



christian psychology around the world

THE EMCAPP JOURNAL

19 / 2023

Main article to Spiritual Formation

- Nicolene Joubert (South Africa)
- Marcin Gajda (Poland)
- Gregory Roy Jensen(USA)
- Comments by Sam Berg (Canada), Janet Warren (Canada) and Tomassc Niemirowski (Poland)

Further Contribution

- Friedemann Alsdorf (Germany)
- Werner May (Germany)
- Nicolene Joubert (South Africa)
- Stefano Parenti (Italy)

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editorial

"Spiritual Formation" is a topic that concerns every Christian.

After more than 45 years of following Jesus I am not the same Christian as I was 40 years ago, 30 years ago or 10 years ago and I will not to be the same in 5 years either. And that's good so.

Why have I changed?

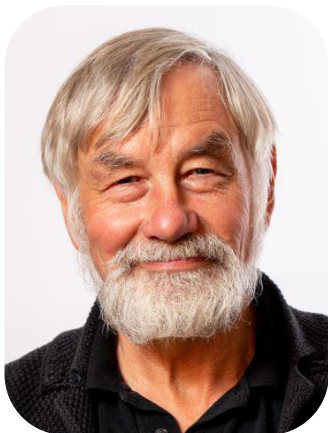
First, because I believe in an incomprehensible and holy God. There is always something new to discover. HE wants to give deeper insights and new personal attitudes can be learned.

Second, because I have changed as a person, like everybody: we grow older, gain experience... and discover new truths in His Word, or our church changes.

Therefore, I am not the same Christian as I was 5, 30 or 40 years ago.

I look back gratefully and definitely don't want to miss my "old treasures" of former years, but they may also change and get a new shine in the light of new treasures.

To be aware of the ways of personal and spiritual development is important for our work as Christian psychologists, whether practical or theoretical. We have to reflect our own development and current state and we must be attentive to other persons, where they currently stand in their faith, how they live and believe. We have to respect and perceive them with their spiritual questions, and be careful, when we try to give impulses for spiritual growth.



Sometimes it may be helpful to support someone directly in his or her spiritual development, to make this the topic of our counselling session. Sometimes a spiritual change will have a positive impact on the symptoms that are the reason for the therapeutic or counselling relationship. But we have to find out, whether it is the right time and the right proposal or not.

Sincere thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of the eJournal as author or commentator to the main topic "Spiritual Formation" and to additional topics, too.

Reading the articles, I wish you refreshing insights into the greatness and love of our God.

Yours, Werner May

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Why do we have a bilingual journal?

In our movement for Christian Psychology, we meet as Christians with very different backgrounds: different churches, different cultures, different professional trainings...

There is a common desire for the movement, but highly "multi-lingual" ideas of its realization! Therefore, a bilingual journal is just a small reference to our multilingual voices to remind us:

Languages are an expression of cultures, countries and of their people. By writing in two languages, we want to show our respect to the authors of the articles, to their origin and heritage, and at the same time symbolically show respect to all the readers in other foreign countries.

There are many foreign languages that we do not understand. Within our own language, we intend to understand one another, but we fail to do so quite often. To really understand one another is a great challenge, and we also want to point to this challenge by offering a bilingual journal.

"When languages die, knowledge about life gets lost." (Suzanne Romaine, 2011)

Finally, there is a pragmatic reason: As we want to have authors from one special country to write the main articles of every journal, it will be easier for them to distribute the journal in their own country, when it also is in their own language.

Note: By clicking the desired contribution in this Contents list, you immediately reach the relevant page.

the first 18 numbers of the ejournal christian psychology around the world

The EMCAPP Journal "The Christian Psychology Around the World" is published in Germany, the main editor is Werner May. Since 2011 the internet bilingual Journal is published two times a year. The authors of articles and comments are psychologists, psychotherapists and scientists from different countries of the world.

This journal is published by the European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology and Psychotherapy in cooperation with the IGNIS-Akademie für Christliche Psychologie.



JOURNAL NO. 1 - 2012
Poland



JOURNAL NO. 2 - 2012
Germany



JOURNAL NO. 3 - 2013
Russia



JOURNAL NO. 4 - 2013
Switzerland



JOURNAL NO. 5 - 2014
USA



JOURNAL NO. 6 - 2015
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JOURNAL NO. 7 - 2015
Canada



JOURNAL NO. 8 - 2016
South Africa



JOURNAL NO. 9 - 2016
Focus Topic: „Therapy Goals“



JOURNAL NO. 10 - 2017
„Conscience“



JOURNAL NO. 11 - 2018
„Who is leading me during practicing Christian Psychology?“



JOURNAL NO. 12 - 2019
„Christian identity“



JOURNAL NO. 13 - 2019
Body Aspects in Christian Psychology, Psychotherapy and Counseling



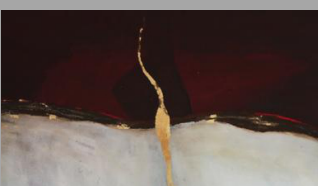
JOURNAL NO. 14 - 2020
„Coping with Stress in Theory and Practice of Christian Psychology“



JOURNAL NO. 15 - 2020
„Basic trust and secure attachment - Christian anthropological, educational and psychotherapeutic aspects.“



JOURNAL NO. 16 - 2021
„A Christian Perspective on the True Self and False Self“



JOURNAL NO. 17 - 2022
„Situating Grief in Redemptive History for the Sake of Joy“



JOURNAL NO. 18 - 2022
„Ways out of the Shame-Fear Cycle“

See here: <https://emcapp.ignis.de>

about the artist

Artist Statement

Alexey Adonin (Israel) explores the point of convergence between abstraction and surrealism to create a channel of communication between his inner world and the viewers, not only to share his personal vision but also and especially to invite viewers to elaborate their personal interpretations and narratives, establishing deep involvement both in the emotional aspect and in the intellectual one. His approach to work is without preconception, allowing random things to happen first. Then, he takes advantage of the mind's ability to find order in chaos or use a prepared sketch. Finally, Alexey mostly strives to get away from banal copying of reality, preferring instead to create one of his own—something that somehow reflects his inner world.

Biography

As an explorer of the mysterious universe of oil painting, Alexey Adonin has dedicated almost



Alexey Adonin

two-decade to conveying his vision of hidden otherworldly realms connected with a timeless source of inspiration. Raised in Eastern Europe, Belarus, Alexey's thirst for mysticism and love for art have been evident from a young age. Since his father was teaching at the children's art school, Alexey began attending drawing classes and later went to art college. In the early '90s, he and his family relocated to Israel. Today Alexey resides in Jerusalem and has exhibited locally and internationally. His works have also been acquired by notable private collections worldwide.

www.alexeyadoninart.com
and see here on Instagram





Lilly

main
articles



Dr. Fernando Garzon (US) is the Associate Dean for the College of Health and Behavioral Studies at Regent University. A licensed psychologist and professor in Regent's PsyD program in clinical psychology, Dr. Garzon's research and writings focus on spiritual interventions in clinical practice, multicultural issues, and lay Christian counseling approaches. His clinical experience encompasses outpatient practice, managed care, hospital, pastoral care, and church settings.

Introduction to the main articles to Spiritual Formation

This edition of *Christian Psychology Around the World* explores Christian spiritual formation. Spiritual formation goes beyond proper theological beliefs and moral conduct. While these are important and included, spiritual formation traverses deeply into the profound experiential aspects of our relationship with God, ourselves, and our neighbor. It has been practiced in Judeo-Christian history for thousands of years and defined in many different ways. In a basic sense, spiritual formation begins as a response to God's generous invitation (Merton, 1987). It includes a variety of inward, outward, and communal practices (Foster, 1998), and its goal is Christlikeness (Willard, 2002). It is considered a central theme across Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox faith traditions (Moon & Benner, 2004). The current issue elaborates further on Christian spiritual formation and focuses on three important areas.

In Nicolene Joubert's opening article, she addresses a critical need—the application of spiritual formation principles in the lifelong development of leaders. What phases do leaders go through and how does spiritual formation relate to these areas? Nicolene Joubert gives us a sense of how spiritual formation principles can help a leader progress from “commitment to maturity to finishing well” (p. 5).

Marcin Gaja follows with an in-depth exploration of prayer in his clinical work. His statement, “Very few people really pray” (p. 7) startled me out of a spiritual slumber. He invites us to consider how the practice of contemplation can expose our false self. The journey continues to a deepened love of God and rediscovery of our real or authentic self in the clinical recovery and healing process.

V. Rev. Gregory Jensen's third article examines the work of “a keen psychologist of the spiritual life” (p. 14), Bernard of Clairvaux in regard to the intricacies of love of God, neighbor, and ourselves. Jensen describes St. Bernard's four stages of love and connects this spiritual developmental process to the work of psychotherapy. An end goal is that “the soul comes to understand the eschatological nature of love” (p. 14).

In addition to these three articles, we recognize the importance of community dialog in spiritual formation. Accordingly, Sam Berg (Canada), Tomasz Niemirowski (Poland), and Janet Warren (Canada) interact in their commentaries with themes from the three articles. Their discussions deepen our understanding and challenge us to careful, prayerful examination of this journal edition's content.

The goal of this edition of Christian Psychology Around the World is not to provide definitive answers to how to do spiritual formation for leaders, practice contemplation, or to help our clients achieve the highest levels of love. Rather, our hope is that God breathes on aspects of this community dialog to inspire each of us further in our growth vocationally and personally in our walk with Christ.

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White Canvas



Professor Dr Nicolene Joubert has been a counseling psychologist in private practice for 39 years, specializing in Christian psychology and psychotherapy, trauma therapy and family counseling. She is the founder of the Institute of Christian Psychology in South Africa, a training institution that offers courses in Christian psychology and counseling. She is an adjunct professor at Houston Baptist University, Houston, Texas, USA where she develops and teaches Christian psychology and counseling courses. She is the chairperson of the Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counselors (CPSC) in South Africa. She is also a post-graduate supervisor at the South African Theological Seminary (SATS) for MA Th and PhD students.

Former contributions in our eJournal by Nicolene you can see here:

<http://emcapp.ignis.de/8/#p=50>

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/9/#p=22>

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/15/#p=21>

Spiritual Formation for Christian Leaders

Abstract

Spiritual formation is a well known term in the Christian faith tradition. Christian leaders are expected to be mature in faith and character and to have wholesome relationships. Spiritual growth and transformation is required to reach a place of maturity and wisdom. Various practices and approaches to spiritual formation have been implemented over the years in the Christian faith community for this purpose. All believers should delve into the Christian literature on spiritual formation to find the gold nuggets that would stimulate and inspire their spiritual growth. In this article the focus is on Christian leaders and valuable perspectives that could guide them into a deeper relationship with Christ throughout their life.

Key words: spiritual formation, faith, spiritual transformation, Christlike, relationships, mature character, lifelong development

Introduction

Spiritual formation is a lifelong process of being formed and developed to become more like Christ. It is personal and relational formation that take place throughout the seasons and transitions of life. Several verses in the Bible refer to how knowing God, change and transform our thoughts, choices and behavior (Gal. 4:19;

Col. 1:28; Rom. 12:2)(1). Formation has different meanings in different contexts. The practices and means have changed over centuries, but the purpose of spiritual formation remains to grow in understanding of God, deepening in the relationship with Jesus Christ, and becoming more Christlike.

Historical Overview

Wilhoit and Howard (2020) identified themes that have been pursued in spiritual formation throughout history. For example, the book of Acts demonstrates how people were formed through worship, service, prayer, mentoring, conflict, teaching and preaching (Wilhoit and Howard, 2020). The desert fathers developed practices for spiritual formation that enabled to them “to demonstrate the radical call of the gospel” (Wilhoit and Howard, 2020, p.6). They devoted themselves to austerity, prayers and work.

The Roman Catholic tradition highlights the priest’s fundamental relationship to Jesus Christ and the Church. Formation takes place through programmes and resources provided by training institutions (Naidoo, 2008). The mission of the seminary is pursued through these programmes. Four key dimensions of formation, i.e., human, intellectual, spiritual and pas-

toral are identified that may be included in the programmes. Martin Luther introduced prayer and meditation on the text in the context of the trials of life and established a practice of spiritual formation for sincere believers (Wilhoit and Howard, 2020).

In the Protestant theological tradition formation is not part of the theological curriculum but rather pursued through individual faculty. In this context, formation refers to human and spiritual. In theological education the scope of formation could be summarised as 1) to be like Christ, 2) to know the Word of God and 3) to do the work of ministry. Lu (2021) asserts that most higher education contexts focus on the cognitive dimension of formation. The dimensions of self awareness in spirit, emotion and awareness are neglected.

According to Lu (2021) transformative learning occurs when a person's frames of reference are critically examined and new frames of reference developed. New frames of reference are formed by going through a process that involves a disorienting dilemma; self examination of feelings of anger, guilt or remorse; a critical assessment of assumptions; interpreting one's discontent as a process of transformation; exploring new options of roles; relationships and responsibilities; planning new actions; acquiring knowledge and skill; trying out new roles; building confidence and competence in the new role, and reintegration into one's life based on the new perspective (Lu, 2021). This process fits in with the lifelong process of spiritual formation as discussed in this article.

The Holy Spirit works in a person to recognize an inner state of self that inspires engagement with the Spirit. This leads to self awareness and self reflection, assessment of the challenge or disorienting dilemma, and consequent spiritual development. Theologians agree that spiritual formation involves multiple levels and dimensions that are interrelated. Self knowledge and self awareness are essential elements in this process. It is important to note that spiritual formation should focus firstly on spiritual development and deepening our relationship with Christ, and secondly on knowledge and skills.

Spiritual Formation

Intentional spiritual formation could be pursued by engaging in spiritual disciplines and spiritual exercises. Traditional spiritual exercises and disciplines such as those developed and practiced by the desert fathers and Benedict of Nursia are still relevant. The practices developed by Martin Luther can be followed by any sincere believer. Wilhoit and Howard (2020) proposed the word WISDOM as an acronym to refer to the practices that should be involved in spiritual formation. W- stands for wise planning. Leaders should prayerfully seek what is needed to implement in a specific context. I- stands for intentional and refers to calling people to commit to distinguish themselves from the world. S- stands for Scripture, salvation and Spirit and emphasises the message of salvation. The D- stands for discipleship, the O- for optimism and the M- for Means, or the methods, trials and events that provide the opportunities for spiritual formation. More recently developed educational methods provide learning experiences aimed at leading theology students into spiritual formation (Lu, 2021). Many of these methods and exercises could be implemented by believers to engage in spiritual growth.

Spiritual Formation as a Lifelong Process of Sanctification

The spiritual formation of Christian leaders from the perspective of a lifelong process of sanctification provides a timeline and direction for growth. This perspective can be applied by any sincere believer. Formation and transformation incorporate processes, challenges and turning points, which are woven together in the lifelong process of sanctification (Clinton & Clinton, 2004; Naidoo, 2008). Through these challenges believers are becoming more Christ-like and their Christian character is shaped in accordance with God's work in them. Ephesians 2: 10 states: "We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Paul, in his letter to Titus, encouraged him to admonish true believers to be ready for every good work. Titus was instructed to remind them "to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to speak evil of no one, to avo-



Ra

id quarelling, to be gentle and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.” (Titus 3: 1-2, ESV). Paul further wrote “that those who believe in God “may be careful to devote themselves to good works and to avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels about the law.” Developing these characteristics is a lifelong process and requires obedience and faithfulness.

Spiritual Formation as a Lifelong Development of Leaders

Christian leaders who adopt the lifelong developmental perspective on spiritual formation will evaluate and interpret every event or challenge that they encounter as an opportunity for spiritual growth and will view these events as God’s sovereign way of shaping their character. 1Timothy 3:1-3 address the character qualities that Christian leaders should possess. This perspective is based in the belief that God intends to develop every leader to his/her maximum potential and accomplish the things he/she is gifted for. This perspective guides a believer to identify and analyze key events and turning points in the light of how they contributed to spiritual formation. Lesson learned could be extracted from these events, and spiritual values identified. Creating self awareness of the developmental process by reflecting on key events will guide actions and decisions about the future. A key question would be: “How is this event shaping me to be more like Christ?” Each leader has to be aware of and se

Clinton and Clinton (2004) proposed a ministry timeline that moves from ministry foundations to the focused life to finishing well. Ministry Foundations entails the shaping of basic character and underlying values. Some destiny activities might occur during this phase. The second phase, Early Ministry, entails a commitment to ministry and early experiences at ministering. During the Middle Ministry phase one’s life purpose and giftedness are clarified. Breakthrough insights for empowering people might happen. The Latter Ministry phase focuses on moving towards effective ministry and the peak of one’s ministry The Finishing Well phase focuses on the consolidation of a lifetime

of ministry. Important values are passed on to upcoming leaders and ultimate contributions developed. According to this model, three concepts may be used to describe God’s shaping activities, i.e., spiritual formation, ministerial formation and strategic formation.

Diagram for Lifelong Developmental Spiritual Formation

The order of the three concepts will shift over the life time of a leader as God’s shaping takes place (Clinton and Clinton, 2004). During the early ministry phase ministerial formation will be more prominent, followed by spiritual formation and lastly strategic formation. In the middle ministry phase it would be spiritual, ministerial and then strategic. During the latter phase it would be strategic, spiritual and ministerial. The finishing well phase is characterized by strategic and spiritual formation.

How does God shape leaders to move to the focused life? And what does the focused life look like? The focused life is described as 1) a life exclusively dedicated to carry out God’s purposes, 2) an increasing prioritizing of one’s major role as a leader, life purpose, and ultimate contributions one’s leadership becomes focused on one’s calling (Clinton and Clinton, 2004). The results should be a satisfying life of being and the sense of finishing well. Ministry flows out of being as God first works in us and then through us. God builds character, the ability to do things and shapes our values. Spiritual formation relates to three critical questions, i.e., 1) “On what to you base your identity?” “On what you are or what you do?” 2) “Do you have focus in your life?” “Do you do the right things?” Or “do you do the right things right?” 3) “Are you proactively moving towards finishing well?”

The shaping processes may include resistance, disappointment in the ministry, backlash, persecution, failure, losses, or other challenges. These challenges should be evaluated and interpreted in the context of a lifelong developmental process of spiritual formation. The process of self awareness and self reflection, previously discussed, could be followed to gain insight into the work of the Spirit, the self, and

how it relates to one's ministry and calling. It includes the examination of emotional reactions to the shaping, such as anger, guilt, shame, remorse; exploration of assumptions; reconsidering of roles and relationships; identifying new roles and relationships and developing a new perspective. The process should be viewed as spiritual formation and the new insight gained about self, God, beliefs about God and others, implemented into the new role(s).

Christian leaders and all believers should understand shaping activities, recognize them, learn from them, and allow God to shape their characters and faith and stay focused. The shaping activities include integrity and obedience to God; a conscious commitment to serve as a leader and to stay committed through trials; submission to authority; learning how to operate in spiritual authority; accepting paradigm shifts and adapting to new ideas; identifying and standing against spiritual opposition; moving to new levels of depth in their relationship with God; dealing with crises and conflicts; discover and develop giftedness; receive guidance; treasure ministry breakthroughs and build on them; handle leadership backlash and other challenges; develop a sense of destiny and embrace destiny activities (Clinton and Clinton, 2004).

Conclusion

Spiritual formation is a lifelong process based on a conscious commitment to follow and serve Christ (salvation), and to become more like Him (sanctification). Traditional spiritual practices of prayer and service could be implemented for intentional spiritual formation. Christian

leaders may also track their formation throughout the lifespan of their ministry to ensure they move from commitment to maturity and to finishing well. Each challenge and dilemma should be analyzed and reflect on to find the opportunity for growth and being shaped by God. In alignment with Paul all leaders and sincere believers should strive to finish well.

Timothy 3-8 provides a vision of how we should finish our ministries and our lives: "As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

(1) All Biblical references are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

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Farewell



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Love of God (Prayer)

PRAYER IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY THAT CAN BE UNDERTAKEN IN LIFE.

Although this chapter on prayer as the practice of the love of God comes near the end of the book, prayer is far and away the most significant action that can be taken to be free of the FALSE SELF. Through prayer, we reach the Source of Life, which is never depleted and, most importantly, which flows from within ourselves, and is therefore independent of external circumstances. Prayer is an acceptance of life. Prayer is the breath that we draw from within. Prayer causes us to regain our sovereignty, so that we do not have to beg anyone for a modicum of attention or affection. Prayer restores our internal freedom, as we cease to be afraid and experience life within ourselves. Thanks to prayer, love begins to be possible.

A wounded person is like a crab encased in the shell of the FALSE SELF. The shell of a crustacean is indispensable to its existence. It is the exoskeleton on which its whole body depends. Nobody in their right mind would give up such a protective shell without receiving something in exchange. An endoskeleton has to be produced before our defense mechanisms can be discarded. Prayer is what builds this skeleton

MIŁOŚĆ DO BOGA (MODLITWA)

MODLITWA JEST NAJISTOTNIEJSZYM DZIAŁANIEM, JAKIE CZŁOWIEK MOŻE PODJĄĆ W SWOIM ŻYCIU.

