

ANTI-RELIGIOUS BIAS IN PSYCHOTHERAPY:

IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Religious writers have long recognized the differences between healthy and unhealthy religion, yet psychologists and particularly psychotherapists have seemed reluctant to acknowledge the positive aspects of religious commitment. Some critics have argued that in seeking to understand human behaviour, psychologists either ignore religion as being insignificant or view its contribution negatively.

Research reviewed indicated that negative attitudes toward religion do exist among many psychologists and psychotherapists despite the fact that the validity of these attitudes is not supported by empirical research. Reasons why such a bias might have developed were reviewed, as were the implications of such a bias for religious clients. Objections expressed by religious and non-religious critics about the "excesses" of humanism today, and the difficulties some religious clients have accepting the assumptions behind modernism and modern psychotherapy were also discussed.

While psychotherapists usually emphasize their scientific role they tend to deny or obscure their role as moral agents. It is important for psychotherapists to learn to bring value issues out in the open and to

deal with them as honestly as possible. Fears conservative Christian clients often express, that psychotherapy may rob them of their faith, appear to be well founded. Major psychotherapist-client value differences may inadvertantly undermine religious faith and can have markedly negative implications for treatment. Empirical evidence suggests that psychotherapists do communicate their own values to clients, often unintentionally, and that the adoption of therapists' values by clients often occurs. The fact that value issues have not received deserved attention, and that a systematic approach to values has not become a part of the training of most psychotherapists, seriously complicates the task of the religious client contemplating therapy.

Some of the barriers encountered in trying to achieve a responsible integration of Christianity and modern psychotherapy, both within psychology and within the churches, were reviewed. Psychotherapists usually steer clear of dealing with religious issues in therapy, or, when they do address religious issues, they tend to do so in a very personal way. Lack of training is probably the reason why clinicians frequently fail to respond to religious issues in an appropriate clinical manner.

Training in the clinical professions is almost bereft of content that would engender an appreciation


of religious variables in psychological functioning. As a rule, psychotherapists lack an understanding and appreciation of the many roles religion can play in people's lives and a proper facilitative framework for helping religious clients.

Suggestions on how to work effectively with religious clients in therapy were offered. Finally a course was recommended, aimed at helping psychotherapists to think outside of modern assumptions, and to recognize the individualistic, metatheoretical biases within their particular approaches to therapy. The course would also assist psychotherapists to develop an appreciation for the different roles religion can play in people's lives, and offer practical therapeutic suggestions on how to work effectively with religious clients, within the client's own value system and frame of reference.

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"When we consider what religion is for mankind,
and what science is, it is no exaggeration to say
that the future course of history depends upon the
decision of this generation as to the relations
between them."

- A.N. Whitehead

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

No doubt many people at some time in their lives have had religious experiences. Often religious organizations encourage members to practice techniques which can produce dramatic emotional or transcendental experiences. These experiences often act as a striking validation to members that their particular religious organization is 'graced by God' and in fact represents God's own intention. The religious organization's system of beliefs, values, and membership requirements are strongly validated and reinforced to members by such 'religious' experiences. Nevertheless, these so-called religious experiences may have been created by principles independent of 'God's Grace,' and the beliefs, values, and practices of the religious organization in question may be unhealthy ones. Another problem is that one can easily become addicted to the highs of altered states of consciousness and spiritual experiences. Spirituality in these forms can be dangerous and often lends itself to compulsive/addictive behaviour.

When viewed from the outside or through the eyes of the media, spirituality and religious commitment can easily appear fraught with corrupting influences.

Nevertheless, there is a healthy religiosity which encourages authenticity and the development of a person's critical faculties in the service of a standard beyond narrow ego consciousness. By internalizing the creed of their religion, the healthy religious individual necessarily internalizes its values of humility, compassion, and love of neighbour, while at the same time being affirmed in their own value as a person.

Sorting out the degree to which a particular religion or a particular person's practice of their religion is healthy or unhealthy can be a complex problem. Psychotherapists generally lack training in dealing with religious issues and consequently tend to avoid getting involved in sorting out what is good and what is bad about a client's religious commitment.

Nevertheless, religious individuals often find that understanding their personal problems merely in terms of their feelings and what is psychologically healthy insufficient. Such individuals may have a strong need to resolve their problems in terms of their commitment to God and often feel that psychotherapists will not be able to offer them the support they need in

such a process. In fact, many religious people avoid psychotherapists, when faced with grave religious or personal conflicts, because they either fear that their faith may be subverted during the process of psychotherapy, or they simply believe that their religious life will not be acknowledged, or understood in anything like the sophistication necessary for them to benefit from psychotherapy. It is the opinion of this author that this situation is a tragedy and that psychotherapy has a vital role to play in counselling the religious client.

What has come to light in the course of exploring these issues is that there appears to be a profession-wide bias among psychotherapists against religion which may, to some extent, justify the fears some religious clients have about entering therapy. The position articulated in this paper is that this bias often works unconsciously within the profession, and restricts the ability of psychotherapists to work effectively with religious clients. Although much remains to be done, the expertise is now available for therapists to begin to gain the technical and clinical knowledge necessary to serve this client population more effectively. This paper is dedicated to all the religious clients who need psychological counselling, but who also need some assurance that their

psychotherapist will know how to deal responsibly with sensitive religious issues, when it is important to do so.

The Problem

In the last 30 years, psychology, along with the other social sciences, has helped identify and curb prejudice in society, both through research and social activism. In the last few years the psychological literature has begun to reflect evidence of prejudice among psychologists themselves (Abramowitz & Dokecki, 1977). Most of this research has focused on determining whether therapists might hold class, race, or sex biases. Recently a few researchers have suggested the possibility of an anti-religious bias among psychologists, which may negatively affect their perceptions of and behaviour toward religious people (Gartner, 1985).

Donald Campbell (1975), in his presidential address to the 1975 convention of the American Psychological Association, took up this theme. While not a religious person himself, Campbell was nevertheless deeply concerned by what he identified as the bias in psychology and psychiatry against religion. He argued that psychologists, in seeking to understand

human behaviour, either ignore religion as being insignificant, or view its contribution negatively. In Campbell's view this attitude is scientifically unjustified and may help undermine the continuance of religious traditions, or what he described as "social-evolutionary inhibitory systems, which we do not yet fully understand" (p. 1120). He recommended as an initial approach that psychologists:

...assume an underlying wisdom in the recipes for living which tradition has supplied...that we use this perspective to edit our teaching materials in those areas where they conflict with traditional dogmas, removing any arrogant scientific certainty that psychology's current beliefs are the final truth on these matters, emphasizing our need for modesty on topics on which we can do no experiments, broadening our narrowly individualistic focus to include social system functioning, and expressing a scientifically grounded respect for the wisdom that well-winnowed traditions may contain about how life should be lived. (pp. 1120-1121)

One recent response to the critical attitude many psychologists have with respect to religion has been the development of a strong backlash among religious-minded psychologists and parts of the general Christian community. This backlash has taken the form of a widespread and broadly based anti-psychology movement (Foster & Ledbetter, 1987). In addition to criticizing the anti-religious bias among psychologists, it has been argued that the model of man and goals of many secular approaches to counselling and

psychotherapy are themselves anti-Christian and ultimately destructive to the moral and social health of society, as well as to the spiritual well-being of the individual. Despite the well-reasoned and scholarly form some of these criticisms of psychotherapy have taken, they seem to have been largely ignored in the psychological literature.

Rationale

The suggestion of a prejudice of any kind should be a cause for serious self-examination. For the psychotherapist, whose reputation and effectiveness are so largely based on the assumption that he or she strives and to a large extent achieves an objective relationship to the facts before him or her, the suggestion of a profession wide prejudice is a particularly serious charge. An unacknowledged bias on the part of a psychotherapist may be expected, at the very least, to interfere with the development of the important elements of trust, honesty, and openness so necessary for effective therapy. At its worst such a prejudice can be positively subversive, doing serious injury to a client's psychological well-being. Nonetheless, for the experienced and ethically

responsible psychotherapist the only really dangerous prejudice is the unrecognized and unacknowledged one.

Goals

As the bias against Christianity has unique historical antecedents in psychology and Western civilization generally, and because the dominant religious influence in the Western world continues to be Christianity, this paper will be limited to a consideration of the Christian client. Most of the therapeutic issues raised will nevertheless be applicable to other religious groups.

It is the premise of this thesis that working with the Christian client is a cross-cultural problem for many psychotherapists. This thesis will, in a limited way, explore some of the cultural and historical influences which have contributed to the uniqueness of this client population. The popularity of humanistic values, which in modern times have been gradually displacing traditional religious values, and the effect this has had on Christians, will be explored. The thesis will then briefly survey arguments criticizing popular secular approaches to contemporary problems and indicate some alternative approaches which Christians, most often conservative Christians, tend to prefer. The

role psychotherapy now plays in people's lives, its contribution to the process of secularization, and its role as an agent of humanistic, as distinct from Christian values, will be investigated. Evidence and arguments suggesting that there is a bias in psychology against religion will be surveyed. These issues will all be presented in order to establish a background of understanding from which the psychotherapist can more effectively approach the religious client. Some practical suggestions on how to counsel the religious client will then be reviewed. Finally recommendations will be made on how educational institutions might prepare psychotherapists to work more effectively with the religious client.

Terminology

Christianity: The religion of Christians: the religion stemming from the life, teachings, and death of Jesus Christ. The religion that recognizes the New Testament as its book of sacred scripture.

Conservative: Of or relating to a political party, point of view, or philosophy that advocates preservation of the established order and views proposals for change critically and usually with distrust. Tending or disposed to maintain existing

views, habits, conditions, or institutions: opposed to radical or basic changes: exhibiting minimal change: Traditional.

Counselling: An interpersonal relationship in which one person (the counsellor) attempts to help another (the counsellee) to understand and cope with his problems in the areas of education, vocation, family relationships, and so on. The term covers a wide range of procedures, including the giving of advice and encouragement, providing information concerning available opportunities, and the interpretation of test results. For the purposes of this paper the terms psychotherapy and counselling will be used interchangeably.

Humanism: A doctrine, set of attitudes, or way of life centered upon human interests or values: a philosophy that rejects supernaturalism, regards man as a natural object, and asserts the essential dignity and worth of man and his capacity to achieve self-realization through the use of reason and scientific method.

Humanistic psychology: A broad range of psychological points of view which share a central emphasis on the importance of approaching the individual as a conscious agent, with feelings, ideals, and intentions and the belief that these factors are crucial to a

comprehensive understanding of human behaviour.

Humanistic psychology is frequently associated with the concepts of human growth, personal fulfillment, and self-actualization.

Liberal: Not bound by authoritarianism, orthodoxy, or traditional or established forms of action, attitude or opinion. Open-minded or tolerant, especially free of or not bound by traditional or conventional ideas, values, etc.

Religion: A set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

Traditional: An approach to religious belief by which all knowledge of religious truth is derived from divine revelation and received by traditional practices.

Method

This study is a theoretical exploration of the issue of whether or not there is a bias in psychotherapy against religion, particularly Christianity. Both theoretical arguments and research

literature bearing on this issue will be reviewed. This survey will then form the basis and justification for a series of recommendations aimed at improving the ability of psychotherapists to serve the religious client population.

Before investigating the bias in psychotherapy against religion, and before discussing the unique context which the Christian client presents in psychotherapy, it will be necessary to reflect upon some pertinent aspects of the relationship between Christianity, contemporary psychology, and modern secular culture.

Chapter II

Secular Humanism and Christianity

A Brief History of Humanism

While it is generally acknowledged that the influence of humanism on modern psychotherapy has been pervasive, it should also be recognized that the humanist tradition of today inherits a current of anti-Christian feeling as one of its historical characteristics. It is therefore quite understandable that some of humanism's anti-Christian feelings would have become part of modern psychotherapy.

The secularization which the modern western world is currently experiencing has its roots in the humanism of the fifteenth century Renaissance, when the rediscovery of classical Roman and Greek texts in many fields resulted in a new respect for humanity and nature as ends in themselves. During the act of studying this great classical literature some of the pagan assumptions that underlay them were gradually absorbed. Consequently the interests of the Italian humanists began to give a secular turn to high Renaissance culture, although there was yet no open break with the Christian past.

Succeeding centuries did see that break. English deism in the seventeenth century all but openly rejected Christian faith, while the eighteenth century saw Enlightenment thinkers come completely out of the closet and launch vigorous, skillful, and sustained attacks on Christianity. To a large extent humanism achieved its modern identity by establishing itself in opposition to the Christian faith. Bullock (1985) affirmed that the humanist tradition of today inherits from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a current of anti-Christian feeling as one of its historical characteristics.

Faith in Humanism

While humanists have debated for years the proper definition of humanism, Kurtz (1983), a principle author of the second Humanist Manifesto, has suggested a number of principles with which most contemporary humanists would probably agree:

First, humanists reject any supernatural conception of the universe; they are sympathetic to one form or another of atheism, agnosticism, or skepticism. Second, humanists affirm that ethical values do not have a supernatural source and have no meaning independent of human experience; humanism is an ethical philosophy in which human beings are central. Third, there is some commitment to the use of critical reason in the analysis, evaluation, and appraisal of value judgments; and fourth, there is a humanitarian

concern for humanity, in both social and individual terms. (p. 64)

Kurtz's definition illustrates how fundamental is modern humanism's opposition to traditional Christianity, and also how much humanism still depends on this opposition to define its own position. The first two out of the four principles stated by Kurtz are unambiguously anti-religious. The conviction with which these statements are made recalls the indictment brought against modern psychology by Donald Campbell (1975). Campbell warned psychologists against assuming an attitude of unjustified scientific certitude and arrogance regarding the superiority of psychological prescriptions for living over those of traditional religion. The above statements by Kurtz reveal the same certitude which Campbell found objectionable among psychologists. Unqualified and bold declarations of belief, such as those by Kurtz, tend to fuel the arguments of critics that humanism has become a civil religion in competition with the Christian faith. Fifty-six years ago Mercier (1933) noted that the humanist position, which suggested that the old religious solutions were inadequate, had already gone beyond what might be termed a critical assessment. Mercier argued that the humanist attitude had become patently more dogmatic than it was critical.

While the process of secularization is identified with a turning away from Christian faith, a turning away from the worship of God, what is often ignored is the fact that something is being turned to in God's place. While the idea of humanity as a deity is seldom openly expressed, it is expressed indirectly by ascribing to man's nature the attributes of God. Kristol (cited in Vitz, 1977) has been critical of the widespread confidence in the West, that the essential goodness of man's nature is all we need have faith in, if we are to solve our social and individual problems:

We have a kind of faith in the nature of people that we do not have in the botanical processes of nature itself--and I use the word "faith" in its full religious force. We really do believe that all human beings have a natural telos toward becoming flowers, not weeds or poison ivy, and that aggregates of human beings have a natural predisposition to arrange themselves into gardens, not jungles or garbage heaps. This sublime and noble faith we may call the religion of liberal humanism. It is the dominant spiritual and intellectual orthodoxy in America today. Indeed, despite all our chatter about the separation of church and state, one can say it is the official religion of American society today, as against which all other religions can be criticized as divisive and parochial. (pp. 107-108)

Many of the assumptions underlying the major schools of modern psychology are based on popularly held but scientifically unsubstantiated humanistic beliefs. Vitz (1977) has traced the consistent "belief"--unquestioned and unverified in humanistic psychology--that the optimal development of the self

comes from deliberately casting off all restrictions imposed or implied by others. Mortimer Adler (cited in Schlossberg, 1983) has argued that any action which despises the external restraint of law in favor of self-determination is one of self-deification. Vitz (1977) would concur, he presented a case in support of the conclusion that the so called self-psychologies have become a religion, that the self has been given the place of God in many schools of modern psychology, and that this idolatry is seriously undermining the Christian faith.

While many social philosophers have discussed the impact of science, technological progress, and humanistic assumptions on modern society, seldom are the religious aspects acknowledged. Kreyche (1972) has suggested that while humanistic assumptions are sincerely held, they often function the way religious beliefs do, although in academia they are seldom recognized in that way.

Schlossberg (1983) asserts that "of all the misleading interpretations of this complex age, few are more so than the common one that secularism means the replacement of a world-view that is religious with one that is not. This completely mistakes the meaning of religion" (p. 273). Max Weber (cited in Schollberg, 1983) argued that all major aspects of human action are

dependent upon distinctive sets of religious attitudes. Men and women are compelled by their existence to act on unproven and unprovable assumptions, which constitute systems of faith. Therefore, systems like Buddhism, communism, and humanism are religious systems. Ellul (cited in Schlossberg, 1983) argued that modern Western society is awash with religiosity. What the much-vaunted secularization process really means is the flourishing of anti-Christian religions.

The question whether or not humanism is a religion is ultimately a question of how one defines religion. If one assumes a functional definition, then it might be argued that humanism serves a purpose which substitutes for the role traditional religions have played in our lives and is therefore a religion. On the other hand, if one assumes a substantive definition then what constitutes a religion will probably include as part of its definition that the system must have an extra-empirical (i.e. spiritual and/or supernatural) dimension. In this case the argument can be made that humanism is not a religion.

Since some of humanism's fundamental concerns are rooted in practical considerations, and since humanists have so often assumed a functional definition of religion when criticizing it, it seems consistent to assume a functional definition in the present

discussion. Some humanistic psychologists have proposed broad functional definitions of religion. Fromm (1950), for example, defined religion as "any system of thought and action shared by a group which gives the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion" (p.21).

The current struggle between what is widely regarded as the secular and the religious becomes coherent when understood as a struggle "between" religious doctrines. Thus, the vehemence with which attacks on someone's assumptions (including humanistic ones) are often met can be explained. They are attacks on that person's religion. The tension and strife over issues like abortion are perfectly understandable, when one recognizes that each side is struggling to establish a rule of order consistent with basic and ultimate precepts. Such heated contemporary controversies over abortion, sex education, women's rights, and homosexual rights stimulate an emotional intensity which suggests that these conflicts constitute deep religious disagreement.

Liberal Humanism versus Christian Ethics

Over the centuries various styles of humanism have been influential. Mitchell (1980) described "liberal

humanism" as the particular form of humanism underlying modern culture today. Under this view society accepts variant moral environments, welcoming the ethical diversity, while resisting attempts of any particular ideal to determine the character of a common morality. According to Mitchell, liberal humanism is now the very air that we breathe:

For this reason, and because of its all-embracing tolerance, we find it hard to notice its premises or to find fault with them, if we do. Are not all rival ideologies given their due? Are they not indeed encouraged, subject only to a basic social morality whose necessity all reasonable men can recognize? The strength of its appeal lies in its claim to provide an entirely non-controversial system of morality which satisfies the requirement for an effective method of social control, while allowing as much scope as they can reasonably expect for the proponents of other, less hospitable, moralities. (p.52)

Liberal humanism, in assuming that there are no moral absolutes, or at least that we are incapable of discovering what they are, can create problems for Christians. Christians believe that moral absolutes do exist, and that they have been Biblically revealed. Because Christians often believe that the knowledge of these moral absolutes must be applied generally to the problems of our day, if individual and social well-being are to be promoted, Christians often end up in conflict with prevailing social attitudes. In making liberal humanism the only acceptable moral absolute, modern society finds itself intolerant of the Christian

world-view. At times the only prejudice which seems to be acceptable in modern society is the prejudice against those who take an absolute moral position on any issue.

One criticism many conservative Christians have of liberal humanism was expressed by Pope John Paul II during his 1987 visit to the United States.

Our Christian conscience should be deeply concerned about the way in which sins against love and against life are often presented as examples of 'progress' and emancipation. Most often, are they not but the age-old forms of selfishness dressed up in a new language and presented in a new cultural framework. Many of these problems are the result of a false notion of freedom at work in our culture, as if one could be free only when rejecting every objective norm of conduct, refusing to assume responsibility, or even refusing to put curbs on instincts and passions! Instead, true freedom implies that we are capable of choosing a good, without constraint. ...we must account for the good that we fail to do and for the evil that we commit. This sense of moral accountability needs to be reawakened if society is to survive as a civilization of justice and solidarity. ...America: you cannot insist on the right to choose, without also insisting on the duty to choose well, the duty to choose the truth. (cited in Potter, 1987, p. 1)

Psychologist Donald Campbell (1975) also argued against liberal humanism, suggesting that human and social well-being may be regulated by moral principles comparable in their exactness to physical laws:

Human urban social complexity is a product of social evolution and has had to counter with inhibitory moral norms the biological selfishness which genetic competition has continually selected....Scientific reasons exist for believing that there can be profound social system wisdom in

the belief systems our social tradition has provided us with. (p. 1123)

What has followed from liberal humanistic assumptions is a secular culture, willing to co-exist with Christianity and other religions, as long as these religions consist mainly of quiet home prayer and attendance at church. What is insisted, however, is that religious values cannot be tolerated beyond the point at which they have a practical effect on public life. This attitude has probably been more destructive to the integrity of the Christian faith than outright persecution. T.S. Eliot (1940) noted that as long as Christians are a tolerated minority the unconscious pressures of intellectual conformity will more gravely complicate their survival, than would the plainly perceived dangers of active persecution.

Given that the assumptions of liberal humanism are now pervasive in Western society, and that Christianity's social influence has been severely curtailed, the intellectual pressures of the prevailing culture have led many ecclesiastical structures in the West to depart from their Christian faith by a process of gradually losing their distinctiveness, by conforming their thought and life to the values of the larger secular society surrounding them. Yet this is not the pattern in many Eastern bloc countries, where

active and open persecution has often strengthened the traditional church. The Soviet press confirms this by their admission that 70 years of intensive education in atheism and severe repression of religion are a resounding failure.

