

CHRISTUS CULTURA

The Journal of Christianity in the Social Sciences



Volume 3: Issue 1 | April 2021

Mission Statement

Our mission at *Christus Cultura* is to explore and highlight in innovative, cutting edge ways the intersection of Christian faith and the human experience as expressed in the study of the social sciences, including history, political science, psychology, sociology, criminology, international studies, Christian and missionary studies, and much more.

Vision

To that end, contributors to this journal present original research and solicited items—from articles and essays to book reviews and commentaries—on issues important to the Christian life as it is experienced now, in the past, or could be experienced in the future. Our scope is intentionally broad, both in terms of geography and time, as well as in content, because we seek to provide readers with a rich mosaic of the ways in which the influence of a single man, a humble carpenter from Nazareth, has continued to shape the human experience, society, and culture in profound ways. It is our sincere desire that readers will find the journal rewarding and spiritually life-enriching and that the content presented will serve, whether in profound or subtle ways, as a vehicle of the Great Commission (*Matthew 28:16-20*).

Christus Cultura, Staff

Managing Editor,

Charles William Carter, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of History
Shorter University

Associate Editor,

Jared A. Linebach, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and
Chair of the Department of Social Sciences
Shorter University

Webmaster,

Andrew Bailey
Shorter University



Authors: Burton & Anita Folsom
Publisher: Thomas Nelson, 2015

--Review by Loudon S.B. Suggs, Shorter
University

*Faith Forward Future: Moving Past Your
Disappointments, Delays, and Destructive
Thinking*

Author: Chad Veach
Publisher: Thomas Nelson, 2017

--Review by Andrea Stiles, Shorter
University

*True Faith and Allegiance: A Story of
Service and Sacrifice in War and Peace*

Author: Alberto R. Gonzalez
Publisher: Thomas Nelson, 2016

--Review by Justin Pettegrew, Shorter
University

*Jesus Politics: How to Win Back
the Soul of America*

Author: Phil Robertson
Publisher: Thomas Nelson, 2020

--Review by Rick Crawford, Shorter
University

*Loving My Actual Neighbor: 7
Practices to Treasure the People Right in
Front of You*

Authors: Alexandra Kuykendall
Publisher: Baker Books, 2019

--Review by Anthony Catanzaro, Shorter
University

Contents

Letter from Editors

Scholarly Articles Section

**Incarnation, the One and the Many:
A Christological Resolution to
Philosophy's First Great Problem**

--Brenton H. Cook, Bob Jones University

**Understanding Criminality: A
Proposition for a Neoteric, Socio-
Psychological Theory**

--Aurora Krec, Liberty University

Evil: A Psychological Exploration

--Jaycee Hallford, Grand Canyon
University & Jared A. Linebach, Shorter
University

**Inner Group Conflict in a Federal
Law Enforcement Agency**

--Daniel Augusto, Liberty University

**Exposing Evil Deeds: The Debbie
Smith Act**

--Deborah J. Link, Liberty University

Scholarly Book Reviews Section

*Death on Hold: A Prisoner's Desperate
Prayer and the Unlikely Family Who
Became God's Answer.*

Contributors to This Edition

Daniel Augusto, Ph.D. Candidate in
Criminal Justice, Liberty University

Anthony Catanzaro, Undergraduate History
Major, Shorter University

Brenton H. Cooke, Ph.D. (Bob Jones
University), Associate Professor of
Bible and Church History, Bob Jones
University

Rick Crawford, Ph.D. (Georgia State
University), Associate Professor of
History, Shorter University

Jaycee Hallford, Graduate Student in
Psychology, Grand Canyon University

Aurora Krec, Graduate Student in Criminal
Justice, Liberty University

Deborah Link, Graduate Student in Criminal
Justice, Liberty University

Jared A. Linebach, Ph.D. (Alliant
International University), Associate
Professor of Criminal Justice and
Chair of the Department of Social
Sciences, Shorter University

Justin Pettegrew, Ph.D. (Loyola University
Chicago), Professor of History,
Shorter University

Andrea Stiles, M.A. (Harvard University),
Instructor of Psychology, Shorter
University

Acknowledgments

The Editorial Staff would like to thank some individuals who contributed to the design of this journal. **Mr. Andrew Bailey**, the webmaster of Shorter University, designed the logo for the journal. **Dr. Kathi Vosevich** provided warm encouragement when we approached her with the idea of establishing a journal for Christian academics who write on the intersection of Christianity and the Social Sciences. To these individuals, we offer our sincerest gratitude.

Letter from the Editors

Greetings, Dear Readers!

The publication of this edition, the third, of our *Christus Cultura: The Journal of Christianity in the Social Sciences* highlights the scholarly work of our colleagues at Evangelical Christian universities. Their research accomplishments and insights into human issues deserve commendation, and we are proud that these scholars sought out our publication to share their ideas with the broader Christian community.

Given the broad focus of our journal in the social sciences, many interesting issues are addressed in this edition, including the psychology of evil, the application of criminal justice in complex situations, as well as the role of the incarnation and redemption in the Christian tradition. It is our sincere hope that readers find these articles just as stimulating as the editors did.

On a broader note, this year has certainly presented new challenges not only in academia but in society and the world at large. Our nation has seen much pain: everything from civil unrest, fear, and worry about the future to the loss of loved ones due to COVID-19.

Still, we must remember to trust in God, who will see us all through the storms we encounter in life.

As Dr. Linebach stated in the first letter in our inaugural edition:

We, as believers, must keep our final destination in mind in all things, great and small. That destination will be a place of the fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11), a place with no more death or mourning (Revelation 21:4), and a place with no more crying or pain (Revelation 21:4). Given these marvelous promises of the age to come, we long for that time. Though we are not there yet, we can train our thoughts to be heavenward. “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things (Philippians 4:8, ESV). It is our right and privilege as believers to be able to focus on the things above. It is our goal with this journal to help shed an eternal light on events and phenomena in this world.

In Christ,

Charlie Carter & Jared Linebach
Shorter University
Rome, GA
April 1, 2021

INCARNATION, THE ONE AND THE MANY: A CHRISTOLOGICAL RESOLUTION TO PHILOSOPHY'S FIRST GREAT PROBLEM

By Brenton H. Cook, Ph.D.

Bob Jones University



Image Credit: Pixabay

The Quest for a Theory of Everything

Buried 330 feet beneath the border of France and Switzerland lies the world's largest machine, a twenty-seven-kilometer

¹<http://home.web.cern.ch/topics/large-hadron-collider> (accessed 9/25/20).

²An excellent analysis of the modern physicists' quest for a theory of everything from a theistic perspective is Edgar Andrews, *Who Made God? Searching for a Theory of Everything* (Evangelical Press, Carlisle PA, 2009), see esp. chapter 3. For a history of the Large Hadron Collider see Sean Carroll, *The Particle at the*

serpentine coil known as the Large Hadron Collider. Inside this enormous particle accelerator, temperatures reach -271.3 degrees Celsius (-456.25 Fahrenheit), creating an environment where a series of superconducting magnets accelerate particles to nearly the speed of light.¹ When these particles collide they split into subatomic particles, enabling scientists to search for the most basic particle of all, the elusive Higgs Boson.² The total cost for locating the Higgs Boson has been estimated at \$13.25 billion.³ But the actual cost in terms of human investment is incalculable; the Large Hadron Collider represents the culmination of a quest going back approximately 2600 years, the search for the ultimate nature of reality.

Philosophers refer to this quest as the “problem of the one and the many.” Essentially, the problem concerns whether the complexity of the universe can be reduced to some simple substance or whether the universe is sourced in an immaterial reality. Stephen Hawking, the twenty-first century's most illustrious physicist, views Thales of Miletus (c. 624 – c. 546 BC) as the originator of the quest for a theory of everything and the ancient mathematician Pythagoras (c. 570 – c. 495 BC) as the first “theoretical physicist.”⁴ Thales stands at the head of a long line of philosophers and scientists who take a material approach toward resolving the problem; whereas Pythagoras represents another line who take an immaterial approach.

Beginning with Thales, this essay will trace the development of both material and immaterial attempts to resolve the problem by working through the contributions of several ancient philosophers. It will then demonstrate

End of the Universe: How the Hunt for the Higgs Boson leads us to the Edge of a New World (New York: Plume, 2012).

³<http://www.forbes.com/sites/alexknapp/2012/07/05/how-much-does-it-cost-to-find-a-higgs-boson/> (accessed 9/25/20).

⁴Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York, Bantam Books, 2010), 17-19.

that the quest for a solution finds its definitive resolution in the central Christian claim of the incarnation of the Son of God.

Defining the Problem of the One and the Many

Although he overstates his case, C. Marvin Pate argues, “The relationship between the ‘one and the many’ is the key construct that is the driving engine of the history of both Western philosophy and Christian theology.”⁵ The question that first ignited philosophical discourse among the pre-Socratics in the sixth century BC and that continued to occupy the greatest philosophers for centuries thereafter was the question of “being.”⁶ The pre-Socratics were especially interested to discover whether the many—the visible diversity in the world—was reducible to a singular state of existence.⁷

Greek philosophers were not primarily interested in modes of being such a quantity, motion, or life—modes that would eventually be associated with mathematics, physics, and biology—but *being* itself. What does it mean to predicate the notion of “being” or “existence”? Was “being” a singular state participated in by all things having the status of existence? Being, as the ancients would quickly discover, was not merely a noun (a being) but also a verb (to be).⁸

⁵C. Marvin Pate, *From Plato to Jesus: What does Philosophy Have to do With Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 15.

⁶Joseph Owens claims that with Aristotle, “Metaphysical contemplation was established as the supreme purpose of human activity and so as the ultimate end to which all human life, public as well as private, had to be directed.” *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1985), 26.

⁷Frederick Copleston writes, “The Ionian philosophers were profoundly impressed with the fact of change, of birth and growth, decay and death. Spring and Autumn in the external world of nature, childhood and old age in the life of man, coming-into-being and passing-away—these were the obvious and inescapable facts of the universe. . . . Perception of the constant process of

This distinction between noun and verb ultimately led to a distinction in being between material and immaterial being. Etienne Gilson distinguishes between these two kinds of being, arguing that being itself is “existentially neutral.”⁹ Gilson illustrates this neutrality with Immanuel Kant’s distinction between \$100 as a concept and 100 actual dollars. Kant demonstrated that being can be both an immaterial concept and a material substance. This conflict between material and immaterial being was fiercely debated among the early philosophers and finally resolved by the incarnation of Christ.

The Pre-Socratic Quest for Being

Two thought streams roughly paralleling Kant’s distinction between material and immaterial being emerged in early Greek philosophy. The majority of pre-Socratic philosophers initiated the search for being without making a careful distinction between material and immaterial.¹⁰ They simply assumed a material solution could be found. A minority including Anaximander, Pythagoras and Anaxagoras also began to reason beyond a material solution immaterial solutions.

The Quest for a Material Solution

change, of transition from life to death and from death to life, helped to lead him, in the person of the Ionian philosophers, to a beginning of philosophy; for these wise men saw that, in spite of all the change and transition, there must be something permanent.” *A History of Philosophy, Vol. 1 Greece and Rome* (New York: Image Books, 1993), 17, 20.

⁸Etienne Gilson develops this distinction in *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Instituted of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), 2-3.

⁹*Ibid.*, 4

¹⁰Copleston writes, “The antithesis between spirit and matter had not yet been grasped; so that, although they were de facto materialists—in that they assigned a form of matter as the principle of unity and primitive stuff of all things—they can scarcely be termed materialists in our sense of the word.” Copleston, 1:20.

Thales of Miletus first raised the problem of the one and the many when he posed the simple question “what is the world made of?” What motivated the question, and why Thales assumed the answer had to be a singular substance is not clear. Only fragments of his writings survived antiquity. But Aristotle tells us Thales observed moisture was present in all things, and that at the edge of every landmass was *water*. Apparently, the whole earth floated on water.¹¹ Thales may also have observed that water solidified becomes hard, and water vaporized becomes air.

Thales’ view that water is the primordial substance from which all things arise was quickly rejected by his successors. But Thales’ assumption that a unifying principle exists in nature has persisted to the present. Copleston argues,

The only certain and the only really important point about Thales’ doctrine is that he conceived ‘things’ as varying forms of one primary and ultimate element. That he assigns water as this element is his distinguishing historical characteristic, so to speak, but he earns his place as the first Greek philosopher from the fact that he first conceives the notion of Unity in Difference . . . and, while holding fast to the idea of unity,

¹¹Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 983b 20. Aristotle says, “Thales, the founder of this type of philosophy, says the principle is water (for which reason he declared that the earth rests on water), getting the notion perhaps from seeing that the nutriment of all things is moist, and that heat itself is generated from the moist and kept alive by it (and that from which they come to be a principle of all things). He got his notion from this fact, and from the fact that the seeds of all things have a moist nature, and that water is the origin of the nature of moist things.” Aristotle acknowledges that Thales’ view may have preceded Thales. “Some think that even the ancients who lived long before the present generation, and first framed accounts of the gods, had a similar view of nature; for they made Ocean and Tethys the parents of creation, and described the oath of the gods

endeavors to account for the evident diversity of the many.”¹²

Aristotle tells us Anaximenes and Diogenes countered Thales’ view with the claim that “*air* was prior to water, and the most primary of the simple bodies.”¹³ William Lawhead suggests four reasons why Anaximenes found air a compelling solution to the problem of the one and the many. First, air is more extensive than water. Second, air is in all things including water and fire. Third, air is self-supporting unlike water which falls through air. Fourth, air is breathed by all living things.¹⁴

Anaximenes also believed air could account for the problem of change through rarefaction and condensation. He believed warm air eventually becomes fire, and cold air condenses to cloud, then water, then mud and finally to stone thus solving the relationship between diversity and unity.¹⁵ Anaximenes’ view cannot be supported experimentally; nevertheless, the philosopher correctly recognized that a valid solution would need to have a robust explanation for *change*. Anaximenes thus advanced the discussion beyond merely a quest for being, to a recognition that the ultimate source should also account for change from the one to the many.

as being by water.” Ibid. Brian Magee argues that what distinguished philosophers from religionists was their use of reason rather than revelation. “In the first place [the philosophers] were trying to understand the world by the use of their reason, without appealing to religion, or revelation, or authority, or tradition.” *The Story of Philosophy: A Concise Introduction to the World’s Greatest Thinkers and Their Ideas* (New York: Dorling Kindersley, 1998), 12.

¹²Copleston, 1:23.

¹³*Metaphysics*, 984a 5.

¹⁴William Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007), 24.

¹⁵Anthony Kenny, *A New History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 13.

Aristotle tells us that after Anaximenes Hippasus of Metapontium and Heraclitus of Ephesus postulated *fire* as the primeval substance. Like Anaximenes, Heraclitus believed fire could account for change through condensation and liquefaction as it pursues a downward and upward path respectively. Copleston summarizes Heraclitus: “When fire is condensed it becomes moist, and under compression it turns to water; water being congealed is turned to earth. . . . The earth is itself liquefied and from it water comes, and from that everything else; for he refers everything to the evaporation from the sea.”¹⁶

Xenophanes added *earth* to the options thus completing the circle of four basic elements: water, air, fire and earth. The earth, Xenophanes claimed, stretched down beneath his feet to infinity.¹⁷ Unlike his predecessors, Xenophanes does not appear to have attempted an explanation for change. However, Xenophanes does present his readers with an inchoate view of god as distinct from the earth. But even though Xenophanes was a monotheist, his god was impersonal and did not intervene in the terrestrial sphere. Xenophanes makes no effort to connect his one god to the many of creation. But after Xenophanes, god begins to make an appearance in ancient philosophy.¹⁸

Aristotle acknowledges that ultimately these material solutions to the problem of the one and the many were insufficient because they failed to explain such concepts as goodness, beauty and change in nature.

When these men and the principles of this kind had had their day, as the latter

were found inadequate to generate the nature of things men were again forced by the truth itself, as we said, to inquire into the next kind of cause. For it is not likely either that fire or earth or any such element should be the reason why things manifest goodness and beauty both in their being and in their coming to be.¹⁹

Nevertheless, these early philosophers did succeed in raising the fundamental metaphysical question of *existence*. Copleston says, “In general . . . the main importance of the Ionians lies in the fact that they raised the question as to the ultimate nature of things, rather than in any particular answer which they gave.”²⁰

The Quest for an Immaterial Solution

Not all of Thales’ successors countered his water solution with material solutions. Some began proposing immaterial solutions also. Anaximander, who could have been Thales’ pupil, was equally concerned to find the solution to the problem of the one and the many. But Anaximander could not understand how water could be ultimate since it could not account for change. He believed change could only come about through conflict, but how could conflict come about if only one element existed?

