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*Psychology &
Christianity
Integration:
Seminal Works
that Shaped the
Movement*
by
Brian Eck, Ph.D.

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Psychology & Christianity Integration: Seminal Works that Shaped the Movement by Dr. Brian Eck

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Dr. Brian Eck, Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Department of Psychology in CLAS, provides a compendium of carefully chosen articles published over the past fifty years which show the trajectory of faith integration in the field of psychology: *Psychology & Christianity Integration: Seminal Works that Shaped the Movement* (ed. Daryl H. Stevenson, Brian E. Eck, and Peter C. Hill; Christian Association for Psychological Studies, Inc., 2007). Dr. Eck has contributed two of his own articles, “Integrating the Integrators: An Organizing Framework for a Multifaceted Process of Integration” and “An Exploration of the Therapeutic Use of Spiritual Disciplines in Clinical Practice,” the postscript on future trends, and numerous prefaces to the main sections of this book: Historical and Theoretical Integration, Science and Faith Reconciliation, Perspectives on Personhood, Levels and Types of Integration, Models of Integration, Applied Integration, and Integrative Research. Each section includes lengthy bibliographies of texts beyond those included in this collection.

In his second article in this fascinating compendium, he writes: “The goals of psychotherapy and those of the spiritual interventions are the same—change in human functioning.” The therapist who is trained in offering spiritual interventions to the client intends to bring about maximal healing—psychological and spiritual—which will enable the client to function well. This seems reasonable especially for religious clients, yet the “therapist needs to assess whether the use of a spiritual intervention would foster increased defensiveness, manipulation, dependency, emotional repression, or increased pathology”. He continues, “Spiritual interventions would be contra-indicated or used with caution with clients who present with a dysfunctional or poorly formed religion or spirituality, have been wounded by past religious abuse, or for whom spiritual interventions would exacerbate existing pathology”. He includes a detailed chart listing several spiritual interventions that could be used if appropriate and their relationship to standard clinical psychology treatment goals.

In his first essay, “Integrating the Integrators”, he organizes, relates and defines the various approaches to faith integration which have arisen in psychology over the years. Interestingly, he finds that “postmodernism” can positively effect faith integration: “This use of different models, depending on the nature of the data or context, is consistent with the growing trend toward a post-modern research paradigm and its acceptance of multiperspectival analysis and procedures, the use of smaller scale rather than universal models, and a more holistic orientation”. The articles for this anthology which provide numerous models have been chosen by the editors with the following criteria in mind: they are seminal and exemplary of integrative scholarship; they are written by key people who shaped the movement; they have broad appeal to Christians in the psychological and pastoral professions; and they uniquely shape or trace the history of the last fifty years of integration's development. The foundational postulate for the entire work is that all truth, psychological and spiritual, is God's truth, ready to be explored and applied in situations where whole person healing is the goal. Dr. Eck's book deserves a place in every Christian psychologist's library.—Carole Lambert

“From the Shadow of the Object to the Shadow of the Almighty: A Story of Transformation” by Theresa Tisdale, Ph.D.



Dr. Theresa Tisdale, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Oxford Study Abroad Semester, presents a poignant case study of faith integrated into psychotherapy in her “From the Shadow of the Object to the Shadow of the Almighty: A Story of Transformation” (*Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Vol. 35:1, 2007: 52-64). Using a therapeutic approach by Christopher Bollas, which is derived from Winnicott, Kohut, Fairbairn, Guntrip, she describes her professional journey with “Barbara (not her real name). . . a 40-year-old single Catholic Caucasian female” whom she counseled from 1996 to 2001. Barbara’s life was in disarray when Tisdale first met her: “She had recently failed her [doctoral] comprehensive exams, . . . was also on the verge of being fired from her job for poor performance and for conflicts with her supervisor. . . . [and] was suffering from anxiety, depression and migraine headaches.” Tisdale carefully explains how her client slowly moves from being the tormented victim of abuse suffered at an early age, caught in “the shadow of the object”, to a joyful, competent woman abiding in “the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91). Tisdale in no way preached Christianity to her vulnerable client. She states that the closest she came to suggesting Christianity in therapeutic sessions was “using theological

language to describe Barbara’s role in her family.” She continues, “On occasion, I referred to her dilemma in her family as her having felt responsible to ‘save’ her family from themselves and each other.”

Through the healing process of psychotherapy Barbara became more stable in her personal and professional life and more focused on spirituality, as expressed in the excerpts from her personal journal which she has permitted Tisdale to publish. Barbara writes, “I prayed 5 years ago and you [Tisdale] were delivered to me. Luke 11:9. . . . I thank God for the time we shared. I thank you [Tisdale] for walking with me!” Tisdale comments about their therapeutic journey together: “Along the way, God became identified as a source of her answered prayers for help.” This fascinating article’s clarity and good organization makes accessible to all readers, not just psychologists, an intimate counseling experience which concluded in joy.



“Introduction to Parish Nursing” by **Connie Brehm, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Nursing, and Eve Cruz, APU Masters student in the Clinical Nurse Specialist program**



Note from Carole Lambert, Ph.D., Editor of the *Research Reporter*: I am pleased to introduce the *Research Reporter's* latest reviewer, **Ms. Abbylin Sellers**, Research and Grants Specialist in the Office of Sponsored Research and Grants and the Office of Research.

Abbylin earned her M.A. in Public Policy from Regent University, her B.A. in Political Science from Westmont College, and is now enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Political Science at Claremont Graduate University. She has also worked at Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems in Goleta, California, at Morgan Creek Christian Academy in Oxnard, California, and at Community Presbyterian Church in Ventura, California. She has interned for Focus on the Family in Colorado in the area of public policy and attended the Focus on the Family Institute. She will be reviewing books and articles as well as serving you as APU's Grants Specialist. Welcome, Abbylin!

Dr. Connie Brehm, Associate Professor of Nursing, and **Eve Cruz**, APU Masters student in the Clinical Nurse Specialist program, offer insight into one of the newer specialized concentrations in the nursing field in their article, “Introduction to Parish Nursing” (*H&D Health and Development*, Vol. 27:1, 2007: 22-25). Combining the standards of professional nursing with spiritual nurturing, parish nursing offers several benefits to the patient, focusing “on the whole person – body, mind, and spirit.” The parish nurse is most often employed by a faith community, such as a church. The responsibilities of the parish nurse encompass a broad spectrum of duties, including being an integrator of faith and health. In addition to a physical assessment of a

patient, the parish nurse evaluates the “human spirit” to help provide the patient with the best “wholistic” care. Patients receive intentional spiritual care by having someone pray with them, listen, and encourage them with Scripture. The article also describes the necessary training and education for someone considering parish nursing as a specialty practice. Nurses are encouraged to develop their own sense of “spiritual awareness” first for this is “an essential first step to learning how to provide spiritual care.” Parish nurses must first be licensed registered nurses. They transition to the Parish Nurse role through supplementary education, which can be obtained by a continuing education program or a masters degree program. The International Parish Nurse Resource Center (IPNRC) publishes curriculum information for the education of parish nurses. Brehm and Cruz do well introducing us to the model of parish nursing. How encouraging it is to know that the role of parish nursing is expanding through faith communities, so that one day we can all choose to be the recipients of such compassionate and spiritual care, if and when necessary! – Abbylin Sellers





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