

William L. Hathaway and
Mark A. Yarhouse

The Integration of
**PSYCHOLOGY &
CHRISTIANITY**

A Domain-Based Approach



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by William L. Hathaway and Mark A. Yarhouse.

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INTEGRATION

The Very Idea



FOR SEVERAL DECADES NOW, students and professionals have been investing their time, talents, and resources in pursuit of the “integration” of the profession and science of the contemporary psychology-related fields and Christianity. This book provides an overview of this *integration project*, focusing on psychology but also touching on its development in related fields such as professional counseling, marriage and family therapy, and social work. We will focus on work done in the clinical and professional areas of these fields, which is where most of the integrative writing has been done; it is also the specialization area for both of the authors. Yet we believe the approach we take in this book has relevance to integration in the nonclinical areas of psychology as well and will illustrate that with examples in each chapter.

In the context of psychology and Christianity, the term “integration” has been used to refer to the integration of different sorts of things: the integration of Christian theology and psychological theory, Christian spiritual disciplines and psychological practice, Christian and professional values, replacing select world-view assumptions of contemporary psychology with Christian ones, and even the revision of approaches to psychological “knowing” that allow for theologically informed psychology. Also, it is important to note, while not framed explicitly as an integration project, Catholic efforts to formulate a Christian approach to a scientific psychology were present since psychology’s earliest decades or perhaps even before. Recently, attention has been given to Ferdinand Überwasser of the Old University of Münster. As an eighteenth-century Catholic scholar holding

the title of professor of empirical psychology and logic (Schwarz & Pfister, 2016), Überwasser conceptualized an empirical psychology a century before Wilhelm Wundt, whose laboratory psychology is frequently presented as the start of psychological science.

Efforts at the integration of faith and academic disciplines are of course not unique to psychology and Christianity. There have been formal efforts to integrate Christianity with law, medicine, and various natural sciences. The fashionable rendering of the phrase “integration of faith and learning” has been credited to Art Holmes (1975) in his *The Idea of a Christian College*, although the notion was evident in earlier works (i.e., Gaebelien, 1954).

There are several possible starting points that could be identified for this contemporary psychology-related integration project in the evangelical world. In 1952, Taylor University’s Hildreth Cross published *An Introduction to Psychology: An Evangelical Approach*. In 1954, Clyde Narramore, together with his wife, Ruth, launched the successful *Psychology for Living* radio program and other ministries. The Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS) was founded in 1956 with an integrative mission. Fuller Theological Seminary launched its doctoral programs in clinical psychology in 1965 with a stated desire to “put the cross at the center of psychology.” Out of the work done by the Narramores, the similarly pioneering Rosemead School of Professional Psychology was birthed in 1968. Professional integrative journals, such as the *Journal of Psychology and Theology* and the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, have now published regular volumes of integrative work for decades. The establishment of rigorous, peer-reviewed venues of this sort to disseminate scholarly work in an academic enterprise is necessary for a scholarly project to be taken seriously. It also functions as a marker that the project has to some degree become a meaningful niche within a discipline.

In addition to the growth of integrative doctoral programs in professional psychology, the latter part of the twentieth century witnessed an explosion of integrative masters and undergraduate psychology and counseling programs at Christian schools. Many of these programs have tailored themselves to prepare their students for careers in related mental health professions outside of psychology, such as licensed professional counseling or marriage and family therapy. There have also been organized efforts to integrate Christianity and social work. For instance, the North American Association of Christians in Social Work grew out of a series of conferences held at Wheaton College in the early 1950s. Its

mission is to “. . . equip its members to integrate Christian faith and professional social work practice” (NACSW, 2020).

This book will be most directly focused on the integration project in psychology, but we believe it will be directly applicable to frame integration efforts in the related mental health fields as well. While we are both psychologists, we also have relevant experience with these related fields. Bill is dean of a school that includes CACREP-accredited professional counseling and an APA-accredited doctoral program in clinical psychology. Mark is credentialed as a marriage and family therapist and also teaches in an integrative psychology department that also has dual APA and CACREP accreditation. Both have supervised trainees and instructed courses for students in a range of these mental health professions.

