features making it quite specific to the conditions of *this* world, which is *not* the kingdom of God.

I believe this brief summary of the basic needs and structures that Christianity ascribes to human nature begins to indicate the distinctiveness of the Christian psychology. This distinctiveness, though, may be obscured by the fact that most of the words for the Christian virtues are shared by other psychologies. Contentment and peace are also virtues in both Stoicism and its twentieth-century update — Rational-Emotive Therapy. Courage is a virtue much touted by existentialist psychology, self-control is a frequent aim of behavior therapy, Jungian individuation can be read as a form of humility (see Roberts, 1993, chapter 6), and so forth. These facts might lead us to think these psychologies are promoting the same personality traits that the church attempts to nurture, and it seems that much of the Christian clergy has uncritically adopted the theories and methods of the psychologists. I have argued (Roberts, 1993) that a psychology's personality ideal is conceptually tied to its other precepts — especially to its view of basic human nature, which after all is what gets actualized in the virtues, but also to its diagnostic constructs, its theory of development, and its practices of therapy.

The virtues projected by a psychology possess a "grammar" — a structure or logic; and we will not know very precisely what kind of hearts and souls are promoted by a psychology, and how these compare with Christian personality, unless we represent that grammar perspicuously. (On the idea of the grammar of a virtue, see Roberts, 1991.) Christian psychology has a special interest in articulating the structure of its personality ideal, because it

is more aware than most psychologies of human verbivorousness and the "edifying" function of psychologies; and of all the dimensions of a psychology, it is perhaps the personality ideal that functions most powerfully in edification. The more articulate we can become about the grammar of the Christian virtues, the less easily will we fall captive to other personality ideals.

How do the Christian virtues reflect, or partake of, the basic needs and structures that Christianity ascribes to the human psyche? What follows is far from a detailed grammar of the Christian virtues, which would need to take the virtues more or less one at a time and would elaborate on more connections. (I have attempted grammatical accounts of a number of Christian virtues in Roberts, 1983,1984a, and 1993.) I make just a few remarks about a couple of virtues, suggesting a few of the many connections that would have to be elaborated in a well-developed Christian psychology.

Stewardliness is the fulfillment of the human need to nurture nature, but in its fullest expression it is a consciousness of doing this for God, in obedience to him and in appreciation of his goodness. In this way it is also a fulfillment of the need to love and be approved by God, to be allied to God, to identify with God by joining him in his projects. A psychotherapy that prescribes gardening or animal husbandry as "occupational therapy" would not inculcate the *Christian* virtue of steward-liness, even if it managed completely to dispel the client's depression by getting him enthusiastically involved with the rabbits, if it did not also manage to get him to see this work as an obedient alliance with God's purposes.

Humility is a disposition to perceive oneself as basically equal with any other human being, even if the other is conspicuously superior or inferior to oneself in looks, intelligence, skill, or social status. Since we are inclined to stress our superiorities to others and take pleasure in them, and to experience emotional pain at "not measuring up," the development of humility may be a painful process of dying to self. But if it is a basic need of our nature to love and be loved by some fellow humans in frank, open, joyful, non-instrumental fellowship, then humility is a formula for fulfillment. A psychology with an individualistic or egoistic conception of basic human nature — such as we have from Albert Ellis or Sigmund Freud — will either have no place for humility in its personality ideal, or the humility that it does commend will have a different grammar from Christian humility.

