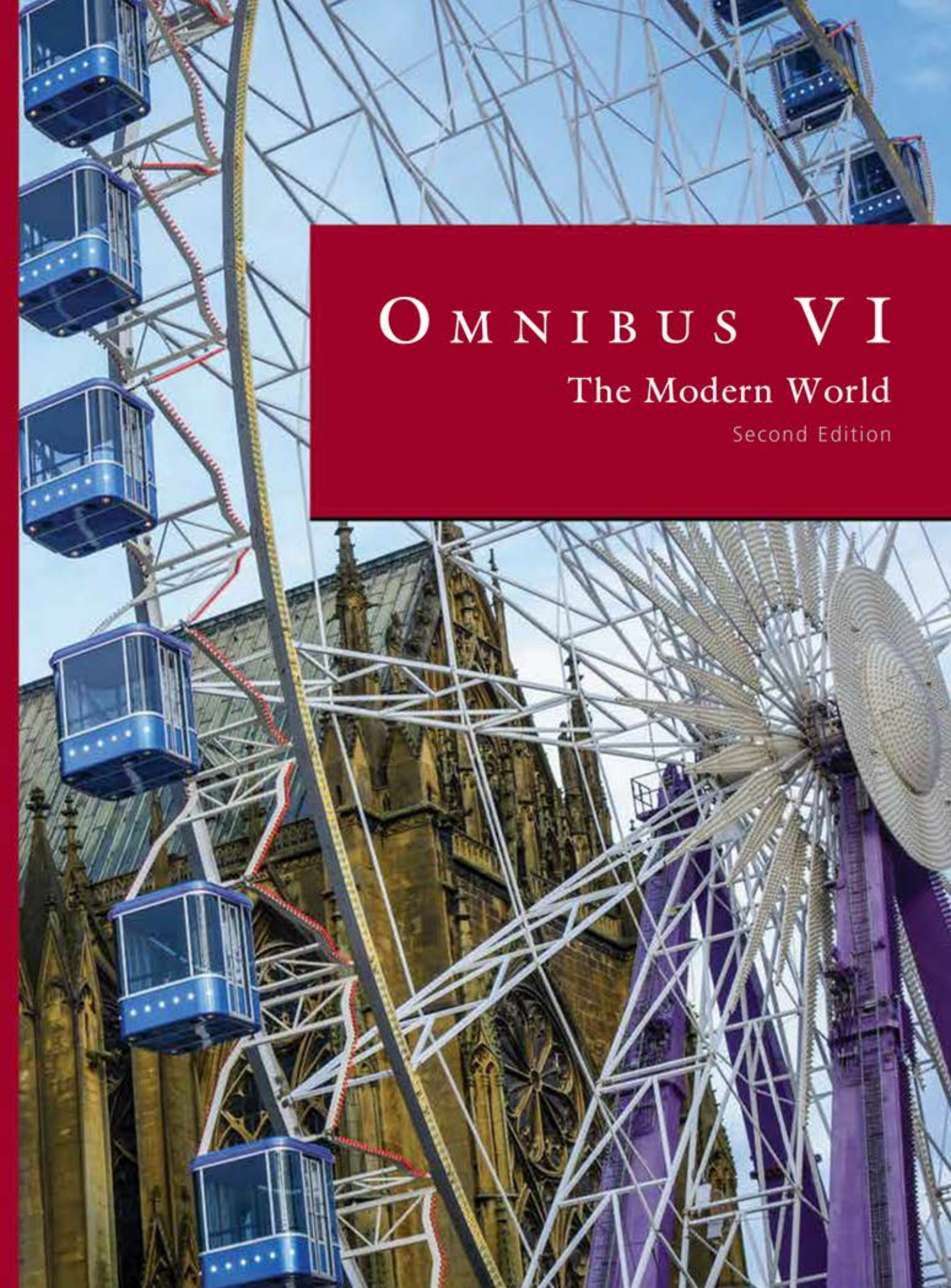




OMNIBUS VI

The Modern World

Second Edition

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The Modern World

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To Marlin and Laurie Detweiler: Thank you for supporting this project.

Your hard work was crucial, and your judgments were stellar.

To Carl Peticoffer: Thank you for your patience. We'd have blown it without you.

To Ned Bustard: Thank you for your brilliance. You made us look good.

To Doug Wilson: Thank you for your wisdom and humor. It's been a nice decade working with you.

To Gene Veith: Thank you for your insights and wit. I promise I'll sign the Augsburg Confession now.

To Emily: Thank you for your patience. I will be down from the office in just a few minutes.

—G. TYLER FISCHER

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FOREWORD

One of the most obvious questions that Christians might ask about a curriculum like this one is, “Why study this stuff?” The question can be asked for different reasons. Perhaps a concerned parent is attracted to the rigor of a “classical and Christian approach,” and yet has thumbed through a couple of the texts and is taken aback by some of the material. “It was this kind of gunk,” he thinks, “that chased us out of the government school.” Or perhaps the question is asked by the student himself when he “hits the wall.” The rigor that is built into this course of study is significant, and about a third of the way through the year, a student might be asking all sorts of pointed questions. “Why are you making me do this?” is likely to be one of them. The student may be asking because of his workload, but if he points to the nature of the material, the question still needs a good answer. It is a good question, and everyone who is involved in teaching this course needs to have the answer mastered.

G.K. Chesterton said somewhere that if a book does not have a wicked character in it, then it is a wicked book. One of the most pernicious errors that has gotten abroad in the Christian community is the error of *sentimentalism*—the view that evil is to be evaded, rather than the more robust Christian view that evil is to be conquered. The Christian believes that evil is there to be fought, the dragon is there to be slain. The sentimentalist believes that evil is to be resented.

My wife and I did not enroll our children in a classical Christian school so that they would never come into contact with sin. Rather, we wanted them there because we wanted to unite with like-minded Christian parents who had covenanted together to deal with the (inevitable) sin in a consistent, biblical manner. We fully expected our children to encounter sin in the classroom, on the playground and in the curriculum. We also expected that when they encountered it, they would see it dealt with in the way the Bible says sin should be dealt with.

A classical Christian school or a home school following the classical Christian curriculum must never be thought of as an asylum. Rather, this is a time of basic

training; it is boot camp. Students are being taught to handle their weapons, and they are being taught this under godly, patient supervision. But in order to learn this sort of response, it is important that students learn it well. That is, setting up a “straw man” paganism that is easily demolished equips no one. All that would do is impart a false sense of security to the students—until they get to a secular college campus to encounter the real thing. Or, worse yet, if they continue the path into a soft, asylum-style Christian college and then find themselves addressing the marketplace completely unprepared.

If this basic training is our goal, and it is, then we should make clear what one potential abuse of the Omnibus curriculum might be. This curriculum was written and edited with the assumption that godly oversight and protection would accompany the student through his course of work. It was written with the conviction that children need teachers, flesh and blood teachers, who will work together with them. It was also written with the assumption that many of these teachers need the help and the resources that a program like this can supply. But we also believe that, if a seventh-grader is simply given this material and told to work through it himself, the chances are good that the student will miss the benefit that

is available for those who are taught.

The Scriptures do not allow us to believe that a record of sinful behavior, or of sinful corruption, is inherently corrupting. If it were, then there are many stories and accounts in the Bible itself that would have to be excluded. But if we ever begin to think our children need to be protected “from the Bible,” this should bring us up short. Perhaps we have picked up false notions of holiness somewhere. In short, there is no subject that this curriculum will raise in the minds of seventh-grade students that would not *also* be raised when that student reads through his Bible, cover to cover. It is true that this curriculum has accounts of various murders, or examples of prostitution, or of tyranny from powerful and cruel kings. But we can find all the same things in the book of Judges.

So the issue is not the *presence* of sin, but of the



response to that sin. What we have sought to do throughout—in the introductory worldview essays, the questions and exercises, and in the teachers’ materials—is provide a guideline for responding to all the various worldviews that men outside of Christ come up with. This program, we believe, will equip the student to see through pretences and lies that other Christian children, who have perhaps been too sheltered, are not able to deal with.

Of course, there is a limit to this, as we have sought to recognize. There *are* certain forms of worldliness and corruption that would overwhelm a student’s ability to handle it, no matter how carefully a parent or teacher was instructing them. And while children differ in what they can handle, in our experience with many students of this age, we believe that the content of this curriculum is well within the capacity of Christian children of this age group. But again, this assumes godly oversight and instruction. The challenge here is two-fold. The rigor of the curriculum can seem daunting, but we have sought to provide direction and balance with regard to the demands of the material. The second concern is the question of false worldviews, paganism and just plain old-fashioned sin, which we have addressed above.

As our students work their way through this material, we want them to walk away with a profound sense of the *antithesis*. What we mean by this is that right after Adam and Eve fell in the Garden, God gave His first messianic promise (Gen. 3:15). But along with this promise, He also said that there would be constant antipathy between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This is what we mean

by the antithesis, and we want our students to come to share in that godly antipathy. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil (Ps. 97:10; Prov. 8:13). In every generation, in all movements (whether of armies or philosophies), in all schools of literature, the men and women involved are either obeying God or disobeying Him. They are either trusting Him or they are not trusting Him. All students are learning to love God, or they are not learning to love God.

But when they love and trust Him, they must do so in the face of conflict. Jesus was the ultimate Seed of the woman, and yet when He came down and lived among us, He faced constant opposition from “broods of vipers.” It is not possible to live in this world faithfully without coming into conflict with those who have no desire to live faithfully. The task of every Christian parent bringing children up to maturity in such a world is to do it in a *way that equips*. False protection, precisely because it does not equip, leaves a child defenseless when the inevitable day comes when that artificial shelter is removed. True protection equips. We do not want to build a fortress for our students to hide in; we want to give them a shield to carry—along with a sword.

Students who have faithfully worked through this course of study will not be suckers for a romanticized view of ancient paganism offered up by Hollywood. They have read Suetonius, and they have worked through a Christian response to true paganism. They are grateful that Christ came into this dark world, and they know *why* they are grateful.

—Douglas Wilson



PREFACE

We learn from the Bible that cornerstones are important, but so are capstones. Jesus Christ is described as the cornerstone of our faith—the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and Christ is the chief cornerstone. We are all living stones, as Peter tells us, and we are being built up into a holy Temple. But does it go on forever, an indefinite skyscraper? No, we understand from Scripture that the process has a final stopping point, a *telos*. At some point the building stops, and the capstone is placed in a position of glory and honor. Christ is the cornerstone at the foundation, but Christ, the perfect man, is also the capstone.