Consequently, Anaximander concluded the ultimate principle was indeterminate.²¹ Anaximander called this indeterminate substance *apeiron*, a word that can refer to the “boundless”—because it has

explained. If change, birth and death, growth and decay, are due to conflict, to the encroachment of one element at the expense of another, then . . . it is hard to see why the other elements have not long ago been absorbed in water. Anaximander therefore arrived at the idea, the primary element . . . is indeterminate. It is more primitive than the opposites, being that out of which they come and that into which they pass away.” Copleston, 1:24.

¹⁶Copleston, 1:41.

¹⁷Kenny, 15.

¹⁸On Xenophanes’ view of god, see Lawhead, 29.

¹⁹*Metaphysics*, 984b 8.

²⁰Copleston, 1:27.

²¹“He sought, like Thales, for the primary and ultimate element of all things; but he decided that it could not be any one particular kind of matter, such as water, since water or the moist was itself one of the ‘opposites,’ the conflicts and encroachments of which had to be

no edge—or the “eternal” or “ageless.” The *apeiron* is also infinite in time, otherwise something more primary would have to produce it. According to Lawhead, “The Boundless can be thought of as a reservoir from which all things and their qualities are produced.”²² Or it can be thought of as spinning off infinite worlds.²³ But at the same time, it cannot be predicated of since such predication would imply specific measurable quantities—the very kind of materialism Anaximander attempted to avoid.

Lawhead argues that Anaximander’s significance was “the fact that his theory moves in the direction of more abstract modes of thought.”²⁴ Certainly aspects of the later Christian definition of God are latent in Anaximander’s *apeiron* though it is highly impersonal.

Pythagoras, and the Pythagorean School he founded, also gave an enormous impetus to Anaximander’s quest for an immaterial solution. Pythagoras’ enduring fame rests largely on his contribution to the development of mathematics as a distinct discipline. Mathematics, the Pythagoreans believed, might hold the key to understanding the nature of the universe. Aristotle tells us,

The Pythagoreans, who were the first to take up mathematics, not only advanced this study, but also having been brought up in it they thought its principles were the principles of all things. Since of these principles, numbers are by nature the first, and in numbers they seemed to see many resemblances to the things that exist and come into being—more than in fire and earth and water.²⁵

Pythagoras seems to have been led to the primacy of numbers through his study of music. Aristotle says, “[The Pythagoreans] saw that the modifications and the ratios of the musical scales were expressible in numbers.”²⁶ From this correlation between music and mathematics, Pythagoras further deduced, “Numbers seemed to be the first things in the whole of nature, they supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number.”²⁷

Geometry confirmed Pythagoras’s discoveries. That “things are numbers” can be deduced from the truth that the number one is equivalent to a point. Two points comprise a line. Three points form a surface, and four points make a solid or tetrahedron.²⁸ Thus, by the addition of points, Pythagoras showed that a complex system of numbers lies behind the world of appearances.

The genius of Pythagoras’ solution to the problem of the one and the many derived from its ability to link Anaximander’s *apeiron* as an immaterial principle to the material world of appearances. Numbers limit and quantify the material world. But numbers also relate to the boundless since numbers lead to a contemplation of the infinite.

But Pythagoras’ solution also came up short since pure mathematics can hardly account for the personal aspects of life. For the Pythagoreans, the number ten—the Tetractys—held divine status and was even the recipient of a Pythagorean prayer.

Bless us, divine number, thou who generated gods and men! O holy, holy Tetractys, thou that containest the root

²²Lawhead, 23.

²³“Once things had been separated off, the world as we know it was formed by a vortex movement or *dine*—the heavier elements, earth and water, remaining in the centre of the vortex, fire going back to the circumference and air remaining in between. The earth is not a disc, but a short cylinder ‘like the drum of a pillar.’” Copleston, 1:25.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 24.

²⁵*Metaphysics*, 985b 24.

²⁶*Metaphysics*, 985b 31.

²⁷*Metaphysics*, 986a 1.

²⁸James Jordan is especially helpful on Pythagorean geometry. *Western Philosophy: From Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 23-24.

and source of the eternally flowing creation! For the divine number begins with the profound, pure unity until it comes to the holy four; then it begets the mother of all, the all-comprising, all-bounding, the first-born, the never-swerving, the never-tiring holy ten, the keyholder of all.²⁹

Despite praying to the number ten, the Pythagoreans did not successfully show how number could account for the personal dimensions of human experience.

Lawhead contends that the Pythagoreans made two major contributions to philosophy. First, they correctly emphasized that one's metaphysical theory should have some bearing on how one lives his life. Second, the Pythagoreans emphasized "form" or the "immaterial" over matter.³⁰ This emphasis would influence Plato, Aristotle (to a lesser extent), Plotinus and many early Christian philosophers.

Anaxagoras offered a third alternative to an immaterial solution, although, ironically, he was at times a staunch naturalist.³¹

Anaxagoras borrowed from Empedocles the notion that the world is full of indestructible materials. The mingling of these materials produces objects—a view that anticipated the later Epicurean approach to nature. However, unlike Empedocles, he did not reduce the world to earth, air, fire and water. Rather, he taught that all things composed of parts were ultimately underived.³²

Beyond all these material substances, Anaxagoras posited the existence of *Nous* or mind.³³ *Nous* represents the presence of a primitive intelligent design, or teleology within nature. *Nous*, however, does not create

since matter is eternal. But *Nous* does energize matter. Copleston says, "Nous is not to be thought of as creating matter. Matter is eternal, and the function of the *Nous* seems to be to set the rotatory movement or vortex going in part of the mixed mass, the action of the vortex itself, as it spreads, accounting for the subsequent motion."³⁴ *Nous*, though it lacks the personal characteristics of the biblical god, does bring philosophy a step closer to recognizing a divine intelligence behind the universe.

In summary, the pre-Socratics developed two kinds of solution to the problem of the one and the many. But none of these immaterial solutions ultimately proved satisfactory any more than did the material solutions. Further, none of the pre-Socratics seemed to have contemplated how the material and immaterial might come together in a single solution to the problem of the one and the many.

The Great Debate: Plato and Aristotle continue the Quest for Being

In a famous fresco, *The School of Athens*, the Italian Renaissance painter Raphael depicts the leading philosophers among the ancient Greeks. They are intensely engaged in contemplation, debate and experimentation. These philosophers made enormous contributions to the study of metaphysics, astronomy, mathematics, ethics, history, science and beauty. Nevertheless, Raphael's focal point reminds us there was one great question that was central to ancient philosophy.

The Platonic quest for an immaterial solution

³³Recently the American philosopher Thomas Nagle endorsed a view similar to that of Anaxagoras in *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³⁴*Ibid.*, 71.

²⁹<http://www.biographyonline.net/spiritual/pythagoras.html> (accessed 9/25/2020)

³⁰Lawhead, 27-28.

³¹Lawhead relates that he was exiled from Athens on charges of heresy because he denies the sun was a god, claiming that it was a white-hot stone. *Ibid.*, 38.

³²Copleston, 67.

At the center of Raphael's painting stand the two greatest minds of ancient philosophy, Plato on the left, and his student Aristotle on the right. Plato points upward arguing that philosophers should bend their educational pursuits toward discovering the immaterial, invisible world above. Plato strongly favored the immaterial approach of Anaximander, Pythagoras and Anaxagoras toward a final resolution of the problem of the one and the many. Plato believed philosophy should liberate prisoners from the dark cave of ignorance allowing them to access the higher realm through reason (or through logos). The world of empirical deliverances was a shadow when contrasted with the world of forms outside the cave.³⁵

In his illustration of the Divided Line, Plato divides between the phenomenal (*horāton*) world of appearances accessible by sense perception and the intelligible (*noēton*) world of forms accessible by reason. The phenomenal world initially appears more substantial than the intelligible world. But metaphysically speaking, the phenomenal world is a world of shadows. And epistemologically speaking, this world is merely the world of opinion (*doxa*). On the contrary, the intelligible world is the world of true knowledge (*epistēmē*).³⁶

What drove Plato to these conclusions is not entirely clear. But Myles Burnyeat, reflecting on Plato's divine craftsman in the *Timaeus*, writes, "He wants to see the entire universe as the product of order imposed on disorder, and by order he meant above all mathematical order."³⁷ Anthony Kenny also sees parallels between the *Timaeus* and the biblical account of the world's origin, as well as points of significant departure. The *Timaeus* does suggest the present world had a

beginning when, "The divinity who fashioned it had his eye on an eternal archetype."³⁸ The divinity also brought the universe into existence because he was "good" and "what is good is utterly free from envy or selfishness."³⁹

The Aristotelian Quest for a Material Solution

Despite Plato's ingenious attempts to resolve the problem of the one and the many, his finest student sharply disagreed. Raphael's painting depicts Aristotle offering a contradictory gesture, pointing to the created world of empirical deliverances around them as a legitimate object of study. A scientific investigation of nature dispels Plato's shadows and discovers a beautiful world that is elegantly designed and purposeful, set in motion by the Prime Mover. Aristotle was especially interested in categorizing the various academic subjects and establishing the axioms by which these subjects should be pursued. He was also the first to map out the rules of logical procedure in his *Organon*. Thus Aristotle, though he is not a thoroughgoing naturalist, does lend considerable support to the material resolution to the problem of the one and the many. He is concerned primarily with the visible world rather than the world of Plato's supersensible forms.

For Aristotle, "form" is the principle of development drawing living things to their mature states. Form begins as unrealized potentiality, pursues *telos* and reaches actualization of potentiality or *entelechy*. For example, an acorn is the unrealized potentiality of an oak. The process of becoming an oak is *telos*. And the mature oak tree represents the actualization of

³⁵Plato, *The Republic*, Bk. 7 ch. 6-7.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Bryan Magee, *The Great Philosophers: An Introduction to Western Philosophy* (New York: Oxford, 1987), 27.

³⁸Kenny, 55.

³⁹Ibid., 55.

potentiality. The whole process is one of *entelechy*.

For Aristotle, form divides into four causes (1) material (2) efficient (3) formal and (4) final cause. To illustrate, consider a sculptor's work on a statue. The statue's material cause is marble—that is, what it is made of. Its efficient cause is the action of the hammer and chisel. Its formal cause is that which gives it identity; did the sculpture carve a horse, a man or a lion? Its final cause relates to the sculptor's purpose; why did the sculpture carve it in the first place?

Aristotle's view of form including its division into four causes represents a significant advancement over Pre-Socratic reductionistic materialism. He recognizes material causes cannot adequately account for nature. Aristotle's four causes suggest remarkable parallels to the biblical account of creation. The original substance of the creation was mere material. Genesis describes it as "formless and void." But during the creation week God efficiently fashioned the material into individual entities. Adam recognized and named these entities identifying their formal cause. And the Scripture frequently speaks of creation's final cause as glorifying the creator. Anthony Kenny, an agnostic philosopher offers a surprising admission when he detects these four causes in the creation of man.

The book of Genesis offers us answers to the four causal questions set by Aristotle. If we ask for the origin of the first human being, for instance, we are told that the efficient cause was God, that the material cause was the dust of the earth, that the formal cause was the image and likeness of God, and that the final cause was for man to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and every living thing on earth.⁴⁰

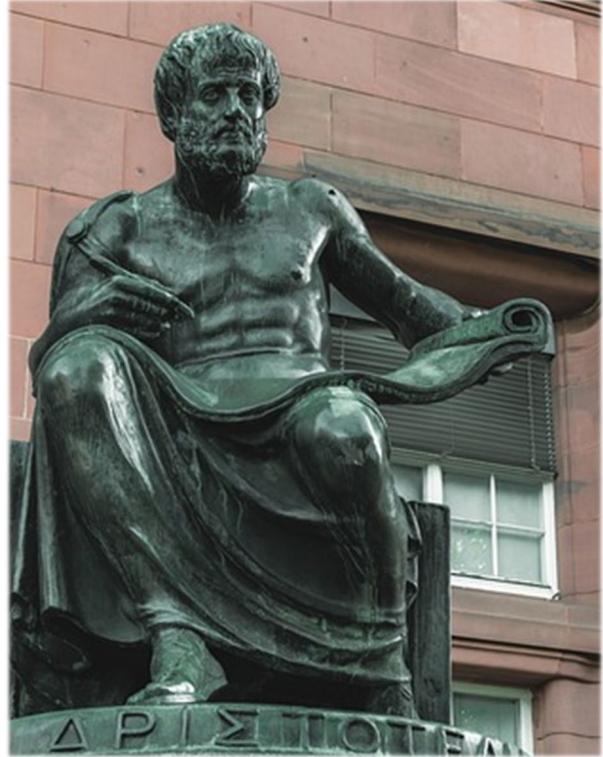


Image Credit: Pixabay

Aristotle's universe is purposive, teleologically ordered. Everything in it moves toward an end. Nothing is chaotic, meaningless, or out of control. This notion of all things moving to an end became an important feature of medieval Christian philosophy and of a modern design arguments for the existence of God. God is a God of order, design and purpose. His creation reflects his mind.

Raphael's painting of Aristotle and his mentor Plato with their respective gestures permanently frozen in time, leaves the viewer yearning for a final resolution. Is there a way to bring their respective worlds together? Or are we left having to side with one or the other? Plato and Aristotle took the question as far as the natural mind could resolve it. And two responses ensued. The Stoics and Epicureans abandoned the complex solutions of both Aristotle and Plato and returned to a

⁴⁰Kenny, 9-10.

simplistic Pre-Socratic reductionism. Christian theology, however, advanced the discussion to a final resolution.

The Stoic and Epicurean Regression

On his second missionary journey, as he passed through Athens, the Apostle Paul encountered two active schools of philosophy in the first century, the Stoics and Epicureans. Both schools, but especially the Epicureans, aggressively sought to return metaphysics to a more simplistic foundation than that of either Plato or Aristotle.

The Stoics advocated a pantheistic view of god together with a return to Heraclitus' view of fire as the primeval substance. Kenny writes, "God is not separate from the universe but is a material constituent of the cosmos. In his prose writings Cleanthes expounded in detail the way in which the divine fiery element provided the vital power for all the living beings in the world."⁴¹

It is difficult to speak precisely of the Stoic view since the writings of the earliest Stoics have all been lost to time unlike several still extant Epicurean sources. But drawing from other ancient sources that commented on the Stoics, Kenny recreates the following system.

The fully developed Stoic physical system can be summarized as follows. Once upon a time, there was nothing but fire; gradually there emerged the other elements and the familiar furniture of the universe. Later, the world will return to fire in a universal conflagration and then the whole cycle of its history will be repeated over and over again. All this happens in

accordance with a system of laws which may be called 'fate' (because the laws admit no exception), or 'providence' (because the laws were laid down by God for beneficent purposes). The divinely designed system is called Nature, and our aim in life should be to live in accord with Nature.⁴²

The Epicureans also returned to a more simplistic cosmology. Diogenes tells us Epicurus was a grammar teacher, but upon discovering the writings of Democritus, Epicurus's mind was enflamed by philosophy.⁴³ Democritus had introduced the term *ατομος* ("atom") to philosophy, a word that literally means "uncuttable" or "indivisible." Four of Democritus's six "principal doctrines" as summarized by Diogenes are important to metaphysics.⁴⁴ (1) The universe consists exclusively of atoms and the vacuum ("void"); all else is merely opinion. (2) There are infinite worlds, created and perishable, but composed of imperishable atoms (since nothing can be created from nothing). (3) Atoms are infinite in number. (4) Combinations of atoms account for fire, water, air, earth and all things.

In his *Letter to Herodotus*, Epicurus claims "nothing is created out of that which does not exist."⁴⁵ Consequently, the universe remains permanently unchanged respecting its basic components, which neither come to be, nor cease to exist. These components are "bodies and space."⁴⁶ Without space, movement would be impossible.⁴⁷ Bodies are "indivisible... completely solid in nature, and can by no means be dissolved in any part."⁴⁸

⁴¹Ibid., 81.