As to our verbivorousness, it is clear that none of the Christian virtues is possible, in its fullness, apart from the self-understanding and understanding of the social and natural world that is generated by Christian discourse — the stories, the commandments, the theology of our tradition. All of the Christian virtues derive their grammar from the gospel and its Old Testament antecedents; their distinctiveness is largely a matter of their "cognitive content"; they are "theological"; they involve taking the word to heart. It is part of the grammar of all the Christian virtues that individuals (at least "normal" ones) can be morally praised for possessing them and blamed for lacking them; they are, or have been, broadly, within the purview of our agency and responsibility. Yet they are all inertial, too — they are dispositions, powers, that have a now irreversible history; the states of our inwardness that exemplify them are initially passions rather than actions. In all of our virtues — as well as our vices — we are that paradoxical mixture of agent and slave. In con- nection with our verbivorousness I have noted that virtues all involve an understanding of ourselves and our world; they are not just dispositions to behave in certain ways — say, hoeing the garden, burping forth true propositions, taking in guests — but to do these things and much else for certain reasons, with certain attitudes. What I have called our inwardness is thus absolutely

crucial to our personalities' having a grammar at all. The Bible suggests that the character of our selfhood is a function of our attachments — the goal of life, insofar as it is to become a proper person, is to get attached to the right things in the right way. This supposition lies behind the double commandment: If you wish to become what you were created to be, you must be passionately, wholeheartedly attached to God, and you must be concerned about your neighbor and involved in his life and well-being in much the way that you are concerned about your own well-being. Again, virtually all of the Christian virtues either are, or presuppose, the attachment to God and neighbor; this is a pervasive feature of their grammar, and one that distinguishes them from the virtues projected by individualistic psychologies, which tend to emphasize *de*tachment from things and persons as an avenue of freedom and thus fulfillment. And lastly, the Christian personality ideal differs, in its structure, even from that of psychologies that emphasize attachment, in this mysterious feature of the mature personality's being a constant inward fellowship with God, with Christ, with the Holy Spirit. The Christian virtues are forms of that presence to God which the New Testament expresses with the little word "in"—they are Christ in you and you in him.

Development

Any psychology must have a story to tell about how personality is grown into, and this will be as story of how the child's—and also the adult's—social environment interacts with the basic structural and teleological features of his psyche to produce, or fail to produce, the virtues projected by that psychology.

Human verbivorousness implies that our psyches will in fact feed on narratives and outlooks and theories and metaphors that are particularly insistent, salient, or otherwise fetching. Accordingly, the Christian psychologist will be especially alert to the developmental significance of stories and philosophies of life with which the child in a pluralistic culture is bound to be bombarded. The Bible as whole forms a sort of supernarrative, composed of other narratives as its parts. The supernarrative might be outlined thus:

> We the human race were created with certain potentials and fell away from these into alienation from God and one another; yet God has nursed us along through these millennia, forming for himself a representative people in the children of Israel and abiding with them through spiritual and political vicissitudes. In the person of the Son, God became incarnate as a human son of this appointed people and more generally of the human race. The Son identified with us even to the point of "becoming sin" for our sake and dying the death of a criminal, so that we might be made righteous before God in him, whom God raised from the dead. Insofar as we are "in" him and he is "in" us, we are accounted as sinless before God, and look forward to the consummation of our perfection in the world to come.

The narrative thus sketched is the most basic form of that "word" in terms of which Christians understand themselves as persons, and which, consequently, forms them as persons. If a person's formation is to be psychologically correct, the teaching needs to be kept "original," not deformed by various kinds of psychological, philosophical, and religious reinterpretations.