The Christian life is imitation of Christ, but not just an abstract Jesus in abstract perfections. We also imitate Christ in the process; we imitate Christ in the story. Our Christian lives follow these patterns, and if this is the case, then our education follows these patterns.

From the beginning of your studies in *Omnibus*, we have wanted you to learn how to ground all your thinking, reading, reflection, and study in the Lord who gave Himself for us. We have wanted you to grow in your study, keeping that foundation in mind the whole time. We have wanted you to build the walls true to that foundation. Now, as you come to the conclusion of this portion of your education, we want it to be as Christ-centered as it was at the beginning. In addition to that, we hope that you have learned something about how to do this—so that as you move on to continue your education in other settings, and in other places and ways, that you will take this central thing with you. We are Christians, after all, and Christ is everything.

Thank you for running this race together with us. You have not quite completed this portion of the race, but you *have* begun the last lap, and you are now rounding into the straight. God bless you as you finish strong.

—Douglas Wilson
2011



PREFACE TO OMNIBUS VI: THE MODERN WORLD

An *omnibus* was the term used in the nineteenth century for a public transportation vehicle. It was a carriage and later a motor vehicle “for all” (deriving from the Latin, the dative plural of *omnis*). After a while, the first part of the word got dropped, and today we just call vehicles that can carry a lot of passengers a “bus.” The original word also developed in another direction at the same time, with “omnibus” being a metaphor for a piece of writing (a book, a piece of legislation) that carries along with it other pieces of writing.

For those of you who have been on board ever since Omnibus I, you will agree that this has been a long ride, with many and varied sights along the way. With this last volume in the series, Omnibus VI, you will be coming home, back to your own time and place.

This final Omnibus is about the modern world. Not “modern” in the sense of just what’s happening now. Even being modern has a history, one that begins really with the “Age of Reason” of the eighteenth century, followed by what we could term the “Age of Emotion” with the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century, followed by the various materialisms, socialisms, and existentialisms of the twentieth century. Today, even being “modern” has become old-fashioned, so we also discuss the twenty-first century relativisms, nihilisms, and yearnings for something better known as “post-modernism.” In the period covered in Omnibus V, Christianity created a consensus in worldview, if not theology. In Omnibus VI, you will see what happened once that consensus was lost.

In the course of this final journey, you will meet a number of great Christian authors—Milton, Pascal, Dostoevsky, Eliot, Lewis, O’Connor—whose achievements are especially striking because they were expressing their faith in and to a culture that to one degree or another had forgotten what Christianity is all about.

You will also read a number of great non-Christian authors—Melville, Whitman, Twain, Camus, Hemingway—and even some anti-Christian authors who specifically attacked the Christian worldview (Nietzsche, and Freud). It’s a fair question to ask, why do we have to study them?

The first reason is that all of these people, for better or worse, gave us the civilization we have today. If you are to understand your times, and if you are to take part in that civilization—and to help change it back in a more biblical direction—you need to know about these non-Christian and anti-Christian writers.

Flour Mill (Factory) by Lancaster,
Pennsylvania-born modern artist
Charles Demuth (1883–1935).

But Christians also have deeper reasons for engaging even the work of non-Christians: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Phil. 4:8). This verse is often used to stop Christians from reading certain things, but it also gives positive guidance.

The key concept here is “whatever.” This is not the slogan of bored teenagers or apathetic relativists (“oh, whatever”). This is a word that opens up for Christians the fullness of God’s creation and His sovereign truth, goodness, and beauty that extend to all of existence.

Whether a work is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy does not depend upon whether the person who made it is a Christian. Non-Christians can occasionally say something that is true, just as a Christian can say something that is unlovely. But God Himself is the source and the final object of all truth, loveliness, and the other qualities this text exalts. In other words, any time we find something noble or just or pure—no matter its human originator—we should thank and praise God, who is glorified even among those who do not know Him.

The word translated “virtue” in the New King James version of this verse is *arête*. This is an important Greek concept that has to do with something fulfilling its purpose. That does tell us something about “virtue,” but the word is not about morality, as such. *Arête* is perhaps better rendered as “excellence.” Thus, other translations of the Bible (NAS, NIV, ESV) say something on the order of “if there is any excellence.”

Melville, Twain, Hemingway, and other non-Christian writers whom you will read in Omnibus VI are indeed “excellent.” Their works fulfill their purpose and the aesthetic laws that God has built into His beautiful creation. They are also “praiseworthy.” They are of “good report.” They have a reputation that is well-deserved. Christians, no less than secularists, should appreciate their greatness.

To be sure, some works that are excellent and worthy of praise do fall short when it comes to truth and purity. The essays in this Omnibus volume will help you to sort out what is valuable from what isn’t, a skill once developed that will prove a survival skill far after you have finished school.

This is part of our overarching goal in the Omnibus series, that you develop and put into practice a biblical worldview. When you do, you will discover another way to approach work by non-Christians.

In this book you will read the arch-pessimist Hobbes, who believed that human beings are little more than animals in need of someone to control them, whose life is

basically “nasty, brutish, and short.” A little while later you will read Whitman, who celebrates himself, America, and the human race in general as glorious miracles of unlimited potential. Now Hobbes the cosmic pessimist and Whitman the cosmic optimist cannot both be right. And yet, Christian readers will find themselves agreeing with Hobbes that human beings are a wretched and depraved lot; and they will also find themselves agreeing with Whitman that human beings are quite wonderful and amazing. What Hobbes is picking up on is the reality and the ugliness of sin; what Whitman is picking up on is that human beings have been made in God’s image. Christians will also find that both Hobbes and Whitman are missing something. The former neglects the image of God, and the latter neglects our fall into sin. Thus a Christian reader of both writers can be both appreciative (up to a point) and critical (up to a point).

This is because the Christian worldview is *bigger*—more comprehensive, more complicated, richer—than the humanly-devised secular philosophies, which, by their nature, are limited, reductionistic, and partial. Thus Christians are freed to respond to what they learn in a more complex way, giving credit where credit is due, while also, at the same time, critiquing what needs to be challenged. This is also what it means to approach a work in a *scholarly* way. This is why Christians always have a big advantage over their secularist peers when it comes to education.

Try this approach throughout Omnibus VI. Do this with Emerson’s transcendentalism and Crane’s materialism, the two morally opposite kinds of existentialism with Nietzsche and Camus, and the biological determinism of the Darwinists vs. the psychological determinism of the Freudians. You can also apply your biblical worldview to unlock the complexities even of works that are not intentionally Christian at all, but turn out to be Christian even despite their authors because they are honest and thus true: the double-nature of the human heart in *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*; the double-nature of nature in *Moby-Dick*.

Notice too how the Christian authors you will read, with their bigger worldview, are responding to the littler worldviews of the secularists in a bigger kind of a way, all the while bringing “out of his treasure things new and old” (Matt. 13:52). And now that you have ridden the Omnibus all the way to the end, we hope that you can do the same.

Now that the heritage of Western civilization has been transmitted to you, you can make your own contributions and play your own part in history. And don’t forget to transmit it to your own children, when you have some, so that it will continue to be passed down from generation to generation.

—Gene Edward Veith

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Have you ever stopped to think what the President of the United States in the year 2040 is doing right now? What about the next Martin Luther or John Calvin? I'll tell you what I hope they are doing. I hope they just finished reading this sentence!

There is no doubt in my mind that classical Christian education and the rigorous study of the greatest works of Western Civilization is a tool to create leaders like no other—godly leaders who understand that this is God's world, Christ inherited it, and we are to take dominion of it to His glory.

Many have begun down the path of studying this material and have not persevered—in their minds it was too hard, too salacious for Christian ears, too unrealistic, too much to grasp, the books were too old or some other “too.” Be assured, like the Scriptures say in the Parable of the Sower, the work you do will *bear fruit a hundredfold* if you stick with it. In the lives of our own children we have already seen tremendous benefit and really have just barely scratched the surface.

Our goal with this text is to make the work easier for you. This text should make approaching Omnibus, and other material not previously encountered, come alive in a way that instills confidence, and it should convey a sense that young students (and teachers) can handle it.

We have done all we could to make this text a stand-alone guide for reading, studying and understanding these great books. One reference book in particular will prove beneficial as a resource for this year as well as the following years. *Western Civilization* by Jackson Spielvogel. If you have previously used our *Veritas Press History and Bible Curriculum*, you will want to keep the flashcards from them handy, too.

May you be blessed as you dig in and study the hand of God at work in the past and prepare for His use of you in the future.

—Marlin Detweiler

ADVISORY TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS

In the course of history there has been much fluctuation on what has been deemed age appropriate for young students. And for those of us alive today, there remains great variation as to what is considered age appropriate. The material we have created and the books we have assigned address numerous subjects and ideas that deal with topics (including sex, violence, religious persuasion and a whole host of other ideas) that have been the subject of much discussion of whether they are age appropriate. The judgment we applied in this text has been the same as we apply to our own children.

In the creation of this program we have assumed that it will be used by students in seventh grade and above. Furthermore, we have assumed that there is no part of the Bible deemed inappropriate to discuss with a seventh-grade student. Therefore, the material assumes that the student knows what sex is, that he understands the existence of violence, that he understands there are theological and doctrinal differences to be addressed and that he has the maturity to discern right and wrong.

The worldview we hold and from which we write is distinctly protestant and best summarized in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The Bible is our only ultimate and infallible rule of faith and practice.

We encourage you to become familiar with the material that your students will be covering in this program in order to avoid problems where you might differ with us on these matters.

INTRODUCTION



This vanitas still life by Dutch artist Pieter Claesz (c. 1597–1660) illustrates the wisdom of Solomon in Ecclesiastes.

Here we are at the end of what seems like a long journey. Has it been half a decade . . . or a decade and a half? As we come to the end of the world—or at least to the end of Omnibus VI—I feel a sense of reflection setting in. We have to remember why we started on this quest at the beginning. I remember something about a dark tower, and a ring, and black riders (where I am from, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, those riders in black are usually in buggies and have good vegetables). This brings me to one of my main points. There is one massive flaw in the *Lord of the Rings* movies (which I love in spite of the flaw—there, I said it!). There are other little flaws, but this one flaw is gigantic. You must remember that the entire Rings Trilogy leads to a chapter called “The Scouring of the Shire.” The movies, as they now stand, miss the point of the books because they simply omit it. We mention this flaw back in Omnibus II.

