

Deeply Engaged *and* Strongly Perspectival? The Impasse in the Psychology-Christianity Dialogue and Its Missional Resolution

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Christians in psychology tend to do two types of scholarship: (1) deeply engaged, weakly perspectival research, in which the work is done for mainstream audiences but Christian beliefs remain largely implicit, and/or (2) strongly perspectival, relatively disengaged research, in which Christian beliefs are made explicit but the work is done for a nonmainstream, typically Christian, audience. Though both of these types of scholarship are essential, there appears to be a paucity of (3) deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research, in which the work is done for mainstream audiences yet with an explicitly Christian perspective. That this is the case, why it is so, and what we might do about it, is explored in this article.

Today we hear a lot about the importance of asking “the right questions.” Do a Google search on Claude Lévi-Strauss’s line, “The scientist is not a person who gives the right answers, he is one who asks the right questions,” and you will find over 43,000 hits—for an exact quote! The (exact) phrase “the right questions” returns about 2.6 million hits. Any academic paper purporting to identify “a right question” may therefore seem to be merely reposting an internet meme or replacing catch-phrases for scholarship. But I remain undaunted. This paper aims to identify and explore a new—and I will argue *right*—question for the psychology-Christianity dialogue, though I do confess to feeling a little embarrassed beginning this article with what has evidently become something of a cliché. But as David Foster Wallace’s fictional Don Gately put it, “The clichéd directives are a lot more deep” than we might origi-

nally think, and, “hard to actually do.”¹ “Right questions” are indeed more difficult to identify than an internet meme would imply. And some of these questions can even be transformative.

Consider the philosopher Immanuel Kant. A thinker of profound depth (and striking difficulty), Kant illustrates Gately’s point beautifully. Indeed, you might say that Kant’s philosophical career—not to mention philosophy itself—was transformed when he articulated a “right question.” This is not an article on Kant or his question. But there are interesting parallels between that question and the one I would like to pose for the psychology-Christianity dialogue. So let me here, in a very cursory way, sketch the background, the structure, and the consequences of

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Kant's question. Then we will be in a better position to articulate and explore the question that will be the focus of this article.

From Kant's Consequential Question to Our Own

For ease of comparison, I will distill Kant's question into five elements, the first of which is the intellectual context.² Eighteenth-century philosophy had been suffering a deep impasse between the rationalists and the empiricists, whose major figures at that time were Leibniz and Hume, respectively. To many, the philosophy of the rationalists seemed too speculative and out-of-touch to be believed (as parodied in Voltaire's famous novel *Candide*), but philosophical empiricism had, in Hume, led to skepticism about the very possibility of philosophical knowledge. Nevertheless—and this is the second element—the two opposing camps did share an assumption. The assumption was that there are two different types of knowledge, roughly, knowledge that comes through logic and reason alone on the one hand, and knowledge that comes from experience on the other. The disagreement between the two, then, had to do with which source to emphasize, and how much could be known given this bifurcation. Third, Kant argued in effect that this agreed-upon assumption actually conflated or merged two separate issues. One of these issues is the difference between cognitions that are *a priori* (roughly speaking, those which are independent of experience) and those that are *a posteriori* (which come from experience). The other issue is the difference between cognitions that are *analytic* (very roughly, definitional, such as bachelors are unmarried men) and those that are *synthetic* (those that go beyond definitional issues, such as bachelors tend to be, say, relatively young).

Fourth, in teasing apart these issues, Kant was able to formulate his monumental question. From the vantage point of previous thinking, "one would expect all ... *a priori* judgments to be analytic, and all ... [*a posteriori*] judgments to be synthetic."³ Kant showed, however, that this is not always the case. Some judgments—indeed, the kind of judgments relevant to philosophy—could arguably be both *a priori* and synthetic (such as the idea that every event has a cause). Kant's great question then was, "How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?"⁴

This question was the focus of his enormously influential book *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Fifth, and finally, is the issue of the consequences of Kant's great question. Kant was sure that "asking the right question" was of paramount importance. "One has already *gained a great deal*," he said, "if one can bring a multitude of investigations under the formula of a single problem [or question]."⁵ Kant thought that his question represented something of a "Copernican Revolution" in philosophy, a completely new, yet essential, vantage point that could not only rescue philosophy from skepticism, but also prevent it from attempting to answer questions beyond its competence.

There are remarkable parallels between Kant's situation and our own. First, in terms of intellectual context, we too suffer from what appears to be a rather strong impasse in the psychology-Christianity debate. Though there are many different "views" on the relationship between psychology and Christianity, I think David Myers is correct when he contends that these may be reduced to "two distinct paths to doing psychology Christianly."⁶ As I shall develop below, one of these paths emphasizes direct participation in mainstream psychology; the other path emphasizes the development of distinctively Christian perspectives.

Second, these two groups also appear to share a not-so-thinly veiled assumption about scholarship, namely, that there will be an inverse relationship between explicitness of Christian perspective and degree of participation in mainstream disciplinary discussion. The difference between the two camps, then, hinges on which of these two emphases is taken to better represent faithful Christian psychologizing. Third, as was the case in Kant's situation, this shared assumption also conflates two issues: mainstream engagement and Christian perspective. In order to more adequately parse the alternatives for scholarship, we ought to draw two distinctions: (1) between deep engagement and relative disengagement in the mainstream, and (2) between strongly perspectival and weakly perspectival approaches. Fourth, these distinctions then allow us, at last, to pose *our* question: Can scholarship in psychology be simultaneously deeply engaged *and* strongly perspectival? Or to use a more Kantian-

sounding phrase, *How are deeply engaged, strongly perspectival approaches possible?*

The remainder of this article will attempt to establish, provisionally answer, and draw out some implications of this question. To this end, I will first define the aforementioned distinction between “deeply engaged” and (relatively) “disengaged” research, and the distinction between “strongly perspectival” and “weakly perspectival” research. I will then provide initial evidence to suggest that scholarship conducted by Christians in psychology today tends to be either deeply engaged but weakly perspectival, or strongly perspectival but relatively disengaged. Since deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research appears to be, at best, rare, I will next turn my attention to the question of *how* such approaches may be developed, suggesting that we need to build on the work of previous Christian scholars who have emphasized pluralism—George Marsden, in particular—by embracing a *missional* orientation. I will further argue that a missional perspective can go far in helping us to understand why we suffer from this impasse, and also in providing some general ideas—not to mention the motivation—to move forward.

I have, of course, not yet drawn the fifth and final parallel to Kant’s situation. Just as Kant believed that his “right question” represented something of a revolution for philosophy, this article will close by asking whether the flourishing of deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research might signify a “Copernican revolution”—not only for Christians in psychology, but also for the discipline of psychology itself.

Defining “Deeply Engaged” and “Strongly Perspectival”

In her introductory article to this theme issue, Heather Looy is right to suggest that we focus on mainstream psychological science. As she says, to be a mainstream psychologist today is to be a scientist.⁷ While there is a place for Christians to break off and “do their own thing,” there are many philosophical and practical reasons for engagement. How else can we be “in the world but not of it?” How else can Christians in psychology have an impact on the world of higher education? How else will our students be prepared for today’s job market or graduate

schools? At Christian universities, we have no choice but to engage the world of mainstream psychology on some level. At the very least, our curricula have been set by the mainstream. We also use the same textbooks as in the mainstream; our PhDs have been granted by mainstream institutions; our courses are designed to transfer to mainstream schools whenever possible. Of course, it is possible to do all these things and still be somewhat cut off from mainstream disciplinary discussion. This explains why many faculty present at mainstream conferences and publish in mainstream journals. In this article, then, a “deeply engaged” approach is one that seeks not only to teach or understand or critique mainstream psychological science, but also to be part of mainstream disciplinary discussion.