It is part of the grammar of the Christian word that it is itself a personal communication, the voicing of God's own love to the hearer. The Christian stories and forms of teaching should be so presented that they speak to the "heart" of the child, to evoke a response of love and contrition. The faith has a rhetoric as well as a grammar. The word of God should be presented "psychologically," so it becomes clear to the child how this word applies to his own heart. This means that the parents or guardians should reflect in their own demeanor towards the child the nurturing love ascribed to God, and expressed by God in the word, and their demeanor should reflect also the orientation by God's word and devotion to him that is implied by his being God. The parents, speaking to the child's need for loving fellowship with God and humanity, are in fact "priests" to the child. In nursing the infant, in changing her diapers, in holding her and reading stories to her, in manifesting joy at her successes and growth, the Christian parents understand themselves as reflecting the nature of God to the child, and they verbalize this as the child gains understanding. Thus, through the word, the child's world is larger than the family, or the society, or indeed, than the physical universe. This word also provides important parameters for the child's self-articulation in a narrower, more psychological sense. Part of the Christian word is itself a personality theory; it is the teaching that we need God, that we are made for fellowship with him and our human brothers and sisters, that we develop through listening to God's word, and so on. The word readies the child to see these features of himself in his own behavior and feelings and thus to be built up in characteristically Christian ways. Since the Christian virtues are in large measure a matter of inwardness, it will be a chief function of Christian discourse to articulate, and thus to shape, the individual's awareness of his own attitudes, emotions, and motivations, both proper and sinful. The child will be encouraged to get in touch with his feelings, his unconscious yearnings, his needs for God, human fellowship, and stewardly activities, as well as his anger, his disobedience, his cruelty, his pride and envy, his competitiveness. He will be encouraged to set his mind on the things of the Spirit, to associate himself with Christ and dissociate himself from sin. He will be taught awareness of sin's presence in him, yet also its alienness from his inmost self.

In accordance with our nature as agents, we develop as persons by doing things "on our own," by being given responsibility and left to undertake actions ourselves, as well as by being trained in how to act, and being encouraged (largely through modeling) in the loves and emotions that function as motives to our actions. Since we are not only socially embedded, dependent creatures of "habit" and "passion," but also responsible agents, the proper development of a child requires the parent to respect the child's growing autonomy and initiative, and to "back off" and let the child have some responsibility. The parent who does too much for the child, or who sets a strict limit on the child's choice-making, will stifle the child's agency and leave him fundamentally frustrated, just as readily as the parent who loads him with responsibilities he is not yet ready for. Guided freedom, measured to the child's stage of maturity, is the formula for what is needed (see Neal, this volume). In guiding the child toward actions that exemplify the Christian virtues, the Christian parent will be oriented by the grammar of those virtues and thus by the three basic targets of human nature, to love God and neighbor and responsibly shape the nonpersonal created world.

Diagnostic

Perhaps you have felt uneasy with the Christian psychology I've been sketching, because I have made so little reference to sin, a concept quite central to the biblical picture of human persons. My reason is that the scheme of exposition has been to start with basic human nature and to derive a Bible-spirited account of maturity, development, diagnosis, and therapy from that. Sin is not a part of basic human nature. Furthermore, we are not really in a position to understand what sin is unless we know what that nature is of which sin is a perversion, what the proper completion of that nature would look like, and how a proper development of personality would go. The concept of sin belongs in the diagnostic aspect of a Christian psychology of personality. It is in part a *summary concept* for a variety of perversions of human nature, traits of personality failure (enmity, strife, cruelty, and hatred instead of love, forgiveness, gentleness, and peaceableness; anxiety and distrust instead of faith and peace; pride and envy instead of humility and proper joy and confidence; etc.). In part the concept of sin is a set of *explanations* of those perversions, an account of how they come about (sinning begets sin). The diagnostic part of a Christian psychology will be a conceptual-psychological exploration of the structure or dynamic of these vices, and will develop, out of the resources provided by the Christian account of human nature, an explanation (as far as explanation is possible) of these pathologies.

Given Christianity's relational view of human nature as harmonious interaction with God, fellow persons, and nature, the basic paradigm of personality corruption will be that of alienation from God, fellow persons, and nature. Persons are dysfunctional to the extent that they refuse to submit to God and acknowledge him as Lord and wish to occupy his place in the scheme of things (disobedience, unfaith, anxiety, ingratitude, pride, envy); and to the extent that they fail to love and live in harmony with their human brothers and sisters (cruelty, indifference to suffering, injustice, grudge-bearing, pride, self-centeredness, stinginess, arrogance, envy); to the extent that they lack due regard for, appreciation of, and care for the natural world (greed, a sense of ultimate ownership, insensitivity). Of course, much of this corruption is not just behavioral, but motivational and emotional — a corruption of our inwardness.