In the West on the other hand, those structures which remain loyal to authentic Christian ethics, today appear:

...like an alien body from times long past, like a kind of meteorite which is in opposition, not only to the concrete habits of life, but also to the way of thinking underlying them...Accordingly, it becomes difficult if not impossible to present Catholic (Christian) morality as reasonable. It is too distant from what is considered to be obvious, as normal by the majority of persons, conditioned by the dominant culture. (Ratzinger, 1985, p. 83)

The Liberal-Conservative Dichotomy in the Church

During the 1920's and 1930's this pressure to conform to the "reasonableness" of modern culture, began to create conflicts within churches themselves. Church members became polarized over the issue of whether the church should "change with the times." This trend eventually resulted in most Christian denominations splitting into liberal and conservative elements. The conservative church reaffirmed Christianity's historical priority of personal sanctification aimed at salvation. The liberal church, on the other hand, moved further and further away from

a focus on biblical theology, reliance on the supernatural grace of God, and the importance of personal salvation. Instead, the liberal church, often inspired by the values and success of liberal humanism, chose to emphasize the social justice ministry and began to borrow heavily from the social sciences of psychology, sociology, and politics.

Those Christians who tend to more easily adapt the traditional understanding of their faith to fit into the values of the modern world are often called liberals. Christians who continue to resist the pressure for change are often identified by the label conservative. These two groups are, of course, not mutually exclusive, but exist on a continuum. Conservative Christians are those more concerned with the preservation of the traditional values of their faith, and are therefore more likely to have objections, and experience resistance to the secular assumptions of the modern world and of modern psychology. These Christians are very much aware that their faith is at odds with the world as it exists today. They also feel, as many others do, that something is seriously wrong with society, but they have concluded that what is wrong is that the world and its secular ideas have seduced humans away from a fundamental dependence on God and obedience to His law.

It is important to note that the areas of real growth in Christianity in recent decades are found almost exclusively within these conservative denominations:

The rising focus on evangelism is only the most obvious sign of the traditional or conservative nature of the religious revival today. It is clear that the gains come mostly when Christianity wears a conservative dress. Currently 30 percent of the total population claim to be born again, half of the more or less serious religious population. And even among clergy, often not a source of orthodoxy within liberal Protestantism, we may note the conservative trend. It is younger clergy now who are much more likely to affirm the Bible's centrality and even its inerrant truth or to affirm Christ's divinity or the truth of the Adam and Eve story. (Fowler, 1985, p. 4)

Summary

While it is generally acknowledged that the influence of humanism on modern psychotherapy has been pervasive, it should also be recognized that the humanist tradition of today inherits a current of anti-religious feeling as one of its historical characteristics. It is therefore understandable if some of humanism's anti-religious feelings have become part of modern psychotherapy. While the process of secularization represented by humanism is usually identified with a turning away from the worship of God, what is often ignored is the fact that something is being turned to in God's place. Some authors (Kilpatrick, 1983; Vitz, 1977), have suggested that

humanity has become, not only the subject of meticulous research but the object of religious worship. Certainly many of the assumptions underlying modern humanism remain scientifically unsubstantiated, and at times seem to constitute beliefs in a religious sense. Some critics (Vitz, 1977; Schlossberg, 1983), argue that the current struggles between what is widely regarded as the secular and the religious become more coherent when understood as struggles "between" religious doctrines.

"Liberal" humanism is the particular form of humanism underlying modern culture today. Under this philosophy society accepts various moral environments welcoming the ethical diversity, while resisting attempts of any particular ideal to determine the character of a common morality. This all embracing tolerance can create problems for some Christians. Christians may object to the humanistic notion of freedom, which defends as absolute an individual's right to choose, without insisting on the individual's duty to choose responsibly. Despite the fact that humanistic thinkers invariably resist any suggestion that absolute moral standards, such as those supported by traditional Christian doctrine, should be universally taught within society, it may yet be true that human and social well-being are regulated by moral

principles comparable in their exactness to physical laws.

Because the assumptions of liberal humanism are so embedded in our culture, and because Christianity's social influence has been severely curtailed, the intellectual pressures for conformity to the values of the larger society have often resulted in a gradual loss, a watering down of the Christian faith. One consequence of this pressure for conformity, has been that most Christian churches today have split into conservative and liberal elements. The conservative church has reaffirmed Christianity's historical priority of personal sanctification aimed at salvation, while the liberal church has moved further and further away from traditional Christian values, choosing instead to emphasize the social justice ministry. Christians are likely to respond differently to the humanistic influence underlying much of modern psychotherapy depending on whether they adhere more to a conservative or to a liberal position within their own Christian community. Conservative Christians are much more likely to have difficulty accepting the humanistic assumptions which are so integral to the practice of psychotherapy today.

Chapter III

CRITICISMS OF HUMANISM AND MODERN PSYCHOTHERAPY

Disagreements have often been heated between many proponents of Christianity and humanism. Some members of the so-called religious right, for example, aggressively assert that secular humanism is entirely to blame for promiscuity, the increase in sex crimes, violence, the divorce rate, the breakdown of the family unit, and abortion. While the hostile reactions of these religious critics is clearly overblown, other more objective critics are convinced that humanistic assumptions now current in modern society have contributed to many of the serious social problems facing us today.

While it must be acknowledged that the forces of market capitalism, individualism, and modern science and technology have played the leading role in effecting life in the West, the argument presented by these critics is that Enlightenment and humanistic thinking have formed the background against which principles of science and technology, market capitalism, and the individual have been empowered to work in the way that they do.

Brinton (cited in Schlossberg, 1983) for example, argued that when Enlightenment thinking began to infiltrate European thought, it profoundly altered the course of history. Since that time, the main influence on life and morals in the West, according to Brinton, may be understood as the interaction and mutual interpenetration of the Christian and Enlightenment world-views. The biblical faith that once informed Western society is being displaced by the Enlightenment faith that is undermining it.

Humanistic assumptions have become the fundamentals of modern Western culture and continue to supplant the assumptions of the Judeo-Christian past. In doing so, they have radically altered the individual's understanding of who man is, and what he is about as a person. Nevertheless, citizens of the modern Western world continue to live off the spiritual capital of their Judeo-Christian heritage, most often without recognizing or acknowledging their debt. Western man's ideas of justice, of the rights of the individual, and even today's much eroded sense of right and wrong are largely the inheritance of the religious commitments of our ancestors to their Judeo-Christian beliefs.

Despite their much publicized abuses, Western religious traditions may have helped protect Western

man from the self-indulgent, narcissistic, and aggressive tendencies, which are so much a part of his history. Some critics assert that as the modern world more and more separates itself from those traditional religious understandings which acknowledge the darker side of humankind's nature, and those traditional religious practices of repentance and reparation which have acted to restrain and correct their dark side, the destructive aspects of man increasingly will find justification in the new values of the secular culture.

The Excesses of Humanism

As humanism has assumed an increasingly dominant influence over modern society, the effects of its implicit values and beliefs have become more apparent. Today, even within the ranks of humanists themselves, criticism of humanism is growing. Ehrenfeld (1978) while not counselling a total rejection of humanism, has suggested Western society has been "too gentle and uncritical of it in the past, and it has grown ugly and dangerous. Humanism itself, like the rest of our existence, must now be protected against its own excesses" (p. vii-viii).

This view is reflected by Solzhenitsyn (cited in Matt, 1978) who asked the question: "How did the West

decline from its triumphal march to its present sickness?" The mistake, he said, is at the basis of human thinking in the past centuries. Rationalistic humanism or humanistic autonomy have proclaimed and enforced the autonomy of man from any higher force above him:

...we turned our backs upon the Spirit and embraced all that is material with excessive and unwarranted zeal. This new way of thinking, which had imposed on us its guidance, did not admit the existence of intrinsic evil in man nor did it see any higher task than the attainment of happiness on earth. It based modern Western civilization on the dangerous trend to worship man and his material needs. Everything beyond physical well-being and the accumulation of material goods, all other human requirements and characteristics of a subtler and higher nature, were left outside the area of attention of state and social systems, as if human life did not have any superior sense. That provided access for evil, of which in our days there is a free and constant flow...in early democracies freedom was given to the individual conditionally, in the assumption of his constant religious responsibility. Such was the heritage of the preceding thousand years. Two hundred or even fifty years ago, it would have seemed quite impossible, in America, that an individual could be granted boundless freedom simply for the satisfaction of his instincts or whims. Subsequently, however, all such limitations were discarded everywhere in the West: a total liberation occurred from the moral heritage of Christian centuries with their great reserves of mercy and sacrifice...Destructive and irresponsible freedom has been granted boundless space...Society appears to have little defense against the abyss of human decadence, such as, for example, misuse of liberty for moral violence against young people--motion pictures full of pornography, crime and horror...All the glorified technological achievements of progress, including the conquest of space, do not redeem the twentieth century's moral poverty which no one could imagine

even as late as the nineteenth century. (cited in Matt, 1987, p. 6)

The problem, as Solzhenitsyn analyzed it, lies in the push in Western societies for individual freedom, without the assumption of man's constant religious responsibility. As the West committed itself to truly enforcing human rights, "man's sense of responsibility to God and society grew dimmer and dimmer" (p. 6). Destructive and irresponsible freedom has been granted boundless space, said Solzhenitsyn, while the most sophisticated social thought places its emphasis not on one's obligations but on one's desires and their fulfillment. Dostoyevsky more or less predicted this condition, when he suggested that once God is dead then everything is permitted. Philip Rieff (1966) argued that the old question about whether civilized man can be a believer is the wrong one. The real question is whether unbelieving man can be civilized.

Humanism and the Concept of the Person

It is paradoxical that one of the most serious problems which has accompanied the growth of humanism, and its reverence for man, is a loss of respect for the individual person, for man himself. Many experts have decried the dehumanizing tendencies which have accompanied modern technology and humanistic

assumptions. While it follows that creatures with souls have intrinsic value, once the "conception of soul and God are rejected by natural and humanist philosophers, technocracy is free to emphasize methods and means, now impoverished in ends....Just as nature comes to be treated only as a resource, so persons are evaluated on the basis of their roles, rather than in terms of their intrinsic worth" (Drengson, 1980, p. 230-231). While theological notions, which previously provided a sense of intrinsic value for persons, are in the process of losing their influence, no other value system has come along to take their place and provide us with this sense of intrinsic value.

Vitz (1987b) argued that one consequence of this dehumanization of man has been that the concept of the "person" has been largely replaced by the idea of the "individual." The concept of the person is unique to the Western world, according to Vitz, and was introduced into Western thought by Jewish and Christian theology many hundreds of years ago. By contrast the ideas of the individual and of the personality, as used by contemporary psychology, are no more than fifty or sixty years old:

The concept of a person and that of an individual are in many respects opposites. The pagan notion of an individual, for example, is lacking the dignity and spiritual dimension of the Judeo-Christian understanding of a person, which

always implies, necessarily, that one is a person because he or she is made in the image of God.

(Vitz, 1987b, p. 204)

An individual is created through the operation of separating from things and others in a process aimed at independence and autonomy. A person, in contrast, comes into existence by a committed relationship to God and others in a process based on love. (Vitz, 1987a, p. 13)

Vitz suggested that it is not surprising, given its secular humanistic assumptions, that modern psychology would reduce the idea of the person to the essentially naturalistic idea of the individual. To become an individual is to become autonomous, self-actualizing, and independent. On the other hand, the person, according to Vitz, is developed and even created by bonds of commitment to others. It is through serving others that the Christian personality grows and reaches its full development. Vitz went on to describe how "a person comes into existence by connecting with others--not by separating, by choosing covenant and connection, not by choosing autonomy and separation" (p. 208).

Some critics have suggested that as society emphasizes the value of the independent and autonomous individual, a danger it faces is that men and women will no longer struggle to be "better" persons, they will struggle only to be "fulfilled" individuals. Swidler (1988) argued that what the humanistic therapeutic culture has offered us is the ideal of

mental health as a substitute for the Christian ideal of moral goodness. The message of the human potential movement today, Swidler suggested, is that there is no such thing as right and wrong, there is only feeling good and feeling bad, and if you are doing what makes you feel good, then you are doing what is right. For many Christians, therapists who express such a perspective are not just the victims of a wrong understanding, they are promoting a totally inadequate social ethic.

Humanism and the Natural Goodness of Man

The element in the humanist tradition which perhaps grates most on Christian critics, especially those who have personally witnessed the horrors of the twentieth century, is belief in the natural goodness of man and his perfectability. That is, the optimism which marked the eighteenth century Enlightenment, and the confidence which the nineteenth century positivist version of humanism felt in science, progress, and the future. Between the 1880's and the 1930's a new version of humanism began to emerge, which broke with the earlier optimistic assumptions and was prepared to accept as a starting point a recognition of the divided nature of man (Bullock, 1985). Nevertheless, the

humanistic assumptions which underly modern man's thinking, including much of what is modern psychotherapy, are still largely derived from the earlier utopian assumptions.

In a broad sense, humanists today believe that the criterion for ethical values lie within native human characteristics. In the way the term is used in psychology, humanism is belief in the self-sufficiency of man to control his own destiny and to realize his inherent potentialities. Irving Babbitt some years ago called attention to the fact that the natural will, intellect, and sense in man are prone to excess which is patently evil. Babbitt denounced the confidence of stoics, rationalists, and humanitarians in the all-sufficiency of human reason and their optimistic, prideful trust in the capacity of natural man to lead an ordered life. Babbitt provided a detailed study of the record of this naturalistic confidence, and of the consequent disorganization of human character and social catastrophies which resulted from it (Mercier, 1933).

The popular belief that people are essentially good is today firmly embedded in our culture. People are held not to be naturally inclined to be aggressive or to exploit others; nor to make self-indulgent or narcissistic choices to the detriment of themselves or

others. When problems such as these do occur, they are most often attributed to external factors such as the family, society, traditional religion, or the economic system.

Because man's nature is assumed to be good, humanism has traditionally emphasized the belief that science and technology can solve most human problems, and that those problems not solvable by technology can be solved by social engineering. Today when social pathologies appear, we tend to blame them on the structures of society. As such, our problems have ceased to be moral; they have become technological. Of course, as long as the structures are to blame then we are not.

Karl Menninger (1973) sounded an alarm over this kind of reasoning. He argued that society must begin to recognize the importance of re-establishing a conception of moral concern and personal responsibility through an understanding and acceptance of the reality of sin. Modern culture has tended to encourage escapism, and the rationalization of wrongdoing, with a consequent reduction in the individual's sense of personal responsibility. Society's problems, as Menninger pointed out, may not be technological after all. Social programs and social control alone may not be enough; our problems may be fundamentally moral ones

requiring moral solutions. Robert Bellah (1975) remarks that "If our problems are...centrally moral and even religious, then the effort to sidestep them with purely technical organizational considerations can only worsen them" (cited in Schlossberg, 1983).

In deploring the loss of the religious idea of sin, Menninger (1973) argued that what once gave "sensitive minds the greatest concern (guilt feelings) were increasingly seen as really not sinful, nor immoral nor wrong. The general conclusion seemed to be that if behavior is really wrong, it is a crime--unless it is a disease" (p. 53). Menninger (1973) suggested that:

Notions of guilt and sin which formerly served as some restraint on aggression have become eroded by the presumption that the individual has less to do with his actions than we had assumed, and hence any sense of personal responsibility (or guilt) is inappropriate...I believe that all evil-doing in which we become involved to any degree tends to evoke guilt feelings and depression. These may be reacted to and covered up by all kinds of escapism, rationalization, and reaction or symptom formation. To revive the half-submerged idea of personal responsibility and to seek appropriate measures of reparation might turn the tide of our aggressions and of the moral struggle in which much of the world population is engaged. (pp. 206-207)

Shapiro (1987) noted that more than 100 members of the Reagan Administration have had legal charges brought against them, yet hardly any feel remorse. "One of the sad commentaries on the Reagan era is that so many of those tainted by ethical improprieties still

seem unable to divine what was wrong with their concept of government service" (p. 22). Robert McFarlane, former National Security Adviser for the Reagan Administration was an exception:

Unlike his fellow players in America's current morality tales, he exuded a sense of remorse, repentance, shame. He knew he had done wrong, he said. He was sorry. He deserved to be punished. How odd! This kind of guilt, this assuming of moral responsibility for one's actions, has all but vanished from public discourse. (p. 18)

Ehrenfeld (1978) suggested that the great barrier to the fulfillment of the utopian vision of humanist thinkers, and their unqualified faith in human nature, is what he called the human ego. That is the "internal force that prompts most people to act in a self-aggrandizing manner much of the time, regardless of whether this behavior is at the expense of other people, or at the expense of society itself" (p. 238). Ehrenfeld sees evidence which suggests that the ego is increasing in the world, and he ascribes that increase to the humanist influence. He goes on to draw attention to the "wave of personal selfishness which has swept over the most humanistic of our societies" (p. 239).

Psychotherapy's Sanction for Selfishness

Campbell (1975) has attacked the assumption that man is by nature good, arguing that the effects which have followed from this assumption have not been positive. Campbell criticized what he sees, particularly "in contemporary North American society, as the 'non-optimal production of underinhibited overly narcissistic and overly selfish individuals,' for which he feels psychology must take considerable blame" (cited in Vitz, 1977, p.49).

Traditional religious wisdom urges concern for others and promotes values of self-sacrifice and self-denial, of duty and responsibility. Much of the thinking of modern psychotherapy pushes us in a different direction. Wallach and Wallach (1983) argued that without intending to, much of psychotherapy actively sanctions selfishness by opposing prescriptions and restraints and encouraging clients to aim fundamentally at their own development and fulfillment. While it is far from their original intention, many psychologists:

...inevitably promote selfishness by asking us to realize ourselves, to love ourselves, to view the environment as a means for our own self-actualizing ends, and to consider whether something will contribute to our own development as the only real criterion for what we should do. (p. 196)

They go on to quote extensive evidence to support their conclusion that:

The problems and troubles that lead people to seek psychotherapy may derive less than is commonly supposed from not expressing themselves, fulfilling themselves, or satisfying needs directed toward themselves and more from not having a workable way of living in which they participate in and contribute to matters they care about beyond themselves. (p. 274)

Not all methods of humanistic psychotherapy are subject to this criticism. Frankel's integrity therapy concentrates on the importance of responsibility, guilt, choice, and values. Frankl (1959), Glasser (1965), Mowrer (1961), and a few others have expressed their concern that many of the standard dynamic and behaviouristic approaches to psychotherapy relieve the client of responsibility and encourage the free and unrestrained self-gratification of sexual and aggressive impulses. Some psychologists such as Dobson (1970) and Powell (1974) approach psychological problems from a Christian rather than from a primarily humanistic perspective. Nevertheless, these approaches remain in the minority.

The goal of the human potential movement has been to transform society by focusing attention on our own needs; by allowing us to get in touch with our real selves. Some critics assert that our consumer society has co-opted those values and now promotes shallow,

personal, ego fulfillment as an end in itself. Lerner (1988) argued that this perspective has led to a relentless quest for self-fulfillment, wherein many individuals now make their own ego selves the highest goal. Such self-centredness has merely reinforced the world in its selfishness.

Naturally, people's understanding of social ethics and personal morals have had to adapt to these new beliefs. In the modern world, criticism of what is wrong outside of ourselves is rapidly becoming the only way in which we express our moral concern. More and more people seem to rage against being abused, and less and less do they take responsibility for the abuses they perpetrate against others. The "rights of the individual" have become the preoccupation of our age. However true and important these concerns often are, the danger may be that by placing so much attention on what is wrong outside of ourselves, on constantly identifying the beam in our neighbour's eye, people are losing the ability to give appropriate weight to what is wrong within themselves, to creatively identify their own faults, and to actively seek the help they will need, if they are to become better people.

Strong (1976) alluded to this when he suggested that we are living in a post-Freudian era. "Freud found people who were repressed, who felt guilty about not

carrying out their responsibilities, who needed confession and release from repression" (p. 156). Today people are not so much burdened by guilt, "...they are angry. They feel that their individual rights have been violated. They are self-righteously angry and are seeking vengeance and retribution" (p. 156).

If we reflect a moment, we see that seeking individual rights is the password of the day. In all areas of our society individuals are encouraged to reach out for their just desserts, to stand up for their rights, to be assertive. This philosophy of social justice is creating a fallout of victims who are angry at the injustices others do to them and who are seeking vengeance or who turn that anger inward and are wallowing in self-pity and depression. Unfortunately, living with other individuals is quite impossible when everyone is seeking his individual rights. (p. 156-157)

An increased emphasis on the rights of the individual--as opposed to duty--has helped unravel traditional family obligations and has contributed significantly to the breakdown of the family unit. Broderick (cited in Bowen 1987) believes that individual rights play a significant role in today's family and that is where the tension arises. Lerner (1988) suggested that:

...what has happened over the course of the past twenty years has been a decrease in the commitment that people have to each other. Its much harder for relationships to work today than it has been at any previous historical moment...and they are not working because people have put themselves at the centre of the universe and the growth processes ironically reinforce that way of looking at the world...

Goldenberg, concluded that the cult of the individual has brought about a more selfish view of responsibilities in marriage, including the responsibility for divorce (cited in Bowen, 1987, p.28). Goldenberg added that the diminished sense of commitment has seeped down to children, leaching out old feelings of loyalty to the family. In consequence, she says, today's children are also "taking care of themselves first" (cited in Bowen, 1987 p. 28).

While many psychologists will argue that such an image of a selfish society is overdrawn and that, for example, parents still make substantial sacrifices to give their children better lives, the question that emerges is why most psychological theories do not reflect the value of such sacrifices. Psychologists themselves certainly act in caring and self-sacrificing ways in their professional and personal lives. Yet as Campbell (1975) noted, after 40 years of reading psychology it was his clear impression that psychologists almost invariably side with self-gratification over traditional restraint. Why are values of self-sacrifice virtually ignored in psychological theory and practice?