Beyond these North American efforts, the academic integrationist movement has gone international, spawning programs such as the Moscow Christian School of Psychology in 1995 and other collaborations such as The European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology and Psychotherapy. Outside of academic settings, explicitly integrative Christian practice contexts have grown to represent the spectrum of practice contexts (i.e., group practices, psychiatric inpatient and residential facilities, interdisciplinary one-stop shops, consultation centers, etc.). In addition, applied integration contributions have also occurred at a semi-popular level drawing from Christians in a variety of mental health professions and counseling ministry vocations. On the counseling front, Collins’s (1980) influential *Christian Counseling* text provided a wide-ranging guide offering practical guidance on how to counsel from a faithfully Christian approach informed by the mental health fields. Collins expanded on this resource by serving as the general editor for dozens of volumes of a series of professional Christian counseling texts covering a wide range of counseling problems during the 1980s and 1990s.

The American Association of Christian Counselors started in the 1980s and grew rapidly in the following decades. It has emerged as the largest professional trade association in Christian counseling with nearly 50,000 members and holding large conferences of Christian caregivers from diverse professional backgrounds. The conferences feature the most popularly influential contributors in Christian counseling, such as Mark McMinn, Gary Smalley, and Larry Crabb. As Christian life and leadership coaching has emerged as a distinct niche for integrative mental health professionals, the AACC conferences have also showcased high impact Christian professionals in this niche. For instance, Henry Cloud and

John Townsend (1992) are frequent presenters, known both for their bestselling self-help books on boundaries as well as their highly successful training and consulting enterprise impacting millions within the church and corporate world.

Given the sheer growth of its academic, institutional, and applied forms, the integration project seems well on its way to realization. Integrationists typically believe they bring a value-added contribution to both their psychology-related disciplines and their Christian communities. Our assessment is indeed that progress has been made and the project has become more sophisticated. Still, there remain foundational issues to be worked out and many aspects of the project into which the integration community is just now venturing. For instance, what scientific methodology should characterize an integrative approach to the psychology-related fields? To what extent can biblical revelation and Christian thought be an explicit source of ideas for psychological theory development? How do professional ethics relate to biblical morality? How are we to navigate professional/disciplinary role conflicts with Christian norms? How can the church be effectively engaged in a manner well-aligned with the mission of God's kingdom to help resolve the world's critical mental health crisis?

The purpose of this text is to take stock of the project to date, to provide an introduction for individuals who wish to come on board, to highlight work yet to be done, and to offer a framework we think may strategically organize and focus this work. We presume both the value of contemporary psychological science *and* the truth of Christianity. While some of our reasons for believing these starting points are warranted will be evident, we will not attempt to offer a full apologetic for them in this text.

Some have claimed the integration project is inherently flawed and needs reformation or possibly even reformulation under a different label and vision—although none have emerged as a widely accepted alternative among those Christians who enter the academic and applied discipline of psychology. Such integration project detractors have made their cases on varied grounds, which we will engage throughout this book. We remain open to the idea of shifting to a new label for the integration project should a compelling one emerge. However, we are not aware of any proposed alternative that more accurately summarizes what Christians have been attempting to achieve under the integration banner.

Proposals by Christians who find value in the psychology-related fields have included an emphasis on ideas such as transformation, conversation, or *thinking Christianly* about our disciplines, which still seem to us—at their core—an

integrative endeavor. Some dissenters from the integration project are discontent with what they perceive as an anemic presence of Christian thought and life or the professional/scientific weakness of its product. From our perspective, to the extent these concerns are founded, this represents inadequate realization of the integration project, not an inadequacy integrative vision itself.

The term “integration” has been put to sundry tasks in contemporary discourse beyond this specifically Christian endeavor. The *Oxford Learner Dictionary* defines integration as “the act or process of combining two or more things so that they work together.” The Latin origin for the term conveys the notion of “renewal, restoration to wholeness.” So virtually anything that is not already whole can be considered grist for the integration mill. As a fruit of the civil rights movement, many settings were *integrated*, bringing previously segregated racial groups within the same schools or public venues. In chemical engineering, *process integration* attempts to design its product more efficiently by considering the interaction of the various component processes from the outset.

Integration projects have been seen in purely secular contexts. The interdisciplinary movement in academia has attempted to build models, degree programs, and garner institutional support for integrating across disciplines. In some cases, these efforts have even spawned their own interdisciplinary study areas and degrees. One way of thinking about contemporary psychology is that it emerged from the interdisciplinary study of natural science, anthropometrics, medicine, and philosophy. It can be understood as arising from attempts to use investigative methods inspired by the experimental sciences of the nineteenth century to answer questions in what might today be called *philosophy of mind* and *ethics*. In that sense, it was an *integrative* discipline from its inception.

