APPLYING A COMPREHENSIVE-INTERNAL MODEL FOR

THE EVALUATION OF SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

TO THE IDENTITY CRISIS STAGE OF ERIK

ERIKSON'S DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY

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A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Brenna Mae Whitley

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Brenna Mae Whitley

Read and approved by:

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Randy L. Stinson

Date _____12-11-09_____

To Bill and Roxie Whitley

and to

the First Baptist Church of East Bernard, Texas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

PREFACE

ix

And finally, I am grateful to God in whose Son I believe, who is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!

Brenna Mae Whitley

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2009

CHAPTER 1

THE TENSION IN ATTEMPTING TO INTEGRATE SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH WITH THEOLOGY IN CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Teaching methods in the twentieth century changed and shifted in their focus to accommodate the principles derived from social-scientific research.[1] The chief Enlightenment period ideals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reason and empiricism, birthed the dominant social-scientific principles and resulting teaching methods of the twentieth century. Eventually, these social scientific principles for teaching and learning became the standards of practice for Christian education.[2] In many ways, the principles of social-scientific research are virtually synonymous with those of the scientific method. The objective and progressive use of the scientific method in the study of human behavior gave rise to the "soft sciences" or social sciences. The method for studying objects became the method for studying human beings. The scientific community dropped the spiritual and moral dimensions from the working definition of

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[1]Michael J. Anthony and Warren S. Benson, *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 326-36. See also, John Hughes, "Why Christian Education and Not Secular Indoctrination?" in *Think Biblically!*, ed. John MacArthur (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003), 243.

[2]James C. Wilhoit and John M. Dettoni, *Nurture That Is Christian* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), 7-8.

the truth and relegated them to the realm of values.[3] Since that time, educational

philosophers and psychologists have shaped the field of education. Their impact on the

teaching methods of Christian educators is evidenced in such ways as "group dynamics,

creative cognition exercises, active Bible learning, understanding student needs and

motivations before deciding on curriculum, being student centered in classroom

management, and emphasizing the social relevance of material."[4]

Developmental psychology is one of many branches of psychology that falls

within the realm of the social sciences. Many different definitions of developmental

psychology exist, yet all share five similar characteristics: (1) apex or point of decision

often termed a crisis (2) centered on the self (3) two sources of tension or crisis, the

internal or biological and the external or social (4) life or growth is a process (5) there is a

predictable, observable, measurable pattern of development based on the resolution of

crises.[5] The following definition of a developmental issue includes these characteristics.

A developmental issue is

> a concern, tension, worry or crisis encountered by the self in the context of change.
> The source of change can be personal and internal—bodily, mentally, emotionally,
> socially—or external—relational, familial, communal, societal. Since internal and
> external change is continual and interactive, life is a process of facing one
> developmental issue after another.[6]

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[3]Julie Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2-5.

[4]Michael Anthony and Warren Benson, *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 337.

[5]Marc H. Bornstein and Michael E. Lamb, eds., *Developmental Psychology: An Advanced Textbook* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999), 22, 31-33.

[6]Jack O. Balswick, Pamela Ebstyne King, and Kevin S. Reimer, *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 297.

Educational psychologists generally agree that psychosocial development consists of "a progressive series of changes that occur in a predictable pattern as the result of interactions between biological and environmental factors."[7] These five characteristics also act as a framework for the accepted criteria of a developmental stage theory.

Christian educators commonly employ the developmental theories of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg, and James Fowler. Though there are many different subsets of developmental psychology, this dissertation focuses on the applicability of one aspect of one specific stage of one psychosocial developmental theory in the context of Christian discipleship—the identity crisis in Erik Erikson's fifth stage: identity versus role confusion.

Stage theory as a conceptual tool came into existence as a result of the foundational work of cognitive developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget.[8] Most stage theories were developed to describe a certain aspect of development in terms of a series of rises and plateaus, much like a staircase. Piaget established five criteria that he believed should characterize any stage theory including the one being examined in this dissertation, Erik Erikson's eight-stage theory of psychosocial development. According to Piaget, a stage theory must meet the following criteria: each stage must be qualitatively different from the next, each stage must be independently systematic in worldview, each stage must represent a patterned fixed order of experience in relation to preceding and

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[7]Neil J. Salkind, *An Introduction to Theories of Human Development* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 311.

[8]Peter L. Samuelson and John Snarey, "Stage Theory," in *Encyclopedia of Moral Education* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 428.

following stages, each stage is successive in nature, complexity and hierarchy, and each stage must be universally applicable.

Two essential concepts of Darwinism, accommodation and assimilation, are also essential to developmental stage theory.[9] Moral developmentalist, Lawrence Kohlberg added a functional component to Piaget's five criteria of stage theories. Kohlberg's functional component allows for "evolving levels of ego functioning responding to culturally scheduled developmental crisis."[10] Assimilation and accommodation are the means by which persons respond and adapt to such crisis. Erikson's eight-stage theory of psychosocial development is considered a *functional* stage theory with each stage being dependent upon the notion of a crisis resolved or alleviated.

Introduction

The thesis of this dissertation is that a biblical framework alternative to the typical models of the relationships between theology and social-scientific research is necessary for discerning the appropriateness of using Erik Erikson's developmental theory, in whole or in part, in the context of Christian discipleship. The three epistemological priorities of the comprehensive-internal model serve as the framework for discerning the appropriateness of Erikson's theory for Christian discipleship in this dissertation. The alternative to integration that is offered in this dissertation—a biblical theological paradigm applied through David Powlison's comprehensive-internal framework for biblical counseling—is intended for the church, "the Body of Christ which

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[9]Bornstein and Lamb, *Developmental Psychology*, 13.

[10]Samuelson and Snarey, "Stage Theory," 429.

includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."[11] Throughout this research, the research examines the validity of employing a social-scientific development theory in the context of Christian discipleship. Erik Erikson's eight-stage theory of psychosocial development, specifically the fifth stage—identity versus role confusion—will be most closely examined.

The dissertation begins with a demonstration of how developmental psychology has come to provide the assumed paradigm for Christian educational philosophy and practice and specifically how Erikson's notion of identity crisis is often presumed as an implicit reality in discipleship. The dissertation then includes a framework for reading Erikson's work based on David Powlison's epistemological priorities.[12] These priorities are employed within a "comprehensive-internal" approach to extract a biblical-theological perspective on identity and identity crisis, to expose any of Erikson's notions of identity that are antithetical to the Bible, and to determine what can be learned and used regarding identity in the context of Christian discipleship. Finally, the dissertation will end with concluding thoughts and a discussion of future research possibilities.

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[11]"The Baptist Faith and Message," *The Southern Baptist Convention* (2000) [on-line]; accessed 4 April 2009; available from http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp; Internet. While Powlison developed the vital-external and comprehensive-internal frameworks to discuss issues of integration in Christian counseling toward biblical counseling, chapter two of this dissertation explains why the vital-external and comprehensive-internal frameworks can be used to discuss issues of integration in Christian education toward Christian discipleship in the church, universal and local.

[12]David Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads: The Care of Souls and the Modern Psychotherapies," in *Care for the Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 33.

The Integration of Developmental Psychology
and Christian Education

Though discipleship is as old as the church, the religious education movement

as well as developmental theory are relatively new in the history of education. In the

course of the twentieth century, Christian educators began to employ developmental

psychology to disciple and to train others to disciple in the church. Erik Erikson's theory

of psychosocial development was only one of several developmental theories proposed

by psychologists and adopted by Christian educators in the twentieth century. There

seem to be four primary avenues by which developmental psychology made its way into

Christian education.

The first avenue is a historic philosophical shift in methodological practices in

the field of education that Christian educators transferred for use in Christian

discipleship. "The religious education movement did not try to replace the Sunday

school but rather attempted to bring to it a new approach to the teaching of religion."[13]

The emphasis on teaching methodology in the religious education movement shifted the

focus of the teacher from a Bible-centered lesson to a teacher-centered or student-

centered lesson.[14] The shift in philosophy to accept the findings of educational

psychologists such as John Dewey for practice in the church contributed to the eventual

acceptance of developmental psychologists such as Erik Erikson.[15]

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[13]Anthony and Benson, *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education*, 346.

[14]Ibid., 337.

[15]Ibid., 346-47.

The second avenue is cultural. A cultural shift toward modern psychology as a framework for understanding human development occurred in the twentieth century. The influence of psychology in the West methodologically reflected a constructed reality in which the individual was increasingly seen from a naturalistic and mechanistic standpoint. From this psychological perspective the individual became an empty self in need of fulfillment often through therapy.[16] Phillip Cushman argues that, with the loss of effective and vibrant "authoritative communities" such as the church, society in the West was left to one scientific voice after the next. In place of authoritative communities, self-realization became the guiding teleology in the culture.[17]

The third avenue by which developmental psychology entered Christian education was provided in the increasingly popular compartmentalization of human life. This compartmentalization of life into the sacred and the secular correlated with the compartmentalization of life into mental, physical, emotional, psychological, and social developmental categories. In turn, Christian educators began to seek guidance from extrabiblical resources specific to these categories. The sufficiency of Scripture comprises the central debate as to what resource should be primary for counseling and teaching.

> [A] sense of insufficiency [in regard to the use of Scripture for the purpose of counseling] arises from a series of faulty assumptions that operate almost unconsciously. For example, 'spiritual' matters are typically split off from 'psychological, emotional, relational [and educational] matters.[18]

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[16]Phillip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 1, 9.

[17]E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2005), 288, 313.

[18]David Powlison, ed., *Counsel the Word*, 2nd ed. (Glenside, PA: CCEF), 4.

Christian educators advocating the integration of social science and theology believe in a fundamental need for some source other than Scripture to inform adequately all areas of the educational process. Developmental psychology is the most common source to which Christian educators look to inform teaching methodology and the nature of human beings for discipleship in the church. According to 1 Corinthians 13:12, the Christian does not and cannot see reality perfectly in the present, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." Compare what John says,

> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.
> (1 John 3:2-3)

The fourth avenue is conceptual. The value Christian educators place on empiricism has intensified exponentially. The loud voice of science via psychology in the West and the human propensity to question the sufficiency of Scripture for communicating God's truth for all of life creates the breach in the wall necessary for empiricism to enter. An increasingly professional social scientific stance demands greater commitment to empiricism.[19] The Christian educator who consults developmental psychology as a source in Christian discipleship will soon encounter the commitment that must also be made to empiricism in order to practice the theories of developmental psychology. A failure to recognize the limitations of empiricism can contribute to the final step toward social science by which Christian education is rendered

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[19]Bornstein and Lamb, *Developmental Psychology*, 7.

barely recognizably Christian. At that point social science has taken priority over theology in Christian education.

The historical, cultural, practical and conceptual ways in which developmental psychology have entered Christian education are sustained primarily through the attempt to integrate theology and the social sciences.[20] It should be noted that the integration of theology and the social sciences is a completely separate undertaking from the integration of faith and learning. This dissertation is concerned with the former. The latter—the integration of faith and learning, digesting the intake of knowledge about the world and how God created it through a biblical worldview is to be commended. The integration of faith and learning is fairly recent terminology for an older concept built on the axiom "all truth is God's truth" reintroduced by Frank Gaebelein. Nancy Pearcey speaks of the way to filter knowledge about the world including scientific knowledge with the mind of Christ.

> As with every aspect of sanctification, the renewal of the mind may be painful and difficult. It requires hard work and discipline, inspired by a sacrificial love for Christ and a burning desire to build up His Body, the Church. In order to have the mind of Christ, we must be willing to be crucified with Christ, following wherever He might lead—whatever the cost. "Through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). As we undergo refining the fires of suffering, our desires are purified and we find ourselves wanting nothing more than to bend every fiber of our being, including our mental powers, to fulfill the Lord's prayer: 'Thy Kingdom come.'[21]

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[20]Frank Gaebelein, *The Pattern of God's Truth: Problems of Integration in Christian Education* (New York: Oxford UP, 1954), 22.

[21]Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 24.

David Powlison's comprehensive-internal approach will be offered as a tool with which to filter and discern the claims of Erikson's identity crisis and thus articulate the Mind of Christ about them.

On the other hand, what James Estep calls faith-learning integration in his chapter "What Makes Education Christian?" in *A Theology for Christian Education*, must be clearly distinguishable from the integration of faith and learning which Francis Schaeffer, Nancy Pearcey, Harry Blamires, or perhaps more distinctly D. A. Carson in his work *Christ and Culture Revisited* would intend.[22] Estep's work provides a typology of how the social sciences may be integrated with theology in Christian education. One of the tasks of this dissertation is to offer an alternative to Estep's typology.

Developmental Psychology Foundational to
Twentieth Century Christian Education

Developmental psychology has not only been integrated into Christian education, but also has become an assumed framework for Christian teaching and learning. Most Christian education literature includes the ready acceptance of the compatibility of the "truth" of developmental psychology with the truth of Scripture and orthodox Christian theology. Long-time leading Christian educator Ted Ward—retired Professor of Christian Education and Missions and Dean of International Studies, Mission and Education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School—describes the acceptance of developmental theories among Christian educators.

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[22]James R. Estep, Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 37. See also, Donald A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Harry Blamires, *Recovering the Christian Mind: Meeting the Challenge of Secularism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1988); Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004); Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality: The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1982).

As a field of academic study, Christian education has gradually come to accept developmentalism as its theoretical base. As the intellectual quality of literature and research in the field has increased, the importance of a sound theoretical base has increased. Judging by the surging mainstream of academic literature in the field of Christian education, the choice has settled on one variation or another of developmentalism, largely because of the compatibility and consistency between its presuppositions and the essential foundations for the field in Christian theology. Biblical studies and Christian theology set criteria for the conceptual and methodological shape of the field. Christian educators can pick and choose among the contending educational theories, but in order to be responsible to both the academic rubrics and the theological tenets, the choice of theory must be in harmony with the rudiments of Christian values and ideation . . . . Developmentalism passes the test rather well, especially if Christian definitions and supernatural components of the person are recognized alongside the inherent naturalism from which developmentalism springs.[23]

Most recently, *A Theology for Christian Education,* by leading Christian educators James Estep and Michael Anthony with systematic theologian Gregg Allison, clearly evidence ongoing acceptance of a broad range of social-scientific theories including developmental psychology. The authors make several arguments for the "integration of faith and learning," by which they mean integration of Christianity and the social sciences. Estep argues that though no one developmental theory can provide an adequate understanding of how a human develops, "developmental theories provide a conceptual framework through which the Christian educator can approach the subject of spiritual formation."[24]

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[23]Wilhoit and Dettoni, *Nurture That Is Christian,* 7-8.

[24]James R. Estep. "Spiritual Formation as Social: Toward a Vygotskyan Developmental Perspective," *Journal of Religious Education* 97 (Winter 2002): 142.

A Typology for the Relationships of Theology
and the Social Sciences

Many different models and explanations of the integration of theology with the social sciences exist. In Figure 1, James Estep outlines five different perspectives on the integration of the social sciences and theology for the Christian educator.[25] These five perspectives provide a typology to explain most, if not all, attempts to express the relationships of the social sciences with theology for the purpose of ministry in the church.[26]

Level 1:
Disintegration
Use of social sciences, theology unknown or regarded as irrelevant

Level 2: *Segregation*
Use of theology, social sciences known and rejected

Level 3: *Paradoxical*
Social Sciences and theology used independently.

Level 4: *Synthetic*
Primary and substantial use of social sciences, theology used sparingly and marginalized, an appendix for appearances.

Level 5: *Paradigmatic*
The social sciences and theology are both valued as necessary and legitimate, both are used simultaneously and interactively.

Figure 1. Student integrative endeavor

[25]Estep, Anthony, and Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education*, 37.

[26]Ibid., Fig. 2.2.

The first of the five perspectives Estep identifies is the "disintegration" perspective where only the social sciences are used and Scripture is not seen as relevant or applicable. The second perspective is the "segregation" perspective where the Bible is the only resource used to inform the Christian education process and the social sciences are deemed man-made and unworthy. The third perspective is the "paradoxical" perspective where the social sciences inform the Christian education process separately and equally as the Bible does, but the two are not in cooperation. The fourth perspective is the "synthetic" perspective. In this perspective Estep explains that the discipleship process is informed primarily by the social sciences while Scripture provides a text to support the social scientific claim being employed. The fifth perspective is the "paradigmatic" perspective which gives the social sciences and theology necessary, simultaneous, and interactive value, importance, and legitimacy.

Estep believes the paradigmatic perspective offers the proper relationship of the social sciences and theology for use by the Christian educator. With this view, he argues that the social sciences (including developmental psychology) and theology are to be used at the same time and in cooperation with the other.

> Level 5: The student uses both Paul and Piaget in the formation of a conceived conceptualization of human nature. At this level both the form and substance of education are derived from theology and the social sciences. She endeavors to use Paul and Piaget simultaneously. All the advantages of the previous levels are present without the limitations or inadequacies. Hence, the student's paper reflects Paul and Piaget together in terms of both analysis and application.[27]

In his model students "use both Paul and Piaget" in the formation of their concept of human nature as well as the overall form and substance of education. It is in this type of

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[27]Ibid., 35.

integration that the issues of the authority and the sufficiency of Scripture arise. For instance, using Estep's paradigmatic perspective on integration to apply Erikson's identity crisis for the purpose of discipleship raises the question of the authority of Erikson compared to Scripture in the life of the one being discipled.

Whatever their view on the relationship between the social sciences and theology, leading Christian educators commonly agree that psychology offers a world-shaping narrative. This world-shaping narrative demands a certain level of acceptance for those who want to employ it. Robert Roberts warns of the dangers of wholly accepting psychological theories and ignoring their underlying presuppositions because of their ability to lead the Christian astray if left unchecked.

> This word is the "logy" of the true psychology; it is the Word of the soul, which must be brought to the forefront and asserted once again, and thought through and placed in perspicuous comparison with the other psycho-logies that sound daily in our ears and bid to form us in their image.[28]

Even in the church, he warns, their narratives are so strong that "our character and relationships are no longer Christian but are now Rogerian, or family-systemic, or Jungian, or rational-emotive" (and this researcher would add, Piagetian or Vygotskan or Kohlbergian or Eriksonian).[29] The purpose of the reality shaping narrative of psychology is the maintenance of a norm-referenced state or a life free from abnormality as the field of psychology defines abnormality.[30]

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[28]Robert Roberts, *Taking the Word to Heart: Self and Others in an Age of Therapies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 6.

[29]Ibid., 2, 4.

[30]Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America*, 6, 180, 280-82.

Philosophical Support for Integration

Developmental psychology is not only integrated into Christian education but also has formed Christian education's foundational philosophical base. This has been accomplished through previously stated integrative approaches, especially what Estep has termed the paradigmatic relationship. Though it has become Christian education's foundational philosophical base, developmental psychology has an inherent philosophical fragility. The philosophical weakness of developmental psychology is its lack of unifying teleology or "final cause." Aristotle suggested that four causes produce change: "formal cause (what a thing is), material cause (out of which a thing is made), efficient cause, (by which a thing is made), final cause (for which a thing is made)."[31] Developmental psychology became an attempt to offer a "set of shared understandings about what it is to be human" by concentrating on the more measurable of Aristotle's causes—the formal, material and efficient.[32] Without a final cause, developmental theorists are driven to leave unquantifiable intrinsic factors for more measurable extrinsic factors to determine that which causes development.[33] A

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[31]Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Greater Philosophers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1926), 82. See also, R. C. Sproul, *The Consequences of Ideas: Understanding the Concepts that Shaped Our World* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2000), 48.

[32]Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America,* 282.

[33]The psychoanalysis hermeneutic with its humanistic tendencies unfortunately invades or displaces the Gospel-centered hermeneutic and proves that it cannot work harmoniously with it. For more information on the psychoanalysis hermeneutic, see Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America,* 297: "The feeling becomes felt after it is categorized, framed in a particular way by the shared understandings of our cultural frame of reference, which have been embodied by us. Then, finally, we experience and understand the feeling, because we have framed what it is. Because we can put it in a moral context, it can appear and be recognized. It is then available to be used by us as proof of the correctness or incorrectness of a particular behavior: as punctuation, if you will, to everyday moral and political acts." For more information on the Gospel-centered hermeneutic, see Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

commitment to the social sciences required some commitment to empiricism and integration as well.[34] Empiricism and science became the reliable non-manipulative guide for everyday living.[35]

Before naturalistic thinking became a cultural mindset, empirical evidence was used to show evidence of order and design in the universe.[36] The Enlightenment era prized and defined freedom as autonomy from religious restrictions and governmental compulsion. Freedom was thought to have come in the objectivity of empirical data and the scientific method.[37] Advances in technology and statistical methods allow sociologists to move toward searching for answers to research questions in outliers of large, randomized experiments. This approach is considered more scientific because it is less attached to any pre-existing ideology. "There has been some shift away from grand frameworks to more focused empirical questions" regardless of whether grand frameworks are religious or not.[38] Empirical evidence is thought to offer a more reliable, measurable, tangible, and rational explanation from which to make more informed decisions for life. Interpretive frameworks, even non-religious ones are threaten to contaminate data. However, empiricism itself relies on grand frameworks to be accurate,

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[34]Balswick, King, and Reimer, *The Reciprocating Self*, 9-10.

[35]Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America*, 280.

[36]Ibid., 50.

[37]Bornstein and Lamb, *Developmental Psychology*, 233.

[38]Patricia Cohen, "The 60's Begin to Fade as Liberal Professors Retire," *The New York Times*, 3 July 2008, sec. A, p. 1.

consistent, and applicable. Empirical data in the hands of developmental theorists

furthers a naturalistic and/or materialistic framework.[39]

The final cause or end to which a human develops remains open ended in most

developmental theories. In other words, developmental theories are not an attempt to

offer an explanation for the purpose of development. It makes sense then that

developmental psychologists recognize no unifying metatheory to unify the various

developmental theories for developmental psychology as a whole.

> The enormous scope of material on human development can serve as a barrier to the
> emergence of a metatheory explaining development in its entirety. Consequently,
> existing theories describe aspects and portions of the developmental process—
> whether cognition in infants, identity development in adolescents or generativity in
> adulthood. As a result developemental theory lacks an organizing principle through
> which to understand and evaluate these theories. Psychological and sociological
> contributions may offer insights into developmental processes, but they do not
> provide a framework for understanding the goals or ends of development.[40]

David Powlison states not only that there is no Grand Unified Theory for psychology but

also that none is being pursued. "Microtheories and eclecticism are the order of the

day."[41]

Christian educators are "able" to accept developmental psychology as a

foundational philosophical base in large part because no meta-theory exists for

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[39]Balswick, King, and Reimer, *The Reciprocating Self*, 18. Renowned economist and student of human behavior Max Weber cautioned that empirical knowledge never includes all the facts. Rather empirical data must be carefully limited to narrow interests in narrow situations. Even then the data that is produced must still be seen in the realm of the abstract. Weber does not totally discount empirical research. Rather, he addresses the issue that when it comes to studying human beings from the empirical, only generalizations can be made. When using the empirical to attempt to get more specific, it must be known that there are a lot of unknowns about how persons come about making their decisions (or actions) whether it be rational or irrational. This is true when attempting to come up with economic theory or developmental theory. For more information on Weber's thoughts on empiricism, see Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 9.

[40]Balswick, King, and Reimer, *The Reciprocating Self*, 18.

[41]Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads," 38.

developmental psychology. Christian educators generally believe that Christianity can provide what developmental theorists are lacking in their naturalistic assumptions. It would seem that the lack of a unified goal or purpose in developmental psychology would render developmental theories useless in the secular world and in the church or at least weaken them in pragmatic terms. Yet, Christian educators see this missing teleology in developmental theory not as a weakness or incompatibility between naturalistic assumptions and biblical presuppositions, rather an opportunity for the special revelation of Christianity to complete the general revelation of the social sciences.[42]

The lack of teleology in developmental psychology makes a developmental theory seem neutral which in turn makes it easier to generalize.[43] For instance, the philosophical support for using Erikson's theory in Christian education is largely teleological. In other words, Christian educators tend to accept a developmental theory, such as Erikson's theory of psychosocial development because they can insert their own "Christian" end.

When the Christian educator accepts a developmental theory, he inevitably *has* to insert a teleology or final cause. There are many examples of this attempt to substitute a final cause. The authors of *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective* offer what they call the reciprocating self—"fully and securely related to others and to God"—as a final goal or endpoint for human development.[44]

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[42]Balswick, King, and Reimer, *The Reciprocating Self*, 17.

[43]Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 96.

[44]Balswick, King and Reimer, *The Reciprocating Self*, 17.

> The purpose of *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective* is to present an integrated view of human development that is based on social-scientific research and biblical truths. We do this by drawing on a biblical model of relationality, where the created goal or purpose of human development is to be come a reciprocating self—fully and securely related to others and to God.[45]

The author attempts to provide the missing overarching teleology by applying the relational aspects of the Trinity (as well as the greatest commandment) as an analogy for human living. In this example the reciprocating self will hold together the rest of their attempt at Christian developmentalism. The final cause that a Christian educator inserts into a theory shapes and defines the theory and what it produces when put into practice.

Just as Christians have a conviction to offer a teleology according to their faith, those in the field of psychotherapy have a conviction to offer a teleology according to their faith. Naturalistic assumptions keep developmental theorists from naming a single agreed upon and specific ideal type. The single agreed upon *telos* of all Christian discipleship ought to be Jesus Christ.[46] The secular psychologist typically would, however, suggest general characteristics of an ideal personality.[47] For example, a well-informed personality such as can be found in Maslow's ideal type consists of these qualities: perception of reality, acceptance, spontaneity, autonomy, creativity, "peak"

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[45]Ibid., 9.

[46]Rom 8:29. Many Christian educators might instead insert something good, but not final as Jesus Christ. They may, for example, insert relationship with God and with man as the *telos* or purpose of Christian discipleship. In other words, though Scripture clearly states that Jesus Christ is who the church is being conformed to, Christian educators do not necessarily advocate Jesus as their final cause.

[47] Robert Roberts and Mark R. Talbot, eds., *Limning the Psyche* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 89.

experiences, and democratic, egalitarian, and humanitarian decision making and relationships.[48]

Erik Erikson and Christian Education

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development appeals to Christian educators for three main reasons. First, Christian educators assume Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is valid because of his emphasis on the social aspect of development. Erikson expanded Sigmund Freud's basic principles of psychoanalysis. Where Freud virtually ignored the role of community in the life of a person, Erikson embraced it. Erikson's social emphasis not only included the individual and his immediate environment, but also the impact of historical occurrences upon the individual and entire cultures.[49] Erikson's emphasis on community, fellowship, and the need for one another appeals to Christians even though their reason for community, fellowship and need for one another differs greatly than Erikson. While the fellowship of Christians is as coheirs with Christ through the Holy Spirit, Erikson's emphasis on social impact or community is as co-beneficiaries for survival. Nonetheless, in an attempt to capitalize on Erikson's ideals, many Christian educators ignore this important distinction or accept Erikson as being partially correct.

Second, Erikson differed from other developmental theorists because he accepted an underlying structure along which human beings develop. Erikson did not specify the end or ideal type toward which a human being develops. Rather he

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[48]Paul Vitz, *Psychology as Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 10.

[49]Wilhoit and Dettoni, eds., *Nurture That Is Christian*, 95.

recognized an underlying structure which he called the epigenetic principle. Christian

educators can insert the image of God or the mind of Christ as the "end," because

Eriskon's theory does not strongly and clearly define the ideal type.

Christian educators do not typically accept developmental theories in their

entirety. It is more common for them to accept certain aspects of developmental theories.

For example, Fred Wilson agrees with Erikson that developmental stages are a series of

"life structures" that change in the course of time.[50] A life structure, according to the

authors, is an underlying pattern or design of person's life in that particular life stage. In

general they seem to agree with Erik Erikson's epigenetic principle. The epigenetic

principle describes a basic developmental framework or patterned ascendancy that brings

every human being to predictable psychosocial crisis.[51] Erikson applies this concept to

his eight psychosocial stages through the epigenetic principle. The epigenetic principle

and its importance to Erikson's theory will be explained further later in this chapter.