⁴²Ibid., 81-82.

⁴³*Lives of Philosophers*, Book X, sec.1.

⁴⁴Ibid., Book IX, sec. 12.

⁴⁵*Letter to Herodotus*.

⁴⁶In an extant fragment for *On Nature* Epicurus claims, "the nature of the universe consists of bodies and void." And again, "The nature of all existing things is bodies

and space." Oates, *Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers*, 46.

⁴⁷Epicurus believes he can trust the data of his senses and departs radically from Parmenides and Zeno's denial of motion.

⁴⁸*Letter to Herodotus*. In a fragment, Epicurus writes, "the atom is a hard body free from any admixture of void; the void is intangible existence." Oates, *Stoic and*

Space, “the void” or the universe, “has no limit; and as it has no limit, it must be boundless and not bounded.”⁴⁹ Further, there are an infinite number of worlds both similar and dissimilar to this world since the total number of atoms cannot be exhausted.⁵⁰

Unlike the modern materialist, Epicurus maintained a belief in the soul. But the soul does not survive death, because it too is composed of atoms. “The soul is a body of fine particles distributed throughout the whole structure.”⁵¹ The soul is responsible for sensation—the reception of particles from external objects. While a person lives, the soul is “enclosed by the rest of the structure.” And at death, “the soul is released from the body; the body no longer has sensation.”⁵²

Like Epicurus, the Roman poet and Epicurean Lucretius derives his doctrine of atomism from the impossibility of nothingness. “Nothing can be produced from nothing.”⁵³ The beginning of all things comes from “imperishable seed.”⁵⁴ These seeds are equivalent to Democritus’s atoms. Lucretius also calls them “imperishable bodies,” “first bodies,” and “everlasting matter.”⁵⁵ The end of all life mirrors the beginning of all things. “No single thing returns to nothing but at its dissolution everything returns to matter’s primal particles.”⁵⁶ Lucretius also advances the doctrine of the void, which exists not only externally to things, but in things. Heavier

bodies have less void within; lighter bodies have more void.⁵⁷

Atoms and the void constitute all of nature. Lucretius claims, “All nature, as it is in itself, consists of two things: there are bodies and there is void in which these bodies are and through which they move.”⁵⁸ Objects, constituted of atoms, move through the void like fish pass through the water; just as water envelops the fish before, beneath, above, and behind as he slips through the medium, so bodies are enveloped by empty space.⁵⁹ As another example, Lucretius points to the glittering dance of particles in a sunbeam. “When the sun’s rays . . . pass through the darkness of a shuttered room, you will see a multitude of tiny bodies all mingling in a multitude of ways inside the sunbeam, moving in the void.”⁶⁰

Both the Stoics and Epicureans viewed death as the finality of the self. Consequently, the Apostle Paul’s doctrine of resurrection met with fierce resistance on Mars Hill (Acts 17). Paul’s doctrine of the resurrection, however, reflected not only a different view of atoms and the void, but a whole different approach to metaphysics. It represented a significant advancement beyond the complex worldviews of Plato and Aristotle. It was part of a larger incarnational resolution to the ancient problem of the one and the many that the Stoics and Epicureans were unwilling to consider.

Epicurean Philosophers, 46. Justin Martyr, who enjoyed as good a philosophical education as any ante-Nicene Father describes the “first principles” of Epicurus. “Epicurus . . . says that the first principles of the things that exist are bodies perceptible by reason, admitting no vacuity [αμετοχα κενου], unbegotten, indestructible, which can neither be broken, nor admit of any formation of their parts, nor alteration, and are therefore perceptible by reason.” Justin Martyr, *Hortatory Address to the Greeks* in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 274.

⁴⁹*Letter to Herodotus*. Here Epicurus seems to borrow Anaximander’s απειρον, the “unlimited” or “indefinite.”

⁵⁰This view is expressed in both *Letter to Herodotus* and *Letter to Pythocles*.

⁵¹*Letter to Herodotus*.

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³Book I, 154; Book II, 288.

⁵⁴Book I, 222.

⁵⁵Book I, 205-256.

⁵⁶Book I, 245-249.

⁵⁷“But the heavier by contrast makes proclaim that it has more matter in it and much less void.” Book I, 366-367.

⁵⁸Book I, 419-421.

⁵⁹Lucretius denies the Pre-Socratic assumption that nature is reducible to one principle. Book I, 419-429, 690-704.

⁶⁰Book II, 114-118.

Outside of the Judeo-Christian faith, no religion claimed anything like a bodily resurrection.⁶¹

An Incarnational Resolution to the Problem of the One and the Many

Considerable debate emerged among the church fathers regarding the merit of Greek philosophy. Some took a dim view of the merits of philosophy. Tertullian exclaimed “What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem? What between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians? . . . Away with all projects for a ‘Stoic’, a ‘Platonic’ or a ‘dialectic’ Christianity! After Christ Jesus we desire no subtle theories.”⁶² But Tertullian overstates his case. He himself was well-trained in philosophy, and he was only capable of recognizing the superiority of Christianity because he was well acquainted with the inadequacies of Greek philosophers.

Other fathers were more tolerant toward the philosophers than Tertullian, but like Tertullian, they recognized that Christianity surpassed in its explanatory power anything the ancients could offer. Justin Martyr was surprisingly generous, “Those who live according to reason are Christians, even though they are accounted atheists. Such were Socrates and Heraclitus among the Greeks, and those like them.”⁶³ Justin adds, “Whatever has been uttered aright by any men in any place belongs to us Christians; for, next to God, we worship and love the reason (Word) which is from the unbegotten and ineffable God . . . For all authors were able to see truth darkly, through the implanted seed of reason (Word) dwelling in them.”⁶⁴

Clement of Alexandria went so far as to claim that Greek philosophy was really a preparation for the gospel.

Thus, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness, until the coming of the Lord. And now it assists towards true religion as a kind of preparatory training for those who arrive at faith by way of demonstration. . . . For God is the source of all good things; of some primarily, as of the old and new Testaments; of others by consequence, as of philosophy. But it may be, indeed that philosophy was given to the Greeks immediately and primarily, until the Lord should call the Greeks. For philosophy was a ‘schoolmaster’ to bring the Greek mind to Christ, as the Law brought the Hebrews. Thus, philosophy was a preparation, paving the way towards perfection in Christ.⁶⁵

John’s prologue certainly suggests there is something to the sympathies of both Justin Martyr and Clement. Pate claims, “Philosophy and its construct of the one and the many points toward the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, while Christian theology flows from the Incarnation like the budding of a beautiful flower.”⁶⁶

John writes, “In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” These verses offer a strong suggestion that the immaterialist resolution to the problem of the one and the many was headed in the right direction. Plato was correct

⁶¹Resurrection scholar N.T. Wright has shown the uniqueness of Christianity on this point. “Christianity was born into a world where its central claim was known to be false. Many believed that the dead were non-existent; outside Judaism, nobody believed in resurrection.” N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son*

of God (Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 3) (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 35.

⁶²Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 7.

⁶³Justin, *Apology* 1.46. 1-4.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 2.13.

⁶⁵Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.5.28.

⁶⁶Pate, 11-12.

in his view that there is a world beyond the deliverances of human empirical faculties. There is a Logos, a rational order and structure that precedes the created world.

John's Gospel frequently returns to this theme. Jesus says in John 8:23 "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world." And in John's prologue the apostle will describe Jesus both as "the light that shines in darkness that cannot be overcome" (1:5) and "the true light which gives light to everyone" (1:9). Whether John was familiar with Plato's allegory of the cave is impossible to know, but certainly his account presents a similar idea. The author of Hebrews also depicts Abraham as seeking a more substantial city than cities encountered during his earthly pilgrimage. "For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10).

However, Plato's glib dismissal of the lower world cannot be so easily reconciled with the Johannine worldview as first appears. In John 1:3 the Apostle introduces the Logos with the personal pronoun "him." For Plato, as also for Aristotle, God was impersonal. But John's Logos is a person you can know—not merely an impersonal rationality structuring the world.

In John 1:14, this person becomes *embodied* as a human. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." This Person comes to live inside his creation in a human body.

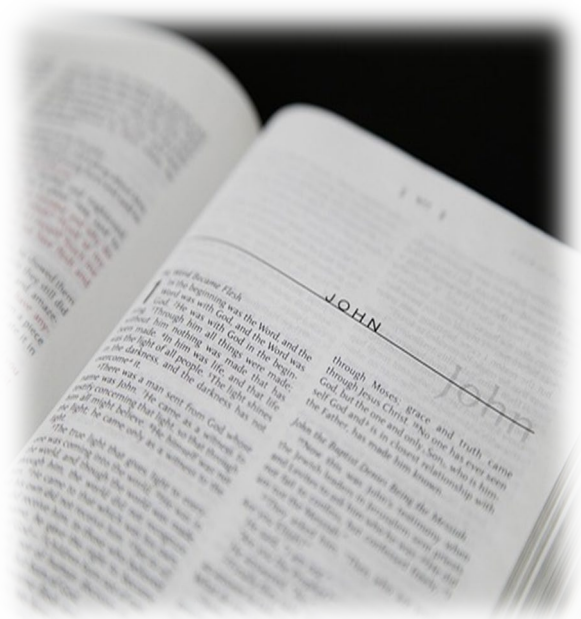


Image Credit: Pixabay

In his first epistle, John describes the humanity of Christ in very scientific terms. 1 John 1:1 records, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handles, of the Word of life." Here Jesus is detectable by three of our five senses. For Plato, the world is full of shadows. But Jesus has a body. And in John's account of the doubting Thomas, the Apostle is emphatic that Jesus is no ghost. John 20:27 Then [Jesus] said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

So, Aristotle is also correct, the lower world is a legitimate object of study, for the simple reason that Jesus took a body and came into it." John also tells his readers in verse 1:14 that to comprehend the invisible God we need to comprehend a human. To see Christ in the flesh is to see the very glory of the Father. Jesus will say to Philip, "if you've seen me, you've seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Central to Johannine theology is the doctrine of the incarnation of God. In the incarnation we clearly have an affirmation and

union of both worlds. This central truth of the incarnation of God was so important to the early church, that it was the center of theological discussion and occupied a whole series of church councils for nearly 500 years. In the incarnation of Christ, the one and the many are permanently conjoined. And in the incarnation of Christ, including his permanent incarnation through resurrection, God and man can be permanently conjoined.

Understanding Criminality: A Proposition for a Neoteric, Socio-Psychological Theory

By Aurora Krec

Liberty University

Crimes are behaviors that defy official, written norms, or laws (Bartol & Bartol, 2014). Because the quality of a community is largely defined by its deterioration and crime rates (Lei & Beach, 2020), it is important to learn how to prevent crime. For successful crime prevention, forensic psychologists must be able to identify possible causes of deviance, or behaviors that defy societal norms (Bartol & Bartol, 2014). For the purpose of this analysis, these explanations are described as socio-psychological theories of deviance, or the theoretical application of society's effect on an individual's psyche (King & Noerr, 2020). Though not all deviance is criminal and vice versa, most offenders have had a history of deviance, which can include anti-social behavior like cheating on a test or even speeding. Researchers seek to identify causal factors for deviant behaviors in an attempt to reduce crime and prevent recidivism (Wojciechowski, 2020). The present analysis reviews the most

updated socio-psychological (learning, strain, and control) and biblical theories of deviance in an attempt to establish a more effective criminological theory.

Learning Theories

Differential Association Theory (1939)

Rather than describing the criminality of a community by the goals of its individuals, Sutherland set out to describe the criminality of individuals by the goals of their community (Bartol & Bartol, 2014). He found that people tend to develop the qualities of the groups in which they belong. In psychology, this phenomenon is known as "associating," because the individual is learning and adopting the behaviors that are associated with the people they share emotional bonds with (Brewer et al., 2019). Sutherland believed that deviance in adolescence was learned by the peers the youth associate with. He named this theory "differential association theory," (DAT) (Bowen et al., 2019).

If deviance is learned by peer influence, then it could be implied that there are methods for negative influence. One study has shown that there are four primary persuasion techniques individuals use to convince their peers to deviate: persistent offers to offend; coercion; simple suggestions; and minimizing the possibility of consequences (Costello & Zozula, 2018). Each of these methods are most commonly explained through the idea of "peer pressure." No matter what persuasion method is used, as soon as an individual associates an offense with more positive attributes than negative, they are extremely likely committing that crime (Boman et al., 2019).

Though a seemingly flawless theory for the field of criminal socio-psychology, DAT does not fully explain behavior. It is simple to acknowledge that people will develop the behaviors of those they spend the most time with (Costello & Zozula, 2018).

However, this theory does not consider how different individuals positively influence one another (Wojciechowski, 2020).

Operant Learning Theory (1964)

After analyzing the behavior of rats when posed with rewards and punishments, Skinner devised the operant learning theory, or operant conditioning. In his experiment, he watched rats change their routine based on the stimuli presented to them. When faced with a shock, the rats would devise a way to avoid or get rid of the punishment. When faced with food, the rats would devise a way to receive the reward (Schultz & Schultz, 2012). When applying operant conditioning to humans, all behavior is learned and can be persuaded to change (Bartol & Bartol, 2014). Skinner outlines four ways that behavior can be altered: positive reinforcement, or reward by offering a positive stimulus; negative reinforcement, or reward by removing a negative stimulus; punishment, or the offering of a negative stimulus; and extinction, or the failure to offer an expected prize. By rewarding, punishing, or refusing to give in to an individual's desires, it is highly likely that a voluntary change in behavior would occur (Alderman & Wood, 2013).

This socio-psychological theory fundamentally provides an effective method for correcting deviant behavior. In a study applying operant learning theory to the intervention of challenging behaviors, researchers discovered it is important that the practitioner make an exhausted list of possible third variables for deviance while making the interventions specific to the trigger event. By doing this, there is a higher likelihood of the behavior being successfully altered (Alderman & Wood, 2013). For behavior modification to be successful, a practitioner must be able to adapt to the individual's progress to try and reinforce desired behaviors. This theory was among the first to provide a legitimate method

for correcting deviance (Harmening & Gamez, 2016).

Social Learning Theory (1973)

In an experiment studying observational learning, Dr. Albert Bandura recognized the effect that the behavior of trusted adults has on children. In the study, an adult would show aggression toward a bobo doll and not receive any negative consequence as a result. When the children were later put in the room with the bobo doll, the most common reaction was aggression – just like they observed with the unpunished, trusted adult (Schmalleger, 2019). Thus, Bandura proposed the social learning theory, stating that behavior was molded by observing the unpunished behaviors of respected individuals (Brewer et al., 2019). The presence of a negative consequence would delineate misconduct, whereas the absence of a negative stimuli would identify a just behavior (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

Early socio-psychological theories of deviance implied that black community members were more criminogenic because they learned to dislike slavery. Though an invalid and outdated hypothesis, it is an acceptable example for expounding upon social learning theory. Because of the nature of slavery and the civil rights eras, close family ties were undoubtedly critical for black individuals to maintain their psychological well-being. When applied to the social learning theory, if a child was raised with an emotional dependency on their parents and then witnessed their parents fight for freedom, the child is likely to mimic that behavior. To many whites at the time, this behavior was considered criminogenic (Barmaki, 2020).

Similar to operant learning theory, social learning theory in itself provides a solution for deviant behavior. In order to get an individual to abstain from deviating, one would need to provide a positive, trusted role model to demonstrate the proper behavior and

its lack of negative consequences (Boman et al., 2019). However, this theory only explains how initial behaviors are formed and fails to acknowledge the development of future behavioral patterns.

Differential Association-Reinforcement Theory (1977)

American criminologist, Ronald Akers, developed the differential association-reinforcement theory (DAR). To do so, Akers combined all the salient points of pre-existing learning theories: DAT, operant learning theory, and social learning theory (Bartol & Bartol, 2014). Expounding upon these, Akers claimed that initial behaviors are the result of social learning, while the adaptation of those behaviors is reliant upon operant learning. This behavior is then reinforced by the different groups that the individual associates themselves with (Costello & Zozula, 2018).