We can generate explanations of sin out of the various structural features of human nature. In light of our nature as agents, we explain sin by saying that we chose it, we did it, and thus corrupted ourselves by our own actions. We are responsible for our own dysfunction. C. Plantinga includes both the relational dimension of sin that I mentioned in the last paragraph, and the reference to agency, in his definition of sin as culpable shalom breaking (this volume; and more extensively, Plantinga, 1994). But the "we" is not just the individual "I"; we are led into corruption and dysfunction and sin by others' sin. We are modeled in it, taught its doctrines, and provoked to it by other agents. Not only is sin grounded in agency; but our agency is affected, from the first, by sin. In light of our verbivorousness, we can say that sin is caused by feeding on "words" that are other than, and contrary to, the word of God — person-corrupting words, words lacking truth about our nature and the nature of our world, words that encourage pride and envy and a sense of despair about the state of the world, words that deny our responsibility for our condition or our dependency on one another and on God, words that encourage us to be selfish, and words that obscure the fact that we are brothers and sisters. All this can be quite subtle and hard to recognize, and psychologies are sometimes as much infused with these perverting words as the advertising and journalism and family myths that naturally come to mind when we think of this sort of thing. Since our character is determined by what we love, it

stands to reason that vicious states of personality are caused by false loves—inordinate loves, loving the creature as though it were God, making into "hypergoods" (see Taylor, 1989) things that are not fit to be such. Our sin comes from "setting our minds on the things of the flesh." Again, this is something we can be held responsible for, and yet there is inertia here. We get into the habbit of setting our minds on the things of the flesh, we come to love them as familiar friends, and so we lose our perspective, become insensitive, and our minds are darkened.

I have suggested that the guardians of a child's infancy are first and foundational in the metting of her need to be loved and to love, and that they are also her priests, mediating to her, in a preconceptual way, an impression of the character of God. We have in this an important source of personality perversion. In extreme cases the personality may be so damaged at this early stage that the individual lacks the motivational/perceptual resources for significant moral agency, and thus cannot be held morally responsible for contributions to her own personality defects. She thus has only inherited sin. But in most of us the deficiencies of our earliest interpersonal experiences only set us back or exacerbate our problems, making it more likely that we will choose perversely, but without depriving us of our freedom (see Jones, this volume).

Sin is promoted and sustained through self-deception concerning the states of our inwardness. A developed account of the Christian psychology would delve into the nature of the various mental states that make u pour inwardness, examine their interactions with each other and with our behavior, and use these insights to explain psychological development, degeneration, repair, and fulfillment. I cannot do that in the present sketch, but I would like to say just a bit about self-deception. The Bible touches on self-deception only occasionally (e.g. James 1:26); its careful study in a Christian psychology would be warranted by the ubiquity of the phenomenon and its relevance to the psychology of sin. One of the chief justifications for the metaphor of inwardness for our mental life is that we can, to a fairly large extent, hide our sin from others and from ourselves. The main motive for such hiding, according to the Bible, is the desire to appear righteous when we aren't. This motive is probably a corrupt version of the first basic goal of human nature that we discerned earlier—the need for a harmonious love relationship with God. The main motive for deceiving ourselves is the same — the desire to appear righteous to ourselves when we know (in some sense) we aren't. Our power to deceive ourselves, which seems a pretty odd ability on first consideration, is based on our verbivorousness and our agency. We have options as to how we construe ourselves because we can talk, and this gives us an almost virtuosic potential for inventing little stories about our inward and outward life. When these stories are untrue they are called rationalizations. They don't need to be *told,* even in sub-oral speech, to operate in our self-understanding. As agents, we are not on steel tracks as regards our feelings and thoughts and wishes, but are capable of choosing among them, as I have noted. So if we are motivated to choose untrue stories about ourselves, and not to notice too saliently that they are untrue, it should not surprise us that we sometimes tell them. Self-deceptive experiences come in varying depths of deceptiveness (convincingness), ranging from cases in which we are hardly deceived, really, to cases in which the deception is so complete that it ceases to be se//-deception except in the sense that my inability to perceive myself as I am is *traceable* to some earlier self-deceptive acts in which I really chose between options of self-construal.