Third, Erikson's theory appeals to Christian educators because it leaves room

for human subjectivity.[52] The theory is not based solely on genetics, therefore, it is

considered to be less deterministic. Each of the stages is part of the human experience,

but the experience of each stage is more of a fluid one than a fixed one. Social scientists

often criticize Erikson's theory of psychosocial development for not being scientific

enough or empirically investigable. His approach is to have a disciplined subjectivity or

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[50]Fred Wilson, "Adult Development" in *Nurture That Is Christian*, eds. James C. Wilhoit and John M. Dettoni (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 172.

[51]Wilhoit and Dettoni, eds., *Nurture That Is Christian*, 95.

[52]Ibid., 94.

a series of "progressive approximations."[53] Erikson himself called his work simply a "conceptual itinerary" saying all he had to offer was "a way of looking at things."[54] His central purpose was not to provide "pat prescriptions or packaged formulae but what in his own words he describes as 'tools to think with."[55] Erikson's lack of dedication or dependence upon the empirical draws Christian educators who value but see beyond the empirical.

**Examples of Erikson in
Christian Education**

Christian educators employ Erikson's theory of psychosocial development in various ways even though the viability of integrating theology and social science remains questionable. A typical example of the integration of Erikson's theory in Christian education can be found in an article from the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* entitled "Using Erikson's Developmental Theory to Understand and Nurture Spiritual Development in Christians." In this instance, the authors attempt to equate Erikson's crises and stages with the terminology 'born again' as used in John 3:3, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," referring to

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[53]Stevens, *Erik Erikson*, 20.

[54]Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950), 17.

[55]Ibid., 2.

Christian salvation into the Kingdom of God by faith in Jesus Christ.[56] The authors

define crises and stages as "new birth" issues.[57]

> It looks at those Christian traditions that emphasize being 'born again' as the
> beginning point of the spiritual journey and seeks to engage this imagery of spiritual
> development by juxtaposing this metaphor of new birth with Erikson's
> developmental stages.[58]

Their conclusions are that understanding Erikson's stages will help the Christian educator

better understand and have compassion for the real life experiences of others so that they

can help individuals move forward to the next stage in their spiritual journey to which

Erikson's stages correspond and illumine.

Bruce Demarest now supports such conclusions as well. In *Seasons of the*

Soul: Stages of Spiritual Development, Demarest clearly states that his goal is to use

Erikson's work to "apply to the Christian life by looking at a journey model for the

development of the soul."[59] The goal is "positive resolution of the various crises" that

people go through. Demarest demonstrates and agreement with and reliance upon

Erikson's ideas regarding the resolution of crises for a model of human spiritual

development. Demarest seems to use Erikson's stage theory as a spring board for finding

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[56]See also John 1:13; John 3:5-8; 1 Pet 1:3, 23; 1 John 3:9, 5:1,4.

[57]The crises in Erikson's eight stages are between trust v. mistrust, autonomy v. doubt, initiative v. guilt, industry v. inferiority, identity v. identity diffusion, intimacy v. isolation, generativity v. self-absorption, integrity v. disgust and despair. See Fig. 2 on p. 32 of this chapter.

[58]Yvonne Tate Bissonnette and Stephen Parker, "Using Erikson's Developmental Theory to Understand and Nurture Spiritual Development in Christians," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 26 (2007): 218-26.

[59]Bruce Demarest, *Seasons of the Soul: Stages of Spiritual Development* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 14: "Research into the human life cycle supports the idea that we pass through spiritual seasons or phases. Psychologist Erik H. Erikson identified eight stages of psychosocial development. His research brought about greater appreciation for the developmental stages and critical transitions of the human life cycle . . . . Erikson's work supports a view of human development in multiple phases, which I'll apply to the Christian life by looking at a journey model for the development of the soul."

theological equivalent patterns other theologians have already developed from Scripture.

One such example is Walter Brueggemann's repeating three-phase pattern.[60]

Eric Geiger in his recent popular level book, *Identity: Who You Are in Christ*,

refers directly to Erikson's theory. He refers to immaturity or a lack of growth in

believers as spiritual adolescence. He goes on to explain the premise of his book in light

of how Erikson defines identity in his fifth stage: role confusion versus identity.

> In the 1960's a social psychologist named Erik Erikson developed a theory of development. He was not a biblical scholar or a theologian. He studied one aspect of God's general revelation: creation. He observed and studied people. In Erikson's model, teenagers reach a point of developmental crisis. Erikson calls the crisis role confusion versus identity. In other words, teenagers are searching for identity . . . . I believe Erikson's model has some credence. Teenagers are searching for identity, a reputation . . . . Erikson believed that if people do not establish a coherent sense of their own personal identity, they would struggle throughout their lives with relating to others and relating to the world around them. According to Erikson, if a teenager does not walk away from his adolescent years with a clear sense of who he is, he will never have a healthy personality. He will be stuck. He will be continually confused about who he is. He will live the rest of his life wavering back and forth still searching for an identity. He will live in perpetual adolescence for the rest of his life. Stuck as a teenager in an adult body. Sadly, many Christians are stuck in an adolescent faith.[61]

Geiger uses Erikson's identity and identity crisis as a theoretical base. Christian

educators, such as Geiger, accept Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and

recommend its use for discipleship purposes in the church. Erikson's theory thus makes

its way from a scholarly level into the every day lives of people in the church. Christian

educators continue to write popular level books as well as scholarly level books from this

integrated perspective.

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[60]Ibid., 15, 155.

[61]Eric Geiger, *Identity: Who You Are in Christ* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 6-7.

On the academic level, editors James Wilhoit and John Dettoni devote an entire chapter to Erikson in their book, *Nurture That Is Christian*—a textbook for Christian educators. Les Steele authors the chapter, "The Power of Erikson."[62] His purpose is to introduce Erikson and his theory and to "explore implications of Erikson's theory for Christian education."[63] After introducing Erikson and briefly explaining Erikson's eight stage theory of psychosocial development, Steele draws implications and insights from Erikson's theory for Christian education. Most pointedly, Steele likens 1 Corinthians 13:13, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love," to three of Erikson's eight stages—hope to the first stage trust versus mistrust, faith to the fifth stage identity versus role confusion, and love to the sixth stage intimacy versus isolation.[64] Steele commits at least two types of logical fallacy in his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 13—an improperly handled syllogism and an unwarranted associative jump.[65] Nontheless, he continues to appeal to Erikson and encourage others to do the same.

> Erikson's work can give us insight as we articulate a philosophy of Christian education. One aspect of developing our approach is to consider the question of human nature; what does it mean to be a maturing Christian human being? Erikson gives us much to help develop a response to this question.[66]

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[62]Wilhoit and Dettoni, *Nurture That Is Christian*, 91-103.

[63]Ibid., 91.

[64]Ibid., 98.

[65]D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 94-95, 115-16.

[66]Wilhoit and Dettoni, *Nurture That Is Christian*, 101.

Steele then gives several examples of Christian educators' use of Erikson to develop applications for Christian education.[67] He concludes with the ways in which he believes Erikson can and should be used in the field.[68] Steele recommends Erikson as a source for helping Christian educators communicate an approach to Christian Education, "identify age-appropriate educational designs," and design individualized plans for discipleship.[69] The religious education movement welcomed psychological development theory such that theories such as Erikson's are now the assumed framework from which many seminaries train future ministers of the gospel to engage in Christian education, a term and field at the peak of its ambiguity.

The Significance of Identity Crisis to Erikson's Theory

Developmental psychology has become the assumed framework for Christian education. Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is one of many theories of developmental psychology employed by Christian educators via a paradigm of the faith-learning integration. Because the purpose of this dissertation is to examine the viability

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[67]Les Steele discusses how Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory is used by Christian educators John Gleason and Donald Capps, *Life Cycle Theory and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Lewis J. Sherrill, *Struggle of the Soul* (New York: Macmillan, 1954); Robert Havighurst, *The Educational Mission of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965); Iris V. Cully, *Christian Child Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979).

[68]Kevin E. Lawson, "Christian Education: A Field in Motion" (research project, North American Professors of Christian Education, 2008). The term field is used here because of the increasingly professional nature of Christian education. Simultaneous to the professionalization of Christian education has been an increasing vagueness to what the term Christian education refers. Recently, an investigation was launched by the North American Professors of Christian Education (NAPCE) to determine what the term "Christian education" now means. The general consensus of the study was that there was no agreed upon understanding of what Christian education is or means.

[69]Wilhoit and Dettoni, *Nurture That Is Christian*, 101-02.

of Erikson's identity crisis for Christian discipleship, it is necessary first to investigate the importance of Erikson's notion of identity crisis within his own theory.

Erikson first introduced his eight-stage theory of psychosocial development in *Childhood and Society* (1950).[70] His thoughts on identity and development grew and changed throughout his life. He expanded his thoughts in *Identity and the Life Cycle* (1959), and even further in *Identity, Youth and Crisis* (1968).[71] His notion of identity crisis remained central to his thoughts on identity throughout his life. He became somewhat disgruntled and perplexed about the common misuse and expansion of the terms identity and identity crisis.

> 'Identity' and 'identity crisis' have in popular and scientific usage become terms which alternately circumscribe something so large and so seemingly self-evident that to demand a definition would almost seem petty, while at other times they designate something made so narrow for purposes of measurement that the over-all meaning is lost, and it could just as well be called something else.[72]

Erikson often hesitated to offer clear definitions of his terms; however, the term identity crisis grew more ambiguous with its popularity. Erikson feared the misuse of the term subscribed to his name. As a result, Erikson clarified the term by agreeing that the term 'crisis' designates "a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshalling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation."[73] Figure 2 shows Erikson's fifth stage as it relates to the other 5 stages.[74]

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[70]Erikson, *Childhood and Society*.

[71]Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*; idem, *Identity, Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968).

[72]Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, 15.

[73]Ibid., 16.

[74]Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 37 Fig. 2.

I Infancy	Trust v. Mistrust				Unipolarity v. Premature Self-differentiation			
II Early Childhood		Autonomy v. Shame, Doubt			Bipolarity v. Autism			
III Play Age			Initiative v. Guilt		Play Identification v. (Oedipal) Fantasy Identities			
IV School Age				Industry v. Inferiority	Work Identification v. Identity Foreclosure			
V Adolescence	Time Perspective v. Time Diffusion	Self-certainty v. Identity Consciousness	Role Experimentation v. Negative Identity	Anticipation of Achievement v. Work Paralysis	Identity v. Identity Diffusion	Sexual Identity v. Bisexual Diffusion	Leadership Polarization v. Authority Diffusion	Ideological Polarization v. Diffusion of Ideals
VI Young Adult					Solidarity v. Social Isolation	Intimacy v. Isolation		
VII Adulthood							Generativity v. Self-absorption	
VIII Mature Age								Integrity v. Disgust, Despair

Figure 2: Erikson's eight stages of
psychosocial development

Identity crisis was first used to describe the perplexity and lack of sameness experienced by World War II veterans as they re-entered society.[75] The term began to connote a "war" experienced within a person or one experienced without via his society or environment. The term identity crisis was quickly assigned and understood to be adolescence. In using the term, Erikson felt sure he was merely describing something everyone had experienced at some point in their lives.[76] Erikson's popularity grew because he indeed articulated an experience common to man.[77]

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[75]Ibid., 17.

[76]Ibid., 18.

[77]Acts 17:22-31.

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is an articulation of the epigenetic principle in terms of a sequence of critical periods or significant points. Each stage, not just the fifth stage, includes a critical period or crisis of sorts. The crisis that occurs at the fifth stage, the identity crisis, is the most significant because it occurs at the crux of Erikson's theory and his notion of a person's progression toward a healthy personality.

The Epigenetic Principle

Though the fifth stage identity versus identity diffusion is at the center of Erikson's theory, it is the epigenetic principle that holds Erikson's entire eight-stage theory together. The epigenetic principle states that the characteristics developed at each stage of development carry into the next as each stage builds on another. The epigenetic principle acts as an explanation of growth. Anything that grows has a *ground plan*, and out of this ground plan the *parts* arise. Each part has its *time* of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a *functioning whole*.[78] In other words, "each stage grows out of the preceding ones but is qualitatively different in spite of its dependence on them."[79] The stages of Erikson's theory act much like a timeline for the epigenetic principle. Sigmund Freud's oral, anal, genital and id, ego, superego ideals are foundational to the epigenetic principle. Erikson simply expands these ideas to all of life and added the consideration of a social component of life.[80]

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[78]Ibid., 129.

[79]Stevens, *Erik Erikson*, 22.

[80]Ibid., 20-21.

Erikson likely borrowed the term epigenetic from developmental biology.

The term epigenesis gained popularity in 1942 when used by Conrad H. Waddington, a

developmental biologist and lecturer of zoology at Cambridge University. "The Greek

prefix *epi-* in *epigenetics* implies features that are "on top of" or "in addition to" genetics;

thus *epigenetic* traits exist on top of or in addition to the traditional molecular basis for

inheritance."[81] Waddington used the term epigenesis to describe the *process* by which

the gene (or genotype) produces the inherited traits or visible characteristics (phenotype).

Waddington accepted the role of the genotype in the process prior to the understanding of

the role of DNA in genetics.[82]

> Thus genetics has to observe the *phenotypes* (his italics), the adult characteristics
> of animals, in order to reach conclusions about the *genotypes* (his italics), the
> hereditary constitutions which are its basic subject-matter...For the purposes of a
> study of inheritance, the relation between phenotypes and genotypes can be left
> comparatively uninvestigated; we need merely to assume that changes in the
> genotype produce correlated changes in the adult phenotype, but the mechanism of
> this correlation need not concern us. Yet this question is, from a wider biological
> point of view, of crucial importance, since it is the kernel of the whole problem of
> development. Many geneticists have recognized this and attempted to discover the
> processes involved in the mechanism by which the genes of the genotype bring
> about phenotypic effects. The first step in such an enterprise is to describe what can
> be seen of the developmental processes. The second and more important part of the
> task is to discover the causal mechanisms at work, and to relate them as far as
> possible to what experimental embryology has already revealed of the mechanics of
> development. We might use the name 'epigenetics' for such studies, thus
> emphasizing their relation to the concepts, so strongly favourable to the classical
> theory of epigenesis, which have been reached by the experimental embryologists.
> We certainly need to remember that between genotype and phenotype, and
> connecting them to each other, there lies a whole complex of developmental
> processes. It is convenient to have a name for this complex: 'epigenotype' seems

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[81]Vincenzo E. Russo, ed., *Epigenetic Mechanisms of Gene Regulation* (Plainview, NY: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, 1996), 16.

[82]J. R. Morris and C. T. Wu, "Genes, Genetics, and Epigenetics: A Correspondence," *Science Magazine* (2001) [on-line]; accessed 4 April 2009; available from http://www. sciencemag.org/cgi/data/ 293/5532/1103/DC1/1; Internet.

suitable...the genotype is in continual and unremitting control of every phase of development. Genes are not interlopers, which intrude from time to time to upset the orderly course of a process which is essentially independent of them; on the contrary, there are no developmental events which they do not regulate and guide.[83]

It appears that Erikson took the work done by his colleague in developmental biology and combined it with Freudian concepts of psychology to script his psychosocial developmental theory. His commitment to an explanation for social development was coupled with his commitment to biology and psychology.

The epigenetic principle is crucial to the fifth stage. The favorable or unfavorable resolution of the crisis in the fifth stage serves as an indicator of appropriate growth to that point, as well as, an indication of potential growth toward a healthy personality for the remainder of one's life. Identity crisis articulates the dilemma of the fifth stage—identity versus identity diffusion. The term crisis also helps the student of Erikson to understand the tension to be resolved at each of the other stages as well. "Each comes to its ascendance, meets its crisis, and finds its lasting solution."[84] Erikson argues that the indispensable concept for the formation of a healthy personality is the solid formation of the identity. The stages preceding adolescence act as a prerequisite to the formation of identity.

A healthy personality cannot be formed without the resulting character of fidelity produced from a solid identity rather than role confusion. Ego identity is the "accrued confidence" in one's ability to maintain internal unity, immutability, or

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[83]Conrad H. Waddington, "The Epigenotype," *Endeavour* 1 (1942): 18-20. See also Conrad H. Waddington, "The Cybernetics of Development," in *The Strategy of the Genes: A Discussion of Some Aspects of Theoretical Biology* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), 11-58.

[84]Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, 95.

fidelity to self through adapted methods of mastering experiences. These methods of adaptation or adjustment might differ somewhat from others. According to Erikson, what remains important is not necessarily how a person successfully navigates outer differences to maintain fidelity to self but that he does so and is recognized and respected by others to have done so.

An environment that does not allow a person to adjust independently will result in the person radically fighting his environment in whatever means necessary to overcome it and successfully maintain fidelity to the attributes, beliefs, or ideas—essentially the identity—committed to during adolescence.[85] In other words, Erikson advocates that a person in the fifth stage of psychosocial development will achieve a healthy personality as long as they are able to take advantage of every opportunity to maintain life and reality as they desire it.[86] Likewise, a healthy society is one that respects the right of any person to pursue his or her means of achieving inner unity.[87]

There is no objective standard to which the person or society must be held. According to Erikson, what identity is and is not "remains subject to changing historical connotations."[88] Erikson presents human growth from the perspective of inner and outer conflicts, which the not just healthy but "vital" personality survives. A successful

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[85]Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 95.

[86]The fruit of the Holy Spirit which includes self-control is, of course, not a factor of discussion in Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. Gal 5:22-24, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

[87]Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 94-95.

[88]Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, 15.

resolution to the identity crisis then, is when the person comes away from the crisis with "an increased sense of inner unity, with an increase of good judgment, and an increase in the capacity 'to do well' according to his own standards and to the standards of those who are significant to him."[89]

Background

My interest in the involvement and integration of developmental psychology in Christian education is the result of many factors. First, as a young Christian college student at Texas A & M University in the field of education, I questioned the basic premises of educational theories in light of my faith. My minor as an undergraduate was educational psychology. Each of my classes in this area was steeped in the theories of developmental psychologists including Erik Erikson's. These theories continued to be used in my graduate classes as I pursued my Master of Science in Educational Administration. Upon graduation I taught for six years in the public school system where these theories were not just talked about, but put into practice. As a special education teacher, theories on development were essential to the every day tasks of the job. Each student in my care was required to have an individual education plan based on state-appointed developmental goals and objectives. It became very apparent that the developmental theories we employed did not bring the results they claimed to bring.

When I came to Southern Seminary and began the Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Leadership and Church Ministry I was disappointed to find that the majority of my classes were spent pursuing these same developmental theories. Though the

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[89]Ibid., 92.

argument was that we needed to know them despite their inconsistency with the gospel, most of our time was spent trying to integrate them with our faith and practice. Rarely, if ever, were we encouraged to think Christianly about these theories. In time I began to see that the push toward the integration of faith and learning was not unique to Southern Seminary but seemed to exist in each of the other five Southern Baptist seminaries and indeed permeated the ambiguous field of Christian education. It became apparent that perhaps my own time in research may be best spent thinking Christianly about these theories and pursuing an alternative for discipleship in the church.

Dean Randy Stinson encouraged me to study the work of David Powlison and to speak to Assistant Professor of Leadership and Church Ministry, Timothy Jones. Jones gave clarity to some of my concerns regarding the integration of the social sciences and theology for the purpose of discipleship in the church. He not only gave clarity to the underlying issues of the integration of the social sciences and theology, but for the first time in my program at Southern he has allowed and encouraged the questioning of such integration.

David Powlison suggests the social sciences repeatedly show that everyone who is thinking about the human life senses or knows that the human being faces hardships and trials, not the least of which seem to come from their own poor choices. The biblical theologian would have a much different answer than the social scientists as to what is "wrong" with people.[90] The Christian educator must learn to think Christianly about the social sciences.

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[90]Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads," 43.

The fundamental debate of the sufficiency of Scripture leaves many Christian education integrationists advocating for extra-biblical resources to adequately inform Christian discipleship. What must be recognized is that social-scientific resources offer a different type of salvation than what God offers in Christ. Thomas Kuhn suggested that the "psychotherapeutic community is a 'secular priesthood' offering a means of 'salvation.'"[91] Developmental psychology cannot be taken in parts without understanding its overall trajectory. Developmental psychology cannot be separated from evolutionary theory and Freudian theory and work optimally. Christianity cannot be substituted in place of these Freudian, Lamarkian, or Darwinian ideologies nor exist alongside these underlying ideologies and leave developmental psychology in tact.

> However, it's my belief that psychotherapy, the secular church, follows a similar pattern. First, you were converted. Then, you studied the doctrines of your church. Finally you began to preach to others, hoping for conversions . . . . Isn't successful therapy defined, in part, by your client working comfortably with your beliefs? Have people ever had 'aha' conversion experiences during therapy sessions?[92]

Many inside and outside the church have come to regard all psychology as a religion. Even the armchair psychologist can come to an intensely held worldview or ideology.[93]

The narrative of the gospel should serve as the overarching narrative in the life of every disciple of Christ. Graeme Goldsworthy suggests there are two questions that the Christian educator must keep before him, "What shall we do with the Bible and what do you think of the Christ: whose Son is he?"[94] He goes on to say that contrary to what

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[91]Powlison, *Counsel the Word*, 94.

[92]Ibid., 98.

[93]Vitz, *Psychology as Religion*, 7.

[94]Graeme Goldsworthy, "Biblical Theology in the Seminary and Bible College" (Gheens Lectures, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 19 March 2008).

the evangelical Christian is accustomed to thinking, the Christian does not believe the Gospel for salvation then move on to Christian living. Rather, the "gospel is the power of God for all of salvation, and this means that it is also the matrix for sanctification." In so being, the gospel will serve as the matrix for Christian discipleship via the comprehensive internal framework applied for the evaluation of Erik Erikson's identity crisis. It is my hope that this dissertation will be a part of the movement toward thinking Christianly about the social sciences and redefining Christian education to mean the individual and corporate discipleship of the church.

Methodology

This dissertation is primarily polemical, to engage the current discussion of the integration of faith and learning to the extent that it deals with developmental psychology—specifically, Erik Erikson's theory of identity and identity crisis—in Christian education. This dissertation is secondarily constructive in that it will include a proposed biblical-theological perspective on identity as an alternative to what Erikson proposes.

David Powlison's three epistemological priorities will be used to call attention to principles antithetical to the Bible within Erikson's theory and discern a biblical theological perspective. These epistemological priorities fall within Powlison's "comprehensive-internal" approach to the social sciences. The three epistemological priorities that will be used are (1) "to articulate positive biblical truth, a systematic practical theology of those things that our culture labels [developmental] issues," (2) "to

expose, debunk and reinterpret alternative models to biblical discipleship," (3) "to learn what we can from defective models."[95] Powlison applies these priorities to the field of counseling and soul care. Because Powlison defines biblical counseling as intense discipleship, it is believed these accepted priorities can be applied to the field of Christian education.[96]

A verification method known as "critical realism" will be used to develop the constructive component of this dissertation, a brief biblical theological perspective of identity crisis. Critical realism describes a way of making a confident assertion of the "way things are" without suggesting that the assertion is an exact delineation of God's special revelation.[97]

The thesis of this dissertation is that a biblical framework alternative to the typical models of the relationships between theology and social-scientific research is necessary for discerning the appropriateness of using Erik Erikson's developmental theory, in whole or in part, in the context of Christian discipleship.

Chapter 1 introduces the subject of the dissertation. This chapter includes evidence of the integration of developmental psychology in Christian education. With proof that developmental psychology is readily used by Christian educators, the chapter then moves to a discussion of the integration of Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial

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[95]Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads," 35.

[96]Stuart W. Scott, "What Biblical Counseling Is and Isn't" (classroom lecture, *34300—Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, Class 1, 14 August 2007).

[97]Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991), 310: "Thus critical realists never assume that they have achieved the 'final' statement of theological truth; the process of validation and improvement never ceases, for there can be no facile assumption that they have 'arrived' though of course one can verify that a particular statement is an accurate depiction of the biblical norm."

development in Christian education specifically. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the significance of Erikson's notion of identity crisis to his own theory.

Chapter 2 introduces David Powlison's comprehensive-internal approach as a biblical framework for Christians to mine the field of psychology for biblical counseling as well as Christian education. Many Christian counselors and Christian educators advocate integrating psychology with theology for discipleship in the church via a "vital-external" framework. The typology of integration employed by these vital-external perspectives will be compared to that which is found in Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture.*

Chapter 3 outlines Powlison's comprehensive-internal framework using his three epistemological priorities and pursues the first of the three epistemological priorities. This first priority is to offer a biblical theological alternative to Niebuhr's typological models. The comprehensive-internal framework is the result of the view that Scripture is sufficient for counsel and for discipleship. The biblical theological alternative offered in this chapter provides a means by which the Christian can confidently and faithfully discern the appropriateness of social-scientific resources for the purpose of Christian discipleship.

Chapter 4 investigates the dependence of Erikson's identity crisis upon Freudian principles of psychoanalysis and psychosexual development as well as Darwinist evolutionary theory. In addition, this chapter also outlines Erikson's beliefs regarding how religion impacts identity, especially socially or in terms of community. This chapter reports Freudian foundations of Erikson's theory specific to his fifth stage. The purpose of this chapter is to pursue the second epistemological priority of the

comprehensive-internal framework: exposing, debunking and reinterpreting Erikson's identity crisis.

Chapter 5 suggests three methods of appropriating Erikson's identity crisis for the purpose of discipleship in the church. These three appropriations are to investigate the popularity of Erikson's ideas regarding identity crisis, to discern and to describe Erikson's methodology, and to propose apologetic appeals that can be made using his ideas regarding identity crisis in light of the employment of the first and second epistemological priorities of the comprehensive-internal framework. These appropriations fulfill the third and final epistemological priority of the comprehensive-internal framework.

CHAPTER 2

POWLISON'S COMPREHENSIVE-INTERNAL
PARADIGM: A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK
FOR APPROPRIATING ERIKSON'S
IDENTITY CRISIS

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. One objective is to discuss an existing

biblical counseling paradigm, David Powlison's comprehensive-internal framework, as a

biblical framework for appropriating psychology in the context of biblical counseling.

The second objective is to demonstrate how Powlison's comprehensive-internal

framework may function as a viable framework for appropriating developmental

psychology in Christian discipleship. Specifically, the comprehensive-internal paradigm

will be applied to Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and his notion of

identity crisis. To accomplish these objectives, Powlison's comprehensive-internal

framework will be contrasted with and offered as an alternative to James Estep's

typologies.[1] The chapter also includes an investigation of the relationship of Estep's

typology of integration to Richard Niebuhr's five categories in *Christ and Culture*.[2]

Introduction

The primary argument for using Powlison's comprehensive-internal approach

is that both Christian counseling and Christian education have sought the same field—

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[1]James R. Estep, Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 36.

[2]H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1951), 2.

psychology—as an alternative or supplementary resource to the Bible for teaching others the way of life. This chapter is the necessary segue from demonstrating the integration of psychology and theology in Christian education and its use of Erik Erikson's eight-stage theory of psychosocial development, to offering a biblical and theological alternative to Erikson's identity crisis.

"In 1955 believing Protestants had no comprehensive models of counseling."[3] Since then, two primary groups have emerged among evangelical conservatives to develop models for Christian counseling.[4] One group believes the best counseling models for the church are an integration of the components of Christian faith with secular psychological theories and methods. For the purposes of this dissertation the integrationist perspective of this group will be referred to as vital-external framework. The second group believes the best counseling models for the church are theologically founded and driven, therefore distinct from secular counsel. The framework of this group will be referred to as the comprehensive-internal framework.

The Sufficiency of Scripture

The essential theological difference that separates integrationist typology and the comprehensive-internal framework surrounds the issue of the sufficiency of Scripture.

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[3]David Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads: The Care of Souls and Modern Psychotherapies," in *Care for the Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 23.

[4]Ibid., 25. Though there are two primary approaches to counseling in reference to the sufficiency of Scripture, but there are various approaches to Christian counseling in reference to integration. Scripture informs the counseling process at different levels depending upon the view each takes regarding the sufficiency of Scripture for the counseling process. While biblical counselors fall within the comprehensive-internal framework, Christian counselors who attempt to integrate psychology with theology in the practice of counseling fall within the vital-external framework. Because Christian psychology is a fairly new approach to the counseling process, it may be too early to determine whether or if it fits within Powlison's comprehensive-internal, vital-external frameworks.