DAR has potential to create and reinforce both positive and negative behaviors (Levenson, 2018). For example, religious beliefs and participation have been found to reduce crime and even promote rehabilitation. By spending time participating in church activities, an individual will mimic a behavior through social learning and then reinforce and adopt it through some form of intrinsic reward and consistent exposure to that group (Jones & Sims, 2016). Similarly, in romantic relationships where one individual is tolerant of criminality, it is likely that the other will adopt deviant behavior as a result. In fact, romantic relationships have been known to exhibit a positive correlation between tolerance of deviance and offending (Wojciechowski, 2020). This socio-psychological theory, like others in the learning perspective, fails to account for the effect of adverse circumstances, namely that of strain.

Strain Theories

Anomie Theory (1893)

In 1893, French sociologist Émile Durkheim proposed a theory explaining deviant behavior in his work, *Suicide* (DeAngelis, 2020). In this theory, Durkheim used the term “anomie” to describe the condition where people grow disconnected from the guiding morals of their community (Henslin, 2014). This “anomie theory” was the first theory that claimed the well-being of a community could be defined by the alignment of societal goals and individual perceptions of self-efficacy (DeAngelis, 2020).

Durkheim defined the goals of society as relating to social status, pleasure, and conformity. Anomie theorists would likely argue that when an individual no longer shares the desires of the community nor feels capable of conforming to societal norms, then they may experience intense feelings of despair (Schmallegger, 2019). Durkheim went so far as to state that these individuals are likely to channel those negative emotions into deviant behavior, specifically suicide (DeAngelis, 2020).

This theory, though impactful, is extremely vague. It provides no recommendations for positive societal intervention, nor does it make an attempt to explain this dysregulation of goal pursuits. For Durkheim, suicide was a main concern for research (Henslin, 2014). It should be noted that this theory is used to explain suicide rates, and not to explain general deviance and criminality (Harmening & Gamez, 2016). However, it provides an effective theoretical foundation for subsequent socio-psychological considerations (DeAngelis, 2020).

Strain Theory (1938)

Nearly half a century later, American sociologist Robert Merton declared anomie theory problematically broad. He believed that in order to be more impactful, this theory

would need to be narrowed down to a specific topic, namely the “American Dream” and its effect on deviance. Merton would go on to call his theory the “strain theory,” (DeAngelis, 2020).

To Merton, the “American Dream” was highly controversial. This ideology implies that in America, anything is possible with a little bit of hard work. People from across the earth emigrate to the United States in pursuit of this dream, only to fail. The unfortunate truth is that unless an individual is a white male belonging to a relatively high socio-economic status, this American Dream is unlikely (DeAngelis, 2020). Even after devoting a significant amount of effort to the pursuit of material wealth and happiness, a majority of individuals are likely to experience financial instability. Merton describes this inability to achieve the American Dream of material wealth as “strain,” and implies that it can drive people to use deviant or illegitimate means on the pursuit of happiness (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

Merton went on to explain four paths of deviance: innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion (Henslin, 2014). Innovators accept the goals of American society, but they refuse to utilize the proper channels to achieve them. These individuals deviate in order to fulfill the American Dream. They may be shoplifters stealing petty items or even individuals making their money through the sale of illicit substances. Ritualism occurs when an individual experiences occupational burnout (Harmening & Gamez, 2016). These individuals continue their employment for the paycheck, but do not share the values of the organization. This misalignment of intrinsic desires is considered deviant. When an individual disconnects from the goals of society and experiences a reduction in self-efficacy, they may retreat to maladaptive, or deviant, coping mechanisms, like substance use. This path of deviance is called “retreatism,” (Chon, 2020). Lastly, the

disconnect from both societal goals and legitimate means to achieve them coupled with the desire to instill new societal goals is defined as “rebellion,” (Henslin, 2014). For criminal justice application, it is critical to recognize that though these phenomena are deviant, they are not inherently criminal.

Strain theory, though an improvement from anomie theory, is problematic in itself. Most importantly: it fails to account for anticipatory stressors (DeAngelis, 2020). Studies have shown that the pursuit of the American Dream impacts people of racial and ethnic groups differently than majority groups. Individuals belonging to minority groups are likely to be raised with the expectation of facing adversity on the road to an unlikely success. On the contrary, white individuals are not as likely to be raised expecting this adversity. Additionally, it fails to acknowledge how the individual came to know how to deviate (Harmening & Gamez, 2016). This has resulted in Merton’s definition of strain being fundamentally flawed.

General Strain Theory (1997)

In 1997, criminologist Robert Agnew proposed that both of these strain theories were flawed (Bartol & Bartol, 2014). As a result, Agnew developed the general strain theory (GST). This theory describes three forms of strain: the inability to achieve society’s goals; the loss of something valued; and the presence of something undesired. The theory provides that there are five areas of an individual’s life that can be subject to strain: self, family, peers, school, and work (Franco & Grattet, 2020). People that are severely impacted by childhood neglect (Barton-Bellessa et al., 2015); social disorganization, or the theory that states that a community’s physical deterioration is positively associated with poverty and crime rates (Lei & Beach, 2020); and even gender disparities in the workplace (Broidy & Agnew, 1997); are experiencing strain. GST also states that this

strain can lead to depression, anger, deviance, and ultimately criminal behavior (Franco & Grattet, 2020). Coincidentally, victimization, mental illnesses and lack of resilience can also take the form of strain, again leading to criminal behavior (Dierenfeldt et al., 2020).

As reviewed previously, strain can impact an individual in many domains of life and in many different ways. Research has shown that in order to appropriately cope with strain, individuals would require high self-esteem, material wealth, or even religion. According to GST, as long as an appropriate coping strategy is in place, then the individual is less likely to deviate (Franco & Grattet, 2020). It is important to note that GST does not fully explain misbehavior; it fails to account for any behaviors that have been learned over time (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

Control Theory

Social Bond Theory (1969)

Hirschi and Gottfredson introduced the idea of control theories. Incongruous to learning theories, social bond theory (SBT) proposes that people are anti-ascetic, dark beings. However, it is similar to learning theories because it states that individuals must associate themselves with positive activities and peers in order to develop pro-social behaviors (Brewer et al., 2019). Hirschi heavily argued that it is no surprise that “deviant” behaviors seem inconsiderate and selfish; humans are motivated primarily by self-interest. As a result, SBT explains conformity, not deviance (Costello & Zozula, 2018).

Hirschi defines bonds as attachments to other individuals that have potential to control one’s behavior (Costello & Zozula, 2018). SBT distinguishes four social bonds or controls: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Intimate attachments to peers in the community such as family, friends, or even teachers, are effective

methods for promoting conformity.

Commitment drives a person to evaluate the possible consequences deviance could have on the future they are devoted to earning.

Involvement in conventional activities like sports causes an individual to spend more time in a controlled environment with less time to offend (Chriss, 2007). Belief, on the other hand, instills morals for the ethical consideration of possible actions (Morrell, 2019). According to SBT, when an individual experiences weak social bonds, like a lack of friends or failure to join a sport, they are at risk for deviant behavior (Costello & Zozula, 2018).

This theory accurately and successfully explains conformity through both encouragement of prosocial behaviors and discouragement of anti-social behaviors. However, this theory does assume that all people share the same moral compass (Costello & Zozula, 2018). Because of differences in ethnic backgrounds, cultural identities, and even religious beliefs, peoples’ values are destined to be diverse.

Biblical Theory

In considering the causes of deviance, it is important for Christian criminal justice practitioners to acknowledge a biblical perspective. In some cases, this perspective is not made clear. In order to establish a full theory, one must evaluate the content of various books. For this instance, two verses are reviewed: one from the Old Testament, and one from the New Testament.

The Old Testament: The first of these verses discusses that behavior is learned as a child, which supports the premise of learning theories. “Start the children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it,” (Proverbs 22:6, *NIV*). This verse points out that behavior in children is both learned and capable of being socially reinforced. This provides an excellent explanation for deviance in adulthood as well

as childhood. The only problem, however, is that it proposes no practical solutions for preventing deviance other than through learning (*Life Application Study Bible*, 2012).

The New Testament: Complimentary to the beliefs of the Old Testament, the New Testament states that it is imperative for humans to live a life free of strain (DeAngelis, 2020).

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? (Matthew 6:25-27, *NIV*)

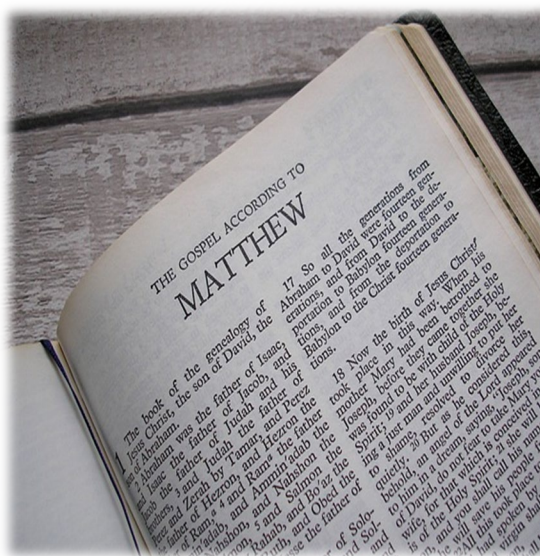


Image Credit: Pixabay

According to this verse, experiencing strain will do nothing but harm to an individual. The Bible provides that if animals of the land can thrive with only resources given by God - no employment, credit, education, or even clothing - then humans should not stress about anything. Everything they need to succeed will be provided to them. In criminological application, this verse prompts Christians to make an effort to improve the quality of life of those that experience strain. When coupled with the belief of the Old Testament, this perspective could be extremely useful for preventing deviance in a real-world application (*Life Application Study Bible*, 2012).

Discussion

Previously, the development of criminological theory was described through both socio-psychological and biblical perspectives. These socio-psychological theories belonged to three different schools of thought: learning, strain, and control. Learning theories provide that deviant behavior is the result of creating meaningful associations (Costello & Zozula, 2018). Most existing strain theories rely on the notion that deviant behavior is solely influenced by the inability to achieve goals (Harmening & Gamez, 2016). Control theories, on the other hand, believe that conformity must be pushed onto an individual in the method of social bonds, or controls (Chriss, 2007). The Bible supports the claims of each of these socio-psychological theories (*Life Application Study Bible*, 2012).

When integrating learning, strain, and control theories, the process for understanding criminality becomes holistic. Because criminality and deviance are such broad terms, practitioners should be able to distinguish between normal behaviors for society and normal behaviors for the individual in order to make an educated determination on concerning behavior. Most importantly, they

should be able to distinguish between learned and pressured behaviors. An “integrated individual” theory (IIT), mixing socio-psychological and biblical theories of deviance may prove to be more effective in explaining and correcting an individual’s deviant behavior.

Strengths and Weaknesses

By reviewing the most renowned socio-psychological theories of deviance, the present analysis was able to make a solid recommendation for forensic psychology application. It also provided a framework for future research in deviance. However, it is not a novel proposal. This analysis moves to establish a theory combining multiple other theories, which should already be occurring within the criminal justice system. In the future, research should be done on the distinction between individual deviance and societal deviance. Only then can IIT be properly evaluated.

Conclusion

Based on available socio-psychological and biblical theories of deviance, the present analysis concludes that a neoteric theory be established. Using a combination of learning, strain, control, and biblical criminological theories as a guide, IIT would provide a holistic approach to reducing an individual’s deviant behaviors. IIT proposes that like stated in DAR and SBT, behaviors are influenced and reinforced by intimate relationships. This type of learning establishes a baseline for how the individual acts on a regular basis; it develops their personality (Bartol & Bartol, 2014). IIT would also apply the workings of GST by implying that when faced with strain, an individual is likely to deviate from their baseline behaviors; they may grow depressed, angry, or even socially deviant (Franco & Grattet, 2020). Lastly, IIT can be applied to teachings from both the Old and New Testaments. By helping

others live a life free of strain and teaching them pro-social behaviors, Christian criminal justice practitioners should be able to make a lasting reduction on an individual’s criminality.

References

- Alderman, N., & Wood, R. L. (2013). Neurobehavioral approaches to the rehabilitation of challenging behavior. *NeuroRehabilitation*, 32, 761-770. DOI: 10.3233/NRE-130900
- Barmaki, R. (2020). Explanations of blacks’ criminality in America: 1630s-1950s. *Deviant Behavior*, 41(10), 1305-1329. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2019.1614138>
- Bartol, C. R., & Bartol, A. M. (2014). *Criminal behavior: A psychological approach* (10th ed.). Pearson.
- Barton-Bellessa, S. M., Lee, J., & Shon, P. (2015). Correcting misconceptions about Alfred Adler’s psychological theory of crime in introductory criminology textbooks: Moving Adler’s theory of crime forward. *The Journal of Individual Psychology*, 71(1), 34-57. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1353/jip.2015.0006>
- Boman, J. H., Mowen, T. J., & Higgins, G. E. (2019). Social learning, self-control, and offending specialization and versatility among friends. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 44, 3-22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-018-9445-7>
- Brewer, K. T., Cochran, J. K., Powers, R. A., & Sellers, C. S. (2019). Intimate partner violence and the capacity and desire for self-control. *Deviant Behavior*, 40(7), 753-777. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2018.1438066>
- Broidy, L., & Agnew, R. (1997). Gender and crime: A general strain theory perspective. *Journal of Research in Crime and*

- Delinquency*, 34(3), 275-306.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427897034003001>
- Chon, D. S. (2020). Are competitive materialism and female employment related to international homicide rate? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 35(16), 2780-2799. DOI: 10.1177/0886260517705664
- Chriss, J. J. (2007). The functions of the social bond. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 48, 689-712. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2007.00097.x>
- Costello, B. J., & Zozula, C. (2018). Peer influence: Mechanisms and motivations. *Deviant Behavior*, 39(1), 94-110. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1260387>
- DeAngelis, R. T. (2020). Striving while black: Race and the psychophysiology of goal pursuit. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 61(1), 24-42. DOI:10.1177/0022146520901695
- Dierenfeldt, R., Shadwick, J. T., & Kwak, H. (2020). Examining gender- and drug-specific arrest counts: A partial test of Agnew's general strain theory. *Deviant Behavior*, 41(9), 1097-1112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2019.1596548>
- Franco, K., & Grattet, R. (2020). The effect of strain, affect, and personal/social resources on problem substance use among incarcerated and non-incarcerated youth. *Deviant Behavior*, 41(10), 1207-1220. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/01639625.2019.1603539>
- Harmening, W., & Gamez, A. (2016). *Forensic psychology*. Pearson.
- Henslin, J. M. (2014). *Sociology: A down-to-earth approach* (12th ed.). Pearson.
- Jones, M. & Sims, B. (2016). Reintegrative shaming, redemption, and acceptance: A survey of Christian church goers in eastern North Carolina. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 14(4), 348-370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15377938.2016.1202167>
- King, V., & Noerr, G. S. (2020). Conceptions of the superego in sociological and socio-psychological analyses. *International Journal of Psychoanalytics*, 101(4), 740-756. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207578.2020.1780734>
- Lei, M. & Beach, S. R. H. (2020). Can we uncouple neighborhood disadvantage and delinquent behaviors? An experimental test of family resilience guided by the social disorganization theory of delinquent behaviors. *Family Process*. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/famp.12527>
- Levenson, J. S. (2018). Sex offender management policies and evidence-based recommendations for registry reform. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 20(3). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-018-0884-0>
- Life Application Study Bible* (New International Version). (2012). Zondervan.
- Morrell, K. (2019). The public good. *Policing and Public Management: Governance, vices, and virtues*, 22-23. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315172569-2>
- Schmallegger, F. (2019). *Criminal justice today: An introductory text for the 21st century* (15th ed.). Pearson.
- Schultz, D. P., & Schultz, S. E. (2012). *A history of modern psychology* (10th ed.). Wadsworth.
- Wojciechowski, T. W. (2020). The development of romantic partner involvement and tolerance of deviance among juvenile offenders: Relevance for offending behaviors in early adulthood. *Deviant Behavior*, 41(8), 1018-1032. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/01639625.2019.1596536>

Evil: A Psychological Exploration

Jaycee Hallford
Grand Canyon University
and
Jared A. Linebach, Ph.D.
Shorter University



Image Credit: Pixabay

Despite its ambiguity, evil is a commonly used term. The contexts of evil are unlimited and extend through movies, books, music, criminal activity, and religion. When reading or hearing the word evil, we must admit that not only does it immediately draw our attention, but it elicits a specific feeling. Feelings in themselves are hard to describe, and perhaps it is the dark mystery of the word that captures an audience. Consider the power of the word "evil". In their book, Newberg & Waldman (2012) write that " a single word has

the power to influence the expression of genes that regulate physical and emotional stress" (p.1). With such physiological capability, "evil" makes for a compelling study. For ages, a broad range of scholars and disciplines have sought a singular meaning of the word. While the field of psychology is not necessarily concerned with defining the word "evil", it is exceedingly interested in studying the behavior behind it. In Thomas Harris' book *The Silence of the Lambs*, Hannibal, an unarguably evil individual, offers a personal explanation of his character. He says: "You can't reduce me to a set of influences. You've given up good and evil for behaviorism.... You've got everybody in moral dignity pants—nothing is ever anybody's fault. Can you stand to say I'm evil?" (Simpson, 2010, p. 197). This paper objects to Hannibal's self-diagnosis that evil simply exists without cause and influence. While evil is often misunderstood, a description of evil will be presented by using psychological and biblical terms to define evil; explaining the transcendence and progression of evil into humanity; and offering paths to healing for the evil doer and their victims that involve an integration of prosocial behavior, empirically supported techniques, and most importantly, a Christian perspective.