On the other hand is the issue of Christian perspective in psychology. When one considers the numerous potential downsides to uncritical Christian engagement in mainstream psychological science (Looy points out several—an implicitly mechanistic worldview, context-independent measures, antisubjectivity, and a host of *isms*: objectivism, biologism, reductionism, and positivism for starters), such perspective seems more critical than ever. As Harold Heie put it, “Scholarly work is perspectival when the research is influenced by the particular worldview beliefs of the scholar ...”⁸ At the very least, this influence will shape choices of topics and questions. Beyond that, however, the influence of Christian perspective can be more or less overt.

Building off the work of George Marsden, Heie makes a helpful distinction between “weakly perspectival” and “strongly perspectival” research. Though this move dichotomizes (what at least *should be*) a continuous variable, the framework helpfully enables us to make a first approximation and assessment of our current situation. The adverbs (“weakly” and “strongly”)—despite initial appearances—are not intended to be value judgments (he respects both types of scholarship, as do I), but rather they describe the *results* of the scholarship.⁹ In the former category, the results of the research are not in any overt way shaped by the scholar’s worldview; in the latter category, however, Christian beliefs are brought explicitly into the mix. In this spirit, I define research as strongly perspectival when it leans upon Christian sources (scripture,

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Spirit, tradition) and draws explicitly Christian conclusions.

The State of the Dialogue Today

In this article, I will use Eric Johnson's 2010 edited volume *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views* as my point of reference for the state of the dialogue today. I concede at the outset that this is not the only way—and very well may not be the best way—to proceed. But it is the way *I* know best,¹⁰ and, given the wide acceptance of this volume at Christian universities, it does likely represent the way most of us, faculty and students alike, have been taught to think about the problem.¹¹ It is in analyzing this volume that the aforementioned problem arises. The book boasts strongly perspectival yet disengaged approaches, and it contains a deeply engaged yet weakly perspectival approach. What is lacking, I would argue, is a deeply engaged *and* strongly perspectival alternative.

For the sake of those readers who are not familiar with this volume, let me briefly summarize it here. At the heart of this edited book are five chapters, written by different authors, each defending their own particular view of the relationship between psychology and Christianity. The first of these, written by David Myers, defends the “levels of explanation” view, and argues that theology, philosophy, psychology, biology, and other disciplines, represent differing vantage points from which one might explain psychological reality. As a science, psychology does not pretend to answer theological or philosophical questions. The results of psychology, however, usually support, although sometimes challenge, our theological beliefs.

The “integration view,” presented by Stan Jones, is the next chapter. Jones challenges the idea that psychological science is or can be entirely cut off from theological and philosophical assumptions, and insists that Christians respect and bring together (“integrate”) science and scripture in their attempt to understand mind and behavior. The following chapter, written by Robert Roberts and P. J. Watson, argues for the “Christian psychology” view, the essence of which is the quest to articulate a psychology uncorrupted by modern assumptions through careful investigation of the Bible and of Christian

tradition. Empirical investigations are of interest so far as they explore religious themes such as prayer, forgiveness, and gratitude.

The somewhat mystical “transformational psychology” view of John Coe and Todd Hall aims to be transformational in two ways: (1) the psychologist is transformed by the Holy Spirit and (2) psychology itself, both as a process and as a product, is transformed into “a single act of faith and love”¹² through the labors of the sanctified psychologist. Finally, David Powlison's chapter describes the “biblical counseling” view, whose primary move is to bring the full, but typically underappreciated, interpretive, and healing richness of the scriptures to bear on our real-life day-to-day struggles.

The levels-of-explanation approach of Myers would represent a deeply engaged, weakly perspectival approach. As far as engagement with psychological science goes, Myers is unsurpassed. His name is instantly recognized at the top conferences, his research well respected, and his introductory and social psychology textbooks are perennial best-sellers. Insofar as his scientific work goes, Myers seeks, along with the mainstream, to put testable ideas to the test and to be guided by data rather than presupposition. Clearly, when one reads his textbooks or scientific publications, the influence of his faith remains implicit—Myers's approach is “weakly perspectival,” as defined above.

There is a nuance that we could add, however. Myers does do strongly perspectival work—but here he typically steps out of his role as a psychological scientist per se and writes for a Christian audience.¹³ His *Psychology through the Eyes of Faith*, coauthored with Malcolm Jeeves, quotes freely from the Bible¹⁴ and says many insightful and explicitly Christian things about the field. One of my favorite points is how he applies the notion of perceptual set to science, arguing that nonreligious scientists have a schema that preconditions them to be blind to God's fingerprint in nature.¹⁵ I would call this strongly perspectival work the “private face” of the levels-of-explanation approach, “Levels-of-Explanation II,” if you will.

Psychology & Christianity: Five Views also has many examples of strongly perspectival, yet relatively disengaged approaches. In particular, the Christian

psychology view, the transformational psychology view, and the biblical counseling view may all be characterized as strongly perspectival. In the Christian psychology view, Roberts encourages Christians to “retrieve the Christian psychology of the past,” that is, to read older, premodern/prescientific sources of distinctively Christian psychological insight. A main characteristic of the transformational psychology view is—as the title suggests—the quest for Spirit-wrought change and insight. And biblical counseling draws deeply from scripture for comfort, admonition, and long-term change. Each of these approaches is strongly perspectival and admirable and important in its own right.

Yet it is also the case that each approach is relatively disengaged from the psychological mainstream. Though Roberts’s textual approach has perhaps some superficial similarities to the traditional personality theories class, with its emphasis on old texts, he draws from a completely different canon, as one might expect. Coe and Hall place strong emphasis on looking “beyond the veil” of earthly tradition, and in their chapter, they do not seem particularly concerned with deeply engaging the mainstream.¹⁶ Although apologetics does play an important role in the biblical counseling approach, they very self-consciously see themselves as a church-centric alternative to mainstream counseling approaches. Myers’s own response to each of these approaches attests to the degree of their disengagement. He sees Roberts’s Christian psychology approach as “replacing psychological science with the sages of the ages,” Coe and Hall as “transform[ing] ‘psychology’ into religion,” and Powelson’s biblical counseling as “spurn[ing] today’s psychological science for a faith, that, with its own implicit psychology, has little need for science.”¹⁷

Here as well we can add some nuance. Just as there is a private face to “levels-of-explanation,” there is perhaps a less obvious “public face” in some of these other approaches as they seek to contribute to mainstream psychological science. The most conspicuous example of this would be what Roberts and his co-author Watson call “step two” in Christian psychology: applying the traditional empirical methods of psychological science to issues of Christian interest such as prayer. When engaging in this type of research, it is possible, of course, to publish

in mainstream journals, but here the emphases reverse, that is, the work generally¹⁸ becomes deeply engaged but also weakly perspectival. We may call this deeply engaged, weakly perspectival public face of this approach “Christian Psychology II.”