The integrationist typically views Scripture as lacking the capacity to inform all of life because it does not include all knowledge. The integrationist does not believe Scripture is a sufficient or comprehensive resource for the counseling process.

> Whereas it is undoubtedly true that God ordained all truth that exists—and that truth can be discovered in creation as well as Scripture—it does not necessarily follow that both sources of truth are equally authoritative throughout all of life. General revelation is more authoritative on issues left unaddressed in the Bible.[5]

Other Christian psychologists, Christian counselors, and Christian educators use the term primacy to describe their view of Scripture.[6] Primacy deems Scripture less than sufficient, but more authoritative than the view presented in the quote above from integrationists Clark Campbell and Mark McMinn.

Scripture in the Practice of Counseling

Integrationists, or those who fall within Powlison's description of a vital-external approach such as Larry Crabb, maintain several arguments against the comprehensive-internal framework used by biblical counselors because it employs the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture.[7] There are three basic arguments the integrationist holds against employing this doctrine for the purpose of counseling. The first argument is that biblical counselors are advocating sheer obedience to God while

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[5]Clark D. Campbell and Mark R. McMinn, *Integrative Psychotherapy: Toward a Comprehensive Christian Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007), 24.

[6]See Eric L. Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care: Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 350.

[7]James Moore, *Self-Image* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992), 5-7. Integrationists will be used interchangeably for those who clearly fall within Powlison's vital-external framework. Three examples of Christian counselors or Christian educators who operate within the vital-external framework will be discussed more in detail later in this chapter, Stanton Jones, Les Steele, and Ted Ward. Two Christian psychologists will be discussed, as well, Erik Johnson and Robert Roberts.

neglecting relationship.[8] In this argument, the biblical counselor misuses the Bible as a tool for conformity. The second typical argument of the integrationist is that biblical counseling does not leave room for the loving-kindness and grace of God that leads to individual and corporate repentance. The biblical counselor is said to expect obedience to God strictly for reasons of authority rather than relationship. The third typical argument of the integrationist against the comprehensive-internal view of the sufficiency of Scripture which biblical counselors typically employ is that it shapes people into becoming rigidly obedient and increasingly courteous but who are "incapable of intimacy" and emotionally shallow.

While Powlison and others in the biblical counseling sphere acknowledge that Jay Adams as the father of biblical counseling, Powlison also acknowledges the validity of arguments of oversimplification and harshness on the part of Adams. What Powlison offers in the comprehensive-internal framework stands on the shoulders of some of Adams work, but with a sieve of discernment that recognizes more clearly the whole person in the counseling process.[9] In terms of the sufficiency of Scripture, the biblical counselor holding to the comprehensive-internal framework views Scripture as both simple and complex. "No deeper or truer or better analysis of the human condition can

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[8]David Powlison, "Competent to Counsel? The History of a Conservative Protestant Anti-Psychiatry Movement" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 346-47. Larry Crabb's arguments in the foreword of Moore's book comprise the three basic arguments those vying for the need of outside sources in the counseling process had against Jay Adams, the father of biblical counseling. Powlison summarizes these arguments: "The other major charges against Adams and his kind were assembled into denunciation: the definition of sin as conscious behavior; the neglect of the counselee's experience of hurt; legalistic solutions that, abandoning the love of God, coerced behavioral compliance; a hostile and confrontive counseling style that deemphasized—because it was incapable of—loving, patient relationships; the degrading affinity of behaviorism" Powlison, "Competent to Counsel?," 346.

[9]Ibid., 370.

be concocted" than from the Word of God.[10] Applying the comprehensive-internal framework requires that Scripture be perceived as sufficient in the counseling process in the context of the Body of Christ.

"Psychological study is a direct implication of the sufficiency of Scripture . . . . If we want to understand people so that we can help them, we undertake a task in practical theology."[11] It is not as though integrationists claim to be psychological while biblical counselors claim to be theological. "Both claim to be theological and psychological."[12] The central debate continues to be the role of Scripture in the counseling process. Powlison believes the core question that separates the two groups revolves around the capacity and purpose of Scripture—the sufficiency of Scripture.[13] It seems necessary then to clearly define both what is meant by sufficiency of Scripture as well as what is meant by comprehensive in order to apply the comprehensive-internal framework.

Defining the Terms: Sufficiency and Comprehensive

Sufficiency does not mean that Scripture contains all knowledge. Rather, Scripture is sufficient for counseling and discipleship by means of offering not just a, but *the* dynamic, systematic, comprehensive, and eternally cohesive metanarrative.

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[10]David Powlison, ed., *Counsel the Word*, 2nd ed. (Glenside, PA: CCEF, 2002), 4.

[11]Ibid., 38.

[12]Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads," 29.

[13]Ibid., 31-33.

Therefore, the Bible acts as a judge over all other knowledge.[14] The canon of Scripture provides the comprehensive nature of this framework. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is largely taken from 2 Timothy 3:15-17.[15] For the purpose of context verses 14-17 are included below:

> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing form whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

Wayne Grudem suggests that contained within Scripture is everything God wanted his people to know at every point in redemptive history. Even now, he contends, Scripture contains the words necessary for salvation, for faith, and for obedience.[16]

> We can define the sufficiency of Scripture as follows: The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly.[17]

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[14]John Piper, "Thoughts on the Sufficiency of Scripture: What it Does and Doesn't Mean," *Desiring God* (2005) [on-line]; accessed 19 April, 2009; available from http://www.desiringgod.org ResourceLibrary/TasteAndSee/ByDate/2005/1282_Thoughts_on_the_Sufficiency_of_Scripture_What_It_ Does_and_Doesnt_Mean/; Internet: "In other words, the Scriptures are sufficient in the sense that they are the only (*"once for all"*) inspired and (therefore) inerrant words of God that we need, in order to know the way of salvation (*"make you wise unto salvation"*) and the way of obedience (*"equipped for every good work"*). The sufficiency of Scripture does not mean that the Scripture is all we need to live obediently . . . . The sufficiency of Scripture means that we don't need any more special revelation. We don't need any more inspired, inerrant words. In the Bible God has given us, we have the perfect standard for judging all other knowledge. All other knowledge stands under the judgment of the Bible even when it serves the Bible."

[15]Wayne Grudem, "Scripture's Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture," in *Scripture and Truth,* eds. Carson, D.A. and John D. Woodbridge, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 46. These verses apply to both the OT and NT. See 2 Pet. 3:2, 16 for elevation of New Testament epistles as Scripture

[16]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 127. To say Scripture is sufficient for counsel and for discipleship is not to suggest that all one needs for life is to read the Bible and obey. Healing, heeding, walking, living, and learning all occur over time in the context of the body of Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

[17]Ibid.

The canon of Scripture provides the overarching metanarrative for the comprehensive-internal framework. Both unity and diversity of Scripture remain necessary to effectively employing the comprehensive-internal framework to the task of discipleship. The comprehensive component of the comprehensive-internal framework lies in the "fullness of God's story" superseding the autonomous inclination of cultural Christianity.[18] The cosmic scope of the gospel as it relates to the comprehensive-internal framework toward Erikson's identity crisis will be discussed more in detail in the next chapter.

Central to the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is an assumption that God's will takes precedent over the believer's life in the counseling process regardless of the situation or the believer's contrary desires.[19] As Powlison points out, the central issue between the integrationist and the biblical counselor applying the comprehensive-internal framework is the sufficiency of Scripture. Therefore the majority of discussion must focus on the sufficiency of Scripture for the purposes of applying Powlison's comprehensive-internal framework to Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is dependent upon three other characteristics of the Word of God, authority, inerrancy, and necessity. Therefore, there are several nonnegotiable principles of the comprehensive-internal framework as it relates to these four characteristics of the Word of God as well as the overarching metanarrative Scripture

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[18] Robert E. Webber, *Who Gets to Narrate the World? Contending for the Christian Story in and Age of Rivals* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 25.

[19] Ibid., 128.

offers of redemptive history in Jesus Christ as the Word of God.[20] In this chapter, these

nonnegotiable characteristics will be contrasted with and offered as an alternative to

Estep's characteristics of a successful integrationist typology in light of the canonical

function of the text of Scripture.[21] First, the implications of the doctrine of the

sufficiency of Scripture as it pertains to Christian counseling and Christian education are

discussed.

The Nature of Ministry

There are three significant recurring implications of these two views of

Scripture (1) the nature of ministry, (2) the relevance of Scripture, (3) the Word of God

upon the nature of man. First, the Christian integrationist who does not believe in the

sufficiency of Scripture generally sees himself ministering to others differently than the

comprehensive-internal discipler. Integrationists tend to see themselves as ministering to

every person and more apt to do so because they are willing to mine the field of

psychology as an application of common grace.

> On the one hand, the integrationist paradigm proclaims that Scripture is an
> inadequate guide for the counseling task. They believe it has not revealed enough
> about ourselves and our world. And though most integrationists view their work as a
> form of 'ministry' for Christ, they see such ministry as needing a fundamental
> contribution from something besides Scripture. The Bible for them simply lacks
> adequate explanations, instructions, and implications.[22]

On the other hand, those employing the comprehensive-internal framework see

their primary role as ministering to the church—individual believers in the Lord Jesus

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[20]Donald A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 43.

[21]Estep, Anthony, and Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education*, 36.

[22]Powlison, *Counsel the Word*, 5.

Christ. However, those who employ the comprehensive-internal framework do not withhold or refuse counsel to the non-Christian. Rather, they see this person as one whose need, first and foremost, is the Messiah. "A consistent biblical counseling ministry will both comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable. It does not merely address the troubled and troublesome, it addresses everyone."[23] According to 1 Corinthians 2:14, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." Though the Christian has believed the Gospel for salvation, he does not then move on from the Gospel to Christian living. The gospel is not only the message of salvation, it is also the matrix for sanctification.[24] Therefore, for those who believe in the sufficiency of Scripture, applying the comprehensive-internal framework to appropriate the field of psychology for Christian counseling is an exercise in defining all of life according to the gospel and regarding no one according to the flesh.[25]

The Relevance of Scripture

The second significant result of the sufficiency of Scripture regards the relevance of Scripture to daily life. Those who do not believe in the sufficiency of Scripture typically see difficulties with applying ancient words to a current situation.

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[23]Ibid., 4.

[24]Graeme Goldsworthy, "Biblical Theology in the Seminary and Bible College" (SBTS: Gheens Lectures. 19 March 2008).

[25]2 Cor 5:16

Many evangelical conservatives put Christianity and reality in two separate categories.[26]

Spiritual matters are considered to be disconnected from "psychological, emotional,

relational" matters. The integrationist, perhaps even unconsciously, transfers this

sacred/secular divide to his view of Scripture and vice versa.[27]

> I see two sorts of contemporary Bible-believing, evangelical Protestants. One sort
> has a Bible crammed with relevance to human life. The other sort has a Bible of
> modest utility....The divide comes when you ask whether the Bible is truly useful in
> the trenches of daily life.[28]

Those who do believe in the sufficiency of Scripture typically believe that the Word of

God acts as and is an active agent of change in a person's life, capable in face-to-face

ministry. The sufficiency of Scripture does not mean that any and every question that

every human being comes up with will be answered. Deuteronomy 29:29 reminds the

believer that "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are

revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of the

law."[29]

Another balance regarding the sufficiency of Scripture in Christian counsel and

Christian education is found in knowing that there are some things the Lord may

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[26]Powlison, *Counsel the Word*, 4. This split view might suggest that theology informs the ideal while the social sciences or other sources outside of Scripture inform reality and maybe even help one move toward the ideal. This researcher's position is to say that God's Word reveals objective reality not an ideal.

[27]Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 20-21: "Francis Schaeffer said, Christianity is not merely religious truth, it is total truth—truth about the whole of reality . . . . The first step in forming a Christian worldview is to overcome this sharp divide between 'heart' and 'brain' . . . . To say that Christianity is the truth about total reality means that it is a full-orbed worldview. The term means literally a view of the world, a biblically informed perspective on all reality. A worldview is like a mental map that tells us how to navigate the world effectively. It is the imprint of God's objective truth on our inner life." It is this objective truth that Nancy Pearcey discusses that the Word of God alone offers.

[28] Powlison, *Counsel the Word*, 4.

[29]See also Ps 131.

intentionally leave unknown. Hebrews 11:1 and 6 help the believer understand that this

is not a "gap" that the Lord leaves unanswered rather,

> Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
> For by it, the people of old received their commendation . . . without faith it is
> impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he
> exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

The Word of God further explains that it is sufficient not by way of offering a way of

seeing and understanding everything as clearly as will be revealed when there is no

longer a physical separation from God as now is currently experienced.[30] Scripture is

sufficient in that God has graciously provided it in culmination with the Holy Spirit, faith,

and the church as a set of lenses to look through.[31]

The Word of God upon the Nature of Man

The third significant result of the sufficiency of Scripture as it relates to vital-

external and comprehensive-internal Christian counseling and Christian education is how

each group views the nature of man. Many integrationist advocate counseling or

discipleship based on either a trichotomous view of the nature of man or an "essential

unity" view of the nature of man.[32]

> The trichotomist view is popular among many evangelicals, especially those who
> seek to incorporate psychological concepts into ministry. By identifying a third
> entity to the nature of man that is equated with human personality, propsychology
> counselors are able to create a three-part compartmentalized ministry. They are able

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[30] 1 Cor 13:12 explains, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."

[31] Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 38.

[32] Gary J. Bredfeldt, and Harry Shields, *Caring for Souls: Counseling under the Authority of Scripture* (Chicago: Moody, 2001), 79. The essential unity view of the nature of man is the view held by Bredfeldt and Shields and also the view held by Christian psychologist Eric L. Johnson in *Foundations for Soul Care*.

to recognize the place of medical treatment for the body, pastoral care for the spirit, and psychological care for the soul.[33]

The integrationist with a trichotomous view of man argues that man is complex and that his need at the body, soul, and spirit level are all three different. They agree with the comprehensive-internal counselor that if the counseling issue is physical, the counselee should first see a medical physician. However, integrationists who hold to trichotomy may advocate that the soul must be ministered to differently than the spirit.[34] According to this view, it is the care of the soul that most requires sources outside the Bible for insight. With a trichotomous view, the soul is the portion of the *imageo dei* that is common to man with or without faith in Christ and where the social sciences most easily or naturally inform the counseling process. Vital-external counselors with a trichotomous view might be more willing to treat the soul than the spirit, entrusting the spirit to the care of the pastor and local church body.

There are a growing number of integrationists who recognize that counseling issues are often not simply either/or, rather overlap in a complexity of issues that pertain to the body, soul, and spirit. These integrationists simply advocate for a view of the nature of man that is not dichotomous or trichotomous, rather that the human being is complex due to his essential unity.[35] Robert Roberts adds that the believer has an

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[33]Bredfeldt and Shields, *Caring for Souls*, 71.

[34]Bredfeldt and Shields, *Caring for Souls*, 71. For a thorough explanation in support of a trichotomous view, see Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man* (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1968).

[35]Ibid., 81. Bredfeldt and Shields refer to the Hebrew word *nephesh* used in the Old Testament arguing that the word is used to connote the whole being and is therefore a biblical concept of person.

additional complexity because he now has two natures—the flesh and the Spirit.[36] This essential unity view rails against the oversimplification of the compartmentalization that comes with any view of care for the soul that attempts to divide body, soul & spirit.

Comprehensive-internal counselors historically counsel with a dichotomous view of the nature of man. Biblical counselors often agree to a view of the dichotomous or body and soul/spirit or material/immaterial view of the nature of man.[37] Biblical counselors do not exclusively hold to this view. Some integrationists hold to dichotomy as well. Historically, the dichotomist view is the view most agreed upon in the church.[38] In light of the dichotomist view, if the counseling issue of the counselee is deemed to be physical, biblical counselors advocate that the first priority is for the counselee to receive medical attention. If the counseling issue of the counselee is decidedly not a physical issue, biblical counselors typically agree that it falls within their realm of service because the issue falls within an immaterial or soul/spirit realm. The biblical counselor then collects data to decide if the issue is a result of sin, test, or trial. The counselor then carefully and within the community of believers wields the Word with wisdom with the help of the Holy Spirit in the person's life. The biblical counselor relies on the Holy Spirit, the Body of Christ and the Word of God as the sufficient sources in the counseling process. One of the chief arguments against biblical counseling is that it is a view that oversimplifies the human condition and the means necessary to restore psychological health.

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[36]Robert Roberts, "Outline of Pauline Psychotherapy," in *Care for the Soul*, ed. Mark McMinn and Timothy Phillips (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 146.

[37]Ibid., 71.

[38]Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 473. See also, Bredfeldt and Shields, *Caring for Souls*, 71.

David Powlison's Comprehensive-Internal and Vital-External Frameworks

The thesis of this dissertation is that a biblical framework alternative to the typical models of the relationships between theology and social-scientific research is necessary for discerning the appropriateness of using Erik Erikson's developmental theory, in whole or in part, in the context of Christian discipleship. Powlison states that the Bible describes a responsibility upon the church to develop a "comprehensive pastoral theology."[39] His comprehensive-internal framework for biblical counseling relies on the characteristics of the Word of God including the sufficiency of Scripture. The primary argument for using Powlison's comprehensive-internal approach is that both Christian counseling and Christian education have sought the same field—psychology—as an alternative to the Bible as a resource for teaching others the way of life. In order to establish this argument, it is first necessary to show how Christian counseling and Christian education currently employ psychology through the integrationist perspective.

The Vital-External Framework

Estep offers a typology of possibilities to integration akin to the five categories described by Richard Niebuhr in his book *Christ and Culture.* Other Christian educators have offered a summary of integrationist perspectives as well. Though Gary Bredfeldt and Harry Shields summarize their typology in three perspectives, these three perspectives also fall within Niebuhr's five-fold framework. Bredfeldt and Shield's categories will be interspersed with Estep's where they are synonymous to offer further support that Estep's work is simply a typology of integration. As a product of Powlison's

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[39]Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads," 25.

comprehensive-internal framework this dissertation will offer a biblical theological

alternative to the typology of five possible relationships of social science and theology

offered by James Estep in Figure 1.[40]

Level 1:
Disintegration
Use of social sciences,
theology unknown or
regarded as irrelevant

Level 2: *Segregation*
Use of theology, social
sciences known and
rejected

Level 3: *Paradoxical*
Social Sciences and
theology used
independently.

Level 4: *Synthetic*
Primary and
substantial use of
social sciences,
theology used
sparingly and
marginalized, an
appendix for
appearances.

Level 5: *Paradigmatic*
The social sciences
and theology are both
valued as necessary
and legitimate, both
are used
simultaneously and
interactively.

Figure 3: Student integrative endeavor

Richard Niebuhr offered a five-fold "taxonomy of possibilities" of the way the

church has historically understood Jesus Christ, and therefore Christians, to interact with

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[40]James R. Estep, Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 37, Fig. 1.

culture.[41] These five categories or possibilities have served as the framework for

understanding how Jesus Christ, and therefore Christians, interact with other aspects of

reality and academic fields: psychology, education (both learning and teaching),

philosophy, creation, history, and virtually any other field of study or aspect of reality.

Though Niebuhr only intended to offer these possibilities as a way of understanding the

relationship of Christ to culture, psychologists and Christian educators have used his

framework to articulate support for integrationist perspectives.[42]

The first of Niebuhr's categories is "Christ against culture."[43] In this category,

Christ has no part of culture because the culture is full of idols. Christ and therefore

Christian withdrawal from culture is the basic result of this line of thinking. Two of

Estep's Christian education integration perspectives, the "disintegration" perspective and

the "segregation" perspective, both use the concept found within the Christ against

Culture category. In the disintegration perspective the social sciences are used and

Scripture is not seen as relevant or applicable. In the segregation perspective the Bible is

the only resource used to inform the Christian education process and the social sciences

are deemed man-made and unworthy. The disintegration perspective and segregation

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[41]Richard H. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975). See also Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, 9.

[42]Ibid., 8: "What is becoming obvious is that Niebuhr is not so much talking about the relationship between Christ and Culture as between two sources of authority as they compete within culture." Carson questions the vascilation of Niebuhr's definition culture. He argues that because Niebuhr does not consistently operate within his own definition of culture, his taxonomy of possibilities is weakened such that his categories are not hard and fast representations of the reality of possibilities. Rather, reality is more akin to a combination of aspects or portions of two or more of Niebuhr's categories.

[43]Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 45.

perspective are two sides of the same coin. Both require withdrawal from the other. For

Christian counseling, Bredfeldt and Shields call this the Bible only approach.[44]

> [*Nouthesia*, from Col 1:28] describes the confrontational methodology and basic
> elements of the nouthetic counseling approach. Because this approach is presented
> as the "biblical" view and its adherents claim to have the stamp of Scripture on its
> technique, it is sometimes presented in a tenacious combative way. Its advocates
> are found doing battle with fellow believers whom they believe to be seduced by
> theories of psychology and guilty of compromising the truth of Scripture
> through the integration of psychological findings in the ministry of counseling. It is
> an approach reminiscent of the radical Anabaptist separationist leanings.[45]

The authors equate this approach with "confrontational methodology and basic elements

of the nouthetic counseling approach" and even compare it to "radical Anabaptist

separationist leanings." The Bible only approach is a fundamentalist use of *Sola*

Scriptura that proclaims psychology has no place in ministry.

Niebuhr's second category is "Christ of culture."[46] Cultural Christianity falls

in this category. There is no stark contrast between the believer and the culture he is in

because Christ and therefore Christians seek to embrace and win over the culture or

world. Estep's "paradigmatic" perspective is most like Niebuhr's Christ of culture

category.[47] In the paradigmatic perspective the social sciences (including developmental

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[44]Bredfeldt and Shields, *Caring for Souls*, 44-45. Bredfeldt and Shields begin with a discussion of the interplay or relationship of faith and reason (reason corrupts faith, reason supports faith, reason establishes faith) as a springboard for discussing three types of relationships of psychology and theology (Bible-only, Bible-and, Bible-over) to establish a social-scientific methodology model for the counseling process.

[45]Ibid., 44.

[46]Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 45.

[47]Estep does not refer to Niebuhr at all in this work. His paradigmatic perspective is most like Niebuhr's Christ of culture category in concept. Niebuhr's Christ of culture category describes a relationship where there is a lack of tension. Likewise, Jesus Christ presents no real problem to developmental psychology or Erikson's psychosocial theory (a theory itself dependent upon the resolution of a series of tensions or crises). See Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 85.

psychology) and theology are to be used at the same time and in cooperation with the

other.

> Level 5: The student uses both Paul and Piaget in the formation of a conceived conceptualization of human nature. At this level both the form and substance of education are derived from theology and the social sciences. She endeavors to use Paul and Piaget simultaneously. All the advantages of the previous levels are present without the limitations or inadequacies. Hence, the student's paper reflects Paul and Piaget together in terms of both analysis and application.[48]

In his model students "use both Paul and Piaget" in the formation of their concept of

human nature as well as the overall form and substance of education. It is in this type of

integration that the issues of the authority and the sufficiency of Scripture arise. For

instance, using Estep's paradigmatic perspective on integration to apply Erikson's

identity crisis for the purpose of discipleship raises the question of the authority of

Erikson compared to Scripture in the life of the one being discipled. For Christian

counseling, Bredfeldt and Shields refer to this as part of the Bible-and approach.[49] In this

approach the Bible and psychology are "given equal or nearly equal place in counseling

ministry."[50] The way that the two are combined is that they are kept compartmentalized

as two separate but equal entities—the sacred and the secular. Estep advocates his

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[48]Estep, Anthony, and Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education,* 35.

[49]Bredfeldt and Shields, *Caring for Souls,* 46-47. Bredfeldt and Shields describe three variations of integration in their Bible-and approach, an approach this researcher believes spans three of Niebuhr's categories—Christ of culture, Christ above culture, and Christ and culture in pardox. The first two variations of the Bible-over approach that Bredfeldt and Shields describe have most in common with Niebuhr's 'Christ and culture in paradox.' See Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture,* 149-89. The third variation of Bredfedt and Shield's Bible-over approach describes Estep's paradigmatic perspective. "The third variation of the Bible-and approach takes a far different path from the first two that we have discussed. Rather than compartmentalizing, this approach welcomes psychology and seeks to incorporate its concepts freely and directly into Christian thinking and practice. Whenever possible, theological and psychological concepts are equated. For example, Robert Schuller has done this with his incorporating of self-esteem and positive-thinking literature of the humanistic branch of psychology into his preaching ministry. Blending the message of Maslow with that of Matthew and Mark is the ultimate result."

[50]Estep, Anthony, and Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education,* 35.

paradigmatic perspective as the perspective of theology from which Christian educators should operate. Bredfeldt and Shields seem to be more apprehensive about this approach for Christian counseling warning that many times pastors and lay-leaders utilizing this approach often incorporate psychological principles "without first doing the hard work of evaluating those ideas in light of the clear teachings of the Bible."[51]

Niebuhr's third category, "Christ above culture," accounts in a general aspect for his other two remaining categories.[52] It does so largely because it has operated as the "majority position in the history of the church.[53] Therefore, other integrationist perspectives utilizing Niebuhr's "Christ and culture" taxonomy of possibilities often combine several of their own categories into one. Estep's "synthetic" perspective corresponds to Niebuhr's Christ above culture category.[54] The synthetic perspective claims that the social sciences do most of the informing on the educational process, while Scripture basically proof texts the claims of social science. While Estep's synthetic perspective offers a social science above theology perspective to Christian education, he does not articulate a synthetic perspective that is theology above social sciences in his

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[51]Bredfeldt and Shields, *Caring for Souls,* 47.

[52]Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture,* 117.

[53]Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited,* 20.

[54]Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture,* 116-48. Niebuhr uses the words synthetic or synthesis to describe this category.

integration model.[55] In keeping with Estep's diagram form, the other side of the synthetic

perspective would look like the following,
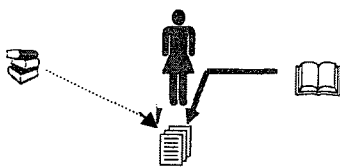
Figure 4: Scripture-sufficient synthetic perspective

Bredfeldt and Shield's Bible-over approach corresponds to this category as well. It is

here that the additional debate of the limitations of general revelation enters.

> God has made himself known in two primary ways—through the world He made
> and all of its creatures, including human beings, and through His Word, both
> incarnate in Jesus and inscribed in the Bible.[56]

The issue of the role and limitations of general revelation in the counseling process or the

discipleship process does not supersede the central debate of the sufficiency of Scripture

as the central issue in the integration debate, but rather is part of core issue of the

sufficiency of Scripture.[57]

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[55]Timothy P. Jones, interview by author, 13 August 2008. Louisville, KY. The purpose of this dissertation is to advocate an *alternative* to the typical models of relationship between theology and the social sciences articulated in Niebuhr's categories. However, a synthetic perspective where the Bible is the sufficient source for discipleship while the social sciences are used for their descriptive capacity for describing human fallenness, might be where many who agree with a comprehensive-internal approach would fall in Niebuhr's categories. Notably, Estep leaves this synthetic perspective out of his perspectives. Estep's perspectives model might be more complete if he would offer two possibilities in each perspective.

[56]Bredfeldt and Shields, *Caring for Souls*, 49.

[57]For the purposes of this dissertation, discussion of the limit of general revelation in terms of authority must be brief to stay on topic. For more information on general revelation and how it impacts the integration debate, see Bruce Demarest, *General Revelation: Historical Views and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), and Daniel L. Akin, ed., *A Theology for the Church* (Nashville: B&H, 2007).

Niebuhr's fourth category is "Christ and culture in paradox."[58] In this category, Christ and culture operate not against each other, but completely separate from each other. This category is very similar to the Christ against culture category except that Christ and therefore believers though separate from the culture, do not withdrawal from that culture. Estep's "paradoxical" perspective is synonymous with Niebuhr's Christ and culture in paradox category.[59] For Christian education, Estep's paradoxical perspective means that the social sciences and the Bible inform the Christian education process separately and at the same time, but the two are not in cooperation.[60]

Niebuhr's fifth and final category is "Christ the transformer of culture."[61] In this category, Christ is capable of transforming the world.[62] Estep does not have a corresponding perspective to this category for Christian education. In this researcher's opinion, Bredfeldt and Shields do not have a corresponding approach to this category for Christian counseling.