Therapy

Psychotherapy is guided remedial personality development. It consists in interventions that aim to reorient the personality in the prescribed basic directions or further

its development in those directions — in the Christian case they are aimed toward the Christian virtues; and the nature of these interventions correlates with the posited basic personality structures.

The central and chief intervention in the Christian psychology is God's own incarnation, sacrificial death, and resurrection in the person of God the Son. In this act God aims to set persons back on the track of acknowledging, honoring, and obeying him as God; of harmonious fellowship with their human fellows; and of responsible nurturing and use of nature. As we will expect from the basically relational account of human nature, virtue, and personality defect given by Christianity, this intervention is a reconciliation. The atonement is an act of forgiveness and restoration to a proper state of son- and daughtership. In accordance with our verbivorousness, this atonement is mediated to us through a "word," which then becomes a chief device of Christian psychotherapy, a conceptual background regulating what is said and establishing the grammar of what is done and aimed at. In accordance with our nature as agents, the Christian combats sin and promotes virtue in himself by undertaking actions that are contrary to his "sin nature" or dysfunctional personality: especially actions of service and praise of God, love to his human fellows, and stewardship of the creation. In accordance with our inwardness, Christian psychotherapy encourages articulation of our mental states, conscious and unconscious, that express our dysfunctional personalities (the confessional, and conversation with a spiritual director are perhaps the chief examples of this) and prescribes cognitive/behavioral exercises such as contemplating one's enemies in the terms of the gospel, asking for and receiving forgiveness, setting one's mind on the things of the Spirit, performing acts of charity and patience and self-denial (on this last, see Okholm, this volume). The exploration of the patient's inwardness may also serve to unearth features of a self that is healthier but dissociated; the exploration may even uncover the presence of Jesus Christ in the patient. Therapy would then consist in strategies for encouraging the patient to associate himself with this better self and dissociate himself from what is dysfunctional in him. In accordance with the Christian principle that selfhood is a function of what one loves and regards oneself as loved by, the Christian therapist, like the Christian parent, will regard herself as a sort of priest to the client, a mediator and representative of God's love. And so the kind of empathic communication and personal presence that is so strongly stressed in some secular therapies will also characterize the Christian — with the difference that the secular therapist does not see herself as modeling and mediating the love of God to the client. All of this will aim to encourage the client to associate himself with Christ and to dissociate himself from his sin, yet without becoming oblivious to its existence or unwilling to take some responsibility for it. ("Associate" here has both the social-interactive sense and the psychological sense of "identify with.")

Conclusion

This paper is not a Christian psychology, but only a sketch of one, an effort to make it seem plausible that one might be worked out, and an encouragement to do so. The development of a biblical psychology is strategically important in the church today, if we are to speak to the hunger for personal development and self-understanding evidenced in the widespread enthusiasm for the psychologies, and yet to do so in a way that preserves the integrity of Christian personality. But our purpose is not defensive only. A compelling Christian psychology would not only liberate us from our Babylonian captors; it would also hold the

potential for deepening our wisdom and increasing the church's ability to form true disciples of Jesus Christ.