We see something similar in the transformational camp. Hall has done well-respected empirical work in the psychology of religion which has been cited in the top journal in social psychology, but here also Hall’s approach is weakly perspectival and deeply engaged.¹⁹ Perhaps we can call this “Transformational II.” Though some members of the biblical counseling movement have received PhDs in psychology and have made weakly perspectival contributions to psychological science,²⁰ engagement with the psychological mainstream does not yet seem to be a priority in the movement. It therefore does not seem appropriate to talk about a “public” (i.e., mainstream) face of the biblical counseling movement.

If any approach in the book promises to consistently approximate the deeply engaged, strongly perspectival approach I am advocating, it would be the integration view, described in the 2010 edition of *Psychology & Christianity* by Jones. Central to his integration vision is giving “special revelation—God’s true Word—its appropriate place of authority”²¹ in psychological work. Yet, for all of its promise, the integration approach has, by profession of its greatest advocates, tended to fall short of its aspirations. And, ironically enough, integration proponents have slipped into the same dichotomy between public/private personae.

According to leading integrationists, the integration approach has struggled to achieve its goals. In the first edition (2000) of *Psychology & Christianity*, the chapter on integration, written by Gary Collins, complained that

Integration has become a word shrouded in mystery, a slogan, a buzzword that gives us warm feelings but is used more as a gimmick to attract students than as a genuine scholarly achievement or a practical methodology.²²

Prior to publishing his chapter in the 2010 edition, Jones repeated a similar concern: “It has been a concern for me for many years that we spend so much

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time defending and defining integration and so rarely get around to doing it.”²³

The problem of enacting the integration vision is not limited to psychology alone. Heie, who knows the landscape of evangelical colleges very well indeed, writes of the general failure of Christian scholars to produce the strongly perspectival research that he advocates. Such scholarship, he argues, “is too often neglected at Christian colleges.”²⁴ Although the mission statements of Christian colleges (particularly those in the CCCU) “invariably ... claim that one of the goals they consider to be most important is the integration of faith, learning, and living, or words to that effect,” the sad reality, according to Heie, is that “much of what is passed off as ‘integration’ in Christian higher education is no better than coexistence. *Coexistence is not integration*. Putting two good things side by side is not integration.”²⁵

Just as is the case with the levels-of-explanation, Christian psychology, and transformational approaches, there also appears to be a public and private face to the work of advocates of the integration approach, yet neither of these faces is simultaneously deeply engaged and strongly perspectival. When advocates of integration articulate strongly perspectival approaches, they tend to be disengaged from the mainstream (in the sense that they are speaking to themselves only). Jones characterized integration advocates as having “an isolated dialogue within their community.”²⁶ Jones’s own *Modern Psychotherapies* is a case in point—an explicitly Christian appraisal of the various leading psychotherapies written for a Christian audience. Gary Collins, reminiscing about the glory days of integration in the mid-70s and early 80s, admitted that they were not only “ignored by the psychology establishment,” but also did not, it seems, intend to speak to the mainstream. Instead,

we were ... convinced that our faith and our psychology could be combined in ways that would help emotionally hurting people, stimulate psychological and spiritual maturity, and enable the church to be a more sensitive, caring institution.²⁷

When advocates of integration write for the mainstream, however, it appears that they may—often for very good reason—assume a weakly perspectival approach. When chiming in on the politically charged issue of sexual orientation change efforts, Jones and

his colleagues courageously challenged the American Psychological Association (APA)’s recently published Guidelines impinging upon these efforts. It would have been unwise to take a strongly perspectival approach to this issue, and the article called psychologists to a more rigorously evidence-based platform to guide such therapies. Similarly, even in his classic “boldest model yet” *American Psychologist* piece, Jones was not obviously arguing from or for explicitly Christian presuppositions, but rather he attempted to rationally articulate a basis for broader interaction between psychology and “religion.”²⁸ We might call this face of integration, “Integration II.”

It would seem, then, that Myers summarizes the situation well:

Christian students ... are offered two distinct paths to doing psychology Christianly. Both are well-intentioned. Both have advocates. One path, represented by Coe and Hall (and by Powlison, as well as Roberts and Watson) is to come apart from the “biased” world of secular psychology and to create, off in a corner, a focused Christian psychology where conservative Christians talk among themselves. The other path takes us into the playing fields of mainstream psychological science ... As for me, the chosen path is not the separatist enclave.²⁹

Myers respects Jones and charitably does not list his integration approach among the approaches that feature “conservative Christians talk[ing] among themselves.” But by Jones’s own admission, the integration movement has tended to be just that kind of conversation. So I would include the integration approach among those whose primary move has been “to come apart from the ‘biased’ world of secular psychology,” that is, as a relatively *disengaged* kind of approach.

I hope the preceding analysis makes clear that there is, however, an irony here. Myers’s description—that there are “two distinct paths of doing psychology Christianly”—can be taken in a different way, as a description of the two faces of each approach. The official position of each approach represents a primary *modus operandi*. However, most of the approaches—including the levels-of-explanation approach—have a secondary *modus operandi* in which emphases reverse. Strongly perspectival but weakly engaged approaches become deeply engaged

but weakly perspectival, and vice versa. In other words, each approach represents not a *modus operandi*, but rather *modi operandi*, depending upon the community to which they speak, reflecting the shared assumption that there will be an inverse relationship between explicitness of Christian perspective and degree of participation in mainstream disciplinary discussion. If we ask, "Is it possible to bring these 'two distinct paths of doing psychology Christianly' together?" we are restating our original question: "How are deeply engaged, strongly perspectival approaches possible?"

I, with Myers, do not want to spend my professional life hidden in a "separatist enclave" (though I do believe that, in our secularized culture, separate Christian institutions are necessary). But, along with the advocates of the other approaches, I do not want to abandon the pursuit of strongly perspectival scholarship, either. And I think that those who are committed to Christian higher education (e.g., members of the CCCU) feel the same way. The ideal of strongly perspectival, deeply engaged research gets very much to the heart of what the contemporary resurgence in Christian higher education has always been about, even if we have not yet attained that ideal, at least in psychology. So we must confront the pressing questions: *Why* have we fallen short in our attempts so far? And is there a way out?

In what follows, we will first consider some previous, essential reflection on these questions, specifically the work of George Marsden. Then, in view of the insights and unresolved tensions within that approach, we will consider how an explicitly *missional* perspective can fill in some important gaps, motivate fresh action, and move the conversation forward.

Revisiting Marsden's *Outrageous Idea*

Though it appears that Christians in psychology have not thought much about deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research, Christians in other fields have. Arguably, the most sophisticated and influential treatment of the issue of Christian perspective in the mainstream is Marsden's book *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*.³⁰ We will begin our

discussion of how to move forward with an analysis of his approach.

It is important to remember the context of Marsden's book. His brilliant *The Soul of the American University* (1994) was a historical exploration of the secularization of American universities, an attempt to explain how these formerly Christian institutions became prejudiced against their founding traditions. Marsden noted that in the mainstream "only purely naturalistic viewpoints are allowed a serious academic hearing,"³¹ that this bias was understandable but unwarranted, and that there ought to be greater openness to religious perspectives in the mainstream. Given the rather strong resistance to his suggestion, *Outrageous Idea* appeared three years later, as an attempt to defend that position.