Defining Psychology of Evil

Many psychological subfields exist that focus on specific classifications of people, such as married couples, criminals, adolescents, the work force, Veterans, and so on. These subfields exist because typically, individuals in these categories have similar traits and tendencies, and exhibit attitudes and behaviors that align with the specialized clinical training a psychologist possesses. For example, a forensic psychologist who is an expert on integrating psychology and the law can analyze criminal motivations and make determinations about competency to stand

trial. The field of psychology has adapted its study and research to meet the needs of varying demographics. It is easy to generate a template for understanding a clearly defined population; in contrast, creating a foundation for interpreting an entire concept is complex. To define "psychology of evil", the two concepts of psychology and evil must be independently dissected. In its simplest form, psychology is the study of human behavior and mental processes. In attempt to define "evil", this paper will incorporate both biblical and secular references and interlace the two to create a clear understanding of what constitutes evil.

For most people, hearing or seeing the word "evil" automatically generates negative feelings associated with fear, anguish, and turmoil. Rarely does its use describe individuals; instead, it describes actions of individuals: behavior. The vast individual perception of the word results in an ambiguous definition. It is natural to equate abstract concepts with personal experiences; for a child with a strict religious upbringing, he may consider the use of bad language as evil. Compare this perception with that of a homicide detective who experiences crime scenes first-hand, and the two interpretations vary dramatically. It is also salient to recognize that for some, evil exists in the form of mythical figures like monsters, vampires, and werewolves. Despite varying perceptions of evil, it is likely a personal collection of the most terrible actions one can conjure that yields a reaction of horror.

Many philosophers concerned with the concept of evil have agreed to accept one essential component: To be evil an action must, at the very least, be wrong (Formosa, 2008). Since "wrong" is another abstract concept, this paper will incorporate God's perception of wrong as variously explained throughout Scripture. The Bible clarifies a culturally confusing definition of wrong; "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails

to do it, for him it is sin (English Standard Version, 2001, James 4:17). From this explanation we can conclude that a wrongful action is one that knowingly opposes what is right in the eyes of God, and such actions are considered sinful. In addition to sinfulness, Stone (2017) expresses evil as an action that is breathtakingly horrible. Employing this conclusion, evil resides upon the foundation of wrongdoing and takes on the appearance of being "incomprehensible, bewildering, beyond the imagination of ordinary people in the community" (Stone, 2017, p. 22). Part of being incomprehensible is the degree of suffering inflicted on another person. For a general consensus about an act that is evil, that suffering will be considered wildly excessive (Stone, 2017).

Sinfulness and incomprehensible action establish the basis of evil. The Bible states that "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness" (English Standard Version, 2001, 1 John 3:4). Therefore, blatantly disregarding the law is a proponent of evil. In addition to these factors, Steiner (2002) expresses how a perpetrator's pleasure in committing the sinful act composes an evil action. To this extent, evil requires a certain conscious motivation. Such conscious motivation is encapsulated in the legal concept of malice afterthought or evil intentions (Stone, 2017). This brings into question various heinous episodes of morally wrong behavior that proceeded due to authoritarian power; Stanley Milgram's 1963 study proved that people succumb to harmful and hurtful acts when obeying authority. Since volunteers responded to an advertisement for a "lab experiment investigating 'learning'" (McLeod, 2017, p. 2), we can assume a lack of participant malice. Therefore, the act of obeying authority in the absence of ill intent is controversial when regarded as evil.

Thus far, the factors which contribute to evil action include sinfulness and lawlessness, severe suffering, perpetrator

pleasure, and conscious motivation. While evil is thought to be a product of suffering on an unsuspecting victim, that victim can also be the perpetrator himself. In attacks such as suicide terrorism, there is typically an associated individual or organizational motivation, and a cognitive willingness of self-sacrifice to kill others (Harmon, Mujkic, Kaukinen & Weir, 2018). In addition, Card (2010) explains how perpetrators tend to exhibit a lack of moral justification for the harm they plan to commit. According to Card (2010), evildoers can foresee the potential chaos and suffering they will inflict but do not produce feelings of empathy. Finally, Russell (2014) alludes that evil actions are products of autonomy-favoring conditions. "Autonomy-favoring conditions are conditions in which an evildoer is not deceived, threatened, coerced, or pressed" (Russell 2014, p. 173), and therefore, able to act on their own volition. The Bible describes autonomy using temptation; "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (English Standard Version, 2001, Matthew 26:41) and in Romans 7; "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing" (English Standard Version, 2001, Romans 7:19). Clearly, people are equipped with the knowledge to understand right from wrong, as well as the capability to act in both capacities. Those who chose to disobey God's will have fallen into temptation.

To intertwine the discussed variables, we will assess each one independently using the crime rampage of one of the most notorious criminals of all time, Ted Bundy. Bundy admittedly killed at least 36 women in heinous ways and decapitated 12 of his victims between 1974 and 1979. The murder of even one victim is, at the very least, considered morally wrong and malicious. Today, Bundy is labeled a serial killer, rapist, and necrophile. His victims undoubtedly endured severe suffering while Bundy

experienced pleasure in his inflicted torturer. Since his murderous rampage continued for 5 years, it is obvious that he acted autonomously during this time. He states, "I just like to kill, I wanted to kill" (Rippo, 2007, p. 24), revealing his conscious intentions. The Bible connects murder with evil in the book of John; "We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother". (English Standard Version, 2001, 1 John 3:12). Bundy has also been famously quoted stating "I don't feel guilty for anything . . . I feel sorry for people who feel guilt" (Hickey, 2013, p. 188). From this statement, we can deduce the total lack of empathy for his victims. Again, Scripture provides evidence that although evil exists within us "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (English Standard Version, 2001, Genesis 6:5), we have the means to choose against it. Those who do not refuse it act according to temptation; "Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" (English standard Version, 2001, Psalm 34:14). Ted Bundy epitomizes evil because he chose to pursue a life of sinfulness and lawlessness; he willingly caused incomprehensible suffering for many people, was motivated to kill and enjoyed doing so, and committed atrocities without feeling empathy for his victims.

For a psychologist, striving to understand the behaviors and mental processes behind evil action creates the psychology of evil. Since psychology is a scientific field, studying evil and evil deeds calls for analyzation and manipulation of the variables that constitute the concept. Using scientific research, psychologists can examine the origins and persistence of evil behavior and understand what enables evil to flourish. Incorporating the variables described, psychology of evil is using scientific methods and resources to analyze the various behavioral and mental components that

contribute to the interlaced biblical and secular concept of evil.

Factors of Evil

The world undoubtedly contains a great deal of evil. Evil actions cause the public to ask the questions: Who? What? How? And, most importantly, Why? There are reasons behind the crimes committed. Perpetrators perceived as the epitome of evil often gain their reputation due to ill-fated circumstances. Developmental factors like unfortunate circumstances, a traumatizing childhood, and brain trauma can all play a role in acting on violent emotions; they can also give course to the development of severe mental illness. It is clear that the quest to extinguish evil is unfeasible. On the contrary, the field of psychology has concluded that the drive to understand evil is considerable. Since we have identified the variables of evil action using Biblical references aligned with corporal examples, division of the variables allows for independent analyzation. Psychology considers that identifying and studying the elements behind evil is a salient endeavor, because once we can recognize behaviors, perhaps we can identify them before crimes are committed. The analyzation of Biblical references helps us to understand the history of good and evil; we consider these associations in the Bible in hopes of finding a way to stray from evil temptation. This section focuses on the role of psychology to discern certain traits that may constitute a great proportion of an individual's fall into sin and wickedness, and the unfortunate consequences of failing to recognize the uprising of evil.

When hearing of an evil act, it is likely that supplementary traits beyond evil come to mind. These traits may consist of, but are not limited to aggression, egotism, narcissism, revengefulness, hatred, selfishness, and sadism. Rarely do we take these characterizations and relate them to mental illness or dysfunctional upbringing. When

labeled evil, consequently, everything that the individual says or does will be construed as evil also, despite its true nature. Additionally, the public will register the offender's circumstances based on his or her disposition, rather than identifying external situational causes; this bias is known as the fundamental attribution error. This concept is especially common in Western cultures and research has demonstrated a lesser bias in Asian populations, who explain others' behavior using situational explanations over internal attributions (Branscombe & Baron, 2017). This is a notable fact concerning the extent that Western countries rely on news and social media to relay criminal activity and information to the public; typically, evil actions appear so disturbing and gruesome that the public does not want to relieve the perpetrator of guilt in any way. Once a headline reading "evil" has been produced, that person is confined to a character that is tough to overcome, and we see the public demanding punishment without any interest in how that individual attained his designation.

Evil acts are not always the product of mental illness, but underlying psychological issues such as schizophrenia, antisocial personality disorder, and mania, can lead a person to act abnormally and viciously. The many varying behaviors that lead to evil is what makes the study itself vitally important. According to Stone (2017), with confirmation that evil has occurred due to serious mental health issues, the public is not only more empathetic towards the perpetrator, but also less likely to categorize that person as "evil". Stone also discusses how the transparency of an evil act automatically assumes a genuine wickedness of the perpetrator, prior to any real investigation of the individual. He states, "By 'inner differences' I mean the various hereditary, early-background, and even brain-structure differences that would not be at all apparent when the people behind the evil actions were first identified" (Stone, 2017, p

38). It is abundantly clear that there are reasons and behaviors behind evil; this is what psychologists strive to understand. Insight will not be explicit until we look past the action and into the traits, genetics, and life circumstances of our evil doers.

While there are certainly psychological factors that construct evil; the Bible tells us that its infancy lies in the fratricide of Abel by his brother, Cain. Before this murder, the word "evil" does not appear in the Bible (Hammer, 1990). When Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Kaufmann (1972) writes, "Man did not thereupon become absolutely evil, but having tasted evil, his sinful impulses raged ever more fiercely" (p. 294). We can conclude from contextual evidence that God did not perceive this disobedience as evil, since Adam and Eve did not have the knowledge, experience, or maturity to understand that what they were doing was wrong (Hammer, 1990). As they were the first humans on Earth, Adam and Eve had no prior knowledge or experiences for which to base their actions. Just as we have marked acting autonomously as a variable of evil, their actions did not intend to cause harm or disobey. Instead, their actions represented a loss of innocence and curse for mankind.

God tells Adam and Eve that the serpent (English Standard Version, 2001, Genesis 3:14) and the ground (English Standard Version, 2001, Genesis 3:17) are cursed, but the curse is not upon themselves. This is again illustrated in the events preceding Cain killing his brother. Genesis (English Standard Version, 2001) introduces the two brothers with disparate skills: Cain working the ground and Abel tending sheep. Both were to bring offerings to God. Abel's offering was acceptable, and Cain's was not. This resulted in Cain getting angry. "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule

over it'" (English Standard Version, 2001, Genesis 4:7). God's comment about sin, or evil, gives the indication that sin is a "doorway demon waiting for its victim to cross the threshold" (Walton, 2009, p. 38). These demons in the ancient world, according to Walton, "were considered evil ...and ambush[ed] their victims" (p. 38).

Psychology makes a great effort to understand the nascence of behaviors; using Scripture, we can at least comprehend the journey of man's fall from perfection into a sinful nature. Hammer (1990) presumes that while the loss of innocence of Adam and Eve left a mark upon the world's perfection, it is totally devastated by the murder of Abel. This turn of events permanently distinguishes man as inherently sinful. God says, "for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth" (English Standard Version, 2001, Genesis 8:21). If we are born with inherent sinfulness and an inclination toward evilness, man must overcome temptation to overcome evil. Here we find the connection between Biblical evil and the psychological significance of understanding and studying the concept. God tells us that people are born with the tendency of evil (English Standard Version, 2001; Linebach, 2019), but that they can combat it. Psychologically speaking, if we can train our profession to recognize the ascendance of evil, we can train to counteract it. Since evil lies within man himself, so should the answers toward change and control.

When the public perceives a person and their crimes as evil, we are often blinded to evil that the perpetrator himself may have endured. Statistics of known serial killers and the like show that this population is likely to have suffered some form of traumatization. Hickey (2013) describes the process of developing serial offender behavior: "influenced by predispositional factors, whether they be biological, sociological, psychological, of a combination thereof, an event or series of events, or traumas, seem to

be required that gradually influence a person to kill" (p. 135). By traumatization, Hickey (2013) refers to factors such as "unstable home life, death of parents, divorce, corporal punishments, sexual abuse, and other negative events that occur during the formative years of the offender's life" (p. 135). Most people would say that suffering does not mitigate the brutal life these people choose. However, it does shed light on the darkness of their nature. As Pelzer (1993) puts it, "Childhood should be carefree, playing in the sun; not living a nightmare in the darkness of the soul" (p. 91).

Those who do survive a nightmare in their youth without turning to a life of crime have successfully overcome temptation. Scripture acknowledges the presence of suffering, neglect, and tribulation. The Bible says, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him" (English Standard Version, 2001, James 1:12). Not only are children's personalities developing during childhood, but their experiences are shaping their future intentions. According to Stone, "a third of serial killers experienced neglect" (p. 225), "about two serial killers out of three suffered humiliation from one or both parents" (p. 227), and "it is rare to find a serial killer who was raised in a family that was even a close approximation of "normal" (p. 223). While we know there are those who remarkably abandon their childhood nightmares and overcome them, there are others who transform their helplessness into hatred and vengeance as they mature.

A key underlying component of a suffering child is aggression. Aggression is also frequently manifested in people with antisocial personality disorder (APD) and those with a high level of psychopathic traits (Azevedo, et al., 2020). If child suffering is a result of their homelife, it is not likely that the parents will act on early warning signs of

conduct disorder (the childhood precursor to the adult APD). Instead, it may be up to other adults such as pediatricians, teachers, and social workers to offer intervention. Azevedo, et al. (2020) found that the primary aggression type associated with adults diagnosed with APD is impulsive, as opposed to premeditated; they also note that aggressive behaviors are "related to high levels of human suffering" (p. 2). The Bible illustrates murder as stemming from hate; it states, "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (English Standard Version, 2001, 1 John 3:15). To hate is to be tremendously angry, and a display of anger is often aggressive in nature. Using this depiction, we can assume that God correlates hate with figurative murder. Regarding untreated aggression as a precursor to APD and at its worst, evil, early warning signs include impulsive or premeditated (less common) displays of aggressive behavior and attitudes representative of aversion or hate.

The study of psychology is concerned with the recognition, treatment, and prevention of variables that equate to evil. Unfortunately, society today is flooded with factors that not only expose people to evil of every variety, but even make it seem appealing in some cases where individuals are predisposed to harmful behavior. In his book, Hickey (2013) uses an example by Haggerty (2009), which outlines modern preconditions for serial murder aside from etiology and biography. Of the six preconditions, two include mass media and achievement of celebrity status and a society deprived of values (Hickey, 2013). Never before has society so highly regarded people who appear in the media, and we can assume that individuals with a grandiose character (the second feature of psychopathy on the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised [PCL-R]) are drawn to this potential stardom. Additionally, violence and turmoil are depicted often and go without consequence, making people who secretly wish to cause harm undeterred by

punishment. Needless to say, no organization, profession, or field of study can completely manage the onslaught of evil doers in society, but they can work to detect, prevent, and even rehabilitate.