The “scouring” is important for this introduction because it leads me to one quotation with which I send you off into your own Shire. It is the one thing that, more than

anything else, I would like to leave you with at the end of this journey. After the hobbits have pretty much saved the world, they are riding back toward the Shire with our favorite wizard, Gandalf. At this point he looks at the four hobbits and says:

I am with you at present, . . . but soon I shall not be. I am not coming to the Shire. You must settle its affairs yourselves; that is what you have been trained for. Do you not yet understand? My time is over: it is no longer my task to set things to rights, nor to help folk to do so. And as for you, my dear friends, you will need no help. You are grown up now. Grown indeed very high; among the great you are, and I have no longer any fear at all for any of you.

He says this *after* Barad-dûr (Sauron’s Black Tower) has fallen and the Ring has been destroyed. He says this *before* the hobbits arrived back in the Shire to find that

Sharkey (a.k.a. Saruman)¹ was running the place into the ground. To paraphrase, he says, “It has been wonderful riding around with you fellows, but I am off. I am thinking of taking up sailing, and you are on your own. This whole trip—fighting orcs and running through mines and climbing into active volcanoes—was just training for what you have to do now. Now, you have to go home and do what I always did for you. You have to set things right.”

I have been blessed to take this trip with you. I have received as much (and probably more) of an education than you have during these years of editing and writing and teaching and thinking. I want to thank you for taking me along for the ride. I have enjoyed it. A few of you sent me nice notes. That was much appreciated. A few of you did not, but instead sent helpful hints about how we could improve the whole thing. I enjoyed your suggestions and even took them as seemed wise.

I hope that the work in Omnibus I–VI has been challenging. If it was not, I am pretty sure that you did it wrong.² If it was really tough at the beginning but you found some of the work pleasing by the end, great! If you loved it all, wonderful!

You should know, however, that what you have completed is only a training simulation. Now it is time to get on with life. Some of you might, at this point, have a few

questions. Here are my answers:

What did we just do, again?

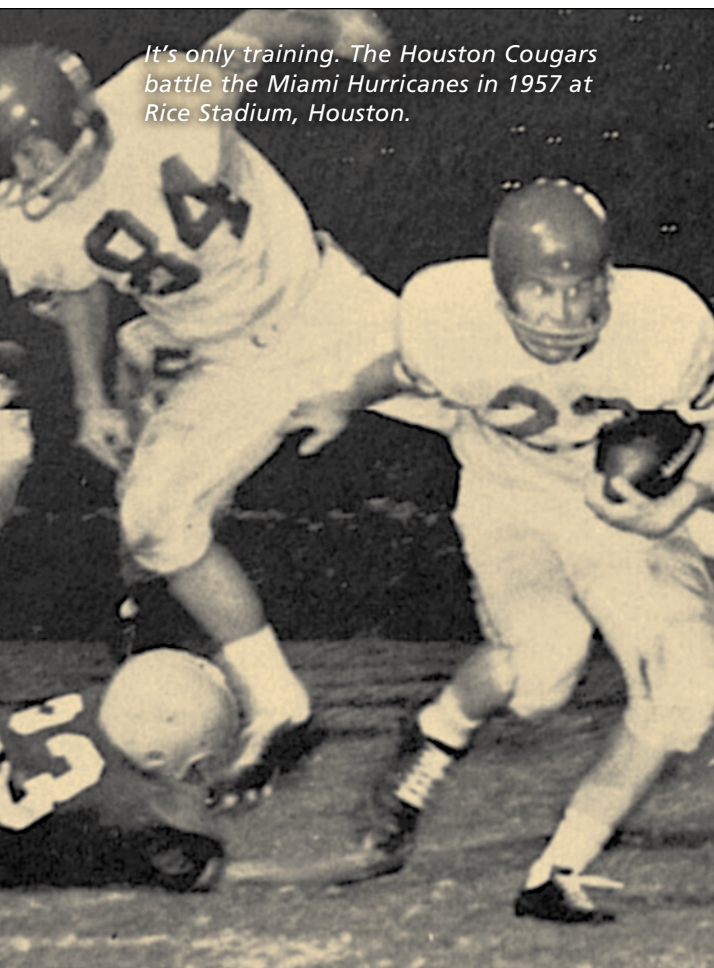
Yes, you heard me correctly. Omnibus I through VI is just a set of training exercises (before you get too steamed, all education and sports—even the state championship—is just training). This training in Omnibus is a particular sort of training, however. It is *subversive*. Now, this word might have the ring of something naughty, and you might already be wondering how you look in a leather jacket with a tattoo. Before you do anything radical, however, know that Omnibus is not meant to subvert anything true, good, or beautiful. In fact, it is meant to stretch your logical and rhetorical muscles while you are wading knee deep in things that are true, good, and beautiful; or while you are being helped to see clearly that some of the ideas and things that our culture might call beautiful are really false, wicked, and ugly. (Many of them even taste bad.)

You were just introduced to the following people (to name only a few): Moses, Homer, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Dante, Luther, Calvin, John Bunyan, Dostoevsky, and Austen. They are great teachers, and you know them. (Someday, if my math is right, you will know many of them personally better than you know any person now—for if you end up in glory with them, and you have endless time, you will get to have tea with Austen, and learn some poetry from Dante, and watch as Luther and Aquinas settle some theological matters.) More than all of this, of course, we, and many of them, wanted to introduce you to Christ. He is, after all, *the Way, and the Truth, and the Life—He is the Teacher*. We introduced you to Him and them because, if you are to live a good (or even a decent) life in this day, you need to know someone who knows something that will be true for more than 15 minutes. They were the best ones that we could find, and they are pretty good.

Why did you train us in this way?

We trained you in hope. Hope that you can live more blessedly than we have or can at present. Hope that you will take this cultural heritage and begin to rebuild its glory. This, however, probably does not start by trying to throw jewelry into an active volcano or driving to Washington, D.C. intent on becoming president during the next general election.

We would all like you to kill dragons. I would suggest, however, that instead of trying to find them in faraway lands that you just stand still for a few minutes and wait for a shadow to move over you. Pick the first one you see (not on TV) in person.



It's only training. The Houston Cougars battle the Miami Hurricanes in 1957 at Rice Stadium, Houston.

Also, I have good news for you! There is plenty of work to do. It will not take long to find evil and pernicious things to fight against right where you are presently standing. Some of you will find your first dragons in college; others in your work; others, sadly, at church.

Here are a few clues about fighting dragons: First, know the Bible. It is your sword. Second, put on your armor (see Ephesians 6). Third, never fight alone if you can help it. Christian fellowship and friendship are two of the sweetest blessings on earth. If God forces you into a lonely place, bear up under it, but pray that he sends friends. (Christian did not do well without a friend. Frodo never would have made it without Sam.) Fourth, never be outside the church. A good church is a safe haven. Dragons hate it there. It is a good place to read, to sing (singing is very necessary if you want to be successful), and to be fed and be nourished. Fifth, don't mind when you get knocked around a bit. It is good for you. (Keep a copy of *The Faerie Queene* close by at all times. I am usually not more than three steps away from one just in case I have to dive for it. Remember, St. George got the stuffing knocked out of him a number of times. The dragon roasted him and threw him down a well.) You will not be measured by whether you never made a mistake. You will make mistakes. But you will be named as accursed if you sit on your hands and do nothing.

Why was I particularly given this training? Does this make me a freak?

I don't know. I was not there. I did not choose you. I would blame your parents. They chose to send you to a school that taught you this or they taught it to you themselves. (The editors are hereby absolved from all blame!)

When you go to talk with your parents, however, you should thank them. This study is not calibrated to make you into a freak or a nerd. If you are headed in that direction, stop and grab that copy of *Faerie Queene* I just warned you that you will need, and start thinking that you need to *do these things—not just read about them!* This



"The knight with the old Dragon fights two days incessantly: The third day him overthrowes, and gayns Most glorious victory."—*The Faerie Queene*

course of reading will not make you a freak. In fact, it will make you normal. You will not, mind you, appear normal to most of your friends or to most people in our culture, but that is not your fault. You have just received the education that many of the most thoughtful people in many generations received—the thinking men and women (and many others, for the Federalist Papers were written with a target audience of upstate New York farmers in mind) of every generation before that would have received this sort of education as well. You are now hopelessly in the majority. If dead people could vote, you would win every time.

Know this, however: at some points you are going to find yourself out of step with many people. Be kind to them. Most don't know any better. You have been blessed. Bless others. Many have made sacrifices for you to receive

this education. Move forward now and show gratitude and grace to others.

Are you sure this will work?

Yes and no. I am sure that it will work, but I am convinced it probably will not work out exactly like I thought it would when I started. I am not sure if I am writing for many or maybe this whole thing was done for just one of you who will spark a fire that will bring renewal. Who knows?

I am sure of this: God is faithful. His promises will not fail. We have tried to be faithful to His word. He has already blessed this work.

Will we receive cultural renewal in this culture immediately? Probably not, but who knows? We cannot control the future. We need to be faithful, remember that God's promises are true, and move forward. If nothing else, General Grant got one thing right. After losing (again) in a skirmish with Lee and being asked if he would withdraw, he is reported to have said, pointing, "Richmond is that way." Be faithful and move forward.

What should we do next?

Omnibus VII, of course—just joking! You need to explore the world. Do four things for me, however. First, keep reading some of these Omnibus books and find one that you really love to read over and over. They are worthy books, but you cannot suck the marrow out of them with one passing skim or a few quick reads. Dig deep! Second, find other good books to read. Always read the Bible (never stop) and always be reading something. Here are a few of my favorites that sadly did not make the Omnibus list. Read Wendell Berry. There is no more sensible corrective to so much fluff that passes for wisdom as his essays. They can be sad, but remember, keep that copy of *Faerie Queene*, and if needed, switch to it for a while. Read Tolstoy. His books are too long to fit anywhere in Omnibus, but they are too good not to read. Read Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* (I am pretty sure that I will receive some sort of judgment because of its omission). Third, find a few good friends (try to find ones smarter than you) to recommend books. Try to make it through 5 or 6 this summer, aim at 8 next year. Sit down with friends when you read things and talk with them

about the ideas. Iron sharpens iron . . . and it is delightful fun. It is also necessary. Never read alone (without talking to other believers about it) if you can help it. Finally, reading is preparation for life, so get out there. Work hard. Find a nice girl or guy and settle down and start a family. Sacrifice yourself for them . . . and start reading the *Narnia Chronicles* with them even before they can talk. I am pretty sure it still gets through.