More recently, the American Psychological Association’s *Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology* (2015) have formally identified the discipline-specific knowledge areas requires to be covered in an accredited psychology program. These include topics familiar to psychology majors like cognitive, biological, or social aspects of behavior. But with the 2015 standards came an added requirement for programs to cover “advanced integrative knowledge” in psychology, (abbreviated “AIK” in accreditation shorthand). AIK is defined as “. . . graduate-level scientific knowledge that entails integration of multiple basic discipline-specific content areas” (APA IR C-7 D). The advanced integrative knowledge requirement came about in recognition that work in psychology routinely cuts across disciplinary subfields like social, cognitive, or biopsychology.

Research projects are now common in areas such as social cognition and cognitive neuroscience. APA does not delineate what specific topics or methods may constitute an AIK area, only that it involves the integration of multiple foundational areas at a graduate level.

Regardless of the specifics of what one is attempting to integrate, the integrative project assumes there are components to be brought together that are currently not united. But synthesis is not automatically a good thing. If we integrate spoiled milk with our cereal, it does not result in an improved breakfast. Such is the concern of integration project critics. These critics can be roughly placed into two camps. The first camp includes several proponents for a psychology or counseling approach derived from explicit Christian sources—either entirely or to a much larger degree than is evident among most integrationists. The nouthetic biblical counseling movement, associated initially with Jay Adams, argues that psychology operates from unbiblical beliefs that are detrimental to a biblically faithful approach to human functioning or to counseling. The very idea of integrating psychology and Christianity has been taken by some to imply some insufficiency in the Christian faith. If Jesus has provided us with abundant life, then why should we need to turn to this odd, Darwinian modern enterprise of psychology to fix our broken marriages, bind-up the demoralized, or “find ourselves”? Such ways of stating the issue seem to cast a shadow over the entire project. But this is only because the appropriation of psychology is somehow considered a divergent tangent from the redemptive and life-giving work of the Spirit. While not *antipsychology*, the Christian psychology movement has also criticized integration efforts in psychology for being insufficiently informed by Christian revelation and theology. Conversely, a second camp consists of some in the secular mental health professions and psychological disciplines who view the integrative project as an attempt to subvert the science and profession of psychology with religious bias and nonscientific beliefs.

Both camps feel their “breakfasts” would be ruined by the integration project, but they could not disagree more about what is the “spoiled milk.” We will return to such perspectives throughout the text and find insight in their criticisms. Suffice it to say for now, we do not fit in either camp. Our view is that the integrative project in psychology, however it might be labeled, is a vitally important way to advance related concerns in both psychology and Christianity. Done properly, such a synthesis is enriching, holding the promise of a better psychology and further realization of essential Christian ideals in human lives.

Two Books—One Author

Another related discussion is central to locating our integration project: the issue of the unity of truth and the scope of Scripture. Consistent with others who approach this matter from an evangelical position, we hold to a high view of the authority of Scripture, seeing the Bible as true in all that it affirms. What is the range of truth God reveals to us in the Bible? Should Christians expect psychological science to be able to yield productive insights for our understanding of the human condition and how to intervene in it? Unlike the secular psychologist who rejects Christian faith, we believe Scripture provides psychological truths about humanity. Yet within at least some portions of the Christian world, differences may exist about *how much* truth one would expect psychological science to offer about human functioning relevant to Christians.

The idea that God reveals truth in two books has been implicit since ancient times in Christian thought and was explicitly stated in 1605 by Francis Bacon (McGrath, 2000). The two books are the books of nature and Scripture. By stating God is the author of both books, Christians typically mean that God has created the world and our knowing faculties in a way that reveal truths he intends for us to know from nature, and likewise has so inspired the writers of Scripture to convey the truths he intends for us to know from special revelation (i.e., Scripture). The idea is not that the Bible was literally *dictated* by God. Nor does this concept of the Bible as *God's Word* deny that the human authors God used to write Scripture reflected their own personalities, languages, and historical situations in their writings. But since the same perfect God reveals truth in these two books of world and Word, it does imply that the truth revealed therein will not conflict.