Careful considerations are necessary when working with individuals with foul tendencies. As we have discussed, serious mental health issues such as antisocial personality disorder begin its progression with aggressive and disruptive displays of behavior. In a study, Gonzales-Ball & Bratton (2019) observed the effectiveness of child-teacher relationship training on children who exhibited disruptive behavior. The training, utilizing "parents and caregivers as therapeutic agents of change" (p.1) demonstrated a significant effect of reducing disruptive behavior. These clinical findings indicate that recognizing signs as general as disruptive behavior and placing young children into a specialized program with personalized, quality care has positive effects. Another effective treatment approach, used primarily in the juvenile justice system, is known as motivational engagement. This program focuses on identifying patient-individual values that help to elicit self-motivation for change. By allowing the offender to autonomously establish their own goals they become more susceptible to treatment and increase the success of harm reduction (Fagan & Ax, 2011). As a consensus of many studies that analyze mental health intervention of youths, programs are most successful when they incorporate a personalization factor. It is vital for children to build a trusting relationship with a supportive adult figure, whether it be a parent, teacher, or clinician.

Temptation resides in all of us, and giving in to temptation creates sin. Although sinful action is not inherently evil, the progression from temptation to evil is apparent and can happen quickly. Psychologically speaking, this progression begins with behaviors such as aggression,

anger, hatred, or combinations of the like. Adolescents externalizing problems (EP) including rule-breaking and criminal activity is another noteworthy sign that these symptoms may persist and worsen into adulthood. On a follow-up, Border, et al. (2018) found that sixty-eight percent of participants in their study who actively externalized problems had been arrested after their 18th birthday. Out of this percentage, it is possible that a number of these individuals will eventually become the evil doers of the world. God tells us that man's heart is born with evil intentions, but through steadfast dedication to God and goodness, temptations can subside. It is not the role of humankind to criticize others; instead, seek to understand what we do not, help the cause if we can, and allow God to make the final judgement.

Paths to Healing/Defeating the Enemy

Like a sickness, the presence of evil has been and continues to remain an element of destruction in the world. It exists in many forms, and the varying facets are all harmful in their own ways. While the desire to exterminate evil runs deep for many individuals and professions, it is ultimately beyond human control and leaves us with the residual role of understanding and controlling its factors. Evilness does not enter or affect the world haphazardly, but rather, it methodically chooses its approach and works to exploit human weaknesses. "Satan prowls like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (English Standard Version, 2001, 1 Peter 5:8) by using weapons such as fear, lies, pride, and temptation to sin. The devil is crafty and plans his attacks deliberately, preying on us in vulnerable times. We must not forget that the ones who surrender to evil have, at least temporarily, given into temptation. Often, those who cannot resist evil have endured suffering and internal destruction themselves. As we have learned, the reasons why some submit while others resist are embedded into

the deepest personal lives of each of us. Thankfully, where sinfulness and temptation are at work, so is profound goodness; these two forces battle to overshadow one another and prevail in the human character. By using the tools God has given us, we can maximize our strengths, defeat the enemy, and repent past sins. To live righteously and to be forgiven for our sins requires the training and application of healing and nurturing for the preparator. This section will focus on the paths to healing that halt the cycle of violence, and the act of repentance that leads to forgiveness.

The making of an evil perpetrator happens through a series of traumatic experiences that ultimately lead to violence. Staub (2014) describes the process beginning with victimization: victimization, in turn, establishes feelings of vulnerability and a perception of the world as dangerous, and harbored feelings of vulnerability seek a coping mechanism of self-defense that often lead to aggression and violence. Without proper healing, overcoming hostility becomes increasingly difficult with every evil act and the cycle of violence continues (Staub, 2014). In a study conducted by Shields et al. (2007), they found that children between the ages of 8 and 13 who were regularly exposed to violence sustained severe psychological distress; perceived safety through social support and family organization and control was the greatest mediating factor to effects of violence. These children have been victimized by innocently witnessing such horrors, and we can conclude that for them, exposure to extreme violence likely instigates insecurity and instability, and the formation of defensive coping mechanisms. To relinquish these insecurities is a vital step in resisting violence, but it cannot happen alone. Social support is a primary factor towards success in the healing process.

Many studies examine the significance of social support related to coping and

healing. Even in the presence of extreme violence, Shields et al (2007) concluded that children with higher social support at school and at home reduced the effects of violence exposure. In addition, they found that "having an understanding of why events occur may be a fairly stable cognitive structure in these children" (Shields et al, 2007, p. 599), perhaps indicating that humans, at a basic level, operate rationally and logically. Their findings suggest that early intervention that helps children understand their experiences may be helpful at reducing future violent tendencies. Another study by Tucker et al. (2020) analyzed the relationship between positive social support and sibling victimization associated with adolescence. Results indicated that "family and friend social support had unique, overlapping, and combined effects on reducing the relationship between sibling victimization and mental health distress, self-esteem, and delinquency" (Tucker et al, 2020, p. 1). Finally, the findings of Garverich et al. (2020) illustrate the significance of social connection in mental health recovery. They concluded that "individual and social level factors, mental health status, social support, perception of community status, and stigma consciousness were found to positively impact one's recovery attitude (Garverich et al., 2020, p. 1).

Perpetrators are also victims, having experienced some form of victimization that started their transgression into evil. Dr. Ervin Staub focuses on healing for perpetrators and their victims and has devoted much of his career to formulating reconciliation activities in Rwanda after the Hutus genocide in 1994. His work involves the organization of conferences that "aim to help people understand the roots of genocide" (Staub, 2014, p. 508), and holding workshops that discuss the "impact of violence on people, healing, and prevention and reconciliation" (p. 509). After giving his lectures, Dr. Staub allows group members to engage in extensive

discussion with one another, starting in large groups and working down to groups of two or three. During an informal evaluation of participants, significant positive changes were observed by Staub and his team, including trauma symptom reduction, a more positive attitude and interaction between tribes, a deeper understanding of the origins of violence, and forgiveness and acknowledgment of actions (Staub, 2014). "They said things like: 'So this was not God's punishment; ...others have also had such experiences; ... if we understand how such things happen we can also prevent them'" (Staub, 2014, p. 510). The people of Rwanda lived through an atrocity that parallels pure evil. Through teaching, understanding, and the formation of social relationships, enemies are now living side by side and learning to forgive themselves and each other.

The devil may prey on our weaknesses, but we can learn to unveil evil's weakness and maximize our strengths. God gives us strength to "Resist the devil" (English Standard Version, 2001, James 4:7) and use "the weapons of our warfare" (English Standard Version, 2001, 2 Corinthians 10:4). Combating the spiritual enemy is not easy; he appeals to us in many ways and uses his own strategies to catch us off guard. By instilling fear as a primary weapon, Satan attempts to challenge God's promises. The Bible repeatedly commands us to "fear not" and to maintain your faith and peace through difficult circumstances. God says, "Fear not, for I am with you" (English Standard Version, 2001, Isaiah 41:10), "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD" (English Standard Version, 2001, Exodus 14:13), and "My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not" (English Standard Version, 2001, Haggai 2:5). While the devil aims to attack us, God ceaselessly works to guard our faith. He has given us "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith

for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (English Standard Version, 2001, 1 Peter 1:4-5).

Lies are another force the enemy uses to play on our insecurities. We can rest assured that any negative thoughts that oppose God's word come from the devil with evil intentions. To combat these lies, we can respond by turning discouraging thoughts into positive ones by answering them using truth (God's word). Satan also uses the temptation of sin to try to defeat you. However, we know that we can resist sin, regardless of how strong it appears. Jesus proves this when he is tempted by the devil after spending 40 days in the wilderness, but he does not submit to temptation: " Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him" (English Standard Version, 2001, Matthew 4:11). By resisting sin, we remain on the path of obedience set forth by God. Finally, the enemy creates an exaggerated sense of pride to lead us into destruction. The Bible identifies pride as one of the seven things that God hates, naming it "haughty eyes" (English Standard Version, 2001, Proverbs 6:17). Straying far from pride requires the maintenance of a humble and grateful character.

God has prepared us to encounter and overcome the devil. While some sins are worse than others, we all succumb to the enemy from time to time. God understands that nobody is perfect; from Adam and Eve's sin in the garden came evil, which has been passed on through the ages. While He acknowledges and accepts our imperfections, God also expects that we repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness. He says, " For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more" (English Standard Version, 2001, Hebrews 8:12). If we ask him to, God will not only forgive our sins, but forget them "as far as the east is from the west" (English Standard Version, 2001, Psalm 103:12). He also promotes the effectiveness of

a strong social network, and caring and praying for each other: "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (English Standard Version, 2001, James 5:16). And again: "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (English Standard Version, 2001, Hebrews 10:25).

Another amazing feat of God is the acknowledgement of suffering, and His assurance that suffering will create a positive character for the people who have faith in Him: "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (English Standard Version, 2001, Romans 5:3-4). Suffering is inevitable in this life, and God has tested countless people with pain and misery. These moments are ones in which we are most likely to question God and stray from a righteous path. However painful, we must not forget that our sufferings will end. After Peter has endured adversity from Satan, he says: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you" (English Standard Version, 2001, 1 Peter 5:6-7). The Bible proves that there is hope for every person who has become an evil perpetrator, and every victim; one only needs to accept that hope through Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

While the idea of evil will always remain mysterious, captivating, and frightening, we should strive to understand and confront evil that we might overcome it and help others to do the same. Evil takes many forms, from large-scale catastrophic events to relatively limited individual events. Whatever the scale, we should not ignore or

cover before evil, because we know that God has not given us a spirit of fear but of the power necessary to defeat it (English Standard Version, 2001, 2 Timothy 1:7-14).

Psychologists around the world are doing their part to detect and prevent the underlying causes of evil through early intervention and therapies. We, too, can foster environments of forgiveness and positive change in our own worlds by living through God's word, which may result in addressing evil and living a righteous life through the power of God. Since its existence lies within humanity because of the original sin of Adam, the power to destroy that evil resides in a second Adam (Linebach, 2019). We are all on this journey together to combat evil in the world; it is up to each one of us to help one another to recognize evil and seek to root it out of our lives.

References

- Azevedo, J., Vieira-Coelho, M., Castelo-Branco, M., Coelho, R., & Figueiredo-Braga, M. (2020). Impulsive and premeditated aggression in male offenders with antisocial personality disorder. *PloS One*, 15(3), e0229876. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0229876>
- Border, R., Corley, R. P., Brown, S. A., Hewitt, J. K., Hopfer, C. J., Stallings, M. C., Wall, T. L., Young, S. E., & Rhee, S. H. (2018). Predictors of adult outcomes in clinically- and legally ascertained youth with externalizing problems. *PLoS ONE*, 13(11), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0206442>
- Card, C. (2010). *Confronting evils: Terrorism, torture, genocide*. Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO97805117821>

- 14 English Standard Version. (2001). Crossway, Good News Publishers.
- Formosa, P. (2008) A conception of evil. *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 42 (2): 217–239. DOI: 10.1007/s10790-008-9118-8
- Garverich, S., Prener, C. G., Guyer, M. E., & Lincoln, A. K. (2020). What matters: Factors impacting the recovery process among outpatient mental health service users. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*.<https://doi.org.ropes.idm.oclc.org/10.1037/prj0000407>
- Gonzales-Ball, T. L., & Bratton, S. C. (2019). Child–teacher relationship training as a Head Start early mental health intervention for children exhibiting disruptive behavior. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 28(1), 44–56. <https://doi.org.ropes.idm.oclc.org/10.1037>
- Haggerty, K. (2009). Modern serial killers. *Crime Media Culture*, 5(2), 168-187.
- Hammer, R. (1990). The Biblical perception of the origin of evil. *Judaism*, 39(3), pp 318-325.
- Hare, R. (1991). *The Hare Psychology Checklist – Revised*. Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems.
- Harmon, V. Mujkic, E., Kaukinen, C., Weir, H. (2018). Causes & explanations of suicide terrorism: A systematic review. *Homeland Security Affairs*. Retrieved from <https://www.hsaj.org/articles/14749>
- Hickey, E. W. (2016). *Serial murderers and their victims (7th Ed.)*. Wadsworth-Cengage Learning.
- Kaufmann, Y. (1972). The religion of Israel. From its beginning to the Babylonian exile.
- Linebach, J. A. (2019). A scriptural view of crime. *Christus Cultura: The Journal of Christianity in the Social Sciences*, Inaugural Edition, 25-34.
- McLeod, S. A. (2017, February 05). *The Milgram shock experiment*. Simply Psychology. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html>
- Newberg, A. & Waldman, R. (2012). *Words can change your brain*. Penguin Group.
- Pelzer, D. (1993) *A child called "It". One child's courage to survive*. Health Communications Incorporated.
- Rippo, B. M. (2007). *The professional serial killer and the career of Ted Bundy: An investigation into the macabre ID-ENTITY of the serial killer*. iUniverse, Inc.
- Russell, L. (2014) *Evil: A philosophical investigation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Retrieved on May 05, 2020 from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/concept-evil/>
- Shields, N., Nadasen, K., & Pierce, L. (2008). The effects of community violence on children in Cape Town, South Africa. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32(5), 589–601. <https://doi.org.ropes.idm.oclc.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2007.07.010>
- Simpson, P. (2010). *Making Murder: The fiction of Thomas Harris*. ABC-CLIO, LLC.
- Steiner, H. (2002). Calibrating evil. *The Monist*, 85 (2): 183–193. DOI: 10.5840/monist200285211
- Stone, M. H. (2017), *The anatomy of evil*. Prometheus Books.
- Staub, E. (2014). The challenging road to reconciliation in Rwanda: Societal processes, interventions and their evaluation. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 2(1), 505-517. DOI:10.5964/jspp.v2i1.294
- Tucker, C. J., Finkelhor, D., & Turner, H. (2020). Family and friend social support as mediators of adolescent sibling victimization and mental health, self-esteem, and delinquency. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*.

<https://doi.org.10.1037/ort000050>

2

Walton, J. H. (Ed.). (2009). Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament (Vol. 1). Zondervan.

Warf, B., and Waddell, C. (2002). Heinous spaces, perfidious places: The sinister landscapes of serial killers. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 3(3), pp 323-345.

Inner Group Conflict in a Federal Law Enforcement Agency

By Daniel Augusto
Liberty University



Image Credit: Pixabay

This case study discusses an inner group conflict related to distrust between law enforcement Analysts and their new supervisor in a federal law enforcement agency and suggests an action plan with specific interventions to address the conflict. The article is meant as a case study by which

readers can learn from the practical application of theory and a review of the literature to overcome a real-world inner group conflict. Analysis of this real-world conflict also serves as an example of the importance of research and application to the workplace, since the paper reveals factors and solutions that were not previously considered by the management team during the actual conflict. The author's Christian worldview is also interwoven throughout the study, and it is hoped that readers who have a Christian worldview will find this case study particularly beneficial, since the author's motivations, lens, and viewpoints may align with Christian readers. The author argues that several factors combined to build and reinforce distrust between Analysts and their new supervisor. The distrust manifested in several ways, with communication issues being most apparent.

The study begins with a conflict description section, which covers the conflict. The study then transitions to provide background information including the mission and history of the unit as well as employee and supervisor characteristics. The conflict description section concludes with some examples of manifestation and efforts taken to resolve the conflict. The next major section is a literature review. The literature review provides a theoretical foundation wherein two theories aid in framing the scenario. Next, the relevant literature on employee distrust is reviewed. Communication literature is discussed, followed by recent literature on the impact of various leadership styles upon the employee to supervisor relationships. Overall, the review resulted in several findings that are later applied within the action plan. The final major section includes an action plan, which begins by applying the two relevant theories. Next, the need for an alternative resolution is discussed and justified. Finally, the suggested intervention plan is discussed, including steps to achieve four primary objectives and the

expected implications on the employees and the supervisor.

