

The second step in developing a Christian psychology is to conduct empirical research within the tradition. Roberts and Watson (2010) call out the prejudice of the allegedly “unbiased” theories of modern psychology and argue that “a Christian empirical psychology will begin unapologetically with an explicit normative understanding of human beings” (p. 165) as understood in the Christian tradition. It is thus more intellectually self-aware than other theories. Good research done from this perspective can make a Christian psychology a “worthy intellectual competitor to the secular psychologies” (p. 165). This research can proceed to address explicitly Christian goals and methods, and the authors illustrate this with studies that have already been conducted. Less directly pertinent for clinicians is the task of research to bring the Christian worldview into dialogue with secular models and to expose hidden metaphysical assumptions of establishment psychology, a project reflected in Watson’s own research (e.g., Watson, 2011).

A third step might be added to the two Roberts and Watson (2010) propose: an approach to counseling based on the Christian psychology approach advocated above. Johnson (2007) has taken a step in this direction, developing a strong intellectual basis for work in the area, but no clear models of therapy have yet been put forth.

For the present work, we turn to a woman who has been counseling in a manner consistent with Christian psychology (Johnson, 2010b), Dr. Diane Langberg. Author of several books on counseling, she has largely focused on survivors of abuse (Langberg, 2003), including, like Dr. Plante above, those who experienced abuse by clergy (Langberg, 1996). With over 35 years of experience as a therapist, and now serving as director of her own clinic, Dr. Langberg also holds academic appointments at Reformed Episcopal Seminary and Westminster Seminary. She is a leader as well, serving on the boards of the American Association of Christian Counselors and the Society for Christian Psychology. She serves as an experienced guide in bringing Christian psychology into the counseling office.

A transformational approach. Johnson (2010b) notes that this view is new to his volume, not appearing in the earlier *Four Views* (Johnson & Jones, 2000). Since then, a number of integrationists have shifted the focus from intellectual to personal/spiritual matters, arguing “that *how* Christians live out their Christianity in the field of psychology and counseling

is at least as important as seeking to understand human beings Christianly" (p. 37; italics in the original). David Benner (1988) was the pivotal pioneer as he looked to historic spirituality for a model of care of souls. He spawned a following, with John Coe and Todd Hall (2010a, 2010b) most fully developing it into a comprehensive approach to reconciling psychology and Christianity.

As Coe and Hall (2010b) present it, the transformational approach might also be called a spiritual formation approach. They de-emphasize relating psychology to faith and argue that psychology, and science itself, is to be transformed into a unity of faith and love. To do this, they propose we are to "get behind the veil" of what tradition tells us is good psychology and do it afresh: "The goal, then, is for each generation in the Spirit to allow *reality* and *faith* to shape this endeavor, to do the work of psychology in faith and then, as a secondary task, reintegrate its findings with those truths and traditions within which it finds itself" (p. 202; italics in the original).

This is therefore a more subjective approach, embedded in the individuals doing such psychology, though certainly objective research has its place as well. The transformational approach is a psychology only for Christians, as it is grounded in Christian realities. The person doing this psychology is fundamental, and the more godly (or healthier) the individual, the better the psychology. "The *good* person is most able to do psychology, for good character transformed by the Spirit and other healthy relationships" (Coe & Hall, 2010b, p. 215) guarantees that the investigator acts out of love and is open to all of reality. Such spiritual maturity is another form of the humility that is a theme in most of the approaches we have surveyed, though here its cultivation is given the most attention as it enables the psychologist to avoid personal biases and distortions.

Coe and Hall (2010b) present a radically relational model, with a strong connection between relation and knowing, in regard to both God and other persons. This is the foundation of the previous point: as we grow in our relationships, we grow in our knowledge. Spiritual disciplines that foster our union with God are a vital part of being a psychologist in the Spirit.

With these basic elements, Coe and Hall (2010b) proceed to lay out the contours of such a transformational psychology. Most basic (Level 1) is the transformation of the psychologist by the spiritual-epistemological disci-

plines and virtues as we have discussed. Level 2 is the methodology of doing psychology in God. Here the authors look to the Old Testament sage (as is seen, for example, in Proverbs and other Wisdom literature) as their model. Theory and the development of a body of relevant knowledge occur at Level 3. Coe and Hall posit three main dimensions of this: (a) the nature of self as spirit, having a nature and being relational, (b) sin and psychopathology, consequences of original sin, perpetuated by sins of the will and heart, and also result from the demonic and the impact of being sinned against, and (c) psychological health promoted by parental love, Christ's redemptive work, the Holy Spirit, and love to God and neighbor. As one studies their longer explanation in their book, *Psychology in the Spirit* (Coe & Hall, 2010a), it is apparent that much of the model draws from attachment theory in secular psychology. This leads to Level 4 and care of the soul, the place that connects to the consulting office as it takes the model from theory to praxis in counseling and spiritual direction. Level 5 introduces a model of training in transformational psychology, a feature unique to this approach.

This might be a good time to reiterate that each of the approaches is a family, grouping around some central features while having differences with others in the genus. Coe and Hall (2010b) propose a model that incorporates spiritual disciplines, a very intentional relationality and a radical approach to redefining psychology while drawing from attachment theory. Others in this group of approaches might lie closer to Benner (1999), who draws profoundly from the spiritual disciplines while keeping more modern psychology. This forms the core of his edited book on spiritual direction, where he is joined by Gary Moon as coeditor (Moon & Benner, 2004). We will turn to Dr. Moon for help in caring for Jake's soul. Dr. Moon is Director of the Dallas Willard Institute and Chair of Integration at Richmond Graduate University. He is a founding editor of *Conversations*, one of the two publications most germane to this approach (the other is the *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, published by Biola's Institute for Spiritual Formation). Dr. Moon has written widely in journals and authored several books (2004, 2009) on the spiritual life. Trained as a psychologist yet having drunk deeply of the spiritual disciplines and spiritual direction, Dr. Moon is thoroughly qualified to represent the transformational approach.