The most common view on this matter by Christians who have held to a high view of biblical authority is that God has revealed what is needed for our salvation and his kingdom purposes during this age in between the resurrection and the return of Christ. Scripture provides a sufficient revelation that perfectly provides what God intends us to know through it (Vanhoozer, 2016). What is it that God intends for us to know from special revelation? Christianity has not typically presumed God revealed all truths about creation through Scripture. God did not intend the Bible as a standalone textbook on what can be known about all matters. Instead, it more commonly asserted that God has revealed in Scripture all that is needed for Scripture to serve as a yardstick against which Christian belief and practice is to be measured. Through the design of our senses and other providentially created natural faculties, God also made possible the discovery of

other truths about creation that help us navigate our lives and world. Because both sources of truth are divinely provided, they will always be ultimately reconcilable since the same Creator speaks through both the book of Scripture and “book” of nature. This notion, that God is the author of all truth and that any truth that is discoverable from any source *is* God’s truth (Holmes, 1977) has been a core inspiration for the integration project.

Still, this does not mean, that any particular Christian or group of Christians will be able to reconcile all data—either from Scripture, nature, or both—at any particular moment this side of the return of Christ. God’s knowledge is absolutely true, but we are not God: “we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Cor 4:7). How is one to interpret Scripture, and what role should any biblical theology we derive from it play in any systematic theology that would be implicit or explicit in an integrated psychology? The answer one might give to these questions will be impacted by specific theological traditions and approaches that one brings to the text and the data.

Such discussions are the preoccupations of theologians, and we can at best give a cursory opinion here. Our integrative approach holds that Scripture is inspired in such a way that it has sufficient clarity to serve the functions God desires, which minimally include being a standard for Christian belief and practice. But *we will not* place a boundary around what God may reveal through Scripture in advance of actually looking to see what God appears to be saying through the text. To put the matter a bit more technically: we accept no *a priori limiting principle for the scope of Scripture*. Something is *a priori* if it is held prior to examining the evidence. While an *a priori* limiting principle may help prevent conflicts by rendering Scripture mute on any topic outside of the predetermined boundaries, one needs to have sufficient biblical and theological warrant to accept such a principle if one is to respect the authority of God, who is the source of all truth. We have not been convinced there is biblical or theological warrant for such a limiting principle and remain open to Scripture functioning as a source of truth on knowledge areas more commonly informed by science in our era. Of course, this would not mean we know in advance that God intends to reveal truth about such things in the Bible. We simply strive to remain open as we engage the Scriptures. For example, if the teaching of Scripture is clearly that there is a continuation of the person in a disembodied state, then we would reject physicalist monism, the idea that we consist only of our bodies and its properties.

Physicalist monism is a metaphysical view, a belief about the nature of reality but not a finding of science. However, it is widely assumed in contemporary neuroscience—at least about humans. The vitally important question for us is not what helps us to easily assimilate or correlate our Christian understandings within contemporary psychology, but rather what God does, in fact, reveal through his Word.

Christian understandings of health and our ability to help others contend with illness or injury are dramatically enhanced through the advances of modern medicine. Similarly, we believe psychological science has much to offer in the way of a Christian understanding of the human flourishing and languishing. Neither medicine nor psychology is infallible. When Scripture, rightly interpreted, conflicts with contingent findings of any human science, we hold Scripture to be the higher standard. Yet, just as when one carefully struggles to harmonize passages of Scripture that may on the surface appear at odds without rejecting any portion of Scripture, (such as James's and Paul's teaching on works and salvation), so too one should not quickly gloss over tensions that exist between a robust psychological finding and a prior Christian understanding. To be sure, psychological findings are derived from empirical observations which may not have even been replicated. Such findings are prone to human observational, methodological, and interpretative errors. But still, while the Word of God is completely true, our understanding of it is not infallible.

When a well-supported and robust psychological finding that has survived critical review creates tension within a Christian understanding, we would recommend holding such tension in mind in a prayerful state, seeking God's wisdom. The hermeneutical philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1981) argued that interpretative insight is fostered when a reader does not too quickly foreclose on a possible understanding of the text by failing to attend to those parts which do not fit well into that hasty interpretation. One engages in this overly hasty *assimilation* or foreclosure if, based on one's prior understandings, one jumps to a conclusion that does not well make sense of all the text before us. In such cases, readers ignore or discount the very parts of the text that could have corrected their misreading and led to new understandings.

