

## INTEGRATION AND THE FULLER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

by  
John G. Finch

"The primary consideration of the mystic Boehme is thus not for a philosophic concept of God which defines God's being, but for a genuine spiritual relationship by which man looks to God as the spiritual power which determines his will and changes his life...

"Only the newborn man is able to direct the lost world back to God as the source of salvation...

"Some years before Boehme, Johann Arndt in his four books on True Christianity, had shown that the Bible describes holiness, not learning, as the ideal desired by God for man...

"All the unrest in the world is caused by the inner anxiety of man. Boehme agrees with Augustine that only the man who has found peace of heart in God is able to bring the world to peace..." pp. xiv - xv, Jacob Boehme: The Way to Christ; tr. Peter Erb.

"An uneducated cobbler, Boehme ... first in the history of human thought, has made freedom the first foundation of being, freedom is to him deeper and more primary than all being, deeper and more primary than God himself'....

"By my own powers I am as blind as the next man, but through the spirit of God, my own inborn spirit pierces all things" p. 223, Freedom and Destiny; Rollo May.

The Fuller Graduate School of Psychology exists as a commitment to demand from Seminary students, and generous donor, to explicate a

Christian Psychology. As I understand a Christian Psychology, it is Christian because it is based on a Christian view of man and all that implies. This was the reason for the founding of the School of Psychology, i.e., to integrate psychology and the Christian faith. Therefore, this objective must be kept in mind as a top priority explicitly and implicitly. Every course, every faculty member should actively embrace this objective.

2. The factor common to both disciplines is man. Psychology's preoccupation is to understand the nature of man by all means at its disposal, i.e., scientific, philosophical, phenomenological, existential, yes, and theological. To omit any of these modalities short changes a full understanding. Theology's preoccupation is with man in relation to God and man.

"Mere purposive rationality unaided by such phenomena as art, religion, dream and the like, is necessarily pathogenic and destructive of life; and its virulence springs specifically from the circumstances that life depends upon interlocking circuits of contingency, while consciousness can see only such short arcs of such circuits as human purpose may direct... That is the sort of world we live in - a world of circuit-structures - and love can survive only if wisdom (i.e., a sense of recognition of the fact of circuitry) has an effective voice." p. 222, quote from Bateson in Freedom and Destiny; Rollo May.

3. God is only to be learned about in order that man may experience Him more fully. Man can only experience God in his own being - existentially. Learning about God is a very different matter from experiencing God.

4. There are numerous blocks between knowing intellectually and

experiencing that knowledge, at a feeling level. The task of Psychology is to unblock the defenses that prohibit knowledge from becoming experience-wisdom. The task of Christian Psychology is to understand and facilitate the dynamics of the Christian experience.

5. The School of Psychology has been in existence since 1964 with a clear mandate to integrate Psychology with the Christian faith. By this time, and with all these years of specialization, the faculty and alumni should have acquired a unique grasp of the meaning and method of integration. Is it not appropriate, at this time, for the faculty and alumni to take over the Symposium to clarify for ourselves, and demonstrate to the world, what a Christian Psychology represents.

6. It is time for a careful appraisal of the Integration Program. To this end, a questionnaire should be issued to, and an answer expected from, every student in the program

and alumni. Questions such as the following may be asked: (of course others may be added)

a) Is Integration a meaningful endeavor?

b) State as clearly as you can how or what you perceive Integration to be.

c) Was the notion of integration a major or serious attraction in bringing you to the Fuller Graduate School of Psychology?

d) Has the program at Fuller met your expectations? Rate it on a scale of 1 - 10.

e) Rate on a scale of 1 - 10 faculty members in terms of what you perceive to be their actual participation in the Integration of Psychology and Christian faith.

f) What percentage of the student body is committed to Integration or actively pursuing integration? How do you see this being done?

g) What, in the program, most impacts you in terms of integration?