Humanism and Liberal Education

Humanism has also been blamed for undermining the value of liberal education. Maxwell (1984) argued that in the last 400 years or so, with the gradual decline in influence of Christian thought in the universities, the Bacon-Newton-Enlightenment philosophy of knowledge has become the dominant creed. By the mid-twentieth century this understanding, which declares that all that is to count for human progress is the advancement of knowledge, had achieved a virtually ubiquitous influence over all aspects of science, scholarship, technological research and education. Factors such as faith, morality, imagination, tradition, and justice have become at best secondary considerations. Maxwell argued against these assumptions, and deplored the fact that this Bacon-Newton-Enlightenment philosophy of knowledge is "usually presupposed in an unconsciously dogmatic, blind, irrational manner, as if any alternative ideal for rational inquiry is utterly inconceivable" (p. 31). Malik bemoaned the consequences of this emphasis for education:

I search in vain for any reference to the fact that character, personal integrity, spiritual depth, the highest moral standards, the wonderful living values of the great tradition, have anything to do with the business of the university or with the world of learning. (cited in Oakes, 1984, p. xxi)

The student of today no longer enters the university with the expectation of discovering what the comprehensive truths of human life are, or of having a great intellectual adventure in the humanities. Liberal humanism instills an understanding that there are no truths to be found regarding ultimate questions, only opinions to be sampled. As a result, the great books of the past no longer attract the way they once did. At best they have come to represent a mere stage in the evolution of human thought. Contemporary thinking is thought to be the crowning achievement of the evolution of man's understanding of himself and his relationships in the world:

The Bible and Plutarch have ceased to be a part of the soul's furniture, an incalculable loss of fullness and awareness of which the victims are unaware.... The primary concern of the educational system has become to indoctrinate social attitudes, to "socialize" rather than to educate. The result is a true philistinism, a withering of taste and conformity to what is prevalent in the present. (Bloom, 1982, p. 1546)

In terms of morals, Bloom (1982) argued that people now live in a world where there are no absolutes: freedom is absolute. "For the last fifty years the only spiritual substance universities have been trying to convey is openness, the disdain for the ethnocentric. Schools once produced citizens, or gentlemen, or believers; now they produce the unprejudiced" (p. 1538).

It can be argued that the revolution of values which has followed from the humanistic influence has undermined much of society's appreciation of the social values of the Christian faith. In the United States, for example, what was considered "traditional" as recently as the nineteenth century has become un-American and unacceptable in the United States of the late 20th century. For example, modern humanists today are generally hostile to any notion of man's dependence on God and his mercy. In the humanist climate of the modern world the American motto "In God we trust," has become a quaint anachronism. In fact, the American Civil Liberties Union has recently sought to purge the words "In God We Trust" from American coins and "under God" from the American Pledge of Allegiance. Modern humanists put their faith, hope, and trust in humanity alone. "No deity will save us," states the second Humanist Manifesto, "we must save ourselves."

Buckley (1978) also illustrated this point, when he quoted from the inaugural address of the president of Yale University in the late 1940's. "I call on all members of the faculty, as members of a thinking body, freely to recognize the tremendous validity and power of the teachings of Christ in our life-and-death struggle against the force of selfish materialism"

(p. 428). A few years later President Charles Seymour of Yale declared that:

...Yale was dedicated to the training of spiritual leaders. We betray our trust if we fail to explore the various ways in which the youth who come to us may learn to appreciate spiritual values, whether by the example of our own lives or the cogency of our philosophical arguments. The simple and direct way is through the maintenance and upbuilding of the Christian religion as a vital part of university life. (Cited in Buckley, 1978, pp.428-429)

As Buckley pointed out, Western civilization has changed dramatically in its appreciation of Christianity and its role in creating a just, moral, and healthy society. No longer are people surprised when Christian values are derided or ignored as relevant to a proper liberal education. More likely people would be shocked to realize that the president of a major university in an inaugural address would ever have made such comments as those of President Charles Seymour.

It might be expected that many Christian clients, especially conservative Christian clients, who are considering psychotherapy, might hesitate before entering into a therapeutic relationship, if they believed that the values promoted by the psychotherapeutic system in question were primarily humanistic values. Because psychology enjoys the status of a science however, many Christian clients no doubt

assume that psychotherapy is neutral with respect to values. Some authors (Browning, 1987; Vitz, 1977) have argued that psychotherapy is not value-free, but rather that it often and actively promotes popular humanistic values, at the expense of more traditional religious values, even when such an emphasis is not scientifically justified.

Summary

Brinton (cited in Schlossberg, 1983) has suggested that the biblical faith that once informed Western society is being displaced by the Enlightenment faith that is undermining it. Since the humanistic view has become dominant in society, it has become easier to recognize its limitations. Consequently, criticism of humanism is growing. Some of the serious ills of our modern Western society may be a direct result of people having abandoned their Judeo-Christian heritage and having replaced it with a humanistic belief system. In retrospect, our religious traditions, despite their much publicized abuses, may have helped protect Western civilization from the self-indulgent, narcissistic, and aggressive tendencies, which are so much a part of our history.

It is paradoxical that one of the most serious ills which has accompanied the growth of humanism, and its reverence for man, is a loss of respect for the individual person, for man himself. Many authors (Drengson, 1980; Ehrenfeld, 1978) have decried the dehumanizing tendencies which have accompanied modern technology and humanistic assumptions.

The humanistic ideal of the self-sufficient, autonomous, self-actualizing individual is, according to Vitz (1987a,1987b), in direct contrast to the Christian idea of the person, which comes into existence by a committed relationship to God and others in a process based on love. An increased emphasis on the rights of the individual--as opposed to duty--has helped unravel traditional family obligations and has contributed significantly to the breakdown of the family unit. Citizens educated to be assertive, to be concerned primarily with getting what is coming to them, may no longer be interested in struggling to be "better" persons, they may struggle only or primarily to be "fulfilled" individuals. Such an emphasis may have merely reinforced the world in its selfishness.

What perhaps grates most on critics is that element of the humanistic tradition which emphasizes the natural goodness of man and his perfectability. The humanistic belief in the natural goodness of man has,

when taken to excess, encouraged the rationalization of wrongdoing, the perception of people's problems as merely social and technological ones. This sidestepping of the moral dimension has led to a reduction in the importance of a healthy sense of guilt and of personal responsibility. In the face of our serious social ills, Karl Menninger (1973) has advocated re-establishing a sense of moral concern and personal responsibility through an understanding and acceptance of the reality of sin.

Humanism has also been criticized for undermining liberal education. Bloom (1982), argued that the primary concern of the educational system today, has become to indoctrinate social attitudes, to 'socialize' rather than to educate. Understanding and adapting to current attitudes has become all important, while no reference or responsibility is now assumed by educators for the task of helping students develop character, personal integrity, moral standards, or spiritual depth.

Given these criticisms, Christian clients may have good reason to hesitate before involving themselves in psychotherapy. As psychology enjoys the status of a science, many Christians probably assume that psychotherapy is neutral with respect to values. Some authors have argued that many psychotherapists often

and actively promote popular humanistic values, at the expense of more traditional religious values, even when such an emphasis is not scientifically justified.

Chapter IV

PSYCHOTHERAPY AND VALUES

In the context of any comprehensive discussion of the humanistic influence on modern society and the Christian faith, it is important to understand the role psychology now plays in our lives. Traditional religion and modern psychology stand in a special relationship to one another, because both of them provide concepts and technologies for the ordering of the interior life.

Acknowledging the Religious Dimension

Beit-Hallahmi (1976) made a case for the "functional equivalence" of religion and psychology, which he claimed leads some people to replace religion with psychology. Sollod (1982) argued that psychotherapeutic systems are largely derivations from traditional religious forms; that the psychotherapies possess religious forms but with secular contents. We come to the psychotherapist as we once came to the priest in search of solace, absolution, meaning, and the chance for a new life. Psychotherapeutic systems serve as a means of replacing those functions of support, value-maintenance, and socialization

previously provided by the extended family, community, and religious institutions in a pre-industrial society:

Such practices argue against the conception of the psychotherapies as neutral, scientifically based forms whose goal is mental health and for a conception that one of the major social functions of the therapies is to facilitate the evolution away from traditional religious practices toward a more secular definition of life.

(Sollod, 1982, p. 82)

Writing on the problems encountered by therapists working in a cross-cultural context, Sue (1981) made a similar case, suggesting that psychotherapists often serve as midwife to the evolution of popular culture:

...the culturally encapsulated counselor may become a tool of his/her own dominant political, social, or economic value. Ethnocentric notions of adjustment tend to ignore inherent culture-class values, allowing the encapsulated person to be blind to his/her own cultural baggage. (p.8)

Browning (1987) argued that psychology's adoption and propagation of an almost exclusively humanistic system of values is based fundamentally on economic and political considerations rather than on scientific ones:

...modern psychology is deeply embedded in the social forces of modern life--particularly the forces of advanced rationalistic capitalism--and that for all practical purposes psychology is an ideological expression of and tool for these social contextual patterns. The argument is that the form of life found in rational capitalism shapes social life in ways that reward individualism, assertiveness, independence, and flexibility. On the other hand, this form of life undermines communities of loyalty, localism, interdependence, and covenanted relations of all kinds. (p. 239)

Psychotherapy by the "individualistic, self-oriented character now commonplace in its theories is easily seen as a rationalization for a self-indulgent consumer economy" (Vitz, 1987b, p. 10).

In this regard Hogan and Sloan (1985) ask:

Can it be a coincidence that the individualism promoted by psychological theory is perfectly consistent with the core values of our culture? Or is it the case that psychology itself is a textbook exemplification of the principle of cultural determinism? (p. 17)

Sollod (1982) referred to an experiment by Welkowitz (1978) to illustrate just how influential popular culture can be in determining psychotherapeutic practice. Welkowitz reported that at the onset of her study, in 1965, therapists working with women had promoted the roles of housewife and mother. They interpreted women's career strivings as neurotic conflict. By 1978, the situation was reversed, women were now supported in their desires for autonomy and professional achievement, and their wishes to remain a housewife and mother were often interpreted as indications of passivity and lack of differentiation. In recording the nature of therapeutic interventions there was also noted a marked diminution in the frequency with which therapists interrupted their female clients' speech patterns. What was perhaps most striking was that when asked about their therapeutic

approach to women, psychotherapists reported there had been no change. These psychotherapists at both the beginning and end of the study, had been using psychotherapy to promote a certain type of social adaptation, consistent with different views of a healthy role for women in society. "In neither case could their choice of goals be considered objective, neutral, or value free, yet they considered their work to be based on scientific theories as well as clinical observations and were unaware of their changing value stances" (cited in Sollod, 1982, p. 53). Results such as these support the notion that psychotherapy serves an educational rather than a purely scientific function in modern society; that one of psychotherapy's most important roles is to indoctrinate clients with popular values.

Browning (1987) cautioned the social sciences to remain sciences and not broaden their role, becoming, in addition, functional religions, world-views, or systems of ethics. There are times, Browning suggested, when the social and psychological sciences begin to illegitimately occupy just these larger roles in our lives. When they do this, they rightly become subjects for philosophical, religious and ethical criticism.

According to Browning, the fields of religion and social science cannot possibly conflict, if they serve

totally different functions. The function of scientific language is the prediction and control of nature; that of religious language is the expression of "self-commitment, ethical dedication, and existential life-orientation." But this separation of function is no longer the case today:

...significant portions of the modern psychologies, and especially the clinical psychologies, are actually instances of religio-ethical thinking. They are, in fact, mixed disciplines which contain examples of religious, ethical, and scientific language. To state this about the modern psychologies is certainly to go against their own self-understanding. They see themselves as sciences, and some certainly do achieve this status more completely than others. But when many of these psychologies are submitted to careful analysis one discovers that they have religious and moral horizons about which both they and the general public are unclear. Frequently, the leaders of our religious institutions are also unaware of the religious and moral dimensions in the psychologies that they use. (Browning, 1987, p.8)

Vitz (1977) contends that psychology's bias with respect to religion is due to its own allegiance to a system of values and beliefs which are fundamentally in conflict with those of traditional religion. Indeed Vitz suggested that much of psychotherapy and counselling have functionally become a religion. Browning set out to distinguish between what is scientific and what is moral and quasi-religious in modern psychology. He asked the important question, "Will our culture be oriented and directed by our

inherited religious traditions or will it increasingly gain its orientation, especially with regard to the inner life, from the modern psychologies?" (p.2).

Forty years ago R.B. Cattell remarked that psychology and religion may find themselves rival recruiting agencies seeking to do good to the same population. Maslow concurred, stating that this may be the source of much of the antagonism between religion and psychology. The animosity observed between psychology and religion may be the result of psychotherapy taking upon itself the role religion used to play in our lives. Psychotherapy would then be prone to devalue religion in order to justify its appropriation of the former's role and prestige. This view would certainly explain why psychotherapists might find it difficult to achieve an objective appraisal of religion; they are competing voices.

Sollod (1982) recommended that psychologists begin to sort out what aspects of their approaches represent a form of substitute religion, closely mimicking religious traditions, and drawing on those motivations which in a religious context would naturally lead to religious commitment and spiritual development. From the point of view of religion, the psychotherapies may be responding to important religious motivations, which

constitute humanity's spiritual potential and not merely psychological needs.

The Myth of a Value-Free Psychotherapy

Psychotherapists have long been committed to the position that counselling and psychotherapy should be value-free (Meehl, 1959; London, 1964; Wick, 1985). In fact Gordon Allport suggested that the movement from religion to psychology occurred because of the supposed "value-free" position of psychology (cited in Meadow, 1979). Ideally, value-free psychotherapy means psychotherapy should be nonjudgmental, and responsive to the client's own values and to the needs resulting from the client's value system, rather than a process of converting the client to the values held by the therapist. The idea of an ethically neutral value-free psychotherapy is, however, no longer tenable.

Williamson (1958) argued convincingly that value judgments are implicit in every action we take, and that counsellors cannot therefore escape introducing their own value systems into the counselling interview. Two independent studies (Murray, 1956; Truax, 1966 as quoted in Bergin 1980a) showed how Carl Rogers was systematically rewarding expressions that he liked, and punishing expressions that he did not like in the

verbal behaviour of his clients. Roger's values were significantly regulating the structure, content, as well as outcome of therapeutic sessions. Bergin (1980a) suggested that if someone like Carl Rogers, who has such a strong therapeutic intention to be non-directive and value-free, cannot be, then it is likely the rest of the profession cannot be either.

Smith (1954) called upon psychologists to act responsibly and become explicit about the relation between their values and behaviour:

...the psychologist cannot stop making choices, as scientist, teacher, or human engineer. The choices may be witting or unwitting, responsible or irresponsible but they are made, and they entail consequences....Only if we know what we are choosing, only if the values involved in our choices are explicit, do our decisions become responsible ones. (p. 515)

Wolff (1955) analyzed the results of interviews with 43 leading psychotherapists of various schools. He found that while social factors were in the foreground, philosophical considerations and values were largely neglected. Only six percent considered a change in values a goal of therapy. Yet 72% admitted that value concepts had a direct or indirect influence on therapy. How can the factor of values take the lowest place among therapist's goals, while a majority recognize that it may have a decisive influence on the patient?

Williamson (1958) recommended that value positions come out from under the proverbial bushel, and once out in the open be dealt with as objectively as possible. And that psychologists, "familiarize themselves with the value orientation under which they operate, that they confess their philosophic biases and then turn those biases to fullest advantage by being of professional assistance to the special interest groups with which their values coincide" (p. 692).

London (1964) virtually demolished the idea of value-free therapy. He described how: "Moral considerations may dictate, in large part, how the therapist defines his clients needs, how he operates in the therapeutic situation, how he defines "treatment", and "cure", and even "reality" (p. 5). London argued further that psychotherapists have two distinct functions, a scientific and a moralistic one. While their scientific function is explicit, their moralistic one is often only implied. Psychotherapists, in their moral role, function as a secular priesthood purporting to establish standards of good living. Because the main assumptions of the dominant theories of personality and psychopathology are naturalistic and humanistic, rather than theistic and spiritual, the moral values taught and reinforced by psychotherapists tend to be secular ones. Lowe's (1979) treatise on value orientations in

counselling and psychotherapy agreed. He argued that everything from behavioural technology to community consultation is intricately interwoven with secularized moral systems.

One danger noted by Bergin (1980a), is that as secular moralists psychologists may be promoting changes not necessarily valued by either the client or society:

...basic conflicts between value systems of clinical professionals, clients, and the public are dealt with unsystematically or not at all. Too often, we opt for the comforting role of experts applying technologies and obscure our role as moral agents, yet our code of ethics declares that we should show a "sensible regard for the social codes and moral expectations of the community" (American Psychological Association, 1972, p. 2). (Bergin, 1980a, p. 103)

Lowe (1959) expressed his concern that:

... social control is passing from the hands of philosophers and theologians who are aware of the moral issues into the hands of experimentalists who are less aware of the value judgments that they make and whose methods are such as to prevent others from questioning them. (p. 688)

Smith (1954) pointed out that much of psychology should not expect to be able to stand on its own feet:

Psychologists must do their research in close association with the normative disciplines of ethics, political science, and, I would add, theology. For instance, psychologists cannot define mental health without having some normative understanding of the kind of society in which one would want to be healthy. One cannot study the psychological formation of conscience without some normative understanding of what constitutes morality. ...our psychologies must be critical psychologies. This means that they should be

disciplines that self-consciously mix descriptive and experimental work with normative work about the nature of the good person and the good society and their dialectical relation. (p. 242-243)

By abstaining from the responsibility of thinking through their world-views and identifying themselves with a clearly articulated viewpoint, therapists fall by default into the camp Lowe labeled "culturalism." This philosophy makes loyalty to contemporary cultural values the supreme value.

Smith (1954) suggested that psychology has helped destroy values traditionally related to the Western world and, by then abdicating responsibility for values has added "to the crescendo urging total conformity." It is clear that prevailing psychotherapeutic systems reflect current culture. American psychotherapeutic approaches are not universal but rather socio-culturally restricted, and are almost nonexistent in other parts of the world (Bobgan & Bobgan, 1987).

Bergin (in press) argued that for a large portion of the population the agnostic, atheistic and unconventional mores of many therapists provide an alien values framework. There is then, considerable justification for introducing a spiritual perspective into clinical work and little justification for opposing it. A spiritual perspective extends our value perspective beyond the immediate definition of good

outcome and emphasizes the broader and long-term social aspects that make life meaningful and lifestyles fruitful, even into succeeding generations (Bergin, 1988).

By our decision not to discuss the broader social implications of our counselling values, we relegate the political implications of psychotherapy to the professional unconscious and avoid assuming responsibility for the role we now play in society. Students of psychotherapy have too often been encouraged to regard themselves exclusively in terms of "dynamics," "relationships," and "perceptions." Insufficient attention has been paid to those aspects of both clients' and therapists' ideologies, philosophies, and moral codes, many of which cannot be interpreted as merely incidental aspects of people's lives. One of the major problems in communication between much of psychology and the Christian faith in particular, appears to be the refusal of many psychotherapists to acknowledge, address, and if need be defend the implicit moral positions they take.

Summary

There is a 'functional equivalence' between psychology and traditional religion which may lead some

people to replace religion with psychology. They are competing voices. While psychology emphasizes its scientific role, it is actually a mixed discipline, containing examples of religious, ethical, and scientific language. It is probably more than coincidence that the individualism promoted by psychological theory is perfectly consistent with and serves as a rationalization for our self-indulgent consumer economy. As an agent of popular culture, one of psychology's major social functions may be to facilitate the evolution away from traditional religious practices toward a more secular definition of life.

While an early ideal for psychotherapy was that it should facilitate clients' working through their problems while respecting and not disturbing the clients personal values, the notion of an ethically neutral, value-free psychotherapy is no longer tenable. Consequently it is irresponsible and even unethical for psychotherapists to deny or obscure their role as moral agents. One of the major problems in communication between psychology and religion today is psychology's refusal to acknowledge, address, and if need be defend the implicit moral positions it takes.

Chapter V

PSYCHOTHERAPY'S ANTI-RELIGIOUS BIAS

The Psychology of Religion

Through the years the relationship between Christianity and the psychological sciences has often been characterized by a mutual antagonism. This was not always the case.

After the birth of scientific psychology, in the late nineteenth century, the study of religious experience quickly became a popular subject for empirical investigation. The first book completely dedicated to the psychology of religion was written by E.D. Starbuck in 1899. During these early years religion was still considered something necessary to human society, and researchers approached their subject with an attitude of deference and even reverence. Along with their faith in the scientific spirit, there was a profound respect for religion as a human and social enterprise (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974). The application of scientific method to the study of religion would, it was believed, be an important contribution to the theory, practice, and progress of religion.

After a promising beginning, however, the psychology of religion movement was dead in a little

over three decades. Strunk (cited in Beit-Hallahmi, 1974) listed the following reasons for its demise:

1. Theological interest in the field introduced speculative and apologetic tendencies which hampered advancement.

2. Psychoanalytic approaches to the study of religion attracted more attention and efforts, since they seemed more promising.

3. The influence of behaviorism led to the neglect of complex human behaviours as the focus of attention in academic psychology.

As Beit-Hallahmi noted, the theoretical and ideological foundations of the movement were basically a residue of the philosophical tradition in psychology, and this was a severe limitation which also contributed to its decline. In addition the second generation of workers in the movement (such as Pratt, Coe, Ames, and Johnson) were theologians first and psychologists second, which seemed to compromise their objectivity.

Nevertheless, the most decisive reason for the decline can probably be attributed to the impression held by most social scientists that religion was rapidly being "neutralized" by newer secular attitudes and values. As Stark and Bainbridge (1985) noted:

The most illustrious figures in sociology, anthropology, and psychology have unanimously expressed confidence that their children, or

surely their grandchildren, would live to see the dawn of a new era in which, to paraphrase Freud, the infantile illusions of religion would be outgrown. (p. 9)

By the 1930's most social scientists probably felt the long war between science and religion had been won by science, and that religion was living on borrowed time. Fashionable academic opinion certainly held the trend toward secularism to be rapid and inevitable. This prediction has not proved accurate. One generation has followed another; yet religion has persisted.