How will we know if we did it right?

If you do it right, life will be more challenging but also more delightful. You will see others around you growing stronger (even if you sometimes feel weak). You will see more and more happy kids hanging around you. Some might eventually be yours. Happy kids result from good living. Happy adults can sometimes be happy about wrong things. Kids tend to like life. Also, your church and community will be healthier because you were in it. This health looks like better friendship, growing relationships, and more glorious and more frequent celebrating. If you do this, you have done well.

The awful and wonderful truth is that you will not know much about whether you did it right when you die. So, do two things. First, try to enjoy the ride, because even if you mess up some parts, you will enjoy it as you go. Second, be content with this, because you are human. Aim at hearing from God: "Well done, good and faithful servant." In the end, that will be all that you need.

This book is Omnibus VI. It is our final swing through the modern world. You will find good people in it, but it can be an odd place. You will find both heroes and villains. The classes have not changed much in this final edition. Work hard to get better at doing more. Teachers, let your students run as much of class as possible. Students, do the work well.

May God bless your labor . . . and your leisure!

—G. Tyler Fischer

Trinity Season, 2011

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

ENDNOTES

- 1 If you think that Saruman died by falling off the top of Isengard, you need to stop watching the movies and go back and read the book a few times.
- 2 Just go back and start again. We will all wait here for you.

USING OMNIBUS

The second half of Omnibus—volumes IV, V, and VI—continue the journey of learning from the greatest minds of the Christian West. For those of you who have been through Omnibus I, II, and III, thank you for coming along on this journey. (I hope that you are having a good time.) For the seasoned *omnibuser*, I hope that you will enjoy the new features that we have built into volumes IV, V, and VI.

Before discussing the new aspects of these new volumes, let's walk back through the basics of Omnibus. First, know that you join an incredible group of men and women as you read through these books. These books (the Scriptures and all the Great—but lesser—Books) have nourished your forefathers. They have a lot to give as you give yourself to this study. Remember, it is important to realize that some of these books are not to be learned from uncritically—some of them we learn from by the problems they caused.

Before you get started, however, there are a few terms you need to understand. First among them is the word *omnibus*. This Latin word means “all encompassing” or “everything.” So, in a very loose sense, the Omnibus curriculum is where we talk about everything. All of the important ideas are set on the table to explore and understand. In a more technical sense, however, this Omnibus focuses our attention on the ideas, arguments, and expressions of the Western Canon, which have also become known as the Great Books of Western civilization.

The *Great Books* are those books that have guided and informed thinking people in Western civilization. They are the books that have stood the test of time. They come from many sources, starting with the Hebrews and Greeks and extending to their Roman, European, and Colonial heirs. These books represent the highest theological and philosophical contemplations, the most accurate historical record, and the most brilliant literary tradition that have come down to us from our forefathers. The Great Books lead us into a discussion of the *Great Ideas*, which are the ideas that have driven discussion and argument in Western civilization throughout its illustrious history.

The Omnibus takes students on a path through the Great Books and the Great Ideas in two cycles. It follows the chronological pattern of Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods. The first cycle is *Omnibus I–III*, and focuses on sharpening the skills of logical analysis. The second is *Omnibus IV–VI*, focusing on increasing the rhetorical skills of the student.

TITLE	PERIOD	YEARS	EMPHASIS
Omnibus I	Ancient	Beginning–A.D. 70	Logic
Omnibus II	Medieval	70–1563	Logic
Omnibus III	Modern	1563–Present	Logic
Omnibus IV	Ancient	Beginning–A.D. 180	Rhetoric
Omnibus V	Medieval	180–1563	Rhetoric
Omnibus VI	Modern	1563–Present	Rhetoric

Two kinds of books are read concurrently in the Omnibus, *Primary* and *Secondary*. The list of Primary Books for each year is what might be termed the traditional “Great Books.” On this list are authors like Homer, Dante and Calvin. The Secondary Books are ones that give balance to our reading (balance in the general areas of Theology, History and Literature). The secondary list contains works such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lord of the Rings*. These books are usually easier, and less class time is devoted to them. Each year is similarly organized. There are thirty-seven weeks’ worth of material. Each week is divided into eight sessions of roughly seventy minutes each, optimally. The time estimate is approximate. Home schooling situations might vary greatly from student to student. Five of these sessions are committed to the study of the Primary Books. The other three are dedicated to the Secondary Books.

In Omnibus IV, V and VI, some changes were made to encourage and challenge students to move toward greater maturity. Two of the biggest changes are the Discipline Essays and a number of new class forms.

The *Discipline Essays* aim at helping students to understand a number of important disciplines—everything from Poetry to Economics. These disciplines are areas that students might study in college. The goal, however, is not to find your college major (although, no doubt, some will find a major among these disciplines). The goal is to help students become well-rounded, mature adults who can converse with other adults on many important topics, with a basic understanding of many of the topics that move the world today. The essays are written to be both enjoyable and informative.

Omnibus IV, V and VI also employ a number of new kinds of sessions. These sessions challenge students to develop the skills necessary to wisely discuss questions in the future after they are done with their study in Omnibus and to encourage even more student involvement in class. Also, these new sessions are intended to challenge students to increase their rhetorical skills and integrate various types of knowledge.

KINDS OF SESSIONS

Prelude

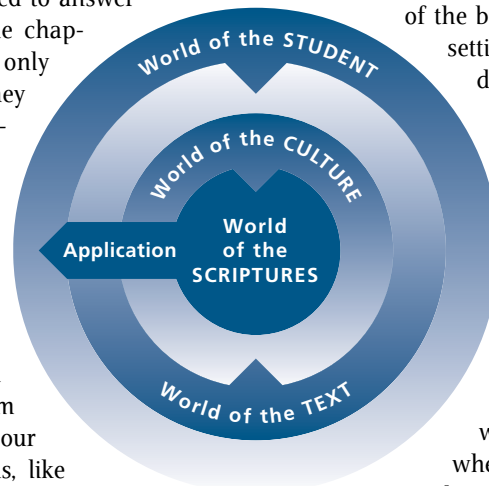
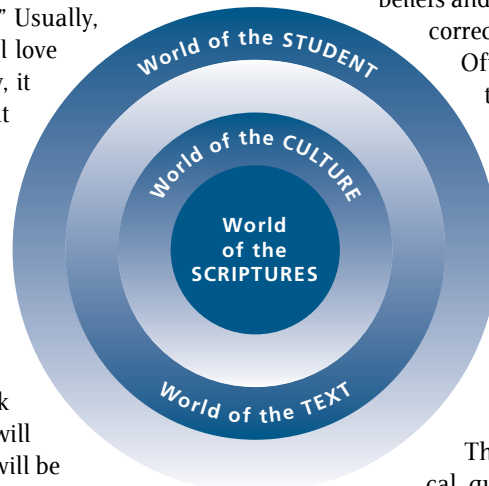
Each chapter is introduced with a session called a Prelude. In each Prelude we seek to stir up the interest of the students by examining a provoking question that is or could be raised from the book. This is done in the section called A Question to Consider. When the teacher introduces this question he should seek to get the students' initial reaction to the question. These questions might range from "Can you teach virtue?" to "Are all sins equally wicked?" Usually, a student in the Logic years will love to argue his answers. Generally, it will prove helpful for a student to read the introductory essay in the student text *before* tackling A Question to Consider. Sometimes a teacher may want to introduce the question first to stir up interest. This "introductory material" will give the students both the general information on the work and a worldview essay which will unpack some of the issues that will be dealt with in the book. After reading this section, the student will be asked to answer a few questions concerning the chapter. These questions are based only on the introductory material they have just read, not on the reading of the book itself.

Discussion

The Discussion is the most frequently used class in the Omnibus. It has five parts. The Discussion seeks to explore a particular idea within a book from the perspective of the text itself, our culture and the Bible. It begins, like the Prelude, with A Question to Consider, which is the first of "four worlds" that will be explored, the world of the student. The world of the text is discovered through the Text Analysis questions. These questions unlock the answer that the book itself supplies for this question (e.g., when reading the Aeneid, we are trying to find out how the author, Virgil, would answer this question). After this, in the Cultural Analysis section,

the student examines the world of the culture, how our culture would answer the same question. Many times this will be vastly different from the answer of the student or the author. The Biblical Analysis questions seek to unearth what God's Word teaches concerning this question. We can call this discovering the world of the Scriptures. So the progression of the questions is important. First, the students' own opinions and ideas are set forth. Second, the opinion of the text is considered. Next, the view of our culture is studied. Finally, the teaching of the Scriptures is brought to bear. All other opinions, beliefs and convictions must be informed and corrected by the standard of God's Word.

Often, after hearing the Word of God, the material seeks to apply the discovered truth to the life of the students. Finally, the students are challenged to think through a Summa Question which synthesizes all they have learned about this "highest" idea from the session.



Recitation

The Recitation is a set of grammatical questions that helps to reveal the student's comprehension of the facts or ideas of the book. This can be done in a group setting or individually with or by students. The Recitation questions can also be answered in written form and checked against the answers, but we encourage doing the Recitation orally whenever possible. It provides great opportunity for wandering down rabbit trails of particular interest or launching into any number of discussions.

Of course, we cannot predict what current events are occurring when your students study this material. Recitations can prove a great time to direct conversation that relates to the questions and material being covered in this type of class.

Analysis

This session of worldview analysis is focused on comparing a character, culture or author you are studying to

some other character, culture or author. This might be done by comparing two or three characters' or authors' answers to the same questions. This type of session effectively helps students to understand the differences between cultures and characters, especially in the arena of worldview.