Rozdział o modlitwie umieściliśmy niemal na końcu książki (jako praktykowanie miłości do Boga), jednak z całą pewnością jest to najważniejsze działanie, jakie może podjąć człowiek, aby wyzwolić się z JA FAŁSZYWEGO. Poprzez modlitwę docieramy do Źródła Życia, które się nie wyczerpuje i, co najważniejsze, tryska w nas samych, a więc jest niezależne od okoliczności zewnętrznych. Modlitwa jest przyjmowaniem życia. Jest oddechem, który czerpiemy od wewnątrz; to ona sprawia, że odzyskujemy suwerenność i nie musimy już nikogo błagać o odrobinę uwagi lub afektu. Modlitwa przywraca nam wewnętrzną wolność, bo przestajemy się bać, doświadczając życia w samych sobie. Dzięki niej miłość zaczyna być możliwa.

Zraniony człowiek przypomina kraba obudowanego pancerzem JA FAŁSZYWEGO. Pancerz skorupiaka to niezbędny do życia szkielet zewnętrzny, na nim opiera się całe jego ciało. Nikt o zdrowych zmysłach nie zrezygnuje z takiego pancerza, nie mając nic w zamian. Aby człowiek mógł odrzucić mechanizmy obronne, musi najpierw wytworzyć szkielet wewnętrzny. Właśnie modlitwa buduje w nas kościec,

inside us and makes it possible to shed the outer shell of defense mechanisms. No one who has not experienced inner life will abandon his pretences. The anxiety is too strong.

As therapists, we have observed that therapy progresses considerably faster when the patient engages in prayer, and especially contemplative prayer. (1) However, what people consider prayer is very often not the real thing. From our standpoint, although the people who come to us are very religious and would unequivocally claim that they prayed, their religious observance does not meet the criterion of "true prayer" as described below. The study of prayer is often a watershed moment in therapy.

"Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from? Is it not from your passions that make war within your members? You covet but do not possess. You kill and envy but you cannot obtain; you fight and wage war. You do not possess because you do not ask. You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." (2) These telling words from the Epistle of James should give us pause for thought. It is worth asking ourselves whether we pray well, but even more, whether this activity, which we occasionally engage in for religious reasons, can be called prayer at all. We obviously respect every religious gesture, but inner life is subordinate to personal growth. We can introduce the analogous concept of "real prayer" in a similar way as we utilize the concepts of the "real self" and "true thought."

What we have in mind when we say that prayer rapidly accelerates recovery and emotional integration is the real prayer that Jesus taught, and not some religious ritual discharged haphazardly, perfunctorily, hurriedly, and with a complete lack of internal commitment, by force of habit, or out of fear or some other motivation(s), even noble ones such as socio-political ends. (3)

Jesus taught that prayer should be "in Spirit and truth." (4) This is the only sort of prayer that will open the individual up to the presence of God and enable him to gradually enter into the miraculous life.

umożliwiający odpadnięcie pancerza mechanizmów obronnych. Kto nie doświadczy prawdziwego, innego życia w sobie, nie zrezygnuje z jego pozorów. Lęk jest zbyt silny.

Jako terapeuci zaobserwowaliśmy, że jeśli pacjent podejmie modlitwę, a zwłaszcza modlitwę kontemplacyjną (1), jego terapia przebiega znacznie szybciej. Jednak bardzo często to, co ludzie uważają za modlitwę, nie jest nią- rzeczywiście. Choć nasi rozmówcy w gabinecie bywają bardzo religijni i sami o sobie powiedzieliby z pewnością, że się modlą, jednak z naszego punktu widzenia ich praktyki religijne nie spełniają kryteriów „prawdziwej modlitwy”, które podajemy niżej. Nauka modlitwy to często przełomowy moment procesu terapeutycznego.

„Skąd się biorą wojny i skąd kłótnie między wami? Nie skądinąd, tylko z waszych żądz, które walczą w członkach waszych. Pożądacie, a nie macie, życie morderczą zazdrość, a nie możecie osiągnąć. Prowadzicie walki i kłótnie, a nic nie posiadacie, gdyż się nie modlicie. Modlicie się, a nie otrzymujecie, bo się źle modlicie, starając się jedynie o zaspokojenie swych żądz”². Te znamienne słowa z Listu św. Jakuba powinny dać nam do myślenia. Warto sobie zadać pytanie, czy modlimy się dobrze, a nawet więcej: czy tę czynność, którą od czasu do czasu podejmujemy z pobudek religijnych, w ogóle można nazwać modlitwą. Oczywiście, mamy szacunek do każdego gestu religijnego. Jednak życie wewnętrzne podlega rozwojowi. Podobnie jak posługujemy się pojęciami „prawdziwego ja” i „prawdziwego myślenia”, możemy analogicznie wprowadzić pojęcie „modlitwy prawdziwej”.

Pisząc, że modlitwa niezwykle przyspiesza proces zdrowienia oraz integracji emocjonalnej człowieka, mamy na myśli wyłącznie modlitwę prawdziwą, której uczył Jezus, a nie religijny rytuał odprawiany byle jak, mechanicznie, w pośpiechu i bez zaangażowania wewnętrznego; z przyzwyczajenia, ze strachu lub z innych, nawet skądinąd szlachetnych, pobudek (np. narodowościowych lub społeczno-politycznych) (3). Jezus nauczał, że modlitwa powinna odbywać się „w Duchu i prawdzie” (4).



Fog

What then is real prayer and what are its attributes? What does it mean to pray well? Let's spend some time pondering these questions.

1. REAL PRAYER IS ENGAGED IN OUT OF LOVE

The most important reason to engage in prayer is the love of The One to Which we return. Prayer is not a technique meant to help us through emotional or practical difficulties. Nor does it appease God, so that He will start to support our life plans and ideas. Prayer is an acceptance of His Life. We pray because we love Him and want to love Him even more.

How and what we feel are of no importance when praying. We have no interest in whether our prayer will "work out" for us. When I love, I cease to matter to myself; I only want the good of That Which I love. Prayer begins to gradually free us from ourselves. This also happens through the difficulties we experience while praying. The importance of not assessing our prayer in terms of its efficiency, effectiveness or quality is crucial here. Once our ego vanishes, prayer becomes completely simple and disinterested.

Prayer leads us to a complete acceptance of the ways in which God operates and manifests Himself in our lives. It is not about obtaining something from God, but obtaining God. When we pray, we wish to express our thanks to God for the miraculous grace that we have received. The very fact that we seek Him attests to His having found us.

2. REAL PRAYER IS SINCERE AND DOES NOT REQUIRE VERBOSITY

Sincerity is the cornerstone of prayer. We should not try to be anyone other than who we really are when we pray. Prayer requires truth. If we feel anxiety, then we should not pretend that we are confident. If we do not understand what is happening in our life and are feeling pain, then we have the right to "pour out our heart" to God.

Some people start to behave strangely when they pray: they switch to a pompous style, use archaic words, and adopt an unnatural tone of

Tylko taka modlitwa otwiera człowieka na Obecność Boga i umożliwia mu stopniowe wchodzenie w życie nadprzyrodzone.

Czym zatem jest prawdziwa modlitwa i jakie ma cechy? Co to znaczy modlić się dobrze? Spróbujemy się chwilę nad tym zastanowić.

1. Prawdziwa modlitwa podejmowana jest z miłości

Nie ma innego ważniejszego powodu do podjęcia modlitwy niż miłość Tego, ku Któremu się zwracamy. Modlitwa nie jest techniką mającą nam pomóc w trudnościach emocjonalnych lub życiowych. Nie jest także przebłagiwaniem Boga, by zaczął sprzyjać naszym planom i pomysłom na życie. Modlitwa jest przyjmowaniem Jego Życia. Modlimy się, bo Go kochamy i chcemy kochać jeszcze bardziej.

Nie jest ważne, co czujemy lub jak się czujemy podczas modlitwy. Nie interesujemy się tym, czy nam modlitwa „wychodzi”. Gdy kocham, przestaję być istotny dla siebie, a chcę jedynie dobra Tego, Którego kocham. Modlitwa zaczyna nas stopniowo uwalniać od samych siebie. Dzieje się to również poprzez trudności, jakich doświadczamy podczas modlitwy. Nieocenianie swojej modlitwy pod kątem jej skuteczności, efektywności lub jakości jest tutaj kluczowe. Gdy znika nasze ego, modlitwa staje się w pełni bezinteresowna i prosta.

Modlitwa prowadzi nas do pełnej akceptacji sposobów działania i objawiania się Boga w naszym życiu. Nie chodzi o to, aby coś uzyskać od Boga, lecz o to, by uzyskać Boga. Modląc się, chcemy wyrazić Bogu wdzięczność za łaskę nadprzyrodzoną, którą otrzymaliśmy. Już sam fakt, że Go szukamy, świadczy o tym, że On nas odnalazł!

2. Prawdziwa modlitwa jest szczerą i nie potrzebuje wielomówstwa

Szczerść jest podstawą modlitwy. Gdy się modlimy, nie staramy się być kimś innym niż w rzeczywistości jesteśmy. Modlitwa potrzebuje prawdy. Jeśli np. czujemy lęk, nie powinniśmy udawać, że ufamy; jeśli nie rozumiemy tego, co się dzieje w naszym życiu i czujemy ból, mamy prawo „wylać swoje serce” przed Bogiem.

voice. They behave so artificially as to give the impression of playing a role. We have to be ourselves, and not how we think God wants to see us, when we pray. It is better to dispute with God than to feign obedience.

God knows what we need before we even ask Him, so we do not have to explain anything to Him. Oratorical skill is not required to pray well. Beautiful prayers written by others can help, but our own simple words are best. Why? Because they are ours.

3. REAL PRAYER IS DIRECTED INWARD

When we pray, we do not seek God outside ourselves, but enter our interior, because He abides in the depths of our heart. Internal and external silence thus become a prerequisite of and a pathway to prayer. St. John of the Cross, a great teacher of prayer, put it as follows: "The Father spoke one Word, which was his Son, and this Word he speaks always in eternal silence, and in silence must it be heard by the soul." (5) Religious rituals and ceremonies have been instituted to lead us to the interior, where we can find the Presence of God. If they do not serve that purpose, it is because they are poorly discharged or poorly experienced, in which case they become useless, and possibly even harmful. God is closer than we think: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." (6) The development of prayer leads us towards perpetual communion with the Personal Love living inside us.

4. REAL PRAYER INVOLVES THE HEART

If prayer is going to be real, then it cannot become a catnap, a rest, or a dream. Prayer is always a struggle to keep our heart with God. It presupposes an attitude of vigilance, and this is also expressed in our complete respect for our external demeanor.

We can sometimes find ourselves praying with our body and our lips, while our mind is far away. The distractions we experience when praying perform two important functions. First, they show us our weakness and thereby render us simple and humble. Second, they indicate those parts of our inner self that are still disordered

Niektórzy ludzie, podejmując modlitwę, zaczynają się dziwnie zachowywać: zmieniają styl na patetyczny, używają słów wychodzących z użycia, przyjmują nienaturalny tembr głosu. Można odnieść wrażenie, że grają jakąś rolę, bo zachowują się sztucznie. Podczas modlitwy trzeba być sobą, a nie takim, jakim się myśli, że chce nas widzieć Bóg. Lepiej spierać się z Bogiem niż udawać posłuszeństwo.

Bóg wie, czego nam potrzeba, wcześniej nim Go poprosimy, dlatego nie musimy Mu nic tłumaczyć. Zdolności krasomówcze nie są potrzebne do tego, by się dobrze modlić. Przepiękne modlitwy napisane przez innych mogą nam pomóc, ale twoje proste słowa są najlepsze. Dlaczego? Bo są twoje!

3. Prawdziwa modlitwa skierowana jest do wewnątrz

W modlitwie nie poszukujemy Boga na zewnątrz siebie, lecz wchodzimy do naszego wnętrza, ponieważ On przebywa w głębinach naszego serca. Milczenie wewnętrzne i zewnętrzne staje się więc warunkiem wstępnym oraz drogą modlitwy. „Jedno słowo wypowiedział Ojciec Przedwieczny, którym jest Jego Syn i to Słowo wypowiada nieustannie w wiecznym milczeniu; w milczeniu też powinna słuchać Go dusza”, powie wielki nauczyciel modlitwy, św. Jan od Krzyża (5).

Rytuały i obrzędy religijne są ustanowione po to, aby wprowadzać nas „do wewnątrz”, gdzie możemy odnajdywać Obecność Bożą. Jeśli temu nie służą, to dlatego, że są źle sprawowane lub źle przeżywane. Stają się wtedy bezużyteczne, a nawet niekiedy szkodliwe. Bóg jest bliżej niż myślimy: „w Nim żyjemy, poruszamy się i jesteśmy” (6). Rozwój modlitwy prowadzi nas ku nieustannemu obcowaniu z Osobową Miłością żyjącą w naszym wnętrzu.

4. Modlitwa prawdziwa angażuje serce

Aby modlitwa była prawdziwa, nie może stać się drzemką, relaksem lub marzeniem. Modlitwa pozostaje walką o to, aby utrzymać serce przy Bogu. Zakłada postawę czujności, która wyraża się także w pełnej szacunku postawie zewnętrznej.

and which can be addressed outside prayertime. All we can do when we pray is to return to the Divine Presence humbly and without stress. Most people reject prayer precisely because they cannot stand themselves.

Prayer requires our whole life to be oriented to the miraculous and the interior. Sometimes this means making drastic decisions and changes. Until we make the necessary changes, whether that is switching off the television, entering into silence, or avoiding a hectic life, prayer will be little more than a supplement to life, whereas it is supposed to become Life.

5. FAITHFULNESS IS THE TECHNIQUE OF REAL PRAYER

Eager willingness is not necessary in order to pray. Prayer requires a resolution, an expression of choice on our part. When we pray despite our reluctance, fatigue, or nervousness, we are confirming once more: "Yes, I want Your Life." God will not change us without our input.

Faith is therefore the basis of our prayer technique. What we do counts for far more than what we promise. Love is concrete. When we want to pray, we should determine how long and what form our daily prayers are going to take (for example, a Bible or breviary reading, reflection or meditation, saying the rosary, praying inwardly, out loud, spontaneously, and so forth) and when we are going to do this. It is also a good idea to set aside a specific place and adopt a specific posture for when we pray. Everything we specify is made an object of faith through which our faith in God Himself is thereafter expressed.

6. REAL PRAYER IS BASED ON THE WORD OF GOD: IT IS BORN OF THE WORD AND LEADS TO THE WORD

Although no two people are the same and each is guided on his own path, we have to safeguard ourselves against subjectivism in our inner life by reading the works of people who have gone before us on the road to prayer. If we base our prayers on the Bible and peruse spiritual literature, we can place our own experience within the Tradition of the Church.

Czasem można się modlić ciałem i wargami, umysłem odchodząc gdzieś bardzo daleko. Roztargnienia, jakich doświadczamy podczas modlitwy, spełniają dwa ważne zadania. Po pierwsze, pokazują nam naszą słabość i przez to mogą nas czynić pokornymi i prostymi. Poza tym wskazują, które obszary naszego wnętrza są jeszcze ciągle nieuporządkowane, czym będzie się można zająć poza czasem modlitwy. Jedyne, co możemy uczynić, gdy się modlimy, to pokornie i bez napięcia powrócić do Bożej Obecności. Większość ludzi porzuca modlitwę właśnie dlatego, że nie są w stanie znieść samych siebie.

Modlitwa wymaga ukierunkowania całego życia w wymiar nadprzyrodzony (wewnętrzny). Czasem oznacza to podjęcie radykalnych decyzji i zmian. Dopóki tego nie uczynimy (na przykład wyłączając telewizor, wchodząc w ciszę i milczenie, unikając życia w pośpiechu), modlitwa będzie zaledwie dodatkiem do życia, podczas gdy ma stać się Życiem.

5. Technika prawdziwej modlitwy jest wierność

Do tego, aby się modlić, „chęć” jest niepotrzebna. Modlitwa potrzebuje decyzji, będącej wyrazem naszego wyboru. Gdy modlimy się pomimo naszej niechęci, zmęczenia lub rozbiegania, potwierdzamy po raz kolejny: „Tak, chcę Twego Życia”. Bóg nas nie zmienia bez naszego udziału.

Wierność jest zatem podstawową „techniką” naszej modlitwy. O wiele bardziej niż to, co deklarujemy, liczy się to, co robimy. Miłość to konkret. Chcąc się modlić, określamy, ile czasu ma trwać nasza codzienna modlitwa, jaką formę ma przybrać (czy będzie to np. chwila czytania Pisma Świętego, refleksja, brewiarz, modlitwa wewnętrzna, głośna spontaniczna, różaniec itp.) i o której godzinie będzie się odbywać. Dobrze jest także ustalić stałe miejsce dla swojej modlitwy oraz postawę ciała, jaką będziemy przyjmować modląc się. To wszystko, co ustaliliśmy, czynimy odtąd przedmiotem wierności, przez którą wyraża się wierność Samemu Bogu (7).

7. REAL PRAYER IS SUBJECT TO PERSONAL GROWTH

Real prayer gradually becomes streamlined into a meeting that does not entail any words or impressions. We are all called to the simplest form of prayer. Tradition calls this contemplation. Every so often, it is worth considering whether our form of praying has been nourishing us and whether we need to make changes in the way we pray.

If we consider the seven principles enumerated above, it will become immediately apparent that very few people really pray. This is sad because prayer is meant to affect an individual's personal growth in every sphere – spiritual, physical, and emotional.

The academic literature on psychology now contains many studies confirming the healing properties of prayer. The very act of praying has an impact on mental integration. Many academics of whatever worldview concur in this. Studies demonstrate that contemplation (called “meditation” in other circles) has a particularly beneficial impact on the psyche. A person who practices contemplative prayer every day becomes less neurotic (increasingly freer internally and less self-absorbed), experiences less anxiety, enters into more fruitful relationships, is more understanding and gentle, assesses reality more soberly, and works more productively. (7) This comes from being able to medically verify an improvement in parameters such as blood pressure, cellular immunity, and biochemical factors. A person who meditates regularly is simply healthier. So how does that work?

This is very easily explained by disregarding theological justifications and staying entirely within the natural (that is, psychological) order. A person engaged in contemplation or meditation, refocuses all thoughts and impressions. In this way, her thoughts become increasingly free of schemes and defense mechanisms, along with the intellectual pathways trodden by the FALSE SELF since childhood. Many people who are not necessarily Christians experience the healing effects of meditation, because it guides their consciousness towards the realm of the REAL SELF. People who pray regularly obtain the benefits mentioned above from the natural order alone.

6. Prawdziwa modlitwa opiera się na Słowie Bożym: ze Słowa się rodzi i do Słowa prowadzi
Choć nie ma dwóch takich samych ludzi na świecie i każdy prowadzony jest własną drogą, trzeba jednak zabezpieczyć się przed subiektywizmem w życiu wewnętrznym, czytając dzieła ludzi, którzy nas poprzedzali na drodze modlitwy. Opierając swoją modlitwę o Słowo Boże i zgłębiając literaturę duchową, możemy umieścić własne doświadczenie w Tradycji Kościoła.

7. Prawdziwa modlitwa podlega rozwojowi

Prawdziwa modlitwa stopniowo się upraszcza, stając się spotkaniem niewymagającym żadnych słów lub wyobrażeń. Każdy jest zaproszony do najprostszej modlitwy, którą Tradycja nazywa kontemplacją. Warto się co jakiś czas zastanowić, czy dotychczasowa forma modlitwy nas karmi i czy nie dokonać jakichś zmian w sposobie modlenia się.

Jeśli weźmiemy pod uwagę siedem zasad, które wymieniliśmy, okaże się, że niewielu ludzi modli się prawdziwie. To smutne, ponieważ modlitwa ma wpływ na rozwój człowieka w każdym wymiarze: duchowym, fizycznym i emocjonalnym.

W psychologicznej literaturze naukowej można obecnie znaleźć wiele badań potwierdzających uzdrawiające właściwości modlitwy. Sam fakt modlenia się wpływa na integrację psychiczną człowieka. Zgadza się z tym wielu naukowców bez względu na ich światopogląd. Badania dowodzą, że szczególnie dobroczynny wpływ na psychikę człowieka ma kontemplacja (zwana w środowiskach niechrześcijańskich medytacją). Człowiek, praktykujący codziennie modlitwę kontemplacyjną, staje się mniej neurotyczny (coraz mniej skoncentrowany na sobie i wolny wewnątrznie), doświadcza mniej lęków, nawiązuje owocniejsze relacje, jest bardziej wyrozumiały i łagodny, trzeźwiej ocenia rzeczywistość i wydajniej pracuje (8). Do tego dochodzi, dająca się zweryfikować medycznie, poprawa takich parametrów, jak choćby ciśnienie tętnicze krwi, odporność komórkowa, współczynniki biochemiczne. Człowiek medytujący regularnie jest po prostu zdrowszy! Dlaczego tak się dzieje?



Sacred Portal

We have observed a dramatic improvement in emotional health and quality of life, and even a rapid recovery, in many patients who have engaged in contemplative prayer. Bulimia, anxiety, and deprivation neuroses, compulsive behaviors, pathological jealousy, addictions, and emotional deprivation disorder, not to mention plain immaturity, are only some of the medical conditions that are cured more quickly when the patient engages in prayer. Praying, in and of itself, clearly improves the state of our patients. This could be considered a purely psychological process, but there is SOMETHING more.