Even if most social scientists tend to see religion as an outmoded and dying phenomenon held over from another era, the persistence of religion in the lives of the people suggests otherwise (Nix, 1978). Gallup Surveys (Religion in America, 1985) continue to indicate that religion is a dominant influence in the lives of Americans. Ninety-five percent of those surveyed reported that they believe in a God or a Universal Spirit. Sixty-six percent believe in a personal God who watches over and judges people. Eighty-five percent believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Fifty-six percent state that religion is very important in their lives. Research results in Canada report similar findings. The Canadian Institute of Public Opinion in the Gallup report of September 12, 1985 found that 87% of Canadians stated they believe in

God. Fowler (1985), after a survey of such indicators, reported that there are absolutely no signs of the once predicted death of religion. On the contrary, there are indications that something of a religious revival is occurring, particularly in the United States.

While Christianity, in terms of numbers of adherents, seems to be experiencing somewhat of a revival, the process of the secularization of our society continues. Fowler (1985) reports that there has:

...been a drastic decline over the past three or four decades in citizen estimation of religion's influence in our culture. In the 1950's there was a considerable sense that religion counted in America, but this fell away in the 1960's. ...Contemporary figures show that in the last few years those who think religious influence is declining continue to predominate. (p.3)

There is no doubt that the climate of North American society today has been radically secularized. Some critics have suggested that religious values within the churches themselves have been seriously eroded and therefore statistics reflecting a revival of religion may be misleading. Schlossberg (1983), for example, argued that starting in the nineteenth century, Christianity began retreating before the 'new ideologies.' According to Schlossberg, the attempt of the churches to merge the message of the gospel with the intellectual fashion of the day has left American

religion full of contradictions and paradoxes. Niebuhr (cited in Schlossberg, 1983) went so far as to describe "the prevailing national religiosity as a 'perversion of the Christian gospel,' aggravating the nation's problems" (p. 9).

Secular Assumptions in Psychotherapy

Humankind has probably been religious in one way or another for at least the past 25,000 years. Only in the last one hundred years or so has the mainstream of western culture drifted away from a recognition of religious awareness as a vital cornerstone of human experience. In fact, the assumptions on which much of the modern western world and modern psychotherapy are based, work against the establishment of an awareness of the sacred, in the biblical sense of God. American philosopher Leo Strauss (cited in Grant, 1986) explained that as we have learned to dominate what we previously could not control, or even understand, through science and politics, we have moved further and further away from a sense of the importance of maintaining our relationship with the sacred:

When a society is entirely directed to the overcoming of chance, it gives human beings the sense that they are the owners and masters of the world. Being that, they cannot know that they are essentially owned by something beyond them, something beyond the passing, which we do not

measure and define, but by which we are measured and defined. (Grant, 1986, p. 14)

As a consequence, our time is probably the first in recorded history which has not generally recognized that the world is filled with some powerful transcendental presence, with something sacred.

A contemporary Italian philosopher, Cornelio Fabro (cited in Giussani, 1986) has offered the following definition of secularism: "The split between the sacred and the life" (p. 5). This split might be expressed by the slogan "God, if He exists at all, has nothing to do with life and its problems." Giussani argued that it is precisely this division which is the root cause of the marginalization of Christianity in today's society.

Psychotherapy has, in its own sphere, contributed to this split between "the sacred and the life." Today, it is not so much that psychotherapy is actively anti-religious, rather it is, that by discounting or completely ignoring the relevance of God to the solution of human problems, that virtually all schools of modern psychotherapy act to undermine religious faith.

Over the last century the behavioural sciences have developed the bio-psychosocial model of understanding persons. This is often pictured as the biological, psychological, and social spheres

overlapping and interlocking with one another. From this model of wholeness also stems our concept of the disease process. Alterations in any of these spheres can result in pathology. Noticeably lacking in this concept is any reference to a spiritual dimension of human nature. Nelson and Wilson (1984) observed that in psychology today, none of the current schools of thought (i.e. dynamic, behavioral, or experiential) have formulated a place of importance in their structure for the person's relation to God.

Consequently, many of the assumptions which are implicitly accepted by modern psychotherapy, contribute to or reinforce the more widespread processes of secularization and thereby undermine humankind's religious faith. Vitz (1987a) argued that atheism is one obvious assumption which allows modern psychotherapy to act as if nothing sacred was relevant to the human condition. All major theories of personality and counselling are (according to Vitz) either explicitly or implicitly based on atheism.

Naturalism is also an unproven but universally accepted assumption within modern psychotherapy. Naturalism assumes that nothing "supernatural" actually exists. Man, and his world are purely natural phenomenon which can be understood by reason and observation alone.

Subjectivism is another. The subjectivist frame of mind emphasizes that no idea is of any more value than any other, that there is no objective morality, or universal spiritual truths. Rather, what counts is to be sensitive to one's own thoughts and feelings and to be open to the thoughts and feelings of others.

Individualism assumes that the individual is the most significant social and psychological reality. Christianity on the other hand focuses on others--on the family and community. It is revealing that there is no major personality theory of psychology which does not make the individual the central unit and primary concern of its theory.

The reductionism of modern psychotherapy is also the opposite habit of mind to that promoted by Christianity. Most secular psychotherapists assume all "higher" things are to be understood as caused by lower underlying phenomena. The Christian is by contrast a constructionist whose mind runs upward toward the sacred, seeing images of the greater in the lesser (Vitz, 1987a).

All of these assumptions act to define the way in which reality is perceived by the secular psychotherapist. In so doing, they will naturally restrict the psychotherapist's ability to understand,

respect, and empathize with the supernatural context of the Christian client.

Psychotherapy's Anti-Religious Bias

Today, evidence of a bias in psychotherapy against religion is often expressed by an attitude of apathy, which seems to characterize the response of much of the psychological community, to the relationship between religious values and mental health. Beit-Hallahmi (1977) reviewed a number of introductory texts on psychology and found most ignored religion completely, while a few made only passing references to it. Strommen (1984) reviewing research in the social sciences from 1942-1968, found only one-half of one percent of psychological studies included religion as a variable.

Not acknowledging the importance of religion is at odds with the importance some psychologists attribute to religion in the historical development of humankind. Theodore (1984), reflecting on religious bias among his colleagues, pointed out that "Religion, according to a recent APA Monitor interview, 'is the most important social force in the history of man... .' Nevertheless anyone trying to investigate it is branded a 'meathead' (Hogan, 1979, p.4)."

Gartner (1985) observed that research on religious counselling is generally a risky undertaking for research psychologists. Such research is only occasionally acceptable to some of the major counselling journals. According to Propst (1986), there has never been a full-blown outcome study published in any of the standard clinical journals to investigate whether inclusion of spiritual values and concerns in the counselling process affects the probability of a successful outcome. As late as 1986 an analogue study by Propst (1980) was the only study to explore the impact of spirituality on the psychotherapy process.

Even when promising research, on the importance of religious concepts in promoting mental health, does exist, it is often systematically ignored by psychotherapists. A few years ago, O. Hobart Mowrer (1973) recognized that some personality disturbances involve a component of "real guilt" which cannot be adequately explained away as socially conditioned guilt feelings. While acts of dishonesty, irresponsibility, and unconcern for others often result in an immediate advantage to the person committing them, according to Mowrer, a "real guilt" can be the result of acts which compromise one's integrity in this way. Such guilt is usually accompanied by fear (fear of being found out, or punished, or rejected), tension, and apprehension.

Mowrer argued that damage to one's integrity can also damage one's self-esteem, and may sometimes be severe enough to lead to personality disturbance. He was in fact suggesting that there is a moral element in psychotherapy which needs to be acknowledged. The best remedy for guilt resulting from a violation of social norms, according to Mowrer (1973), is confession and expiation. His "integrity therapy" therefore, utilized those principles of confession, restitution, and amendment, which he observed have been "sovereign remedies for pathogenic secrets in virtually all great historic cultures" (Mowrer & Veszelsky, 1980, p.445).

Despite the promise which early results from this approach showed, Mowrer observed a marked resistance on the part of psychotherapists to his conclusions. The concept of real guilt (as opposed to mere guilt feelings) he concluded is anathema to many clinicians because of the amoral, ethically neutral position which is assumed to be demanded by science. While both empirical (Johnson, Docecki, and Mowrer, 1972) and anecdotal (Mowrer and Veszelszky, 1980; Smrtic, 1979) evidence lent support to Mowrer's claims of a connection between psychopathology and moral accountability, Mowrer and Veszelszky (1980) reported that this evidence has been selectively ignored by psychologists. Smrtic (1979) reflected that the

resistance among psychologists to the ideas of integrity therapy may be understood by the fact that integrity therapy:

...employs currently unpopular theological terminology such as sin, guilt, confession and expiation. Herein lies the explanation of why integrity therapy has not received as much attention and usage as I feel it deserves. As London (1964) has observed, "It is sometimes the fate of radical theories that they must pass political as well as scientific tests before they become respectable objects of intellectual inquiry." It is unfortunate, that as psychologists, we too often try to divorce ourselves from any theory or notion that is reminiscent of religion. We are often motivated by feelings of insecurity about the scientific validity of psychology and the result is that we too strongly strive to identify with the white coat of the scientist and evade any identification with the black robe of the theologian. We are thus denying the moral component that exists in human personality. It is simply not sound therapeutic rationale to ignore a potentially powerful, effective and valid therapeutic model for strictly psycho-political reasons. (pp. 186-187)

Yet, as we shall see, the potentially positive therapeutic aspects of religion, have often been overlooked by psychologists.

One reason, as Bergin (1983) noted, is that "training in the clinical professions is almost bereft of content that would engender an appreciation of religious variables in psychological functioning. Race, gender, and ethnic origin now receive deserved attention but religion is still an orphan of academia" (p. 171).

Some evidence indicates anti-religious attitudes have an effect in areas of psychology other than psychotherapy. For example, conceptual and attitudinal biases expressed by psychologists against religion seem to have become part of empirical enquiry in psychology.

American personality theorists have largely avoided religion and religious motivations as being important subjects of consideration. Murray, who played a seminal role in the development of clinical psychology as a field, avoided listing religious motivations such as salvation, transcendence, and enlightenment in his exhaustive enumeration of human needs (Vitz, 1980). Religious behaviours were included only in a depreciatory fashion. The desire for atonement or confession, for example, was listed under the category of self-abasement (Sollod, 1982, p. 52).

Several authors have argued that religious factors are often either excluded from measurement and manipulation in personality tests or are included in such a way as to prejudice the results (Bergin, 1983; Gartner, 1983; Gorsuch & Aleshire, 1974; Stark, 1971).

Gartner (1982) reviewed a number of classic studies linking religion, authoritarianism, and dogmatism, and concluded that they share "a serious methodological flaw that is found in much of the psychological research on religion, namely the

confusion of mental health with liberal ideology" (p. 31). While purporting to measure rigid, well-defined, domineering/subservient personality traits, Gartner suggested that this scale may be measuring adherence to a conservative ideology. The author cited the following example from many items on the well known F and dogmatism scales: "every person should have a deep faith in some supernatural force higher than himself, to which he gives total allegiance and whose decisions he should not question." Gartner noted that while the phrase "should not question" is a bit strong, if that phrase were replaced by the word "accept," the sentence would constitute a near perfect summary of a basic principle of traditional Judaism and Christianity. Gartner's conclusion is that questions measuring an authoritarian personality and ones measuring conservative ideology appear to be indiscriminately combined. The discovery of this confound suggested to the author that the relationship between authoritarianism, dogmatism, and religion might not be as strong as previously believed. Of course, traditionally religious people are going to respond positively to items which measure traditionalism, and traditional religiosity. Gartner notes that while these items may correlate well with the rest of their scale:

...any personality test which automatically scores traditionally religious responses as pathological, is unfairly biased against religious subjects. It is the equivalent of including questions measuring social class on an I.Q. test because a strong relationship between class and I.Q. has been observed. (pp.32-33)

Examples of prejudice against those who hold religious views have also been documented in the areas of the licensing and hiring of psychologists, accreditation (Clement, 1978), and graduate school admissions (Gartner, 1982).

The apparent bias of many psychologists against religion cannot be explained away as the attitude of one academic discipline, reflecting the cynicism and disillusionment felt by most academics toward religion. While scientists as a whole are less religious than the general population, social scientists are less religious than natural scientists, and psychologists are the least religious among social scientists (Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975).

In fact a kind of truce has been observed between religion and the natural sciences but not between religion and the social sciences (Long, 1971; Friedrichs, 1974). Ragan, Malony, and Beit-Hallahmi (1980) have reported that as early as 1931 it was observed that social scientists responded differently to religion than natural scientists. Physicists have been shown to be much more likely than psychologists to

perceive church membership as important and to acknowledge the mysterious element in nature (Lehman & Witty, 1931).

In response to the question "How religious a person do you feel you are?," McClintock, Spaulding, and Turner (1965) reported that 58.7% of the political scientists, 50.7% of the sociologists, and only 34.1% of the psychologists surveyed indicated that they were "moderately" or "very" religious. While 44.8% of the psychologists, 32.2% of the sociologists, and 19.2% of the political scientists reported themselves as not religious. Ragan, Malony, and Beit-Hallahmi (1980) reported that 34% of the psychologists in their sample chose the ideological position which denies the existence of God. This compared with 23% of the general academic population and two percent of the general United States population. Such findings tend to reinforce the lay stereotype that equates psychology with atheism. While one in five Americans is traditionally religious only about one in twenty-five psychologists hold traditional religious beliefs (Nix, 1978).

Psychologists Explain their Anti-Religious Bias

It can certainly be difficult to document the attitude of a profession; especially when, as with most forms of institutionalized prejudice, psychologists tend not to be aware of their biases. Kivley (1986) administered a questionnaire to 57 therapists in East-Central Illinois. While no therapist consciously agreed that religious belief is a neurosis, 58% of the therapists surveyed agreed with at least one of Freud's criticisms of religious belief as a neurosis. One must wonder with the author "about the overall amount of consideration the typical therapist gives to sorting out what he/she believes about religious belief" (p. 43). While no therapist admitted to a view of religious belief as a neurosis, the majority of therapists hold views of religious belief which might be interpreted as a basis for labeling religious belief as neurosis. In view of these results Bergin's (1980b) comment that therapist statements of attitudes and beliefs might be different from what those attitudes and beliefs actually are, seems relevant.

A number of reasons have been offered by psychologists to help explain this apparent bias in psychotherapy toward religion. Nix (1978) surveyed 240 randomly selected clinical psychologists to assess

their attitudes toward religion. Although only 13% identified themselves as "anti-religious," responses to other questions suggest the number may be between 25% and 45%. Just over 25% seem to feel that religion in any form is undesirable. For example, 26% believe that "religion is a set of illusions that will hopefully be vanquished by science and education." Twenty-eight percent agreed that, "belief in a supernatural being is a sign of a person's failure to accept responsibility for his own life." Forty percent said that, "In general, religion fosters passivity and unhealthy dependency which prevents people from taking an active part in planning and improving their lives." The largest group of subjects in this study expected their colleagues to be negative or antagonistic toward religion, thus confirming at least the perception of a bias against religion. Nix reflected that "work experience with religious clients whose use of religion is mainly defensive (used rigidly, dogmatically, as a solution to intrapsychic conflict, as a way of controlling impulses, as a focus for defenses, etc.), may reinforce the therapist's holding a negative attitude toward religion" (p. 57).

One obvious reason why psychotherapists are likely to hold negative attitudes toward religion is that the three major schools of psychotherapy--Psychoanalysis,

Behaviorism, and Humanistic Psychology--have promoted anti-religious assumptions as part of their theoretical world-view. Leaders of these movements have frequently pointed out the unhealthy uses of religion while more or less ignoring the ways by which religion can contribute to psychological growth, emotional health, and social well-being. Gartner (1982) reviewed statements made about religion by leaders of each of these schools. Highlights of Gartner's survey are reported below.

While a few post-Freudian psychoanalysts have suggested that there is a "healthy religiosity," William Saffady (1976) insists this group is in the minority; "Freud, while recognizing the therapeutic potential in religious sublimations, insisted that religion represents little more than a neurotic attempt to avoid frightening reality. This remains the accepted psychoanalytic view" (p. 296).

Behaviorism is of course in fundamental disagreement with the tenets of Christianity. While leading behaviorists may acknowledge the value of religious moral codes as a stabilizing factor, they find them too rigid and believe they can and should be replaced by a new set of "experimental ethics" based on behavioristic principles. Gartner (1982) quotes Skinner's response to a question about religion asked

during an interview with Psychology Today: "And I don't know whether I want to improve religion or not, I prefer to get rid of it" (Hall, 1967, p. 105).

Humanistic psychology also takes a view which is in fundamental conflict with the traditional understanding of Judaism and Christianity. While Christianity and Judaism hold that God, not man, is the source of all goodness, humanistic theorists, for the most part, seem to agree that there is no ultimate source of goodness outside of man's own nature. Traditional Christian, Jewish, and Islamic beliefs emphasize man's entire dependency on God. Rollo May represents the Humanistic view, when he suggests that dependency on God is regression to an infantile helplessness. In Humanistic thought man replaces God as the subject of religious attention.

Gartner (1982) concludes his summary of the Humanistic position toward religion:

...it is clear that traditional religion and humanistic psychology are entrenched in conflict at the level of their most fundamental assumptions. As one scans the humanistic psychologists' texts, one finds a series of "new-fashioned" names they have found for traditional religion. Maslow calls it "pathological" and "crippled religion." He says it decreases self-actualization. May says that traditional Christianity is for "weaklings"...Eric Fromm likens traditional religion to spiritual Nazism and calls it "idolatry." Finally Rogers finds traditional religious morality "ridiculous." The hostility of humanistic psychology for traditional religion is indeed real. (pp. 27-28)

Gartner simplified the objections of each school to traditional religions as follows: Behaviorists believe they are unscientific, humanists believe they are authoritarian and dogmatic, and psychoanalysts believe they are neurotic. The validity of these charges is briefly discussed below:

I. Religion is unscientific; its premises and assumptions have not been validated by scientific methodology.

It is obvious that religion is not scientific and there is really little justification for arguing that it should be. While behaviorists originally felt that all principles of human conduct should be validated by empirical methods, since that time so many aspects of human behaviour have proven resistant to the methods of science that few psychologists still hold rigidly to this ideal today. Campbell (1975) argued that psychology has responded with an unjustified arrogance toward religious traditions because psychology has itself been unable to put well developed theories in the areas of how people live their lives to the test.

Robert Sollod (1982) argued that from many considerations the psychotherapies do not themselves constitute an applied science within psychology. "The

subjective and value-laden aspects of the development and validation of the psychotherapies is in marked contrast to the formulations of positivistic science (Ayer, 1959; Nagel, 1961; Popper, 1958). Sollod argued that "although the psychotherapies purport to be scientific their actual nature is veiled by such a label" (p. 47). Philosopher Karl Popper (1975), after an examination of psychological theories, reported that those theories, "though posing as sciences, had in fact more in common with primitive myths than with science; that they resembled astrology rather than astronomy" (p. 343). "These theories," argued Popper, "describe some facts but in the manner of myths. They contain most interesting psychological suggestions, but not in testable form" (p. 346).

Jerome Frank (1971) has also referred to psychotherapies as myths because they are not subject to disproof. Absent from theories of psychotherapy but crucial to experimental science is the possibility of refuting theories, predicting future events, reproducing results obtained, and controlling what is observed. With over 250 often contradictory psychotherapeutic systems available, each claiming superiority over the rest, it is hard to imagine the scientific framework of psychotherapy being more than an embarrassment.

Sigmund Koch (1973) who planned and directed the extensive study, Psychology: A Study of a Science sponsored by the American Psychological Association to evaluate the status of psychology, described the delusion from which we have been suffering in thinking about psychology as a science:

The hope of a psychological science became indistinguishable from the fact of psychological science. The entire subsequent history of psychology can be seen as a ritualistic endeavor to emulate the forms of science in order to sustain the delusion that it already is a science. (p. 636)

Sollod (1982) has recommended that as a group of approaches which endeavor to facilitate new patterns of individual behaviour and adaptation to society, psychotherapy would more legitimately be termed an educational, rather than a scientific endeavor. While psychotherapy would perhaps suffer a loss of prestige, if it removed itself from the rubic of scientific discipline, it would gain in integrity by stripping itself of unwarranted claims to scientific authority. While this argument may, to some extent, apply to all sciences the case made here is that psychotherapy is especially vulnerable to this kind of criticism. While some branches of psychology, for example experimental and social psychology, support their theoretical conclusions with research findings, most of pscyotherapy is notoriously weak in research yet

continues to enjoy and benefit from the status of a legitimate scientific discipline and the illusion of scientific objectivity.

Bergin (in press) suggests that critics of religion not forget that their critiques can be just as aptly applied to any of the dominant psychological approaches:

Isn't it abundantly clear that advocates of these 'doctrines' have strong beliefs, tend to overgeneralize, believe their approach is better, inculcate clients with predetermined views of what is healthy, and believe that their models have universal applicability? It is not defensible for critics to attack the spiritual approach on the basis of criteria they are not willing to apply to their own orientations. (Bergin, 1988)

II. Religion is authoritarian and dogmatic and encourages helplessness and dependency.

While religious writers from Kierkegaard to Tillich have long recognized the differences between healthy and unhealthy religion, psychology has seemed reluctant to acknowledge the more positive aspects of religious commitment.

Many psychotherapists have no doubt encountered anecdotal evidence of the sorrowful, guilty religious client. While the existence of such theists cannot be denied, the merits of theism should not be determined by the biased client samples of psychotherapists.

"Overstatements and generalizations have contaminated

the appropriate consideration of religious values in psychotherapy" (McMinn, 1984, p. 27).

In 1950 Gordon Allport wrote The Individual and His Religion in which he presented a well reasoned psychological justification for religious practices and challenged mental health professionals not to simplify and negatively stereotype a vastly complex phenomenon. In fact, researchers of these issues have consistently warned against this kind of stereotyping. Probably the most definitive thing that can be said about religion in our culture is that it is not simple; it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon (Bergin, 1983). As many as 21 factors of religiosity have been identified in one study by King and Hunt (cited in Bergin, 1983).

Despite the warnings, religion and religious people have been described in a simple and predominantly negative fashion in the psychological literature (Gartner, 1985). While, as a rule, psychology realizes it cannot neglect any aspect of man's behaviour and experience, it has "resisted attempts to treat the religious sentiment intensely and seriously" (Strunk, 1970, p. 73).