Activity

These classes are focused on bringing creative ideas into the mix. Activities might include debates, trials, sword fights, board games and dramatic productions. Music and art appreciation are also included in this category. These classes are harder to prepare for, but are quite important. Often, the student will remember and understand (and love) the material only if our discussions and recitations are mixed with these unforgettable activities. There are also a number of field trips that are recommended. Often, these are recommended in two categories: ones that most people can do and ones that are "outside the box" experiences that only some will be able to do. The first category might send you to the local museum or planetarium. The latter will recommend ideas like chartering a boat at Nantucket to experience what Ishmael felt on the *Pequod*. Careful pre-planning is important to be able to take advantage of these opportunities.

Review and Evaluation

Weekly testing is not recommended. Students will weary of it and will spend all of their time preparing for tests instead of learning. Choose your tests carefully. Even if a chapter has an evaluation at the end, know that you can use it as a review. The test and the review both work toward the same goal of demonstrating the knowledge of the students and cementing the material into their minds.

Evaluations are divided into three sections. The first section tests the student's grammatical knowledge of the book. Answers to these questions should be short, consisting of a sentence or two. The second section is the logic section. In this section students are asked to answer questions concerning the ideas of the book and to show that they understand how ideas connect with each other within the book. The final section is called lateral thinking. This section asks students to relate ideas in one book with the ideas that they have studied in other books. For instance, the student might be asked to compare Homer's ideal heroes (Achilleus and Odysseus) with Virgil's character Aeneas to discover how the Roman conception of the hero was different

from the Greek idea. Finally, students often will be asked to compare and contrast these pagan ideas with a biblical view. So, students might be asked to contrast Homer and Virgil's teaching on what is heroic with the ultimate heroic work of Christ. In this way students demonstrate that they can set ideas in their proper biblical context, showing the relationship between the writing of one author and another. Students should be allowed to have their books and Bibles available during testing. If they have to do extensive reading during the tests, they are not going to be able to finish or do well anyway. Students should not be permitted to have notes of any kind during the test.

Optional Sessions and Activities

For each chapter there are also some optional classes included. These allow the teacher to be flexible and to add to, or omit classes as they think wise. Usually the number of optional classes is approximately one optional class for every week that the book is taught. There are also a number of optional activities included. These activities allow you to spend addition time on ideas that your students might find fascinating.

Midterm and final exam forms have been provided on the Omnibus Teacher's Edition CD. These tests are optional, but can be a helpful gauge of how much the student is retaining. Usually midterms are given around the ninth week of the semester, and finals are given during the last week of the semester. Midterm exams are designed to be completed in a class period. (You might want to give the students slightly more time if possible.) The finals, however, are made to be completed over two class periods (or roughly two and a half hours). Most students will finish more quickly, but some might need all of the time. If possible, give the finals when the student has no time limit. These tests, as well, are given with open books and Bibles, but no notes, and they feature the same sections as the review and evaluation (i.e., grammar, logic and lateral thinking).

Student-Led Discussions

This kind of session (new in Omnibus IV, V, and VI) fits the form of a regular Discussion, but to encourage more student involvement the students are expected to create their own questions and answers for Text Analysis, Cultural Analysis, and Biblical Analysis. The teacher is responsible for the Summa Question. The assignment appears at the end of the previous session to allow the students to work on it while doing the assigned reading.

We would expect that students might need help with this the first few times they try it. These questions will quickly reveal whether or not the students have understood their reading. The teacher should collect students' questions and answers to edit and grade them. In a group setting, teachers may allow the students to ask and answer each others' questions—inserting themselves to correct or guide progress but with as gentle a hand as possible.

Current Events

This session (new in Omnibus IV, V, and VI) challenges students to see the modern relevance of the issue they are studying in Omnibus. The assignment appears at the end of the previous session, and there is no reading assignment, allowing the students to prepare their assignment for the following session. The student will find a news or magazine article and prepare a short presentation demonstrating how the article and the previous readings relate to the issue. Students will show where the issue is present in both their reading and in their articles, comparing the worldviews and critiquing both from a biblical perspective.

Poetry

This session (new in Omnibus IV, V, and VI) first introduces a kind of poetry—like a sonnet, a limerick, a quatrain, a sestina, etc. The student is expected to then write a poem related to some content or object in the book they are reading. During the Rhetoric Stage (tenth through twelfth grade) we are encouraging students to grow in their love of poetry and to begin to write poetry themselves.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics sessions (new in Omnibus IV, V, and VI) introduce students to different pieces of art, ask them to analyze the work and respond to the *content*, *method* and *meaning* of the work. When studying art, one or more of three general emphases should be covered:

- *Grammar of art* (e.g., why is Moses frequently depicted with horns coming out of his head?)
- *Immediate cultural connection* (e.g., colors or poses used at certain times in history). To evaluate a particular work of art, we need to place the work

within its historical context: When was the work produced? And where? By whom? Man? Woman? Collaborative? What were/are the historical implications of this particular work? How does it compare to other works produced in that time and place? How does it compare to other works by this artist? And other artists of that time? And of previous periods? Do we recognize any specific artistic or cultural influences?

- *Deeper meaning* (e.g., How does the blurred focus of Impressionism relate to the worldview of the artists using the form?) All art speaks in a language of signs, symbols and semblances: It looks like some thing, sounds like some thing, feels like some thing or references some thing. In what language does the piece of art speak? Once that is determined, does it speak it well?

Trials

These sessions encourage verbal argument and debate, yielding some wonderful discussion. This kind of class appears more frequently in Omnibus IV, V, and VI than it does in the earlier years.

Writing

Writing assignments in Omnibus IV, V, and VI are shorter than in the earlier volumes. This is to encourage the teacher to edit the work more carefully and more critically. It might mean that the editorial process will take a few cycles before the work is in its final state. We hope that the writing will be shorter but much better by the end of the process.

For those getting ready to teach this curriculum, preparation should be carefully considered. The material has been designed so that it can be taught with little preparation, but this is not recommended. If you want your students to get the most out of this program, you should prepare carefully. First, make sure you are familiar with the book being studied. Also, consult the Teaching Tips on the Teacher's Edition CD before teaching. Knowing where you are going in the end will help you to effectively move through the material and interact with your students effectively.

WHAT'S ON THE CD?

Teacher's Edition of the Text

The teacher text includes teaching tips and additional pages of material, with suggested answers for all the questions, writing assignments and activities in the daily sessions.

Lesson Plans

Session-by-session lesson plans for each chapter.

Midterms and Exams

Tests with answer keys for both semesters. Three versions are provided for each test (labeled A, B and C).

Grading Tools

An explanation of our suggested grading routine, including sample and blank grading charts, as well as a grading calculator in a popular spreadsheet format.

Requirements and Use

The CD is Windows and Macintosh compatible, and requires Acrobat Reader, which may be downloaded and installed for free at <http://get.adobe.com/reader>.

WINDOWS OS

If the main application does not appear automatically, double-click the file named "Omnibus-VI-TE".

MACINTOSH OS

Double-click the appropriate PDF file in the Teacher's Manual Files folder to open the desired chapter.

PSYCHOLOGY

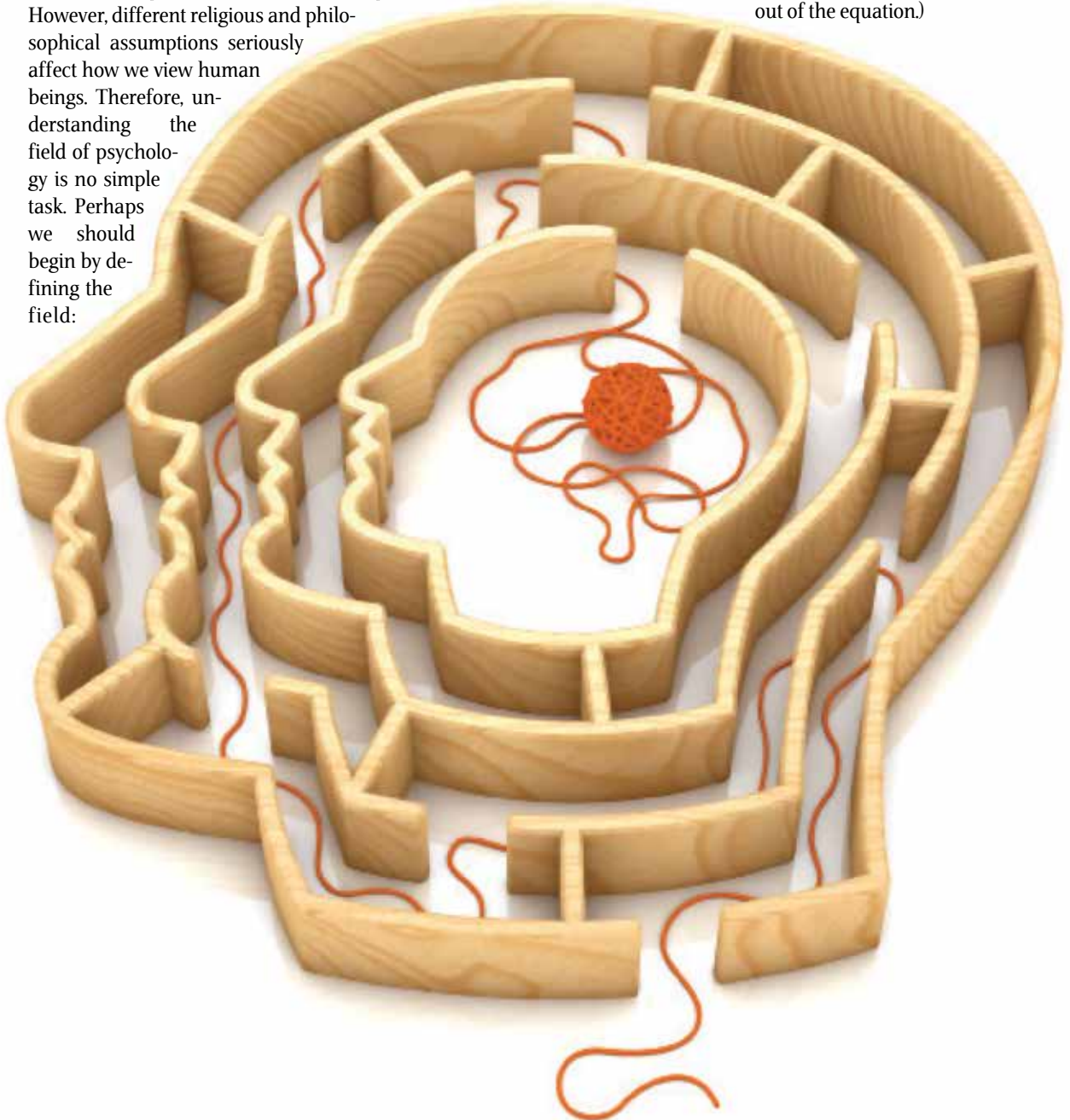
Objective evidence and certitude are doubtless very fine ideals to play with, but where on this moonlit and dream-visited planet are they found?