We accept people with very different outlooks on life in our practice, as long as they accept our way of working. Our office is not a place of conversion, but as we work with people, we obviously witness their changes on the spiritual plane as well.

For therapeutic reasons, we encourage non-religious people to take up meditative practices, which we teach as exercises of sorts. Our patients are often surprised to experience a certain depth within themselves. Some simply describe it as an encounter with a "gentle force," a "personal love" or "grace." Some, convinced that this SOMETHING is benevolent towards them, is concerned for their welfare, and wants them to grow, engage in prayer before the altar to the "Unknown God,"(8) and even yearn to embark on a sacramental life. We might add here that this happens without any influence or encouragement on our part.

As Christians, this does not surprise us. We do not have to grope in the dark, because we are fortunate enough to have experienced a revelation in the person of Jesus. He announced that, together with the Father, he would dwell inside the individual.(9) We do not perform concentration exercises when we pray. And we enter a communion, not a void. We therefore mostly see a miraculous quality in contemplation. This stems from the fact that by praying, we are committing ourselves to working together with grace. A mysterious exchange, a sort of "heart transplant," can then be effected within us. We

Pomijając uzasadnienia teologiczne i pozostając wyłącznie w porządku naturalnym (psychologicznym), bardzo łatwo możemy to wytłumaczyć. Człowiek, który podejmuje kontemplację (medytację), odsuwa wszelkie myśli i wyobrażenia, i w ten sposób jego umysł staje się całkowicie wolny od schematów i mechanizmów obronnych oraz intelektualnych ścieżek, wydeptywanych od dzieciństwa przez JA FAŁSZYWE. Wielu ludzi, i to niekoniecznie chrześcijan, doświadcza uzdrawiającego działania medytacji, ponieważ kieruje ona ich świadomość ku obszarowi JA PRAWDZIWEGO. Ludzie modlący się regularnie, zyskują wspomniane wyżej korzyści z samego już tylko porządku naturalnego!

U wielu pacjentów zauważamy radykalną poprawę zdrowia emocjonalnego i jakości życia lub nawet szybkie wyleczenie po podjęciu modlitwy kontemplacyjnej. Bulimia, nerwice lękowe i deprywacyjne, zachowania kompulsywne, chorobliwa zasadość, uzależnienia, zespół niezaspokojenia emocjonalnego, nie wspominając już o zwykłej ludzkiej niedojrzałości – można by mnożyć przykłady jednostek chorobowych, które leczą się znacznie szybciej, gdy klient podejmie modlitwę. Nie ulega wątpliwości, że samo modlenie się poprawia stan naszych pacjentów. Można by to uznać za proces czysto psychologiczny, a jednak jest COŚ więcej!

W naszym gabinecie przyjmujemy osoby o bardzo różnym światopoglądzie, jeśli tylko zdecydują się zaakceptować nasze formy pracy. Gabinet nie jest miejscem „nawracania”, choć niewątpliwie pracując z ludźmi, doświadczamy ich zmiany także na płaszczyźnie duchowej.

Zdarza się, że z powodów terapeutycznych zachęcamy osoby niewierzące do podjęcia praktyki medytacyjnej, ucząc jej jako pewnego rodzaju ćwiczenia. Nasi pacjenci są często zaskoczeni doświadczeniem „jakieś głębi” w sobie. Niektórzy wręcz określają to jako spotkanie z „łagodną siłą”, „osobową miłością” lub „łaską”. Mając przekonanie, że to COŚ im sprzy-

are not talking about improving our lives, but about something radically new that will astonish us. This happens extra-intellectually, in the obscurity of faith, when our minds are “switched off” as it were. We then witness what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: “Seek in reading and you will find in meditating; knock in mental prayer and it will be opened to you by contemplation.” (10)

(1) What we have in mind here is acquired contemplation.

(2) James 4:1–3.

(3) Obviously, this does not mean that you cannot pray for your country or social issues. You can and should. However, prayer cannot become a mere tool in a political battle.

(4) “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those that worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.” John 4:23–24.

(5) St. John of the Cross, Words of light and love, 99, in: Works, transl. B. Smyrak OCD, ed. 5, Kraków 1995, p. 109.

(6) Cf. Acts 17:28.

(7) They were quick to observe that businesspeople in many companies now try to introduce meditation practices as part of their training.

(8) Cf. Acts 17:23.

(9) “Jesus answered and said to him, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our dwelling with him.” (Jn. 14:23)

(10) Catholic Church. Catechism of the Catholic Church. 2nd ed. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012. Para. 2654

From:

MONIKA AND MARCIN GAJDA, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT- HOW TO COOPERATE WITH GRACE?

CONTEMPLATIVE THERAPISTS LOOK AT HOW TO GROW AS CHRISTIAN PERSONS

ja, chce ich dobra i rozwoju, niektórzy podejmują modlitwę przed ołtarzem

„Boga Nieznanego”(9), a nawet pragną podjąć życie sakramentalne. Dodajmy, że dzieje się to bez jakiegokolwiek wpływu lub zachęty z naszej strony.

Jako chrześcijanie nie jesteśmy tym faktem zaskoczeni. My nie musimy szukać „po omacku”, ponieważ mamy szczęście doświadczać objawienia w osobie Jezusa. On zapowiedział, że razem z Ojcem będzie zamieszkiwał we wnętrzu człowieka (10). Modląc się, nie uprawiamy ćwiczenia na koncentrację, nie wchodzimy w pustkę, lecz w komunie. Widzimy więc w kontemplacji przede wszystkim wartość nadprzyrodzoną, wynikającą z faktu, że modląc się podejmujemy współpracę z łaską. Wtedy może się w nas dokonywać tajemnicza wymiana, swoista „transplantacja serca”. Nie mówimy tu o poprawie naszego życia, lecz o czymś radykalnie nowym, nas samych zaskakującym. Dzieje się to pozaintelektualnie, w ciemności wiary, kiedy nasz umysł jest niejako wyłączony. Doświadczamy wtedy tego, o czym mówi Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego: „Szukajcie czytając, a znajdziecie rozmyślając; pukajcie modląc się, a będzie wam otworzone przez kontemplację” (11).

(1)Mamy tu na myśli kontemplację nabytą.

(2) Jk 4,1–4.

(3) Co oczywiście nie oznacza, że nie można się modlić np. za ojczyznę lub sprawy społeczne. Można i trzeba! Jednak modlitwa nie może stać się instrumentem do prowadzenia walki politycznej.

(4) „Nadchodzi jednak godzina, owszem już jest, kiedy to prawdziwi czciciele będą oddawać cześć Ojcu w Duchu i prawdzie, a takich to czcicieli chce mieć Ojciec. Bóg jest duchem: potrzeba więc, by czciciele Jego oddawali Mu cześć w Duchu i prawdzie.” J 4,23–24.

(5) Św. Jan od Krzyża, Słowa światła i miłości, 99, w: Dzieła, tłum. B. Smyrak OCD, wyd. 5, Kraków 1995, s. 109.

(6) Por. Dz 17,28.

(7) Co jakiś czas, na przykład co rok lub dłużej, warto zastanowić się, czy nie zmienić czegoś we własnej regule modlitewnej.

(8) Szybko zauważyli to ludzie biznesu i w wielu firmach w ramach szkoleń próbuje się obecnie wprowadzać praktyki medytacyjne.

(9) Por. Dz 17,23.

(10) „W odpowiedzi rzekł do niego Jezus: Jeśli Mnie kto miłuje, będzie zachowywał moją naukę, a Ojciec mój umiłuje go, i przyjdziemy do niego, i będziemy u niego przebywać” (J 14,23).

(11) KKK nr 2654.



Imminence



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<https://emcapp.ignis.de/5/#p=77>

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/9/#p=30>

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/10#p=62>

To Love Because We Have First Been Loved by God

Bernard of Clairvaux's Psychology of Love

For 12th century monk, preacher, and spiritual author, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), love of God, neighbor, and self are interconnected. In *On Loving God*, he argues that love is “not a contract” but “an affection of the soul” that arises not “from mere agreement” but spontaneously. Love’s true reward is the beloved, not any external benefits.

A keen psychologist of the spiritual life, Bernard identifies four stages in love:

- 1) I love myself for the sake of myself,
- 2) I love God out of a recognition of my need for Him,
- 3) I love God in gratitude for His many gifts to me, and
- 4) I come to love myself because God has first loved me.

To transcend the constraints of a “nature... frail and weak,” the soul “has to love itself first.” It is only then, by stages, that one can ascend to the love of God and eventually “oneself only for God’s sake.” Given the limits of human na-

ture and our sinful condition, this last stage of love is “something [we] may [only] hope to possess... or rather to be possessed by” in heaven. Rather than seeing this as negative, it is for Bernard a source of compassion for self and others and a reminder of the joy that awaits us in the Kingdom of God. Love’s eschatological fulfillment is a theme he returns to in his sermons of the *Song of Songs*. Here he discusses love as affect or “of feeling,” which no one can order or fulfill “in the measure required.” Love is also a behavior or doing—this makes love “a command to be carried out” in faithful obedience to God. While “our natural desires” inspire us to love apart from the right reason, they also “degrade” love. And while love “governed by reason” is “enduring,” it is “arid.” Both forms of love are necessary but insufficient because, ultimately, love finds its fulfillment only in the beloved (both divine and human). Therefore, love is ultimately a gift to be received by the “full maturity” of which “is reserved to future bliss” in the Kingdom of God.

Introduction: Who is Bernard of Clairvaux?

Who is Bernard of Clairvaux and why do we care about what he has to say? In my case, I care because I was educated by the Cistercian fathers, contemporary members of his monastic community. Their personal example of fidelity to Christ, holiness, and above all charity led me to Bernard's writings. My personal fondness for Bernard aside, let me suggest that we should care about Bernard's work not only because it is true but because he practiced what he preached; he loved sacrificially.

Building on our Lord's teaching of the two greatest commandments (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27) the monk, preacher, spiritual author, and saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), teaches that the love of God, neighbor, and self are interconnected. He touches on this in sermons and letters and at length in his treatise *On Loving God* (Bernard of Clairvaux, 2016). For Bernard, love is not transactional; it is "not a contract" but "an affection of the soul." It is not rooted in "mere agreement" but arises spontaneously in response to the beloved. Love's true reward is not any external benefit but the beloved (Bernard of Clairvaux, 2016, 26).

A keen psychologist of the spiritual life, Bernard identifies four stages or "degrees" in our formation in love:

1. I love myself for the sake of myself.
2. I love God out of a recognition of my need for Him.
3. I love God in gratitude for His many gifts to me.
4. Finally, I come to love myself because God first loved me.

There is a self-referential aspect to all four degrees of love. The frank narcissism of the first stage gives way in time to the humility of the second, the eucharistic character of the third, and culminates in an act of obedience that is a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven. This need not disturb us or compel us to doubt the sincerity of especially the opening movement as the soul comes to understand the eschatological nature of love. In order to transcend the constraints of a "nature... soft and weak," the soul

"has to love itself first" (30). Only then can one gradually ascend to the love of God and eventually come to love "oneself only for God's sake" (34). Seen in the light of the last stage, the narcissism of the first is revealed as the seminal presence in the soul of the Kingdom of God. Across all stages, self-love within the limits of the moral law is not an act of mere formal or external obedience but rather a gradual process of the believer becoming a co-worker with Christ in his or her own salvation, of conforming the self to Christ and taking every thought captive.

Given the limits of human nature and our sinful condition, this last stage of love is something we only glimpse in this life; it is "something [we] may [only] hope to possess... or rather to be possessed by" in heaven (36). Rather than seeing this as negative, Bernard sees it as the source of compassion for self and others. In addition, this unfulfilled longing is a reminder of the joy that awaits us in the Kingdom of God and so both fidelity and patience. Finally, desire is a source of hope.

Sacrificial Love

"God Himself," writes Bernard, "is the motive of our love for Him." As for "the measure of love" we owe God the answer is "clear enough" to those who have studied the Scriptures; we are to love Him "without measure." Because though he is the abbot of a monastery made up of both the "learned and the unlearned" he realizes he must remember the latter even if he has already "said enough for the former." And so the love of neighbor requires that he "unfold [his] meaning, and perhaps add somewhat to it" for the benefit of all (p. 9).

This is not merely a moral or institutional obligation for Bernard. Faithful to the example of Christ Who "gave Himself to us in spite of our unworthiness, and, being God, what could He give us of greater worth than Himself" his catechesis on love is also his own, personal act of self-offering. His treatise is a sacrifice of his own interiority for the sake of his spiritual sons and, as it happens, for us as well. Such sacrificial service for others is a central theme of Bernard's life. Though a nobleman, he renounces



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his privilege to pursue intimacy with Christ in a life of prayer, fasting, obedience, and manual labor in the new, obscure, and poor, monastery at Cîteaux. Soon though he would leave the peace he found here to be the founding abbot of the monastery at Clairvaux.

The peace he found in Clairvaux would frequently be interrupted--sacrificed really--as he was drawn into the various ecclesiastic and geo-political controversies of the Middle Ages. Papal schisms, theological arguments, the crusades, and the petty jealousy of his brother monastics would all at one time or another intrude upon his solitude. Each time he is called to do so, the abbot of Clairvaux sacrifices the quiet of monastic life and the fellowship of his brother monks because love requires that we sacrifice ourselves first to God and then for our neighbor's good. We "are bound to love God," Bernard writes, because "He first loved us" (p. 9). This obligation is bound up not simply with God's love for us. Created as we are in the image of God Who is Himself love, our love for Him and our neighbor is intrinsic to who we are as Christians and human beings. Failure, or worse refusal, to love God or my neighbor is not only a moral failing but to inflict a deep wound on my identity.

Let's turn now to the text of *On Loving God* and see what we might see.

Four Degrees of Love

I Love Myself, for the Sake of Myself

As was mentioned a moment ago, human nature is weak and frail. This is not simply a matter of moral failing because of sin or the vulnerability of the body to deprivation, injury, or illness. All of these are certainly true even as they are all secondary. For Bernard, we are first of all ontologically weak. Such weakness is inherent in being a creature. I am, in an absolute sense, dependent on God for my existence even as, in a relative sense, I am dependent upon my neighbor--first my parents and then everyone else. (1) Far from being a negative reality, our ontological weakness is the source of love and so our greatest strength.

The web of ontological, material and social dependence that characterizes my life as a creature is why I "love first by nature, not precept-

-'No man ever hated his own flesh'" (p. 30) The problem is that I tend to narrow my own flesh to simply my own body or (worse) bodily desire. Doing so means I reduce my existence to only a few things. What these things are specifically doesn't matter over much.

What does matter is that this reductionistic view of self hides the awareness that I am dependent on both God and my neighbor.

Built on this narrow and superficially view of my own identity, self-love "increase(s) too much." It becomes "like a river" that "overflow(s) and flood(s) the lands about it." It is only the command to love my neighbor as myself Bernard says that can serve as the "dyke" that keeps the love of self from causing great harm to self and others; he calls this harmful desire "voluptuousness" (p. 31)

While this sounds all rather stern, he also says that we should think our ourselves "as much as ever [we] will, if only [we] take care to think equally of [our] neighbor." Again, this is not a life hack or a utilitarian scheme that offers the "form of godliness" while "denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:5). It is rather "the just limit imposed upon [us] by ... [our] own being and by ... conscience" so that we are "not carried away by ... selfishness to ... destruction" and left "at the mercy of the enemies of [our] soul(s)" the powers of sin and death (p. 31).

Thanks to the superabundance of grace "which always heals that which is infirm and completes that which is lacking," (Orthodox prayer of Ordination) "Selfishness becomes benevolence by taking a wider range" (p. 31). Though we are, Bernard concludes, "by nature animal and carnal, with no love but for [ourselves]," grace brings us "through self-love to love of God." It is this first degree of love that sets the stage for the next two as we slowly come to recognize that "all [our] ability, ... for good, [we have] from God, and without Him [we are] able to do nothing" (p. 32).

Loving God for What He Does and Who He Is
The notion of divine simplicity (Vallicella, 2019) highlights that there is no division between Who God is and what He does. In other words

and unlike us, God is wholly present in all His actions. This is why for Bernard the next two degrees of love are discussed together. To come to love God because of my great need for Him is to come to love Him for what He does for me as well as Who He has revealed Himself to be not only in creation and redemption. And Who God is as Creator and Redeemer is also Who He is for me (pro me).

Reflecting on my need for Him and the manifold expressions of His grace, I come--or should come anyway--to an enduring sense of gratitude for all that God has given me. Or to return to what we said earlier, it is in the next two degrees of love that I begin to see the wisdom in Job's words and make them my own even if only do so by fits and starts.

Bernard builds here on the difference in the divine effort displayed in creation and redemption. Creation, he says, is effortless--a word spoken--while the latter is characterized by divine "hardship" (McCabe, pp. 36-44). It is the contrast between creation and redemption that leads the soul to come to love God not simply for His actions but for Himself:

If I owe my whole self to my Creator, what do I not owe to my Redeemer, and to such a Redeemer! It was a far less work to create, than to redeem; for God had but to speak the word and all things were made; but to repair the fall of that, which one word had created, what wonders had He ... to perform, what cruelties, nay, what humiliations, had He ... to suffer! (Bernard, p. 24)

It is here, nestled between his theology of creation and redemption, that Bernard's spirituality of love flowers. In creation God gives me myself; in redemption, I am restored to myself but now because God has given Himself to me.

As I come to understand that I have been given not just the gift of self but the Gift of the Giver, I become able and willing to respond in love, with the desire to give myself to God. It is only in giving myself to God (devotio; see McCabe, pp. 38, 43), that I find myself. "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25, NKJV).

How does this unfold?

Loving God for my own sake, I can't but "feel the limits" of my own life. I want to succeed not in loving God but in my myriad plans and projects. To do so I at least intuitively "know ... [I] cannot do [so] without the help of God."

But, let a train of disasters befall and oblige [me] perpetually to have recourse to God ... [to] get the aid [I need] ... [and only a heart] of brass or marble [would] not at last be touched by the goodness [of God and] ... begin to love Him for Himself (Bernard, p. 33).

It is, however, not simply suffering that moves us to love God.

"Let the frequency of trials bring us often to the feet of God," he says, and "surely it is impossible" that we not "begin to know Him, and, knowing Him, ... discern His sweetness." This knowledge of divine goodness born from an awareness of our need soon brings us "to love Him rightly, far more for the sweetness and beauty that we find in Him than for our own self-interest" (p. 33)

We mustn't allow the real but transitory character of pain and suffering to obscure the wholly positive if fallen character creation has here for Bernard. Again to be creatures means we are dependent not only on God but each other. While I may at first resist one or both of its forms, it is this dual dependency that is the source of my identity and so of my freedom, rationality, and goodness that "makes [me] seek ardently" (p. 11) Him Who is our Creator and Redeemer.

Suffering also reveals a new facet of our dependence upon the Creator and the creation. "The necessities of this life," we read "are a kind of language proclaiming in transports of joy and thanksgiving the blessings of which they have taught us the value." It is through our dependence on the material world (i.e., the "necessities of life") that we come to the bodily knowledge of God. It is this knowledge, especially as embodied in the sacraments, that is the source of the Christian's gratitude to God for the gift of our lives in all their social and material complexity. Having tasted for ourselves divine joy, it



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becomes “easy enough to obey the precept [to] love our neighbour as ourself” (p. 33).

Loving the Self for God’s Sake

Here Bernard’s work takes a surprising turn. In his view, there comes a point when we come to love ourselves not narcissistically but because of our obedience to God. While surprising this makes sense. After all, what is obedience except to join our will to the will of God? If God loves me and I make His will my own then how can I fail to love myself as well? But, again, Bernard offers us a sober warning.

Given the struggles of living in a fallen world, “We may not hope to possess the fourth degree of love, or rather to be possessed by it, until we have put on a body spiritual and immortal, pure and calm, obedient and subject in all to the spirit” (p. 36). Love’s highest degree, in other words, is an eschatological reality. And while it doesn’t happen without our participation, it is not “our doing, but only the work of the power of God in favour of such as please Him.” While we may have glimpses of this “perfect love” we will only experience it fully in the life to come because it is only then “when neither the burden nor the temptations of this body oppress” us (p. 36).

This doesn’t contradict Bernard’s view of the fundamental goodness of creation and so of the body. Nor does it mean he denies the intimate connection of creation and redemption. “The body,” he writes, “is for the soul a faithful companion; if it be a burden [because of sin], it is also a help.” This is why our lives are “laborious,” because that which is given to us for our help is often a hindrance. This changes at death when the body “ceases to aid” but also “ceases to hinder.” It changes again definitively at the resurrection when the body is once again a help and “no more a burden” but “glorious.” It is this last, glorious state, that we glimpse in this life when we come to love ourselves with the love God has for us (p. 38).

Bernard & Christian Psychology

So what does Bernard’s work mean for those interested in psychology, psychotherapy, biblical counseling, or spiritual direction?