It was Allport and Ross (1967) who made what is probably the first experimental attempt in the history of psychology to explain how religion could be used in either a healthy or an unhealthy way. They began by

making a rudimentary distinction between positive and negative features of religiousness. The Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) was then developed to measure the degree to which a person was extrinsically motivated (E) in his religious views: using religion to provide security, comfort, status, or social support for himself or contrariwise intrinsically motivated (I) where religion is not a mode of conformity, a crutch, a bid for status but rather where "all needs are subordinated to an overarching religious commitment. In internalizing the total creed of his religion the individual necessarily internalizes its values of humility, compassion and love of neighbor" (p.441). While early studies had found churchgoing correlated with ethnic prejudice closer examination by Allport and Ross (1967) found the relationship to be curvilinear. When factored out, the extrinsically motivated churchgoers were found responsible for the prejudice effect.

Donahue (1985) provides a comprehensive review and meta-analysis of research on the I-E framework up to 1985 and concludes that it is still a useful tool in the assessment of religiousness. In their conclusions Allport and Ross (1967) cautioned professionals not to stereotype the religious client: "To know a person is

religious is not as important as to know the role religion plays in the economy of his life" (p.442).

III. Religious commitment correlates positively with psychopathology.

A major point of contention with more than just the psychoanalytic community has been the relationship between religiosity and mental health. Some critics have suggested that religion is antithetical to emotional health and rationality (Ellis, 1980; Walls, 1980). Ellis (1980) boldly suggested that: "Religiosity is in many respects equivalent to irrational thinking and emotional disturbance...The elegant therapeutic solution to emotional problems is to be quite unreligious...the less religious they are the more emotionally healthy they will be" (p.637).

Such conclusions tend, at most, to be generalizations based on therapeutic encounters with limited client samples. Empirical research, on the other hand, has not supported the suggestion of a correlation between religious involvement and psychopathology. In 1960, the Joint Commission of Mental Illness and Health indicated that, in general, individuals who participate in religious services experience less severe forms of mental distress than

those who do not (cited in Purdy, Simari, and Colon, 1983). Sanua's (1969) extensive review of the literature on religion and mental health found no systematic relationship between religiosity and psychological maladjustment or social deviancy. In a meta-analysis of 24 pertinent studies, Bergin (1983) also found no support for the contention that religiousness is necessarily correlated with psychopathology. Of 30 effects tabulated, 77% of the obtained results were contrary to the negative effect predicted by Ellis and others. Most of the results were not statistically significant and were sometimes contradictory, leading Bergin to agree with Strommen (1971) that the phenomenon of religion is multi-dimensional and "attracts, reduces, increases and heals mental disorders" (p.462). Bergin compared the ambiguities of the data with those ambiguities which formerly characterized psychotherapy. He noted also that social psychiatry and sociology studies have been more clearly favorable to religion.

Bergin, Masters, and Richards (1987) investigated the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations and mental health. Results generally indicated that (I) is negatively correlated with anxiety and positively correlated with self-control and "better" personality functioning. When

personality scores were compared with those of other normal populations, trends slightly favored the intrinsic population. The authors caution that as with most studies in this field no causal connections should be inferred. The results indicate that (I) is related to "normality" and that religiousness is not indicative of emotional disturbance.

In light of the fact that there is no convincing empirical support for the contention that religiousness is correlated with psychopathology, one has to wonder about the motivation behind such conclusions. Karl Menninger (1973) has recommended that the practice of attributing pathogenic origins to values one disagrees with, simply because one disagrees with them, should be constrained.

A large number of social scientists have argued that the adoption of prejudiced attitudes like the adoption of other cultural values and behaviours is a normative part of the socialization process (Gartner, 1985). Bergin (1983) suggested that the adoption of anti-religious attitudes is sometimes part of the socialization process involved in becoming a psychologist. Anecdotal reports are perhaps the most graphic evidence of this.

A number of religious psychologists have claimed that those who hold religious views are often

stigmatized by the profession (Bergin, 1980; Sollod, 1978; Van Leeuwen, 1982; Vitz, 1977). Nix (1978) described how many professors and students at New York University could not quite believe she could be a graduate student and still be "religious." She noticed she was becoming hesitant to make her beliefs known and found colleagues who, sharing her experience, were also reluctant to reveal their views and feelings about religion, fearing ridicule and criticism from others in the field.

Nix (1978) quoted from an introspective report submitted by one of her psychotherapist subjects:

...during my graduate school days I felt too unsure of myself and my religious beliefs, and too over-awed by the benign contempt or outright attacks on religion by professors and some fellow students to publicly state what my own religious beliefs were and what they meant to me. (p.160)

Vitz (1977) reported that in graduate school at Stanford: "...religion was treated as a pathetic anachronism. Occasionally a person's religious beliefs were "measured" in personality tests. The common interpretation was that people holding traditional religious views were fascist-authoritarian types" (p.11). Gartner (1982) and Sollod (1978) argued that the overall intellectual atmosphere of higher education and professional training schools is actively anti-religious. In their research of psychology

admissions committees reviewing applicants with strong religious beliefs they found some faculty regard these expressions as neurosis, poor judgment, or "bad taste."

The stigma associated with religious affiliation indicated above reinforces the notion that the adoption of anti-religious attitudes is part of the socialization process involved in becoming a psychologist. At the same time, this possibility may help explain the high percentage of nonreligious and anti-religious psychologists.

Another contributing factor is that the language adopted by psychology generally excludes spiritual meanings, thus reinforcing nonreligious ways of thinking about psychological problems and nonreligious value systems. Bergin (1983) expressed surprise that many mental health professionals still consider themselves religious, and that ten percent of a random sample of American Psychological Association members hold positions in religious organizations (Ragan, Malony, & Beit-Hallahmi, 1976).

One would never know this by content analyzing professional conversations or publications. This strong level of interest and participation has been compartmentalized because the language of academic training and of personality, psychopathology, and psychotherapy is nonspiritual. Thus the religious interests of clinicians and researchers are subjected to conceptual shaping in other directions--that is, naturalism, mechanism, and secularism prevail, and degrees and certification are earned by emitting

such terminology at the right times and places.
(Bergin, 1983, p. 181)

"The nonreligious bias of much psychological literature is based on ideological choices that have become dominant because of professional usage. These orienting constructs often exclude spiritual phenomenon or cast them in negative terms" (Bergin, 1983, p. 171). Bergin (1983) recommended: "that because religious affiliation is so pervasive clinicians should understand the cultural content of their clients' religious world-view rather than denying the importance of these views and coercing clients into alien linguistic and conceptual usages" (p. 180).

According to Strunk (1970) the major challenge religion poses for the psychologist is learning how "not" to fit religious experiences into the pigeonholes of Freud, Jung, and so forth, but to see what the data of religious experiences themselves suggest. Vande Kemp (1986) also described this tendency among psychologists to reduce the phenomena of faith to "nothing but," a multitude of psychological processes. This philosophical error, called "psychologism" has, in its extreme application, been a means of converting all things (art, politics, social life, religion etc.) into psychology. Vande Kempe cites James Hillman's (1975) warning that psychologism becomes a danger, when we

begin to see ideas instead of seeing by means of them. Psychologism turns psychology into a new metaphysics. Meehl (1959) commented that this pseudo-psychology does a disservice both to the phenomena which it refuses to respect in its own right and to the profession of psychology. This author deplored the tendency among psychologists to take for granted without scientific proof that value and religious problems are obviously never what they seem; that the client is obviously talking about something else. In such cases the rapid termination or avoidance of therapy so characteristic of therapeutic value mismatches may be a very adaptive and wholly appropriate decision on the part of the patient (Goldstein, 1971).

Many psychotherapists may be unresponsive to the spiritual values in their client's lives because of a lack of religious influences in their own lives. Shafranski and Gorsuch (cited in Cunningham, 1983) in a survey to determine how psychologists respond to spiritual dimensions in their clients' lives found the strongest predictor of whether therapists would see spirituality as relevant to their practice was recognition of its importance in their personal lives.

The fact that most therapists are nonreligious and do not experience religion as an important element in their own lives may lead them to ignore or

underestimate the significance of religion in the lives of their patients. Gorsuch and Butler (1976) conducted a review of predisposing factors in drug abuse studies. While religion was a background variable in many of the studies, and the most powerful variable in some of the studies, it was invariably excluded from the discussion and abstract of the papers. The authors concluded that investigators often had blinders on, which prevented them from seeing religion, even when it was a major variable in their own data analysis.

While survey evidence has pointed out the low level of religious commitment among psychologists and the negative attitudes many psychotherapists have toward religion, a crucial question remains whether training in psychology brings about a lessening of religious beliefs, or whether psychologists are recruited from those less religious in the first place. Results with social scientists generally suggest their apostasy begins in adolescence, and is probably reinforced by later training (Stark, 1963).

After a review of relevant literature, Beutler, Jobe, and Elkins (1974) concluded that "It now seems clear that not only can psychotherapy change religious beliefs but that the process of training counsellors and psychotherapists can produce fundamental and relatively lasting changes in these beliefs" (p. 435).

Rochester (1967) looked at the stability of attitude change and found that while the evaluative attitudes of guidance and counsellor trainees became more similar to those of the trainers during the course of a guidance institute training program, within one year trainees had reverted to the attitudes they held prior to training. Religious values were an exception and remained consistently more similar to those of the instructor.

Marx and Spray (1969) compared the religious biographies and professional characteristics of psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and psychiatric social workers practicing in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. The authors quoted a 1957 census report that approximately two-thirds of the United States population was Protestant, one-fourth Catholic, and three percent Jewish. The magnitude of the differences in the representation of these religious groups in the mental health professions surveyed was striking. With a response rate of sixty percent, thirty-four percent were Jewish, nine percent were Catholic, twenty-one percent Protestant, and thirty-six percent either atheists, agnostics, or did not adhere to any religious position. While Jews and those who eschew traditional religious allegiances were markedly over represented,

Catholics and Protestants were strikingly underrepresented.

Among the conclusions from this study Marx and Spray stated:

Indirect evidence was provided that therapy is partially responsible for, rather than a consequence of, weakening of traditional religious commitments....Assuming that there is a basic conflict between religious and professional belief-systems and that psychotherapy represents a uniquely intensive professional as well as personal socialization experience for mental health practitioners, this process should simultaneously increase and consolidate commitments to professional and, specifically, psychotherapeutic belief-systems as well as further weaken any remaining pre-professional religious convictions" (pp. 253, 288).

Summary

While there was a keen interest among psychologists in the study of religion around the turn of the century, the psychology of religion movement was dead in a little over three decades. Probably the main reason for its demise, was that most social scientists of that time, had come to believe that religion was rapidly being neutralized by newer secular attitudes. The trend toward secularism was thought to be rapid and inevitable. This prediction has not proved accurate.

In fact Christianity, in terms of number of adherents, seems to be experiencing somewhat of a revival. Nevertheless, the process of the

secularization of our society, in terms of the decreased influence which traditional religious values have on modern society, continues.

The understanding that "God, if he exists at all has nothing to do with life and its problems", (Fabro, cited in Guissani, 1986) is probably the root cause for the marginalization of Christianity in today's society and in modern psychology. By ignoring the relevance of God to the solution of human problems, psychology acts to undermine religious faith. None of the current schools of psychological thought have formulated a place of importance in their structure for the person's relation to God. Atheism, naturalism, subjectivism, individualism, and reductionism are assumptions operating within modern psychology which contrast with those implicit in a religious faith. Secular psychologists who accept these assumptions will naturally be restricted in their ability to understand, respect, and empathize with the supernatural context of the Christian client.

Psychology most clearly demonstrates its bias against religion by its apathy, its lack of interest in the relationship between religious values and mental health. For example, despite the current revival of public interest in all forms of religion, training in the clinical professions remains bereft of content

which would engender an appreciation of religious variables in psychological functioning. There has never been a full-blown outcome study published in any of the standard clinical journals to investigate whether inclusion of spiritual values and concerns in the counselling process affects the probability of a successful outcome.

American personality tests have also largely avoided religion and religious motivation or have included them in a depreciatory fashion. While experts have challenged mental health professionals not to simplify and negatively stereotype the vastly complex phenomenon of religion, as a rule religion, and religious people have been described in a simple and predominantly negative fashion in the psychological literature.

As with most forms of prejudice, psychologists tend not to be aware of their anti-religious bias. Nevertheless, survey evidence supports the notion that a negative attitude toward religion exists among psychotherapists. It also appears that the adoption of anti-religious attitudes may sometimes be part of the socialization process involved in becoming a psychologist. At the same time, anecdotal reports and some research evidence support the view that those who hold religious views are stigmatized by the profession.

The three major schools of psychotherapy no doubt contribute to this anti-religious attitude since they have all have promoted anti-religious assumptions as part of their theoretical world-views. While the behaviorists have often rejected religion because it is unscientific, the argument that all human behaviour should be subject to empirical validation is probably no longer tenable. Humanists have frequently accused traditional religion of being authoritarian and dogmatic and of encouraging helplessness and dependency. Yet it seems clear that such generalizations are based on biased client samples and a reluctance to acknowledge the positive aspects of religious commitment. Finally the contention that religious commitment correlates positively with psychopathology does not find support in the empirical research.

A fact which makes it difficult for psychotherapists to develop an appreciation of religious frames of reference is that the language and conceptual forms adopted by psychology are based on ideological choices which exclude spiritual phenomenon or cast them in a negative light. Clinicians should be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the cultural content of their client's religious world-view instead of coercing them into alien linguistic and conceptual

usages. Counsellors must learn how "not" to fit religious experiences into familiar psychological pigeonholes, but rather to see what the data of religious experiences themselves suggest. As long as a psychologist refuses to respect a client's religious experiences in their own right, then the avoidance or termination of therapy on the part of a religious client may be a very adaptive and wholly appropriate decision.

While social scientists are less religious than natural scientists, psychologists tend to be the least religious of all scientists. The fact that most therapists do not experience religion as important in their own lives may lead them to ignore or underestimate the significance of religion in the lives of their patients. Some evidence indicates that therapy itself is responsible for, rather than a consequence of the weakening of traditional religious commitments among psychologists.

Chapter VI

VALUE DISCREPANCIES IN THERAPY

Client-Therapist Value Discrepancy

Given the extent and implications of a bias in psychology against religion, it might be expected that many Christian clients considering psychotherapy, especially conservative Christian clients, would be reluctant to enter into a therapeutic relationship without first determining the attitude of their psychotherapist toward religion.

Many religious clients frequently report feeling more comfortable working with counsellors who share their values and often express a preference for treatment from religious psychotherapists. In fact, Dougherty and Worthington (1982) suggested that congruence between client and psychotherapist beliefs is a stronger determinant for preferred treatment than are psychological factors such as the kind of therapy to be administered. Weintraub and Aronson (1974), assessing the religious preferences of approximately 20% of the analytic patients in the Baltimore area, found the more choice the patient had the more likely they were to work with people of the same religion.

Posavac and Hartung (1977) reported no clear evidence that lay people believe there is any real difference between pastoral counselling and other forms of counselling. Quackenbos, Privette, and Kentz (1985), however, found subjects capable of making sophisticated distinctions between pastoral and other forms of counselling. In addition, this study reported that an overwhelming majority of subjects indicated religious values are an important topic for discussion during counselling. Caution was urged with respect to the generalizability of these findings as the sample was taken from a nontypical religious community.

A striking indication of how important value matching is for religious clients is suggested by the number of clients who seek help from the clergy for emotional problems. Brown (1969), Scarlett (1970) and Clemens, Corradi, and Wasman (1978) found that between 42% and 60% of people experiencing emotional problems turn first to the clergy for counselling. Lieberman and Mullen (1978) reported that after physicians, clergy are the most consulted professionals in the United States and that these consultations only infrequently deal with spiritual matters. In fact, pastors do most of the mental health work in the United States, perhaps more than psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers combined (Worthington 1986). Despite the fact

that parishioners seem generally satisfied with the pastoral counselling they receive, Virkler (cited in Worthington, 1986), reported that many pastors are poorly equipped for counselling activities and may function "at low levels of helpfulness."

Psychotherapists also seem to prefer working with clients who share their values to working with clients who do not. Marx and Spray (1972) reported the degree of "fit" between a psychotherapist's own religious biography (religious origins, rather than current religious position) and the client's current religio-cultural affinity was the best screening device for the client's emotional suitability for therapy. Religious homophily was clearly the dominant basis for the selective recruitment of clients by psychotherapists. The authors conclude that religio-cultural value homophily is a direct reflection of the emotional, affective dimension of psychotherapeutic relations.

When therapist-client differences on religious values are significant, they may create discrepancies on such fundamental issues as the nature of personal identity, the role of guilt in personal distress, the understanding of love, the goals of therapy, the nature and existence of God and many other issues (Ellis, 1980).

McMinn (1984) took just one of these issues--the role of guilt--and analyzed it conceptually and clinically from a religious and non-religious perspective. Guilt, a common theme in therapy, may have a very different meaning for someone who considers sin a valid concept. The religious person may interpret guilt as a warning sign pointing to dishonesty, irresponsibility, and unconcern for others, whereas for the non-religious psychologist guilt may be the problem itself. Albert Ellis (1980), for example, has expressed the belief that guilt itself, rather than the actions leading to guilt, is the main cause of psychopathology. McMinn analyzed the effects of this one value dimension and concluded that only by matching psychotherapists and clients along value dimensions will therapeutic outcome be most favorable.

Major therapist-client differences on dimensions such as values can have markedly negative implications for treatment (Beal, 1969; Rosenthal, 1955; Strupp & Williams, 1960; Ortmeyer, Welkowitz, & Cohen, 1966). A number of authors have strongly recommended therapist-client matching along value dimensions (McMinn, 1984; Sollod, 1982). McMinn (1984) suggested that without value clarification and matching psychotherapists expose themselves to a serious ethical problem. That of covert proselytism without consent.

Not matching along value dimensions, or at least acknowledging value differences between psychotherapists and their clients, is to impose the belief that the psychotherapist's values are superior to the values of his clients. While value transfusion and persuasion are certainly necessary and basic elements in the therapeutic process, persuasion without consent is not a proper activity for psychotherapists (McMinn, 1984).

Other authors have argued that if therapeutic enhancement is to succeed, it may be necessary to go beyond concern with therapist-client matching and face and confront the reality of psychotherapist bias directly (Goldstein, 1971). Psychotherapists often hide their biases by labeling clients "resistant" or "unsuitable," when difficulties are more appropriately the result of a negative affective reaction or dislike for the client and his values, a general lack of therapeutic skills in working with this kind of client, or a sense of inadequacy in contemplating treatment. It seems clear, then, that value differences between psychotherapists and clients are a critical aspect of the therapeutic relationship generally, and that to acknowledge and address these value issues openly is to face the problem of the religious client in psychotherapy.

The Christian Client's Fear of the Secular
Psychotherapist

King (1978) surveyed parishioners and pastors from theologically conservative congregations in San Diego and found many critical of available counselling services. Of those expressing dissatisfaction 89% "expressed concern that their Christian faith would be misunderstood, unappreciated, or perhaps even ridiculed or eroded by an atheistic or agnostic counselor" (Worthington, 1986, p. 425). Some anecdotal reports tend to support these findings. Meehl (1959), for example, reported his eventual realization that one of his patients was reluctant to reveal his religion because of the felt hostility of psychiatry toward religion. Others have expressed the fear that psychotherapists may seek to take away their religious beliefs (Rayburn, 1985).

Fears religious people express that their values may be changed or their beliefs misunderstood during psychological counselling have been thoroughly investigated among Conservative Christians (Worthington, 1986). Whether other Christians or clients representing other religions share these fears in the same way, or to the same degree, remains unclear. Such perceptions on the part of potential

clients have, of course, serious consequences for the elements of trust, honesty, and openness which are so necessary for effective counselling.

Even a vague awareness of an anti-religious bias among psychotherapists is likely to make the informed religious client hesitate before committing himself to psychotherapy. But if he is not informed, if he does not take the threat seriously, or if his need for professional treatment is urgent enough, he may enter therapy and experience a gradual kind of secular conversion. Conservative Christian fears that counselling is a persuasive process, subversive to religious beliefs, which may rob them of their faith, have some empirical support.

Humphries (1982) argued that because clients in pain become easily dependent on their psychotherapist, they often become vulnerable to their influence and authority, and can, therefore, more easily be persuaded to relinquish cherished beliefs.

Many psychotherapists have conceptualized psychotherapy as a process of attempting to alter "maladaptive" or "obstructive" attitudes held by clients (Ellis, 1962; 1966; 1980; Murphy, 1955; Pratt, 1956). Wolff (1954) noted that 48% of the psychotherapists and psychoanalysts questioned in his study confirmed that "value concepts of the therapists

do have and should have a direct influence upon the therapy" (pp. 11-12). An additional 24% saw an indirect influence taking place. Despite the fact that many psychotherapists seem to take great precautions to "avoid" influencing their clients' values in any way at all, it seems psychotherapists communicate their values unintentionally in subtle ways, even while trying to avoid doing so (Rosenthal, 1955; Szasz, 1962).

Lewis and Walsh (1980) found that participants lacked awareness of a counsellor's values, even when those values were stated explicitly during treatment. Despite the fact that clients failed to recognize influence attempts, over three-fourths of the participants in their study were influenced by the persuasion. Lewis and Lewis (1985a), after a review of persuasion research, concluded that findings constitute "solid empirical evidence supporting the occurrence of persuasion in counseling" (p. 151).

Kessel and McBreartry (1967), in an early review of values research, concluded that counsellors do communicate their values to clients and that the adoption of counsellor values by clients often occurs. Beutler (1979, 1981) also reviewed values research and confirmed earlier findings that client values change during psychotherapy and "that patients acquire the specific values and attitudes of their own therapists

rather than simply a more mature or adaptive set of beliefs" (Beutler, 1979, p. 432).