—William James

What is Psychology?

Human beings are the pinnacle of God's creation and the psychological study of people is arguably one of the most complex and fascinating disciplines there is. However, different religious and philosophical assumptions seriously affect how we view human beings. Therefore, understanding the field of psychology is no simple task. Perhaps we should begin by defining the field:

psychology is the science of the immaterial (invisible) aspect of individual human beings. It is the study of what Christians call the "soul" (the Greek word *psyche* means soul). The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of contemporary psychology, in light of its underlying assumptions, and a roadmap for understanding the field *Christianly*. (Of course, we speak of this discipline as believers, knowing that modern psychology, ironically, tries to explain human beings while leaving the biblical soul out of the equation.)



Psychology Before Modern Psychology

Herman Ebbinghaus, a pioneer in memory research, once quipped, “Psychology has a long past, but only a short history.” Though the current approach to the field goes back just 150 years, systematic reflection and writing on the nature of human beings have been going on for more than two millennia. The ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, for example, carefully described many aspects of the soul, including its sensing, thinking, feeling, and remembering. Even the Bible makes reference to psychological topics, though less systematically. A few centuries later, great Christian thinkers began devoting their attention to a variety of psychological issues—Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, and Calvin—some more philosophically, some more theologically, and some more practically, but while influenced by ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, their psychological reflections were based on a Christian worldview and influenced most by the Bible.

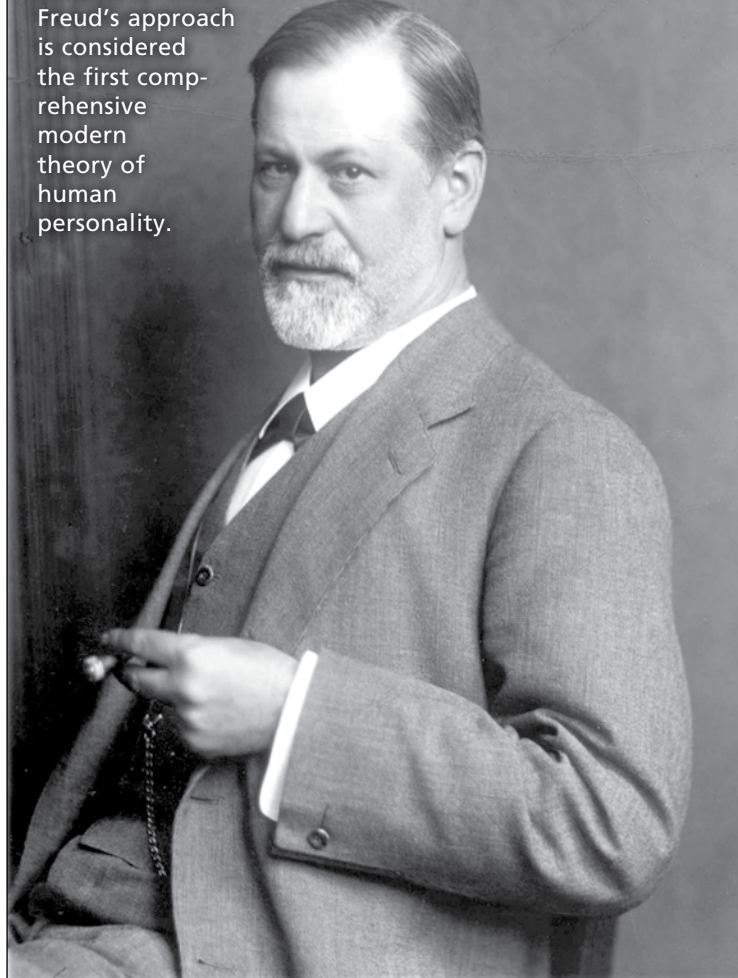
Modern Psychology

Impressed by the accomplishments of the natural sciences (astronomy, physics, and chemistry) and discouraged by the religious conflicts of the 1600s, Western intellectuals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries became increasingly convinced that disagreements between people could not be resolved by appeal to Scripture and church teachings, but only by rational argument and empirical evidence gained through well-designed experiments and evaluated with careful measurement and mathematics. They sought a sure, objective foundation for universal knowledge which all people could use to settle intellectual disputes. Signifying this shift, philosophers like Descartes, Locke, and Kant wrote on psychological topics, but they only used philosophical arguments that appeared neutral with respect to religion, since they did not rely explicitly on their Christian beliefs. These thinkers paved the way for a new kind of psychology that was entirely secular.

Three other influences contributed to the birth of what came to be known as *modern* psychology: research on sensation and the brain, the theory of evolution, and the measurement of mental abilities. In the 1800s natural science methods came to be applied to human life and experience. Investigators began studying the human senses and their limits and how brain damage compromised language and thinking abilities. Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859, and to intellectuals eager to leave behind Christian beliefs, it seemed to offer an intellectually satisfying account of human

Interest in Sigmund Freud’s (1856–1939) psychoanalytic theories grew after his publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1899.

Freud’s approach is considered the first comprehensive modern theory of human personality.



origins based on empirical evidence that required no appeal to the activity of a Creator God. Coming to believe that natural selection favored the fit, in the late 1800s interest grew in individual intellectual abilities, and researchers devised tests and statistics to measure the competitive differences between people. Such influences fit well with the growing allegiance to a purely naturalistic worldview that came to characterize modernism.

The first psychology laboratory was established by Wilhelm Wundt at the University of Leipzig in 1879. This is commonly seen as the birth of modern psychology, a secular version based exclusively on natural science methods, which were believed to provide a sure foundation that would yield universal (that is, religiously neutral) psychological knowledge. One of the first Americans to travel to Europe to study this psychology

was William James. He published a definitive review of the field in 1890, called *The Principles of Psychology*, in which he declared that “psychology is a natural science.” The American Psychological Association (APA) was formed two years later.

Modern psychology quickly became the only recognized approach for understanding individual human beings in American universities, a dominance that has continued to the present. Reflecting the norms of the natural sciences, the goal of modern psychology is the description, explanation, and prediction of human brain function, behavior, and thought, all from a secular standpoint. Over the past hundred years the field has flourished as investigators have used an ever-expanding set of experimental and statistical techniques to explore ever-expanding areas of human nature, including physiology, neuroscience, sensation and perception, cognition (memory, reasoning, problem-solving, and intelligence), human development, motivation, personality, psychopathology, psychotherapy, and social influence and relationships. More research than you care to read has been published on such diverse topics as color blindness, the importance of bonding relationships in infancy (called *attachments*), the role of the neurotransmitter serotonin in depression, the formation of long-term memories, the relation between violence in media and aggressive behavior, the best counseling skills, and the dysfunction of group dynamics. At this point the amount of information amassed in a

single sub-discipline of the field is enormous, and the

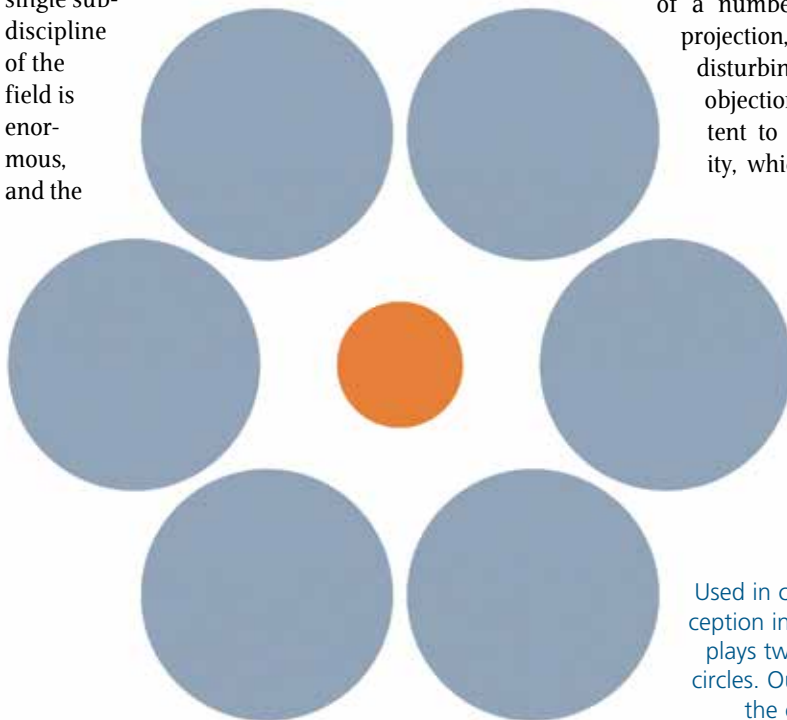
value of most of this research is self-evident.

Given the influence of postmodernism of late across the academy, one might expect contemporary psychology to be moving away from its modernist roots. However, the American Psychological Association is in some ways still strengthening them. In a recent blueprint for undergraduate education, the APA makes the case that psychology programs should continue to emphasize empirical research since it considers psychology to be a STEM discipline (STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics).

Overview of Modern Psychology

To understand the voluminous and diverse findings of modern psychology, we will consider some of the major models of the person that have developed in modern psychology, as well as representative theorists of each view.

Sigmund Freud developed the *psychoanalytic* approach, credited as being the first comprehensive modern theory of human personality. According to Freud, personality can be divided into levels of consciousness (conscious, preconscious, and unconscious) and into three structures, the id (the unconscious realm of primitive desires), ego (the conscious personality), and superego (the realm of conscience, morality, and social pressure). Adults unconsciously seek to reduce the tension created by the conflicting desires of the id and superego. To achieve a state of intrapsychic reduction of tension (equilibrium), Freud proposed the existence of a number of defense mechanisms including projection, denial, and repression, which keep disturbing thoughts out of awareness. One objectionable feature of this model is the extent to which it assumes unconscious activity, which is difficult to measure objectively.