There is an interesting tension in *Outrageous Idea*, which Marsden acknowledges, between what may be called the realistic and the idealistic sides of his argument.³² The realistic side of the case deals honestly with the profound historical and intellectual barriers to overt Christian perspectives in the mainstream academy. Historically, for example, traditional Christian perspectives were intentionally suppressed as universities moved away from Christian establishment to more democratic and inclusive approaches. Among the intellectual barriers are scientific, multicultural, and political arguments which are adduced to justify continued exclusion.

Idealistically, however, Marsden presented a hopeful case. For one, the historical reasons for exclusion no longer apply. Indeed, the removal of a Christian establishment (which was needed if the university was to be truly public) led ironically to a different, secular, establishment (which, of course, does not reflect the public). Marsden likewise shows that the intellectual barriers to inclusion lack coherence. Further, while the reasons for exclusion are weak, there *are* strong reasons for inclusion. As the contemporary academy secularized, it adopted a pragmatic, pluralistic approach in which all worldviews and perspectives could, in theory, be included as long as all parties were willing to base arguments on publicly available and accessible standards of evidence. This approach has served certain perspectives (e.g., Marxist, feminist, queer) very well. Yet, for the historical and intellectual reasons just

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mentioned, this inclusion has not yet been extended to religious scholars. Though there are many Christians in the mainstream academy, and though there are no *official* rules excluding such perspectives, the pressures toward silence are powerful, so religious scholars typically learn to self-censor and repress overt expression of their faith. Marsden therefore encourages Christians to re-imagine scholarly life in the mainstream and gently, but firmly, advocate for greater consistency. The appeal for a genuine pluralism is, of course, a common theme in contemporary Christian scholarship.³³

With historical and intellectual barriers exposed and a pluralistic rationale articulated, Marsden then dealt head-on with the concerns of secular scholars, articulating a “tamed” approach to overtly perspectival research.³⁴ Though we cannot expect non-Christians to take scripture and tradition as authoritative, these still can serve as sources of ideas as long as we defend them using the accepted evidentiary disciplinary standards. Given that “background beliefs” inevitably shape scholarly work in a variety of ways, it only makes sense that scholars reflect occasionally on this relationship. Indeed, one potential implication of this line of thinking is that there ought to be space for scholars from *all* traditions and worldviews to participate in deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research.³⁵ Marsden’s vision for an inclusive and self-aware public academy remains an inspiring ideal, and his guidance for perspectival research in that context remains essential.

However, we need to ask: is the idea of Christian perspectives in the mainstream any less outrageous today, some sixteen years later? Perhaps a bit. Many Christians inspired by Marsden’s *Outrageous Idea* (and Mark Noll’s *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*) have successfully pursued academic careers. There is also some evidence of a measure of greater inclusiveness in a handful of academic disciplines.³⁶ However, Marsden’s idea remains outrageous in much of the mainstream academy, including psychology. As we have seen, in psychology at least, deeply engaged, strongly perspectival approaches seem rare at best. If anything, the mainstream academy seems less hospitable, and the proponents of atheistic materialism seem stronger than ever.

There are three tensions within Marsden’s own book which, when placed alongside the sobering “realistic” side of his argument, suggest that Christian scholarship is likely to remain an outrageous idea in the mainstream for the foreseeable future. First, there is a tension in Marsden’s epistemological recommendations. Marsden’s epistemology depends—quite rightly, I believe—on a distinction between “publicly available” (“data”-level) knowledge and the more ultimate-level background or control beliefs that shape the way we select and interpret “the facts.”³⁷ His inclusive vision requires that people be willing to reflect on this distinction and the relation between these levels. Yet, at the same time, he acknowledges that mainstream academics show very little willingness to reflect on first principles.³⁸ This is certainly the case in psychological science, where naturalistic, ultimate-level frameworks are given free interpretive reign in psychology with little reflection on how these frameworks express worldviews.³⁹ We need to realize that our attempts to do deeply engaged, strongly perspectival work will likely be resisted as “unscientific.”⁴⁰

Second, there is, in this book, a tension between Marsden’s account of Christian historical explanation and his practice, which turns out to be quite germane. To illustrate how Christian historians can avoid reductionism, he says,

No matter how ingenious our [natural/historical] explanation of how George Whitefield sparked the Great Awakening, we will not likely tell the story as though that exhausts the explanation.⁴¹

Yet, Marsden’s nuanced and multifaceted natural/historical account of the institutional prejudice that Christians experience in the mainstream reads like such an explanation, probably for reasons of audience. However, the Reformed theological tradition that Marsden and I share, and biblical passages such as Romans 1, suggest that there is a general human prejudice against acknowledging God’s handiwork that transcends the particular historical contingencies he explores. This spiritual dimension of our struggle implies that our attempt to do strongly perspectival, deeply engaged work will meet greater resistance than Marsden perhaps implies.

Third, there is a tension between Marsden’s “tamed,” nonproselytizing vision of Christian schol-

arship and his understanding of how Christian perspective can “function as a critique of current scholarly assumptions.”⁴² On the one hand, he asks that Christian scholars simply be given the freedom to occasionally and publicly reflect on how their faith informs their scholarship. On the other hand, Marsden argues—again quite correctly—that Christian faith can offer a kind of coherence that is conspicuously lacking in mainstream discourse.⁴³ Suppose a Christian scholar wanted to make this issue the *focus* of her scholarly investigations? In such a scenario, such reflection would be neither “occasional” nor would it necessarily be perceived as “tamed.” Indeed, no matter how careful we are, it may even seem like elitism or proselytizing.⁴⁴ Further, as Marsden notes again and again, the major background assumption in the contemporary academy is that we can make sense of reality without God. If a deeply engaged, strongly perspectival program of research *did* attempt to challenge this assumption, we would again expect resistance. It is little wonder, then, that those Christians in psychology desiring to articulate strongly perspectival approaches tend to remain relatively disengaged.

This brings us to the crux of the issue. The key shortcoming of pluralistic approaches such as Marsden’s—and very likely an impediment to progress in the psychology-Christianity dialogue as well—is the assumption (or, at least, the unintended perceived implication) that moving forward with deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research depends upon first making the idea seem less outrageous to the mainstream. Another way of saying this is that such approaches give too much power to the contemporary “secular” university. The emphasis throughout *The Outrageous Idea* is on making the case for greater inclusion in the mainstream, that is, that Christian perspectives “be accepted as legitimate in the mainstream academy.”⁴⁵

Once again, I fully support that goal, and I think that Marsden provides good advice to help us move toward that end. However, such an emphasis seems to put our quest for deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research on hold.⁴⁶ Christians in psychology and, presumably, in other disciplines, need to ask themselves a question: do we need first to be “accepted” before we begin? In the psychology-Christianity dialogue, it seems that we have implic-

itly answered this question in the affirmative. What seems to be needed, then, is an empowering vision for Christian scholarship—a vision that shifts us from merely pleading for permission and acceptance, to a deep sense of having been commissioned by God himself. We need a vision that shifts our emphasis from doing strongly perspectival work “in” the mainstream academy, to doing such work “for” the mainstream. Such a vision will require that we turn to scripture itself for guidance.