Beutler (1979) made an important distinction between the consideration that values and beliefs change during psychotherapy, and the consideration that psychotherapy systematically induces a client to develop beliefs which parallel those of their therapist. Critical issues of ethics and responsibility emerge, if psychotherapy is more than value clarification, but is in fact a persuasive process reflecting the client's adoption of "certain beliefs held by an advocate while simultaneously discarding equally valid beliefs held by non-advocates" (p. 33).

Schrier (1953) presented evidence of a relationship between improvement and the extent to which a client developed identification with his psychotherapist's need-system. Rosenthal (1955) showed a positive relationship between outcome and convergence of the client's moral attitudes toward those of his psychotherapist. Hill (1969) and Parloff, Iflund, and Goldstein (1960) found that clients' satisfaction was related more to whether psychotherapy achieved the psychotherapists' goals than it was to whether the clients' own goals for therapy were reached.

The relationship between value convergence and improvement in therapy is most strongly observed in the

course of individual treatment. Of 16 studies reviewed by Beutler (1981), 12 supported the hypothesis that convergence is both a common occurrence in therapy and is associated with improvement. The conclusion warranted by the analysis was that "convergence among a patient's and a therapist's personal beliefs not only seems to occur in individual psychotherapy but is positively associated with diverse measures of improvement" (Beutler, 1981, p. 86).

Beutler, Jobe, and Elkins (1974) found that improvement in group psychotherapy was most influenced by changes in religious and philosophical attitudes. Beutler, Jobe, and Elkins (1974) concluded that "psychotherapy may have its greatest effect on attitudes of a philosophical nature dealing with ethics and religion" (p. 552).

A follow-up study (Beutler, Pollack, & Jobe, 1978) on individual psychotherapy found psychotherapeutic improvement correlated strongly with changes in religious and other evaluative attitudes. Nevertheless, the authors caution, the effect is a complex one requiring greater specification of values. Some studies have failed to find a consistent relationship between improvement and attitude change (Beutler, Johnson, Neville, Elkins, & Jobe, 1975).

A correlation of measures of improvement with the adoption of psychotherapist values may initially seem to support the proposition that religious values are less conducive to psychological well-being than, for example, humanistic values. There is little argument among religious critics that the goals of psychotherapy can be achieved through the adoption of a humanistic value system. The objection they have is with the goals of psychotherapy. Critics ask if personal adjustment (freeing the client of guilt, anxiety, and neurosis), if elevated to a supreme value, can be an adequate philosophy for a community of men and women?

When clients use their religious beliefs to justify maladaptive ways of thinking or acting, then psychotherapists are justified in challenging the way those clients are using their beliefs. But if psychotherapists, whether intentionally or not, act in a way which, without just cause, undermines the commitments religious clients have to their faith, then religious clients should be concerned about the potentially subversive effect of psychotherapy upon their religious faith. The fact that value issues have not received deserved attention within the profession of psychology and that a systematic approach to values has not yet become a part of the training of most psychotherapists, complicates the task of the religious

client seeking psychotherapy. For the most part, the substantial challenges which working with a religious client poses for the psychotherapist, have not yet even been acknowledged by the profession.

Summary

Conservative Christians often express concern that their Christian faith will be misunderstood, unappreciated or perhaps even ridiculed by an atheistic or agnostic psychotherapist. Whether other Christians or clients representing other religions share these fears in the same way, or to the same degree, remains unclear. Such fears on the part of religious clients may inhibit the development of those important elements of trust, honesty, and openness which are so necessary for effective psychotherapy.

Fears which conservative Christian clients often express that psychotherapy may rob them of their faith may be well founded. Because clients in pain can easily become dependent on their psychotherapist, and therefore vulnerable to their psychotherapist's influence and authority, they may also be more easily persuaded to relinquish cherished beliefs. Many authors have conceptualized psychotherapy as a process of attempting to alter "maladaptive" or "obstructive"

attitudes by clients. In fact solid empirical evidence now supports the occurrence of persuasion in psychotherapy. Research indicates that psychotherapists do communicate their own values to clients, often unintentionally, and that the adoption of psychotherapist values by clients often occurs. In addition, psychotherapeutic activities seem to lead clients to acquire new beliefs, which parallel those of their own psychotherapist, rather than simply leading clients to adopt a more mature or adaptive set of beliefs. Nevertheless, value convergence between a psychotherapist and client is often strongly associated with diverse measures of improvement.

There is little argument among religious critics that the goals of psychotherapy can be achieved through the adoption of a secular value system. What religious critics are more likely to object to are the goals of psychotherapy themselves. Critics ask whether personal adjustment (freeing the client of guilt, anxiety, and neurosis), and self-actualization, if elevated to a supreme value, can be an adequate philosophy for a community of men and women.

The challenge posed by the religious client has, for the most part, not even been acknowledged by the profession of psychology. The fact that value issues have not received deserved attention, and that a

systematic approach to values has not become a part of the training of most psychotherapists, seriously complicates the task of the religious client who is contemplating therapy. As long as value issues remain unacknowledged or dealt with only superficially, religious clients stand a greater risk of having their faith undermined by the secular values of a psychotherapist.

Chapter VII

THE INTEGRATION OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND CHRISTIANITY

Psychologists dedicated to the study of religion around the turn of the century believed that the scientific investigation of religion would be an important contribution to the theory, practice, and progress of religion in the world. Through the years, however, the relationship between Christianity and modern psychology has not proved to be a particularly profitable or in many cases even a very congenial one. Once Freud's ideas, along with his aggressive assaults on the Christian faith, began to meet with wide critical acclaim, the Christian churches began to suffer a corresponding loss of influence and prestige. As a result, the feeling by many that Christianity and psychology were fundamentally incompatible and conflicting systems became established. Despite the fact that Freud and his theories have largely fallen out of favour and are certainly no longer the standard in psychology, the scars of this antagonistic period probably still influence and thus complicate the relationship between psychology and Christianity today. Strangely one hundred years after the founding of modern psychology we still find only scattered attempts

to integrate the Christian faith with modern psychological theory and data. Nevertheless, modern psychology has had a profound impact on Christianity.

Barriers to Integration Within the Churches

In the past, Christian churches had frequently been guilty of failing to minister to the emotional needs of their constituents and had often neglected their responsibility to speak out clearly on vital psychological issues. In 1926 Anton Boisen published an article challenging the church to become involved in people's emotional ills:

We have therefore this truly remarkable situation--a church which has always been interested in the care of the sick, confining her efforts to the types of cases (physical) in which religion has least concern and least to contribute, while in those types in which it is impossible to tell where the domain of the medical worker leaves off and that of the religious worker begins (mental problems), there the church is doing nothing. (Narramore, 1981, p.34)

Boisen became the spokesman for those encouraging the church to minister to the emotional needs of the people. This new emphasis gained ground quickly within liberal churches. Because the Christian faith had not evolved a comprehensive Christian psychology, which could fully address the mental health needs of its people, the apostles of this new ministry began to come under the influence of secular approaches, which had

demonstrated some effectiveness. Recognizing that emotional health was an important but neglected apostolate, religious liberals turned increasingly to psychotherapy as the means of ministering to the needs of society.

As pastoral counselling began to rely more and more on secular theories, the assumptions of the psychotherapeutic movements began to infiltrate the teachings of the liberal churches. So much so that critics now decry the fact that "the training programs for pastoral counseling, have too much psychiatry, too much psychology, and too little that is pastoral counseling....Too much of pastoral counselling is simply orthodox psychotherapy of common neurotic problems offered under the auspices of a 'churchy' figure" (Schofield, 1979). The extent to which psychological ideas have affected liberal churches has sometimes bordered on the ridiculous. Kilpatrick (1983) referred to a priest of his acquaintance who tells his congregation, "The purpose of Christ's coming was to say, 'You're O.K., and I'm O.K.'" Many Christians, particularly conservative Christians, are likely to react strongly to any suggestion that the experience of the Christian faith may be reduced to a psychologism, without utterly depriving it of its essential mysterious and transcendental nature.

Among many liberal Christian denominations, however, biblical faith and the inherited teaching of the church have now become tangled up with popular psychological ideas about self-esteem and self-fulfillment. In many evangelical churches, positive thinking often seems to have taken the place of faith. An indiscriminate adoption of secular psychology has resulted in a watering down of the Christian faith in these groups.

Hobart Mowrer (1961), who has helped revive interest in the psychology of religion, has written about the convergence of religion and modern psychology. Over a long period of time, Mowrer studied the relationship between academic psychology and the American churches. He found that psychology and psychiatry were beginning to discover the damage done by their naturalistic, particularly Freudian, assumptions and were now turning in other directions. Much of the religious establishment, on the other hand, had become so thoroughly caught up in these naturalistic assumptions, despite the fact that they were often inimical to their own traditions, that they had serious difficulties getting free of these influences.

Vitz (1987a) made a similar observation. He described as tragic the phenomenon of much of the

Christian world abandoning traditional Christian values in order to buy into the latest secular trends at the very peak of their influence, but just before they began to lose their popularity in the secular world. This willingness to compromise traditional Christian teachings, in order to be more in tune with the times, can leave the religious establishment looking ridiculous:

As an example, secular psychologists have recently discovered such ideas as character, virtue, chastity, celibacy, and even virginity. Soon these will be hot topics in the secular marketplace--just as these ideas and values have almost totally dropped out of Christian use. (Vitz, 1987a, p. 68)

Mitchell (1980) observed that, "Christian moralists and theologians have often been too uncritical of their borrowings from the prevailing secular culture, taking over themes and attitudes which the more discerning secular thinkers have found increasingly untenable" (p.162).

Obviously psychological understandings can be an invaluable help to Christians, just as they are to the general population. But today, modern psychotherapeutic trends, and not always the best ones, permeate the Christian media, and flood its literature. Psychotherapy has proven itself to be a temptation to theologians struggling to keep their churches full and their message current. But indiscriminate convergence

with modern psychotherapeutic perspectives has often resulted in a weakening of the traditional meanings, which have made the Christian message both distinctive and effective (Bobgan and Bobgan, 1987).

As a result of the invasion of secular humanistic values into liberal churches, many conservative Christians now feel that the only standard which can guide and re-animate the church, and help it to re-discover its true function, is a return to Christian orthodoxy.

While liberal pastors have been criticized for adopting psychotherapeutic practices too readily, conservative ministers have been criticized for being too resistant to adopting psychological understandings. Confronted by some of the deep emotional entanglements of their parishioners, ministers may feel they need a better understanding of the human personality, which psychology could help to provide. At the same time, they often believe that the Bible contains all of the answers to man's difficulties, so if they look to psychology, they are being disloyal to the Scriptures. In addition, a fearful avoidance of feelings and deep personal involvement has caused many conservative Christians to anxiously steer clear of psychotherapy. Consequently, conservative Christian leaders have sometimes chosen to entrench themselves in old formulas

and have failed to minister adequately to inner emotional needs. Many Conservative religious groups now regard psychiatric treatment and psychotherapy with distrust, and more or less actively discourage members from entering treatment. Members who do pursue treatment, in spite of this official or peer pressure, often feel disloyal, embarrassed, and isolated. Conflict and resistance to adopting the practices of psychotherapy, continue to characterize the attitude of many conservative Christians, especially pastors. (Narramore, 1981)

Because of the extreme responses of both liberals and conservatives to the challenge of emotional health, Christianity has largely failed to make distinctive contributions to psychology. From the side of the churches neither the liberal nor the conservative attitude, as characterized above, can be expected to provide a proper context within which a responsible integration of Christian and psychotherapeutic approaches might be nurtured. But there are other options. Pope John Paul II, for one, is leading Catholicism in the direction of what has been called "Christian humanism." It is a position which, while defending and supporting the principle of the dignity of man by way of the traditional teachings of the Church, remains open to the value and importance of

dialogue with the world. It is also very much aware of the dangers implicit in becoming a Church of compromise (Johnson, 1982).

The spirit of dogmatism is frequently the great obstacle to a larger more realistic view of man. In the face of modernity, Christians must be courageous enough not to retreat into either paranoid or superior attitudes. They should avoid becoming solely concerned with preserving doctrinal purity by adopting an isolationist attitude. Nor must they succumb to the pressure of the new psychotherapies and so abandon the traditional meanings of the Christian message. A middle way must be forged which integrates an intact Christianity with the most useful elements of modern psychotherapy.

Barriers to Integration Within Psychotherapy

Psychotherapists must likewise get beyond their personal vocational interests and personal prejudices and avail themselves of a larger vision and fresh perspective on the human condition. What psychotherapists must recognize is that there can be both theological and psychological dogmatism. Both psychotherapists and theologians are too easily tempted

to remain in isolated camps, when they could choose to become involved in a constructive reconciliation.

Anxiety, defensiveness, and sometimes resentment have been the barriers on both sides to the development of an integration of psychotherapy and theology. Nevertheless, the undeniable contribution of psychotherapy to the alleviation of human suffering has led a growing number of Christian psychotherapists to seek a responsible integration.

One example is Tournier (1963), who described two contrasting philosophies or what he called gospels in the world, the gospel of psychotherapy which urges people to assert and defend themselves, to develop their abilities, to pursue their ambitions, to live their lives to the fullest, and the gospel of religion which is a plea for self-denial, generosity, meekness, and love. It is a call for people to leave their places of security and give themselves to the service of others. Tournier asserted that these views are not mutually exclusive, and that it is unnecessary for followers of these two contrasting viewpoints to line up in opposition to one another. Both gospels are right and in fact complementary. People must first assert themselves and then deny themselves, said Tournier. They must assert themselves, accept themselves, and find a place in life for themselves, before they can

move on to loving service for others. Tournier argued effectively that the biblical position is as intellectually respectable, and on many points more logical than is non-Christian, secular psychology. Yet psychotherapists continue to raise some of the most disturbing questions which Christians must answer. What is important, and difficult, is to discover how modern psychotherapy and theology can coexist comfortably. But, as Tournier insisted, they must be integrated. The task of integration is then:

...neither to construct a "Christian psychology" based entirely on biblical anthropology, which leaves out all the enriching aspects of the psyche nor to construct a psychologically sophisticated theology, which would still ignore the unique issues of psychopathologizing and genuine soul making. Rather, it is to construct a model which allows the process of soul-making (or mental health) to meet in the depths with the processes of sanctification, leading to a person who is both spiritually and psychologically whole. Each function--psychological and spiritual--serves as a catalyst for the other. When either is neglected, the other suffers in response. Thus psychology and theology walk hand in hand, as parents of a child destined to become spiritually sanctified and psychologically whole. (Vande Kemp, 1982, p. 210)

This task of integration will be challenging. If a comprehensive integration is to be achieved, integrationists will need to tolerate much ambiguity, and be able:

...to hold seeming conflicts in abeyance or in tension until a broader perspective or a new way of looking at things brings resolution. This is a virtue that most against theorists seem to lack.

In being anxious to find "the" answers, they make closure too early and shut themselves off from insights available from differing perspectives. (Carter & Narramore, 1979, p.119)

For their part, individual psychotherapists must begin examining their personal prejudices with respect to religion. The psychotherapeutic community as a whole must begin to give deserved attention to the special context of the Christian client and begin applying the knowledge and experience, which those who are working toward an integration of theology and psychotherapy have already achieved.

Summary

Through the years the relationship between Christianity and modern psychotherapy has not been a particularly profitable or even a very congenial one. Nevertheless, modern psychotherapy has had a profound impact on Christianity.

In the past, Christian churches have frequently been guilty of failing to minister to the emotional needs of their congregations and have often neglected to speak out clearly on vital psychological issues. Recognizing that emotional health was an important, but neglected apostolate, members of the liberal churches turned increasingly to psychotherapy as a means of ministering to the needs of the people. As pastoral

counselling began to rely more and more on secular theories, the assumptions of the psychological movements began to infiltrate the teachings of the liberal churches, eventually resulting in a further watering down of the Christian faith in these groups.

While liberal churches have been criticized for adopting psychotherapeutic theories too readily, conservative churches have been criticized for being too resistant to adopting psychological understandings, even when the adoption of such perspectives would have proven useful. If a proper integration is to be achieved, both extremes will have to be avoided. The Christian humanism of Pope John Paul II is one example of a Christian perspective which strikes this balance, and which may, therefore, be ideally suited to the nurturing of a responsible integration between psychological and Christian approaches.

From the side of psychotherapists, what must be recognized is that there is both theological and psychological dogmatism. Anxiety, defensiveness, and sometimes resentment have been the barriers on both sides to the development of an integration of psychotherapy and theology. Integrationists must be prepared to tolerate much ambiguity and learn to hold seeming conflicts in abeyance until a broader perspective brings resolution. The psychotherapeutic

community, if they chose to be involved in this task of integration, must start by giving deserved attention to the special context of the Christian client. They must begin to apply the knowledge and experience which those who are working toward an integration of theology and psychotherapy have already achieved.

Chapter VIII

PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH THE CHRISTIAN CLIENT

The contribution of religious factors to positive psychotherapeutic outcomes has been noted by a number of psychotherapists in the past. Gordon Allport (1950) for example, remarked that when he finds religion present in a patient he never disturbs it, for in the long run it is likely to turn out to be a leading factor in the cure. Nevertheless, for the most part the psychological literature has represented an almost exclusively negative attitude toward religion.

Recently however, this literature has begun to reflect an encouraging shift away from its traditional negative response to religion (Benson, 1984; Bergin, 1983; Saffady, 1976). Bergin (1986), in a review of Robert Lovinger's book Working with Religious Issues in Therapy (1984), and Moshe Spero's Psychotherapy of the Religious Patient (1985), noted the "historic juncture" represented by these volumes. Both authors are respected professional clinical psychologists who "take religion seriously as a potentially positive ingredient in personal change and adjustment, thus countering in a rigorous way the stigma associated with

religiousness in much of the clinical literature" (p. 85).

Robert Lovinger (1984) has provided the best reference book currently available for the secular psychotherapist seeking direction in the area of working with religious clients. Fundamental to Lovinger's approach is the assumption that psychotherapists must develop an understanding of the ways in which religion can be exploited by patients, as well as an understanding of the ways in which religion can facilitate health and community relations. It is suggested, therefore, that psychotherapists must become sensitive to a patient's religious upbringing and current beliefs and to whether spiritual attitudes and practices can be used to relieve psychic suffering.

Handicaps when Dealing with Religious Clients

Lovinger (1979) suggested several reasons, personal to the psychotherapist, why psychotherapists might hesitate to explore religious material during therapy. First, psychotherapists may have a strong reaction toward religion in general or a specific denomination in particular. Negative experiences in a psychotherapist's past with religion may be responsible for this. The psychotherapist who at one time had a

religious affiliation, which has now been rejected, may experience feelings of guilt, desertion, apostasy, or heresy. Or there may be anger toward former beliefs and practices and those who still hold them, particularly if these experiences were in the context of a strict, moralistic religious upbringing. Such previous experience can create real complications for psychotherapists during therapy. It is important in such instances that psychotherapists recognize not only the potential for countertransference but also the very different importance and meaning religion may have for their clients.

Many psychotherapists who received some religious education in childhood may now view religion as childish, and for good reasons. Much religious education stops at about age 13 or 14, and many adults, because they have not continued their religious education, never develop a mature understanding of religious doctrines and practices. It is likely that many psychotherapists will have to do some further study, if they are to understand the experiences of their religious clients and not end up dismissing religious beliefs as simplistic or childish.

Psychotherapists may be reluctant to intervene on value-loaded topics because of underlying fears about their own competence to do so. Most psychotherapists

will have had no formal training in spiritual exploration. In many cases, psychotherapists also will have assumed certain beliefs about religious issues, without having thoroughly examined their own convictions. Avoidance of spiritual exploration, in such cases, may be based on denial. In addition, certain truths about basic questions of man's existence cannot be settled by established empirical methods. Therapists may fear getting bogged down in discussions about which they know little, or about which they feel no firm conclusions can be reached. Nevertheless, clients may need to scrutinize and examine some of these existential issues.

It is difficult to take seriously a matter one is misinformed about, or has no respect for. For the psychotherapist without a religious affiliation, lack of respect is a handicap, if he or she is to enter the experiential world of the religious client. Lovinger (1984) argued, that no change in the therapist's attitude toward religion is really required to conduct effective therapy with the religious client, other than relinquishing the idea, if held, that religion is silly or meaningless. No phenomenon can be usefully approached if one holds such an idea.

To help psychotherapists overcome this barrier, Lovinger discusses certain fundamental roots of Western

religions. He intends to clarify, for the secular psychotherapist, some of the nonreligious functions religions have served in society, and at the same time provide the psychotherapist with some basis for taking seriously those with religious affiliation. Also helpful in this regard would be for psychotherapists to acquaint themselves with the intellectual tradition of Christian apologetics: Orthodoxy or the Eternal Man by G. K. Chesterton, Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis, or Peace of Soul by Fulton Sheen are among the many books, which provide a sophisticated and cogent justification for the Christian faith.

Lovinger takes the position that if a psychotherapist first tries to understand, rather than undermine the client's view of the Bible, the client may be open to hearing other things the Bible has to say. Lovinger's treatment is particularly helpful in that he discusses biblical references related to common social problems, which are sometimes used by Christian clients to justify unhealthy attitudes. For the psychotherapist to have access to alternative interpretations of these passages, which Lovinger provides, will allow therapists to work with the clients' value system and not feel their only option is to deny the values because the client's 1976 interpretation is so obviously unhealthy.

Toward a General Approach to the Religious Client

Psychotherapists must be more informed about the major religious denominations and their characteristics, if they are to be culturally prepared for the encounter. The general approach is to view the client along denominational lines, as well as to explore the personal meanings. In this way, both the normative and the variant qualities of the beliefs held can be determined. A little experience soon proves to psychotherapists that clients often misunderstand their own religion.