*"I guess I have that indefinable something."*



## RESPONSE TO THE FINCH "WHITE PAPER"

by  
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Once again John Finch has done us a service by his treatise, "Intergation and the Fuller Graduate School of Psychology." He wrote this in response to my request for a "white paper" from him on these issues. Although there is no question in our mind that the integration of psychology and theology--faith and practice--is at the center of our "Reason for being," we owe John a debt of gratitude for reminding us of this fact and calling our attention to its importance. He functions as a worthy catalyst and a formidable stimulus!

In response to his ideas let me say the following: I applaud John's sensitivity to the common concern that both theology and psychology have for persons. Psychology takes its place alongside theology (and philosophy, biology, economics and sociology for that matter) in a consuming effort to understand human beings. In a school such as ours, all avenues toward human understanding are "fair game." John agrees with this and encourages us in our endeavors even though he and we alike may become impatient with where our studies lead us at times.

John's emphasis on experiencing rather than that of abstract conceptualizing

is long standing and worthy of consideration. It reflects a persistent concern I have had about how integration is best learned. We are a school and must, quite naturally, offer courses. But many of us will attest that we learned as much about integration in such experiences as intensive therapy as we did in any class we have ever taken. Of course, all persons are not alike and courses have their place in the scheme of things. I am, however, committed to a broad understanding of integration and am deeply invested in designing ways in which God (and integration) can be experienced, not just learned about.

We are about to enter the third decade of our existence as a school. I'm not as sure as John is about what should have been accomplished in integration by this time. But I do share his impatience that we move the enterprise into "high gear" and that we make known the impact of our efforts. It would be a tragic mistake to judge the results of the past as paltry or inadequate. Many of our graduates are indeed, quietly but confidently, living out their faith in their practices. The faculty is, to a person, deeply committed to the task of modeling the integration of their discipline with theology. The twelve years of the Finch Symposium have resulted in eight books which, while not fully satisfying anyone, have been received as genuine contributions to the integration dialogue and are vivid testimonies to the complexity of the integration tasks.

John Finch, and all of the faculty, would have wished for more definitive products to show for our integration efforts. John's testimony, through his writings and courses, has been without question a most consistent, the best conceived and the most welcomed model presented to students over these years. Would that some of the rest of us could have said it as well and as clearly as John! However, John knows, as we

I do, that the individuals are unique and the issues complex. Each person brings his/her own perspective. Good thinking is going on. Writings are being published. We have eschewed simple answers to hard problems. The future is bright - not dark.

Finally, I agree with John that careful appraisal of how integration is proceeding is needed. In addition to the questionnaire John proposes (which will be distributed this month) the following procedures have been initiated: 1) A periodic questionnaire of alumni, which I began several years ago, will be reinstigated; 2) An inclusion of an integration component in the clinical exams which began last year will be continued; 3) A question regarding "attention to integration issues" is being added to all course evaluations; 4) A new end-of-the-fourth-year "integration guidance evaluation" of all students being instigated in the 1983-84 academic year; 5) Several consultations with new students, older students and alumni are being held this spring; 6) Several informal integration groups are now meeting on their own (one of these resulted from John's class this spring); 7) A new emphasis on "practical integration" resembling the old church consultation service will begin next fall; 8) The Church-Based Human Services network in the Psychology Center soon will afford new opportunities for integration; 9) Integration supervision in each component of the Psychological Center is being proposed for next year; 10) The two foundation courses in integration will be combined into one next year and this Introduction to Integration seminar will be required of all new students during the fall quarter; and 11) John's course in Christian psychology and his intensive therapy which often follows it will be highlighted as optimal opportunities to experience integration invivo.

I do not list these developments as if they reflect a complete or master plan for integration. We made a Master Plan several years ago and it is being revised. I realize these projects are only partial attempts and that much remains to be done. However, they do reflect a serious and deep commitment to the task and they are an indication of the School's continuing attempts to make the central focus of our training the integration of clinical psychology with Christian faith. It would be a gross misperception to assume that such a concern had ever been other than the highest priority in all our minds. John Finch knows this and, as he said in his letter to me, he is "most willing to do anything to enhance and facilitate this endeavor." I believe him and count him among the integration program's most loyal supporters and loving critics. He wants the best and we can count on him to work hard for it.