Love & Human Identity

The first lesson is that the convergence of love and human identity is critical for all human beings. “When we look inside ourselves,” we must do so being careful to retain “the inward recollection of who we are.” If we don’t “we run the risk of acting contrary to our nature or letting the evil one slip into that central place of heart and there exert an influence” (McCabe, p. 23).

If this is true for me personally, how much more is it necessary when I help others to make the same inward turn? If forgetfulness of my own deepest identity is a great, self-inflicted wound on my own soul, how is not an even greater failure when I am similarly forgetful when I seek to guide those who come to me for help?

Bernard reminds us that I owe those I serve and what they have a right to expect from me, is not snappy life hacks but guidance in an “inward contemplative gaze in the light of the truth.” The “careful guarding of the heart and unflinching honesty about what we see there” is what we must offer since it is this alone that “clears a space ... where it becomes increasingly easy to see, to hear, and to breath the things of God” (McCabe, p. 23).

Unity of Creation & Redemption.

The second lesson is the intimate and enduring relationship between creation and redemption. While he contrasts the ease of creation with the hardship of redemption, even after the Fall creation retains for Bernard its goodness and its fundamentally positive role in our redemption.

This unity is first of all ontological. Even in a Fallen world, all that exists does so because God calls it into being. This means that, even in a fallen world, creation shares in God’s life. The fallenness of the world might obscure creation’s goodness and its participation in the divine life, but for Bernard, it never obliterates it. No matter how wicked we are, we never cease to share or participate in the being of God. The ontological unity of creation, its fundamental unity and balance, are only grasped by a gra-

teful human heart. And so there is here as well an anthropological dimension as well. It is through thanksgiving for the work of God in creation and redemption that we are able to see that in Christ “all things work to the good” (compare Romans 8:28).

Moreover, and to borrow a patristic teaching, it is the grateful heart that understands its true identity as a microcosm of creation (Meyendorff, 1974, pp. 134-1). As 4th century Egyptian St Macarius the Great says

The heart itself is but a small vessel, yet dragons are there, and there are also lions; there are poisonous beasts and all the treasures of evil. But there too is God, the angels, the life and the kingdom, the light and the apostles, the heavenly cities and the treasures of grace—all things are there (Homilies, 43.7).

And, in another place, he says,

Within the heart is an unfathomable depth. There are reception rooms and bedchambers in it, doors and porches, and many offices and passages. In it is the workshop of righteousness and of wickedness. In it is death, in it is life.... The heart is Christ's palace...There Christ the King comes to take His rest, with the angels and the spirits of the saints, and He dwells there, walking within it and placing His kingdom there (Homilies 15:32-33).

Seen in this light, it is no wonder that (like Narcissus), we fall in love with our own beauty and why those who have drawn closest to God are also the most susceptible to the sin of pride. After all, what is more beautiful, more delightful to behold after God than the work of God that is the human person?

It is also here that we find the theological justification for empirical research. While quantitative research cannot as such tell us how to live, it certainly can tell us how we do live. From whatever the source of findings, researchers who understand the human person as a creature called to share in the life of God can play a valuable role in helping believers and non-believers alike understand the impediments to freedom and the possible steps to overcoming these obstacles.

An Enduring Theological Vision

Bernard's defense of human reason and his concern for the self does not, and this is our last point, justify a purely secular or reductionistic approach to our psychological life. The abbot Clairvaux is no “practical atheist” who would have us live our lives “as if” God did not exist.

Apart from the twin vessels of creation and redemption, of the self-given and restored, love remains if not impossible then deeply wounded: ...the heart, tempted by many deceitful charms, wearies itself to no purpose, is always craving, and counts for nothing what it has enjoyed, compared to what it fain would have; and is tormented, by desire of what it has not, out of all delight with what it possesses. All one cannot have; for the little it is possible to get, the price of labour must be paid; and it must be enjoyed with trembling; nay, with the miserable certainty that one day it must be lost, though the date of that day be not known (p. 28).

Here psychology and the other social and human sciences must hear a harsh word spoken against them.

For all the good they do, separated ideologically or even methodologically from creation and redemption, of an awareness that the self is given and restored, they are the cause of misery. Or by encouraging us to labor for bread that does not, and cannot, satisfy, they perpetuate the misery of sin by offering a false self and not the self known and loved by God.

Conclusion: A Foretaste of the Kingdom Of God
Though he doesn't quote from the text, we can I think fairly summarise Benard's teaching in On Loving God, with Job's words and example:

Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said:

“Naked I came from my mother's womb,
And naked shall I return there.

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:20-21, NKJV)



Ancient Dreams

And a little later “Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” (2:10, NKJV).

Like Job, Bernard is no sentimentalist, no proponent of positive thinking, the prosperity gospel, or Christian life hacks. He is rather a sober spiritual father who grounds his counsel to us in the sacramental and ascetical vision of the Christian life he found in the Church fathers and monastic authors.

This vision is rooted in the analogy of being; creation, and redemption are both the work of God. Though with their own unique characters, their differences don’t obscure their fundamental similarity and unity. To understand creation is to also understand something of redemption. Likewise, our understanding of redemption helps us understand God’s creative act. God creates in order to redeem and redemption fulfills God’s intention in creating. And so creation and redemption are related not only analogically but teleologically. Creation ends not by ceasing to be but by becoming what God from all intends it to be in Jesus Christ.

To understand then human psychology and psychopathology is also to understand something of the great drama of human redemption. To say grace perfects nature, is to say that nature aspires toward that which is above nature. Likewise, grace not only perfects nature but, in so doing, reveals nature to us.

As for the work of grace which is salvation, though not wholly absent in Bernard’s theology, salvation is not simply a forensic declaration nor moral improvement. To be a Christian in his view means to “partake of the divine nature,” as the Apostle Peter tells us (see 2 Peter 1:4). In other words, his is a soteriology of deification, of our becoming by grace what Jesus is by nature. “For if anything merely human remained in man, how then should God be all in all?” Bernard asks before continuing “It is not that human nature will be destroyed, but that it will attain another beauty, a higher power and glory” (p. 36).

Desire Unfilled

This leads us to our next theme: the eschatological fulfillment of all human desire. This is a theme Bernard returns again and again to in his sermons of the Song of Songs. In Sermon 50 he gives his brothers an overview of what he means by love. Here he tells the monks that, yes, love is an emotion or feeling it is however something beyond my ability to fulfill as I would like much less in the measure required. This is why, in this life, love remains an unfulfilled desire.

Ironically, nothing so kills love as my attempt to consummate my desire. It is one thing to be in the presence of the Other (whether divine or human); it is quite another to possess the Other. Here Emmanuel Levinas’s discussion of alterity is helpful. I can only possess the Other by an act of literal or metaphorical violence that strips the other of his or her uniqueness (otherness or alterity). Doing so I exchange an image (ikon, see Hebrews 8) for an idol.

There remains even in the life to come, love retains a certain unfulfilled quality. At least this is the argument made by St. Gregory of Nyssa who sees heaven as a process of our unending growth in love for God. God being infinite means that there is always more to discover, more to know and love. To be in the divine presence is to experience the possibility of desire that is never fulfilled not through any negative factor in us but rather because of the superabundance of beauty in God.

A Rational Desire and a Gift to Be Received

As Levinas’s works suggest, there is a sense in which love is perfectly natural and our proper response to each other. At the same time, while natural [i.e., created] desires inspire me to love (and here again, Levinas proves himself Bernard’s ally), divorced from right reason these same desires degrade love. To say love must be reasonable, is to say that it must conform not only to the divine will but the divine intention. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These

you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone” (Matthew 23:23, NKJV).

And yet, while love governed by reason is enduring, divorced from feeling it is arid. As for love without obedience what is it but mere pretense? Love then is and emotion and action guided and guarded by reason but transcending all three individually and in the aggregate that finds its fulfillment only in the Beloved.

Finally, since the ultimate object of our love is the God Who first loved us, love is ultimately a gift to be received by the “full maturity” which means that love in the full sense “is reserved to future bliss” in the Kingdom of God.

(1) This distinction is articulated by Scholastic philosophy as primary causality and secondary causality. For more see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I q. 103.

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Three Comments to the articles of M. Gajda, G. Jensen and N. Joubert

For these comments I developed a vision that I would like to share here:

- The comments should be on all three articles on Spiritual Formation, which are published in this eJournal.
- The authors of the three articles come from different church backgrounds, different denominations, evangelical, catholic and orthodox. And the commentator also have a denominational and church background. And that's good. I wanted to see the contributions from a professional, and also from a denominational perspective.

comment

by Sam Berg (Canada)

Response to:

- Spiritual Formation for Christian Leaders by Nicolene Joubert of South Africa
- Love Of God (Prayer). Prayer Is The Most Significant Activity That Can Be Undertaken In Life by Marcin Gaja of Poland.
- To Love Because We Have First Been Loved by God - Bernard of Clairvaux's Psychology of Love - Gregory Jensen of the USA.

First of all, let me situate myself in the vast possibilities of intersectionality available to us in the Christian movement. From a faith perspective, I am an evangelical, Baptist, raised in a German Baptist church in Canada, part of the North American Baptist Conference. Educationally, I hold an undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, an M. Div. from Sioux Falls Seminary, and the D. Min from Palmer Seminary. Culturally, my parents were both of German descent and were small children when their parent immigrated from eastern Europe in the 1920s. Professionally, I am a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist Supervisor Mentor with the Canadian Association for Marriage and Family and a Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor with the American Association for Marriage



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and Family Therapy. Professionally, I have served as pastor in NABC churches in Canada, and as professor of counseling at the Briercrest College and Seminary.

Each of the three articles reviewed here bring an important perspective to the understanding of the role of spiritual formation in the lives of Christians. Nicolene Joubert addresses the vital role of intentional spiritual formation that is required of those who would be leaders in Christian endeavours, whether in church ministry, mission or education. I especially appreciated her comments on the history of spiritual formation in the life of the church including the desert fathers and the reformers. This is particularly relevant for some evangelicals such as myself who tend to see church history as the Book of Act and the last 100 years or so. The diagram depicting a lifelong developmental spiritual formation is a helpful tool for anyone in a ministry leadership role. It led me to reflect on where I might be on this timeline. The same kind of reflection was spurred by the three categories of formation, ministerial, spiritual, and strategic. I recognized each of those as phases I had experienced, with a back-and-forth movement between each as I went through the stages of ministry. In my opinion, these are two processes that could be very useful during a personal or group retreat. They would enhance what Eugene Petersen (1980) called “a long obedience in the same direction.”

Each of the other two article point to this rich history to which Nicolene Joubert referred. Marcin Gaja’s treatise on prayer reviews seven characteristics of “real prayer,” and challenged me to reflect on my prayer practice and whether I really pray and led me to join the disciples as they said to Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). His first point, that “real prayer is engaged in out of love” established the theme introduced by his title to the article, “Love of God (Prayer).” His discussion brings an important corrective to the popular psychological view often taken about the second great command, to love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:29-31). The “pop psychology” interpretation often given to this is that in order to be able to love our neighbour we need to first learn to

love ourselves. In my opinion, this is a gross misinterpretation of this command. To begin with, it is the second command, which follows the first, namely, to love God wholeheartedly. This command is possible for us only because “we love because we have first been loved” (1 John 4:19). It is the result of our response to the love of God in praying that we recognize that we have been loved and are thus able to turn to the neighbour in love. Love of self, sometimes popularized as self-esteem or self-worth, is the product of this process rather than the precondition for it!

The third article, “To Love Because We Have First Been Loved by God - Bernard of Clairvaux’s Psychology of Love” by Gregory Jensen develops this theme of love of God by considering the teachings of Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard of Clairvaux is somewhat of an exception to the evangelical lack of historical awareness in that his hymns show up in our hymn books. “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded,” “Jesus the Very Thought of Thee” and “Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts” are three of his well-known hymns, at least for those of us who are old enough to remember when we sang these hymns out of hymn books. (I hasten to add that I’m a big fan of contemporary worship music!) These hymns express well the teachings about the love of God as displayed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that Gregory Jensen reviews in his article. His presentation of the four degrees of love, beginning with “loving self for self” and culminating in “loving self because God first loved” states more eloquently what I sought to express in my discussion of the second command in the above paragraph.

I want to make three observations to encapsulate some impressions from reading these three articles together. First, I was reminded of the rich heritage that there is in the two millennia of Christian thought and reflection on the matter of spiritual formation. The practices of the early church and the writings of the canonical letters are the important beginning of the reflections of a “great cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1) that make up the church universal. The references that both Joubert and Jensen make to this history underline the rich re-

sources we have in the writings that have been produced over these two millennia. I am grateful to each of the authors for their contribution to this in their pieces.

Secondly, the three articles provide a rich spectrum of consideration of spiritual formation due to their ecumenical breadth. To juxtapose an evangelical with Baptist leanings, a Roman Catholic and a Ukrainian Orthodox as contributors to this topic in this way invites a profound appreciation of the largesse that our collective history contains. It invites, further, a blurring of the lines that divide us, in contrast to the sometimes-strenuous efforts to clarify the lines that separate us. The three articles together present a mosaic that, with further reflection, emerges as a complex whole as each is considered in light of the others. For example, the discipline required, and the spiritual disciplines involved in a lifelong spiritual development would be greatly enhanced by “real prayer” and a contemplation on the love with which we are loved. Conversely, to think of real prayer and the love with which we are loved as the grist for lifelong spiritual development allows for a hope that may be difficult to realize if one must suddenly transform one’s praying and loving immediately!

Finally, I was impressed again with the connection between spiritual formation and psychology that the three authors displayed. In my undergraduate studies in psychology, I learned that psychology is the study of human behaviour, and that we learn by doing and reflecting on what we have done. The practices of the spiritual disciplines, with prayer being such an important priority, are intentional behaviours in which we can engage our whole selves in the project of spiritual formation. The practices of the spiritual disciplines such as prayer presented by Gaja, and described in such works as Richard Foster’s (1978) *Celebration of Discipline* provide for us the specific practices in which we can engage, the “what to do”. The principles of psychology give us the “how to,” the self-obs-

ervations and the coaching of others that will help us engage in these specific practices. For example, I have learned that rote memorization of scripture passage by simply repeating them over and over has provided for me some significant insights and spiritual growth. This rote memorization is an example of the combination of spiritual disciplines and psychology that I refer to here. Of particular note is the emphasis on prayer provided by Gaja. The end goal of such practices is given for us in such passages as Romans 8:28-29, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” Here, we are given the goal, the “telos,” of being “conformed to the image of Christ.” The apostle Paul personalizes this in Philippians 3:7-10, a passage in which he describes what he has discounted in his life in order to know Christ, and which concludes with his personal goal in v. 10, “that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings,” These two passages present for us a vision of what might be as we engage in the practices of spiritual formation.

We are given by these three authors the vision of a lifelong journey of spiritual formation, motivated by a growing absorption of and into the love of God, and enriched by the collective wisdom of 2000 years of reflection on what it means to follow Jesus. Thank you, Nicolene, Marcin and Gregory.

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comment

by Janet Warren (Canada)

Spiritual formation, an important aspect of Christian faith and practice, is especially critical for the interconnected fields of theological anthropology, psychology, and psychotherapy. It is of particular interest to me, as one who teaches on the theology of the human person and one who practices medical psychotherapy. Also of interest to me, as a Canadian post-conservative evangelical theologian, are the differing denominational backgrounds and nationalities of the authors of these articles. Suffice it to say, there are many points of connection and inter-connection.

Nicolene Joubert, from an evangelical perspective, points out that spiritual formation involves growing in our understanding of God, deepening our relationship with Jesus, and becoming more Christlike. It is a continual process and involves multiple dimensions. This daunting task is made possible only through the love of God; the saving work of his Son, who is the perfect image of his Father; and the presence of the Spirit, who guides and inspires the community of believers. Joubert suggests that spiritual practices, or shaping activities, such as disciplines and ministry timelines, are helpful in this process but appropriately insists that knowledge and skills are always secondary to developing our relationship with Christ.

Prayer, of course, is a critical spiritual discipline and the topic of Marcin Gaja's article. In his title, Gaja equates love of God and prayer, noting the latter to be "the most significant activity that can be undertaken in life." It is engaged in out of love and faithfulness, and needs to be sincere. This concurs with most writings on prayer. However, I do have some questions about Gaja's emphases and language. For example, he claims that "prayer causes us to regain our sovereignty"—surely only God is sovereign (regardless of one's denominational perspective)? Similarly, he states that we "seek God inside of ourselves," and "he lives in our hearts." Although not wrong, I would prefer him to reference divine transcendence as well as immanence, and the complex interactions between the two. The claims that prayer helps us be free of our "false selves" (presumably fol-



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<https://emcapp.ignis.de/7/#p=28>
<https://emcapp.ignis.de/7/#p=42>
<https://emcapp.ignis.de/11/#p=9>

lowing Richard Rohr) and we need to engage in “real prayer,” potentially lead to sharp dichotomies. I am always more comfortable with more nuanced language. I wonder about using the biblical language on flesh/spirit, old/new selves instead, or referring to mature prayer instead of “real prayer.” No doubt prayer is essential to Christian spiritual formation and helpful in a counseling context. I am no determinist and believe in the importance of human responsibility, but I do think that divine initiative is more important.

This primacy of divine love is prominent in Gregory Jensen’s article on Bernard of Clairvaux. (He writes from an Orthodox perspective, but I would argue that teachings from classic works transcend denominational divides.) Jensen is clear that we love because we are first loved by God (1 John 4:19); love is a gift and is sacrificial in nature. He grounds his therapeutic conceptions in solid theology. The statement, “Apart from the twin vessels of creation and redemption, of the self, given and restored, love remains if not impossible then deeply wounded,” contains multiple insights for theological anthropology and psychology!

One helpful notion is the reciprocal nature of knowing God (receiving his gift of love) and knowing oneself. Joubert similarly suggests that inspiration from the Spirit leads to self-awareness, self-reflection (for example, asking what forms the basis of our identities), and subsequent spiritual growth. This relates to something both Joubert and Jensen emphasize: that spiritual formation is a gradual process, occurring through the various seasons of life. (Gaja also suggests that prayer is “subject to personal growth,” but does not elaborate.) Joubert no-

tes that it is a “lifelong process of sanctification” that we aim to “finish well” (2 Tim 4:5-8). Jensen discusses Bernard’s four (somewhat paradoxical) stages of our transformation in love: we move beyond the narcissism of self-love, toward the humility associated with realizing our need for God’s love, and the gratitude for his gifts, which leads to love, toward a self-love that in turn leads us to love God more! I resonate, from both theological and psychological perspectives, with the idea of process, but would add that spiritual transformation is not linear, difficult to categorize into discrete stages, and accompanied by many challenges.

The process of transformation, the practice of prayer, and the receipt of love are not meant to serve the self. This brings us to the topic of ministry. Joubert thinks that the work of ministry is part of the scope of spiritual transformation, or perhaps a result of the process of becoming Christ-like. And Jensen notes that Bernard practiced what he preached: the love he received, he naturally passed on through his work. His statement regarding the “convergence of love and human identity, for self and for helping others,” nicely summarizes the reciprocal nature of love (to be received and given to both self and others), and the relationship between divine love and human identity (both a psychological and an anthropological concept).

It is always thought provoking to read diverse perspectives on subjects of interest. I would appreciate further exploration on topics such as the imago Dei, the role of the Holy Spirit, spiritual disciplines, and parallels between psychotherapeutic and spiritual practices—but that’s for another issue!

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Here you can download free the book of Tomasz

“TO BE GOD – TO BE YOURSELF”

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comment

by Tomasz Niemirowski (Poland)

There is no more important thing in a human life as the spiritual formation and development. And there is no more important task for the Christian psychology as describing, analyzing and helping this kind of development. Why? Because only the unity with God can fulfill every human desires. The human being is created as God's image and that's why he/she starves to be like God. This is the deepest motive of all human action. To a large extent, this becoming more like God is accomplished through imitation. And the main problem of proper course of the spiritual development is to find proper answer to this question: who is worth to imitate? Initially a child imitates his/her parents (caregivers), then usually peers, teachers and other important persons. We can say he/she puts them on the place intended for God and become their image.

The development proceeds properly only when important persons themselves are like God. Then imitating them human being become oneself. But it never is fully so because every human being is a sinner. For proper development a human being needs the contact with God and trying to be like Him. And because only God – as my creator – fully knows who I am, the contact with Him is a condition to know the

Nie ma ważniejszej rzeczy w życiu człowieka niż formacja i rozwój duchowy. I nie ma ważniejszego zadania dla psychologii chrześcijańskiej niż opisywanie, analizowanie i wspomaganie tego rozwoju. Dlaczego? Ponieważ tylko jedność z Bogiem może zaspokoić każde ludzkie pragnienie. Człowiek jest stworzony na obraz Boży i dlatego dąży do tego, aby być podobnym do Boga. Jest to najgłębszy motyw wszelkiego ludzkiego działania. W dużym stopniu to upodabnianie się do Boga dokonuje się poprzez naśladownictwo. I głównym problemem prawidłowego przebiegu rozwoju duchowego jest znalezienie prawidłowej odpowiedzi na pytanie kogo warto naśladować. Początkowo dziecko naśladuje swoich rodziców (opiekunów), potem najczęściej rówieśników, nauczycieli i inne ważne osoby. Można powiedzieć, że stawia ich na miejscu przeznaczonym dla Boga i staje się ich obrazem.