From Permission to Commission: The Missing *Missional* Context

The last recorded act of Jesus Christ in Mark’s gospel was to instruct his disciples to “go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). At first blush, the Great Commission may seem an unlikely place to turn to for the resolution of a complex theoretical conundrum regarding the possibilities for deeply engaged Christian scholarship. Yet, I hope to show that the mission of the church, with its high calling of bringing the Christian message to different contexts and cultures, speaks directly to the impasse we suffer in the psychology-Christianity dialogue. Thankfully, we are not left to our own devices in beginning to get some grasp on the relevance of the church’s mission to the academic disciplines. Thinkers like Lesslie Newbigin, the great twentieth-century missiologist, have shown the relevance of a missional mindset thereto.

Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew, two students of Newbigin, also provide some excellent foundational work upon which we might build.⁴⁷ To begin, they argue (along with a host of biblical theologians) that *kingdom* is the central organizing principle of the New Testament.⁴⁸ The gospel of Christ which the church is called to proclaim is the good news of the Kingdom of God, of the restoration of God’s *comprehensive* rule over all things. Before sin, God reigned over every aspect of human life, over all cultural activity, including science (as undeveloped as that might have been). God was glorified in all of these cultural activities. Science was to be the explication of Psalm 19—giving voice to the creation’s praise to God. Due to sin, this is no longer the case. For all of the accomplishments of science in studying the creation, God’s authority is

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no longer acknowledged, his glory in what has been made suppressed (Rom. 1:18).

It would seem that for psychology, then, the gospel of the kingdom would be the joyous news that God's authority and glory may increasingly be acknowledged and praised through our study of the brain, behavior, and mental life. We are Christ's followers, commissioned to take his message into all the world, into every corner, every square inch, including the mainstream academy whose controlling assumption is, as Marsden says, that "there is no creator god."⁴⁹ As we go, we are asking that Christ's call to *metanoia*, a "U-turn of the mind,"⁵⁰ will be heard by some. Of course, *how* precisely the call is to be issued in psychology, and *what* precisely such a U-turn might look like, should be discussed in detail. The call would certainly need to take into account Marsden's and others' wise advice.⁵¹ However, one thing seems clear enough—the entire psychology-Christianity dialogue is missing this crucial missional mindset. When we "go into all the world," we leave the gospel of the kingdom at home. When we seek to develop a psychology faithful to the gospel, we fail to "go into all the world."

Though a missional mindset will always begin with a deep desire to see the Kingdom of God extended into all cultures, it cannot end there. For cultural engagement is no simple thing. It involves learning a new language, a new set of practices. Something analogous to this happens when Christians train in psychology and give a major portion of their lives to the discipline. However, it also requires putting the gospel into a language so that the inhabitants of that culture can understand it, and understand it as *good news*. This is the place where we need to grow.

Newbigin argued that there are two mistakes that missionaries can make when they venture off into a new culture. On the one hand, a missionary may fail to learn the language of that culture. This is a fatal error leading to irrelevance—the culture sees such a missionary as a strange "babbler" whose words make no sense and do not apply to their lives. The other mistake is syncretism, that is, when the culture is learned so well, and the gospel so accommodated to that culture and "absorbed into the existing worldview," that the call to repentance and faith is never issued and never heard. These mission-

aries are reduced to the role of "moralists," calling the culture to greater purity, perhaps, but not to *metanoia*.⁵²

The impasse in the psychology-Christianity dialogue might be understood in these terms. When we do strongly perspectival work, we tend to do it for ourselves, our voice is never heard by the mainstream—we are off in a corner, irrelevant.⁵³ To the mainstream, our voice "sounds like a foreigner; [our] message is heard as the babblings of a [group which] really has nothing to say."⁵⁴ When we do deeply engaged research, we—as Marsden has noted—suppress the gospel message, and we are sometimes seen as moralists within the discipline, calling, perhaps, for a different view of sexuality, a wider inclusion of or deeper respect for "religion," or, as Looy suggests, deeper environmental consciousness, wider employment of qualitative methods, and so forth. Again, there is a very important place for all these things, and Christians are uniquely positioned to play a significant role in such activities. But we should not confuse these vital activities with the call to gospel *metanoia*.

Finally, a missional mindset will not settle on merely "learning the language" of a culture, but will also strive to understand the narratives that animate these cultures. We all inhabit cultural *stories* and live them out, consciously or unconsciously. But the missional task to psychology is complicated *immensely* by the fact that we Western Christians live and move and have our being in the same cultural story as psychology. This is a point that Marsden's approach tends to neglect, in treating the mainstream academy as an object whose relevant and exclusionary controlling assumptions are entirely distinct from our own.⁵⁵ Newbigin, however, upon returning to Britain after decades in India, could see clearly that it can be extremely difficult to bring the gospel to your own culture because it is easy to blur the distinction between your own culture's story and the biblical one. Newbigin thus found the following Chinese proverb apt—"if you want a definition of water, do not ask a fish."⁵⁶ His approach raises the possibility that we are like fish, swimming in the cultural assumptions of modern/postmodern Western culture, unaware of the degree to which they have a controlling, determining influence on the way we live our lives as psychologists.

The very first step we need to take, then, is as Looy suggests—we need to understand the worldview assumptions of psychology. But we need to realize that psychology is embedded within a broader, Western cultural mindset of which *we* are a part. Our task is therefore challenging indeed. We must begin with a clear sense of what these broader Western assumptions are and to what extent they have shaped us, before we can have what Newbigin called a “genuinely missionary encounter” with psychological science.

Many academic disciplines, particularly those in the humanities, have been powerfully affected by postmodern thought. My colleagues from those areas will sometimes respond with profound surprise when they learn that mainstream psychological science still, by and large, inhabits the *modern* Western worldview. If we are to make any headway in contextualizing the gospel for a missionary encounter with psychology, then, we will need to have a keener sense of the characteristics of this “water” in which we continually but unconsciously swim. For a very helpful description of this narrative, we may turn to Newbigin’s “profile of a culture,” namely, the second chapter of his seminal *Foolishness to the Greeks*. Here he identifies several aspects of the modern story that still animates psychology, such as the emphasis on efficient causality and the removal of final causality.⁵⁷ (The prevalence of mechanistic explanation in psychology, which Looy discusses in her introductory essay, flows out of this emphasis.) But the key aspect of the modern narrative is what has been called the fact/value distinction. Reason and faith, science and religion, are understood to be two nonoverlapping worlds. Privately, we are free to believe in whatever we desire. Publicly, however, we must stick to “the facts.”

If Marsden’s analysis helps us to see how the mainstream academy itself suppresses religious expression, Newbigin’s approach reveals why we so easily and without any pangs of conscience comply with these pressures. In other words, the two approaches complement each other, taking a different level of analysis, with Marsden looking more narrowly at the historic and intellectual complexities that have shaped the academy itself, and Newbigin focusing instead on broader, shared cultural narra-

tives. It is at Newbigin’s level of analysis that we see how powerfully our efforts in psychology have been shaped by modernity itself. In fact, the impasse in the psychology-Christianity debate may also be seen as a rather straightforward imprinting of the modern dichotomy between facts and values upon our own community. *We* have been shaped by the values of modernity, keeping our strongly perspectival ruminations to ourselves (in the private realm of values or religion) and engaging the mainstream in a language that is virtually indistinguishable from the other participants in that public square (the public realm of fact and science).