The author encourages psychotherapists to approach the client from a basic stance of respectful interest in the client's world, without necessarily agreeing or disagreeing with the client who wants to live differently from the psychotherapist. He notes that often gaps and contradictions in the client's belief system, which in the course of psychotherapy the psychotherapist may become aware, rather than being a reason for dismissing religion as a topic of discussion, may very well be the opposite. If approached with sensitivity and openness, cognitive dissonance may yield that level of anxiety and discomfort important to resolve conflict in therapy. It may surprise both psychotherapist and client to

discover that these issues, through open discussion, do not necessarily threaten faith, but may actually strengthen it by providing new insights. While gaps and contradictions in a client's religious understanding have been seen by secular psychotherapists as grounds to exclude religious issues, the position taken here is the opposite. These points of contradiction may offer therapeutic leverage and be keys to a deeper understanding of a client's faith.

The religious client who isn't trusting enough to expose the reasoning behind his faith to the psychotherapist may be either uncertain if he and his faith would emerge unshaken by such a challenge, or uncertain that the counsellor would not abuse this confidence. If sensitive religious issues can be discussed safely, then the development of the therapeutic relationship stands to gain.

The argument is easily made that a psychotherapist from the same religious background as the client is best suited to understand that person. In addition, religious clients frequently report feeling more comfortable working with psychotherapists who share their values and often express a preference for treatment from religious psychotherapists. This reasoning tends to slide past the issue of competence. Also overlooked is the fact that a different background

may allow a psychotherapist to pick up on issues which might otherwise be missed. A lack of familiarity with the religious culture of the client can usually be alleviated by asking the client for more information about the normative aspects of their religion. Clients are often flattered, surprised, and more than willing to educate their psychotherapist on the details of their faith.

The religious psychotherapist must face different challenges with religious clients than those of the nonreligious psychotherapist. Psychotherapists who are serious about their religious commitment may take offence, when they come across clients who use religion for self-serving purposes, and who fail to recognize the high ethical, emotional, and spiritual qualities demanded by religion. The religious psychotherapist must realize that religions are readily available for such abuse. In such instances, religious psychotherapists may find it helpful to focus on how the client is using religion, rather than on how they should be using it. Religious psychotherapists must also be vigilant to the possibility that shared religious values and beliefs may lead to collusive avoidance, rather than therapeutic investigation; that apparent similarities in religious values and beliefs may not have the same origins and functions in the

patient; and that the dynamic significance of the patient's religious beliefs are not overlooked when these are important.

Most Frequently Encountered Problems

Practical difficulties when working with religious clients arise most often "when dependent (or, more rarely, paranoid) patients who have embraced a simplistic, authoritarian form of religion are threatened by a therapist's attempts to stimulate them to think independently" (Peteet, 1981, p. 561). As Lovinger has indicated, this kind of resistance can usually be sidestepped, if the therapist is willing to deal with the issues openly, within the client's own religious frame of reference. When extreme conflict in a client is related to belief and behaviour, it can often relate to family life and early training. "This involves the formation of religious images of the divinity in particular, where much of the experience of parent and authority figures is closely bound up with the sense of God and the qualities of this God" (Byrnes, 1984, p. 223).

A common attitude in psychotherapy, and one which can contribute greatly to resistance, is when the religious client believes that if only he were

religious enough, that is, prayed enough and had enough faith, he wouldn't require psychotherapy. When this attitude comes up, and it can emerge at different stages of therapy, Lovinger (1984) often responds by telling the client, "Religion deals with how to live spiritual values, and one's relationship with God and other people. Healing comes in many ways and who is to say how God will choose to make help available." It is often useful to adopt the client's idiom in order to enhance communication.

Initiating the Religious Discussion

The literature reveals differing views on the issue of when to bring up the subject of religion. Pruyser (1971) advocates careful assessment of the client's religiosity and its social and dynamic implications as part of the case history. Lovinger (1984), on the other hand, does not bring up the subject of religion until some time has gone past, unless the client initiates the discussion.

Psychotherapists, when asked about their religious values by a client, should answer in a candid, forthright manner. At the same time, it is important to realize that, when a therapist's values differ significantly from those of their client,

self-disclosure can have considerable impact, and must be approached with some sensitivity. If clients are to be open and express their own beliefs, they need to feel secure that these are not going to be rejected or ridiculed. Psychotherapists must continue to be alert to patient's fears as psychotherapy progresses, and they may need to stop to discuss them. In these ways, the fostering of resistance can be avoided.

A clear self-disclosure is often necessary, when religion is important to the client. For example:

In the second session, a patient (Mr. D.) raised the matter of religion and I gave him the general assurance that I regarded it as important. Two months later, he expressed the feeling that I would not be able to understand something because I was an atheist. I replied that I was Jewish, and he felt relieved. He was able to discuss the material troubling him, but also said that he had experienced my initial answer as professional evasiveness. (Lovinger, 1984, p. 172)

Psychotherapists have different ways of managing the self-disclosure. When the patient brings up the matter of religious orientation, Buhler (1962) prefers to explore the issue thoroughly before disclosing her own position. Lovinger (1984), on the other hand, prefers to reveal his position right away, but worded carefully to avoid tension.

The matter of values comes more sharply to the fore when the patient is religious and asks about the therapist's religious stance in the early phase or poses other questions that derive from the patient's fear that a personal religious orientation will be attacked. What I have found

helpful is to indicate my orientation briefly and state that I have no interest in having other people see it my way. If their religion is important to my patient, then I would certainly be interested in understanding it, as I am interested in anything they would want to tell me. (p. 69)

Beit-Hallahmi (1975) sees the problem of self-disclosure of religious orientation as one of encouraging differentiation without creating too much tension. He made the point that once therapist-client value differences are recognized, this separation process itself can be useful in encouraging the client's individuality in the face of the therapist's obvious authority.

Referrals to Clergy

If a psychotherapist experiences too strong an aversion to a client's values, referral to another psychotherapist, or perhaps to the clergy, may be advised. Most of the research in the literature on the referrals between the clergy and psychotherapists has been unidirectional: from clergy to psychologists. Meylink and Gorsuch (1988), reviewing research which was bi-directional, reported that clergy refer more clients to others than are referred to them. While this is not surprising, therapists who are considering a referral to clergy should note that clergy often report dissatisfaction both with the lack of reciprocity and

with the lack of feedback on referrals that were given. The following statement is a good general perspective to have, when considering a referral to clergy:

Because clergy have been trained in pastoral counselling by mental health professionals who were themselves fairly ignorant of the clinical significance of moral development, they tend to be equally lost when it comes to helping a client with serious psychological symptomatology related to values. A clergy person's expertise tends to be most effective within the moral reference system that his or her religion provides. The moral-psychological understanding of the religious leader is normally related to issues of moral-code compliance and conflicts resulting from transgressions of stated values as well as the difficulties a believer may experience in accepting sometimes. (Wick, 1985, p. 14)

Closer ties between religious helping professionals and mental health professionals certainly need to be established. Clergy should be made more aware of their role as a moral reference authority and the psychological significance of that issue for a religiously oriented person's moral development. Both professional groups need to expand their efforts to train their members in effectively dealing with value problems (Wick, 1985).

Christian Counselling for Christian Clients

Some Christian psychologists exclusively promote Christian counselling for Christian clients, (for example the "nouthetic counselling" approach of Jay Adams), and believe that for secular counsellors to

work with Christian clients is unacceptable. Strong (1976), while acknowledging that "in process" there are many more similarities than differences between Christian and secular counselling, says that when the "content" of the counselling session is considered, differences become paramount:

Secular counseling systems are humanistic and pagan to the core. People are viewed as basically good, and they are perceived as justified and worthy simply because they exist. In other words, at the core of all secular counseling systems is man. At the core of Christian counseling is Jesus Christ; man is viewed as fallen but justified and worthy of Grace. A second important difference is that most counseling systems currently emphasize the rights of the individual. Individuals are taught to assert themselves, to demand their rights from other persons, to stand up for themselves.... Christian counseling, on the other hand, emphasizes the concept of responsibility. Individuals must accept responsibility for themselves and for others. A third dissimilarity between secular and Christian counseling lies in the difference in the source of power used to change the individual's life. In secular counseling, the source is the willpower of the individual. In Christian counseling, the willpower of the individual is important but takes its place in relation to the Grace of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. I ascribe to the idea that it is not a question of either works or Grace but rather a question of works and Grace. One must depend on the Grace and power of the Spirit and on one's own determination and will to change one's way of living. (Strong, 1976, pp.152-153)

Spero (1985) also objected to the notion that secular counsellors can work effectively with Christian clients:

There is a quantum difference that therapists and most nonpsychotic patients perceive between accepting for the sake of building rapport that,

say, a patient's fantasies have an "almost real" quality and the possibility that a "third party" (God) is present in the relationship. Therapists who reject this distinction eventually will convey this attitude to the patient, resulting in misalliance. (p. 83)

Jay Adams is a Christian counsellor, and prolific author, who has made vigorous and persuasive attacks against modern psychotherapy. But Adams is noteworthy because he has gone beyond being just another conservative Christian attacking contemporary psychology. He has detailed an extensive set of counselling methods which are based on Christian values and Biblical authority (cited in Lovinger, 1984).

Adams, Strong and others have detailed their objections to the notion that secular counsellors can work effectively with Christian clients. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Lovinger, and some of the other secular psychologists noted above, are making a positive contribution to overcoming the bias in the field of psychotherapy against religion by promoting an awareness of the potentially positive aspects of religious commitment. They have also outlined methods which are meant to assist the non-religious psychotherapist or counsellor to help the religious client, without disturbing the fundamental elements of his or her faith. At the same time, psychotherapists are being told they must be careful with value issues

and not end up playing a role for which they are not equipped. How successful this approach is in practice, and how protected the Christian client ultimately is from the elements of persuasion and secular conversion, is not known. Lovinger clearly does not attempt to integrate Christianity and psychotherapy. Rather, what he is saying is that the psychotherapist can remain secular and still offer a valuable service as a professional to the religious client. Criticisms that psychotherapists tend not to understand or respect this client population are being addressed.

Summary

Recently, the psychological literature has reflected a shift away from its almost exclusively negative stance toward religion. There are now articles and books available which offer psychotherapists basic insights into how to utilize the potentially positive aspects of their client's religious beliefs.

Psychotherapists who wish to counsel religious clients effectively, need to develop an understanding of the ways in which religion can be exploited by patients, as well as an understanding of the ways in which religion can facilitate health and community relations.

There are several reasons why psychotherapists might hesitate to explore religious material during therapy. Negative experiences in a therapist's past with religion, particularly where a strict moralistic upbringing was involved, may lead to countertransference problems. psychotherapists may also hesitate to involve themselves in value-loaded topics because of underlying fears about their own competence to do so effectively.

Many psychotherapists, because their own religious education was terminated early and they never had the opportunity to develop a mature understanding of religion, may now view religion as childish or simplistic. It is certainly difficult to take seriously a matter about which one is misinformed or for which one has no respect. For the psychotherapist without a religious affiliation, lack of respect can be a handicap.

According to Lovinger (1984), the only prerequisite for working with the religious client is relinquishing the idea, if held, that religion is silly or meaningless. Certainly, no phenomenon can be usefully approached in this way. But Spero (1985) noted that there is a profound difference between accepting, for the sake of building rapport, that a client's fantasies are "almost real," and the possibility that a

"third party" (God) is present in the relationship. To ignore this distinction may eventually result in misalliance.

To help psychotherapists get beyond these barriers, Lovinger (1984) discusses some of the nonreligious functions religion has served in society, and offers reasons why the psychotherapist might take seriously those with religious affiliation. Psychotherapists are also advised to acquaint themselves with the rich tradition of Christian apologetics.

Lovinger's (1984) text is a good reference book, as he discusses not only the major religious denominations and their characteristics of which a therapist must be aware, but also biblical references related to common social problems, which are sometimes used by religious clients to justify unhealthy attitudes. Psychotherapists will need alternative interpretations of these Biblical passages, if they are to avoid feeling that their only option is to attack their clients' beliefs.

Gaps and contradictions within a client's belief system instead of being a reason for dismissing religion as a topic for discussion, if approached with sensitivity and openness, may offer the therapeutic

leverage necessary to help the client develop a deeper understanding of their faith.

Lack of familiarity with the religious background of a client, need not be a barrier. For one thing, when asked, clients are often flattered and more than willing to explain to the therapist the details of their faith.

Religious psychotherapists may face special problems, especially when they encounter clients who use religion for self-serving purposes. A good approach is for the religious therapist to focus on how religion is being used, rather than how it should be used.

The most common problem, when dealing with religious clients, is probably encountered when dependent clients, who have embraced a simplistic, authoritarian form of religion, begin to feel threatened by a psychotherapist's attempts to stimulate them to think independently. Such clients are most effectively dealt with if the psychotherapist does not merely attempt to expose the unhealthy consequences of their belief system but rather offers an alternative interpretation of relevant scriptural passages.

Psychotherapists should be candid and forthright, when questioned about their own religious values. A clear self-disclosure is often necessary, when religion is important to the client, and when the

psychotherapist's own beliefs differ from those of his or her client's. The self-disclosure may even encourage the client's individuality in the face of the psychotherapist's obvious authority.

Referral to another psychotherapist or to the clergy may be advisable when a psychotherapist experiences too strong an aversion to a client's values. A referral to the clergy may be useful, but it should be noted that most clergy are fairly ignorant about the clinical significance of moral development. The clergy tends to be particularly helpful when moral issues and attitudes need clarification. Both clergy and counsellor communities need to expand their efforts to train their members in effectively dealing with value problems.

While some Christian psychologists exclusively promote Christian counselling for Christian clients, it cannot be denied that the approach of some secular psychologists, for example Robert Lovinger, by exploring the potentially positive aspects of religious commitment, make an important contribution toward overcoming the anti-religious bias in psychotherapy. Therefore, they contribute to providing better service for those religious clients who do end up in therapy with a secular psychotherapist.

Chapter IX

PSYCHOTHERAPIST EDUCATION AND THE CHRISTIAN CLIENT

The Cultural Unconscious

From this exploration of the literature, several questions emerge. Why has the profession of psychotherapy, for the most part, ignored the unique context and special demands of the Christian client? And why have those who have challenged psychology to confront the existence of a profession-wide bias against religion largely been ignored?

These questions may be partially answered by an idea coming out of cultural anthropology, that of the "cultural unconscious." While the members of a given culture usually share a set of assumptions, values, and beliefs about the world which guide and determine their actions, they can be unaware of the extent to which these ideas are influencing them. In fact, it is extraordinarily difficult for the members of a culture to become aware of many of their values and attitudes, because they are, quite simply, part of a world that is taken for granted.

As Marshall McLuhan (cited in Schlossberg, 1983) noted, environments, even theoretical ones, tend not to be noticed. While we see the explicit contents of our

environments, because we see with them, they are themselves often imperceptible. We are often influenced by ideas of which we are unaware and consequently are unaware of their effect upon us. Or if we are aware of their effect, we find it difficult to discover their cause. The value assumptions held by modern psychotherapy are shared with the surrounding culture and act as a kind of cultural unconscious. Consequently, one may not be heard, if one is critical of psychotherapy on an issue which finds justification in the general culture. If psychotherapy is biased against religion, this is not likely to become a serious concern within the profession of psychotherapy so long as that bias is a shared feature with the surrounding culture.

Psychotherapy's failure to assume full responsibility for the value positions it promotes is also not helped by the emphasis in graduate school education on training students in research methods, rather than in conceptual analysis. Hogan and Sloan (1985) have suggested:

...we do more than simply ignore metatheoretical considerations; we teach our students that to analyze their (or our) pretheoretical or metatheoretical assumptions has nothing to do with "science," and that in fact such concerns are a sign of weak-mindedness ...All of this makes sense in terms of career planning, but is disastrous for the development of a valid and cumulative knowledge base. We would argue, then, that to the

degree that psychologists are unaware of the individualistic biases of their discipline, our entire process of graduate education is substantially inadequate. (p. 17)

Kreyche (1972) noted that while some academic disciplines, especially those in the social sciences are profoundly anti-Christian in their effect, it can be difficult to counter their effect by dealing with their evidence or their arguments. It is their assumptions that need to be questioned. These are statements presumed to be true which have not been proven:

The problem is that the careless or untrained are misled into accepting conclusions without recognizing their shaky foundation of unstated beliefs; and second, the very fact that the most dubious beliefs are taken for granted by experts lends an aura of verisimilitude that beguiles the overly respectful into accepting them without question....Soundly designed experiments, complete data, airtight controls, scrupulous honesty, and rigorous logic yield wrong conclusions when the original assumptions are wrong. (p. 105)

The Christian Client: A Challenge for Psychotherapist Education

Whatever attitude the psychotherapist may personally have toward religion, the client may see religion as providing him with strong psychological and spiritual support, as well as meaningful frames of reference for understanding himself and his relationships in the world. Religious beliefs may be so

fully integrated into a person's being that understanding certain problems necessitates examining spiritual influences.

Nevertheless, Pattison (1969) noted that most psychotherapists steer clear of dealing with religious issues in psychotherapy, and rarely, if ever, employ religious concepts or techniques in treatment. Lovinger (1979) has pointed out that for a psychotherapist to fail to take cognizance of any significant aspect of a client's life is likely to significantly restrict what therapy can offer. Cunningham (1983) took a stronger position, he suggested that if the psychotherapist does not take into account spiritual or religious values, when they are important to the client, then effective outcomes will be temporary. Peteet (1981) argued that it may be appropriate to address religious beliefs for other reasons. Religious values and practices can themselves be a source of conflict for religious clients living in a heterogeneous secular society. Psychotherapists who avoid discussion of religious issues thereby miss opportunities to help patients integrate their religious and emotional selves.

Certainly most psychotherapists are not trained to deal with highly charged value discussions. In fact, the anticipation of such discussions probably leads many to avoid the exploration of religious beliefs

during psychotherapy. But as has already been noted, when religious beliefs do provide important orienting constructs for the Christian client the avoidance of any discussion of religious issues can be expected to inhibit therapeutic progress.

Shafranske (cited in Cunningham, 1983) observed that when psychotherapists do respond to spiritual issues, they tend to do so in a very personal way. Lack of training may be the reason psychotherapists often fail to respond in an appropriate clinical manner.

A 20-year-old college student reluctantly agreed to seek psychiatric help for depression and concurrent hostility. This young man had been attempting to control these feelings through prayer and Bible reading. A previous psychiatrist had told him that much of his difficulty stemmed from his being "too religious." A summary from this psychiatrist revealed that his treatment plan had "focused on the reduction of religious preoccupation." (Peteet, 1981, p. 561)

Was the psychiatrist in the above example really trying to confront defensiveness and/or resistance, or was he diagnosing the problem in terms of the most obvious behavioural and verbal activity of the client, that is, his religious activity? An exploration of the religious beliefs and practices of the client was not attempted. Obviously this psychiatrist viewed the client's interest in religion as a problem, rather than as a possible solution. The psychiatrist's conclusion, that religious preoccupation needed to be reduced,

appears presumptuous. Such a conclusion is probably the result of not having a developed understanding and appreciation for the many roles religion can play in people's lives, and a proper facilitative framework for helping religious clients.

Religious clients can present the clinician with many complicated technical and ethical dilemmas, but current training programs have almost totally neglected preparing clinicians to deal with these issues (Russo, 1984; Spero, 1985). Cunningham (1983) argued that while conflicts surrounding ethics, morality, and spiritual development are often important to people in psychotherapy, "therapists have little, if any, training in probing spiritual feelings and using patient's spiritual beliefs to resolve problems" (p. 21). Von Struck (1978) surveyed fifty randomly chosen San Diego psychologists to determine whether and how they discuss patient's religious problems. Most subjects reported that discussion of patients' religious problems should be attempted, and that discussion of religious problems may be beneficial to the therapeutic process. Most subjects also reported feeling inadequately trained to handle patient's religious problems, but given the opportunity, many would seek advanced training or education in this field.

As already discussed, psychotherapists frequently promote, either knowingly or unknowingly, their personal values in psychotherapy. Psychotherapists, therefore, must become aware that they have certain beliefs which, as long as they go unacknowledged in the therapy setting, may create countertransference problems that could seriously inhibit progress in therapy. The fundamental and often highly charged value differences between the secular and Christian world-views may well form the most crucial part of the dynamics between the religious client and the secular psychotherapist. It would, then, seem imperative that psychotherapists become aware of their religious values (or lack of them), and have the sensitivity to keep them from interfering with the exploration of the patient's own attitudes and values. This principle is, however, not by itself sufficient. Grosch (1985) described a nonreligious colleague who bends over backwards not to challenge a client's religious statements, in order to avoid introducing his own bias. Unfortunately, this attitude may ultimately be responsible for his failure to ever respond to the relevant issues within the client's belief system.

Is it realistic to believe we can sharpen the attitudes and techniques of psychotherapists to the point that they will not, even subtly, act in a way

which unnecessarily undermines the religious thinking and feeling of their clients? Most writers on this subject believe not, and advocate either value matching or psychotherapist self-disclosure along with psychotherapist education, including in-depth knowledge of spiritual concerns, and how to work openly with the value issues of religious clients.

While the issue of informed consent has received considerable emphasis in medical practice and research, it has only begun to receive attention in the practice of psychotherapy. Psychotherapists, if they want to be responsible under the principle of informed consent, must clarify the relationship between their own value positions, the value positions held by clients, and the therapeutic task itself. Psychotherapists should certainly be encouraged to understand more precisely their own value positions, the value positions of others, and then become educated about the potentially destructive therapeutic results of unconsciously carrying on a missionary activity.

Strunk (1979) pointed out that psychotherapists must also learn to treat intellectualizing as an integral part of a total personal system. The failure to do so has often led psychotherapists to devalue the client's religious and/or theological processing of life experiences. The anti-intellectualism often noted

in the psychotherapeutic community may be a movement away from total person concern. Over years of working with religious professionals, especially priests, nuns and ministers, Strunk learned that:

...to treat their philosophical and theological concerns "merely" as defensive maneuvers simply did not work. For many of them, the intellectual project--the attempt to build logical and meaningful cognitive systems--is as essential to their self-realization as is owning their feelings. (p. 195)

Meehl (1959) noted that from time to time, exchanges between client and therapist occur which are, in their actual verbal structure, rather like a segment out of one of the Platonic dialogues:

I suspect that one reason why so many therapists are skittish about getting involved in this kind of thing is that they lack talent and training for the Socratic dialogue; and that this deficiency, together with their own personal ambiguity about the value-question, makes them feel unsafe if they treat any such material in its own right (p. 258).