Rzeczywiście przebiega prawidłowo tylko wtedy, gdy te ważne osoby są podobne do Boga. Wtedy naśladując je człowiek staje się sobą. Ale nigdy nie jest tak do końca, bo każdy człowiek jest grzesznikiem. Dla prawidłowego rozwoju człowiek potrzebuje kontaktu z Bogiem i prób upodabniania się do Niego. A ponieważ tylko Bóg – jako mój Stwórca – w pełni wie, kim jestem,

truth about myself. That's why Marcin Gajda could write: "prayer is far and away the most significant action that can be taken to be free of the False self." Strictly speaking this false self is nothing other as the false self-concept. When we come into close contact with God, we experience His unchangeable love to us and this is a base for gain justified and durable high self-esteem. We then can get rid of defense mechanisms. And because the true self-concept is a very important condition of our mental health, that's why "therapy progresses considerably faster when the patient engages in prayer, and especially contemplative prayer. "

Author claims that "contemplation (...) has a particularly beneficial impact on the psyche. A person who meditates regularly is simply healthier." And one more note regarding prayer. As the author states: "sincerity is the cornerstone of prayer. We have to be ourselves, and not how we think God wants to see us, when we pray. It is better to dispute with God than to feign obedience." – Such are – in short – the main thoughts of the author. I would add here that freedom has string connection with the sincerity. We are not free mostly because we are afraid to be sincere. But that's not the way Jesus acted. And there is no other way to the full freedom as trying to be free here and now – in the prayer too.

I think it would be very interesting and important to study the problem of what are the relations between true self-concept, sincerity in prayer and contemplative prayer. What kind of prayer could in a best way help to gain true self-concept and to live in truth? But the more important question is related to the following author statement: "when I love, I cease to matter to myself; I only want the good of That Which I love." – I think that's really true but the contemporary psychology, as far as I know it, does not recommend this attitude. It rather accents the rights of the human being: "you has right to...." Does modern psychology teach people to live in love?

kontakt z Nim jest warunkiem poznania prawdy o samym sobie. To dlatego Marcin Gajda mógł napisać: „modlitwa jest zdecydowanie najważniejszym działaniem, które może być podjęte, aby się uwolnić od fałszywego ja”. Ściśle mówiąc, to fałszywe ja jest niczym innym jak fałszywym obrazem siebie. Kiedy wchodzimy w bliski kontakt z Bogiem, doświadczamy Jego niezmiennej miłości do nas i jest to podstawa do uzyskania uzasadnionego i trwałego poczucia własnej wartości. Wtedy możemy się pozbyć mechanizmów obronnych. Stają się bezużyteczne. A ponieważ prawdziwy obraz siebie jest bardzo ważnym warunkiem zdrowia psychicznego, to dlatego „terapia postępuje znacznie szybciej gdy pacjent angażuje się w modlitwę, a szczególnie modlitwę kontemplacyjną”.

Autor twierdzi, że „kontemplacja (zwana ‘medytacją’ w niektórych kręgach) ma szczególnie korzystny wpływ na psychikę. Osoba, która medytuje regularnie, jest po prostu zdrowsza”. I jeszcze jedna uwaga dotycząca modlitwy. Jak stwierdza autor: „szczerść jest kamieniem węgielnym modlitwy Powinniśmy być sobą, a nie takimi, jakimi myślimy, że Bóg chce nas widzieć, gdy się modlimy. Lepiej jest kłócić się z Bogiem niż udawać posłuszeństwo.” – Oto są – w skrócie – główne myśli autora. Dodałbym tu, że wolność ma ścisły związek ze szczerścią. Nie jesteśmy wolni przeważnie dlatego, że obawiamy się być szczerzy. Ale nie takie było postępowanie Jezusa. I nie ma innej drogi do pełnej wolności niż próbowanie bycia wolnym tu i teraz – również podczas modlitwy.

Myślę, że byłoby czymś ważnym i interesującym przestudiowanie problemu jakie są relacje między prawdziwym obrazem siebie, szczerścią w modlitwie i modlitwą kontemplacyjną. Jaki rodzaj modlitwy może w najlepszy sposób pomóc w uzyskaniu prawdziwego obrazu siebie i życia w prawdzie? Ale najważniejsze pytanie jest związane z następującym twierdzeniem autora: „Gdy kocham, przestaję troszczyć się o siebie, chcę tylko dobra Tego, którego kocham”. – Myślę, że tak jest naprawdę, ale współczesna psychologia, o ile ją znam, nie poleca takiej postawy. Ona raczej akcentuje prawa człowieka:

May be someone will say that psychology is a science and the aim of science is not to teach people how they should live but to discover laws which govern the reality. Nevertheless, there are moral laws too; for example: 'if you will contribute to unhappiness of the other people, you yourself will be unhappy'. What's more, every scientist should act for the better life and well-being of the other persons. Nobody has right to say: "I'm doing this in order other people live worse". Although then psychology declares itself as the science free of values and the psychotherapists should not impact the system of values of clients, in reality they are guided by some values and – intentionally or not – pass them on to their clients.

In this context it is worth to ask: what value is the more important in psychology? Marcin Gajda writes: "We have to be ourselves" – and I believe this is a value, which should direct live and work every psychologist, psychotherapist and generally – every human being. I think it should be a main idea of good psychology as well. Christian psychology is able to show the way to this aim because we become fully ourselves only by contact with God and it is this psychology that takes such fact into account.

The article of Gregory Jensen contains a lot of sentences allowing to create foundation of Christian psychology. The main of these sentences are:

we are created in the image of God Who is love,
the human person is called to share in the life and love of God,
then we love from nature but our love should be directed by the right reason,
our reason is right when it conforms to the divine will and the divine intention,
only by giving oneself to God we can find ourselves,
love to oneself is perfect when human person loves God and in consequence oneself,
if God loves us and we make His will our own then we love ourselves by His love,
our vocation is deification, that is becoming by grace what Jesus is by nature.

The consequence of this statements – according to the author – is that psychology should

„masz prawo do...” Czy ta psychologia uczy ludzi żyć w miłości?

Być może ktoś powie, że psychologia jest nauką, a celem nauki nie jest uczenie ludzi, jak oni powinni żyć, ale odkrywanie praw, które rządzą rzeczywistością. Niemniej jednak, istnieją również prawa moralne, na przykład: „jeśli będziesz przyczyniał się do nieszczęścia innych ludzi, to i sam będziesz nieszczęśliwy”. Co więcej, każdy naukowiec powinien działać na rzecz lepszego życia i szczęścia innych osób. Nikt nie ma prawa powiedzieć: „robię to po to, aby inni ludzie żyli gorzej”. Chociaż więc psychologia deklaruje się jako nauka wolna od wartości, a psychoterapeuci nie mogą wpływać na system wartości klienta, w rzeczywistości są oni kierowani przez jakieś wartości i – świadomie albo nie – przekazują je swoim klientom.

W tym kontekście warto zapytać: jaka wartość jest najważniejsza w psychologii? Marcin Gajda pisze: „powinniśmy być sobą” – i uważam, że to jest wartość, która powinna kierować życiem i pracą każdego psychologa, psychoterapeuty i ogólnie – każdego człowieka. Uważam, że to również powinna być główna idea dobrej psychologii. Psychologia chrześcijańska jest w stanie pokazać drogę do tego celu, ponieważ stajemy się w pełni sobą tylko poprzez kontakt z Bogiem, a to właśnie ta psychologia uwzględni ten fakt.

Artykuł Gregory'ego Jensena zawiera wiele stwierdzeń pozwalających tworzyć fundamenty psychologii chrześcijańskiej. Główne z nich są następujące:

jesteśmy stworzeni na obraz Boga, który jest miłością,
człowiek jest powołany do udziału w życiu i miłości Boga,
zatem kochamy z natury, ale nasza miłość powinna być kierowana przez prawidłowo ukształtowany umysł,
nasz umysł jest właściwie ukształtowany gdy jest zgodny z wolą i planem Boga,
tylko poprzez oddanie się Bogu możemy odnaleźć samych siebie,
miłość do samego siebie jest doskonała, gdy człowiek kocha Boga i w konsekwencji siebie,

propose to the people "inward contemplative gaze in the light of the truth". But it's not happening; the contemporary psychology offers a false self and not the self which is known and loved by God.

I agree with the author of this claims but as for the last sentence I would say that psychology offers not "false self" but rather false self-concept, of course not always but that opinion is – at least partially – justified. And by the way it's worth to consider the problem of the sources and bases of psychology.

The contemporary psychology – in most part – has been built on the model of physics. The psychologists wanted to be considered as scientists and this is why they decided to follow the example of physicists, for whom an experiment plays a decisive role. Not every psychologist, of course, but this is – as I see it – the main trend. This attitude leads to treating psychology as free from values because such is also physics. But the problem is that psychology without values would be really valueless. In fact, every psychologist has some values and is directed by them in his/her work. He/she is obligated to strive to the good of his/her client. And what is good for the human person? There is not higher good as deification of man, called also an unity with God, that is having one will with God. Then the question arises: how to convince psychologists that Christian theology may be very useful for them to understand other people and to help them?

I think one can start with the statement that there is no science without assumptions, that is sentences accepted without prove. Even mathematics is created in this way. Then these assumptions are taken on faith. And who is worth believing? Who always tell the truth? The Christian psychology deem word of God as fundament to understanding a human being and this is why it has right to be considered as the best basis to treat other people with love. The book of St Bernard is a precious help in this project. It is good that Gregory Jensen turned our attention on it.

In turn, the article of Nicolene Joubert shows us the way to the full development. She claims

jeśli Bóg kocha nas, a my czynimy wolę Boga naszą własną, wówczas kochamy siebie Jego miłością,

naszym powołaniem jest przebóstwienie, to znaczy stanie się przez łaskę tym, czym Jezus jest z natury.

Konsekwencją tych stwierdzeń – według autora – jest to, że psychologia powinna proponować ludziom "wewnętrzne spojrzenie kontemplacyjne w świetle prawdy". Ale tak się nie dzieje, współczesna psychologia oferuje fałszywe ja, a nie 'ja' jako znane i kochane przez Boga.

Zgadzam się z autorem tych stwierdzeń, ale co do ostatniego powiedziałbym, że psychologia oferuje nie „fałszywe ja”, co raczej fałszywy obraz siebie, oczywiście nie zawsze, jednak ta opinia moim zdaniem – przynajmniej częściowo – jest uzasadniona. A przy okazji warto rozważyć problem źródeł i podstaw psychologii.

Współczesna psychologia – w przeważającej części – została zbudowana na wzór fizyki. Psychologowie chcieli być uważani za naukowców i dlatego zdecydowali się naśladować przykład fizyków, dla których najważniejszy jest eksperyment. Oczywiście, nie wszyscy, jednak wydaje mi się, że to jest główny trend. Taka postawa prowadzi do traktowania psychologii jako wolnej od wartości, bo taka jest też fizyka. Problem jednak w tym, że psychologia bez wartości byłaby w istocie bezwartościowa. W rzeczywistości każdy psycholog ma jakieś wartości i kieruje się nimi w swojej pracy. Jest on zobowiązany do kierowania się dobrem swojego klienta. A co jest dobre dla człowieka? Nie ma większego dobra niż przebóstwienie człowieka, zwane także zjednoczeniem z Bogiem, czyli posiadaniem tej samej woli, co Bóg. Powstaje wtedy pytanie: jak przekonać psychologów, że teologia chrześcijańska może być dla nich bardzo użyteczna dla zrozumienia innych ludzi i udzielenia im pomocy?

Myślę, że można zacząć od stwierdzenia, że nie ma nauki bez założeń, czyli zdań przyjętych bez dowodu. Nawet matematyka jest utworzona w ten sposób. Z kolei te założenia są przyjęte na wiarę. A komu warto uwierzyć? Kto zawsze mówi prawdę? Psychologia chrześcijańska

that the purpose of spiritual formation is growing in knowledge of God (especially by knowing the Word of God), becoming more Christ-like and to do the work of ministry. The way to it is strive to gain a new, better frames of reference, especially self-knowledge and self-awareness. It may be named the way to sanctification. Every event can and should be seen as an opportunity for spiritual growth. Such question may be useful in every situation: "How is this event shaping me to be more like Christ?" The main problem in the process of this growth is issue of the identity: "who am I?" and sources of knowing oneself: "how do I know who I am?" In the course of the spiritual development the human person takes his/her sense of the identity more and more from God not from other people. And from new, better, insight about God flows new, better, insight about self which is expressed in the new roles.

This everything is true but the title of this article is „Spiritual Formation for Christian Leaders“, then the problem arises: who is „Christian leader“? I think, not only leaders but every Christian should strive for sanctification, that is to be like Christ. The same can be said about the second sentence: „God intends to develop every leader to his/her maximum potential and accomplish the things he/she is gifted for.“ – I’m sure that God treats in such a way not only “every leader” but every Christian and even every human person as well. God’s love does not exclude anyone.

What’s more: what would be the difference between formation of leaders and of Christians? Is it not so that every Christian should be a leader in his/her own way? And if so, how to prepare him/her for this task? I think it is interesting problem to discuss not only for pedagogues but for psychologists as well. I believe they should teach people how to manage in a creative and proper way with every challenge from reality. On this depends a high quality of life.

But there is other issue: it is very important to connect theological and psychotherapeutic conception of the goal of a human life. It is not so as psychotherapy could be free of values. It

uważa słowo Boga za fundament rozumienia człowieka i dlatego ma prawo być uważana za najlepszą podstawę traktowania innych ludzi z miłością. Książka św. Bernarda jest cenną pomocą w tym działaniu. To dobrze, że Gregory Jensen zwrócił na nią naszą uwagę.

Z kolei artykuł Nicolene Joubert pokazuje nam drogę do pełnego rozwoju. Uważa ona, że celem formacji duchowej jest wzrastanie w poznaniu Boga (szczególnie przez czytanie Słowa Bożego), stawanie się podobnym do Chrystusa oraz posługa na rzecz innych. Drogą do tego jest dążenie do uzyskania nowych, lepszych układow odniesienia, szczególnie nowego poznania siebie i samoświadomości. Może to być nazwane drogą do świętości. Każde wydarzenie może i powinno być traktowane jako sposobność do duchowego rozwoju. Następujące pytanie może być użyteczne w każdej sytuacji: „w jaki sposób to wydarzenie ukształtuje we mnie podobieństwo do Chrystusa?” Głównym problemem w procesie tego rozwoju jest zagadnienie tożsamości: „kim jestem?” i źródeł poznania siebie: „skąd wiem, kim jestem?” W trakcie duchowego rozwoju człowiek czerpie swoje poczucie tożsamości coraz bardziej od Boga, a nie od innych ludzi. A od nowego, lepszego, poznania Boga zależy nowe, lepsze, poznanie siebie, które jest wyrażone w nowych rolach.

To wszystko jest prawdą, jednak tytuł artykułu brzmi: „Duchowa formacja chrześcijańskich liderów” – a wtedy powstaje problem: kto jest „chrześcijańskim liderem”? Uważam, że nie tylko liderzy, ale wszyscy chrześcijanie powinni dążyć do świętości, to znaczy do podobieństwa do Chrystusa. To samo można powiedzieć o drugim zdaniu: „Bóg zamierza rozwinąć potencjały każdego lidera do maximum, aby osiągnął to, do czego jest uzdolniony.” – Jestem pewien, że Bóg traktuje w taki sposób nie tylko „każdego lidera”, ale każdego chrześcijanina, a nawet każdego człowieka. Boża miłość nikogo nie wyklucza.

Co więcej: jaka byłaby różnica między formacją liderów i chrześcijan? Czy nie jest tak, że każdy chrześcijanin powinien być liderem na swój sposób? A jeśli tak, to jak go do tego przygotować? Myślę, że jest to interesujący problem do

is impossible to do something consciously without a purpose, and the purpose is always connected with values. Then the problem arises: how to implement Christian values into psychotherapy? Psychotherapy should help not hinder the process of spiritual formation that is client's becoming more Christlike. I think the problem of the true self-concept is crucial in this process. Both psychotherapists and spiritual directors (leaders) should assist their clients to achieve the true insight in themselves. And Christian psychology may be very useful for them. One of the elements of this psychology is the article of Nicolene Joubert which in a short way shows the main points of the process of spiritual formation.

Summarizing, we can say that although the authors of the articles under discussion: Gajda, Jensen and Joubert comes from different Christian denomination, have different background and different professions, nevertheless there is a deep unity between them. They accent different aspect of our development and spiritual formation but Jesus Christ is important for them all and they manage to show us the sure and verified way to fulfill our Christian and human vocation.

dyskusji, nie tylko dla pedagogów, ale i dla psychologów. Uważam, że powinni oni uczyć ludzi jak sobie radzić w twórczy i poprawny sposób ze wszystkimi wyzwaniami rzeczywistości. Od tego zależy wysoka jakość życia.

Jest jeszcze inny problem: jest bardzo ważne połączenie teologicznej i psychoterapeutycznej koncepcji celu ludzkiego życia. Nie jest tak, że psychoterapia może być wolna od wartości. Jest niemożliwe świadome uczynienie czegoś bez celu, a cel zawsze jest związany z wartościami. Powstaje więc problem: jak wprowadzić wartości chrześcijańskie do psychoterapii? Psychoterapia nie powinna przeszkadzać w procesie duchowej formacji, to znaczy w upodabnianiu się klienta do Chrystusa. Myślę, że kluczowe jest tu pojęcie obrazu siebie. Zarówno psychoterapeuci, jak i kierownicy duchowi powinni pomagać swoim klientom w osiągnięciu prawdziwego obrazu siebie. A psychologia chrześcijańska może być dla nich bardzo użyteczna. Jednym z elementów tej psychologii jest artykuł Nicolene Joubert, który w krótki sposób ukazuje główne punkty procesu formacji duchowej.

Podsumowując, możemy powiedzieć, że choć autorzy omawianych artykułów: Gajda, Jensen i Joubert pochodzą z różnych denominacji chrześcijańskich, mają różne pochodzenie i różne zawody, to jednak istnieje między nimi głęboka jedność. Akcentują różne aspekty naszego rozwoju i formacji duchowej, ale dla nich wszystkich ważny jest Jezus Chrystus i udaje im się wskazać nam pewną i sprawdzoną drogę do wypełnienia naszego chrześcijańskiego i ludzkiego powołania.

• further
contributions



Walking on Yellow



After working for a short time in psychiatry and at a special school, Friedemann Alsdorf was therapeutic director of a special clinic for addiction therapy (Teen Challenge Fehmarn) from 1988 to 1997.

With IGNIS since 1997, 2001-2023 IGNIS board member.

Participation in setting up a higher professional college for social pedagogy in Switzerland (ICP).

2010-2018 Head of the ICP-IGNIS Tutorial Center for a bachelor's degree in psychology.

Current tasks: Lecturer with a focus on addiction, ethics, interviewing skills, cognitive therapy and topics from the field of social work. Contact person for those seeking advice on addiction problems.

Friedemann is married, three adult children, three grandchildren.

Nach kürzeren Berufszeiten in der Psychiatrie und an einer Sonderschule war er 1988-1997 Therapeutischer Leiter einer Fachklinik für Suchttherapie (Teen Challenge Fehmarn).

Seit 1997 bei IGNIS, von 2001-2023 IGNIS-Vorstandsmitglied.

Mitarbeit beim Aufbau einer Höheren Fachschule für Sozialpädagogik in der Schweiz (ICP Höhere Fachschule für Sozialpädagogik).

2010-2018 Leitung des ICP-IGNIS-Tutorial Centers für einen Bachelor-Studiengang der Psychologie.

Aktuelle Aufgaben: Dozent mit den Schwerpunktthemen Sucht, Ethik, Gesprächsführung, Kognitive Therapie und Themen aus dem Bereich der Sozialen Arbeit. Supervisor. Ansprechperson für Ratsuchende mit Suchtproblemen.

Friedemann ist verheiratet, drei erwachsene Kinder, drei Enkelkinder.

"Why would you describe yourself as a Christian psychologist?"

Questions to Friedemann Alsdorf, Germany

Why did you study psychology?

I've always loved having good, deep conversations with others, but as a young adult I often got stuck at points where I didn't know what to say anymore. I was also very interested in how people live, feel and think and why they do what they do. That's how I came to the decision that what was so exciting and interesting to me should become the field of my profession. I found a lot of what I was looking for during my psychology studies, especially in the advan-

Warum würdest du dich als Christlicher Psychologe bezeichnen?

Fragen an Friedemann Alsdorf, Deutschland

Warum hast du Psychologie studiert?

Ich habe immer schon gern gute und tiefgehende Gespräche mit anderen geführt, kam dann aber als junger Erwachsener oft an Punkte, wo ich nicht mehr weiterwusste. Außerdem interessierte mich sehr, wie Menschen leben, fühlen und denken, und warum sie tun, was sie tun. So kam ich zu dem Entschluss, etwas, was ich so spannend finde und mich so interessiert, zu meinem Beruf zu machen. Im Psychologiestudium, besonders im Hauptstudium, habe

ced courses, so that I studied highly motivated and I always knew: I'm in the right place!