Christian Counselors and Christian Educators
Integrate Psychology with Theology

Christian counselors and Christian educators use one or a combination of the perspectives, categories, or approaches above to attempt to integrate psychology with

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[58]Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 150.

[59]Estep, Anthony, and Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education*, 33-35.

[60]Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, 16. Carson attributes Gnosticism to Niebuhr's second category, Christ of culture.

[61]Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 190-91.

[62]Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, 12. Niebuhr changes from using the term culture to world in his "Christ the transformer of culture" category.

theology. Evidence of the integration of psychology and theology in both Christian counseling and Christian education abound. Two Christian educators, one Christian counselor, and two Christian psychologists will be discussed in regard to their approaches to the use of psychology in the practice of counseling and/or discipleship. Vital-external practitioners Stanton Jones, Les Steele, and Ted Ward exemplify the common ground Christian counselors and Christian educators find in the social sciences. Christian psychologists, Eric Johnson and Robert Roberts also represent a confidence in the social sciences for the practice of ministry.

Christian Counselors and Educators in Vital-External Framework

Among these Christian counselors and Christian educators, there emerges one group that are full-fledged integrationists and a second group that would consider themselves Christian psychologists. Christian psychologists believe they fit neither into a comprehensive-internal framework or a vital-external framework. For this reason, Stanton Jones, Les Steele, and Ted Ward will be considered as those operating within a full integrationist or vital-external framework, while Eric Johnson and Robert Roberts will be considered separately.

Stanton Jones. Stanton Jones and Eric Johnson co-edited the four-views book *Psychology and Christianity*, in which Gary Collins, David Myers, David Powlison, and Robert Roberts offer four perspectives of the relationship between psychology and Christianity. The purpose of this book is to offer perspectives that fall between the

extremist perspectives of atheism and fundamentalism—both of which argue that no relationship exists between psychology and Christianity.[63]

Jones also contributes a chapter in *Care for the Soul: Exploring the Intersection of Psychology and Theology* in which he advocates his integrationist perspective. One of the assumptions he begins his essay with is that he does not advocate a dualism of choosing "Freud or Jesus."[64] This, incidentally, coincides with a rejection of Niebuhr's first and fourth categories, Christ against Culture and Christ and Culture in paradox respectively. In addition, Jones advocates the essential unity view of human nature. "This [essential unity view] gives me the freedom to intervene in the complex reality that the person presents to me without a rigid formula," whether that be a non-confrontational Freudian psychoanalysis or a Jay Adams style of confrontational biblistic counsel.[65]

Finally, Jones believes his perspective of integration is that which is meant to help both the Christian and non-Christian. For the non-Christian, he believes that any improvements they show due to his counsel are capable of bringing God glory.[66] The glory that is God's, Jones argues, is not only in the counselee's improvement but also in the counselor's work of good to them if the counselee "truly cares for [their] souls."[67]

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[63]Stanton L. Jones and Eric L. Johnson, *Psychology and Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 12-13.

[64]Mark R. McMinn and Timothy R. Phillips, eds., *Care for the Soul: Exploring the Intersection of Psychology and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), 64.

[65]Ibid., 69.

[66]Ibid., 75.

[67]Ibid., 75: "We are doing good when we help people, even when they are not brought to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ." The question is, what is the nature of the help they have received from the counselor?

Jones argues that it is not true that "all good is the gospel." He adds that there is an "if"

and "when" component to deciding upon sharing the gospel with a client.

Jones perspective of the integration of psychology and theology most closely

aligns with Niebuhr's second category, Christ of culture, and Estep's paradigmatic

perspective. Like Estep, Jones suggests that Scriptures important role in the counseling

process is that of primacy. "[Counseling's] first resource should be deep learning from

the Scriptures and from the historic teaching of the church."[68] More than anything, Jones

argues against a dualistic perspective and equally against a withdrawal perspective. "It is

vital that we avoid paralyzing dualisms such as the psychological way versus the spiritual

way." What Jones seems to have is a faulty assumption that non-Christians can be on a

trajectory toward salvation through the means of common grace.

> I also urge a role for Christian mental health professionals to work with people
> outside of the church, people who merit compassionate care by methods consistent
> with biblical revelation and administered by individuals who have their ultimate
> cure in mind and want to help them toward that end.[69]

If this is so, it is contrary to what the Bible teaches not only about the nature of man, but

also the nature of his standing before God. According to Galatians 3:22, "Scripture

imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be

given to those who believe." Likewise, Romans 11:32 states, "For God has consigned all

to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all." In this light, the non-Christian remains

in the kingdom of darkness and a slave to sin so long as he does not believe Jesus Christ.

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[68]Ibid., 76.

[69]Ibid., 77.

A non-Christian is not on a path of enlightenment capable of understanding the cross for salvation.

Les Steele. Christian educator, Les Steele, summarizes his vital-external or integration perspective as the critical confessional model.[70] He compares the critical confessional model to the critical scientific model and the critical correlational model. Each of these three models falls within one of Niebuhr's five categories as well as Estep's typology of integration. The difference between each of the models depends on the emphasis of the social sciences versus the emphasis on theology in the integration process.

The critical scientific model places more emphasis on the social sciences in this vital-external model. In concept, this corresponds to Niebuhr's Christ above Culture category and to Estep's "synthetic" perspective where theology takes a supportive role to the social sciences. Steele's correlational model corresponds to Niebuhr's Christ above Culture and Estep's synthetic perspective as well. The emphasis in this model, however, is that the social sciences take a supportive role to theology. In other words, in Steele's correlational model, theology is the sieve through which the social sciences are filtered.

Steele's preferred method of integration is the critical confessional model. This model corresponds to Niebuhr's Christ of Culture and Estep's preferred perspective—the paradigmatic perspective. With his critical confessional model, Steele attempts to select and understand "psychological insights that are in line with Christian faith." In this model, both the social sciences and the Bible contribute vitally to spiritual

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[70]Les Steele, *On the Way: A Practical Theology of Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 9.

formation. Like Estep, Steele uses the word primacy versus sufficiency in describing his

view of Scripture. However, Steele uses the terminology of primacy of narrative rather

than primacy of Scripture.[71] Therefore Steele emphasizes the story line of Scripture as

acting as the primary overarching metanarrative in a person's life, but not the *only*

metanarrative in a person's life.

Steele describes the narrative of Scripture as having two parts. "Part one has

four scenes: God, creation, the fall, and covenant; part two has two scenes: incarnation

and Christian identity."[72] Like Robert Roberts, Steele uses Scripture to interact with

psychological premises. There is a sense in which Scripture is above psychology as both

Roberts and Steele suggest that the only acceptable psychological premises are those that

agree with Scripture. In practice the paradigmatic perspective lends itself to what

Niebuhr characterizes as a lack of "firm grasp of Christian view of sin, of grace and law,

and of the Trinity."[73]

Ted Ward. Christian educator, Ted Ward, accepts that Christian education

now operates from a paradigm of developmental psychology.[74] Like Steele and Roberts,

Ward's integrationist perspective falls in Niebuhr's Christ of Culture category and

Estep's paradigmatic perspective. Ward asserts that there is great "compatibility and

consistency between [developmental psychology's] presuppositions and the essential

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[71]Ibid., 15.

[72]Ibid., 17.

[73]Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 112.

[74]Ted Ward, Foreword in *Nurture That Is Christian* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), 7-17.

foundations for [the field of Christian education] in Christian theology." Like Johnson,

Roberts, Steele, and Estep, Ward also argues for the primacy of Scripture.

> The Bible is God's major means of revealing the being and the activities of God as creator, sustainer, and redeemer of the universe. It provides the authoritative means for human beings to know God. But it presumes that God's created universe will be studied in its own terms and that the findings from evidences in any and all particulars in that universe will be understood in light of the creational presuppositions and godly values revealed in the Bible.[75]

Both Christian educators and Christian counselors attempt to integrate psychology and

theology to inform their practice. Because Christian counselors and Christian educators

both utilize psychology as an alternative resource to the Bible for teaching others the way

of life, David Powlison's comprehensive-internal framework can be used both for biblical

counseling and for discipleship.

The Christian Psychologist Framework

Eric Johnson and Robert Roberts will be considered as those operating from a

Christian psychology framework.

Eric Johnson. Eric Johnson is perhaps one of the strongest proponents alive

today for the use of psychology in the practice of counseling. Johnson is the director of

the Society for Christian Psychology. His most recent work, *Foundations for Soul Care*,

is largely a "proposal for a fundamental framework for Christian soul care" that "aims at

the development of a distinctly Christian *version* of psychology."[76] Johnson's approach

can best be described as a combination of Niebuhr's categories, Christ of culture and

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[75]Ibid., 10.

[76]Eric Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 9.

Christ above culture, but not really either one of these categories exclusively.[77] Johnson's

emphasis on creation helps him supersede Niebuhr's categories. Though Niebuhr's

categories are emphasized and often thought of as mutually exclusive, D.A. Carson

suggests that it may be more accurate to think of each of the categories as emphasizing

one particular doctrine over another.

> Niebuhr's typology offers his five types as slightly idealized competing options.
> Yet this emphasis on choosing from among the options does not square with the
> canonical function of Scripture.[78]

The canonical function of Scripture provides limitations to Niebuhr's categories as well

as the means by which Johnson supersedes them, his semiodiscursive model.[79]

The emphasis of Niebuhr's Christ of culture category is upon creation.

Christians can interact with the culture and it is good because God created it. In the same

vein, Johnson introduces the "semiodiscursive" model as the foundation of his Christian

psychology proposal. He views creation as a type of discourse from God because creation

is a result of and sustained by the Word of God. An emphasis on creation without regard

for the Fall risks minimizing sin, its consequences and affects.

However, Johnson's proposal also relates closely to Niebuhr's Christ above

culture category. Johnson does not rely on the sufficiency of Scripture to do so; rather he

speaks of Scripture in terms of primacy.

> The Bible is an indispensable document that has primacy over all other texts,
> because it provides an inspired, fixed sample of the discourse of the spiritual order.
> As the source of the most accurate information available about the most important
> order of meaning, the Bible provides an essential semiodiscursvie fountain,

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[77]Ibid., 350.

[78]Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, 206.

[79]Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care*, 13-21.

touchstone and base by which the rest of human discourse is transformed as it is brought up into the spiritual order.[80]

Though he might agree in part with a Bible-over approach, Johnson's proposal seems to suggest that the Bible is one among other avenues by which God communicates. He also speaks of the role of the canon of Scripture in the study of the soul. However, Johnson's purpose for the Bible seemingly overshadows any authority of the Bible he acknowledges. This overshadowing occurs because of the authority he gives to the other means by which he says God speaks, chiefly creation, including fallen human beings. Johnson admits that Christian psychologists "study the Bible not for its own sake but for the light it sheds on the nature of human beings and their well-being and improvement."[81] Studying Scripture for this purpose risks substituting a gospel-centered hermeneutic for a human-centered hermeneutic.[82] If this gospel-centered to human-centered hermeneutical shift occurs, the effect is a shift from the interpretation of life experiences according to the Word of God to an interpretation of the Word of God according to life experiences.[83] This is, at its root, a move toward human autonomy and rebellion.

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[80]Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care*, 350. Johnson's proposal is somewhat confusing in that he argues not only for the primacy of Scripture and the importance of the metanarrative of Scripture, but his primary choice of discipline for Christian psychology is psychology—the study of the soul (ibid., 143).

[81]Ibid., 16.

[82]Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 16: "For evangelicals, the main purpose of reading and studying the Bible is to know God and his will for our lives. We believe that only as we know God can we really know ourselves and the true meaning of life. Evangelical Christianity stands firmly on the conviction that we know God through his Son, Jesus Christ, whom, in turn, we know only through Scripture." Johnson's purpose for studying the Bible differs greatly with the purpose of those advocating a gospel-centered hermeneutic.

[83]Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 59.

Robert Roberts. Robert Roberts co-edited with Mark R. Talbot, *Limning the Psyche: Explorations in Christian Psychology* in which they explored the resulting practices of Roberts' psychology-dependent perspective.[84] One of the goals of this book is to help Christians form a position on where they stand on certain aspects of personality theory.[85] Roberts' belief regarding integration is that psychology and theology come from two different directions.[86] Roberts turns his attention first to a philosophy of psychology before offering his perspective on integration.[87] Although his is an extra step, Roberts remains committed to the use of psychology. Roberts' differs from most integrationist perspectives in that he seems to advocate for taking Christian psychology and holding it up to "established" psychology to show its uniqueness rather than holding it up to theology. "Our endeavor will not be primarily to integrate but to retrieve, evaluate, and communicate something originally Christian."[88]

Roberts' integrationist perspective is most closely aligned to Niebuhr's second category, Christ of culture and Estep's paradigmatic perspective. Roberts' takes Scripture and a sermon and attempts to draw out psychological implications and match them to aspects of psychological theories.

> On the integration model we start from a Christian standpoint and attempt to assess various pieces of establishment psychology so as to discriminate what is consistent

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[84]Robert C. Roberts and Mark R. Talbot, *Limning the Psyche: Explorations in Christian Psychology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997)

[85]Roberts and Talbot, *Limning the Psyche*, 3-5.

[86]Robert C. Roberts, "A Christian Psychology View," in *Psychology and Christianity: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 149.

[87]Ibid., 152.

[88]Ibid., 153.

with our faith from what is not, to adopt what is consistent with it, and to adapt what has potential but is not originally consistent with the faith.[89]

Whatever their perspective on integration, these Christian counselors and Christian psychologists advocate the use of psychology in the context of Christian discipleship. Likewise, numerous Christian educators advocate the use of the social sciences, including developmental psychology, in the context of Christian discipleship.

The Comprehensive-Internal Framework

The comprehensive-internal framework is not an integration model, nor is it a retreat into moralism, fundamentalism, or pietism. Powlison's comprehensive-internal framework is an alternative to the typology of integration discussed previously. Establishing and developing a comprehensive pastoral theology through the comprehensive-internal framework requires discerning the claims of psychology. Psychology passes through the comprehensive-internal framework with three results: (1) a positive biblical alternative is offered, (2) the psychological claim is exposed, taken apart, and redefined in the light of Scripture, (3) what can be learned is gleaned from the processed claim. Powlison states it as follows,

> Our first priority must be to articulate positive biblical truth, a systematic practical theology of those things that our culture labels "counseling issues." A systematic theology of care fore the soul will wed conceptual, methodological and institutional elements . . . . Our second priority must be to expose, debunk, and reinterpret alternative models to biblical care for souls, whether secular or religious . . . . Our third priority must be to learn what we can from defective models; we should be stimulated and informed by those with whom we disagree and whom we aim to convert.[90]

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[89]Ibid., 172.

[90]Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads," 34.

Vital-external models differ greatly from comprehensive-internal approaches to psychology. Specific qualities must exist in vital-external models for thinking integratively. Estep asserts there are six factors necessary for a person to be able to cognitively achieve his paradigmatic perspective level of integration.[91]

> In [Estep's] model six factors contribute to the individual's ability to engage in the process of integration.
>
> 1. The Individual's Expertise with the Various Components: How well do they know both theology and the social sciences? Which is better known? In which field can they more readily converse?
>
> 2. The Individual's Valuing of the Various Components: Is there primary allegiance to theology or the social sciences? Which one receives greater voice in the integrative process?
> 3. The Individual's Acceptance of an Integrative Paradigm: Does the individual have a schema by which integration can occur or be accomplished? Is the idea of integration considered a purely theoretical and/or a practical exercise to the individual?
>
> 4. The Individual's Ability to Deal with Apparent Contradictions and Paradoxes That Occur in the Process of Integration: How does the individual deal with ambiguity? Can the individual maintain a conceptual balance in the midst of discontinuity?
>
> 5. The Individual's Level of Commitment to the Process and Product of Theological Integration: Does the individual genuinely value faith-learning integration?
>
> 6. The Individual's Ability to Analyze, Synthesize, and Decide on Matters of Integration: Does the individual possess the necessary cognitive abilities to significantly integrate theology and the social sciences?
>
> Without any of these factors the likelihood of achieving a paradigmatic level of integration is impeded.

Applying the comprehensive-internal model to Erikson's identity crisis asserts that with the mind of Christ a biblical alternative to Erikson's claims exists and must be

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[91]Estep, Anthony, and Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education*, 36.

stated, Erikson's claims must be exposed, debunked if necessary, and reinterpreted, and Erikson's claims must be gleaned to the glory of God. According to 2 Corinthians 10:5, "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to Christ." Harry Blamires calls this "thinking Christianly."[92] Harry Blamires defines what it means to think Christianly as "to accept all things with the mind as related, directly or indirectly, to man's eternal destiny as the redeemed and chosen child of God."[93] According to this definition there is nothing that falls outside the realm of being able to think Christianly about it.[94]

Six objective qualities are necessary for applying the mind of Christ to developmental psychology in the comprehensive-internal framework: (1) a belief and practice of the sufficiency of Scripture, (2) a belief and practice of the authority of Scripture, (3) a belief and practice of the inerrancy of Scripture, (4) a belief and practice of the unity of Scripture, (5) a belief in the gospel as a defining meta-narrative for every aspect of life in whole and in part, (6) a willingness to understand all claims of psychology from the perspective of the person making them. These six aspects of thinking Christianly set the comprehensive-internal approach apart from thinking integratively in the paradigmatic perspective that Estep offers.[95]

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[92]Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1963), 3.

[93]Ibid., 44.

[94]Francis Schaeffer, G. K. Chesterton, and C. S. Lewis all discuss thinking with the mind of Christ or thinking christianly.

[95] Estep, Anthony, and Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education*, 37, Fig. 1.

Applying the mind of Christ requires that the Word of God is understood not as ideological, rather God's revelation of himself. In other words, the Word of God is a matter of reality not ideology.[96] Thinking with the mind of Christ about developmental psychology requires a reliance on the Word of God at points of ambiguity, apparent contradictions, and paradoxes in life circumstances. Dependence on the Holy Spirit is also an essential aspect of thinking with the mind of Christ about any given situation or claim.

This dissertation now turns to applying the comprehensive-internal framework for the evaluation of social-scientific research to the identity crisis stage of Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. The third chapter will focus on the first epistemological priority of the comprehensive-internal framework—offering a positive Biblical truth about human identity.

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[96]Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005), 355; Heb 4:12, John 1:1-5

CHAPTER 3

EMPLOYING THE FIRST EPISTEMOLOGICAL
PRIORITY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE-
INTERNAL PARADIGM: A BIBLICAL
THEOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVE TO
TYPOLOGICAL MODELS
OF INTEGRATION

The purpose of this chapter is to use David Powlison's comprehensive-internal

paradigm to offer a biblical theological alternative to James Estep's typology of

integration generated from Richard Niebuhr's five-fold taxonomy of possibilities. The

biblical theological alternative offered in this chapter is the first of three steps toward

appropriating Erikson's identity crisis for discipleship purposes through a

comprehensive-internal framework. Four "great turning points from redemptive history"

studied from a biblical theological standpoint will provide an outline for this

comprehensive-internal alternative.[1] These four "epochal events" are creation, fall,

redemption, and restoration. What would be impossible in this chapter is to offer a

complete explanation of all things identity inside and outside of Christ. However, what

can be offered is an approach and framework for doing so. As such, the biblical

theological framework being offered as an alternative here reflects an inquiry into human

identity as the creation, fall, redemption and restoration objectively determines it. This is

not to say that only biblical theology and only the metanarrative of Scripture is sufficient

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[1]Donald A Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 44.

for explaining everything regarding the identity of man inside and outside of Christ,

rather that biblical theology and the metanarrative of Scripture, specifically the purpose

of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ, can and must be used to faithfully and confidently

explain and understand issues of identity because Scripture is sufficient for doing so.

Introduction

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised to high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore. (Ps 131)

Christian education has taken on a decidedly integrationist perspective in the

last half century. In the comprehensive-internal framework, the relationship between the

social sciences and theology is completely redefined for discipleship purposes. The

comprehensive-internal biblical theological alternative that will be offered in this chapter

does not assume any allegiance to the social sciences, but remains open to hearing,

understanding and discerning social scientific perspective. The Christian educator or

discipler applying the comprehensive-internal framework does not assume that any level

of integration of theology and the social sciences is necessary. Where developmental

psychology makes a claim in accordance with redemptive history in regard to

anthropology, the discipler can acknowledge the claim for its reflective order. Similar to

the relationship of redemptive history to sociological and scientific claims and

observations, at no time is biblical theological identity dependent upon an observation

level claim of developmental psychology.

So it is possible to complement historical study with a sociological theory within the discipline of biblical theology, but this is only an option for the scholar. The

validity of the historical approach to biblical theology is not dependent upon its being supplemented by sociology.[2]

The relationship of the social sciences to theology in the comprehensive-internal framework then is likened to an appendix. There are certain unnecessary but sometimes helpful characteristics of an appendix both in the human body and in writing. However, neither the human body nor the body of a paper relies on the appendix. Where the appendix does not align with the body, it is at best realigned in accordance with the body or otherwise removed and discarded without taking away from the whole.

The Limitations of Biblical Theology
to the Alternative

One of the central purposes of developmental psychology and thus Erikson's eight-stage psychosocial theory is to offer an explanation of the way things are in terms of human development so that persons can be offered better lives. Erikson himself said all he had to offer was a "way of looking at things."[3] Erikson's psychosocial emphasis,

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[2]T. Desmond Alexander et al., *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 26.

[3]Stephen Schlein, ed., *Erik H. Erikson: A Way of Looking at Things* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 24-25: "In the closing chapter of *Childhood and Society*, where [Erikson] said, 'I have nothing to offer except a way of looking at things.' It appears that he brought with him a configurational perspective which helped explain how things 'hang together' or 'hold together.' As he built a bridge between art and psychoanalysis, he developed a configurational view of children's play which was influenced by Freud's emphasis on the vital importance of dreams . . . . Yet, as Erikson expanded his notion of a psychosocial theory of human existence, it emerged as a critical departure from Freud's psychosexual model of man. This perspective was an alternative to a focus on causality and the traumatological model and to the energy-libido theory of psychoanalysis. Erikson avoided seeing everything as a symbol for 'something else' and believed that the human mind was more than drives and instincts. He emphasized a homeostatic quality of the organism rather than psychopathology. The configurational view studied the interaction and convergence of multiple processes and recurrent patterns. This was highlighted in *Childhood and Society* when Erikson said, 'In recent years we have come to the conclusion that neurosis is psycho-and somatic, psych-and social, and interpersonal,' three aspects of human experience organized by a process of ego synthesis. It is here that his multidimensional perspective demonstrates the integration and convergence of various processes—biological, psychological, social, cultural, communal, and historical. These processes are seen as aspects of one process—i.e., human life and human existence." See Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 359.

though built on and dependent upon Sigmund Freud's ideas, was a departure from

Freud's inherent drives-based theory of human existence. Erikson's theory of the human

life and its existence was dependent upon a "commitment to the strength of the human

ego, to the conception that adult maturity is not the end of psychological growth, and to

the comprehension of the coherence of a person's unique qualities."[4] Erikson also

believed the unity of the human life was found in the individual's "life-history" and the

continuity found within it. This differed from Freud's "case-history" perspective by

taking into account more than an individual's life in isolation. Rather he sought to

understand another's life as a whole, which included the impact of society around them.

The biblical theological alternative that will be offered in this chapter uniquely exposes

Erikson's theory of identity through the objective metanarrative of Scripture.[5]

The comprehensive-internal framework requires a decidedly different stance in

offering a way of life. The centerpiece and defining attribute of the comprehensive-

internal framework is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where the way, wisdom, and

the power to walk according to the way are all defined in Jesus Christ according to John

14:6 and 1 Corinthians 1:24 respectively, the comprehensive-internal framework cannot

be employed apart from the gospel. Jesus proclaims he is the Way in John 14:6. The

Word also proclaims him as the power of God and the Wisdom of God to those who are

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[4]Schlein, *A Way of Looking at Things*, 25.

[5]Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 76: "Despite the fall into noetic apostasy, all humans alike seek to learn from experience and to interpret this experience in a way that gives coherence to their lives. The biblical idea of wisdom based on human experience is one of the strongest bulwarks against a docetic interpretation of the Christian life."

called in 1 Corinthians 1:24, "but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ

the power of God and the wisdom of God."[6]

> If wisdom is about knowing how to live a successful life in God's world, then the
> fear of the LORD is the indispensable starting point. The route to true wisdom will
> not be found apart from the particularity of God's salvation of Israel. The OT here
> firmly rejects human autonomy as the path to truth and thus delineates a pre-
> theoretical epistemology. The OT wisdom writers often appeal to observation to
> support their views, and this might appear to contradict their taking Yahweh as their
> starting point. However, as M. Fox rightly points out wisdom's epistemology is not
> empiricism. It is not neutral observation which is used to support wisdom, but
> observation through Yahwistic glasses.[7]

The comprehensive-internal framework, then, considers all things through a gospel-

centered lens, not an empirical one.[8] In so doing, identity takes its definition from a

center not just different from Erikson's, but one that is completely "other" in nature.

Likewise, the implications of the comprehensive-internal framework are other in nature

as well. Among the most important is that the gospel rests a complete rejection of the

idea of human autonomy. Where Erikson's theory depends upon Freudian

psychoanalysis human autonomy remains a necessary starting point. The

comprehensive-internal framework predisposes that Yahweh, who is meticulously

sovereign, saves individuals not in isolation from one another, but in community with one

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[6]Ibid., 77: "True wisdom and true knowledge of ultimate reality come from the submission of one's mind and actions to the fear of the Lord. This fear is not an undefined religiosity, but is given its shape by the words and actions of Yahweh. The emphasis in Proverbs on the words, thoughts and experiences of people should not obscure the overarching assumption of the interpretive framework of the word of God."

[7]Alexander et al., *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 120-21. See also John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Elsie Anne McKee (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2009), 3-4.

[8]Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 76: "The term 'empirical wisdom' is used to designate those wisdom sayings and literary constructions based on human observation and experience. The tendency to view wisdom literature as focusing more on creation than on salvation history is helpful, provided we do not thereby assume that these are anything other than two perspectives within the one great reality."

another.[9] Human identity is thus dependent upon relationship to the Creator who thus

defines the relationship of every person to every other person.

The comprehensive-internal alternative in this chapter proposed through the

Gospel-centered, biblical-theological lens of Scripture, will not be a clear picture of

everything regarding identity inside and outside of Christ. However, as much as the

alternative offered stays true to Scripture, it will be an accurate one.[10] No matter how

much any human being now accurately understands human identity, Scripture makes it

clear that what can be seen and known now is less than what can and will be known in

the Eschaton and specifically the *parousia*. The truth that the picture the church now has

in regard to their identity is not as clear as it will be, does not negate the fact that what

God has allowed to be known of himself and of humanity through Scripture is true and

unchanging. The comprehensive-internal framework operates within the bounds that

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[9]Russell D. Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 185. "The atoning work is indeed directed toward individuals, since Christ is a covenant sacrifice bearing in His body the sins of individual sinners. Thus, the apostle Paul is able to write of 'the Son of God, who loved and gave Himself up for me' (Gal 2:20). Nonetheless, the key word here is *isolated.* The goal of salvation is never to redeem individuals in isolation from one another. The goal of the atonement is presented in Scripture as to redeem believers in community with one another, to redeem a people." See Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ*, 256. Necessary to biblical theological identity is clarity that the God of the Bible is "creator, judge, and king." God's sovereignty is inseparable to His wisdom. The biblical theological identity being offered in this chapter is not defined in a human's vacillating cooperation with his Creator. Rather, the biblical theological identity offered in this chapter is dependent upon who God says He is—not limited but specific to the creation, fall, redemption, and restoration, and what that means toward a biblical theological understanding of human identity inside and outside of Christ.