Used in cognitive psychology to investigate perception in the brain, the Ebbinghaus Illusion displays two dots surrounded by larger or smaller circles. Our brains have difficulty perceiving that the orange dots are actually the same size.



Modern psychology was born when Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) established the first psychology laboratory at the University of Leipzig in Germany. Wundt is called the “father of experimental psychology.”

In order to uncover unconscious thoughts, feelings, and impulses, psychoanalysis uses free association (saying whatever comes to one's mind), projective tests (like the Rorschach ink blot test), and most important to Freud himself, dream analysis. Freud's most controversial theory was his model of psychosexual stages of development. Though rejected by many in the field today, the concepts of Oedipal complex and the oral, anal, phallic and genital stages are well-known and still discussed. Freud believed individuals are supposed to move through the stages without becoming fixated. Fixation at a particular stage results in corresponding adult personality problems. His most important contribution was the development of psychoanalysis to heal people from psychological problems. Freudian psychoanalysis placed the client on a couch with the therapist behind and out of sight. It often took months or years, and focused on uncovering unresolved issues in the unconscious. Over the years, serious criticisms have been leveled against his theory and therapy, even by some of his followers. For instance,

Erikson, Horney, and Adler criticized Freud for placing too much emphasis on the impact of the first few years of life on personality development, for presenting an overly negative view of human nature, and for overemphasizing the role of biological factors in development.

Rejecting the notion of unconscious drives and motivations, John Watson and later B.F. Skinner proposed that psychology focus strictly on overt behavior in order for it to be an objective science, along the lines of the natural sciences. *Behaviorism* asserted that the behavior of all organisms, including humans, is caused and maintained by two types of simple, associative learning. *Classical conditioning* involves pairing a new stimulus (like a bell) with an unlearned stimulus (like food), so that the new stimulus produces the same behavior as the unlearned stimulus does (salivation). Operant conditioning is even simpler: it uses a stimulus (called a reinforcement or a punishment) to shape behaviors in desired directions. Operant conditioning is used in animal training and throughout human life (e.g., getting paid for work is an example of reinforcement).

Reacting against the determinism of the psychoanalytic and behaviors perspectives, the *humanistic* approach focused on the healthy side of the human personality and emphasized growth, human freedom and responsibility, and the experience of the individual in the present. Carl Rogers developed the “person-centered” approach to therapy. Rogers believed that all people naturally develop towards health and fulfillment, to the extent possible given the barriers in life. The therapist's job is to establish a healthy relationship with the client that provides unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathy, which enable the client to resolve their own problems.

Social learning theorists made the behaviorist model more humane by explaining how people's expectations and values of reinforcements assist in the prediction of human behavior. Albert Bandura's research found that humans can learn behavior without being reinforced, but just by observing the behavior of others.

Jean Piaget developed a comprehensive and influential theory of *cognitive development*. Piaget described two basic mental processes that cause change in all human understanding: assimilation (forming a new mental *schema* based on new information) and accommodation (fitting new information into an established schema). He also described the global changes that occur in children's understanding as they pass through four stages of cognitive development. He discovered that children of different ages comprehend the world with qualitatively different “systems of understanding,” leading in adolescence to the ability to reason using formal logic.

Critical Issues

In spite of its amazing accomplishments in its short history, questions need to be raised about the limitations of modern psychology and its current dominance in the field. Postmodern and cross-cultural psychologists, for example, have questioned the possibility of developing a universal science of human beings that applies to all people for all time in all cultures and have criticized most contemporary psychological research for being too westernized and focused on the individual.

But modern psychologists themselves acknowledge the challenges they face. Most of psychology is concerned with intangible aspects of human life that cannot be directly observed and measured. For example, a psychological researcher might collect observable, measurable data from the performance of 100 people on an intelligence test, but the real focus of interest is the people's intelligence, which is intangible. The observable data is necessarily one step removed from the actual intangible object of the research. Contemporary psychology research takes such matters into account mathematically and by replicating previous studies, but this "gap" between the data and the object of psychological interest keeps psychologists from claiming absolute certitude about their findings and the conclusions they can draw from them. Even more problematic, all psychological science involves making some assumptions that cannot be empirically proven (Koch, 1981). For instance, in order to investigate the process of becoming a mature person, one must have some understanding of what a mature human looks like, and different communities disagree about their maturity ideals.

Some contemporary psychologists have also criticized modern psychology's reliance on natural science methods (see Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003). They point out that some psychological features of human beings, such as human freedom, cannot properly be described just using the methods of the natural sciences. As a result, it is necessary to use *human science* methods as well, for example, narrative, ethnographic, and phenomenological (Creswell, 2007).

The Christian faith has its own set of concerns about modern psychology. To begin with, while Christians affirm that knowledge can be gained through the scientific method, there is a greater recognition that human finitude and fallenness impose restrictions on our pursuit for knowledge, regardless of our research methods. In fact, the human (or social) sciences are especially susceptible to what has been called the "noetic effects of sin," the distorting effects of sin on human understanding and research (see Moroney, 1999). Such assumptions should lead Christians to be humble about their own psychological

claims, but also to develop a "hermeneutic of suspicion" regarding psychologies based on distorted worldviews, like naturalism, which allow for no reference to God or the supernatural. Religious neutrality is a modern myth (Clouser, 2005). From a Christian standpoint, one cannot exclude God in the study of the images of God. Modern psychology, therefore, dramatically misinterprets the transcendent, God-oriented nature of human beings and views human life solely instrumentally and adaptively. For instance, it has been common in modern psychology to see concepts such as agape-love, altruism, free will, and belief in God treated as illusions and considered to be merely chemical processes in the brain that are a function of social experiences. (This is an example of *reductionism*, especially common among adherents of naturalism, a view that reduces all unique, higher-level human experience and activity to lower-level natural processes that humans have in common with the rest of the natural world.)

To understand better the impact of worldview assumptions on one's psychology, let us consider the following hypothetical interaction from the standpoint of naturalism and Christianity. During a conversation Jesse tells Jacob he doesn't have the money he needs to fix his car and get to work the following week. Jacob tells Jesse he would like to give him the money he needs, and he does not care if Jesse pays it back. Jesse expresses his gratitude repeatedly, takes the money, and they part ways. Believing that all human actions are fundamentally motivated by self-interest, an adherent of naturalism will interpret the interaction accordingly, for example, saying that Jacob's action was an attempt to hold power over Jesse for a future favor, whereas Jesse's response was merely a kind of ingratiation, performed in the hope of gaining more resources from Jacob in the future. Because of the Christian doctrine of sin, a Christian might agree that motives of crass self-interest could be at work. However, believing also that humans are created in God's image, there is also the possibility that this interaction manifested human virtue, where Jacob's action was a sincere attempt to give sacrificially to another and Jesse's response was a grateful reaction to Jacob's altruism. Such interpretive differences will decidedly affect the kind of empirical investigation the respective psychologists conduct and what they look for.

Modern psychology has yielded great gains in our understanding of many aspects of human nature, but we know now that the quest for a sure foundation for universal human knowledge that led to the development of modern psychology was misguided. "Foundationalism has failed, but [this] does not lead to the opposite errors of relativism or skepticism. We must begin with faith" (MacIntyre, 1990, p. 42).

A Christian Response

All human knowledge is founded on basic beliefs that cannot be proven to the satisfaction of skeptics (Plantinga, 1983). Likewise, all psychological knowledge entails unproven assumptions and begins with faith. The Dutch theologian and prime minister Abraham Kuyper (1898) argued that the enlightening effects of regeneration on Christians ought to lead to two kinds of human science: one based on naturalism, that considers the way humans are now to be normal, and the other based on Christianity, that considers the way humans are now to be tragically compromised by human sin and alienation from God, and therefore *needing* regeneration.

How would a distinctly Christian psychology differ from modern psychology? It would flow from a Christian anthropology (model of humanity): all human beings are created in the image of God but they currently exist in a fallen condition, alienated from their Creator, and their psychological capacities are accordingly compromised. However, through faith in Christ, humans become reconciled to their Creator, a triune God who has begun a partial restoration of their psychological capacities that is realized in Christian community and will be perfected in the age to come. The Scriptures give us some divinely inspired psychological knowledge (but not *all* the psychological knowledge God has), so the Bible has a primary role to play in a Christian psychology, along with the work of Christian thinkers and ministers over the centuries.

The goal for the Christian psychologist is to think about humans like God does. Because God has not revealed everything he knows about humans in the Bible, Christian psychologists will need to do their own research and they will also want to learn all that they can from modern psychology. For example, they will use all valid methods to study human beings, and natural science methods have proven their worth. However, their knowledge of, consent to, and love-relationship with God will provide the ultimate context for their use of all psychological methods and practices (Coe & Hall, 2010). "Recognizing God is required for the most comprehensive psychology" (Johnson, 1997, p. 16). In addition, believing

that all humans are made in God's image and confident that God's creation grace is the source of all good in culture and science, Christians should expect that modern psychologists will discover plenty of psychological knowledge and contribute to many worthwhile activities (e.g., the mental health system). But their faith also leads them to expect

that there will be distortions in their psychology, the closer the psychological topic is to the central issues of human life (Brunner, 1946). To cite just one example, belief in God (or at least the divine) is ubiquitous among humans, yet psychology of religion is marginalized in modern psychology, showing up in few "Introduction to Psychology" textbooks.

Christians in psychology therefore must work towards a psychology that is thoroughly Christian. This means, first, creatively engaging in psychological theory-building that is foundationally and explicitly Christian. Not only will this honor God, but it will give us a more accurate and complete picture of human beings. For instance, classic social psychology studies on conformity

One of the weaknesses of Freud's psychoanalytical model is the extent to which it assumes unconscious activity, which is difficult to measure. Along with free association and dream analysis, the Rorschach inkblot test has been used to try to detect a subject's underlying thought processes.



and obedience have frequently focused on how these features of social life can lead to negative consequences such as aggression, also a concern to Christians. However, with Christian assumptions of human nature Christians may more readily recognize the positive role conformity and obedience can play in establishing and maintaining order in culture. Some Christian

like beliefs about sin (Watson, Morris, Loy, Hamrick, & Grizzle, 2007), beliefs about grace (Sisemore, et al, 2010; Watson, et al, 2010), Christian wisdom (Kwon, 2009), distinctly Christian therapy (Aten, Hook, Johnson, & Worthington, 2011), Christian postformal cognitive development (Johnson, 1998), and Christian self-representation (Johnson & Kim, unpublished manuscript).