Goheen and Bartholomew suggest that our task is to become aware of the prevailing Western story, to recognize it as a *competing* story, and to make every effort to inhabit the biblical narrative instead. Then we will be prepared to be in this world but not of it, prepared for a genuinely missionary encounter with psychological science.

Next let us consider, in a bit more detail, the devastating effect of modernity on our own witness to psychology. We must raise the question of what will happen when we do not fully recognize the Western narrative for what it is, and we begin to live our gospel not on its own terms, but on the terms of the Western narrative itself.

The Dividing of Our Worldview

If we are not sufficiently critical of the prevailing cultural story, Goheen and Bartholomew warn that “there is another, darker possibility.” Christians may inadvertently “tailor the gospel to fit somewhere within that cultural story.” If this happens,

the inevitable result for the church is compromise and unfaithfulness, for it will not be offering the gospel to the world on the gospel’s own terms, namely, that it alone is the truth about our world and about our lives in it.⁵⁸

I am afraid that to some extent this is what has happened in the psychology-Christianity dialogue. Goheen and Bartholomew continue:

Newbigin believed that the church had deeply compromised its living out of the gospel, allowing the biblical story to be subsumed within the modern scientific story. He spoke of the Western church

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as being “an advanced case of syncretism,” having accepted the fusing together of two incompatible viewpoints.⁵⁹

I realize that this language is strong, and I again want to affirm how much I value the various perspectives in the psychology-Christianity dialogue. But I do think that our lack of missional engagement reflects a “tailoring of the gospel” to fit the modern Western assumptions of psychology, that is, it has led to a discernible fragmentation in our own worldview, which has severely diminished our capacity for missionary encounter with psychological science. Specifically, when we put on our deeply engaged, weakly perspectival face, we embrace half of our worldview—the half that encourages worldly activity, scientific engagement, and common grace. But we simultaneously jettison or compartmentalize those uncomfortable beliefs about antithesis, revelation, *metanoia*, and so forth. When we put on our strongly perspectival, disengaged faces, the emphases reverse. We embrace those aspects of our worldview that emphasize scripture, antithesis, and sin, while jettisoning or compartmentalizing those uncomfortable beliefs that would have us “go into all the world.” A missional framework will hold all of these polarities together.⁶⁰

Newbigin understood that there can, of course, be no “culture-free gospel,” that no understanding of the gospel is perfectly pure, and that missionary encounter at its best will include a process of “mutual correction.” Yet it is also the case, he insisted, that the gospel properly understood will portray Christ “as the light that alone shows the whole of reality as it really is.”⁶¹ Newbigin therefore

believed that the church must recover the gospel *on its own terms*, as the true and comprehensive story of our world and the declaration of the ultimate goal of cosmic history. Only then, he believed, would the gospel story be liberated for its missionary encounter with Western culture.⁶²

This applies to Christians in psychology, too. It is only as we—in all humility and reliance upon Word and Spirit—recover the gospel on its own terms that it (and *we*) will be liberated for missionary encounter with psychology.

A Copernican Revolution?

Kant’s search for synthetic propositions a priori led him to an entirely new way of approaching the problem of knowledge, analogous, he thought, to the Copernican shift in astronomy. Just as our understanding of planetary motion was greatly advanced when we stopped positing geocentrism and instead imagined a heliocentric situation, Kant thought that if we stopped wondering about the properties of objects of knowledge as they are in themselves, but rather considered the human mind’s contribution to knowledge, philosophy could advance. We have found an analogous situation in this discussion. When we stop assuming that there must be an inverse relationship between mainstream engagement and Christian perspective, Christian scholarship in psychology will be free to move in new and much-needed directions. But as comedian Bob Newhart has taught us, psychologists need to offer more than an admonition to “stop it!” Here work like Newbigin’s becomes useful. The “true problem” (to use Kant’s phraseology) of the psychology-Christianity dialogue (how are deeply engaged, strongly perspectival approaches possible?) seems to find its animating spirit and its *raison d’être* when placed in a missional framework, that is, when we begin viewing our strongly perspectival work as *for the mainstream*. So we might be tempted to ask: Would such a missional turn in the psychology-Christianity dialogue represent a “Copernican Revolution” for Christians in psychology?

In some ways, it would not. If the various camps in the dialogue *were* to unite under the banner of the gospel of the Kingdom, we would continue to need deeply engaged, weakly perspectival research, not only to extend psychological science into uncharted territories of Christian interest, but also for our own credibility within the profession. We would need to continue to foster relationships and seek respectful conversations with our non-Christian colleagues, not for instrumental purposes, but because we love and admire and desire to learn from and with them.⁶³ On the other hand, we would also continue to need strongly perspectival but relatively disengaged, “pure” research, in order to better ascertain the contours of a distinctively Christian psychology.

Indeed, we would need this type of research to better ascertain *how* to approach missionary encounter. It is important to reiterate that the call for deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research should not be understood as devaluing these other more common approaches.⁶⁴

A missional orientation would also sensitize us to work that already comes close to a deeply engaged, strongly perspectival approach. Angela Sabates's *Social Psychology in Christian Perspective* is a good example. Structured as a traditional social psychology textbook, this work could serve as a stand-alone text in a social psychology class. The most exciting feature of the text is the way it attempts to show how a Christian worldview provides

a richer understanding of human social interaction than if we only used the current naturalist assumptions of social psychology; and further, that Christian ideas of persons are a legitimate and valid starting point for social psychology research.⁶⁵

Published by InterVarsity Press, the book seems well positioned to be adopted at Christian universities, although it is unclear the extent to which the book is intended to influence mainstream discussion.

For most of us, however, a missional perspective would represent a profound shift in the way our conversation has been framed. To move forward, we would need to foreground "missional questions." We would be asking, in effect: How does this thing I am currently working on speak in a distinctively Christian way to the concerns of the mainstream? How can Christian perspective contribute to discussions currently underway in the discipline? How does our current strongly perspectival research demonstrate that the gospel of the Kingdom is *good news* for psychological science? And how could this research be presented to the mainstream *as such*? Such questions certainly violate the controlling nontheistic background belief of the mainstream academy, and the cultural/Western rule that facts and values ought to be separated, but they could also be a catalyst for new and creative thinking.

This creative thinking may extend into how we structure our professional lives. As an example, a shared missional mindset might serve as impetus for an effort to establish a new division in the APA,⁶⁶ something analogous to the Society of Christian

Philosophers,⁶⁷ in which we explicitly identify with and contribute to the mainstream, and yet also unapologetically seek to engage psychology from the vantage point of our own Christian presuppositions. Such an initiative could make use of Marsden's proposal, or Jim Skillen's similar notion of "principled pluralism," in which we contend for equal treatment of diverse religious and philosophical perspectives within psychological science. We would not seek a monopoly on discourse within psychology, but we would seek the freedom to maintain our Christian identity even as we engage in psychological work. As Skillen notes,

Our religion, on biblical terms, is a way of life and not merely a way of private worship. We are called to live publicly and not merely privately as Christians.⁶⁸

Part of that public life within psychology ought to include the freedom to attempt to persuade our colleagues from other perspectives of the truth of our own, even as we continue to respectfully allow them to attempt to do likewise.