[10]A verification method known as "critical realism" will be used to verify the constructive component of this dissertation, a brief biblical theological perspective of identity crisis. Critical realism is a term that describes a way of making a confident assertion of the "way things are" without suggesting that the assertion is an exact delineation of God's special revelation. Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991), 310: "Thus critical realists never assume that they have achieved the 'final' statement of theological truth; the process of validation and improvement never ceases, for there can be no facile assumption that they have 'arrived' though of course one can verify that a particular statement is an accurate depiction of the biblical norm."

though no one can yet fully know as they are known by God until we see him face to

face, we can indeed see and know who we are in Christ.[11]

> To think Christianly is 'to think God's thoughts after him.' Of course, our thinking
> is both finite and distorted. We never see it all; and we often misconstrue what we
> do see. We see in a glass darkly, skewed reflections in a battered bronze mirror—
> but we do see.[12]

Biblical theology, then, acts as the logic of the comprehensive-internal framework toward

all things identity offered in this chapter. This is not to say Biblical theology alone is the

place to look for answers as to questions of identity. Rather it is to say that the Bible's

depths of being able to do so are vast and complex and manifold, yet simple and uniquely

one.[13] It is of this aspect of canonical oneness attributed to the purpose of God in Jesus

Christ that this biblical theological alternative is written.

> Powlison warns against elevating biblical theology to a place of all truth.

Instead, Powlison encourages the study of the Bible so that one may "know the depth of

the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God," his unsearchable judgments and

inscrutable ways (Rom 11:33).

> While the pieces are capable of reassembly into a redemptive historical narrative,
> Paul is up to other purposes. Yes, every story is embedded in this Story. Everyone
> lives tucked between eternal purpose an eternal destiny, a story within the Story.

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[11]Mark Seifrid, "Story-Lines of Scripture and Footsteps in the Sea," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12 (2008): 88: "It is our beholding God's face, our knowing fully in the same manner as we have been known by God (1 Cor 13:12). *The Scripture thus speaks of its own limits.* All interpretation of Scripture, therefore, must provide a *concrete* account as to how we presently see only "through a glass, darkly." It is questionable whether that accounting is possible within the plan of a comprehensive and unified narrative of Scripture. The construction of such a narrative involves a forgetfulness that we do not speak from above, but *from within* the ongoing story of God's dealings with the world."

[12]David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition Through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R publishing, 2003), 10.

[13]Daniel P. Fuller, *The Unity of the Bible: Unfolding God's Plan for Humanity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 21-28.

> But, note well, Paul did not write a narrative. He did not write a piece of Biblical theology . . . . Biblical theology organizes the whole of the Bible with a historical and narrative logic, but we must do more than tell the Story if we are to minister to people.[14]

Understanding and discipling others in their quest and need to know who they are is not an intellectual exercise, rather a means by which disciples of Christ minister to one another. Careless exegesis and application of the metanarrative must be avoided. Otherwise, the same weak logic and exegetical fallacies will plague the comprehensive-internal framework and subsequent biblical theological alternative offered in this chapter as occurs in many of the resulting products of Estep's typology of integration. An example of such is as follows,

> He never does out-of-control things like taking Numbers 13:33 to mean "the spies in the land suffered low self-esteem because they saw themselves like grasshoppers." His logic is not the sort that says, 'Nehemiah first inspected the damage to the walls of Jerusalem, therefore counselors must first explore the woundedness of those they counsel.'[15]

In addition to these parameters for applying the comprehensive-internal framework through a biblical theological lens, the gospel demands that no one is regarded according to the flesh. There is no sacred/secular split rather one unique way of approaching everyone according to the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.[16] "The distinction

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[14]Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes*, 21.

[15]Ibid., 22.

[16]Alexander et al., *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 120-21: "Wisdom based on the fear of Yahweh enables humans to use their resources to explore God's world. From such a perspective it is clear that wisdom holds redemption and creation closely together and knows nothing of the modern sacred/secular divide . . . . Because the fabric of creation comes from God, wisdom is found and is to be sought in every area of human life. Wisdom is not restricted to family and cultic life. Proverbs stresses that wisdom's call is heard in the city centers: the city gates which were the place of government and justice, and the market squares, which were the economic centers. God's people are called to be wise in all areas of life by locating and living according to his norms."

between 'biblical truth' and 'practical application' is artificial."[17] Part of what Powlison

warns against is creating another framework that only uses Scripture to present life "in

theory." One of the goals of presenting this biblical theological alternative to integration

is to demonstrate how God has revealed the answer to the common human question,

"Who am I?"

> [Paul] was not wooden, 'biblistic,' or superstitious about Scripture . . . . You must
> do something like what Paul did in the way he used Scripture. You already do
> something like it every time you pray, ponder, preach, or counsel wisely.[18]

In light of Powlison's warnings, this biblical theological alternative to

typological integration methods must be applied in light of the wisdom of God and the

continual informative nature and necessity of the other theological disciplines.[19] With the

fear of the Lord the comprehensive-internal framework is applied such that there is no

attempt to separate the Word of God from his humanity or deity.[20] In other words, the

Bible is not sought as the sufficient resource devoid of its Author.

Withdrawal from or renunciation of extrabiblical resources is not what

Powlison means by biblistic. What Powlison addresses in his warnings regarding biblical

isolationism includes the tendency for those who love and hold to the authority,

inerrancy, infallibility, and sufficiency of Scripture to seek a valid theological mechanism

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[17]Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes*, 18.

[18]Ibid., 30.

[19]G. K. Beale and Donald A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2007), 859-60.

[20]Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 76: "The fear of the Lord is the Old Testament equivalent of a gospel-centered hermeneutic."

or discipline as an isolated means of interpretation, proclamation, and ministry of the

Word of God into the lives of people. Biblical isolationism is a slide into legalism and an

equal but opposite side of the same error made by integrationist.[21] Becoming biblically

isolated is a human response that is denying Christ by desiring a paradigm through which

to have an understanding of life or the way of life apart from the Creator. In view of this,

the biblical theological alternative offered in this chapter is not an attempt to offer the

definitive answer on all things related to identity. Rather it is unapologetically to reflect

what God has already revealed according to his Word.

> The most experienced psychologist or observer of human nature knows infinitely
> less of the human heart that the simplest Christian who lives beneath the cross of
> Jesus. The greatest psychological insight, ability, and experience cannot grasp this
> one thing: what sin is. Worldly wisdom knows what distress and weakness and
> failure are, but it does not know the godlessness of man. And so it also does not
> know that man is destroyed only by his sin and can be healed only by forgiveness.[22]

The church's identity questions, whether corporate or individual are deeply

personal, effectual, and ongoing. Though the positional nature of her standing does not

waiver, the church progressively learns God's new identity for her in Christ. Hearing the

proclamation of the Gospel in love understood and applied to every area of life, the

church grows up into the head, that is Christ (Rom 10:17, Eph 4: 15-16). The resource for

interpreting and applying Scripture necessarily includes God—Father, Son and Holy

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[21]Powlison's biblicism or biblical isolationism is a valid warning against the VitEx typology of integration seen in Estep's disintegration, segregation, paradoxical, synthetic, and paradigmatic perspectives. See James R. Estep, Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg Allison, *A Theology for Christian Education* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 37, Fig. 1. Estep's perspectives indicate a similar dissatisfaction in biblicism which he seems to use to support his view of the primacy rather than sufficiency of Scripture. Powlison is able to warn against biblical isolationism without forsaking his belief in the sufficiency of Scripture.

[22]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 118-19.

Spirit—as well as the church.[23] The biblical theological alternative is written in view of the fact that the believer's identity by nature is not individualistic or autonomous rather that the Holy Spirit reconciles him to God and joins him with the communion of saints.[24]

Two Conservative Evangelical Views of Sanctification that Inform the Biblical Theological Alternative to Identity

Before discussing identity in terms of biblical theology, a brief discussion of its relationship to theology is needed. Identity falls into two primary categories of Christian theology that are especially pertinent to this dissertation. Because of their unique relationship to Niebuhr's five categories, it is necessary to clarify the position on justification and sanctification from which the biblical theological alternative is written. First, this biblical theological alternative to identity as it relates to justification and sanctification is written with a strong emphasis on the Kingdom of God.

> The Kingdom of God cannot be reduced to the reign of God within the individual soul or modernized in terms of personal existential confrontation or dissipated to an extra-worldly dream of blessed immorality. The Kingdom of God means that God is King and acts in history to bring history to a divinely directed goal.[25]

The theological perspective being employed within the comprehensive-internal framework has four primary distinctions that are necessary to point out because of the way each uniquely informs the biblical theological discussion of identity. (1) The

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[23]Conrad Wethmar, "Confessionality and Identity of the Church—A Reformed Perspective," in *Christian Identity,* ed. Eduardus Van Der Borght (Boston: Brill, 2008), 146.

[24]God describes an individual believer's relationship to the Father in two familial ways—adoption and marriage—both of which are dependent upon God Himself and others by definition. The church's identity in Christ also includes sharing in his sufferings and future glory (1 Pet 4:12-5:5).

[25]George E. Ladd, *Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 331.

primary emphasis on salvation which includes justification and sanctification is Christocentric, holistic, and cosmic.[26] (2) Jesus Christ is the true Israel and those found in Him are thus defined.[27] (3) The primary emphasis on redemption is as new creation in an already/not-yet state that will eventually be both spiritual and physical for the people of God, the earth, and the heavens.[28] (4) The primary emphasis on both justification and sanctification is as a positional attribute of the believer rather than progressive.[29] These perspectives are essential to offering an alternative to Niebuhr who, in the end, seems most supportive of his fifth category, Christ the transformer of culture. The first places human beings in cosmic perspective, something Erikson does not and cannot do. The last three reveal the myopic scope of Niebuhr's categories for explaining the relationship of the God-man, Jesus of Nazareth, his identity and the rest of humanity. In other words, these four positions pull identity out of Erikson's developmental framework and Niebuhr's Christ and culture framework and place them in the comprehensive-internal framework.

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[26]Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ*, 98-100. The kingdom emphasis aids in tying salvation to both creation and the eschaton rather than an individualized one-time event in a person's life. This kingdom emphasis also shows the biblical theological unity of the canon. "Salvation, including its unity in the one people of God, is inherently Christocentric and Kingdom-oriented" (ibid., 100).

[27]Tom Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 173: "Matthew's emphasis on fulfillment indicates that Jesus is the true Israel who fulfills what God always intended when he chose Israel to be his people. He is the obedient Servant of the Lord who always does the will of the Father. He brings victory and freedom to his people not by waging war but by suffering in their place." See Gal 3:28-29, 6:16.

[28]Ibid., 108. also ibid., 32-34.

[29]Ibid., 371-76: "Paul is not claiming that Christians will reach moral perfection in their everyday lives before the eschaton. Believers are already in the realm of the holy, but on the last day they will be transformed so that they are without sin."

Taken together these four positions provide necessary framework for identity in a biblical theological framework where only the epochal events of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration are discussed. Without the way these positions specifically inform identity, this comprehensive-internal alternative might be deemed as yet another perspective easily placed in one of Niebuhr's five categories. These emphases reinforce not just that but how this biblical theological alternative remains particularly dependent upon the other disciplines of theology. The purpose in laying such groundwork for the biblical theological alternative is to show how this comprehensive-internal alternative is not simply another depiction of one of Niebuhr's categories.

Because "the purpose of God from the beginning centers on His Son," the argument could be made that using biblical theology as the lens through which to offer an alternative to vital-external typology simply replaces Niebuhr's "culture" or Estep's "social sciences" with "identity."[30] In other words the results of such an alternative would be Christ against identity, Christ of identity, Christ above identity, Christ and identity in paradox, or Christ the transformer of identity where Christ represents the Christocentric nature of biblical theology. Though human identity itself is Christocentric, identity is not the primary concentration of this alternative. The concentration of this alternative is to say that this biblical theological alternative outlined specifically through the Christocentric epochal events of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration so completely redefines identity itself that no dependence upon, nor resemblance with human identity remains between what God says through His word regarding identity and

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[30]Edmund P. Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1988), 11.

identity as Erik Erikson defines it.[31] One of the greatest reasons for this is the de-

emphasis on the individual that results from the centrality of Christ Jesus in a gospel-

centered framework.

The Comprehensive-Internal Framework as a
Biblical Theological Perspective on Identity

What is being presented in this alternative is not a biblical theology *over*

Erikson's identity approach which simply would be another version of Niebuhr's

typology. It is the position of this dissertation to say that biblical theology acts as the

"canon-stipulated vision" of identity while other theological disciplines are also

necessary for an accurate rendering of Christian identity and investigation of any notion

of identity crisis.[32] The benefit of doing so is a biblical explanation of identity for

discipleship purposes that extols a complex reality that extends across cultures and is not

dependent upon Western ideas of cultural influence as a theory such as Erikson's that was

limited to observation of persons from only the Western world is limited to show.[33] Nor

will this alternative be as biblical theology the *transformer* of identity such that the

epochal themes of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration are discussed similar to

creation and identity, fall and identity, redemption and identity, or restoration and

identity. These four epochal themes were chosen as the outline of this alternative not for

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[31]Ibid., 32: "The intellectual worldview that controls the mind-set of unbelievers is limited to this age (1 Cor 1:20; 3:18)."

[32]Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, 43: "We should not think of each pattern in Niebuhr's fivefold scheme as warranted by individual documents in the New Testament, such that we have the option to pick and choose which pattern we prefer, assured that all are equally encompassed by the canon that warrants them individually. Rather, we should be attempting a holistic grasp of the relations between Christ and culture, fully aware as we make our attempt, that peculiar circumstances may call us to emphasize some elements in one situation, and other elements in another situation."

[33]Ibid., 45.

lopsided emphasis but according to each event's complementary canonical function to the whole.[34]

Liberal and fundamentalist slants exist for any framework that exists. Where the comprehensive-internal framework is susceptible to ideation is in emphasizing one theological discipline, such as biblical theology over another or even one epochal event over another. That is not the intention of this dissertation. The richness of Scripture requires a caveat to be stated here that the following represents a small portion of what God has to say through His Word regarding human identity from a biblical theological perspective.[35]

Creation and the Fall

Creation, not as a systematic category in fact not a theological category at all but the beginning and ongoing epochal event in the redemption story, grants unique and essential understanding of human identity. The ultimate goal of this chapter is not only to offer a comprehensive-internal alternative to identity, but ultimately a comprehensive-internal alternative to identity crisis. Creation as an ongoing epochal event includes the aspects of God's purpose in creation—His glory, man's subsequent purpose—God's glory, God's creation of man in His image as male and female, and the essential nature of man.[36] Creation as an epochal event in biblical theological focus includes these aspects but also takes a step back in order to concentrate on creation within the larger framework

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[34]Ibid., 37.

[35]Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 17, 35. Each can be understood by any generation of believers anywhere in the world at any level of education or sophistication.

[36]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 439-550.

of the gospel narrative.[37] In fact, each of these aspects—God's purpose, man's purpose, the *imageo dei*, and the nature of man, are all ultimately defined by the gospel. Jesus Christ is the purpose and goal of creation according to Colossians 1:15-16,

> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.[38]

It is the process of defining these aspects with the gospel that articulates the relationship of biblical theology to these systematic categories. Biblical theological identity is necessarily and similarly defined and discussed, not separate from these aspects, rather completely dependent upon them. It is the culmination of these gospel-centered aspects, in turn, that the boundaries of discipleship toward human identity are found.

Transcendent Character of God through Creation and over the Fall upon Identity

Sin is so closely associated with the biblical theological understanding of the past, current, and future state of all of creation that creation and fall are inseparably discussed. Creation and fall in these terms necessitate that an individual's identity is not first and foremost considered on autonomous or even individual terms. The very nature of individual accountability before the Creator on the Day of Judgment necessitates that from conception to that day no individual is autonomous. "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every

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[37]Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, 44. The epochal events of Scripture are needed to inform *how* evangelical conservatives think Chistianly about Christ and identity.

[38]Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 83.

tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:9-11).

The epochal events of redemption and restoration further explicate this fact.

> Christians whose worldview—whose way of looking at the world—is decisively shaped by the Bible's story line cannot forget that we human beings have been made in the image of God; that our first obligation is to recognize our creatureliness, and thus our joyful obligation to our Creator; that sin is nothing other than de-godding God; that our dignity as God's image bearers is horribly marred by our rebellion; that the entire race, and all of human history, is rushing toward final accountability before this God who is no less our Judge than our Maker; that there is a new heaven and a new earth to gain and a hell to fear; that our sole hope of reconciliation with this God is by the means he himself has provided in his Son; that the people of God are made up of human beings from every language and tribe and nation, and empowered by God's Spirit, are growing in personal and corporate obedience and love, rejoicing to come under the reign of God in anticipation of the consummation of that reign. Meanwhile, we are enjoined to do good to all, especially—but certainly not exclusively—those of the household of truth, but truth about all reality. However complicated the issues may be, however disputed the way ahead may be, this vision of reality is radically different from a secularist vision that wants Christianity to scuttle into the corner of the hearth by the coal shovel, conveniently out of the way of anything but private religious concerns. Christians informed by the sweep of the Bible's story line will not be intimidated, for instance, by academic sneering.[39]

Integrationist typology is dependent upon a sacred/secular split. A significant difference between the biblical theological alternative is that there is no presumption or even mention of a sacred/secular split. Developmental psychology, for instance, is not relegated to the category of the secular, rather it is consumed in the cosmic scope of the gospel and the metanarrative of Scripture and tradition of the church where this word of Christ is proclaimed. Paul repeatedly and in a manifold way highlights a much different contrast of concern than a sacred/secular split. God, through the apostle Paul, emphasizes that the divide that is more pertinent to the believer's understanding of the way of life is that of creation/new creation, heaven/earth, already/not yet, God/humanity, flesh/spirit,

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[39]Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, 120-21.

history before Christ/history after Christ, history before faith/history after faith, life

before knowing God/life after knowing God, slaves to sin/slaves to righteousness,

enemies of God/sons of God and heirs with Christ.[40]

> For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:22)

The chief identity issue in one's life is whether they remain an enemy of God

and therefore remain in the kingdom of darkness and under the condemnation of the law

or if they have become an heir with Christ by grace through faith and therefore abide in

the Kingdom of God learning to rule and reign with Christ in the here and now.

According to Romans 11:32, "God consigned all to disobedience, that he may have

mercy on all." Disobedience is humanity's default position outside of Christ. The

"crisis" of an individual's identity is not only an internal one but and external

and infinite one as well. In his complete inability to obey the law of Christ and even

desire to obey the law of Christ at all times, every human being is helpless.

Therefore, the chief identity crisis in a person's life is being separated from his

Creator. Scripture ratchets up the nature and definition of the identity crisis. The cosmic

scale of this crisis engulfs Erikson's "crisis" which he deems as something more akin to a

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[40]Alexander et al., *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 311-12.

turning point in one's life largely based on how one sees himself and how "true" he remains to himself in the eyes of others.[41] The second most significant crisis of identity in a person's life is believing and acting as though he belongs to the kingdom other than that which he truly belongs. The discipleship of the church largely involves teaching others how to live according to their new identity in Christ, thus advancing the Kingdom of Christ on the earth.

Immanent Character of God through Creation upon Identity

The realities of human identity according to the epochal events of creation and fall are not left to the transcendent, but are equally immanent, theological, and practical. Scripture speaks of the LORD's servant, referring to Jesus, in Isaiah 49:1 that "from the body of [his] mother he named [his] name." An immanent part of creation and therefore identity is the naming process. God brought to Adam every living creature to see what Adam would call them. "And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name" (Gen 2:19). The creature's name was intricately tied to its relation to the man and not one creature was found whose relationship to him was that of helper.[42] When God created woman, Adam named his helper twice. First, he called her woman because she was taken out of him. Second, he called her Eve because "she was the mother of all

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[41]Erik Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 22-23: "Identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. This process is for the most part unconscious except where inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to aggravate a painful, or elated, identity consciousness."

[42]Beale and Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1094.

living" (3:20). Adam did not call the woman by the name Eve until the decree went out

from the Lord that her pain in childbearing would be multiplied and that in pain she

would bring forth children.[43] Naming is intricately tied to relationship and both names

and relationships are one of the most significant aspects of creation as it relates to

identity.

The significance of naming is similarly significant to the order of the new

creation.[44] Just as Christ Jesus has a name known only to himself, so has the Father

assigned a new name to those born of the Spirit known only to them in the eschaton. "To

the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white

stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who

receives it" (Rev 2:17). The significance of this new name is that it is associated

with "a new identity of the redeemed in the new heaven and the new earth."[45] According

to Revelation 21:4, this name of Jesus known only to Himself will also be on the

foreheads of his servants when they see him face to face.[46]

> The new name is likely to be the name of the one who overcomes. No one else can
> know the transforming experience of fidelity in trial and the joy of entrance to the

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[43]Allen Ross, *Genesis*, ed. Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), 57: "Adam's faith was expressed in the naming of his wife, now for the first time. He called her 'eve,' which means 'living' or more properly 'life-giving.' Under the sentence of death, Adam looked to the future, to life, and acknowledged that she would be the mother of all living. Eve's statement of faith comes in 4:1 in her acknowledgement that the blessing of God is on her."

[44]Beale and Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1095.

[45]Those in Christ are not the only people who name. All of humanity employs the act of naming. It is the gospel that gives naming meaning. When a person who is outside of Christ names their child or changes her surname to that of her new spouse or even names a pet, he or she is reflecting the Creator and the gospel as it pertains to creation. Likewise, when any person seeks their identity in a title or relationship to another human being, he is reflecting the significance of the need for a new name as the Creator has ordered things.

[46]See also Rev 3:12.

great marriage supper of the Lamb. The overcomer's name is new (*kainos*) in quality; it is appropriate to the New Age.[47]

As heirs of God, children of God, and the bride of Christ those in Christ enter the family of God and take on his name.

The believer's identity is consumed in Christ, who is "the beginning of God's creation," and in God's economy the exchange is that by doing so, he actually finds his life.[48] Suffering is a very real part of this identity with Christ. This suffering is experienced by creation itself.

> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom 8:19-23)

In these verses is found a distinguishing factor between the comprehensive-internal approach to human identity and the identity offered by Erikson. The psychoanalytic framework assumes a peeling of the layers is necessary to find out the truth regarding an individual life. As part of the epochal event of creation and fall in light of redemption and restoration, the believer in his suffering rightly desires to be further clothed with the eternal, that is Christ (2 Cor 5:4).[49]

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[47]Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 82-83. See also, Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation of John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 539-45.

[48]Rev. 3:14; Matt 10:39; 1 Pet 4:13-14.

[49]2 Cor 5:2-4.

While mankind is certainly distinguished from the rest of creation, there is an intricate and intimate connection with creation.[50] The "image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" is intimately involved in the continual care of the universe.[51] As the image of God, Jesus is the intercessor between the Creator and creation and the restoration of his image in humanity is the goal of the believer. As the "origin of the cosmos," Jesus is also its goal.[52] In view of these sufferings according to 1 Peter 4:19 Paul encourages believers who are suffering according to God's will to "entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good." By suffering while doing good thereby becoming like Christ in his death, the believer joins in with creation in the hopeful expectation of their own resurrection and the restoration of all things in Christ.[53]

Redemption

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Cor 5:16-17)

As the discussion of this comprehensive-internal alternative moves from being informed by the epochal events of creation and fall to the epochal event of redemption, it is done so in view of creation and the eschaton not as a category all its own. This comprehensive-internal alternative is being offered from the position that the answer to

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[50]Alexander et al., *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 431.

[51]Ibid., 433.

[52]Ibid., 434.

[53]Phil 3:10-11.

the question of human identity and subsequent lostness is found in the Creator.[54] As

such, redemption does not start with "accept Christ as Savior," but rather with "in the

beginning God created the heavens [the total cosmos] and the earth . . . . At this point we

are ready to explain the second lostness and the answer in the death of Christ." What

happens in this type of framework is, again, not a focus on a sacred/secular split where

denial of the world or separation from the world or navigation of the world is the primary

effort or worldview. Instead, the concentration is on the reality of Christ's redemption of

not just humanity, but the cosmos and what it subsequently means to be found in Christ.[55]

Niebuhr's categories seem to give both too much credence to the power of this world and

yet not enough from God who loves it. According to Romans 8:37, Jesus Christ's

redemption of the cosmos makes those found in Him, "more than conquerors through him

who loved us." The idea of human autonomy which Erikson's psychosocial theory is

dependent upon, remains completely foreign to the comprehensive-internal framework

and subsequent biblical theological alternative.

The Purchase

Christ's redeeming work is by definition an act of purchasing or "buying."[56]

The law teems with the act of redemption pointing to the Redeemer. The most common

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[54]Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1968), 201. Man commonly seeks his identity in the things he possesses, especially real estate or land. In this, too, he is imaging his Creator and the order set by Him. Where someone is from has a great deal to do with who he is. Nationality, home town, and relationship to the land all give man a defining sense of self. This, too, is a picture of a greater reality.

[55]Moore, *Kingdom of Christ*, 108.

[56]Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 410.

type of redemption in the Old Testament is that of a kinsman-redeemer.[57] "As a 'venger of blood' the kinsman-redeemer would redeem the life of a relative by killing its killer."[58] The responsibility of the kinsman-redeemer was closely tied to producing an heir. In redeeming the believer, God is saving him from the sin and death through the purchasing blood of Jesus. The redeemed are changed from being slaves to sin to slaves of righteousness. They are made heirs and receive the Spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by whom they cry together, "Abba! Father!" (Rom 8:15). Redemption is, of course, of individuals but Paul's emphasis on their redemption is as one unified voice.

> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Sprit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Rom 8:15-17)

Erikson cannot inform the Christian in regard to his identity because outside of Christ, he could not acknowledge or understand this type of community. The substantive belief in Christ produces not just a dependent community but a united body under one head. Erikson's dependence upon human autonomy to explain identity stands in stark contrast to the church's identity in Christ, so much so that the two cannot be integrated.

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[57]Alexander et al., *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 716-719.

[58]Ibid., 717.

New Creation

Integrationists typically see the old nature as the avenue by which the field of

psychology is helpful in the discipleship of the believer.[59] In a vital-external framework

Erikson's theory of psychosocial identity easily fits within the flesh side of a two views

nature of human beings after salvation. It is more easily applied within an Augustinian-

dispensational perspective where the progressive rather than positional nature of the new

creature in Christ is held and employed.[60] The argument is that these secular

observations help the believer understand who he is and understand why he does the

things he does in relation to who he is in his flesh nature. Scripture indicates, however,

that Paul himself did not understand his own actions apart from knowing Christ and his

new identity in a law-fulfilling Savior (Rom 7:15). The power of the sin over his "not

yet" redeemed body or tent is condemned in Christ (Rom 8:1-4, 23).

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[59]The title of Les Steele's book, *On the Way: A Practical Theology of Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990) indicates this progressive view of the nature of sanctification. Les Steele is admittedly integrationist and also writes form a Wesleyan perspective. In fact, the book's main thesis does not work without a progressive view of sanctification. "Formation implies that a person is in the process of being formed and at the same time is forming" (9-10). Steele begins with the significance of the Christian narrative, but qualifies that there are three stories of seemingly equal importance and progressive nature—the canonical or biblical story, the faith community story, and the life story (16). Rather than one objective gospel-centered narrative, Steele advocates that the biblical story is "the unfolding story of God's relationship with the world." He goes on to explain this story using James Fowler's outline of chapters: "God, creation, fall, liberation and covenant, incarnation, church, and the commonwealth." (See James W. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 82-84. Steele also speaks of Christian identity in relation to his three narratives by concluding, "Sanctification is the process of growing in the love of God and neighbor" (24). The difference with the biblical alternative being offered in this chapter is that biblical theology is not being used to offer a lens of one of many other stories, but one objective gospel-centered lens focused on the person of Christ and his work. The comprehensive-internal framework gleans implications for human identity from this lens but at no time suggests the lens be adjusted to offer an explanation of individual life stories as liberal uses of "narrative theology" often do.