Finally, this means developing distinctly Christian models of counseling and psychotherapy. More work has probably been done by Christians in this area of psychology than any. For example, there are models of transformational psychology (Coe & Hall, 2010), Catholic psychotherapy (Dilsaver, 2009; Zeiders, 2004), Orthodox psychotherapy (Chrysostomos, 2007), Reformed counseling and psychotherapy (Johnson, 2007), and many others.

Translation of Modern Psychology Truth into a Christian Psychology

Yet Christian psychology should not and need not do everything itself. So it is very interested in the work of modern psychology. Wherever modern psychologists have done good work (that is, work that is not very distorted by secularism), Christians should receive it with gratitude (1 Tim. 4:4–6). As Kuyper (1898) has said, “What has been well done by one need not be done again by you” (p. 159). This probably applies to most of modern psychology.

At the same time, in another sense, what is left out is *everything* (the triune God and his salvation and a Christian anthropology)! So, just how much a modern, secular perspective is distorting the psychological topic in a text or lecture will have to be carefully evaluated every time. This requires reading, critiquing, and wrestling with secular theories, research, and clinical practice that may on the surface seem reasonable and appropriate, but analyzed in the light of the Christian faith are found to fall short of God’s comprehensive understanding. Because of modern psychology’s commitment to study empirical reality rigorously, combined with its secular orientation, there will generally be fewer sins of commission than of omission. That is, from a Christian standpoint, the primary problem of modern psychology is what is left out, because modern psychologists do not share the pretheoretical assumptions necessary to recognize features of human beings that Christians do, like the image of God, sin, and the activity of God.

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ing has begun regarding the emotions (Elliott, 2006; Roberts, 2008), personality (Spiedell, 2002), Christian postformal cognitive development (Johnson, 1996), happiness (Charry, 2010), and Søren Kierkegaard’s psychology (Evans, 1990).

Second, this means doing empirical research that is grounded in the Christian faith, for example, studying the attribution beliefs of Christians, indwelling sin, stages of spiritual development, the identity and self-representations (like old self/new self) of Christians, true shame and guilt, Christian perfectionism, same-sex attraction and gender disorders, and so on, all from a Christian perspective. So far Christian psychologists have begun to investigate just a few psychological topics

To oversimplify, the Christian student of psychology will sometimes have to “translate” the understandings of modern psychology into a Christian psychology language-system. This requires a good understanding of Christian psychology, the modern psychology concept of interest, and practice in such translation work. Concepts that are little distorted (like “neuron”) should be simply brought over into a Christian psychology; whereas concepts that are antithetical to a Christian psychology should be rejected (like Maslow’s notion of “self-actualization”). Most modern psychology understandings will be somewhere in between, requiring some Christian modification before being brought in. Consider, for example, the concept of self-esteem. A Christian orientation will vary greatly from a modern approach, since Christians believe that value is ultimately established by God (and not the self). Nonetheless, there are many findings in the modern self-esteem literature that are helpful. Modern theorists, for example, have postulated that self-esteem is related to interpersonal dynamics. Such an insight is thoroughly compatible with Christian ideas of relationship, community, and interdependence.

Finally, a Christian psychology should also develop a literature that is constructively critical of the distortions evident in modern psychology (as well as in other psychologies, e.g., Buddhist psychology). Exemplary work with this agenda includes Vitz’s critique of Freud (1988) and of humanism in personality and clinical psychology (1994), Adams’s critique of Freudian and humanistic therapy, and deterministic psychiatry (1970), and various analyses of therapeutic and personality models (Jones & Butman, 1991; Roberts, 1994; Browning & Cooper, 2004).

Christian psychology might seem to be out of step with contemporary psychology. However, when the discussion broadens to include philosophy of science, it becomes apparent that modern psychology is out of step, for contemporary philosophy of science by and large rejected modernist assumptions decades ago (Ratzsch, 1986). Indeed, Christian psychology is simply taking its cue from Christian philosophy (see Plantinga, 2000), which has been paving the way for a renewal of radical Christian scholarship in all the disciplines for some time now.

Working with Modern Psychologists

Nonetheless, Christians should not hesitate to work with modern psychologists wherever they can. This will be easy in areas of psychology where worldview assumptions make little difference in understanding human nature (e.g., neuropsychology, animal learning, and basic psychological structures, like cognitive and emotion

systems). Moreover, all members of a culture ought to participate in its university and mental health systems. So Christians are free to wisely consider how and where they might participate as Christian minorities in fields that are currently dominated by a modern majority.

The Christians who have done the best at such participation tend to call themselves “integrationists,” since they believe that Christians should integrate their faith with contemporary psychology. Though we are more critical of the secular worldview influences in contemporary psychology, we greatly appreciate their work. In some cases they have contributed to the shape of contemporary psychology, using modern rules with a Christian agenda (e.g., Everett Worthington on forgiveness and Robert Emmons on gratitude). Moreover, significant changes have been occurring in contemporary psychology over the past two decades that should excite all Christians (e.g., a growing openness to generic spirituality and religion and positive psychology’s investigations of human virtue).

A Pluralist Set of Psychologies

In the future it seems likely that pluralist, democratic cultures like ours, helped by the postmodern critique of modernism, will no longer view the human sciences as universalizing disciplines based on a single worldview. Instead, it will be widely acknowledged that human sciences like psychology require that their scientists utilize their worldview assumptions in their work, so they should make explicit those assumptions. This is necessarily the case, because human beings are socioculturally-constituted, so, contrary to the “neutral” modernist agenda, it is impossible to remove one’s worldview assumptions from one’s human science work and duplicitous to try. This will result in a pluralist set of psychologies (modern, feminist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and so on), agreeing where they can (in many areas of psychology, see above), but articulating different approaches in those areas of psychology that are more *worldview-dependent* (e.g., personality, psychopathology, therapy, and social psychology).

This is not as controversial as it sounds, since even now modern psychology is not as unified as is commonly supposed. The field is composed of many different sub-disciplines, some of which vary tremendously in their orientation and some of their assumptions (e.g., neuropsychology, cognitive psychology, and clinical psychology). We are only pointing out that that worldview differences also affect one’s view of human beings, so, if they are taken seriously, it will necessarily result in a single discipline that has a common core in some areas, but multiple psychologies in other areas, each based on a different worldview. (This, of course, does not mean that all worldviews are equal. Different “psychologies” built on different

worldviews will be more or less effective based on how close their assumptions about man correspond to the Christian Worldview—that is, reality.)

Conclusion

Contemporary psychology constitutes a vast, complex, and remarkable human science. However, it is currently dominated by a modern, secular orientation. Christian students of contemporary psychology will benefit from understanding well their Christian faith and their own worldview assumptions, particularly a Christian understanding of human beings and salvation in Christ. There is tremendous value in contemporary psychology, but Christians need to be wary of its secular distortions. As students move through their study of psychology, it is hoped that they will develop a sophisticated Christian understanding of the field and that some will feel called to contribute to a distinctly Christian version. While William James despaired of certainty on this planet, Christians can more confidently base their psychological knowledge and practice on the divine revelation found in Scripture, acknowledge the limits of human knowledge, and find the greatest kind of certitude and happiness through faith in Christ.

—C. Eric Jones & Eric L. Johnson

For Further Reading

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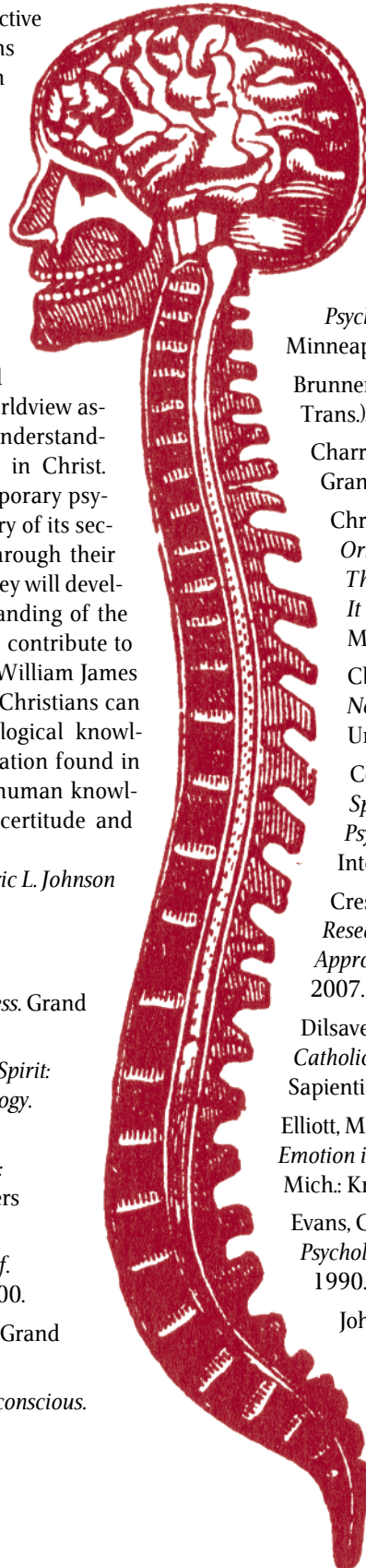
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The modern world is full of conundrums. It is a place that is dedicated to (even worships at some points) human rationality, and yet it is full of folly and some irrational decisions that seem hard to even imagine were they not true. The robust Christendom of the Middle Ages was flawed in many ways, but it was alive. Many in the modern world seem to vacillate between denying God and hating Him. These two reactions make no sense together, but we see people embrace them in the modern world. This schizophrenia comes mainly from the Enlightenment, but we can see it most clearly in Milton's Satan. He chooses Hell to be away from God, but in cutting himself off from God, he cuts himself off from life. The modern world and all of us pay a high price for this folly. God's plan, however, moves forward. New foundations are laid. In the Omnibus series, we have not given you "learning," but rather, as Dorothy Sayers put it, the "tools of learning." We have sought to provide some guidance and oversight with these works so you would know how to proceed on your own when there is no guidance and oversight. The world is before you now. Go, and God bless you in it.