Along these lines, perhaps it is time to begin a new psychology journal that features deeply engaged, strongly perspectival work. The journal would reject all articles in which Christians merely speak to one another. Instead, the articles would be written for a mainstream audience, attempting to show how a Christian perspective sheds light on, advances, critiques, or contributes to current research. It would be a journal in which Christians in psychology give a reason to their colleagues for the hope that is in them. There is, of course, no guarantee that non-Christians would show interest in such a publication. But without venues like this, we can be fairly certain that there will continue to be, as Marsden noted more broadly, "no identifiable Christian schools of thought"⁶⁹ in mainstream psychology.

A missional perspective has much to offer the psychology-Christianity dialogue. It helps us to understand why deeply engaged, strongly perspectival approaches, though rare, are necessary. Further, it elucidates why we have had such difficulty articulating them. But it is only when we begin to re-imagine psychological science *in the gospel's own terms* that we will gain the full benefits of such an approach. As Newbigin claimed, when we view modern culture, including psychological science

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"from within the plausibility structure that is shaped by the Bible, it is perfectly possible to acknowledge and cherish the insights of our culture [i.e., psychology]." ⁷⁰ Further, if we could begin to articulate "a view ... that is seen to offer ... the widest rationality, the greatest capacity to give meaning to the whole of experience," ⁷¹ we may begin to persuade some that the gospel is indeed good news for psychology. For example, we could make the case to the mainstream that it is within this wider rationality of the Christian faith that we can embrace objectivity without falling prey to objectivism, reduction without reductionism, biology without biologism.

In his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn drew an analogy between scientific paradigm shifts and religious conversion. Building on Kuhn's argument, Newbigin continues:

... it follows that the missionary encounter of the gospel with the modern world [of psychology] will, like every true missionary encounter, call for radical conversion. This will be not only a conversion of the will and of the feelings but a conversion of the mind—a "paradigm shift" that leads to a new vision of how things are and, not at once but gradually, to the development of a new plausibility structure in which the most real of all realities is the living God ... ⁷²

When our deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research is used by God to open up such a new vision of *psychological* things—indeed, of psychological science itself—then we may say a truly Copernican Revolution in psychology has begun. ●

Acknowledgment

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Notes

¹David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 273.

²This analysis is based on Sebastian Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

³*Ibid.*, 55.

⁴Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 146, B19.

⁵*Ibid.*, emphasis added.

⁶Eric L. Johnson, ed., *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 229.

⁷Heather Looy, "Psychology at the Theological Frontiers," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 65, no. 3 (2013): 148.

⁸Harold Heie, *Learning to Listen, Ready to Talk: A Pilgrimage toward Peacemaking* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2007), 158. Heie served as the Founding Director of the Center for Faith and Inquiry (formerly the Center for Christian Studies) at Gordon College from 1994–2002.

⁹In our APA-Style-dominated world, "results" has a more specific connotation than Heie intended. Perhaps the term "finished product" better conveys his intention.

¹⁰For a close analysis, see Russell D. Kosits, "Whose Psychology? Which Christianity?," *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry* 13 (2011–2012): 101–97.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 101.

¹²John H. Coe and Todd W. Hall, "A Transformational Psychology View," in *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, ed. Johnson, 200.

¹³Myers sometimes portrays his work with Christians as a "spokesperson" or ambassador of psychological science. Strictly speaking, such activity is part of his role as a psychologist, but not so much advancing the field as much as translating and promoting it for a sometimes skeptical audience. I should also note that Myers wrote an important and winsome response to the new atheism: David Myers, *A Friendly Letter to Skeptics and Atheists: Musings on Why God Is Good and Faith Isn't Evil* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008). In this book, Myers attempts to diffuse many of the objections to faith on grounds that would be acceptable to the mainstream. The book is strongly perspectival in the sense that Myers is quite explicit about many of his theological and ethical beliefs. But the book treats the question of worldview/faith in a modern way, as ultimately an autonomous and private decision, not something that (if I may borrow Hume's famous line) "is, and ought ... to be" a controlling element of science itself.

¹⁴Myers does quote freely from the Bible and many other sources in his textbooks, but these quotes are illustrative, not authoritative.

¹⁵David G. Myers and Malcolm A. Jeeves, *Psychology through the Eyes of Faith*, rev. and updated ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 60–5.

¹⁶Coe and Hall, "A Transformational Psychology View," 201.

¹⁷Johnson, ed., *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, 180, 228, 74.

¹⁸Watson's work is multifaceted, however, and in some of it, his Christian perspective is quite explicit, such as when he analyzes scales for explicit prejudice against Christian samples, and redesigns those scales so that they do a better job, measuring those samples. When doing this sort of work, Watson moves toward the deeply engaged, strongly perspectival approach that tends to be lacking. See Robert C. Roberts and P. J. Watson, "A Christian Psychology View," in *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, ed. Johnson, 149–78.

¹⁹T. W. Hall and K. J. Edwards, "The Spiritual Assessment Inventory: A Theistic Model and Measure for Assessing Spiritual Development," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41 (2002). Hall's paper was cited in Julie J. Exline et al., "Anger toward God: Social-Cognitive Predictors,

Prevalence, and Links with Adjustment to Bereavement and Cancer," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100, no. 1 (2011): 129–48.

²⁰Edward T. Welch, "Pattern Reversal Evoked Potentials in Monkeys," PhD diss., University of Utah, 1982. After receiving his seminary degree in 1978, he went on to Utah to study for his PhD. Clearly, Welch maintained a weakly perspectival approach while working on his PhD.

²¹Stanton L. Jones, "An Integration View," in *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, ed. Johnson, 102.

²²Gary R. Collins, "An Integration View," in *Psychology & Christianity: Four Views*, ed. Eric L. Johnson and Stanton L. Jones (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 105.

²³Stanton L. Jones, "Integration: Defending It, Describing It, Doing It," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 34 (2006): 258.

²⁴Heide, *Learning to Listen, Ready to Talk*, 160.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 169.

²⁶Stanton L. Jones, "A Constructive Relationship for Religion with the Science and Profession of Psychology: Perhaps the Boldest Model Yet," *American Psychologist* 49 (1994): 185.

²⁷Collins, "An Integration View," 104.

²⁸Jones, "A Constructive Relationship for Religion with the Science and Profession of Psychology: Perhaps the Boldest Model Yet"; and Christopher H. Rosik, Stanton L. Jones, and A. Dean Byrd, "Knowing What We Do Not Know About Sexual Orientation Change Efforts," *American Psychologist* 67 (2012).

²⁹Johnson, ed., *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, 229.

³⁰George M. Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³¹George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 440.

³²Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, 57.

³³For example, Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 93; James R. Vanderwoerd, "The Challenge of Fundamentalism for Social Work Ethics: Can Anti-oppressive Social Work Include Orthodox Religion?," *Canadian Social Work* 12 (2010).

³⁴Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, 51, 59.

³⁵Thanks to Heather Looy for encouraging me to think about this point.