Remaining in the *productive moment of tension* caused by attending to the alien (i.e., that which we do not understand and that does not easily assimilate) prompts creative new insights and possibilities. To the extent any contingent scientific finding leads us to an accurate rethinking of Scripture in a way that

results in a new or expanded understanding of that text, we would, in fact, be aligning our understanding more, not less, with the authority of God's Word. We would be forming a *more biblical* understanding.

Let us consider examples of how persistent reflection or discovery have enhanced our ability to understand and correctly hear Scripture as Christians. We can see such a development in theology in the early Christian understanding of the diverse Old Testament prophetic streams Christians now have widely understood as messianic. These prophecies reflected figures often thought distinct from one another in the mind of Jews living in the Second Temple period (e.g., the promised Davidic ruler, the great high priest, the suffering servant), but the New Testament writers understood them as all being fulfilled in the person of Jesus (Bird, 2009). We can also see such productive novel Christian interpretation in the formulation of a trinitarian theology. Nicene Christians understand the doctrine of the Trinity as clarifying what one must say about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit to correctly convey what Scripture teaches (Sanders, 2016). We also see it in shifting understandings of biblical language that construed some biblical phrases as phenomenological or metaphorical rather than literal in the wake of changing understandings of the world from natural science. For instance, the verse, "He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble" (Job 9:6) is understood now by Christians as metaphor, not a literal description of a stationary earth (Lennox, 2011). But such productive development is unlikely if the truth seeker glosses over the tension by too quickly reading their own prior prejudices about the text into their interpretation. If we either ignore the empirical realities to preserve a preexisting pet Christian understanding or contort Scripture to have it align with psychological claims, we will have likely missed God's truth. The resolution of such tension can only be truth productive if it faithfully represents both Word and world with the clear teaching of the Word never being compromised.

But to be attentive to such tensions, we need to believe that knowledge of the respective truths on an intersecting topic is possible both from Scripture *and* psychological science. This brings us back to the issue of the scope of Scripture. Some have rejected the need for psychological science for Christian counseling. Some biblical counselors have argued that regarding counseling, Scripture is sufficient for all we need to know in that area (Lambert, 2016). The sufficiency of Scripture proponents do not merely claim we can get all we need for counseling from the Bible; typically, they also assert there is something

inherently flawed with psychological science when it addresses issues that inform counseling and clinical practice, making it an improper source for Christian caregiving. From a quite different direction, others understand the scope of Scripture to refer to such a truncated set of spiritual concerns, that the Bible rarely, if ever, is expected to impinge on the claims of psychological science. What the Bible appears to say about the nature of an immaterial soul, agency, human motivation, marriage and family life, sexuality, or any other topic is irrelevant to what our psychological science might address on such a view. The Enlightenment fact-value dichotomy common in theological liberalism may be reflected in this latter viewpoint: Scripture is seen, at best, as only a font of values, never a source of authoritatively revealed psychological facts (Rashkover, 2016).

Perhaps an illustration is in order of how Christians in the mental health fields may disagree with one another. Not too long ago, I (Mark) was invited, along with Mark McMinn, to a special convening of leaders in the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). After making presentations in areas of ethics and gender, Mark was asked during the Q&A session what biblical counselors get wrong about Christian integrationists. Mark shared that the attendees at the ACBC event appear to think integrationists have a low view of Scripture, when in fact integrationists view themselves as having a high view of Scripture precisely because they see themselves as carefully engaging themes and principles derived from Scripture but not demanding more from Scripture than what Scripture itself promises. Put differently, when Mark teaches on sexuality and sex therapy, he does not look to specific passages from Scripture for a protocol for therapy to treat a woman presenting with symptoms of what today is referred to as genito pelvic pain and penetration disorder. It is not that Scripture fails to address pain or sexuality; rather, it does not promise to deliver the level of details often looked for in developing intervention strategies for various concerns clinicians might address in their work.

We can see there are differences between how integrationists and biblical counselors view the scope of Scripture. At the same time, integrationists do not hold one position on the scope of Scripture. For our part, we do not believe in so narrow an understanding of that scope as to make scriptural claims irrelevant to our psychological theories and conjectures. Whenever Scripture speaks on a topic, affirming truths about it, we believe the Scripture assertion true and thus do not assume any *a priori* range of topics on which Scripture

is silent. However, we also believe there are many aspects of the human condition that psychological science can inform us about that are not deducible from Scripture. We believe this to be the case even in areas that are the focus of psychological well-being and counseling. As with the discoveries of archeology, some of these psychological findings can elucidate the truths of Scripture in ways previously unknown to us but never in contradiction of the Scripture itself.