[60]Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 372-73. Schreiner calls attention to the incompleteness of the common view of sanctification as essentially progressive. "Often sanctification is understood only in terms of progressive growth in the Christian life, whereas Paul typically indicates God's definitive setting aside work at conversion . . . . Nevertheless, the Corinthians were sanctified by virtue of their conversion. Since they are in Christ, they belong to the realm of the holy. They are sanctified definitively or positionally, even though they are not sanctified in terms of personal behavior" (ibid).

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. (Rom 7:14-25)

Whether Paul is writing of his experience as a believer or as one who was still lost is not of paramount importance in this instance.[61] The two natures and terms, flesh and spirit are eschatologically defined.[62] "Flesh" signifies living according to human and worldly resources and ways. Living according to the "Spirit" represents the Kingdom of Christ as an already/not yet reality.

Paul carries out his argument to say, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1). What he is explaining to the believer is that now that they have put on Christ through faith the law is no longer their guardian.[63]

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[61]Anthony Hoekema, "Response to Walvoord," in *Five Views of Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 231. Hoekema agrees that Christians retain a sinful nature defined according to the Reformed creed and Heidelberg Catechism. Hoekema also agrees that believers even have to combat sinful temptations. Hoekema's emphasis, however, and difference with Walvoord's Augustinian-dispensational perspective is that this perspective "fails to do full justice to the fact that a decisive break with sin was brought about by Christ for believers (Rom 6:6)—so that sin, though still present in the believer, no longer has dominion (v. 14)—and to the amazing truth that the believer is now indeed a new creature, old things having passed away (2 Cor 5:17)."

[62]George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 520-21.

[63]Gal 3:24-27.

"But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (Gal 3:22).

> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Gal 5:16-24)

It is the nature of Freudian psychoanalysis, upon which Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is built, to look inside the layers of the flesh in order to offer understanding of human beings. Scripture indicates that in Christ, it is not the peeling back of layers for which believers groan. Rather, human beings in Christ, rightly long to be further clothed.[64]

Restoration

The epochal events of creation, fall, and redemption show that the transition for the believer from "this age to the age to come has already been accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ."[65] While creation itself is not fallen, it has been

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[64]George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 288: "[The tree of life] has particular reference to the eschatological hope; and in its eschatological aspect, it includes the complete transformation of that which is mortal into the likeness of the immortal (2 Cor. 5:4). However, the condition of eternal life is relationsip to God through Christ (John 17:3), and the eschatological transformation into immortality is a blessing resulting fromdirect, unmediated fellowhip with God and with his Christ. 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is' (1 John 3:2)."

[65]Alexander et al., *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 314.

subjected to "futility" because of its close tie with the disobedience of humankind.[66]

Human beings and creation are unable to "achieve its *telos*, to fulfill the purpose of its

existence."[67] In the obedience of the one man, Jesus Christ, creation, too, is restored.

Human identity is, therefore, closely tied to creation itself. Romans 8:18-25 outlines the

cosmic scope of restoration.

> Paul sees Christ's redemptive activity as effecting not just the reconciliation of
> humanity with God but also, through that reconciliation, the consummation of the
> entire created order. The non-human part of creation is not merely a backdrop to the
> human drama of salvation history but is itself able to share in the 'glorious liberty'
> which Paul envisages for the covenant community. What we have here is a
> Christological and pneumatological (and, hence Trinitarian) transformation of the
> Old Testament concept of the [earthly dominion].[68]

This biblical theological alternative operates with a *telos* that is not an ideal type rather

the person, Jesus Christ. Developmental psychology is criticized even by those in the

field for lacking a Grand Unifying Theme or *telos*.[69] It is in the epochal event of

restoration that the weakest point of developmental psychology—its lack of *telos*—lies

exposed.

Niebuhr's categories which typologically define the relationship of sacred and

secular are similar to how theologians, specifically kingdom theologians, have attempted

to offer the explanation of human salvation and the subsequent relationship of the

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[66]C. E. B. Cranfield, "Some observations on Romans 8:19-21," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to Leon Morris on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Richard Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 227. See also Banks, "The Development of the Concept of Redemption in the New Testament," 153-69.

[67]Alexander et al., *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 435.

[68]Ibid.

[69] David Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads: The Care of Souls and the Modern Psychotherapies," in *Care for the Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 43.

believer to the world.[70] Kingdom theologians have disagreed as to whether the new

nature of the believer is a complete contradiction of humanity or if it is a heightened

continuation or restoration of sorts of the human state in the Garden of Eden. The point

of this biblical theological alternative to identity is that the epochal events of creation,

fall, redemption, and restoration all have one cosmic *telos*. Therefore, human identity has

one cosmic *telos*—Jesus Christ and to be formed into his image.[71]

Restoration in cosmic scope is not a fundamentalist emphasis on individual

decision.[72] Rather, individual or personal salvation is important in this biblical

theological view because God is saving the cosmos through his Son and for his Son for

His own glory. Personal faith is Christocentric rather than anthropocentric.[73] Therefore,

human identity is Christocentric rather than anthropocentric. The crisis of identity occurs

when the Word of God falls upon the heart of the human being.[74]

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[70]Moore, *Kingdom of Christ*, 108.

[71]Rom 8:29. See Moore, *Kingdom of Christ*, 108. "The purposes of creation, redemption, and consummation are seen holistically as God's purpose to glorify Christ by fulfilling the Adamic creation mandate, the universal Noahic promise, the patriarchal covenants, and the Israelite monarchy in Him, thus exalting Jesus as preeminent over the entire cosmos as the agent of creation, the true imago Dei, the Davidic subjugator of all rival powers, the firstborn of the eschatological resurrection from the dead, and the atonement through whom final cosmic peace is found at last (Col. 1:15-23)."

[72]Ibid., 110.

[73]George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 288: "They shall see his face. This is the hope and the goal of individual salvation throughout the Scriptures: the beatific vision of God . . . . To see and know Christ was to see and know the Father (John 14:7, 9; 17:3). This vision of God was still a mediated vision, realized only in faith. In the age to come, faith will give way to sight (Ps 17:15; Matt 5:8; 1 John 3:2)."

[74]Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1928), 104, 140.

A Biblical Theological Perspective
on Identity Crisis

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2 Pet 1:3)

The comprehensive-internal framework produces a biblical theological alternative to identity and identity crisis. Biblical theology does not sit over or against or act as the transformer of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. The Word of God instead consumes Erikson's notion of identity crisis. What Erikson may suggest as a crisis must be redefined according to the metanarrative of Scripture. Where Erikson's claims align in any way with this metanarrative, they can be kept as a descriptive level observation of humanity toward humanity. These claims act within the metanarrative as the Bible explains the purpose and limitations of humanity. The metanarrative of Scripture never becomes dependent upon such claims. In terms of the discipleship of the believer, Erikson's theory could never be introduced and the believer's life would not lack anything for life and godliness.[75]

Even systematic theology alone might encourage a discipleship that relegates identity in Christ to the two natures view.[76] The canonical oneness of Scripture anchors both the flesh and Spirit natures of the believer in the story of the cosmos.[77] "Flesh and

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[75]2 Pet 1:3

[76]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 747-53. Grudem even provides a chart of the progressive nature of sanctification that does not acknowledge the positional nature of sanctification accomplished in Christ.

[77]Gal 4:21-26. When Paul encourages the churches in Galatia, he does so by reminding them of the faith of Abraham and that they are no longer under the guardianship of the law. See also, Gal 3:5-29.

Spirit are not anthropological, but eschatological terms."[78] Teaching others to obey

everything that he has commanded requires laying out the cosmic scope of their own new

nature, new identity in Christ. The personal, effectual, and ongoing need to understand

this new identity occurs because of the changing nature of life situations and

circumstances, especially involving suffering and persecution that comes because of this

identification with Christ.

The first epistemological priority of Powlison's comprehensive-internal

approach in this dissertation results in this biblical theological alternative to typological

models of integration of theology and Erikson's identity crisis. The summary of using a

gospel-centered lens toward identity crisis is to say that Erikson's notion of identity crisis

is dismissed, redefined, intensified and resolved in the comprehensive-internal

framework.

Conclusion

Only a portion of the work of the comprehensive-internal approach has been

accomplished in this third chapter of the dissertation and will be continued in chapters

four and five with the second and third epistemological priorities respectively. The

biblical theological alternative to Estep's typology of integration toward identity in this

chapter is the first of three epistemological priorities in the comprehensive-internal

framework. Now that the first of Powlison's epistemological priorities—to articulate

positive biblical truth toward identity, has been offered this dissertation moves on to the

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[78]Alexander et al., *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 314.

second epistemological priority in the comprehensive-internal framework—"to expose,

debunk, and reinterpret" Erikson's notion of identity and identity crisis.[79]

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[79]Powlison "Questions at the Crossroads," 34.

CHAPTER 4

EMPLOYING THE SECOND EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRIORITY
OF THE COMPREHENSIVE-INTERNAL PARADIGM:
EXPOSING, DEBUNKING, AND REINTERPRETING
ERIKSON'S IDENTITY CRISIS

With the biblical theological alternative to Erikson's identity crisis in mind,

this dissertation moves on to the second epistemological priority of the comprehensive-

internal paradigm—exposing, debunking, and reinterpreting.[1] The purpose of this

chapter is to use the biblical theological lens to expose, debunk and reinterpret (1)

Erikson's theory as a theory within the larger framework of developmental psychology,

(2) epigenesis as the central, necessary connecting theme of Erikson's theory, and (3)

Erikson's dependence upon Freudian foundations. This chapter begins with a discussion

of Erikson's beliefs regarding how religion impacts identity, especially where Erikson

discloses his religious beliefs as they relate to the formation of identity or influence the

outcome of what he calls an identity crisis.

Introduction

The influence of psychology in the West methodically created a man-made

reality in which the individual was increasingly seen from a naturalistic and mechanistic

standpoint. From this psychological perspective the mind was an empty self in need of

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[1]David Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads: The Care of Souls and Modern Psychotherapies," in *Care for the Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 34.

therapy.[2] Phillip Cushman argues that due to the loss of effective, living "authoritative communities" such as the church, society in the West was left to one scientific voice after the next. In place of authoritative communities, self-realization became the guiding factor in the culture.[3]

Erikson lacked dependence upon empiricism, acknowledged the role of society in the human life, accepted the human need for authority toward identity, and relied on a *telos*.[4] Each of these aspects of his theory appeals to Christian integrationists. However, the primary role of authority in the shaping of individual, as well as, group identity is one of survival according to Erikson. His beliefs regarding religion result in his prioritization of subjectivity. This chapter as well as the next includes discussion regarding Erikson's ideas regarding religion. Erikson displays this subjectivity in the way he defines terms within his theory, especially those regarding society and the individual. Rather than objective definitions of identity and identity crisis, his stated desire was simply to offer a "way of looking at things."[5] The epigenetic principle, as well as Freudian principles of psychoanalysis, plays the most significant role in Erikson's psychosocial theory of identity—the explanation of his way of looking at things in regard to human identity. All of these factors will be the central focus of employing the second epistemological priority

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[2]Phillip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 1, 9.

[3]E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2005), 288, 313.

[4]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 41.

[5]Stephen Schlein, ed., *Erik H. Erikson: A Way of Looking at Things* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 24-25. Erikson was most interested in developing an explanation for the way things "hold together." He could see a sense of order and commonality within and among human beings and sought to offer an explanation through a neo-Freudian, evolutionary lens.

of the comprehensive-internal approach in this chapter.[6] Erikson's view of the individual human life in relation to the world can be better understood in the light of Christ, and specifically so through using the biblical theological alternative. The priority of this chapter is to expose, debunk, and reinterpret Erikson's theory within the biblical theological alternative to the typology of integration.

Erikson, Religion, and Christianity

The most common statements that Erikson made regarding religion and the identity of man have to do with Erikson's overarching ideal that humanity as a whole ideally heads toward one identity.[7] He argued that technology greatly influences and even ushers in this anticipated end. The ideological perspectives that technology requires will eventually override all ego strength or identity strength that previously came from the tradition in religion, politics, economics, ethnicity, and nationality.[8] Erikson defined ideological as a "universal psychological need for a system of ideas that provides a convincing world image."[9] According to Erikson, man will willingly submit to the "wider identity" as the social part of psychological identity strength. To Erikson, the church, specifically Catholicism, is one example of this exchange.

> Furthermore, as you have seen in the history of your own church, even a venerable example of a wider identity which truly began as a family of new men aspiring for the then widest identity which was embodied n Christ also developed all the aspects

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[6]Ibid., 41: "For man's development does not begin or end with identity; and identity, too, must become relative for the mature person."

[7]Erik Erikson, "Remarks on the Wider Identity," in *A Way of Looking at Things: Selected Papers from 1930 to 1980*, ed. Stephen Schlein, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), 498.

[8]Erik Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 31.

[9]Ibid., 30.

of a new and vainglorious pseudo-species. What nevertheless seems (to me, as a psychologist) to have perpetuated the Catholic "soul" is the humility engendered by the individual awareness of sin, the ideal of charity, and the communal certainty of grace.[10]

In an attempt to reach a Catholic audience during a lectureship where he was explaining social movements and identity, Erikson used a New Testament concept to describe the audience's Catholic identity. Erikson altered Scripture to support and describe his argument of individual and group submission to the wider identity that one experiences as "finding himself by losing himself in some absorbing social issue."[11]

Perhaps nowhere is Erikson more candid about his dismissal of religion as a stage of development, and ultimately a necessary part of evolution, than in his work *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History.*[12] Erikson's claims regarding Luther's crisis depend upon the Darwistic ideals of adaptation applied to the Freudian concept of the ego. It is also in this work that Erikson most clearly defined and used the term identity crisis.

> I have called the major crisis of adolescence the identity crisis. It occurs in that period of the life cycle when each youth must forge for himself some central perspective and direction, some working of his anticipated adulthood; he must detect some meaningful resemblance between what he has come to see in himself and what his sharpened awareness tells him others judge and expect him to be... In some classes, at some periods in history, this crisis will be minimal. In other people, classes, and periods the crisis will be clearly marked off as a critical period, a kind of 'second birth,' apt to be aggravated either by widespread neuroticisms or by pervasive ideological unrest.[13]

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[10]Erikson, "Remarks on the Wider Identity," 499.

[11]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 29.

[12]Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1958).

[13]Ibid., 8.

It is with these words that Erikson begins his work on Luther. He dismisses Luther's theology as an ideology that helped bridge a gap created within Western Christianity between politics and psychology. The nature of his theory disregards religion itself as nothing more than an ideology created by man.

Erikson would likely never have imagined that his own theory of psychosocial development would be used to inform Christian discipleship. Erikson clearly rejects Jesus. He stated that Jesus was simply man's attempt to bring God down on man's level.

> Christianity, like all great movements, had its heroic era, repeatedly appealed to as a mythical justification, but rarely recaptured in earnest... The legend of Christ conveyed that total presence and absolute transcendence which is the rarest and the most powerful force among men. A few simple words had once more penetrated the disguises and pretenses of this world, words which at one and the same time were part of the language of the child, the language of the unconscious, and the language of the uncorrupted core of all spiritual tradition. Once again the mortal vulnerability of the individual soul had become the very backbone of its spiritual strength; the very fragility of new beginning promised to move mountains. Death, fully accepted, became the highest identity on earth, superseding the need for smaller identities, and assuring at least one unquestionable equality for poor and rich, sick and healthy, ignorant and erudite. The disinherited above all desired to hear and rehear those words which made their inner world, long stagnant and dead, reverberate with forgotten echoes; this desire made them believe that God, from somewhere in the outer spaces, spoke through a chosen man on a definable historical occasion. Because the savior used the biological parable of a sonship of God, they believed in a traceable divine descendance of the son. But alas, having hardly made a God out of the son, they brought the Father down to a level where He seems much too human–for such a son.[14]

Erikson referred to Christianity as mythology and to Jesus' life as a legend. Furthermore, he reinterpreted Jesus Christ and the church as an ideology that actually supported Freudian concepts of "language of the child" and "the language of the unconscious." His

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[14]Ibid., 180-81.

only means of understanding the world was from his own standing in the kingdom of darkness.[15]

Erikson's *telos*

For the integrationist, there are many difficulties in marrying developmental psychology to the practice of Christian education. One of the greatest difficulties for the integrationist is inserting a final goal for developmental theory. Without the glory of God—Jesus Christ—as the teleology of human life, the Christian risks simply inserting "practical ideologies of the good life" designed by the social sciences that leave no room for suffering of any kind.[16] These ideologies and the competing narratives they generate are not neutral or innocent.

Christian education philosopher, George Knight suggests that the teleological purpose for Christian education is essentially a redemptive process.

> If the entrance of sin brought alienation and the deterioration of relationships, then the essence of the gospel is rebuilding those relationships. The entire process entails a restoration of the image of God in individuals through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Education is one arm of God's restorative and reconciling effort. It may therefore be seen as a redemptive activity . . . . The redemptive, restorative, and reconciling goal of Christian education.[17]

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[15]Erikson's makes many poignant statements in the quote pulled from *Young Man Luther.* Perhaps most significant is that he cannot and does not acknowledge that Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, came in the flesh. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God" (1 John 4:1-2).

[16]Robert Roberts, *Taking the Word to Heart: Self and Others in an Age of Therapies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 9.

[17] George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 195.

Every ministry of the church depends upon the gospel and the way the good news of

Jesus Christ narrates the world. The discipleship of the church depends upon the gospel

narrative.[18] The discipleship of the psychologized depends upon the narrative of

evolution.[19]

While there is no grand unifying theme or *telos* for developmental psychology,

as a field, Erikson relies on his idea of a healthy personality as the *telos* in his theory of

psychosocial development. Erikson agreeably used Marie Jahoda's definition of a

"healthy" personality as the telos for his eight-stage theory of psychosocial

development.[20] The healthy personality "actively masters his environment, shows a

certain unity of personality, and is able to perceive the world and himself correctly."

While Erikson sets this as his *telos*, he notably uses someone else's definition rather than

offering one of his own. While this definition of a healthy personality offers an end goal

for Erikson's theory, he is more reliant upon the epigenetic principle as an overriding

social factor in the development of this personality.

Epigenesis as an Open-ended Metanarrative

The narratives that ideologies generate are so strong in readily defining

"reality," their impact on a daily basis often goes unnoticed.

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[18] Robert E. Webber, *Who Gets to Narrate the World? Contending for the Christian Story in and Age of Rivals* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 125: "When the church and its ministries are disconnected from God's narrative, they become subject to the whims of culture."

[19] Brian Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 2.

[20] Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 92. For the reference to Marie Jahoda's work, see "Toward A Social Psychology of Mental Health," in *Symposium on the Healthy Personality* (New York: Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, 1950).

> Developmentalism offers one 'story' for explaining life and who people are. But depending on what 'religion' one chooses in psychology—usually science for most—depends on the story one buys into. Developmentalism is based on a storied system.[21]

Developmental theories have been around long enough now that they not only inherently offer a narrative, but are capable of taking on cultural ideologies. Even more significant, developmental theories are capable of constructing cultural ideologies.[22] Due to their lack of an objective teleology, they are easily malleable to cultural shifts in thought. One of the most current shifts is that toward a "moralistic, enlightenment maturity narrative that humans should be on a journey from thoughtless, dependent, tradition-bound rationality to reflective, independent, free-thinking rationality."[23] Christian educators must not only expose, debunk, and reinterpret developmental psychology with the gospel narrative, but also through the lens of Scripture, be acutely aware of how the cultural ideologies are currently affecting the practice of developmental theory within secular education.

Jerome Bruner argues that stories are not innocent, but rather always carry a message that shapes reality. Story proposes "alternative worlds that put the actual one in

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[21]Mark McMinn and Timothy Phillips, eds., "Leaving Development Behind and Beginning Our Pilgrimage," in *Care for the Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 82.

[22]Phillip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 1-3; 281-82; 297: "Each era has a predominant configuration of the self, a particular foundational set of beliefs about what it means to be human. Each particular configuration of the self brings with it characteristic illnesses, local healers, and local healing technologies."

[23]Eric Johnson, "The Call of Wisdom: Adult Development within Christian Community, Part I: The Crisis of Modern Theories of Post-Formal Development," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 24 (1996): 90.

a new light."[24] In psychiatry patients learn to frame their experiences in the right story in order to "heal." Developmental psychology arises out of an interpretive community—psychology and more broadly, the social sciences.

> In time, the sharing of common stories creates an interpretive community, a matter of great moment not only for promoting cultural cohesion but for developing a body of law, the *corpus juris*.[25]

Erikson offers a narrative in his theory of psychosocial development. In fact, the literary genre, autobiography, is often written according to Erik Erikson's "life stages" which help the author recognize or determine life "turning points."[26] These turning points become the outline for autobiography.[27] Erikson's life stages end up being common interpretive ground between the author and the reader. The interpretive framework for Erikson's narrative is the epigenetic principle.[28] In other words, due to the influence of Erikson, the epigenetic principle serves as a hermeneutic of sorts between author, text, and reader for the literary genre, autobiography.[29] This illustrates the significance and necessity of the narrative. Erikson's identity crisis, as a turning point, cannot be integrated with theology because the biblical narrative so reinterprets Erikson's theory that the notion of identity crisis is consumed and collapses. The biblical narrative is grander in purpose than Niebuhr's (and therefore Estep's) categories allow because the

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[24]Bruner, *Making Stories*, 12.

[25]Johnson, "The Call of Wisdom," 25.

[26]Bruner, *Making Stories*, 83.

[27]Ibid., 84.

[28]Bruner, *Making Stories*, 83. The narrative that Erikson offers is responsible for providing the outline for a literary genre—autobiography.

[29]Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991), 7-10.

Word of God delivers the verdict that to be a disciple of Christ is to regard no one according to the flesh.[30]

Epigenesis

The epigenetic principle acts as the narrative framework of Erikson's eight-stage psychosocial theory of development. The term epigenesis originated in the field of developmental biology. Geneticists Conrad H. Waddington used the term to describe the unique role of the environment upon the genotype in the actualization of phenotype.[31] The term has since become vague in some ways at times being synonymous with evolution and at others pitted as nurture versus preformationism or nature.[32] Though it appears Erikson borrowed heavily from Waddington's concepts, he is found to have only vaguely referenced Waddington on one occasion.

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[30]2 Cor 5:16. See George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 414-15: "Christ, understood *kata sarka*, was a blasphemous claimant to messianic activity, a transgressor of the Law . . . . Only when his yes were opened by the Spirit could Paul understand who the Jesus of history really was; the messianic Son of God." One who is in Christ can no longer regard Christ as they were once only able to regard him, *kata sarka*, according to the flesh. As such, the Christian can no longer regard any human being, *kata sarka*. The new order of things has been revealed to him or her. Where before they were only able to see others, including Christ, in one way; those in Christ are now able to and commanded to consider others according to the spirit of Christ. See Ibid., 372-373.

[31]J. R. Morris and C. T. Wu, "Genes, Genetics, and Epigenetics: A Correspondence," *Science Magazine* (2001) [on-line]; accessed 4 April 2009; available from http://www. sciencemag.org/cgi/data/ 293/5532/1103/DC1/1; Internet. Waddington was not the first to use the term epigenetics but did reintroduce it in the 1940s. The first known use of the term was by William Harvey and followed by Casper Friedrich Wolff in the early 1800s. Oscar Hertwig also used the term in his article, "Biological Problem of Today: Preformation or Epigenesis? The Basis of a Theory of Organic Development" (London: W. Heinemann, 1896). Genotype is the genetic code in DNA. It is the inheritable information passed on from the parental generation. Phenotype is the physical manifestation of the traits prescribed by the genotype.

[32]Jane Maienschein, "Epigenesis and Preformationism," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2005) [on-line]; accessed 15 June 2009; available from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ epigenesis/; Internet. The nature versus nature debate is not central for the purposes of this dissertation. However, the epigenetic principle has in the course of its history been synonymous with this debate.

This brings me to final perspective which will, at any rate, help to throw light on the over-all significance of the problem of identity and provide the best argument yet for our *not* settling on any methodology or any definition too early. For man's need for a psychosocial identity is anchored in nothing less than his sociogenetic evolution. It has been said (by Waddington) that authority-accepting is what characterizes man's sociogenetic evolution. I would submit that identity formation is inseparable from this, for only within a defined group identity can true authority exist . . . . To reinforce the illusion of being chosen, every tribe recognizes a creation of its own, a mythology and later a history: thus was loyalty to a particular ecology and morality secured . . . an all-inclusive human identity must be part of the anticipation of a universal technology.[33]

Erikson suggests that the survival of humanity has been dependent upon breaking up into "pseudospecies"—tribes, classes, and/or nationalities. He then reiterates his point that the future evolutionary state will be a unified human identity which technology will make possible via the breakdown of these tribes, classes, and nationalities.[34] Erikson's one humanity motif eerily echoes a familiar voice. The voice is that of the people of Babel who sought out to build a city and a tower and remain in one place rather than obey the Lord's commandment to fill the earth.[35] "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:4).

Instead of a God-given unity and identity, they seek a false, autonomous collectivism and a reputation of their own devising . . . . Babel stands as a monument to the perennial human desire to build our *own* kingdom apart from God. But God will have none of this false center for human existence, and so he scatters the builders of Babel. *Name* in Scripture stands for identity. With this city and tower, the people have sought a false identity, a reputation built on human autonomy (11:4). God's response is to judge their sin for what it is and to put a stop

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[33]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 41. Erikson only mentions Waddington in parentheses but does not note the source or publication of Waddington. Rather Erikson simply moves on to discuss the concept of epigenesis as it applies to his own psychosocial theory.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 53; See Gen 1:28; 11:4.

to their ambitious, idolatrous building program. But as we have seen again and again, judgment is accompanied by mercy . . . . God takes the initiative once more and turns his attention to one man, Abraham.[36]

Unlike Freud, Erikson accounts for the impact of society on the ego as a necessary part of life. This acknowledgement of society does not, however, negate Erikson's acceptance and agreement with Freudian assumptions of the necessary and desirable goal of autonomy. A society devoid of classes, tribes, and nations into one humanity acts as Erikson's ultimate ideal society where individuals are free from societal expectations and restrictions. This freedom creates an environment that allows them to develop into the full potential of his autonomous, healthy personality.

Tribes, classes and nationalities are a result, not of human-centered evolutionary compensation, rather the mercy of God upon all humanity realized through the confusion and dispersion of the people who sought their identity apart from their Creator. Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, makes this very argument to the Athenians who spent their lives telling and hearing something new.

> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth... gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being.' (Acts 17:24a-b, 26-28a)

The epigenetic principle assumes evolutionary principles to be true. Epigenesis describes the process by which adaptation occurs. Lamarckian evolutionists employed the concept of epigenesis to explain their version of evolution equally as much as that of strict Darwinists. The term has come to refer to the obscure framework along

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[36]Ibid., 53.

which a living thing develops.[37] This includes, of course, human beings. The entire

concept of development is built upon attempting to explain the why and how between

genotype or DNA encoded material and phenotype or the actual realization of traits. The

study of this "in between" cause or process from what a living thing is and what it ends

up being is what Conrad Waddington defined as the field of epigenetics.[38] Whether

developmental theorists believe changes occur as Darwin suggested, according to the

strongest survival traits of the parent generation, or as Lamarck suggested, according to

the traits attained through wants and needs acquired during the parental generation and

passed along to the next generation, epigenesis is an evolutionary concept.

Deterministic principles are necessary for the epigenetic principle to hold

together Erikson's eight-stage theory of psychosocial development. A common

characteristic of Erikson's principle statements is that nearly all of them are open-ended

or leave room for subjectivity. Erikson argues one such principle in saying that the

growth of man does not begin or end with identity.[39] As image bearers of God, however,

Hebrews 1:3 clarifies the exact imprint of God's nature as objective, Jesus Christ, to

whom, for whom, and in whom all human growth occurs and is sustained.[40] Erikson

further argues that identity itself is relative to each person so long as they move toward

what he calls a healthy personality. He makes this possible by arguing that the

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[37]Morris and Wu, "Genes, Genetics, and Epigenetics," 3.

[38]Conrad H. Waddington, "The Epigenotype," *Endeavour* 1(1942): 18-20.

[39]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 42.

[40]1 Cor 8:6.

experience within childhood "provides the moral basis of our identity."[41] Evolutionary

epigenesis simply cannot act as a principle acceptable within, compatible to, or

comparable with Christian discipleship in the church.