What was the focus of your studies/training? Were there any results that you would particularly like to highlight?

After the pre-diploma (covering all areas of psychology) I specialized on psychotherapy and its methods. I wanted to be a psychotherapist and I became one. Carl Rogers' personcentered approach, which was prominent and well represented at my university in Hamburg with Prof. Reinhard Tausch and his students, was very inspiring to me, both in terms of the way of counselling and the underlying view of humans. Unconditional appreciation, authenticity / honesty and empathy are still very important to me today; as well as good self-awareness.

I became a Christian in the 8th semester of my studies and wrote my diploma thesis on the subject of "Support and Healing through Faith".

That was at a secular university. How was this "pious" subject received at the time?

At the time, there were many esoterically interested people at the Hamburg psychological faculty, both students and lecturers. Christianity was a legitimate spectrum among other spiritual life plans. And the diploma thesis was not about theological topics, but about how believers behave, experience and classify things (e.g. how their view of life events changes with the reference to God) - i.e. a probably psychological (or hermeneutically speaking: phenomenological) approach via free interviews.

Why would you call yourself a Christian psychologist?

Because I know and have experienced again and again (for myself and others) that the work of God overshadows everything that is psychologically possible. That even people with very serious illnesses and living conditions have experienced lasting healing and positive changes after encounters with God. And who would I be as a Christian and therapist if I wanted to do without it and limit myself to psychological techniques.

That's why I've been looking for ways to seriously integrate the Word of God, prayer, the work of the Spirit, etc. into psychotherapeutic

ich viel von dem gefunden, was ich gesucht habe, so dass ich hochmotiviert studiert habe und mir immer klar war: Hier bin ich richtig!

Was waren Schwerpunkte in deinem Studium, bzw. deiner Ausbildung? Gab es da etwas, was du gerne speziell betonen möchtest?

Ich habe mich seit dem Hauptstudium (nach dem auf alle Bereiche der Psychologie ausgerichteten Vordiplom) auf Psychotherapie und ihre Methoden fokussiert. Ich wollte Psychotherapeut werden und bin es auch geworden. Sowohl vom Vorgehen als auch vom Menschenbild her sehr inspirierend fand ich die Gesprächstherapie nach Carl Rogers, die an meinem Studienort Hamburg mit Prof. Reinhard Tausch und seinen Schülern prominent und gut vertreten war. Unbedingte Wertschätzung, Echtheit / Ehrlichkeit und Empathie sind mir bis heute sehr wichtig; ebenso eine gute Selbstwahrnehmung.

Christ geworden bin ich im 8. Semester meines Studiums und habe meine Diplomarbeit zum Thema „Halt und Heilung durch den Glauben“ geschrieben.

Das war ja an einer säkularen Universität. Wie wurde damals dieses "fromme" Thema den aufgenommen?

An der Hamburger psychologischen Fakultät waren damals viele esoterisch interessierte Personen unterwegs, sowohl Studenten als auch Dozenten. Da war das Christliche ein legitimes Spektrum unter anderen spirituellen Lebensentwürfen. Und es ging in der Diplomarbeit ja nicht um theologische Themen, sondern darum, wie gläubige Menschen sich verhalten, Dinge erleben und einordnen (wie sich z.B. mit dem Gottesbezug ihre Sicht auf Lebensereignisse verändert) – also eine durchaus psychologische (oder hermeneutisch gesprochen: phänomenologische) Herangehensweise über freie Interviews.

Warum würdest du dich als Christlicher Psychologe bezeichnen?

Weil ich weiß und immer wieder erlebt habe (an mir selbst und an anderen), dass das Wirken Gottes alles psychologisch Machbare in den Schatten stellt. Dass auch Menschen mit sehr schweren Krankheiten und Lebensvoraus-

practice. I have always tried to understand psychology in terms of faith, not the other way round. The team at the IGNIS Academy and my colleagues at ICP Switzerland www.icp.ch, where I have been jointly responsible for many years, have been a great help and inspiration in these search movements over the years.

What are your actual professional duties? Please tell me a little bit about your experiences.

I work as a lecturer for psychological topics in trainings for pastoral care, Christian counseling, and Christian social pedagogic. I very much like to bring professional and spiritual topics and methods into a good connection - and I also experience this joy in our students. I also work as a therapist for some hours and also as a supervisor in order to keep in touch with the practice.

A few weeks ago I was able to hand over my responsibilities for the management at a Christian Institute (IGNIS) to very good younger employees - I am very grateful for the last 22 years in leadership and that we now have a new generation of successors.

I can see that your life is full of interesting tasks. And you have a family, too. Has this been stressful?

I would like to invest more time in both areas (work and family) - it's a shame that there are only 24 hours in a day! Of course there are always conflicts of interest, but our marriage and family are also enriched by work issues and vice versa. And my family is a big support for me. I have learned a lot from being a husband and father and I think I would be a worse psychologist without a wife and children. Looking back, the decision to get married and start a family is one of the best decisions of my life. And the grandchildren that we have had over the past four years are a very special joy.

Do you have "future dreams"?

I would like to continue working as a lecturer and supervisor even after my retirement in 3 ½ years. There are still so many interesting topics that I would like to learn more about and that I would like to pass on! Just two of them: How can we in a good way deal with fellow Christi-

setzungen nach Gottesbegegnungen dauerhafte Heilung und positive Veränderung erfahren haben. Und wer wäre ich als Christ und Therapeut, wenn ich darauf verzichten und mich auf Psychotechniken beschränken wollte. Darum habe ich nach Wegen gesucht, das Wort Gottes, Gebet, das Wirken des Geistes etc. auf seriöse Weise in psychotherapeutisches Handeln zu integrieren. Dabei habe ich die Psychologie immer vom Glauben her zu verstehen gesucht, nicht umgekehrt. Das Team der IGNIS-Akademie und meine Kollegen am ICP Schweiz www.icp.ch, wo ich seit vielen Jahre mitverantwortlich bin, waren mir über all die Jahre eine große Hilfe und Inspiration in diesen Suchbewegungen.

Was machst du gerade? Berichte uns etwas über deine Erfahrungen.

Ich arbeite als Dozent für psychologische Themen in Seelsorgekursen, Ausbildungen für Christliche Berater, christliche Sozialpädagogik-Ausbildungen und für Theologen. Immer wieder macht es mir Freude, fachliche und geistliche Themen und Methoden in eine gute Verbindung zu bringen – und ich erlebe die Freude daran auch bei unseren Studierenden. Des Weiteren bin ich mit einem kleinen Stundenkontingent als Therapeut tätig und auch als Supervisor, um meinen Kontakt mit der Praxis zu behalten.

Meine langjährige Leitungstätigkeit an einer christlichen Akademie (IGNIS) durfte ich vor wenigen Wochen an sehr gute jüngere Mitarbeiter abgeben – dafür bin ich sehr dankbar.

Ich sehe, dein Leben ist voller interessanter Aufgaben. Du hast auch Familie. Lässt sich das ohne Stress vereinbaren?

Gern würde ich in beide Bereiche (Arbeit und Familie) mehr Zeit investieren - schade, dass der Tag nur 24 Stunden hat! Natürlich gibt es immer wieder Interessenskonflikte, aber auch eine Befruchtung unserer Ehe und Familie durch Themen der Arbeit und umgekehrt. Und meine Familie ist mir ein großer Rückhalt. Ich habe durch das Ehemann- und Vatersein viel gelernt und denke, ich wäre ein schlechterer Psychologe ohne Ehefrau und Kinder. Die Entscheidung, zu heiraten und eine Familie zu gründen gehört im Rückblick zu den besten

ans who are caught in spiritually dressed-up conspiracy theories? Or: Relatives of addicts are primarily recommended to let go and take good care of themselves. But they certainly have strong means of power in their hands – how can they use them for the benefit of all those involved?

I also want to invest more time in deepening my love of God. Having handed over my management responsibility at IGNIS I hope that now there is more room for both.

Entscheidungen meines Lebens. Und die Enkelkinder, die wir seit gut vier Jahren dazubekommen haben, sind eine ganz besondere Freude.

Was sind deine Zukunftsträume?

Ich möchte gern, auch über den Ruhestand in 3 ½ Jahre hinaus, weiterhin als Dozent und Supervisor tätig sein. Es gibt noch so viele interessante Themen, über die ich mich gern tiefer informieren und die ich weitergeben möchte! Nur zwei daraus: Wie können wir gut mit Mitchristen umgehen, die sich in geistlich verbrämten Verschwörungstheorien verfangen haben? Oder: Angehörigen von Suchtkranken wird in erster Linie ein Loslassen und eine gute Selbstfürsorge empfohlen. Sie haben aber durchaus starke Machtmittel in der Hand – wie können sie diese zum Wohl aller Beteiligten einsetzen?

Außerdem möchte ich mehr Zeit in die Vertiefung meiner Liebe zu Gott investieren. Mein Ausscheiden aus der Leitungsverantwortung bei IGNIS gibt mir die Hoffnung, dass für beides mehr Raum da ist als bisher.

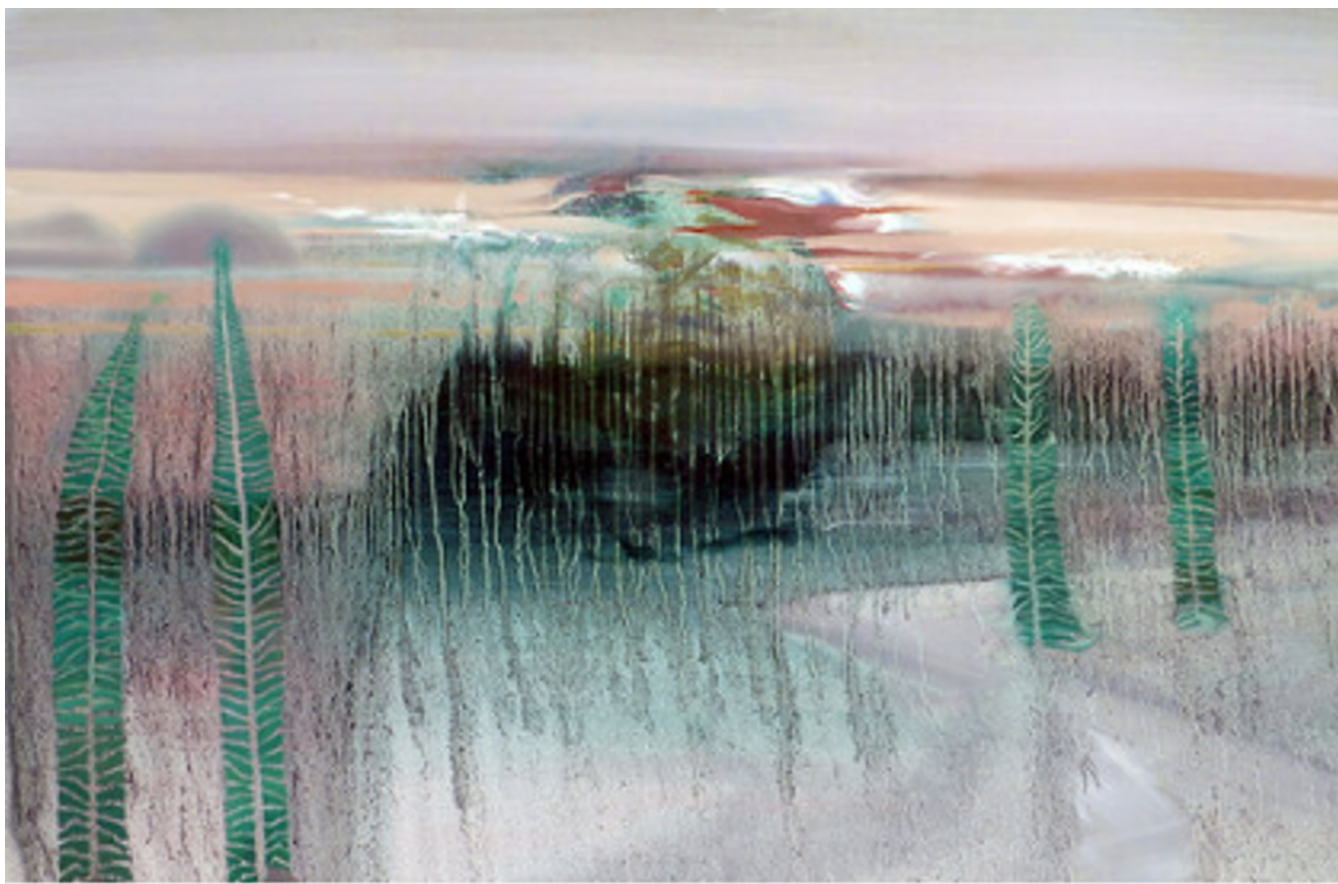
Former Interviews with a Christian Psychologist:

„Why would you call yourself a Christian Psychologist?“

Steven Voss (USA) <https://emcapp.ignis.de/18/#p=38>

Päivimaria Kuivamäki (Finland) <https://emcapp.ignis.de/17/#p=32>

Olena Yaremko (Ukraine / Germany) <https://emcapp.ignis.de/16/#p=27>



Northern Star



Werner May (Germany)

was the senior chairman of the IGNIS Institute for Christian Psychology in Kitzingen for more than 25 years (www.ignis.de). As a teacher his main interest was in basic questions of Christian Psychology and in counseling of foster families. He also helped to build up the Institute for Christian Psychology, Education and Therapy in Switzerland (www.icp.ch). Now he is the chairman of the European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology and Therapy (www.emcapp.eu) and publishes the free e-journal Christian Psychology Around The World (<https://emcapp.ignis.de>). Since 2016 he has also published another e-magazine (www.gehaltvoll-magazin.de) to encourage people that they can live their everyday life in relationship with God and others as an extraordinary life.

Werner has been married to Agnes for more than 45 years. They live in Würzburg, Germany, and have six adult children.

Former articles by Werner available here:

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/18/#p=53>

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/17/#p=34>

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/16/#p=37>

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/15/>

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/12/#p=29>

<https://emcapp.ignis.de/2/>

A Christian Psychology?

IGNIS, the German Association for Christian Psychology, was founded in 1986 as a result of a joint search by several Christians working as psychologists, psychotherapists or psychiatrists: How can we - with our professional competence and on the basis of our Christian faith - develop concepts that are appropriate and helpful to people? How can our Christian faith become the supporting and formative basis not only of personal but also of professional thinking and acting?

The goal of this search was what they called Christian Psychology, a psychology that is developed holistically within the framework of a biblical-Christian understanding of reality and uses scientific research methods.

Eine Christliche Psychologie?

Die Gründung von IGNIS, der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Christliche Psychologie, entsprang 1986 der gemeinsamen Suche mehrerer als Psychologen, Psychotherapeuten oder Psychiater arbeitender Christen: Wie können wir mit unserer fachlichen Kompetenz und auf der Grundlage unseres christlichen Glaubens dem Menschen angemessene und hilfreiche Konzepte entwickeln? Wie kann unser christlicher Glaube die tragende und prägende Basis nicht nur des persönlichen, sondern auch des beruflichen Denkens und Handelns werden?

Das Ziel dieser Suche nannten sie Christliche Psychologie, eine Psychologie, die ganzheitlich aus dem Rahmen eines biblisch-christlichen

There are some special questions and hopes associated with this project that have been and are still being asked:

- Can there be a Christian psychology?
- Can there be a Christian psychology?
- Can there be one single Christian psychology?
- Do we need a Christian Psychology?

Can there be a Christian psychology?

For many scientists, psychology is clearly and exclusively a scientific discipline that uses scientific methods to explore human experience and behavior. Therefore, for them, there can be no Christian psychology same as there is no Christian physics or chemistry.

Here we are, in agreement with other experts, convinced that every science is also shaped by an ideological framework. This has been introduced since the beginning in the 19th century with the demand for psychology as a discipline within the humanities, e.g. by Dilthey and others, and in the 1960s T.S. Kuhn showed the impact of this framework even for the "hard" natural sciences of physics, chemistry, etc. The basic view of the reality one wants to investigate, the research questions one asks, and even the methods one uses are never completely neutral.

In current psychological research we find, on the one hand, strongly biologically oriented approaches, which aim to explain human beings in accordance with laws. On the other hand there are humanistic approaches, which emphasize on freedom, creativity and development, or projects, which call systemic interactions the central point. Recently, a Buddhist psychology with its own research and explanation approaches has also appeared.

Even more than in university psychology, the connection between one's image of humans and the understanding of disorders, therapeutic interventions and goals becomes clear in relation to the different psychotherapy concepts.

We are convinced that a basic Christian understanding of human beings, which sees them as a responsible person, as a unity of body and

Wirklichkeitsverständnisses entwickelt wird und wissenschaftliche Forschungsmethoden nutzt. Mit diesem Projekt sind einige spezielle Fragen und Hoffnungen verbunden, die sich bis heute stellen:

- Kann es eine Christliche Psychologie geben?
- Kann es eine Christliche Psychologie geben?
- Kann es eine Christliche Psychologie geben?
- Brauchen wir eine Christliche Psychologie?

Kann es eine Christliche Psychologie geben?

Für viele Wissenschaftler ist Psychologie eindeutig und ausschließlich eine naturwissenschaftliche Disziplin, die mit naturwissenschaftlichen Methoden das menschliche Erleben und Verhalten erforscht. Deshalb kann es für sie eine christliche Psychologie ebenso wenig geben wie eine christliche Physik oder Chemie.

Hier sind wir, in Übereinstimmung mit anderen Fachleuten, der Auffassung, dass jede Wissenschaft auch durch einen weltanschaulichen Rahmen geprägt ist. Dies wurde seit dem 19. Jahrhundert mit der Forderung nach einer geisteswissenschaftlichen Psychologie z.B. von Dilthey und anderen eingebracht und z.B. durch T.S. Kuhn in den 1960er Jahren selbst für die „harten“ Naturwissenschaften Physik, Chemie usw. aufgezeigt. Das grundsätzliche Bild der Wirklichkeit, die man untersuchen will, die Forschungsfragen, die man stellt und selbst die Methoden, die man anwendet, sind niemals vollkommen neutral.

So finden wir im aktuellen psychologischen Forschen einerseits stark biologisch ausgerichtete Ansätze, die den Menschen z.B. aus physiologischen Abläufen gesetzmäßig erklären wollen, andererseits humanistisch ausgerichtete Ansätze, die Freiheit, Kreativität und Entfaltungsmöglichkeiten betonen, oder Forschungsprojekte, die systemische Wechselwirkungen als Kern sehen, usw. In neuerer Zeit tritt z.B. auch eine buddhistische Psychologie mit eigenen Forschungs- und Erklärungsansätzen in Erscheinung.

Noch stärker als in der universitären Psychologie wird der Zusammenhang von Menschenbild, Störungsverständnis, therapeutischen In-

soul, as a being designed for relationship and complementarity, is a scientifically possible framework for psychological research and practice that can also be communicated to those who think differently. And our hope is that we can develop appropriate, helpful concepts from this framework.

Can there be a Christian psychology?

For others, the Christian psychology project is above all questionable because they see everything that is relevant to life for Christians as covered by what God revealed through His Word and Jesus himself. From her point of view, the only important thing for dealing with people is to understand God's message better and better and to live according to it, to grow in personal faith relationships and to trust God. To do so, one can learn everything necessary from the Bible itself and from the pastoral approaches in the course of church history.

Here, in agreement with other Christians in social professions, we believe that God Himself and His Word are our essential source. In our limited human insight, however, we will never fully comprehend God's word as He meant it. In addition, we have to implement it again and again in our own life situation, apply it to new questions.

A psychologically trained perspective can be helpful for this, for example asking more precisely how processes of experience and action take place when we act in faith according to God's Word, when we want to be honest, loving and compassionate, when we repent and confess guilt, receive forgiveness or forgive others, when we want to accept God's help in fear or failure.

For us, the development of Christian psychology includes the personal and congregational faith practice of those involved as well as exegetically based reading of the Bible, the processing of psychological specialist literature and our own research.

Our belief is that God gave us intellect and perception and we can use them in many ways in relationship to Him as a creature in relationship

interventionen und Zielen in Bezug auf die unterschiedlichen Psychotherapiekonzepte deutlich.

Unsere Überzeugung ist es, dass ein christliches Grundverständnis vom Menschen, das ihn als verantwortliche Person, als leib-seelische Ganzheit, als auf Beziehung und Ergänzung angelegtes Wesen sieht, ein auch an Andersdenkende zu kommunizierender, wissenschaftlich möglicher Rahmen für psychologische Forschung und Praxis ist. Und unsere Hoffnung ist, dass wir aus diesem Rahmen dem Menschen angemessene, hilfreiche Konzepte entwickeln können.

Kann es eine Christliche Psychologie geben?

Für andere ist das Projekt christliche Psychologie vor allem deshalb fraglich, weil sie alles für Christen zum Leben relevante Wissen durch das abgedeckt sehen, was Gott durch Sein Wort und Jesus selbst offenbart hat. Das einzig Wichtige für den Umgang mit Menschen ist aus ihrer Sicht, Gottes Botschaft immer besser zu verstehen und danach zu leben, in der persönlichen Glaubensbeziehung zu wachsen und Gott zu vertrauen. Dafür könne man aus der Bibel selbst und aus den seelsorgerlichen Ansätzen im Laufe der Kirchengeschichte alles Nötige lernen.