Two Ancient Christian Rationales for Integration

While the integration of psychology and Christianity may be a relatively new project, there are two ancient strands of Christian thought that resonate well with this integration project, each with a distinct focus. We might engage in integration in order to help repair what has been broken from the fall. We also might engage in integration to further grow into the mature bearers of God's image we were created to be. The former notion resonates with Augustine's theology of the fall, while the latter echoes Eastern Christian themes. Augustine conceptualized humanity's original state before the fall of Adam and Eve as perfect and complete. Sin brought with it a fracturing of perfection. Redemption is now, under this framework, a work of repair. As fallible, fallen human beings, we meander about the shattered pieces of our formerly paradisiacal world. We can only, in this present age, move forward by incremental degrees through divine providence and the sanctifying power of the Spirit toward a more unified, integral state of being that restores the damaged image of God humans were created to display. A vital part of that restorative providence is the special revelation God has provided to us through Scripture. The intellectual project for Christian believers in this fallen state is a *faith seeking understanding* (*fides quaerens intellectum*, Anselm's often cited phrase) that strives to reassemble from shards of our broken world something of the original that was shattered.

Rather than seeing our original state as pristine and complete, Irenaeus saw humanity as created innocent but immature. For Irenaeus, Adam and Eve were like children. Their moral failures were not a fracturing of the creative intent of God but rather predictable steps in human development. God allowed death to put an outer limit on human suffering and made the world in such a way that humans could begin a journey that would allow the image of God to be realized in a more mature and deeper way. For both Augustine and Irenaeus, the fall requires the redemptive work of Christ for our salvation. But for Irenaeus, a fuller

image of God is to be realized by humanity through the postfall journey through redemption than was present before the fall.

Such perspectives have impacted psychology in ways that may be underappreciated by many in the field. Martin Seligman is a pioneer for the contemporary positive psychology movement with its emphasis on cultivating strengths and positive emotion rather than focusing on mental illness. Dr. Seligman (2006) conducted a workshop on positive psychology at the university where both authors were employed at the time (i.e., Regent University). He provided a surprising example of how ancient Christian perspectives might be still impacting the psychological disciplines, and by extension, integration. Although not a Christian, he was aware of the faith foundations at Regent. During the workshop, he quipped that Western psychology has been too *Augustinian* and needs to be more *Pelagian*. By that he meant we have too heavily focused on repairing what is broken and fixing pathology rather than on promoting growth and health. While not convinced to move toward the heresy of Pelagianism from his comment, we appreciated his point about the Augustinian legacy in the psychological professions. It was noteworthy that such an influential leader in psychology readily acknowledged the large footprint left by Augustinian theological tradition on the secular discipline of psychology.

The two ancient orthodox theological understandings we have explored in this section both provide impetus for an integration project. They construe our journey to wholeness as a harkening back and restoration, in Augustine's case, and a developmental progression that benefits from even our failings, in the case of Irenaeus. Thus, on both of these theological perspectives, integration can be construed as serving a productive role. The Augustinian perspective might call for an integration project attempting to repair our brokenness from the vantage point of a creation paradigm that is the blueprint for well-being. The Irenaean view sees in our current state opportunities for discovery and transformative growth that moves further on the telos God has intended for us from the outset of creation. Both would not be surprised to see our lives, academic disciplines, and professions somewhat fragmented or in need of Christian alignment in this present age. Both would call us to a more holistic engagement of God's Word and world for fostering our development. Thus, we find ancient Christian rationales reinforce the contemporary motivation of those who labor with the integration project to press ahead.

A Metatheoretical Classification of Integrative Domains

In the first portion of this chapter, we described the concept of integration and briefly recounted some of the recent history around the integration of faith and learning construct in psychology. The integration project can be thought of crudely as a set of efforts to put together Christian faith and contemporary psychology. There have been many varied approaches to how integration is fleshed out, and there is no uniform strategy that has won the day. This has led some to argue for abandoning the integration moniker for the project and for pursuing some other term to serve as our clarion call. In this text, we will take a different strategy. We will continue to use the integration term but will try to capture some of the complexity in this project by using a *domain* framework. We are using domain here to mean an area of life which has perceptible demarcations, soft boundaries, responsibilities, and activities that characterize its area of life. The domains are different historically situated spheres of life for integration for all those who follow Christ and thus who are called to submit every area of life to the lordship of Christ.