Epigenesis and the Identity Crisis

The fifth stage of Erikson's theory, identity versus role confusion, includes the

identity crisis. However, a type of crisis occurs at each of Erikson's eight stages. This

crisis can be best understood as "turning points" or what geneticists call critical points of

either ascendancy or defect.[42] Each stage consists of the process of coming to the crisis,

being in the crisis, and resolving the crisis. It may be that the crisis is resolved either in

ascendancy or defect, either of which greatly impact the next stage of development. The

social aspect of this process mostly has to do with the impact society or the environment

has upon the individual at each stage of the process of crisis. Erikson suggests that the

healthy personality will emerge out of what is preprogrammed in the human being. In

other words, the human being will, in a healthy environment naturally develop into a

healthy or good personality.

> Psychoanalysis has given us and understanding of the more idiosyncratic
> experiences, and especially the inner conflicts, which constitute the manner in
> which an individual becomes a distinct personality. But here, too, it is important to
> realize that in the sequence of his most personal experiences the healthy child, given
> a reasonable amount of proper guidance, can be trusted to obey inner laws of
> development, laws which create a succession of potentialities for significant
> interaction with those persons who tend and respond to him and those institutions
> which are ready for him.[43]

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[41]Ibid., 43.

[42]Ibid., 92.

[43]Ibid., 94.

Erikson's conclusions place a great deal deterministic weight and responsibility upon the parents and the society of individuals. These conclusions act contrary to the gospel where individual responsibility falls upon the depraved individual. The need for a Savior is removed in Erikson's theory. First, he suggests that human beings by nature will be good and healthy. Second, he suggests that anything that goes wrong or defective in an individual personality develops from the unhealthy, incapable family, institution, and/or society imposed upon him.[44]

The epigenetic principle itself developed as a scientific explanation for the mystery of growth and differentiation devoid of any acknowledgment of a Creator or the "word of his power" that sustains creation itself. Assuming the epigenetic principle is true, Erikson's only conclusion can be that there is a necessary process to development which includes proper rates and sequences to healthy growth. He leaves no room for the rebellious child who despite a righteous upbringing pursues a faithless and unholy path. Likewise, Erikson neglects those who despite the unhealthiest of home environments and the worst of circumstances, because of their faith in Jesus Christ are righteous, holy, and able to learn and live in righteousness and holiness.

Freudian Foundations

Erikson interacted with Freud on a personal level. Before meeting his Canadian wife, Joan, and moving to the United States, young Erikson was a frequent visitor to the Freud home.[45] He was analyzed and trained by Anna Freud, the daughter of

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[44]Interestingly enough, Erikson never, in turn, discusses the individual as part of the societal problem to other individuals. He only discusses identity and crises in terms from the position of the self. He does the same when transferring identity concepts to whole societies.

[45]Stevens, *Erik Erikson*, 2.

Sigmund Freud. Erikson became a certified psychoanalyst under Anna Freud's

instruction. Erikson spent seven years in the Freuds' psychoanalytic society. He became

'a spokesman for, an interpreter of, [Freud's] ideas and maybe . . . a lifesaver of them,

one who ensured their continuation and meaningful presence among so many of us."[46]

Erikson never received a college degree but taught at Harvard, Yale, and the

University of California-Berkley in the United States. His only official qualification was

his certification in psychoanalysis under Anna Freud. He was in the United States a very

short while when professors of Harvard grew impressed with his thoughts and insights in

the field of psychoanalysis and the growing field of psychology. Aside from

psychoanalysis, Erikson only formally studied art. He believed this was to his advantage

in the skill and application of psychoanalysis as it left him "equidistant from biology,

psychology, and sociology . . . a better position to achieve some kind of integrated

approach."[47]

The work of Sigmund Freud undoubtedly acted as the precursor to Erikson's

theory of psychosocial development and specifically, identity crisis. This portion of the

chapter will demonstrate Freudian foundations of Erikson's fifth stage. There are three

primary themes in all of Erikson's work. Erikson's "triple book-keeping" included (1)

psychological growth and development throughout all of life; (2) psychosocial identity;

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[46]Robert Coles, *Erik H. Erikson: The Growth of His Work* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1970), 20.

[47]Stevens, *Erik Erikson*, 117.

(3) the "study of individuals against the background of their time."[48] These three themes

can also be summarized as the somatic process (biological aspect), the ego process

psychological aspect or the sense of self), and the societal process (social science aspect).

> Erikson considers the somatic process by elaborating on Freud's theory of
> psychosexual development. He illustrates the significance of the societal process,
> through the medium of child rearing, [and how] it can shape the individual . . . He is
> then devoted to exploring the growth of the ego and evaluation of individual
> identity.[49]

Erikson's clinical approach was an integrated triad. He used these three common themes

as aspects of one process—the human life.[50] Of his three themes, the somatic process

and the exploration of the formation of the ego most relate to the work of Sigmund Freud.

Erikson's approach was to integrate and extend Freudian concepts to all of life.

His "way of looking at things" began with Freudian principles of psychoanalysis.

Epigenesis, as well as, psychoanalysis provided his hermeneutical lens. His central

purpose, then was not to provide "pat prescriptions or packaged formulae but what in his

own words he [further] describes as tools to think with."[51]

> He is not interested in establishing dogmatic laws. His goal is to make sense of the
> situation—to gain and convey insight into the complexity of factors underlying a
> patient's actions and symptoms. It is the whole pattern of identity which concerns
> him, but many of its component parts are inaccessible, provisional, meaningless or
> even misleading taken out of context. So he has put together by a series of what we
> might term a series of 'progressive approximations.'[52]

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[48]Richard Stevens, *Erik Erikson: Shaper of Identity* (New York: Macmillan, 2008), 14.

[49]Ibid., 20.

[50]Ibid., 16.

[51]Ibid., 2.

[52]Ibid., 20.

Erikson provided not just an extension of Freud's stage theory in his eight stage theory of

the life cycle. More importantly, he also provided a way of understanding the application

of Freud's concepts throughout life in any given culture. Erikson relied on

psychoanalysis and desired to extend it to his own theory of psychosocial development.

> One methodological precondition, then, for grasping identity would be a
> psychoanalysis sophisticated enough to include the environment; the other would be
> a social psychology which is psychoanalytically sophisticated; together they would
> obviously institute a new field which would have to create its own historical
> sophistication.[53]

Erikson's work is not only related to but dependent upon and assumes Freudian theory of

persons.

Erikson's psychosocial theory shares structural similarities with Freud's

psychosexual theory such as stages and overarching principles. Basic concepts of

Freud's psychosexual development are foundational to Erikson's psychosocial theory.

With his theory of psychosocial development, Erikson expanded Freudian ideology to all

of life.

> Following Freud, the expression of a general drive is shaped as a result of the
> interaction of a biologically programmed timetable of development with the way a
> child is handled by those who nurture him. Like Freud, [Erikson] claims that the
> body mode associated with each phase has its related psychological modality. In
> many respects, Erikson's account represents no more than an effective restatement
> of Freud's ideas on psychosexual development.[54]

Erikson's most significant addition to psychosexual development is the

epigenetic principle. Erikson adds and concentrates on the social component of

development to psychosexual development theory. Erikson thought of psychosexual

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[53] Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 24.

[54]Ibid., 20.

development as a continuation of the maturation process that started at conception.[55]

Somewhat different that Freud, Erikson did not believe this to be a unilateral process.

Rather he believed development, via the epigenetic principle and his subsequent eight-

stage theory of the life cycle, an opportunity of mutual regulation between the person and

society beginning with the mutual regulation between the child and parent.[56]

Conceptual Connections

Psychoanalysis is the fundamental conceptual framework for Erikson's

psychosocial development. His achievement was "to deepen and extend the spirit of

Freud's work."[57] While Freud's theory of development stopped at puberty, Erikson's is

an evaluation of the ego throughout life. Where Freud focused his work on id

psychology, Erikson focused his work on ego psychology while assuming all in Freud's

id psychology. Erikson, therefore, teases out what Freud states generally regarding the

ego.[58] Erikson's strength was to "bring psychoanalytic concepts alive."[59] Both Freud's

psychosexual development and Erikson's psychosocial development depend on Freud's

creation—psychoanalysis. Further, they both assigned the same value to and employed

the use of Freud's "significance of the unconscious" in dreams, fantasies, actions and

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[55]Ibid., 22, 93: "The presentation of stages in the development of the personality, we employ an epigenetic diagram analogous to the one employed in *Childhood and Society* for an analysis of Freud's psychosexual stags. It is, in fact, an implicit purpose of this presentation to bridge the theory of infantile sexuality and our knowledge of the child's physical and social growth." For Erikson's initial analysis of Freud's psychosexual stages see, Erik Erikson, *Childood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963).

[56]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 23.

[57]Stevens, *Erik Erikson*, 14.

[58]Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 11.

[59]Stevens, *Erik Erikson*, 3.

speech as well as Freud's "sequence of early experience" articulated in his theory of psychosexual development.[60]

Perhaps the most significant conceptual aspect of psychosexual development that contributes to Erikson's psychosocial development is Freud's emphasis on libidinal forces. Freud believed that libidinal forces acted as the basic motivator of man. Notably this falls in line with an evolutionary scientific framework where survival is paramount. Erikson employed libidinal forces as the crux of his psychosocial theory. "Libidinal forces become attached to various levels of life experience."[61] Erikson with Freud, defines these levels as (1) conscious experience (events in realm of cognitive awareness); (2) preconscious experience (events beyond immediate recognition, but within the realm of the conscious); (3) unconscious experience (events beyond awareness).

> Identity comprises the sum of the 'pressure of excessive wishes' originating in unexpanded, unreconstructed, and unconscious libidinal energy . . . . Erikson's five stages essentially are a reformulation and expansion of Freud's psychosexual stages.[62]

Erikson's emphasis on Freud's "libidinal energy" in psychosocial development mirrors Freud's emphasis on libidinal energy in psychosexual development. One of Erikson's goals was a psychoanalysis specific to psychosocial development where cultural and historical relativity are prioritized, not just Freud's emphasis on the physical.[63]

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[60]Ibid., 5.

[61]Henry W. Maier, *Three Theories of Child Development* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 23.

[62]Ibid., 29.

[63]Ibid., 14.

Identity Crisis and Freud's Psychosexual Development

"The theory of ego-identity is safely anchored in systematic clinical investigation and in psychoanalytic methodology."[64] Erikson specifically expands Freud's key issue of sexuality and the repression that social life demanded. With Freud's emphasis on libido in mind Erikson focuses on ego formation while investigating the ego qualities that emerge and seem necessary at each stage. Erikson was specifically looking at the biological basis of development in the social context.[65] Rapaport observes that Erikson's employment of the epigenetic principle and the impact of society on a person "complements Freud's theory of the third [psychosexual] stage [genital]."[66]

Given Erikson's desire to offer a way of looking at things rather than dogmatic laws of psychology, he hesitated to offer hard and fast definitions to any of his terms. In so doing, he never readily offered a clear definition of identity. He seemed more apt to offer an explanation of what identity was not rather than offer an actual definition in the positive. Instead he often used another's concept of identity as he believed the concept of human identity to be an issue of great complexity.[67] Erikson accepted William James definition of identity.

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[64]Erik Erikson, "Late Adolescence (1959)," in *A Way of Looking at Things: Selected Papers From 1930 to 1980*, ed, Stephen Schlein (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 632.

[65]Stevens, *Erik Erikson*, 4.

[66]Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 11.

[67]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 15. In discussing the popular and scientific use of the terms identity and identity crisis, Erikson states, "Identity and identity crisis have in popular and scientific usage become terms which alternately circumscribe something so large and so seemingly self-evident that to demand a definition would almost seem petty, while at other times they designate something made so narrow for purposes of measurement that the over-all meaning is lost, and it could just as well be called something else" (ibid.).

A man's [identity] is discernable in the mental or moral attitude, in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says: 'This is the real me!'[58]

Erikson echoed this definition, "Ego identity can be said to be established when the individual comes to be and feel most himself."[69] Erikson maintained that identity necessarily has the characteristics of sameness and continuity within the individual.[70] Identity formation emerges as an evolution of sorts throughout childhood. This evolution is a gradual integration of several factors, not the least of which is "idiosyncratic libidinal needs."[71]

Erikson clarifies that what he means by crisis is not a tragedy or trigger event or catastrophe in one's life, rather a turning point that markedly shapes the person's ego or personality.[72] Erikson admits his idea of identity crisis is derived from Freud's theory of psychosexual development. "My life cycle was originally based on Freud's early stages of life and in his far reaching origin of neurotic disturbance."[73] The particular strength sought in the identity versus identity diffusion stage is fidelity. Fidelity is notably defined by Erikson as the "opportunity to fulfill personal potentialities." These potentialities include erotic vitality or its necessary sublimination in a person's social context. For optimal realization of fidelity the individual must be able to be true to

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[68]Henry James, ed., *The Letters of William James* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), 199.

[69]Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 34.

[70]Ibid., 256.

[71]Ibid., 163.

[72]Erik Erikson, "The Human Life Cycle (1968)," in *A Way of Looking at Things: Selected Papers from 1930 to 1980*, ed. Stephen Schlein (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), 598.

[73]Ibid., 595.

himself and to significant others despite inevitable contradictions of value systems each of them may hold."[74] Fidelity, then, is the cornerstone of identity. Identity is not only dependent upon optimal realization of fidelity. "Lasting ego identity cannot begin to exist without the trust of the first oral stage."[75] Erikson fundamentally accepts the Freudian definition of man as a psychosexual, energy-laden organism.[76] Erikson's notion of identity crisis clearly originates from and remains dependent upon Freud's theory of psychosexual development.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to expose, debunk and reinterpret Erik Erikson's understanding of identity and his related notion of identity crisis. Erik Erikson's identity crisis derived from Sigmund Freud's theory of psychosexual development. His link to Freud is perhaps most significant because Christians more quickly dismiss Freudian ideology than Eriksonian. His theory is dependent upon the epigenetic principle as an mechanistic and naturalistic explanation for human growth. The result of which is a complete lack of acknowledgment of his own Creator. Erikson dismissed Christianity as one of many ideologies created and developed by man because it benefited him in his particular class, tribe, and/or nation for survival.

The first epistemological priority of the comprehensive-internal framework for the evaluation of the identity crisis stage of Erikson's developmental theory was to offer a biblical theological alternative to Estep's typology of integration. The second

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[74]Ibid., 605-06.

[75]Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 96.

[76]Maier, *Three Theories of Child Development*, 18.

epistemological priority was to expose, debunk, and reinterpret Erikson's developmental theory, specifically his conclusions regarding identity and identity crisis in light of the biblical theological alternative. The first two epistemological priorities show that Erikson's conceptions of identity, on both the descriptive and prescriptive levels of observation, are rooted in human falleness, not in Jesus Christ. This dissertation now turns to the third epistemological priority in the comprehensive-internal framework— gleaning what can be learned from this defective theory of human identity and the typological attempts toward the integration of Erikson's identity crisis into the discipleship of the church.

CHAPTER 5

EMPLOYING THE THIRD EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRIORITY: TOWARD DISCERNING THE APTNESS OF ERIKSON'S IDENTITY CRISIS IN THE CONTEXT OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

The thesis of this dissertation is that a biblical framework alternative to the typical models of the relationships between theology and social-scientific research is necessary for discerning the appropriateness of using Erik Erikson's developmental theory, in whole or in part, in the context of Christian discipleship. This chapter includes the third and final piece of the comprehensive-internal framework. The third epistemological priority of the comprehensive-internal framework is to appropriate Erikson's "way of looking at things" for Christian discipleship in the church.[1] This chapter does not stand alone, rather each epistemological priority is an essential part of the comprehensive-internal framework toward the thesis of this dissertation.

The epochal events of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration outline the biblical alternative to Estep's typology of integration offered in the third chapter of this dissertation. The biblical theological alternative is not a sixth option for understanding the intersection of psychology and theology. Rather, the biblical theological alternative reflects the altogether different scope that the Word of God gives to the world.

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[1] Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 403.

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According to chapter four of this dissertation and the second epistemological priority of the comprehensive-internal framework—exposing, debunking and reinterpreting, Erikson's psychosocial development theory depends upon and assumes to be true evolutionary as well as Freudian principles. The purpose of this chapter is to appropriate, in whole or in part, Erikson's notion of identity and identity crisis for Christian discipleship in view of how Scripture informs the first, second and third epistemological priorities.

Powlison uses the term priority to describe the importance of his three points of epistemological inquiry. According to the comprehensive-internal framework learning from defective models such as Erikson's is a third-order or tertiary priority. Of greater importance is offering biblical truth, then exposing and reinterpreting the defective model. Nonetheless, the third epistemological priority remains essential to the comprehensive-internal framework.

> Because we are tainted by sin, God often uses perceptive error to reprove his people and to make us get to work to refine our understanding of his truth. God's redemptive revelation is constitutive, but counterbiblical theories may be provocative. And extrabiblical knowledge—of ourselves and our world—is the grist with which biblical truth works continually to extend the range and depth of understanding. We learn, critique, reinterpret, convert, apply. We traffic in the extrabiblical constructively when we know what we ought to know that reorients and controls are view.[2]

In the comprehensive-internal framework, every theory or model whether truthful or faulty can be used to inform and hone the discipleship process. The Word of God

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[2]David Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads: The Care of Souls and the Modern Psychotherapies," in *Care for the Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 35.

informs and interprets these extrabiblical sources.[3] The necessary grand framework for doing so is the metanarrative of Scripture offered in the biblical theological alternative.

Introduction

Erikson's assertions regarding identity and the crisis that occur in his fifth stage of psychosocial development should not be consulted for their inherent value for informing any person inside or outside of Christ regarding their questions of identity. As noted in chapter 1 of this dissertation, the identity crisis of the fifth stage is central to Erikson's eight-stage theory. Therefore, any attempt to integrate Erikson's theory, in whole or in part, with theology for the purpose of discipleship falls short of how the Word of God informs and interprets Erikson's theory. However, that does not mean that Erikson's ideas cannot be used to show how Erikson himself, as a person made in the image of God, testifies to Jesus Christ. "This is God's world, so everything, even if it intends to efface God, bears witness to God—if it is viewed through biblical eyeglasses."[4] Specifically pertinent to this dissertation is how Scripture through the epochal events of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration redefine Erikson's ideas such that they may be appropriated though not necessarily used for Christian discipleship in the church.

In his quest for identity, Erikson bears witness to his Creator even though Erikson never suggests that any answers to human identity questions are found in Christ. Erikson never acknowledged his Creator for the purposes of understanding human

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[3]Ibid., 34.

[4]Ibid., 35.

identity. In doing so, he rejects the order in creation.[5] Though he appears to have

rejected his Creator, Erikson still testifies to his own creation in the image of his Creator

by seeking an order-bearing framework. Erikson consults other manmade order-bearing

frameworks such as the epigenetic principle and Freud's ego stages and superimposed

them into his own framework for explaining among other things, human identity.[6] Even

so, his desire to find order is an acknowledgment in itself of the need for a Creator and

the order He creates and sustains. Without the fear of the Lord, Erikson had no reference

for the beginning of knowledge. This does not prohibit him from making knowledge

claims, it simply exposes that the nature of his claims can only be grounded in the way

things seem, not in the way they actually are. Erikson sought to redefine self and

redefine the world around him. This eventually allowed him to come up with a

framework coherent enough for people to understand and accept his attempt to redefine

God.[7]

There are three primary ways in which Erikson's notion of identity and identity

crisis will be appropriated for the context of Christian discipleship in this chapter. This

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[5]Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991), 173: "Sin involved a rejection of the order of creation and a refusal to accept revelation as the basis of true knowledge."

[6]Erikson necessarily builds order into his own theory. For instance, in addition to Freudian and Darwistic principles, his theory remains dependent on stages of which are dependent upon polar opposites. These opposites have the connotation of being favorable and unfavorable. Therefore, in addition to order, Erikson also must assign value within these frameworks. In doing so, he again testifies to the Creator.

[7]Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Mystique* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 9. This same technique used by feminists follows the common elements of liberation theology and also the other general way in which people who reject their Creator and His created order must seek other order bearing frameworks and ultimately, an alternative narrative to the gospel. Erikson dismisses God as an evolutionary mechanism people groups employ for survival. According to Erikson, every people group has chosen a "god" not because human beings are made in his image, but because a "god" provided the community of people with a unique sense of identity and purpose and, therefore, unity for survival. According to Erikson, this "god," was simply an ideology that was helpful, while in reality there is no God. See Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1958), 14-15.

does not negate the Christian from perusing Erikson's theory. Contrarily, Erikson's theory is freely and fully investigable by the Christian operating in the comprehensive-internal framework, specifically armed with the biblical theological alternative to the typological relationships of theology and social science.

As such, one of the key pursuits in this chapter is to uncover and understand what makes Erikson's theory so provocative. The popular appeal of his theory of psychosocial development and the specific provocation of identity signals a common human need, experience, and inquiry. Not only does Erikson's popularity indicate a common human need, but also the common human response of creating a narrative for explaining their questions if they do not hear and believe the gospel. The important task for the Christian educator or discipler rests in knowing the truth so well that he is able to peruse the extrabiblical and understand its relationship to the Word of God.[8] The exalted Christ and the "peculiar wisdom" of the gospel that consumes Erikson's ideas regarding identity and identity crisis will be used to discern the appropriateness of Erikson's ideas in the context of Christian discipleship.

Second, Erikson demonstrates the "pattern of human fallenness" in a logical system of thought.[9] This system of thought occurs when anyone or any movement attempts to understand or define themselves apart from God. It is important to note that this tertiary priority of the comprehensive-internal framework—the appropriation of Erikson's theory in whole or in part—is not performed on the basis of dialoguing with Erikson on Erikson's terms. Rather, the fruit of the biblical theological alternative is to

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[8]Powlison, "Questions at the Crossroads," 36.

[9]Timothy P. Jones, Interview by author, 11 September 2009. Louisville, KY.

use Scripture, specifically a biblical theological outline of the epochal events of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration to peruse the extrabiblical that is Erikson. The focus is not a secular/sacred split rather, on how the gospel envelopes and explains the extrabiblical.

> The dialogue might be a tertiary contribution, but our primary call to dialogue with the Bible and with lives as they are lived. Let us work explicitly from our own foundation.[10]

Thus, appropriation of Erikson for the discipleship of the church is not to teach and train passive and otherwise ignorant, limited victims of culture who receive information. The goal of discipleship is to present former slaves to sin, "mature in Christ" (Col 1:28). Those who teach and preach act as ambassadors for Christ as God is making his appeal through them (2 Cor 5:20). One of the main responsibilities in appropriating Erikson's ideals exists in the cosmological and historical scope of Christ's redemption of the church. If the church's "[discipleship] model arises from Scripture, it will cohere with long formulated orthodoxy and orthopraxy," not contrary to it in order to take into account "new" knowledge.

Third, Erikson's ideals can be used to make an apologetic appeal to a truth seeking individual. Because he was not a believer, Erikson's perspective was limited to human reason. As such, his thoughts regarding human identity are easily traced with human reason. This does not make his conclusions or the means by which he comes to them truthful. However, his theory regarding identity and notion of identity crisis can be used as an apologetic teaching point to direct people to Christ similar to the way Paul

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[10]Ibid., 40. See also, J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923, 6-7, 78-79: "The liberal attempt at reconciling Christianity with modern science has really relinquished everything distinctive of Christianity."

uses Athenian perspectives to show Athenians the vanity in their epistemological pursuits and the impotence of their subsequent conclusions (Acts 17:16-34).[11] Where apologetic appeals to reason have their inherit limits, the final appropriation of Erikson's theory and all of its knowledge claims are derelict for the subsequent proclamation of the gospel into the hearts and lives of people through the Holy Spirit.

The Appeal of Identity Crisis

Erikson realized that what he tapped into with his notion of identity crisis was a common human element or experience. Identity crisis provided a common terminology for a shared human experience.[12] This shared human experience was the process of understanding personal belonging in whatever society in which one lives. He was able to articulate an experience or question common to man and did so at a crucial time in Western society, specifically American society. As Erikson intended and supported by way of *Ghandi's Truth* and his explanation of the "wider identity," the phrase identity crisis was quickly applied not just to individuals but to the process that entire societies go through whether they be tribes, people groups, or nations.[13]

The popularity of Erikson's identity crisis indicates that there indeed is a common human need, experience, or inquiry regarding identity. One particular appeal of Erikson is that people identify with the experiences surrounding idenity as Erikson defines them. Nearly everyone can relate to two primary aspects of Erikson's identity

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[11]Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Acadecmic, 2008), 142-43.

[12]Erik Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 18.

[13]Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 433.

process: (1) "the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and a typology significant to them," (2) "he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to the types that have become relevant to him."[14] What Erikson is helping define is the concept of self-image that permeates psychological theory and also the sinful disposition of searching for identity in the face and fear of man rather than God. Scripture prioritizes and describes man's relationship to God, to others, and to nature, specifically through the Christocentric epochal events of creation, fall, redemption and restoration.[15] Indeed man's relationship to himself is not naturally a healthy one due to his deprived state. According to the metanarrative of Scripture, it is the right understanding of who one is in relation to God, others, and creation, all Christocentric, that affords him a right relationship with "himself."

> At the time of the fall there occurred a twofold perversion of the self-image . . . . We can observe this same twofold perversion of man's self-image after the Falll. Man's self-image is sometimes inordinately high (in the form of sinful pride) or excessively low (in the feelings of shame or worthlessness).[16]

Though human beings share this common need to know who they are and why they are on the earth, Erikson taps into a perversion of this inquiry. One perversion is in recognizing that society impacts an individual, but focusing still on the autonomy of the

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[14]Ibid., 23.

[15]Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 102: "We should not think of man's relationship to himself as a fourth relationship alongside the other three. It is, rather, a relationship that underlies all the others, and makes possible a person's proper performance in his or her relationships toward God, others, and nature."

[16]Ibid., 104.

individual within that society.[17] Erikson articulates a common human experience within a Freudian framework where autonomy is still paramount and the highest goal remains the self—albeit the "healthy personality." Without Jesus Christ, this describes the natural human tendency toward grasping for identity in the fear of man.

> I am the center of *my* own universe. I am the creator and sustainer of my own private reality; everything revolves around my happiness, my well-being, my personal satisfaction. Even Christians reduce Jesus and the Christian faith to a means of securing our own happiness, instead of rightly recognizing and living our lives in joyful obedience to the One who made us in *his* image and sustains us for *his* purposes in the world.[18]

Part of Erikson's appeal to Christian proponents of vital-external or integrationist frameworks may simply be that his ideas initially seem harmless. Afterall, the goals of his eight stages are moralistic—hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, wisdom. Yet, these goals are wrapped in Freud's autonomy. The Christian must recognize and acknowledge the lack of neutrality in Erikson's goals because of the Freudian basis from which they arise. Erikson defines fidelity, the goal of the stage of identity versus identity diffusion, this way:

> Fidelity is the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems. It is the cornerstone of identity and receives inspiration from confirming ideologies and "ways of life."[19]

From the vital-external perspective, language such as "cornerstone" and "ways of life" are winsome because the argument is that Erikson is showing evidence of general revelation. The Christian integrationist is tempted to simply insert what they know to be

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[17]Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Mistake* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005), 20.

[18]Robert E. Webber, *Who Gets to Narrate the World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 70.

[19]Erik Erikson, "The Human Life Cycle," in *A Way of Looking at Things: Selected Papers from 1930 to 1980* (New York, W. W. Norton, 1987), 606.

the true cornerstone and the way and the life, who is Jesus Christ according to Ephesians 2:20 and John 14:6, into Erikson's notion of fidelity and employ his surrounding ideals.[20] This is part of the provocation of Erikson upon even the Christian educator, but it is not a biblical appropriation of Erikson's identity and identity crisis from the comprehensive-internal framework. Specifically, the appropriation of Erikson's identity must first run through the comprehensive-internal biblical theological alternative offered as the first epistemological priority in this dissertation.