Postscript

At the conference where this paper was first presented, Nicholas Wolters-torff questioned my easy identification of Christian psychology with biblical psychology and Eleonore Stump and Paul Griffiths asked whether what I expound in this paper should even be called a psychology. I would not, Wolterstorff suggested, want to identify a Christian cosmology — one that late twentieth-century Christians could espouse—with the cosmology of the early chapters of Genesis; only with quite heavy-handed reinterpretation might the Genesis material contribute to a "Christian cosmology." How, then, can I think that a Christian psychology can be read more or less directly out of the Bible? My answer is that the truths of psychology, in the sense in which I use the word in this paper, are not learned by esoteric techniques, mathematical computation, and special equipment such as are required to learn the truths of the physical sciences. These techniques have made available to modern cosmologists information and theoretical constructs utterly inaccessible to the biblical writers. By contrast, the vast majority of psychological claims that Aristotle makes in his *Nicomachean Ethics* are espoused by many twentieth-century thinkers. The reason is that the psychology of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is a practical one — what we in our day would call a personality theory or clinical psychology or psychotherapy — one whose primary business it is to discern what motivates people, how they think about what they do, what it is to perform actions and experience emotions, what a mature personality and human flourishing are like, what a person has to go through to develop a mature personality, and what kind of actions, if any, can be taken to correct defective personalities. These are questions to which any reflective culture will have more or less successful answers.

I do not deny that some advances have been made in 2400 years, but I am saying that the most basic method of answering these questions— long-term careful observation of human beings in more or less natural life settings and in interactions with other human beings (including, importantly, situations of stress) by wise observers — has not changed very much. In neuroscience, an area that is sometimes allied to psychology, Aristotle has nothing to say, because he did not possess the theoretical background, the techniques, and the equipment needed to make observations here. If the Bible said anything about brain functions, it is unlikely that its claims would be taken up in a modern Christian psychology. What the biblical writers have to say about psychology is said out of a wisdom matured in reflective practical interaction with God — in worship of him, in struggles with and against and in favor of him and his revealed will. It is a psychology hammered out in the corridors of nonacademic, non-scientific life by reflective people whom God specially chose to perpetuate the traditions concerning himself. Since the parameters of the moral and spiritual life in the twentieth century do not differ fundamentally from those of the first, or of the third century B.C., it should not surprise us that the New Testament psychological concepts, like those of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* present the parameters of a psychology viable in its own terms, not in need of radical revision to bring it into the twentieth century. This is not to say, however, that the biblical psychology is not different from the personality theories and psychotherapies of the present century. (The New Testament psychology is also different, in fundamental ways, from that of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* just as the psychology of Carl Jung differs from that of Aaron

Beck, and that of orthodox Freudians differs from those of the various family-systems theorists.)

Griffiths and Stump wondered whether I wasn't "re-inventing the wheel." Stump said that much of what I say here can be found in Aquinas, and Griffiths suggested that what I present is not psychology, but "ascetical theology," again something that I certainly did not invent. I do not claim to be inventing anything in this paper, but only to be expounding the biblical psychology, and comparing it, in a modest and *ad hoc way,* with some of the claims of the modern psychologies. If what I have found in the Bible is similar to what Aquinas found there and in the earlier Christian tradition, this seems to me an encouragement that I'm on the right track. As to saying that it is not psychology, but ascetical theology, why not say that it is both? I call it psychology here because that is what it is called in the twentieth century, and our contemporaries are hungry for this sort of thing, more or less under this label. I predict that their spirits will salivate less if they are served the same thing under the name of ascetical theology. And not only the name of ascetical theology will put people off, but probably a fair amount of its working vocabulary. If we are careful, we can perhaps bridge between the Bible and the twentieth-century psychologies by carefully employing some of the vocabulary of the latter (see my use of Kohut's "self object" above) in the interest of distinctively Christian psychological concepts. I do not do that very much in the present paper, but I believe that a full version of the Christian psychology for the twenty-first century would adapt contemporary psychological vocabulary and offer reinterpretations of it.

One fundamental way to begin the project of articulating a Christian psychology for the twenty-first century is to take all of the nine biblical parameters and to explore them in interaction with the best of psychological research and thinking on cognate topics. My paper on attachment (this volume) illustrates one way in which this might be done. In a fullscale articulation of this psychology, the connections among each of the parameters and others would also be carefully explored, with a working out of the implications for character ideal, development, diagnostic, and therapy.