An emphasis on, and/or taxonomy of, domains is present in multiple fields. The World Health Organization's (2001) *International Classification of Functioning* (ICF) delimits, defines, and codifies the adaptive life domains that can be impacted by illness. According to the ICF, "*Domains* are a practical, meaningful set of related physiological functions, anatomical structures, actions, tasks, or areas of life" (p. 216). It recognizes—but only briefly addresses—religion and spirituality as one of those adaptive life domains in which humans often function. Still, the ICF framework means an authoritative world body in health care recognizes that humans function in distinct, but often overlapping, life domains in ways that can reflect flourishing or impairment depending on the impact of diseases and other factors.

We would also assert that the Neo-Calvinist notion of *sphere sovereignty* advanced by Abraham Kuyper is relevant to our domain approach. Kuyper held there were different areas of life, each with their own distinct authority and responsibilities, with none subservient to the others (e.g., state, church, family, etc.). These spheres are all to be lived out *coram Deo*—"before the face of God" (Mouw, 2011). Kuyper's sphere sovereignty might be thought to imply an integration approach something like what Carter and Narramore (1979) referred to as one form of parallelism. A parallelist Christian of this

type who is also a psychologist by vocation likely considers the explicit forms of the Christian life as distinct from one's conduct as a psychologist. Such a Christian would likely act indistinguishably from non-Christian psychologists during their practice hours or in their lab, apart from perhaps an added incentive to do excellent, ethical work "for the Lord" (Col 3:23). At church, they may be a typical Christian, fulfilling their Christian roles in that setting as well, perhaps as an elder or a faithful attender. Such a parallelism is a model for how to coexist as a psychologist and Christian, which may make sense only given certain approaches to role integration that we will return to in a later chapter.

We do not intend to imply anything like this sort of understanding by our use of the notion of integrative domains. We would argue that a default compartmentalization of professional life and one's Christian faith would rarely represent an integrative form of life. In addition, such compartmentalization overlooks the boundary diffusion within contemporary psychological science itself. Psychology is a highly diverse set of theoretical, methodological, and praxis habits, many of which naturally converge on areas of Christian understanding and praxis. We use the notion of domains to refer to some of the natural areas of recognizable effort, activity, and content in psychology within which Christians have been striving to live in biblically faithful ways before the face of God. Further, as we will see in later chapters, Christians have also been increasingly working to not only respond with biblical fidelity to the playing field delimited by these secular psychological domains but have been working to shape the domains and even to foster new ones.

Figure 1 presents our integrative domains model. Many of these are familiar labels or concepts in the integration literature. *Worldview integration* refers to the attempt to reposition contemporary psychology on a coherent biblical worldview. This typically involves the identification of the alternative worldviews informing and shaping psychology and a rethinking of how psychology is altered or informed when grounded on a biblical worldview. *Theoretical integration* attempts to modify psychological theories, especially personality theories, to fit with a Christian theological understanding, to cultivate psychological theories from the soil of Christian thought in a way that enhances psychological theory building, or to use psychological understandings to inform theology. *Applied integration* is the attempt to either culturally adapt or accommodate secular interventions or helping approaches for use with a

Christian population or to develop explicitly Christian interventions and helping approaches derived from Christian thought and practice. Most explicit discussion of applied integration has occurred in clinical or counseling practice, but a small number of integrative programs in other applied areas (e.g., the doctoral program in Industrial-Organizational Psychology at Seattle Pacific University) now exist. Tan (1996) noted that clinical integration may occur either explicitly or implicitly. *Explicit* integration involves a treatment that declares itself to be Christian or that utilizes a recognizable technique shaped by Christian thought or practice. *Implicit* integration occurs when standard practice approaches are used in a way that is guided by Christian beliefs or values despite there being no explicit Christian identification. *Role integration* refers to living out in integrity role expectations and patterns arising from a psychological vocation in a particular context in a way that is simultaneously faithful to one's Christian identity. Finally, we use *personal integration* to refer to the personal discipleship journey of the Christian who is a psychologist (or by extension any similar profession). Personal integration is illustrated by what Farnsworth (1985) called "wholehearted integration." Where much of the early work in the integration project was conceptual, focusing on theoretical integration, for instance, personal integration recognizes the central role of our spiritual formation of cultivation of Christian passions for the fully developed integration project.