While finding the appeal to Erikson's ideas regarding identity is possible, his lack of appeal to, especially to the church and to Christian educators should be quite striking as well. One of the greatest points of derision between Erickson's theory of psychosocial development and Scripture in regard to identity is that Erikson's ideas do not indicate any difference between male and female when it comes to human identity. The differences between man and woman are not delineated in Erikson's theory. However, he does attribute one chapter in *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* to women and identity.[21] Erikson acknowledges that psychoanalytic theory basically promotes the idea that woman is basically man without certain physical, psychological, and sociological

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[20]Estep's paradigmatic perspective of integrastionist typology, which relates most closely with the Christ of Culture or cultural Christianity category within Neibuhr's framework describes this type of integration. The primary danger in this category remains the priority given to understanding Christ as relevant. See Roger Lundin, "Postmodern Gnostics," in *The Culture of Interpretation: Christian Faith and the Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). Lundin describes a type of interpretation of the culture similar to Niebuhr's Christ of Culture category while building his argument against the dangers and realities of Gnosticism. "A completely relevant Christ is a useless Christ, a needless verbal construct we would do well to discard once it no longer serves our purposes."

[21]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 261-94.

traits.[22] He does not readily offer an alternative to this basic premise except to suggest the consideration of observing woman from the standpoint of what she does have rather than what she lacks. Erikson's discussion on the subject also lacks real coherency except that his claims remain in the narrative framework provided by Darwinian evolution and Freudian psychoanalysis where survival and autonomous libidinal driven ego are paramount respectively. Thus, the necessity of procreation to satisfy both the need for survival and satisfaction of libidinal energy drives Erikson's thoughts on the uniqueness of female identity.

Scripture narrates the focus of the war of the cosmos as not between man and woman, rather between Christ and Satan. The cosmic battle already won in Christ, though not yet seen, goes on between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. The differences between man and woman mirror the narrative of Scripture defined in the gospel—Christ's redemption of his bride the church—a narrative which begins and ends with Christ in creation and the eschaton. This satisfies Erikson's logical conclusion that "what it is to be 'fully human' and who has a right to grant it to whom indicates that a discussion of the male and female elements in the potentialities of human nature must include rather fundamental issues."[23] Men and women, both as image bearers of God, are in opposite kingdoms only according to their relation to Christ, not according to each

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[22]Ibid., 266: "I think it was fair to say that the psychoanalytic view of womanhood has been strongly influenced by the fact that the first and basic observations were made by clinicians whose task it was to understand suffering and to offer a remedy, and that by necessity they had to understand the female psyche with male means of empathy and to offer what the ethos of enlightenment dictated, namely, the acceptance of reality. It is in line with this historical position that they saw, in the reconstructed lives of little girls, primarily and attempt to observe what could be seen and grasped (namely, what was there in boys and hardly there in girls) and to base on this observation infantile sexual theories of vast consequence."

[23]Ibid., 263.

other. Even when it opposite kingdoms because of their belief or unbelief in Christ, men and women "do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12). The qualification for their entrance into the Kingdom of Christ lies in the gift of faith and the blood of Christ not in their maleness or femaleness.

Because his own theory was mostly an extension of Freud's ideas to all of life, Erikson's theory remained dependent upon Freud's ideas of the unconscious and conscious motivations of man, largely libidinal energy. Erikson later agreed that other significant factors of motivation exist according to psychologists such as Adler and Jung. "Jung and Adler both saw power as the driving motive."[24] The unbeliever still under the law and a slave to sin is thus enslaved to all sorts of motives as is the believer who acts according to the flesh instead of according to his new nature in the Spirit. The unbeliever lives his life limited in choice as "[Satan] holds them as prisoners, so they invariably do his will even as they trumpet their own freedom."[25]

> Since man, and especially suffering or conflicted man, always demands of any explanatory system a total answer, social scientists are apt to oblige and to totalize their methods . . . . But here the main point is that we are able to know and formulate such a small excerpt of our whole experience that it seems wrong to

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[24]Richard I. Evans, *Dialogue with Erik Erikson* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 85.

[25]Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 536.

surrender our whole responsibility on earth (both metaphysical and very physical indeed) to any one system of knowledge.[26]

Erikson recognized some of the limits of his own theory, even being hesitant to offer definitions for identity and for identity crisis.[27] This lack of objectivity, makes Erikson's theory malleable to the culture and to each person who seeks to apply not just his theory, but his ideology. What the Christian educator gleans from the popularity of Erikson's ideas is that human beings, no matter the society, share the common need and practice of taking on an identity whether or not they prioritize autonomy or community. This is an important factor in discipleship because the popularity of Erikson's ideas, indeed Christian educators own desire to integrate Erikson's ideas with theology, signify that this is a common human need and a point of evangelism and discipleship for the church.[28]

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[26]Evans, *Dialogue with Erikson*, 88-89. Evans question to Erikson resulting in the quoted response was as to the pendulum swing within psychology's motivation theory. Evans suggests in the question that even with motivation theories in which man realizes he is subject to biological and physiological limitations makes theorists swing the pendulum of "entrapment" to some other more freeing notion of motivation. Erikson, who is noted for his prioritization of subjectivity, admits here that he will not surrender himself "to any one system of knowledge," even within the social sciences. In doing so, he admits not freedom, but rather testifies to his own lack of freedom.

[27]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 9: "I have asked myself more than once in rereading what I have written on identity, and I hasten to declare that I will not offer a definitive explanation of it in this book. The more one writes about this subject, the more the word becomes a term for something as unfathomable as it is all-pervasive. One can only explore it by establishing its indispensability in various context.

[28]The human heart is not coaxed into repentance with bridges between the bible and psychology. Man seeks identity in his idols. It might easier be said that man is tempted to forsake his identity, indeed his own inheritance for his idols. It is the kindness of the Lord that leads him to repentance (Rom 2:4). The kindness of the Lord can and should be portrayed by the discipling ministry of the church.

**Erikson's Attempt to Redefine the Self, the
World, and God through Identity Crisis**

Erikson's understanding of the church is primarily from a Gnostic

perspective.[29] He described Christians as those with separate vertical and horizontal

perspectives—a double citizenship of sorts on earth and in heaven. This dual citizenship

meant a "split identity" according to Erikson. This same idea is what Niebuhr describes

as Christ and culture in paradox and expounded upon in numerous Christian works.

> Reason and science in the modern world, which originally developed among
> Christians, eventually became the enemy of God's narrative by separating the
> secular from the sacred and thereby opening the possibility for new gods to narrate
> the world... This split occurred because the understanding of the incarnation was
> reduced from God who became the created order to God who stepped into the
> creation.[30]

A sacred/secular split only occurs, however, if the gospel is misunderstood and

misapplied. The incarnation of Christ challenges and consumes the utilitarian nature of a

Gnostic worldview at every point, but specifically in the role and signficance of

creation.[31] The sacred/secular split is dependent upon an emphasis on personal or

individual salvation over and above what God is doing through Christ in the cosmos. In

short, when the church disciples believers according to mental, physical, social, spiritual,

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[29]Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 180-81: "[Jesus], in whose blood the early Gnostic identity had flourished, was gradually sacrificed to dogma; and thus that rare sublimation, that holiday of transcendence, which alone had been able to dissolve the forces of the horizontal, was forfeited. Philosophically and doctrinally, the main problem became the redefinition of the sacrifice so that its magic would continue to bind together, in a widening orbit, not only the faith of the weak and the simple, but also the will of the strong, the initiative of the ambitious, and the reason of the thinking." Erikson's unbelieving heart is portrayed very clearly here, mocking Christ's blood as "magic." Interestingly, he is only able to see Christians as those seeking to live separate from the rest of society.

[30]Webber, *Who Gets to Narrate the World?*, 74.

[31]Lundin, "Postmodern Gnostics," 16. "The doctrine of the incarnation challenges the amoral and utilitarian orientation of the modern gnostic self. It affirms that nature and the body are significant, not because they are the useful tools of imaginative, willful human activity, but because God has taken on human form and dwelt among us."

and psychological categories, a shift occurs where human needs and suffering become the

paramount concern. Salvation is personal of course, but it is also communal and

relational. Proper understanding of individual identity in Christ, however, is dependent

upon the cosmic, Christocentric scope of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.

> The historic understanding of the incarnation as the assumption of the entire created order has been replaced by a view that in the incarnation God stepped into history to save souls. The focus is no longer on the cosmic work of God in history but on personal salvation. The language often used to describe salvation through Christ expresses this shift. We speak of God 'saving souls.' We focus then not so much on God who redeems the world but on Christ who saves me . . . . Obviously it is true that God has saved me. What I decry here is the loss of the cosmic vision, the idea that God's work of redemption narrates the entire world... The assumption that the true me is a soul that lives inside of and is redeemed from the body to soar into some kind of ethereal realm is not Christian, it is Gnostic. The current misunderstanding of the incarnation logically results in a split between the sacred and the secular because if Christ only redeems souls, the stuff of this world is unredeemable . . . . Creation separated from redemption will always result in the secularization of life.[32]

While Erikson's primary focus is redefining self, the ability to do so becomes

immediately dependent upon the environment around the individual. Erikson is unlike

Freud in that he recognizes the reality of social factors upon the individual and deems

them a necessary aspect of his life stages. In order to speak of the environment he must

define not just the identity of self, but define the ideal environment in which an identity

for a healthy personality is ideally shaped.[33] Erikson's relationship of the role of society

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[32]Ibid., 76-77.

[33]There is a sense in which Erikson's ideas regarding the relationship of a person to his environment is dependent upon the opposite side of the same coin of Gnosticism. Where in reference to Christianity, the knowledge that divides the sacred from the secular is the person's knowledge of God, Erikson's greater knowledge of self in progressive stages purposely makes the individual able to transcend his environment. Erikson was quick to recognize a Gnostic understanding of Christianity, in part because he was not able to understand true Christianity due to unbelief, and also because it worked cohesively with his own best understanding of the world around him. The desire for autonomy is really a desire to be one, without Christ. Human beings will, of their own accord, desire and pursue this type of peace individually or corporately and either way autonomously.

in the development of man according to the epigenetic principle logically concludes that the environment can be manipulated such that it becomes a factory for healthy personalities. This is a Locke-ian concept. "The manipulation of the environment would eliminate most problems and produce good humans and a peaceful, utopian society."[34]

Another logical conclusion of this relationship is that society plays a sovereign role in the life of the individual. If a person grows up in an environment that allows him to explore and become his best self, then he will have every opportunity for a healthy personality. If the person grows up in a restricted environment, his potential will always be thwarted or postponed. A certain amount of determinism and lack of accountability pervades this theory as a person is always subject to his environment. This is not true for the believer who overcomes his circumstances in Christ, even sin and death. Redemption is best understood as a "particular kind of deliverance" not just from current personal circumstances or even personal history, but a cosmic salvific reality.[35]

Identity Crisis as an Apologetic Teaching Point

Surprisingly, Erikson's ideal society was not pluralistic. Erikson describes an ideal society as one headed toward a unification brought about by technology.[36] In this society, the acceptance of multiple gods is not the means of societal unity, rather the

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[34]Webber, *Who Gets to Narrate the World?* 80.

[35]Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 11: "The state of sin out of which man is to be redeemed is likened to slavery, a captivity which man cannot himself break, so that redemption represents the intervention of an outside Person who pays the prices which man cannot pay (John 8:34, Rom 7:14) . . . . It is a basic tenet of biblical theology that man is completely unable to grapple with the position created by the fact of his sin" (ibid., 61).

[36]Erik Erikson, "Remarks on the Wider Identity," in *A Way of Looking at Things: Selected Papers from 1930 to 1950* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 498. However, a pluralistic society is a necessary precursor to Erikson's ideal society.

unity occurs in the complete elimination of a need for any god. Erikson echoes a belief that human beings themselves under their own power are capable in and of themselves to accomplish everything needed for survival.[37] Ironically, autonomy appears and appeals as strength except in times of crisis, one of the essential themes in Erikson's psychosocial theory of development.

The Crisis

The notion of identity crisis, a term originally created to describe the experience of World War II veterans returning home, provides an explanation of identity that is only usable when a person is going through no real life crisis at all.[38] Erikson's identity crisis grants no relief to a person navigating the difficulties of life, rather his theory is a lens by which people either look back on their own lives in agreement or look into the lives of others from a distance. Psychoanalysis is not the goal of Christian discipleship.

> The gods of paganism were to be feared and placated, not loved and served. In times of great crisis, when the physical world is harsh and cruel, the inner person cries out for something more than religious mechanisms designed to please an arbitrary god. Paganism simply had nothing to offer those whose personal lives, families and entire social network had been devastated by the travesties of the historical moment.[39]

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[37]Erikson does not introduce this concept to the world, rather echoes one that has been in existence since the Tower of Babel. Just as the metanarrative of Scripture includes the typology of Christ in Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, and David, Scripture also indicates another typology—the person and voice of God's enemy. This is antichrist typology seen in the serpent, Pharaoh, Haman, and Nebuchadnezzar.

[38]Erikson's theory lacks an explanation for endless real-life scenarios. Erikson's theory is unable to provide and explanation to the parent regarding the identity, value and worth of their teen recently disabled or possibly disabled from birth. The theory lacks an explanation for the life of an adult who lived rebelliously in "adolescent" years, but came to Christ as an adult. Scripture is not silent to any life scenario.

[39]Webber, *Who Gets to Narrate the World?*, 59.

[Pagans] had no narrative that would bring peace in the midst of crisis. They had no way to address the despair, hopelessness and meaninglessness of life felt by so many in the face of disaster. The Christians, on the other hand, offered a message of meaning and hope. In brief, Christian character narrated the world differently.[40]

Erikson consistently defines identity crisis to mean a "turning point" or a "crucial moment, when development must move one way or another."[41] He declares as good the change in the definition of the term "crisis" to take on a less serious connotation. Erikson is careful to state that what he means by crisis is not "impending catastrophe." With this he dulls the edges of the raw human desire of his student to know and be known. Erikson, too, is a discipler. He is the teacher of another kind of story. He saw his own contribution to the field of psychosocial research as a concerted effort to provide ethical support for the "stage of psychosocial evolution" in which he lived.[42]

Belief

The resolution of identity crisis according to Erikson results in fidelity. According to Erikson, fidelity is "the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged." What is left undefined is the object of that fidelity. The object of Erikson's fidelity might be a person or group or ideology. Erikson seems to have a view of faith that has no content. The Christian integrationist might see this as an integration point for his faith to supply what Erikson lacks, however, Erikson's theory would collapse with Jesus Christ at its center. Erikson's view of fidelity does not work with Jesus Christ as the content of faith. Most likely, it seems Erikson advocates fidelity to self. The logical conclusion of his

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[40]Ibid., 62.

[41]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 16.

[42]Ibid., 235.

theory is that the commitments a person makes during adolescence establishes his identity.

> Fidelity is the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems. It is the cornerstone of identity and receives inspiration from confirming ideologies and "ways of life."[43]

Accordingly, identity strength depends upon a person's ability to persevere with the person or ideology of his choice made in adolescence. Because he believes religion is manmade ideology for individual and community survival, Erikson puts Christianity into the same category. It follows then that even if the Christian educator were to use Erikson's theory for the purposes of youth ministry from a vital-external perspective, he would have to agree with Erikson that a person who comes to faith in Christ during "adolescent" years simply commits his life to one ideology out of many competing ideologies. The comprehensive-internal perspective, on the other hand, advocates the discipleship of young believers such that they come to understand how Jesus Christ confronts the wisdom of the world and ushers in a reality so contrary to what the eye can see that the world is consumed.

Erikson argues that "the evidence in young lives of the search for something and somebody to be true to can be seen in a variety of pursuits more or less sanctioned by society."[44] He capitalizes on something true not only to young lives, but a common lifelong human pursuit, allegiance, and mode of worship. What Erikson identifies as the adolescent human quest for identity actually portrays not just the natural human inquiries

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[43]Erik Erikson, "The Human Life Cycle," in *A Way of Looking at Things: Selected Papers from 1930 to 1980* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 606.

[44]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 235.

regarding identity but also the human heart's natural inclination to worship. Because of the Freudian lens through which he saw life, Erikson relegated to an adolescent stage the manifestation of the human heart's growing desire and strengthening need to worship as one comes to an age of accountability.

Erikson offers a summary to his eight-stage theory and identity crisis specifically in *Young Man Luther*. According to Erikson, the identity crisis contains the attributes of any psychosocial crisis.

> At a given age, a human being, by dint of his physical, intellectual, and emotional growth, becomes ready and eager to face a new life task, that is, a set of choices and tests which are in some traditional way prescribed and prepared for him by his society's structure. A new life task presents a *crisis* whose outcome can be a successful graduation, or alternatively, and impairment of the life cycle which will aggravated future crises. Each crisis prepares the next. As one step leads to another; and each crisis also lays one more cornerstone for the adult personality. [45]

The cornerstone of human identity is Jesus Christ whether he is accepted as such or rejected and a "rock of offense" (1 Pet 2:8). Christian educators must be careful to realize the subtle redefinition that takes place in Erikson's theory. His theory is dependent upon the resolution of a crisis to act as the cornerstone of adult personality. Not only is Jesus Christ the cornerstone of adult identity, the crisis of belief regarding Jesus Christ as the cornerstone acts less like a turning point and more like an impending catastrophe.

> Abraham is asked to give up all the symbols of security and autonomy with which the builders of Babel sought to shore up their own identity. But wonderfully, Abraham *does* give them up, for the sake of obeying God. To follow where God

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[45]Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 254.

will lead, he sets out with his wife (Sarah), his nephew Lot, and their extended family.[46]

This belief, though it is a turning point in a person's life at which both justification and sanctification become a positional reality, is also an ongoing active faith in which the person goes from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18).

Community

The final essential element to Erikson's theory, community, can be appropriated for apologetic means for Christian discipleship in the church. Again, this appropriation is not performed separate from the first and second priorities, rather in line with them. There are two steps necessary for appropriation. First, it is necessary to gather information and fully understand, in this instance, community as Erikson intended community (or society). Second, it is necessary to use the unified yet outlined metanarrative of Scripture to approach Erikson's theory with a clear understanding of what community, people, or society is according to the way God sees it. Again, the metanarrative is not the only theological discipline necessary for understanding all that God reveals through Scripture about community or identity or even a man-made notion like identity crisis. Rather biblical theology provides the necessary framework for understanding and explaining what God has graciously revealed of himself, the world, and humanity.

Though community is an essential necessary aspect of development, according to Erikson, his Freudian lens limits the purpose of that community to providing the

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[46]Craig G. Bartholowmew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapdis: Baker Academic, 2004), 53.

timeline or structure for the eight psychosocial stages of individuals.[47] The sinful nature

of the human being is to use community for selfish purposes. Essentially, Erikson's

worldview or "world image" is that the world is eventually headed to one identity for

which technology will provide the evolutionary means. For Erikson, individual and

corporate survival remains the most important goal of humanity.

> The utopia of our own era predicts that man will be one species in one world, with a universal technological identity to replace the illusory pseudo-identities which have divided him and with an international ethics replacing all moral systems of superstition, repression, and suppression. In the meantime, ideological systems vie for the distinction of being able to offer not only the most practical, but also the most universally convincing political and private morals to that future world; and universally convincing means, above all, credible in the eyes of youth.[48]

He sought to contribute what he could toward helping provide support for the place in

which he found the evolution of psychosocial studies to be during his lifetime. Within

this framework, he believed the "true community" was the only place where the

adolescent ego strength, fidelity, could arise.[49] Though he acknowledges the necessity of

community, it is necessary because of what it brings to and how it impacts the individual.

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[47]Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 241: "In youth, ego strength emerges from the mutual confirmation of individual and community. In the sense that society recognizes the young individual as a bearer of fresh energy and that the individual so confirmed recognizes society as a living process which inspires loyalty as it receives it, maintains allegiance as it attracts it, honors confidence as it demands it."

[48]Ibid., 241.

[49]Ibid., 235.

Erikson advocates that the purpose of community in the life of the individual is a mutual

give and take for the ultimate purpose of survival of all.[50] Ultimately, overcoming death

is the highest goal of Erikson's worldview. Therefore, overcoming death is the ultimate

goal of his eight stage theory of psychosocial development. It follows then, that

overcoming death, devoid of Christ, is the goal of his ideas regarding identity as well as

the resolution of tension in the identity crisis.

Scripture clearly affirms that the identity of the believer cannot be functionally

understood devoid of community. However, according to Scripture a person's salvation

is into a living community, that is the body of Christ. Contrary to Erikson, death will not

be overcome by technological advances or evolutionary adaptation.

> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood he himself likewise partook of
> the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of
> death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject
> to lifelong slavery. (Heb 2:14-15)

The natural human inquiry into personal identity cannot be understood and realized

outside of the community of believers, the church. "There are two kinds of freedom: the

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[50]In order to build his theory of the autonomous nature of Freudian psychoanalysis, yet acknowledge and even emphasize the role of society or community in development, Erikson had to acknowledge the cavernous gap between the autonomy of Freud and the need for/role of community in human identity. He does so in a roundabout way through a discussion of the Freud-Marx polarization. "The question of the 'admission' of social considerations into 'official' psychoanalysis has a stormy history ever since the publication of the work of Alfred Adler, and one cannot escape the impression that this has continued to be an ideological as well as a methodological issue." Though Erikson does not agree with or specialize in Adler's area of contribution to the field, he needs and utilizes Adler's contributions regarding alternative motivations of man to Freud's libidinal energy. Erikson continues, "What was at stake, it seems, was, on the one hand, Freud's treasured assumption that psychoanalysis could be a science like any other without a worldview other than that of natural science; and, on the other hand, the persistent conviction among many of the most gifted younger psychoanalysts that psychoanalysis as a critique of society should join the revolutionary orientation which in Europe had earned the solidarity of many of the most original minds. Behind this is a rather gigantic Marx-Freud polarization which was the result of an intrinsic antagonism between these views, as though they were really two reciprocally exclusive ideologies." Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 225-26.

freedom of the community and the freedom of the individual."[51] Individual questions of

human identity are not primarily answered individually or psycholosocially, rather in the

corporate cosmic relation of the bride of Christ to Jesus of Nazareth.

Conclusion

Essentially, the observations Erikson makes and his contribution to

psychoanalytic research, specifically the extension of Freud's stages to encompass all of

life, is only usable to the Christian educator in this apologetic manner. The

appropriations of Erikson's central themes, especially identity crisis, are necessarily

understood in light of the metanarrative of Scripture outlined by the epochal events of

creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.

> What is the relation between Christianity and modern culture; may Christianity be
> maintained in a scientific age? It is the problem which modern liberalism attempts
> to solve.[52]

Whether or not Christianity can be maintained in a scientific age is not the

answer nor the question pursued in this dissertation. "In the intellectual battle of the

present day there can be no 'peace without victory;' one side or the other must win." It is

the position of this dissertation to say that indeed one side has won. The result of the

victory of Jesus Christ is that life swallows up death and light overcomes darkness. Jesus

Christ himself is that life (1 John 5:12). Jesus Christ himself is that light (John 8:12).

The question is not whether Christianity can co-exist or exist at all in the age of science,

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[51]Wendell Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 151-52. See also, Judith Weismann, *Half Savage and Hardly Free: Women and Rural Radicalism in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), Introduction and chap. 1.

[52]J. Gresham Machen. *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923), 6.

rather the answer is that Jesus Christ is the answer to which all of science points. Every investigation, every thrilling "discovery" testifies to Him to the glory of the Father. General revelation is Christocentric or it is not general revelation.

> Modern materialism, especially in the realm of psychology, is not content with occupying the lower quarters of the Christian city, but pushes its way into all the higher reaches of life; it is just as much opposed to the philosophical idealism of the liberal preacher as to the Biblical doctrines that the liberal preacher has abandoned in the interests of peace. Mere concessiveness, therefore will never succeed in avoiding the intellectual conflict.[53]

In the case of the social sciences or the soft sciences, the battle is slightly different, but the same principles apply. The social sciences really do not fall into the realm of general revelation so much as they fall into the realm of sinful human beings looking at the world as sinful human beings only can. The hard sciences have provided the metanarrative of evolution and the necessary mechanism of empiricism for which the social sciences operate. Outside of this, the social sciences are a report of man considering himself according to the flesh.

The entire scope of the discipleship of the church differs from the social sciences because in Christian discipleship no one is regarded according to the flesh beginning with Christ Jesus. Jesus does not tip-toe into human hearts attempting to woo them with whispers of what they already know into a better life with Him. Rather, the Father lovingly enters the darkness with light that offends in order to save. The goal of Christian discipleship is not health, but holiness.[54] The positional holiness of the Christian is manifested in learning and walking in obedience to the Lord. The church

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[53]Ibid., 6-7.

[54]Timothy P. Jones, interview by author, 11 September 2009. Louisville, KY.

through faith identifies with Christ and learns to walk in the light as He is in the light. The focus of the battle in the mind and heart of the Body of Christ in regard to her identity is not over integrating the sacred and secular, nor is it over separating the sacred and the secular. Rather the work of discipleship for the Body of Christ, specifically in regard to her unchanging identity as new creation, is rooted in salvation history from creation, to the patriarchs, to the incarnation, to the eschaton.

APPENDIX

AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

There are two areas of further study that would be of great service to further

the scholarly conversation toward a comprehensive-internal framework for discipleship.

The first area of study would be an investigation, possibly a dissertation, on the influence

of H. Richard Niebuhr. This research would not be on Niebuhr's influence but rather the

influence of others, specifically Ernst Troeltsch and Abraham Kuyper, upon Niebuhr's

theological conclusions, specific to his work in *Christ and Culture*.[1]

Second, a dissertation on the Christocentric nature of general revelation is

needed. The most common argument for the integration of the social sciences and

theology is found in the axiom, all truth is God's truth. This axiom was popularized in the

field of Christian education through the work of Frank Gaebelein in *The Pattern of God's

Truth: Problems of Integration in Christian Education*.[2] Researching the significance of

general revelation as Christological would provide clarity to this broadly applied axiom,

as well as, to the task of Christian discipleship in a comprehensive-internal framework.

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[1]H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

[2]Frank Gaebelein, *The Pattern of God's Truth: Problems of Integration in Christian Education* (New York: Oxford UP, 1954).

156

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159

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ABSTRACT

APPLYING A COMPREHENSIVE INTERNAL MODEL FOR
THE EVALUATION OF SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
TO THE IDENTITY CRISIS STAGE OF ERIK
ERIKSON'S DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY

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The thesis of this dissertation is that a biblical framework alternative to the

typical models of the relationships between theology and social-scientific research is

necessary for discerning the appropriateness of using Erik Erikson's developmental

theory, in whole or in part, in the context of Christian discipleship.

Chapter 1 includes evidence of the integration of developmental psychology in

Christian education. The chapter then discusses the integration of Erik Erikson's theory

of psychosocial development in Christian Education specifically. The chapter concludes

with a brief discussion of the significance of Erikson's notion of identity crisis to his own

theory.

Chapter 2 introduces David Powlison's Comprehensive-Internal (CompIn)

approach as a biblical framework for Christians to mine the field of psychology as

opposed to the Vital-Exteral (VitEx) perspectives found in Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and

Culture.* Both Christian counselors and Christian educators frequently advocate

integrating psychology with theology for discipleship in the church via a VitEx

framework.

Chapter 3 begins the process of employing the three epistemological priorities of the CompIn framework. This first priority is to offer a biblical theological alternative to Niebuhr's typological models of integration. Because Scripture is sufficient for discipleship, the biblical theological alternative offered in this chapter is the means by which the Christian can confidently and faithfully peruse the extrabiblical without reservation.

Chapter 4 focuses on the influence and relationship of Freudian and Darwinist principles upon Erikson's identity crisis. Erikson's beliefs regarding how religion impacts identity are also discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to pursue the second epistemological priority of the CompIn framework: exposing, debunking and reinterpreting Erikson's identity crisis.

Chapter 5 includes three final methods of appropriating Erikson's identity crisis for the purpose of discipleship in the church: (1) to investigate the popularity of Erikson's ideas regarding identity crisis, (2) to discern and report Erikson's methodology, and (3) to propose apologetic appeals that can be made using his ideas regarding identity crisis.

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