Hier sind wir, in Übereinstimmung auch mit anderen Christen in sozialen Berufen, der Auffassung, dass Gott selbst und Sein Wort unsere wesentliche Quelle ist. In unserer menschlich begrenzten Einsicht werden wir dieses Wort jedoch nie vollständig so erfassen, wie Gott es gemeint hat. Außerdem müssen wir es immer wieder in unsere eigene Lebenssituation hinein umsetzen, auf neue Fragestellungen anwenden.

Dafür kann ein psychologisch geschulter Blick eine Hilfe sein, der z.B. genauer fragt, wie Prozesse des Erlebens und Handelns ablaufen, wenn wir im Glauben nach Gottes Wort handeln, wenn wir ehrlich, liebevoll und mitfühlend sein wollen, wenn wir Schuld bereuen und bekennen, Vergebung empfangen oder anderen vergeben, wenn wir Gottes Hilfe in Angst oder Versagen annehmen wollen.

Zum Aufbau Christlicher Psychologie gehören für uns die persönliche und gemeindlich einge-



In-Between World

to the Creator. This applies to various practical, technical or scientific fields of activity, to questions of agriculture or house building, machine production and also to the field of psychology. Our hope is that we will offer life support to Christians, Christian communities and people outside the church with Christian psychological concepts.

Can there be one single Christian psychology?

Another possible request to the Christian Psychology Project arises from the diversity of Christian expressions: Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostal... with many subgroups, theological emphases and styles of piety. If it's Christian psychology, doesn't it honestly need to be further divided into Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist... psychology?

On the one hand, it is important to us to appreciate the diversity of Christian influences and not to standardize them too quickly. Especially in counseling situations, we want to respect the denominational background of those seeking advice. On the other hand, we also see a special opportunity for encounters in our work. Since its foundation until today, Christians from different communities with different theological backgrounds have been working together at IGNIS.

Initially more strongly from charismatic awakenings, later coming from the broad field of Christian churches represented in our country, and working together and serving in different congregations, we have experienced ourselves, how some of our ideas of what God has clearly said have changed over the years, because we realized that they were more a faith tradition, one possible manifestation of God's concerns, and that we can enrich each other in our faith.

Our aim is not to develop a unifying Christian concept. We are convinced that the fullness of God and His purposes for humanity cannot be captured in human concepts. Nevertheless, by the cooperation of different Christians we can develop approaches of Christian psychology on the common basis of the Bible, the central creeds and the lived faith, we can summarize them in individual concepts as helpful orientation and use them in this way in practice.

bundene Glaubenspraxis der Beteiligten ebenso wie exegetisch begründetes Bibellesen, das Verarbeiten psychologischer Fachliteratur und eigenes Forschen.

Unsere Überzeugung ist, dass Gott uns Verstand und Wahrnehmungsfähigkeit gegeben hat und wir diese in der Beziehung zu Ihm, als Geschöpf in Beziehung zum Schöpfer, vielfältig nutzen können. Dies gilt für unterschiedliche praktische, technische oder wissenschaftliche Aufgabenfelder, für Fragen der Landwirtschaft oder des Hausbaus, der Maschinenherstellung und auch für den Bereich der Psychologie. Unsere Hoffnung ist, dass wir mit christlich-psychologischen Konzepten sowohl Christen, christlichen Gemeinden als auch Menschen außerhalb der Kirche Lebensunterstützung bieten.

Kann es eine Christliche Psychologie geben?

Eine weitere mögliche Anfrage an das Projekt Christliche Psychologie erwächst aus der Vielfalt der christlichen Ausprägungen: katholisch, orthodox, protestantisch, pfingstlerisch... mit vielen Untergruppen, theologischen Schwerpunkten und Frömmigkeitsstilen. Wenn schon Christliche Psychologie, muss man dann nicht ehrlicherweise weiter unterteilen in katholische, lutherische, reformierte, methodistische... Psychologie?

Hier ist es uns einerseits ein Anliegen, die Vielfalt der christlichen Prägungen zu schätzen und nicht vorschnell zu vereinheitlichen. Besonders in Beratungssituationen wollen wir den konfessionellen Hintergrund von Ratsuchenden achten. Andererseits sehen wir in unserer Arbeit auch eine besondere Chance der Begegnung. Seit der Gründung bis heute arbeiten bei IGNIS Christen aus unterschiedlichen Gemeinden mit unterschiedlichen theologischen Prägungen zusammen. Anfänglich stärker aus charismatischen Aufbrüchen, später aus dem breiten Feld der bei uns vertretenen christlichen Kirchen stammend, haben wir im Miteinander und im Dienst in den Gemeinden selbst erfahren, wie sich manche unserer Vorstellungen von dem, was Gott eindeutig sagt, im Laufe der Jahre eher als eine Glaubenstradition, als eine mögliche Ausprägung von Gottes Anliegen erwiesen haben und wie wir uns gegenseitig in unserem Glauben bereichern konnten.

Do we need a Christian Psychology?

In view of increasing globalization and the diversity of postmodern societies, some may also ask whether an ideologically shaped psychology is still appropriate in our time or whether it would not be more appropriate to search for concepts on a generally acceptable basis.

Since we are convinced that human beings always move within a frame of ideas and belief, it makes more sense to us to name these roots and use them consciously than to make neutrality and tolerance to the general foundation. In doing so, we do not want to isolate ourselves from other approaches, but instead want to exchange ideas, learn and be able to talk.

A word that keeps motivating us in our work:
"The place where the question of the reality of God and the question of the reality of the world is answered at the same time is designated solely by the name: Jesus Christ.

God and the world are contained in this name. In him everything has its substance (Col 1:16). From now on neither God nor the world can be rightly spoken of without Jesus Christ. All concepts of reality that disregard him are abstractions.

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Christian psychology should be based on this understanding of reality; it should build on Jesus Christ.

Unser Ziel ist nicht, ein vereinheitlichendes christliches Konzept zu entwickeln. Wir sind überzeugt, dass sich die Fülle Gottes und seiner Absichten für den Menschen gar nicht in menschlichen Konzepten einfangen lässt. Dennoch können wir Ansätze Christlicher Psychologie auf der gemeinsamen Basis der Bibel, der zentralen Glaubensbekenntnisse und des gelebten Glaubens in der Zusammenarbeit verschiedener Christen entwickeln, in einzelnen Konzepten als Orientierungshilfen zusammenfassen und entsprechend für die Praxis nutzen.

Brauchen wir eine Christliche Psychologie?

Angesichts der zunehmenden Globalisierung und der Vielfältigkeit postmoderner Gesellschaften stellt mancher vielleicht auch die Frage, ob eine weltanschaulich geprägte Psychologie noch in unsere Zeit passe oder ob es nicht vielmehr angebracht sei, verstärkt nach Konzepten auf einer allgemein akzeptablen Grundlage zu suchen.

Da wir überzeugt sind, dass der Mensch sich immer innerhalb eines Denk- und Glaubensrahmens bewegt, erscheint es uns sinnvoller, diese Wurzeln zu benennen und bewusst zu nutzen, als Neutralität und Toleranz zum allgemeinen Fundament zu erheben. Dabei wollen wir uns nicht gegenüber anderen Ansätzen abschotten, sondern in Austausch treten, lernen und Gesprächsfähig sein.

Ein Wort, das uns immer wieder in unserer Arbeit motiviert:

"Der Ort, an dem die Frage nach der Wirklichkeit Gottes wie die nach der Wirklichkeit der Welt zugleich Beantwortung erfährt, ist allein bezeichnet durch den Namen: Jesus Christus. In diesem Namen ist Gott und die Welt beschlossen. In ihm hat alles seinen Bestand. (Kol 1,16).

Von nun an kann weder von Gott noch von der Welt recht geredet werden, ohne von Jesus Christus.

Alle Wirklichkeitsbegriffe, die von ihm absehen, sind Abstraktionen."

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

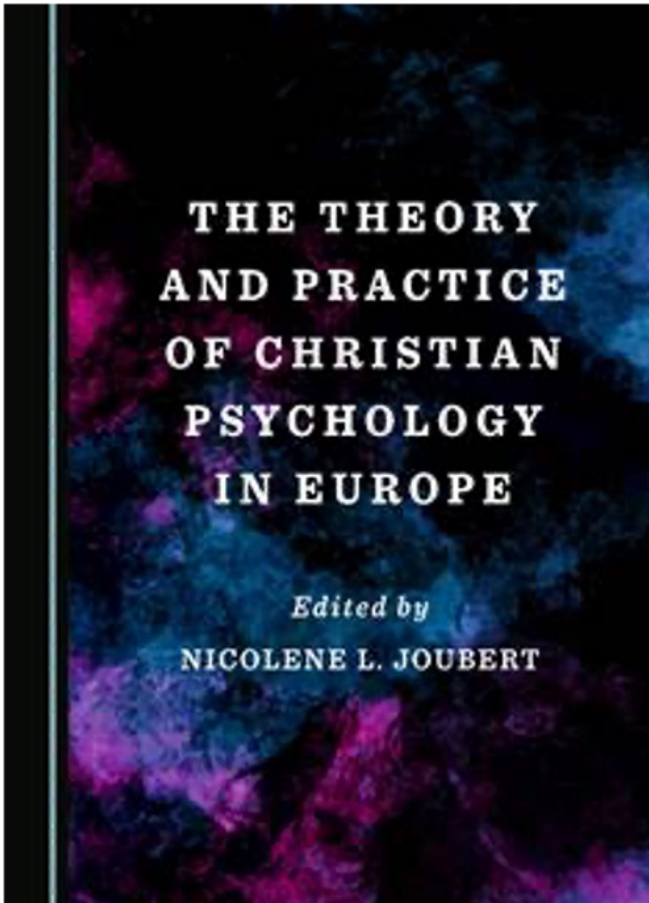
In diesem Wirklichkeitsverständnis soll Christliche Psychologie gegründet sein, auf Jesus Christus soll sie aufbauen.



Untitled

EMCAPP BOOK VOL II

NICOLENE L. JOUBERT



Professor Dr Nicolene Joubert

has been a counseling psychologist in private practice for 39 years, specializing in Christian psychology and psychotherapy, trauma therapy and family counseling. She is the founder of the Institute of Christian Psychology in South Africa, a training institution that offers courses in Christian psychology and counseling. She is an adjunct professor at Houston Baptist University, Houston, Texas, USA where she develops and teaches Christian psychology and counseling courses. She is the chairperson of the Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counselors (CPSC) in South Africa. She is also a post-graduate supervisor at the South African Theological Seminary (SATS) for MA Th and PhD students.

This second volume on a Christian approach to psychotherapy and counseling, compiled by members of the European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology and Psychotherapy (EMCAPP), contains significant contributions from various Christian psychologists and theologians practicing in the Europa and South Africa. The board of EMCAPP decided to publish a second volume fielding a Biblical perspective on various mental health challenges to stimulate further discussion and development of this approach. The book could also be a resource for Christian mental health professionals and students.

The first volume, titled Psychology and Psychotherapy in the Perspective of Christian Anthropology, contains various essays from European-based practitioners in the fields of psychology, psychotherapy and counseling. In this volume Christian anthropology is articulated as a foundation for the theories, approaches and techniques applied in practice by its contributors. The authors drew from scientific knowledge from the fields of psychology, psychotherapy and theology, focusing on intra-psychic aspects of human functioning as well as interpersonal and eco-systemic functioning. The authors consider spirituality as an intrinsic part of human functioning through which persons seek meaning and transcendence. A wide range of topics are covered in volume I, which lay a foundation for a European-based discourse on Christian psychology and psychotherapy. In volume II the discourse continues and is advanced through a collection of distinguished scholarly articles.

The first article written by **Nicolene L. Joubert** presents a Biblical perspective on global collective trauma, resilience and social transformation. The author explains the impact of collective trauma on society and presents an analysis of COVID-19 as a collective trauma. The Russian-

Ukraine war is mentioned as the most recent collective trauma to hit the world.

Collective trauma is viewed as a cataclysmic event that shatters the basic fabric of social life and often damages the bonds attaching people together. It impairs the prevailing sense of community and safety. It could also lead to communities pulling together in solidarity to support each other. Currently the world is still reeling from COVID-19 pandemic and threatened by a second disaster, the Russian-Ukraine invasion. COVID-19 is in the disillusion phase of disaster, i.e., additional resources and support are being pulled out of communities and people are left to find their own solutions. The Russian-Ukraine war is in the third stage of disaster, which is described as the heroic stage. During this stage many organizations step in to support victims and provide resources. During all stages it is important to help sufferers to develop the perspective that the trauma would end as it creates hope. In this article a biblical perspective is presented to encourage clients to believe that the trauma would end and to instill hope. The world is still recovering from COVID-19 pandemic and many countries have not recovered fully on financial-, social- and health care levels. The pandemic caught the world by surprise and the healthcare systems were not prepared for the sudden transmission of the Corona virus detected in Wuhan, China for the first time in December 2019. The spread of the virus led to a pandemic, which resulted in mass trauma. While the COVID pandemic was slowing

down and the people began to readjust to post-Corona life with a better future in sight, Russia invaded the Ukraine on 24 February 2022. At the time of this writing the conflict is escalating causing mass trauma due to war crimes, disappearances of thousands of people, loss of lives, displacement of millions and the threat to the energy and food resources for the world. Many countries stepped in to provide shelter and medical assistance to refugees.

The impact of the two collective traumatic events on all sectors of life globally is not fully understood yet. Researchers have studied the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and there is no doubt that it caused severe losses worldwide and tore at the very fabric of society. Research on the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian invasion is ongoing, but the traumatic effect of war is well known and there is no doubt that millions of people are suffering.

In this article the author looks at the social, psychological and financial fallout caused by the pandemic. This is juxtaposed with collective trauma narratives of ancient Israel. Based on these narratives and the way Israel responded and found hope in YHWH, the author presents a therapeutic action plan.

The next article is written by **K.A. Wojcieszek**. He focuses on community as our real home. The author asserts that love is our deepest vocation and should be the foundation for this



community. Human love always has two aspect – the material (feelings) and the immaterial (personal relationship). The author points out that most marriages are falling apart and argues that the main reason for this is a lack of understanding the relationship of two people. It is critical to understand what love is to address this issue. To fully understand what love is, we should consider both the material and immaterial sides of human beings. The author based his description of the meeting “places” in a person on the Aristotelian-Thomistic model. These places are not only based on the nervous system but also the immaterial aspect of the intellect. The reader is challenged to participate in the discourse by reassessing the reductionistic view of human existence and to reflect deeply on the meaning of “words of the heart”.

Romuald Jaworski wrote on periodization of religiousness development. He distinguishes seven stages of religious development and states that “the analysis of religious phenomena was particularly inspired by the analysis of religiosity as an interpersonal relationship, focusing attention on the personal dimension of human contact with God, which takes place in religious experiences.” In his analysis and identification of the seven stages he draws knowledge from the fields of philosophy, theology psychology of religion, and psychological knowledge about interpersonal relationship.

The article written by **Werner May** contains a discourse on Christian identity. The author argues that Christian identity entails more than a modern or postmodern view. The classical modern understanding of identity is described as the ontic identity. He discusses various models of identity and explains how identity develops during adolescence. He covers the postmodern view of identity formation based on construction and narrative. The author then presents his preferred Christian identity as agape identity, a special form of dialogical identity. He expanded on the formation of agape identity which starts with the love of God. The author argues that the digital future we are facing may greatly impact the formation of identity but concludes that the love of God will be an anchor as it is the

answer to a deep heartfelt longing for a real encounter that a digital future cannot destroy.

Samuel Pfeifer wrote an insightful article on prayer. He asserts that prayer is the most frequent expression of spirituality, around the world and in all cultures. He investigates the interaction between psychology and prayer and provided empirical evidence on the importance of the positive subjective effect of prayer is critical in life-situations. He distinguishes between ritual and dialogue but demonstrates the ritualized function of prayer which relates to communal prayer. Communal prayer can evoke a deep response in the individual and underline the sense of community. The importance and impact of communal prayer is also underscored in the first article that investigated collective trauma from a biblical perspective. The author included an indispensable section in his article, to be carefully considered by psychologists and psychotherapist, i.e., ethical guidelines for the use of prayer in therapy.

Anna Ostaszewska highlights elements of Christian psychotherapy. The author argues that the aim of psychotherapy is to heal psychological problems and that a psychotherapist should have enough knowledge to understand a client’s beliefs and their context. It means that a therapist should respect a Christian client’s beliefs and be able to distinguish between healthy and “unhealthy” spiritual beliefs. Furthermore, psychotherapists’ own religious knowledge and openness for the work of the Holy Spirit is important. The author further provides information on research in the area of spirituality and available training offered by higher educational institutions in the field of Christian psychotherapy. The author discussed various elements of Christian psychotherapy that should be understood in accordance with Christian anthropology. This article offers the reading insight into these elements and how they could be utilized in Christian psychotherapy.

Elena Strigo’s article, titled, The Moral Word and Reconstruction of the Person in Christian Psychotherapy, debates the constructive potential of a moral judgment in the therapeutic re-

construction of person in Christian psychotherapy. The author argues that the aim of Christian therapy is the reconstruction and recreation of the anthropological image of patients in accordance with their base nature as human beings. This means that the therapeutic reconstruction of a person in Christian therapy involves uncovering and fulfilling the image and likeness of God in the person. The author further explores the concepts of good and evil and argues that the interrelation of nature and person unfolds itself in the exploration of the patient's personality by means of the symbolic power of a "moral word." The author refers to Luke 22:47-53 as a perfect example of the action of the moral word spoken by Jesus Christ when he said to Judas: "Would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" Here Jesus Christ provides an example of the pure, conscious, definite moral assessment of the situation, taken as a whole, without any sign of aggression, violence, hatred or loss of control.

The article written by **Andrey Lorgus** focuses on intrapersonal conflict as a collision of different basic needs. The author articulates that the fundamental personality model, at least in psychotherapy, is based in as to be (existence) and to achieve self-worth. He further states that to some extent they correlate with Maslow's hierarchy of needs model and Langle's fundamental motivations. The author presents a new approach to basic needs based on a phenomenological picture of intrapersonal conflicts. He provides a graphic scheme of basic needs and argues that intrapersonal conflict arises when these need pull in different directions. It can lead to complex conflicts, for example, when one basic need gives rise to several different strategies for its implementation, which are in conflict with each other, it creates ambivalence. The author further explores the resolution for this conflict by means of case studies.

Ulla Dahlen developed a model, the Heart-House model, based on the Hebrew word *leb* and the metaphor of a house. The model is encapsulated in the discourse in her article. The meaning of *leb* is heart, and refers to feelings, thinking and volition. These aspects of the heart are the rooms in the house. Anxiety is ex-

perienced in the feelings room and performance, based on choice and thinking in the other rooms. The author argues that the growing experience of living as the Father's beloved is reflected in each of these rooms. The author offers a practical model and metaphor for the integration of Christian faith and psychotherapy. She phrased it eloquently in the following statement: "The heart-house model offers an integrative Christian approach to psychotherapy and counseling by bringing together several theories with the Word of God."

The article written by **Marjatta Ollikainen** describes a case study and psychotherapeutic process with a trauma survivor who has both type A and B trauma with both physical and psychological symptoms. The author emphasised that the actual therapy is embedded in the therapeutic relationship. The therapy starts with creating a relationship that provides a safe space and trust. The author integrated several theories and approaches in the case study with the main model being the Trauma-Informed Stabilization Treatment (TIST) model. The model is effective in treating clients who have addictions and self-destructive behavior. The author discusses the defenses and coping mechanisms as well as the themes that emerged during therapy.

Pawel Surma and Malgorzata Surma focuses on a 12 Steps recovery workshop as a method to integrate spirituality into the praxis of psychotherapy. The authors discuss how they present the program as a practical means of integrating Christian spirituality into the recovery process. The message of the 12-step program is analysed with an emphasis on spiritual growth. The 12 Steps Living to the Full – recovery workshop has its roots in a Christian fellowship founded in 1921 by a Lutheran minister, Frank Buchman. The authors point out that the main emphasis of the group was on developing a personal bond with God by surrendering to Him wholeheartedly. The underlying principles of the work of the group were applied by the authors to develop a recovery workshop that focuses on advancing the spiritual growth of the participants.

Olga Krasnikova attempts in her article to reveal the characteristics of the Christian Orthodox psychotherapy and counseling. Her focus is on how cultural and moral Christian values can be manifested in practice of spiritually focused psychotherapy done with believing Christian from the Orthodox or Catholic traditions. The author shows how Christian values influence the world and how one can change oneself based on spirituality-oriented psychotherapy by applying consecutive steps. Spiritually oriented psychotherapists could benefit from this article in terms of finding direction for their work.