Strunk (1979) recommended that in the training of psychotherapists a truly liberal education ought to be basic, an education inclusive of far more philosophy, theology, literature, and popular culture than is now the case. What is also needed in this regard, argued Strunk, is a realistic appraisal of personal and professional strengths and limitations, and a greater consideration of referral and consultative courses, including the possible utilization of philosophers, theologians, and so forth.

Summary

Why has the profession of psychotherapy largely ignored the unique context of the Christian client? And why have those who have challenged psychology to face and confront the existence of a profession wide bias against religion largely been ignored?

It may be difficult for psychotherapy to recognize its bias against religion as long as that bias is a shared feature with the culture which is surrounding it. In addition, the emphasis in graduate school education on training students in research methods, while discouraging conceptual analysis, inhibits their ability to analyse or even recognize the individual metatheoretical biases within their particular disciplines.

While some academic disciplines are profoundly anti-Christian in their effect, it becomes difficult to counteract their effect only by dealing with their evidence and arguments. It is their assumptions which need to be questioned. However, it is these very assumptions which are least likely to be scrutinized.

Whatever attitude psychotherapists may personally have toward religion, they should recognize that clients may derive strong psychological and spiritual support from their religion, as well as meaningful

frames of reference for understanding themselves and their relationships. Most psychotherapists steer clear of dealing with religious issues in therapy, despite the fact that for a psychotherapist to fail to take cognizance of any significant aspect of a client's life is likely to significantly restrict what therapy can offer.

Shafranske (cited in Cunningham, 1983), noted that when psychotherapists do respond to spiritual issues they tend to do so in a very personal way. Lack of training is probably the reason clinicians do not respond to religious issues in an appropriate therapeutic manner. As a rule, psychotherapists lack an understanding and appreciation of the many roles religion can play in people's lives, and a proper facilitative framework for helping religious clients. Even though religious clients may present psychotherapists with many complicated technical and ethical dilemmas, current training programs have almost totally neglected preparing clinicians to deal with these matters.

Strunk (1979) pointed out that psychotherapists must learn to treat intellectualizing as an integral part of a total person concern. The failure to do so has often led psychotherapists to devalue the client's religious and/or theological approach to life

experiences. To prepare therapists for the dialogues which may result from value discussions, they should ideally receive a truly liberal education, which includes far more philosophy, theology, literature, and studies of popular culture. What is also needed is a realistic appraisal of personal and professional strengths and limitations, as well as giving greater considerations to referral and consultation when developing courses of treatment involving religious clients.

Chapter X

CONCLUSIONS

General Summary

Donald Campbell, in his inaugural address as president of the American Psychological Association in 1975, expressed his concern about the bias he identified in psychiatry and psychology against religion. Campbell argued that psychiatrists and psychologists, in seeking to understand human behaviour, either ignore religion as being insignificant or view its contribution negatively. In Campbell's view this attitude is scientifically unjustified and may help undermine the continuance of religious traditions which we do not yet fully understand. The present thesis has reviewed evidence that such a bias exists within the field of psychotherapy.

This thesis has outlined reasons why such a bias might have developed, and explored the implications for religious clients. It concludes with some general guidelines on how to counsel the religious client, and some recommendations on how graduate education might prepare counsellors to work more effectively with

religious clients. As the bias against Christianity has unique historical antecedents in psychology and Western society, and because the dominant religious influence in the Western world continues to be Christianity, the impact of an anti-religious bias in psychotherapy on Christian clients has been a particular focus of the present review. The thesis begins with some reflections upon pertinent aspects of the relationship between Christianity, contemporary psychology, and modern secular culture.

The second chapter established the background of conflict which has characterized the relationship between those who hold a Christian and those who hold a humanistic view of human life. While it is widely acknowledged that the influence of humanism on modern psychotherapy is pervasive, it should also be recognized that the humanist tradition of today contains a current of anti-Christian feeling as one of its historical characteristics. It is therefore quite understandable that some of humanism's anti-Christian feelings might also have become part of modern psychotherapy.

In reviewing the ways in which humanism influences us, some critics have concluded that secular humanistic assumptions now function in the same way that religious beliefs do in our society. Humanism has ironically

become a secular religion which competes with other faiths. The dramatic increase in the influence of liberal humanism in recent times has certainly been accompanied by a decrease in the influence and prestige of Christianity. It has been noted that humanism's influence within Christian churches has been so controversial that many churches have split into conservative and liberal wings. While the conservative churches have reaffirmed Christianity's emphasis on the historical priority of personal sanctification aimed at salvation, the liberal churches have moved further and further away from traditional Christian values, and have chosen to emphasize more the reform of society. Counsellors who work with Christian clients must recognize the need to respond to the differences between the more liberal and the more conservative Christians. Conservative Christians are much more likely to experience resistance and have objections to the humanistic values implicit in much of modern psychotherapy. Whatever the client's faith, it is the client's own value position that must be understood and respected. The psychotherapist should strive to develop the knowledge necessary to work with clients within that value framework which the client himself has chosen or if not, possibly to refer the client to someone who has this knowledge.

Chapter three explored some of the strong objections which Christian and other critics now have regarding the "excesses" of humanism. Many authors have decried the dehumanizing tendencies which have accompanied modern technology and humanistic assumptions, and which have resulted in a loss of respect for the individual person, for man himself. At the same time, as Christian conceptions of guilt and sin, which formerly served as some restraint on aggression became eroded, the presumption that the individual has less to do with his or her actions than was previously assumed became established. The humanistic belief that people are naturally good, has often resulted in the idea that the solution to all our problems lies solely in providing individuals with sufficient opportunities for their own growth and development. This idea, critics now suggest, has encouraged the rationalization of wrongdoing, and allowed individuals to avoid taking responsibility for their actions, while at the same time making the "structures" of society the new scapegoat for our problems. Karl Menninger (1973) recommended that we must begin to recognize the importance of re-establishing a conception of moral concern and personal responsibility through an understanding and acceptance of the reality of sin. By idealizing the

self-sufficient autonomous individual, and by placing the emphasis on the "rights of the individual" as opposed to duty and responsibility, modern humanism has also helped unravel traditional family obligations and therefore contributed to the breakdown of the family unit. Today, people are encouraged to become "fulfilled" individuals, to get "all the gusto they can," and consequently are investing less energy in the moral struggle involved in becoming better people. According to some critics such an emphasis has merely reinforced the world in its selfishness and resulted in the "non-optimal production of underinhibited, overly narcissistic and overly selfish individuals" (Campbell, 1975), for which psychology must take considerable blame. Evidence now suggests that:

The problems and troubles that lead people to seek psychotherapy may derive less than is commonly supposed from not expressing themselves, fulfilling themselves, or satisfying needs directed toward themselves and more from not having a workable way of living in which they participate in and contribute to matters they care about beyond themselves. (Wallach and Wallach, 1983, p. 274)

Psychotherapists who work with Christian clients must be aware of the different stances taken by many Christians on these value issues. It is equally important for the psychotherapist to understand the reasons why Christians believe the way they do. If the psychotherapist begins to appreciate that regardless of

how dogmatic or rigid their particular religious client may be, the Christian position on these issues can be a reasonable alternative, then the counsellor will be less likely to feel compromised, when working with a person who has a Christian value framework.

Chapter four reviewed the argument that there is a functional equivalence between psychology and traditional religion which leads many people to replace religion with psychology. While psychotherapy tends to emphasize its scientific role, it is actually a mixed discipline, containing examples of religious, ethical, and scientific language. Without being explicit about it, counselling and psychotherapy often perform an educational function related to the advancement of popular culture and values. While an early ideal of psychotherapy suggested it should facilitate clients in working through their problems, while not disturbing the clients' personal values, the notion of a value-free psychotherapy is no longer tenable. It is, therefore, irresponsible and unethical for psychologists to deny or obscure their professional role as moral teachers. Psychotherapists must begin to acknowledge, address, and if need be defend the moral positions they take. Value issues must be brought out from under the proverbial rug, and in the open, they should be dealt with as objectively as possible.

The fifth chapter reviewed evidence of a bias in psychotherapy against religion. None of the major schools of psychotherapy have formulated a place of importance in their theories for the person's relationship to God. By ignoring the relevance of God to the solution of human problems, psychotherapy contributes to the ongoing process of secularization and thereby acts in a way which undermines religious faith. Also, many of the assumptions underlying modern psychology contrast with those implicit in a Christian faith. Psychotherapy most clearly demonstrates its bias against religion by its apathy, its lack of interest in the relationship between religious values and mental health. While psychotherapists tend not to be aware of their anti-religious bias, survey evidence supports the claim that a negative attitude toward religion exists among psychotherapists. Researchers have also observed anti-religious bias in the areas of the hiring of psychologists, accreditation, and graduate school admissions. One reason for such a bias in psychotherapy, may be that the three major schools of psychotherapy have all promoted anti-religious attitudes as part of their theoretical world-views. Nevertheless, these schools of psychotherapy have all failed to provide evidence for their objections to religion, from empirical studies. The use of language

and conceptual forms which exclude spiritual phenomenon, or cast them in a negative light, probably makes it difficult for psychologists to appreciate religious frames of reference. Clinicians must learn how "not" to fit religious experiences into the pigeonholes of Freud, Jung, and so forth, but rather learn to see what the data of religious experiences themselves suggest. Psychologists are the least religious of all major groups of scientists. The fact that most psychotherapists do not consider religion important to their own lives, may lead them to underestimate the significance of religion in the lives of their patients.

In the sixth chapter we looked at the problems encountered when a psychotherapist and client are not matched along value dimensions. When therapist-client differences on religious values are significant, they can have markedly negative implications for treatment. Conservative Christians often express the fear that their Christian faith will be misunderstood, unappreciated, or perhaps even ridiculed, by an atheistic or agnostic counsellor. Certainly the presence of such fears in themselves might be expected to inhibit those important elements of trust, honesty, and openness which are necessary for effective psychotherapy. But research evidence also suggests that

these fears may have some validity. Because patients in pain can easily become dependent on their psychotherapist and vulnerable to their therapists influence and authority, they can more easily be persuaded to relinquish cherished beliefs. Relevant research reviewed in this chapter, supports the position that psychotherapists do communicate their own values to clients, often unintentionally, and that the adoption of therapist values by clients often occurs. While value transfusion and persuasion are certainly necessary and basic elements in the psychotherapeutic process, persuasion without consent is not a proper activity for psychotherapists. By not matching along value dimensions, or at least by not acknowledging their value differences, psychotherapists risk imposing their values on their clients. As long as psychotherapist values remain unexpressed or dealt with only superficially, then religious clients stand a greater risk of having their faith undermined by the secular values of a psychotherapist.

The seventh chapter discussed some of the difficulties which have been encountered in trying to achieve a responsible integration of Christianity and modern psychotherapy. In the past, Christian churches have frequently been guilty of failing to minister to the emotional needs of their members. They have not

spoken out clearly on vital psychological issues. Recognizing that emotional health was an important but neglected apostolate, members of the liberal churches turned increasingly to psychology as a means of ministering to the needs of their members. In relying more and more on secular theories, however, the assumptions of the psychotherapy movements began to infiltrate the teachings of the liberal churches, eventually resulting in a watering down of the Christian faith in these groups. While liberal churches have been criticized for adopting psychological answers too readily, conservative churches have often been criticized for being too resistant to adopting psychological understandings. If a responsible integration is to be achieved, both extremes will have to be avoided. From their side, psychotherapists must recognize that there can be both theological and psychological dogmatism. Integrationists must be prepared to tolerate much ambiguity, while holding seeming conflicts in abeyance, until a broader perspective brings resolution. The psychotherapeutic community must start by giving deserved attention to the special context of the Christian client. They can begin by applying the knowledge and experience which those who are working toward an integration of theology and psychotherapy have already achieved.

Chapter eight looked at practical suggestions on how to counsel the religious client. Recently, the psychotherapeutic literature has reflected a shift away from its almost exclusively negative stance toward religion, thus providing opportunities for therapists to develop a balanced understanding of the ways in which religion can be exploited by patients, as well as the ways in which religion can be used to facilitate mental health and good community relations. The ignorance of psychotherapists on how to work with religious clients is a result of graduate training programs that are virtually bereft of content which would engender an appreciation of religious values.

According to Lovinger (1984), the only prerequisite for working with the religious client is relinquishing the idea, if held, that religion is silly or meaningless. No important subject can be usefully approached with such an attitude. Psychotherapists may be able to overcome negative attitudes toward religion, Lovinger advises, by exploring the roots of the major religious traditions, and some of the nonreligious functions religion has served in society. As well, they should acquaint themselves with the rich intellectual tradition of Christian apologetics. Psychotherapists should prepare themselves for an encounter with a religious client by familiarizing themselves with the

denominational line the client has adopted. After they have done this they can then proceed to explore the client's personal religious beliefs. In this way, both the normative and the variant qualities of the beliefs held can be determined. A little experience soon proves that clients often misunderstand their own religion. Also when working with religious clients, psychotherapists should have access to reference material which discusses biblical references related to common social problems. Biblical references are sometimes used by clients to justify their own unhealthy attitudes. If psychotherapists have access to alternative interpretations of scripture, they will be able to avoid feeling that their only option is to change their client's beliefs because the client's interpretation of scriptural teachings is so obviously unhealthy. Probably the most difficult religious clients to deal with are those dependent clients who, having embraced a simplistic, authoritarian form of religion, begin to feel threatened by a therapist's attempts to stimulate them to think independently. Again, the psychotherapist is advised that if he or she is to be most effective, he or she should respect the client's own value context and work within it to produce healthier attitudes. Gaps and contradictions in a client's belief system often lead therapists to avoid

discussion of religion. If approached with sensitivity and openness, however, these gaps may actually provide precisely that therapeutic leverage necessary for clients to develop a deeper understanding of their faith. Psychotherapists should be candid and forthright, when questioned about their own religious values. Both psychotherapists and clerics need to expand their efforts to train their members in effectively dealing with value problems. While some Christian psychotherapists exclusively promote Christian counselling for Christian clients, it cannot be denied that the approach of some secular psychotherapists, who have recently written about the potentially positive aspects of religious commitment, makes an important contribution toward overcoming the anti-religious bias in psychotherapy. Their efforts contribute to providing a better service for those religious clients who end up in therapy with a secular psychotherapist.

Chapter nine explored reasons why psychotherapy has largely ignored the special context of the religious client, and why psychotherapists have failed to address charges that they frequently exhibit anti-religious bias in their attitudes toward religion. As a shared feature of modern culture, psychologists may have difficulty recognizing their anti-religious

attitudes, because they are attitudes which are generally accepted by the secular society surrounding them. In addition, graduate students are discouraged from involving themselves in conceptual analysis, which inhibits their ability to analyse or even to recognize the individualistic, metatheoretical biases within their disciplines. While religion is no doubt important to many clients, it was noted that psychotherapists usually avoid dealing with religious issues in therapy. When they do address spiritual issues, they tend to do so in a very personal rather than a clinical way. Lack of training is probably the reason clinicians do not respond to religious issues in an appropriate clinical manner. As a rule, psychotherapists lack an understanding and appreciation of the many roles religion can play in people's lives, and a proper facilitative framework for helping religious clients. What is needed is a realistic appraisal of personal and professional strengths and limitations in this area. Psychotherapists should, ideally, receive a truly liberal education, including far more philosophy, theology, literature, and popular culture so as to prepare them for the value discussions that are likely to occur with religious clients.

Recommendations

Since the Enlightenment, many intellectuals have criticized Christianity for promoting an oppressive doctrine. Today, as our societies have become more secular, traditional Christianity itself may have become the object of oppressive attitudes. In the struggle to make secular humanism a dominant creed in Western civilization, intellectuals have frequently made Christianity the scapegoat for social problems. Many of these attacks persist today in the form of stereotyped images of the rigid, dependent, or of the domineering, controlling religious personality. A one-sided view which emphasizes only, or primarily, the unhealthy ways in which religion can be used, is prejudicial toward all those religious people who express a mature, authentic commitment to their religious life. It is also prejudicial to the potential of religion to provide an experience and a framework of understanding by which the sanctification of the individual and the well-being of the community can be advanced.

In some respects current negative attitudes toward religion can be compared to the oppression of women and minorities in society. Today, Christianity is frequently treated as a pariah, as an outcast from the

cultural and academic community. Instead of a student learning about modern Western culture as a field of tension and conflict between the forces of the Christian tradition and the movements of modernist criticism and revolt, the existence of Christianity is today generally either ignored or cast in an unfavourable light. In addition, by failing to define and educate students about the distinctions between healthy and unhealthy religion, the academic world may, by omission, be contributing to the success of some of the unhealthy religious organizations around today.

The tyranny of intellectual fashion has provided no real opportunity for the creative Christian element in Western culture, over the last three centuries, to be recognized and grasped by most students. In institutes of higher learning those works which are often taken as representative of the Western cultural tradition, tend to be by authors like Voltaire, Rousseau, Mill, Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud, Marx, Engels, and their successors. These authors help cultivate the mind of the modern student in habits of intellectual skepticism and moral relativism, as well as in a rejection of the spiritual foundations on which Western culture has been built; while the creative works of the brilliant Christian apologists of the past three centuries remain virtually unknown. Where, for example

are the works of Pascal and Edmund Burke, two of the foremost critics of the Enlightenment, to be found in the modern curriculum? Where is the work of de Tocqueville, whose thought is so necessary to an understanding the dangers present in societies organized on a basis of mass market culture? Where are the writings of John Henry Newman, one of the most penetrating and influential thinkers of the past two centuries? Where is the eloquent response of Chesterton to the agnostics and materialists of the 19th century? In the interest of achieving perspective, and promoting a healthy open-mindedness, credible spokespersons for the religious positions should receive deserved attention. When one reads Freud's view of culture, Civilization and its Discontents, in a first year psychology course, the case should be pressed that Christopher Dawson's great work on cultures and civilizations, an incisive refutation of Freud, should also be included in the reading list. Is it any wonder if students graduate from university with no sophisticated appreciation of the positive contributions, which religious traditions have made in advancing civilization? This one-sidedness should be brought into balance.

In the field of psychology, a seminar questioning the assumptions behind modern culture and the

psychotherapeutic movements would promote a healthy objectivity, and provide a buffer against any professional arrogance about the final truth of current psychological answers to human problems. Such a course would also help students become aware of perspectives on the human condition, other than those currently taught in psychology courses, and would acquaint them with responsible social criticism about the cultural and technological direction which humankind is presently taking. Particular emphasis would, of course, be placed on understanding the role psychology and psychotherapy play in advancing popular culture.

Orthodoxy by G.K. Chesterton, Religion and Culture by Christopher Dawson, The Closing of the American Mind by Allan Bloom, and The Arrogance of Humanism by D. Ehrenfeld might be among the titles considered for the first semester of such a course.

The second semester of this course would look more closely at the values implicit in modern psychology and modern psychotherapy, and how they often conflict with values held by religious clients. The importance of the principle of informed consent, particularly in the case of psychotherapy with religious clients, and an understanding of the potentially coercive nature of psychotherapy, if its values are not made explicit, should be part of the ethical issues discussed during

this semester. The Meaning of Persons by Paul Tournier, Psychology as Religion by Paul Vitz, Psychological Seduction by William Kilpatrick, along with selected articles by Allen Bergin might be writings used for this section of the course. How to deal with value issues, and how to counsel the religious client, would constitute the main focus of the course. Robert Lovinger's book Working with Religious Issues in Therapy, could be the text used for this section of the course.

This training should include a section on value theory and applicable treatment procedures for use with clients who have problems stemming from value issues. An understanding of values should be a part of psychotherapist education, not just because therapists should be made aware of the distinctions in value preferences among religious clients and how to deal with them, but also to enable therapists to know how to recognize and assess those values, which are implicit within their own approach to therapy. The value positions they take should become explicit, and open to evaluation and criticism. After this course, students should be better prepared to make responsible decisions about the moral positions they will take in therapy, and better able to defend those moral positions. They should also have developed a greater understanding and

appreciation of religious faith, and be able to identify unhealthy, as well as healthy religious attitudes.

In this course students would learn that the most descriptive image of the relationship between many religious institutions and the larger Western society today, particularly in North America, has become one of convergence. While some Christians vigorously resist this pressure for conformity, others do not. Therapists would be trained to make these distinctions and be instructed in how to identify, and then work within, the value framework of the client. Students would also learn how to work with unhealthy religious attitudes within a religious context. Without this knowledge, psychotherapists will, when faced with unhealthy religious attitudes, tend to automatically resort to the unethical practice of coercing religious clients into accepting a more secular definition of life.

University courses are a logical place to begin, if a profession-wide attitude change is desired among psychotherapists. But seminars for interested professionals already working in the field should also be established.

Another recommendation is to establish closer ties between religious helping professionals and psychotherapists. Seminars and conferences should

include both professional groups and be designed to deal with issues of mutual concern. These could be effective in promoting a stronger working relationship and a better understanding between these groups. A questionnaire administered to psychotherapists and religious helping professionals would be useful in determining issues of mutual concern and establishing an acceptable format within which those issues could be worked through. Both clergy and psychotherapists need to be better equipped to deal with value issues beyond value teaching, and it may be possible to design courses to teach value theory which are acceptable to both professional groups. Wick (1983) has made the recommendation that:

...until both professional groups have caught up with training their members in effectively dealing with value problems, a list of professionals should be made available on the national level, in order to identify those individuals who are currently able to and interested in dealing with value issues. Only professionals should be listed who offer a nonbiased and nonproselytizing approach to values. Or if professionals are included who wish to promote a specific value system, as may be the case with some members of the clergy, then the value framework within which they operate should be clearly stated (such as, "value system: Baptist"). (p.23)

Finally psychological research should be stepped up to map out the value field, to identify effective therapeutic interventions for value problems, and to

help establish guidelines for working effectively with religious clients.

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IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Author


James Fraser Field

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