Conflict Description

The conflict stems from distrust between the employees and the new supervisor over the unit. Such distrust has proven problematic for mission accomplishment within organizations (Kujala, Lehtimäki, & Pucetaite, 2016). The group is referred to as ‘the Hotline,’ and it consists of four law enforcement Analysts and one supervisor. During the new supervisor’s first week, one of the three employees submitted an informal complaint directly to the agency director complaining of a hostile work environment created by the new supervisor. However, all levels of management expressed confusion at the complaint because the supervisor had only held one conversation with the employee, which was a simple introduction and rapport-building attempt. Additionally, another employee within the group has begun discussing the potential of her filing a complaint. Gossip often occurs within the group and has spread outside the group. Additionally, a poor performing employee from outside the workgroup has begun influencing group members and aligning the employees against the supervisor. Essentially, the workgroup has decided to not cooperate with the supervisor or trust his intentions, and they have established a narrative against the new supervisor within his first week.

Potential Benefits of Conflict Resolution Intervention

The increased trust will reduce miscommunications between members of the group and the new supervisor. One might also assert that increased trust and working relationships will enhance efficiency through reduced staff complaints. Finally, the conflict resolution will likely help the group gain an increased score on the group quarterly

performance measure requirements, thereby increasing the agency’s overall performance. Christians within the group will also be more likely to please God with their efforts to get along and work well together. John 13:34 states “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (KJV). The background information provided below will offer some context on the situation.

Background Mission of the Group

The group is responsible for reviewing and disseminating complaints from the public as well as any investigative referrals from outside agencies. More than 10,000 complaints of fraud, mismanagement, or other crimes are received by the staff each year. Additionally, the staff conducts thousands of other requests for analytical assistance. The group also receives hundreds of Freedom of Information Act Requests from the public, requesting copies of government records related to the work of the group. The supervisor receives the incoming request, complaint, or referral, or action item, and assigns the item to the appropriate Analyst. The group also maintains a group email and public-facing complaint site, where people can submit requests or complaints directly to the group. The supervisor assigns one or more Analysts to monitor the group email and other daily assignments.

History

The group is overtasked based on the technology and work processes in place. Although the group is not significantly understaffed compared to similar units in other agencies, the work processes are so antiquated and often redundant, that basic tasks take excessive amounts of time to complete. This overtasking has resulted in a backlog of action items, and the supervisor is actively working toward new processes to

resolve the backlog. However, the constant backlog has been in place for years, and Analysts have no hope of overcoming the backlog. The ever-present backlog has demotivated employees as well.

The Analysts are accustomed to having law enforcement officers as supervisors, despite the law enforcement officers' not having Analyst experience. This creates a rift since the Analysts believe an Analyst should be promoted into the supervisor position. Senior management has historically promoted a law enforcement officer into the position because the position also entails other duties that only a law enforcement officer is permitted to do. Past supervisors have been overtasked and lacked Hotline knowledge. They have also overtasked one senior Analyst to handle the more complex Hotline tasks. As a result, the senior Analyst distrusts management at all levels because she is accustomed to being trusted to do complex work, and often has knowledge that the supervisor does not have. The Analysts believe the senior Analyst should be promoted, and continued promotions of law enforcement personnel instead of Analysts have added to the distrust.

Overall, the employees have expressed frustration because they are in a thankless position with an ever-present work backlog. Additionally, their specialized knowledge paired with lack of understanding from senior management and prior direct supervisors has galvanized the group into an 'us versus them' mentality, and the senior Analyst is seen as the clear internal group leader. None of the Hotline staff members have law enforcement experience, which seems to add to the differing communication styles. Prior supervisors and non-Hotline coworkers have indicated that communication differences occur between the Hotline staff and law enforcement personnel because a direct communication style is often exhibited by law enforcement. Prior managers have stated that

they were required to 'baby' the Hotline staff because they were resistant to any direct communication attempts.

Line Employees

All of the Hotline employees perform at the expected level or above the expected level. They take pride in accomplishing their jobs, and they are all knowledgeable of their duties. All Hotline employees are over the age of 40, and minority females. Ignorance of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws has perpetuated the perception that the aforementioned protected classes give employees more leverage with which to file an EEO complaint. Essentially, employees have expressed a belief that the more protected classes a person can claim, the more likely he or she is to be successful in an EEO complaint. As a result, the perception is that the employee has increased leverage in the EEO process because the complainant would be a minority female who is over 40 years old versus a non-minority male who is under 40 years old. Additionally, lack of effective grievance options within the agency has resulted in employees' overreliance upon EEO as the only remedy for any complaint they might have, regardless of suitability for the EEO process. The agency also has a history of showing flexibility when employees file complaints. As a result, the employees have learned strategies by which to most effectively prepare for and file an EEO complaint, even when no discrimination is occurring.

Each Analyst has a unique personality, which impacts the way the Analysts expect to be treated. One Analyst expects to be contacted regularly and given consistent feedback. Failure to do so results in the employee believing that the supervisor 'does not like' her. Another Analyst wants to be left alone, and she views increased contact from the supervisor as a sign that the supervisor does not trust her. All of the Analysts are also in communications with a poor performing

non-Hotline employee who also works for the supervisor in a different unit. The non-Hotline employee has an active EEO complaint against the supervisor and has filed complaints on every male supervisor she has ever had. The non-Hotline employee is in communications with the Hotline Analysts and increasing their distrust of the new supervisor by relaying exaggerated and one-sided perspectives on negative interactions with the new supervisor.

Supervisor

The aforementioned individual expectations of each employee create difficulties for the supervisor relative to treating employees consistently. The supervisor would default to applying what he knows of each employee's personality to foster an effective working relationship with each employee. However, the supervisor's ongoing EEO complaint with the non-Hotline employee requires him to focus on consistency among employees to avoid allegations that he is treating one employee differently from another based on a protected class.

The supervisor has added to the distrust by his direct communication style. He has sent several emails when he should have had conversations. The conversation would have allowed employees to read the supervisor's non-verbal communications instead of fully relying upon the supervisor's direct writing style. He also failed to adjust for the distrust in the group and communicated in a manner that one might communicate with a trusted coworker. He was also overly aggressive in holding the poor performing non-Hotline staff member accountable for her performance and conduct. These factors have combined to create an image of the supervisor as a dictatorial manager who is more concerned with holding people accountable than helping employees perform.

Other Factors

The supervisor's management training taught him that he is task-oriented, which predisposes him to prioritize task completion over interacting with people. This helps him complete his job since he is responsible for thousands of items per week. However, this lack of relationship orientation has also caused issues with the Hotline staff. The Hotline staff members are known to expect others to adjust to their personality and communication style. This expectation was perpetuated by previous supervisors defaulting to an accommodating style of management to minimize conflict (Raines, 2020). As a result, the supervisor is becoming frustrated and resentful that he is adjusting his personality and communication to meet the staff where they are, instead of the staff and supervisor attempting to adjust to one another equally. The supervisor is also frustrated because he believes he is facing 10 years' worth of poor management decisions, permissiveness, and accommodation from prior supervisors, which has shaped Analyst expectations of supervisors and allowed employee expectations to become unrealistic. Christians might also argue that the supervisor would benefit from the understanding that this challenge is part of what God has planned for him and may be a growth opportunity provided by God. However, that understanding cannot occur without trust in God's plan. Indeed, Joshua 1:9 states "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (ESV).

Examples of Manifestation:

Escalation and de-escalation

Escalation can be paired with negative interactions with the poor performing non-Hotline employee. When the supervisor counsels her, she communicates her dislike for the supervisor to the Hotline staff. Despite the

supervisor never counseling any Hotline Analyst, the staff increases distrust for the supervisor subsequent to the non-Hotline employee's communications. The issues de-escalate when the supervisor praises the staff or acknowledges their accomplishments, particularly in public. The conflict then de-escalates for a short time. However, despite the escalation and de-escalation cycle, two of the four Hotline Analysts maintain watchful distrust of the supervisor.

Interpersonal Facets

The primary example of the manifestation of the distrust comes in the form of seemingly constant miscommunications between the staff and supervisor. The supervisor told an Analyst that he would be teleworking the following day, but that he would be in the office for a short time to drop off boxes into his office. The Analyst interpreted the message as a warning against her neglecting her duties because the supervisor would be checking in on her. Later, when the supervisor capitalized an acronym in an email, he did so in an effort to avoid grammar errors. However, the Hotline staff interpreted the capitalized acronym as the supervisor 'yelling' at them. Additionally, during the previously mentioned informal complaint against the supervisor during the first week, senior management reviewed the supervisor's email that was provided as evidence of the hostile working environment, and none of the senior managers could determine what language was being interpreted as hostile or aggressive. Overall, Analysts were interpreting supervisor communications in the least trusting manner possible. Interpersonal differences and distrust were creating a significant barrier to communication, and the barrier was creating additional work for various levels of management.

Social Facets

The supervisor's failure to proactively communicate with employees, particularly related to what seems like constant organizational change, has created a vacuum of information. Thus, the more vocal employees are filling the silence with their own narratives. As a result, the more vocal and negative employees have become the de facto source of information, whether correct or incorrect, related to the Hotline. In addition, the poor performing non-Hotline employee is intentionally aggravating the Hotline staff by providing false information to align the employees against the supervisor.

Psychological Facets

The distrust is also due in part to the Hotline staff's past experience with agency management. The staff has communicated several examples of times where they were asked for feedback regarding decisions that affected them, only to have the feedback ignored. They have also communicated several major changes to their work process, where management failed to ask for their input. Past supervisors and the new supervisor have made efforts to resolve the distrust.

Previous Efforts toward Resolution

The former supervisors attempted to use an accommodating management style, but that resulted in continued expectations among the Analysts that supervisors should adjust to the employees. The new supervisor attempted to build trust using a few steps. He held a meeting with the Analysts to openly discuss their interpretation of the problems. He provided feedback, being careful to listen for additional details. The meeting concluded with employees stating that they have not given the supervisor an opportunity to prove himself, and they immediately lacked trust. The supervisor stated that he would work to soften his communication and seek feedback

regarding employee interpretation of supervisor communication. The supervisor also bought quarterly lunches for the staff when they exceeded their performance measure requirements. In addition, he worked to soften communications, and give credit to employees in public, since the senior Analyst was accustomed to supervisors taking credit for what she viewed as her work. The supervisor also defended employees to senior management and provided employees copies of emails wherein the supervisor lobbied on behalf of employee concerns. Within approximately six months, the supervisor had gained a cautiously trustful attitude from two of the four Analysts. Although the supervisor's progress is admirable, a literature review is provided below in an attempt to reveal additional information that might be useful beyond the supervisor's efforts thus far.

Literature Review and Conceptualization Uncertainty Management Theory

Yang, Lin, Fang, and Huang, (2019) discussed Uncertainty Management Theory (UMT). UMT is designed to explain how people respond to uncertainty in their environment. Under UMT, it is argued that fear affects the individual's cognition, in turn affecting behavior. UMT also assigns a high level of importance to the perception of fairness by the individual employee. Environmental uncertainty is mitigated by a sense of workplace fairness. Employees are thought to be less affected by uncertainty if they can rely upon the relative certainty of workplace fairness, which essentially sets parameters for how many bad things can happen to the employee. UMT also posits that unfairness results in high levels of reactivity by the worker in the uncertain environment, and unfair messaging by organizational management is particularly distressing for employees in this environment.

Social Exchange Theory

Porter (2018) discussed Social Exchange Theory (SET). SET is intended to explain how people develop relationships with one another through repeated interactions, which generate obligations to one another. SET is characterized by (1) rules of exchange, (2) resources exchanged, and (3) exchange relationships. Rules of exchange include negotiated rules, such as quid pro quo or a purchase transaction, and reciprocity rules wherein one person feels an undefined obligation to the other as a result of a previously shared resource by the first person. An example of reciprocity might be a neighbor who is eager to help another neighbor with yard work, because of an earlier instance when the second neighbor showed the first neighbor how to change the oil in his vehicle. Resources exchanged under SET could be anything from knowledge to mentorship on a topic to physical or financial assistance. Exchange relationships are a form of reciprocity wherein an ongoing series of exchanges occur between two people. Economic exchange relationships are simple business transactions. Social exchange relationships are less defined and are more likely to occur in a work setting.

Employee Distrust

Employee distrust has proven problematic for mission accomplishment within organizations (Kujala, Lehtimaki, & Pucetaite, 2016). Trust has also been found to be essential to working relationships since employees depend upon one another for help in their attempts to navigate uncertainty in the organization (Lanaj, Kim, Koopman, & Matta, 2018). Quader (2011) studied the U.S. Presidential candidacy race between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton to evaluate trust. He found no significant cultural or gender differences between evaluations of the candidates. However, he found a high association between the perception of trust

and the likelihood of voting for a particular candidate. These findings reinforce the importance of trust over other factors, including skill level in selecting a leader.

Elsbach, Stigliani, and Stroud (2012) studied distrust at Hewlett Packard for more than 10 years. They determined that building trust was unlikely while active distrust exists among employees. Their findings indicate that managers must take deliberate steps to overcome the distrust before attempting to go beyond that and build trust. Their findings indicated a trust continuum with distrust on the left, neither trusting or distrustful in the middle and trusting on the right. They also determined that distrustful employees perceive organizational communications as disrespectful, and they perceived management as dissatisfied with employee performance. Finally, employees perceived the treatment of employees as unfair. These perceptions often stemmed from management renegeing on promises, enforcing unfair practices, and dismantling organizational traditions. Managers were also perceived to use labels and disparaging language.

Coleman Gallagher, Meurs, and Harris (2016) used uncertainty management theory as a foundation for their exploration of the role of political skill during employee distrust of management. The authors conducted multiple regressions of survey results from sales representatives. They found that as distrust increased, employee commitment decreased, and was pronounced for employees with low levels of political skill. Employees with high levels of political skill were found to enjoy their jobs even during times of increased distrust of management. Employees with high political skill were also more likely to perceive increased job mobility when distrust of management was present. These findings could be viewed as intuitive, since employees with political savvy may seem to navigate organizational challenges and personalities with relative calm and ease.

Lanaj et al. (2018) applied a unique perspective by focusing research upon the mistrusted person as opposed to a majority of research, which focuses on the impact of mistrust on the person whose trust was violated. Conservation of Resources theory posits that the person being mistrusted will experience negative implications both at work and at home from the mistrust. Qualitative research was conducted, revealing that the mistrusted person experienced emotional exhaustion, which led to withdrawal from coworkers and conflict with significant others. Increased perception of mistrust was also paired with increased negative outcomes experienced by the mistrusted employee.

Saunders, Dietz, & Thornhill (2014) tested whether trust and distrust could co-exist in the mind of the same employee. Saunders et al. (2014) used a mixed-method design wherein more than 50 participants were interviewed. They found that participants indicated that trust and distrust were separate constructs. Findings also indicated that employee trust and distrust are shaped partially by management actions that reinforce quality communication and job security. Saunders et al. (2014) also found that distinct actions are necessary to reduce distrust, which is different from the actions necessary to build trust.

Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik, and Škerlavaj (2014) drew upon social exchange theory to posit that a reciprocal distrust loop is created when employees hide knowledge from one another. The authors studied 240 employees and found a negative correlation between knowledge hiding and creativity levels of the knowledge hider. They later replicated the study on more than 130 college students and uncovered the same results. Rani, Arain, Kumar, and Shaikh (2018) examined the effect of the breach of trust on the employee's disidentification with the organization. The study of 281 employees in Pakistan determined that a perceived breach of trust

had significant direct and indirect positive effects on organizational identifications with distrust as a mediator. Trust was not found to be a mediator, which further separates the two constructs of trust and distrust.

Employee Communication

DuFrene and Lehman (2014) found that employees typically view organizational change as a form of crisis, regardless of the reality of the change. As a result, employees display reactions that management might not be prepared for. Employees exhibit reactions stemming from feelings of insecurity, fear, chaos, stress, grief, anger, and betrayal. Employees also increase their expectations of open and honest communication during times of uncertainty. DuFrene and Lehman (2014) thus emphasized the need for effective communication during times of change.

Grossner, Lopez-Kidwell, Labianca, and Ellwardt (2012) studied workplace gossip and found some relevant themes. They found several functions of gossip, including gaining information, gaining influence, releasing pent-up emotions, fostering interpersonal relationships, providing intellectual stimulation, and maintaining group values or norms. The authors also suggested several tactics to manage gossip in the organization. Managers should formally communicate information, foster a culture of civility, and promote organizational justice. Providing mechanisms to deal with stress or boredom are other manners of reducing gossip. The authors also suggested that gossip can be used as a diagnostic tool for managers, helping them to be alert to potential conflicts in the office. Rahman, Osman-Gani, Momen, and Islam (2015) surveyed 200 employees in Malaysia to assess relationships associated with knowledge sharing. They found that trust and knowledge sharing effectiveness is mediated by perceived risk among employees. They also found that communication skill

mediates leadership style and knowledge sharing effectiveness.