³⁶T. M. Moore, "Still Outrageous: An Interview with George Marsden" (2009), <http://www.breakpoint.org/features-columns/archive/1101-still-outrageous->

³⁷For a similar approach, see Kosits, "Whose Psychology? Which Christianity?"

³⁸Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, 3, 72.

³⁹Kosits, "Whose Psychology? Which Christianity?," 118–27.

⁴⁰Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, 25–31. As a remedy to this, Christians in psychology should, as Looy suggests, prioritize the identification of the worldview/control beliefs that guide psychological science. We need to relentlessly press this point, and this is a task to which thinkers (Christians or not) inside and outside mainstream institutions can contribute.

⁴¹Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, 74–5.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 72.

⁴³This also is the major premise of Kosits, "Whose Psychology? Which Christianity?"

⁴⁴As Marsden notes, such arguments would be red herrings, if we frame our arguments carefully and with command of the publicly available evidence. We *all* assume our worldview/control beliefs are true, and we all, on some level, seek to persuade others of their veracity. "Even those who profess to be relativists treat other viewpoints as inferior to their relativism and try to convince others of their viewpoint," in Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, 10.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁶This is true even if we take the final chapter of *Outrageous Idea* into account. This chapter argues rightly that Christian scholarship needs organizational and institutional support, and he offers several helpful suggestions to that effect. But the emphasis of the chapter is on building scholarly organizations and institutions that support Christian conversations outside of the mainstream. The emphasis is on fostering strongly perspectival scholarship, but the need for deep engagement somehow seems to be diminished. Of course, there is nothing in his proposals that would forbid Christian scholars from strategizing for deep engagement; he just does not emphasize it there.

⁴⁷This section draws heavily from Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), chap. 1.

⁴⁸Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004).

⁴⁹Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, 53.

⁵⁰Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 6.

⁵¹For example, our work would need to be recognizably excellent according to the standards of the discipline. Yet we also need to acknowledge that scholarship that challenges implicit orthodoxies will likely be resisted, no matter how carefully done.

⁵²Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 7.

⁵³Myers's *A Friendly Letter to Skeptics and Atheists* is an exception to this rule. However, this book speaks to the secular mainstream but not in such a way to challenge the current practice of psychological science vis-à-vis worldview. In this way, Myers's winsome book, though strongly perspectival, still plays the role of the "moralist" in Newbigin's parlance. See note 13.

⁵⁴Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 7.

⁵⁵An exception to this is Marsden's theme of the self-censorship of Christians in the mainstream. Still, this self-censorship, he argues, arises from the values and practices of the mainstream academy itself, that is, not from broader cultural assumptions.

⁵⁶Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 21. It turns out that the aforementioned fictional Don Gately heard a memorable version of this proverb as well—see Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, 445.

⁵⁷With the explosion of evolutionary psychology, however, a kind of materialistic teleology has returned to psychology.

⁵⁸Goheen and Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads*, 9.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

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⁶⁰Space prohibits the kind of analysis that this framework would imply, so at best I can present a tentative summary of these tensions and their missional resolution here.

	Deeply Engaged/ Weakly Perspectival	Strongly Perspectival/ Disengaged	Missional Approach
Mandate	Creation Mandate	Great Commission	Dual Mandate
Source of data	Book of God's Works	Book of God's Words	Two Books
Apologetic strategy	Evidential	Presuppositional	Evidential Presuppositionalism
Ontological/ethical emphasis	Structure	Direction	Discerning structure and direction
Approach to non-Christian knowledge	Common grace	Antithesis	Kuyperian Paradox
Theoretical orientation	Proximate	Ultimate	Multileveled
Preferred virtue	"Humility"	"Faithfulness"	Symmetrical virtue
Approach to theology	Ecumenical	Sectarian	"Sectarian" or particular ecumenism
Argumentation	Empirical	Transcendent	Transcendental

Many of these "Reformed and Reformational" polarities are discussed in Kosits, "Whose Psychology? Which Christianity?" For a discussion of structure and direction, see Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), chap. 5. An elaboration of the notion of symmetrical virtue may be found in Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith, vol. 2, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 365–76. Look specifically at the tenth sign of genuinely spirit-wrought experience: a "beautiful symmetry and proportion" in the virtues of the saints.

⁶¹Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 4, 8, 19.

⁶²Goheen and Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads*, 9, emphasis added.

⁶³Heie, *Learning to Listen, Ready to Talk*.

⁶⁴Recently, Jamie Smith (JS) and Christian Smith (CS) had a fascinating exchange over this very issue which I will translate into the language employed in this article. JS criticized CS's deeply engaged but weakly perspectival book *What Is a Person?* for failing to be more strongly perspectival. CS replied that we should not "demand that the Christological implications of every scholarly project be spelled out explicitly in every publication," that is, that deeply

engaged, weakly perspectival research is legitimate. JS insisted that he was not demanding such a thing, and that he (JS) wants to be "pluralist about the shape and tenor of Christian scholarship." I strongly affirm this pluralist stance, though I also would like to see a broadening of this pluralism through the development of deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research.

The exchange between JS and CS has other important links to this article. JS explained that his desire to do strongly perspectival work was what led him away from mainstream institutions and publishers, while CS's weakly perspectival, mainstream research is animated by "the wide purchase [CS] seeks" for his work. It would seem, then, that the impasse described in this article goes beyond the psychology-Christianity dialogue.

Citing Marsden's *Outrageous Idea*, JS also very briefly raised the possibility of deeply engaged, strongly perspectival research: "it might even be the case that we do not have to choose." Though Marsden's hoped-for "level playing field has not yet arrived," JS cited an issue of the *South Atlantic Quarterly* as "some sign that things might be changing."

I hope that this article persuades some that we *should not* choose, and that there are steps we can take to move from this instinctive but passive posture of looking for signs of hope to a more active posture.

JS's original review: James K. A. Smith, "The (Re)Turn to the Person in Contemporary Theory," *Christian Scholar's Review* 40, no. 1 (2010); CS's response: Christian Smith, "'More Realism, Critically' – A Reply to James K. A. Smith's 'The (Re)Turn to the Person in Contemporary Theory,'" *Christian Scholar's Review* 40, no. 2 (2010); and JS's response: James K. A. Smith, "Natural Law's Secularism? – A Response to Christian Smith," *Christian Scholar's Review* 40, no. 2 (2010). Thanks to Kevin Flatt for alerting me to this exchange.

⁶⁵Angela M. Sabates, *Social Psychology in Christian Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 26–7.

⁶⁶Though most of the divisions of the APA are thematically organized, some of them are clearly perspectivally oriented, such as Division 32 (Humanistic), 39 (Psychoanalysis), and 35 (Psychology of Women) which self-identifies as a feminist organization. Division 36 (Psychology of Religion), on the other hand, is not perspectivally Christian but rather "strictly nonsectarian."

⁶⁷For a fascinating discussion, see Nicholas Wolterstorff and James K. A. Smith, "Earning Your Voice," *Comment* (March 1, 2013), <http://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/3931/earning-your-voice/>.

⁶⁸James W. Skillen, "Christian Counseling in the Public Square: Principled Pluralism for the Common Good," *Edification* 3 (2009): 10.

⁶⁹Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, 6.

⁷⁰Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 63.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 64.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 52, 64.

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