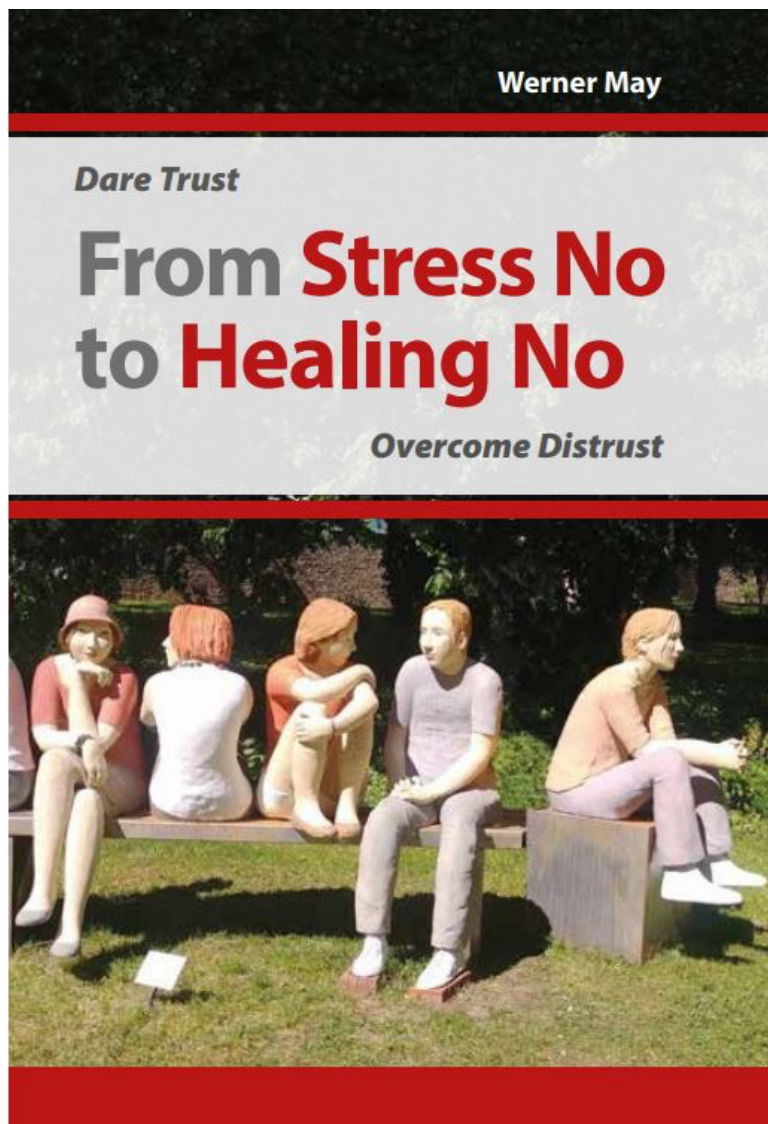
Marjaana Jurvainen-Broms wrote a thought-provoking article on narcissism. She distinguishes between thin-skinned and thick-skinned narcissism based on a psycho-analytical understanding of narcissism. She argues that personality is organized in different ways for these two types. The difference stems from the way a child develops in his/her relationship with their mother or primary caregiver. The interesting concept of “psychic skin” is presented. It refers to the idea that a child experiences the way their mother holds them as “skin” around them. When the “psychic skin” that develops in early childhood leads to deep disappointment a child may develop narcissism. The development of thin-skinned versus thick-skinned narcissism depends on the structure of their personalities. This article provides an interesting and thought-provoking perspective on a relevant topic.

Roland Mahler wrote on two relevant concepts in Christian counseling, i.e., conscience and faith and how it could be handled in the therapeutic relationship. The author asserts that conscience serves as a barometer to show people how lost they are and that they cannot help

themselves. Furthermore, conscience gives us orientation and ultimately leads us into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Conscience is conceptualized in the mystical tradition, monasticism of the Anchorites and Cenobites, Gregory the Great and Meister Eckhardt. The need for empirical studies on the function of conscience and its formation in the pedagogical and psychotherapeutic process is highlighted.

Friedemann Alsdorf presents his thoughts on the setting of therapeutic goals in Christian psychotherapy. The question arises whether goals are defined from the client’s point of view, the therapist’s point of view or God’s will. The author challenges the tendency to increase the depth of the therapy and highlights the danger in such an endeavor. The deeper the therapy the greater the damage in case of therapeutic failure. He further posited that aims should be communicated early and clearly in a therapy process. The “deeper” aim might not be the best. The reader is challenged by interesting and thought-provoking questions regarding goal setting in Christian counseling, for example, do we stick to a paternalistic model, a model of service or a model of negotiation? In this article these questions are considered, and tentative answers are developed.

In his second article, Roland Mahler addresses spiritual maturity. He poses the question whether spiritual maturity could be an aim or goal in Christian psychotherapy. He starts the article with an overview of the terms, maturity and mature as it occurred in the New Testament. He offers seven theses to explain his own definition of the term Spiritual Maturity. His conclusion is that spiritual maturity is not a specific goal in Christian psychotherapy, but it can be promoted by it.



Click here on the picture then you can read or download it. If you like it, then please share it with others around the world. And I ask you for your feedback too: post@werner-may.de.

Do some of these personal goals, or at least one of them, apply to you?

- I want to find a real yes I can stand up for,
- say no if I mean no,
- learn to speak a no that is taken seriously,
- be a head rather than a tail in life,
- win deeper relationships,
- gain more space for myself to live,
- help others to follow rules,
- help others to overcome their mistrust,
- find inner strength, together with others,
- in my relationships.

Who is the Catholic psychologist?

CONFERENCE 2023

by Association of Catholic Psychology Italy

Report by Stefano Parenti parentiste@yahoo.it

There is one theme in particular that is usually carefully avoided in the world of psychotherapy. It is a subject that causes annoyance and sometimes scandal for a discipline that elects "neutrality" and "unconditional acceptance" as the undisputed values of a "non-judgmental" profession par excellence. But in a way of thinking in which the operator seems to have to become a neutral screen, with no contents of his own, what place does his faith occupy?

In other words, what distinguishes a Catholic psychologist from one who is not? The Association of Catholic Psychology ventured into its first conference, held in Rome from 20 to 22 January 2023, to delve into this unusual topic, but perceived as urgent by many psychotherapists. "Who is the Catholic psychologist?" was the question that gave the title to a series of sessi-

Chi è lo psicologo cattolico?

CONFERENZA 2023

dell'Associazione di Psicologia Cattolica Italia

Relazione di Stefano Parenti parentiste@yahoo.it

C'è un tema che solitamente nel mondo della psicoterapia viene accuratamente evitato. È un argomento che procura fastidio e talvolta scandalo per una disciplina che elegge la "neutralità" e l' "accettazione incondizionata" a valori indiscussi di una professione per antonomasia "non giudicante". Ma in un modo di pensare in cui l'operatore sembra dover diventare uno schermo neutro, senza contenuti propri, che posto occupa la sua fede? Detto in altri termini, cosa distingue uno psicologo cattolico da uno che non lo è? Ad approfondire questo argomento insolito, ma avvertito come urgente da molti psicoterapeuti, si è cimentata l'Associazione di Psicologia Cattolica nel suo primo convegno, svoltosi a Roma dal 20 al 22 Gennaio 2023. "Chi è lo psicologo cattolico?" è la domanda che dà il titolo ad una serie di sessioni a cui hanno partecipato docenti e professionisti italiani e stranieri.



ons attended by Italian and foreign teachers and professionals.

The introductory lecture by Prof. Martín Echarría, professor and director of the psychology department at the Abat Oliba-CEU University of Barcelona, analyzed the break that divides contemporary currents from tradition: the first authors of psychology, both theoretical and experimental such as Wilhelm Wundt (and before that Christian Wolff), both clinical and Sigmund Freud, have obscured the antecedent formulations, opposing them and placing themselves as a novelty with respect to the psychologies of the past.

Aristotle, the Fathers of the Church, Thomas Aquinas - authors on whose conceptions Christianity was built - have been deliberately relegated to oblivion, to make room for a new way of conceiving man and reality. The outcome of this break with tradition means that Catholics involved in the world of psychology today do not access the roots of their own culture, but start from modern authors, erroneously considered "the first". A split therefore is created in the Catholic professional, who uses theories and techniques born in non-Christian contexts.

His Excellency Monsignor Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for evangelization of the Holy See, underlined how this fracture - which is clearly evident in the field of psychology - concerns the entire Catholic world which, during the 19th century, is seen progressively subtracting the foundations from the secular culture. We find ourselves in an intermediate age, in which modernity, which in some forms is radically opposed to the Christian culture and message, also leaves empty spaces which it is unable to fill with meaning and which Catholics are called to make their own through testimony.

To do so, however, they must have their roots very clear and therefore - as the Holy Father Francis has suggested on several occasions - to rediscover their own tradition, to then decline it in an original way in the contemporary world.

A specific session of the conference was dedicated to the recovery of tradition in which Father

La lezione introduttiva del prof. Martín Echarría, docente e direttore del dipartimento di psicologia presso l'Università Abat Oliba-CEU di Barcellona, ha analizzato la rottura che divide le correnti contemporanee dalla tradizione: i primi autori di psicologia, sia teorica e sperimentale come Wilhelm Wundt (e prima ancora Christian Wolff), sia clinica come Sigmund Freud, hanno oscurato le impostazioni antecedenti, contrapponendosi ad esse e ponendosi come novità rispetto alle psicologie del passato. Aristotele, i Padri della Chiesa, Tommaso d'Aquino - autori sulle cui concezioni si era edificata la cristianità - sono stati volutamente relegati nell'oblio, per lasciare spazio ad un nuovo modo di concepire l'uomo e la realtà. L'esito di questa rottura con la tradizione fa sì che i cattolici impegnati oggi nel mondo della psicologia non accedano alle radici della propria cultura, ma partano dagli autori moderni, ritenuti erroneamente "i primi". Di fatto, quindi si viene a creare una scissione nel professionista cattolico, che usa teorie e tecniche nate in contesti non cristiani.

Sua Eccellenza Monsignor Rino Fisichella, pro-prefetto del Dicastero per l'evangelizzazione della Santa Sede, ha sottolineato come questa frattura - che si rende ben evidente nell'ambito della psicologia - riguarda tutto il mondo cattolico che, nel corso del XIX secolo, si è visto progressivamente sottrarre i fondamenti dalla cultura laicista. Ci troviamo in una epoca intermedia, in cui la modernità, che in talune forme si oppone radicalmente alla cultura e al messaggio cristiano, lascia anche degli spazi vuoti che non è in grado di riempire con un significato e che i cattolici sono chiamati a far propri attraverso la testimonianza. Per farlo, però, devono aver ben chiare le proprie radici e quindi - come ha suggerito a più riprese il Santo Padre Francesco - a riscoprire la propria tradizione, per poi declinarla in modo originale nel mondo contemporaneo.

Al recupero della tradizione è stata dedicata una sessione specifica del convegno in cui padre Ignacio Andereggen, docente di teologia e filosofia presso diverse università italiane e argentine, e padre Giovanni Cucci, docente di filosofia e psicologia all'Università Gregoriana di

Ignacio Andereggen, professor of theology and philosophy at various Italian and Argentine universities, and Father Giovanni Cucci, professor of philosophy and psychology at the Gregorian University of Rome, proposed the essential contents of the psychology of two great saints: Thomas Aquinas and Ignacio di Loyola.

In the first, today's Catholic psychologist can find an anthropology capable of explaining the fundamental structure of man: the relationship between passions and reason, intelligence as the ability to grasp the truth of reality, natural law as a guide to happiness through the exercise of the virtues, grace and the sacraments as the perfection of nature.

St. Ignatius anticipated contemporary psychology by deepening some dynamics: how from the emotions that a person lives consciously, one can understand what he knows, his deepest needs (for fullness), the temptations and even the illuminations on which he can lean, and therefore the inner tools that allow him to walk towards health or illness.

After the analysis of the break with tradition and the recovery of the same, the conference proposed three areas in which the specificity of a Catholic psychologist can be manifested. Mariolina Ceriotti Migliarese, a psychotherapist from Milan, explained how it is possible to mend a wounded marriage bond by focusing on hope and faith, to the point of getting married again. Maria Vittoria Sanese, a psychotherapist from Rimini, added that the testimony of the professional on one's faith helps and illuminates the dormant religiosity of couples in crisis, often grappling with quarrels that tarnish the point of origin from which their marriage arose.

The psychotherapist Maria Monetti, from Varese, instead spoke of adolescents: being fragile and in need of safe guidance, such as that of parents rooted in a living experience and able to give meaning to everything. The teenager's original and sometimes annoying expressions hide a question for meaning that needs simple and engaging answers. Their crisis is actually the difficulty of the adults themselves. The professional is therefore called to support the psycho-educational task of the family.

Roma, hanno proposto i contenuti essenziali della psicologia di due grandi Santi: Tommaso d'Aquino e Ignacio di Loyola. Nel primo lo psicologo cattolico di oggi può trovarvi un'antropologia in grado di spiegare la struttura fondamentale dell'uomo: il rapporto tra le passioni e la ragione, l'intelligenza come capacità di cogliere la verità della realtà, la legge naturale in quanto guida alla felicità attraverso l'esercizio delle virtù, la grazia e i sacramenti come perfezione della natura. Sant'Ignazio ha anticipato la psicologia contemporanea approfondendo alcune dinamiche: come dalle emozioni che una persona vive coscientemente si possa capire ciò che conosce, le sue esigenze più profonde (di pienezza), le tentazioni ed anche le illuminazioni su cui può appoggiarsi, e quindi gli strumenti interiori che gli permettono d'incamminarsi verso la salute o la malattia.

Dopo l'analisi della rottura con la tradizione ed il recupero della stessa, il convegno ha proposto tre ambiti in cui si può manifestare la specificità di uno psicologo cattolico. Mariolina Ceriotti Migliarese, psicoterapeuta di Milano, ha spiegato come sia possibile ricucire un legame matrimoniale ferito puntando sulla speranza e sulla fede, sino al punto da giungersi a risposare di nuovo. Maria Vittoria Sanese, psicoterapeuta di Rimini, ha aggiunto che la testimonianza del professionista sulla propria fede aiuta e illumina la religiosità sopita delle coppie in crisi, spesso alle prese con litigi che appannano il punto di origine da cui il loro matrimonio è sorto.

La psicoterapeuta Maria Monetti, di Varese, ha invece parlato degli adolescenti: fragili e bisognosi di una guida sicura, quale quella di genitori radicati in una esperienza viva e in grado di dare significato di tutto. Le espressioni originali e talvolta fastidiose dell'adolescente nascondono una domanda di senso che ha bisogno di risposte semplici e coinvolgenti. La loro crisi è in realtà la difficoltà degli adulti stessi. Il professionista è chiamato quindi a sostenere il compito psicoeducativo della famiglia. Infine padre Gabriele Scardocci ha aperto uno squarcio sul mondo della disabilità, in particolare sui disabili psichici. Anche per loro è possibile essere educati, anche alla fede, attraverso semplici accorgimenti pratici e l'accesso ai sacramenti. Uno

Finally, Father Gabriele Scardocci opened a window on the world of disability, in particular that of the mentally disabled. It is also possible for them to be educated, even in the faith, through simple practical arrangements and access to the sacraments. A good look towards them is really charity if it contemplates them as beings wanted by God and loved even in their limited conditions, according to an anthropology that sees in intelligence and in the role of grace resources that can always be appealed.


To the question "Who is the Catholic psychologist?" The convention then replied: "a dwarf who sits on the shoulders of giants". In other words, a professional who knows the tradition preceding him and who carries it forward in the present, dialoguing with contemporary settings but also taking the right critical distances from it, feeling strong in two millennia of history that have taught us how to conceive man and his problems. The space now opens up to the field of psychotherapy, which will be explored in subsequent conferences and proposals of the Association: the declination of a model that has its roots in the anthropology of Thomas Aquinas and in the contributions of the great names of tradition; and who knows how to intercept the needs and challenges of the contemporary clinic - think of topics such as pedophilia, pornography, homosexuality, gender identity, end of life, post-abortion, etc. - better than current approaches do.

sguardo di bene verso di loro è realmente carità se li contempla come esseri voluti da Dio ed amati pur nelle loro condizioni limite, secondo una antropologia che vede nell'intelligenza e nel ruolo della grazia delle risorse sempre appellabili.

Alla domanda "Chi è lo psicologo cattolico?" il convegno ha quindi risposto: "un nano che siede sulle spalle dei giganti". Ovvero un professionista che conosce la tradizione a sé precedente e che la porta avanti nel presente, dialogando con le impostazioni contemporanee ma anche prendendone le giuste distanze critiche, sentendosi forte di due millenni di storia che hanno insegnato come concepire l'uomo e le sue problematiche. Lo spazio adesso si apre all'ambito della psicoterapia, che verrà esplorato in successivi convegni e proposte dell'Associazione: la declinazione di un modello che abbia la sue radici nell'antropologia di Tommaso d'Aquino e negli apporti dei grandi nomi della tradizione; e che sappia intercettare i bisogni e le sfide della clinica contemporanea - si pensi a temi come pedofilia, pornografia, omosessualità, identità di genere, fine vita, post-aborto, ecc. - meglio di quanto facciano gli approcci attuali.

Stefano Parenti, psychotherapist, President of the Italian Catholic Psychological Association
Stefano Parenti is husband, father of three little mischievous kids (and a fourth is coming!) and works like psychotherapist in Milano, Italy. Since university times, he had the need to find a link between psychotherapy and faith, between work and life. Because all of the temporary approaches to therapy are build upon anthropologies far away from Church's one, he was searching for authors and professionals who have already linked this two parts. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Rudolf Allers, Magda Arnold and some friends help him to find an integration and, overall, to understand that Catholics are called to continue the traditional psychology that was erased by modern and post-modern times.

Former article by Stefano available here
<https://emcapp.ignis.de/14/#p=56>



Next Number
Anticipated
Publication date:
Summer 2023

About Us

This journal is published by the European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology and Psychotherapy in cooperation with the IGNIS-Academy, Kanzler-Stürtzel-Str.2, D-97318 Kitzingen. EMCAPP as a non-institutional movement enjoys meeting Christian scholars and practitioner in the field of Christian anthropology, psychology, psychotherapy and counseling from all over the world and from most Christian traditions. We are focused on bringing together key persons from different countries. The richness of experience and background always stimulates and refreshes us.

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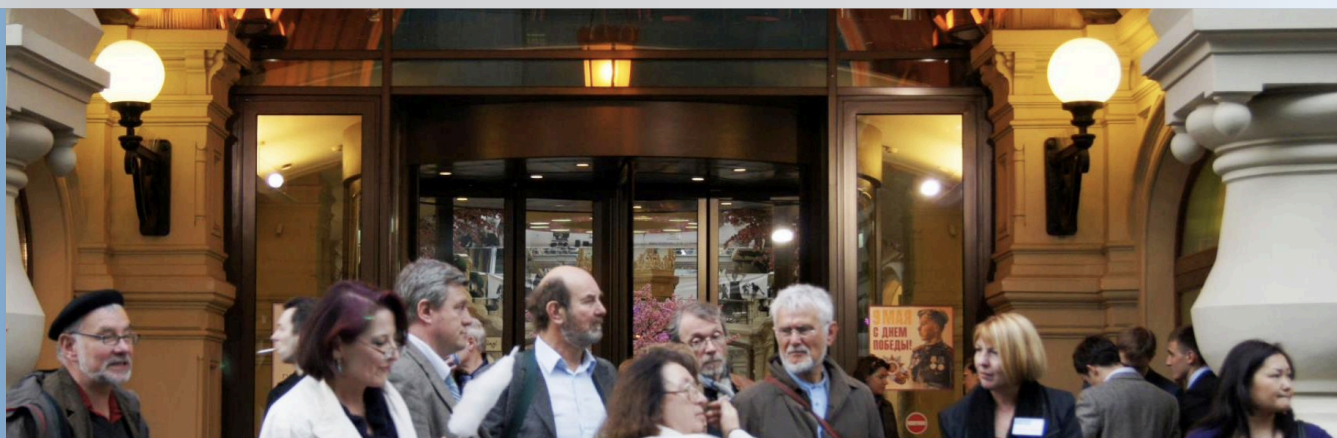
Per year, two issues of the journal are planned.

Publisher, Editor: Werner May
Design: Juliane Thoma
Interactive design, Webdesign:
Heiko Gneuß, pro-webART
<http://www.pro-webART.com>

Many thanks to the numerous authors and the translators. Without their commitment and gifts this number would not exist.

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European Movement for Christian Anthropology, Psychology and Psychotherapy

seven statements of emcapp



The seven statements of EMCAPP are as follows:

- 1. EMCAPP is based on the belief that there is a God who is actively maintaining this world, and therefore there cannot be any discussions about Man without talking about God.**
- 2. EMCAPP acknowledges the limitations of all human knowledge and therefore appreciates the attempts of the various Christian denominations to describe God and their faith.**
- 3. EMCAPP brings together international leaders and pioneers in the field of Christian psychology and psychotherapy and its underlying anthropology.**
- 4. EMCAPP respects and appreciates the cultural and linguistic diversity of backgrounds of its members.**
- 5. EMCAPP encourages its members to learn how to recognize each other as friends and brothers and sisters in Christ.**
- 6. EMCAPP encourages its members in their national challenges and responsibilities.**
- 7. EMCAPP has a global future and it is open to discourse and joint research opportunities around the world.**