Integration domains are not watertight compartments. They intersect each other and have mutual impact. However, we believe they represent distinguishable areas of thought, activity, and socialization in the profession of psychology. Each has at least some soft boundaries and distinctive enough concerns to make their being treated as separate spheres productive. We also believe this focus on worldview, theory, applied considerations, roles, and personal formation helps us understand the emphasis and impact of much of the integration effort to date and affords strategic opportunities for the integration project moving forward. There are missional and other reasons for Christians to not waste the opportunity to enter these domains in Spirit-filled and biblically faithful ways. We organize the chapters in our text around these domains as a result.

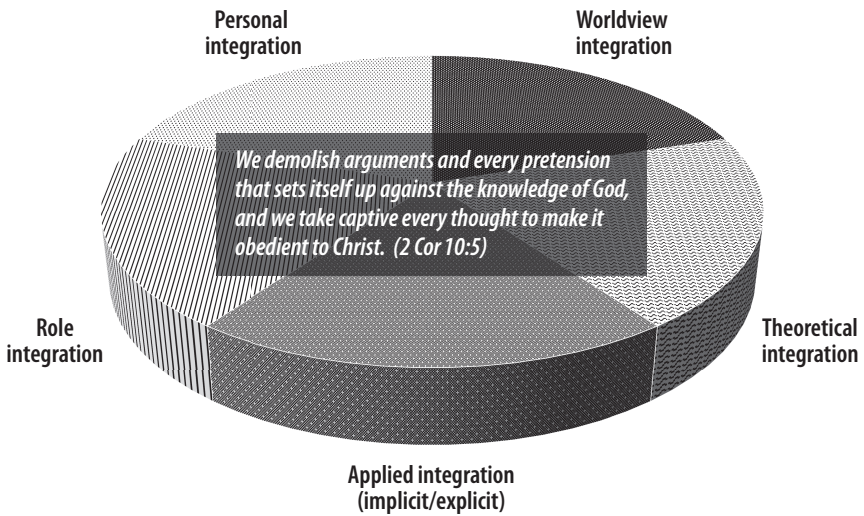


Figure 1. Integration domains

Much of the early work in the integration of psychology and Christianity has been described by Worthington (1994) as “unsystematic and rudimentary” (p. 79). Worthington identified a “second wave” starting in the mid-1970s and declining by the early 1980s. The second wave was dominated by efforts at formulating integrative models that might be described as fitting largely into our theoretical and worldview integration domains. By the 1990s, Worthington saw a “third wave” emerging, characterized by greater effort at detailed intradisciplinary integration and empirical engagement, developments which he welcomed and invited. The last few decades have been marked by a greater emphasis on clinical integration and the emergence of evidence-based Christian treatment approaches and techniques (Worthington et al., 2013). A growing concern for navigating the demands of professional ethics and regulatory standards with Christian integration has been present in recent years reflecting the challenges of role integration (Sanders, 2013). Finally, scattered contributions on the importance and relevance of personal Christian formation for the Christian psychologist has been present during the integration project and has gained momentum with the spiritual direction trend in evangelicalism (Crisp et al., 2019). Before launching into our domain-focused survey, we will first consider the complex and foundational topic of method in psychological science.

Summary

The contemporary *integration project* represents an effort by Christians to, in some way, unify or integrate the contemporary psychological sciences and professions with Christianity. This project has precursors predating contemporary psychology but has gained most momentum over the last half-century by evangelical contributors. Integration efforts have been associated with a motivation to learn from God's two sources of revelation: Word and world. A parallel commitment is maintaining personal fidelity to the Christian faith and professional and scientific integrity in one's discipline. While some noteworthy evidences of progress exist, some integration project detractors have opposed the project or called for its reformulation. We find good reason to continue to explicitly pursue the integration project. A domain-based approach is offered to position existing integration work in a more organized fashion and to facilitate intentional progress on various aspects of the integration task. This framework will be used as an organizing framework for our presentation of the project in this text.

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