Walden, Jung, and Westerman (2017) explored the connection between employee engagement and employee to organization relationships. They surveyed more than 530 employees and found that employee engagement mediates the relationship between employee commitment and communication. Walden et al. (2017) concluded that employee engagement is paired with commitment and negatively correlated with mobility. One year later, Kim (2018) explored organizational effectiveness and crisis communication. Kim (2018) surveyed 544 full-time employees and conducted multiple regression analysis. The researcher found that two-way symmetrical communication and transparent communication were important factors in organizational effectiveness, particularly during organizational crisis situations.

Kang and Sung (2017) examined internal communication compared to employees' perceptions of relationships and turnover. They surveyed 438 sales representatives and conducted structural equation modeling. Kang and Sung (2017) found that employee communication is linked to employee engagement, which reduces turnover. Mazzei, Butera, and Quaratino (2019) later conducted mixed methods research to study the connection between employee engagement and competitiveness in the workplace, with a focus upon employee communication and employee engagement in Italy. They used a statistical sampling of companies, followed by snowball sampling for interviews of those companies. They found that employee communication can foster employee engagement, but companies must identify and leverage opportunities to benefit from the communication.

Results of Leadership Styles

Perhaps not surprisingly, several authors found relationships between

leadership style and employee performance, trust, and motivation. Saad, Sudin, and Shamsuddin (2018) conducted a cross-sectional correlational study of 111 executives in Malaysia to explore relationships between leadership style, personality, and employee communication on employee engagement. Correlation analysis, stepwise linear regressions, and analysis of variance were conducted on the data. Saad et al. (2018) found that leadership style, personality, and communication were significantly positively correlated with employee engagement. Leadership style was correlated lowest with employee engagement. The authors suggested that organizations focus on personality attributes in selecting employees and managers. Jo, Lee, Lee, and Hahn (2015) proposed a theoretical model between trust, leadership style, and employee creativity. Jo et al. (2015) surveyed 350 employees and found that leader consideration and initiating structure positively influenced trust in the leader and the organization. They also found that trust in the individual leader had no significant influence on employee creativity.

Karasel et al. (2018) used qualitative research to interview 30 employees related to paternalist leadership style by managers. They found that social and personal characteristics were among the most important factors in determining trust. Overall, Karasel et al. (2018) found that paternalistic leadership styles are effective when attempting to create employee trust, and organizations should focus on developing paternalist leadership among managers.

Yasier et al. (2016) studied three leadership styles in relation to employee trust within organizational change. More than 200 employees at various levels participated in a survey, which revealed a significant positive correlation between employee trust and transformational leadership. A negative correlation was found between laissez-faire leadership and employee trust during

organizational change. Employee trust was also found to mediate leadership styles and confidence in organizational change.

Zargar, Sousan, and Farmanesh (2019) asserted that the ability of leadership to operate within the necessary leadership style will be ineffective and be seen as simply a representative of management. They also paired leadership failure with overall distrust. Zargar et al. (2019) conducted a mediation analysis to determine if measures of servant leadership and job satisfaction were mediated by the level of trust in the individual leader. Although no mediation was identified, significant positive correlations between trust and servant leadership as well as job satisfaction and trust were found in more than 200 hotel employees in Dubai.

Conceptualization of the Conflict Dynamic Application of Theories

UMT is likely applicable to the Hotline Analysts since they have experienced seemingly constant change and uncertainty in their roles for five to 10 years leading up to the new supervisor's arrival. UMT's emphasis on the perception of unfairness by employees is also reflected by the Hotline staff. Perceived unfairness among the Analysts results in high levels of reactivity and occasional complaints against the supervisors. The distrust from Analysts is also likely reducing any opportunities to observe the fairness that is present in the environment. Additionally, the supervisor's communication style is likely not focused upon a message of fairness, which is aiding in misinterpretations and reactivity by the Analysts.

Under SET, the relationship between the new supervisor and each Analyst is expected to be several social exchange relationships. These types of relationships form somewhat organically with undefined rules. Given the previously discussed communication issues between the Analysts

and the supervisor, opportunities to build social exchange relationships and a sense of debt between the Analysts and the supervisor are likely being missed. Additionally, the lack of trust between the supervisor and Analysts is likely stifling further opportunities to create a reciprocal process. For example, the supervisor learned that two of the Analysts refused to eat the lunches he bought them as a reward for good work.

Conceptualization through the Literature and Theories

Overall, this literature review revealed that the Hotline conflict is likely due to a combination of organizational change, distrust, communication issues, outside influences, and leadership style all interacting to create and exacerbate the conflict. The Hotline Analysts would likely be categorized as employees with low political skill, which also might be attributed to increased reactivity to organizational change or supervisor distrust. Additionally, the Analysts and supervisor are feeling mistrusted, which is probably causing stressors in their personal lives, which further aggravates emotional reactions at work (Lanaj et al., 2018). Those emotional reactions are also likely exacerbated since the Analysts have undergone a constant state of uncertainty for years. The Analysts are likely viewing things through a lens of change, which has implications on their reactivity to seemingly minor communications from the supervisor (DuFrene & Lehmen, 2014). Zargar et al. (2019) indicate that the Analysts' distrust of the supervisor is also correlated with their job satisfaction, which may be a point for further research by the supervisor. Based on UMT, the above symptoms and overall conflict characteristics seem to indicate that uncertainty plays a large role in the reactions of the Hotline Analysts and that UMT should shape the supervisor's approach and his evaluation of the Analysts' reactions. The

action plan will be discussed next with UMT and SET as a foundation.

Action Plan

Yang, Lin, Fang, and Huang, (2019) discussed UMT. UMT is used to explain how the Hotline staff is responding to uncertainty in their environment. Fear affects the Analysts' cognition; in turn, affecting behavior and the employees' perception of fairness becomes a point of focus. The Analysts thus emphasize fairness, and that should be a priority for management; otherwise, employee reactivity will continue to be escalated. Additionally, the perception of unfair messaging should be avoided by organizational management is particularly distressing for employees in this environment.

Porter (2018) discussed SET, which explains how the staff and the manager develop relationships with one another through repeated interactions, which generate obligations to one another. The Analysts and the manager establish rules of exchange, and reciprocity to create undefined obligations to one another as a result of a previously shared resource. The resources exchanged between the staff and manager are likely the supervisor's protection and scheduling fairness in exchange for Hotline Analyst's knowledge and effort. The application of UMT and SET inform the intervention plan below.

Suggested Intervention Plan

Overall, this research has revealed that the Hotline conflict is likely due to a combination of organizational change, distrust, communication issues, outside influences, and leadership style. The Hotline Analysts have experienced seemingly constant change and uncertainty in their roles for five to 10 years leading up to the new supervisor's arrival. UMT's emphasis on the perception of unfairness by employees is also reflected by the Hotline staff, and the distrust is likely

blinding staff to the examples of fairness in the environment, which would serve to reduce their reactivity. Given the previously discussed communication issues between the Analysts and the supervisor, opportunities to build social exchange relationships and a sense of debt between the Analysts and the supervisor are likely being missed. The intervention plan discussed below will incorporate four primary overarching goals, which are based upon the previous literature review, and are intended to address the pillars that are supporting the conflict.

Objective 1: Educate the Manager and Alter Leadership Style

Given the high amount of organizational change experienced by the Analysts in recent years, the new manager might also consider studying and applying transformational leadership tactics in an effort to adjust to his audience (Yasier et al., 2016). Based on Karasel et al.'s (2018) findings, the Hotline manager should also further explore developing a paternalistic leadership style. The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center also provides management training that would benefit the group. Additionally, the agency mentor program might provide an ongoing source of development for the new manager. The mentor relationship might help the new supervisor to consider his own role in the conflict, which will facilitate progress for the group. The supervisor might also benefit from the findings of the earlier literature review assignment since the research appears to provide some perhaps unexpected reasons for the Hotline staff's surprising level of distrust. Training and application of the above management approaches and consideration by the supervisor would hopefully increase the social exchange described by SET that produces a reciprocal and beneficial work relationship between the supervisor and Analysts.

Objective 2: Educate Staff on Common Reactions to Organizational Change

The Hotline Analysts would likely be categorized as employees with low political skill, which also might be attributed to increased reactivity to organizational change or supervisor distrust. Additionally, the Analysts and the supervisor are feeling mistrusted, which is probably causing stressors in their personal lives, which further aggravates emotional reactions at work (Lanaj et al., 2018). Those emotional reactions are also likely exacerbated since the Analysts have undergone a constant state of uncertainty for years. The Analysts are likely viewing things through a lens of change, which has implications on their reactivity to seemingly minor communications from the supervisor (DuFrene & Lehmen, 2014). One measure to overcome those factors is training for the employees.

Hotline staff and the manager should be trained on factors associated with organizational change. They should also be trained specifically on employee reactions to organizational change, as well as the findings of the literature review. The training and education might prove cathartic for the staff since they will view their reactivity as a result of constant organizational change and would perhaps be more willing to accept that they are being overly reactive and distrustful. Employees and the supervisor should also undergo a DiSC evaluation and attend DiSC training. This training will allow them to better understand their personality types and their supervisor's personality type (DiSCprofile, n.d.). The training will also prepare them to better deal with one another and the supervisor.

Objective 3: Enhance Communication Efforts

Since the Analysts perceive employment-related risk, the manager can mitigate this by focusing on his

communication skills and effectively sharing knowledge with the staff (Rahman et al., 2015). Additionally, the supervisor's communication style is likely not focused upon a message of fairness, which is aiding in misinterpretations and reactivity by the Analysts. Much of the negativity is generating from the narratives of a 'vocal minority.' Additionally, the supervisor's inclination to reduce communication as a defense mechanism against complaints is misguided. It is recommended that the supervisor communicate consistently to the staff with updates and emphasize the importance of fairness in his message. This will relieve some of the distrust, meet the fairness needs of employees experiencing organizational change, and it will provide fewer opportunities for the 'vocal minority' to fill the silence with their own narratives and rumors.

Objective 4: Reduce Distrust

Based on the findings of Saunders et al. (2014), the supervisor should consider the implementation of a two-step process, involving (1) specific tactics designed to reduce distrust among Hotline Analysts, followed by (2) other actions to later build trust among the same employees. This is a different process from simply 'building trust' with the group. Zargar Sousan, and Farmanesh (2019) indicated that the Analysts' distrust of the supervisor is also correlated with their job satisfaction, which may be a point for further research by the supervisor. Based on UMT, the above symptoms and overall conflict characteristics seem to indicate that uncertainty plays a large role in the reactions of the Hotline staff. Additionally, the lack of trust between the supervisor and Analysts is likely stifling further opportunities to create a reciprocal process, which is creating more distrust.

Distrust will hopefully be reduced through objectives one through three. In

addition, the supervisor should take steps to build credibility with the staff by completing projects that will (1) reveal his competence in Hotline related matters and (2) reduce the workload of the Hotline staff. The supervisor should also incorporate additional employee reviews, wherein the supervisor checks in with the staff to determine what he can do to reduce their distrust. Additionally, the supervisor should be aware of opportunities to exhibit trust toward employees to begin the reciprocal cycle. Finally, the employees and the supervisor should be tasked with reading the book entitled *The Speed of Trust*, and bi-weekly discussions should be facilitated by the DCR staff, wherein some of the main points of the book are applied to the Hotline situation.

The Need for Conflict Resolution Capabilities Across Criminal Justice Agencies

Criminal justice agencies, like other organizations, should make efforts to build organizational conflict resolution capabilities. One could argue that criminal justice agencies are more in need of resolution capabilities. Proper emotion management and conflict resolution techniques inside an organization will also provide an example for personnel to emulate during public interactions. Additionally, reducing conflict and distrust will likely result in lower stress for personnel at work and at home (Lanaj et al., 2018). Research has also found that organizational change is associated with increased stress and reactivity among employees (DuFrene & Lehman, 2014). Criminal justice agencies are subject to ongoing organizational change stemming from new technology, changes in case law, political shifts, and public perceptions (Willis, Koper, & Lum, 2018). Thus, one might assert that criminal justice agencies should generally develop their conflict resolution capabilities, since employees are likely to experience a

significant amount of change (Willis, Koper, & Lum, 2017), resulting in conflict.

The Need for Conflict Resolution for the Hotline Staff

The paper previously outlined the tangible benefits of conflict resolution for the Hotline. In addition, the agency would likely experience increased efficiency due to less employee time spent on complaints. Recruiting and retention efforts would also likely benefit from a more trusting environment in the Hotline. However, previous attempts to build cohesion and reduce distrust have been met with mixed results. Previous supervisors' attempts to use an accommodating management style increased the Analysts' expectations that supervisors should adjust to the employees. The new supervisor's steps to address the issues resulted in some progress and within approximately six months, the supervisor gained a cautiously trustful attitude from two of the four Analysts. He also bought quarterly lunches for the staff when they exceeded their performance measure requirements. However, he learned that two of the Analysts maintained their distrust and refused to eat the lunches.

Thus, alternative resolution techniques are the next reasonable step to reduce distrust, enhance communication, and improve productivity. The agency utilizes a Dispute System Design (DSD) that incorporates multiple levels of intervention (Raines, 2020). The Office of Diversity and Conflict Resolution (DCR) typically uses one or more mechanisms to handle conflict. The first level of involvement incorporates conversations with the manager and staff involved in the conflict. The second level of involvement uses a facilitation process where the staff and managers are encouraged to discuss the conflict in a controlled environment. Both phases of DCR involvement were discussed to some degree above. However, a more

deliberate and formal level of involvement from DCR might prove beneficial. Thus, DCR should increase involvement in the situation.

Christian Worldview

The strife and discord that comes with this conflict are not aligned with the teachings of the Holy Bible and an intervention is necessary if only to please God. Employees should increase trust as a display that God will take care of them. "In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" (Psalm 56:4, NIV). One might argue that Christian employees might benefit from the perspective that they are trusting God's plan by trusting the supervisor. An intervention might remind them of this. Additionally, Ephesians 4:28 states, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need" (ESV). An intervention might be in line with a Christian worldview since the manager and the employees might all be viewed as stealing time and energy from the organization with their conflicts. Ephesians 4:31-32 also states, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

In applying the author's Christian worldview specifically to the intervention plan, one might be reminded of the importance the Holy Bible places upon working well with people and treating one another well. Romans 13:10 states, "Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law" (NIV). One could interpret this to mean that the staff and the supervisor should remember one of their primary goals under Christianity. They should all act in a way that reflects a love for their fellow men and women. That goal is also

reflected in the action plan steps that require all involved employees to make an effort to grow as individuals and apply training insights to their relationships with one another. This can often be challenging for people, but the effort arguably reflects the intent of Romans 13:10.

Conclusion

This case study discussed an inner group conflict related to distrust between law enforcement Analysts and their new supervisor in a federal law enforcement agency and suggested an action plan with specific interventions to address the conflict. This study also provided a review of recent literature relevant to the problem. The study also outlined and justified an action plan, based on agency need and the situation. The case study began with a conflict description section and transitioned to provide background information. The conflict description section concluded with some examples of manifestation and efforts taken to resolve the conflict. The literature review then provided a theoretical foundation wherein SET and UMT aided in framing the scenario. Next, relevant literature on employee distrust, communication, and leadership style were reviewed. The action plan was then detailed, and the need for alternative resolution was discussed. Finally, the suggested intervention plan was discussed, including steps to achieve four primary objectives and the expected implications on the employees and the supervisor.

A major finding of this case study is that the employee reactions were possibly associated with ongoing organizational change. Other important findings point toward potential solutions by applying UMT and SET. Under the two theories, the manager should adjust his communication style to account for the need for increased emphasis on trust in the messaging. The supervisor should also explore transitional leadership and

a paternal leadership style. Finally, Hotline employees and the supervisor should receive training that exposes them to their likely heightened reactivity, and as well as the natural impact of organizational change on their communication, trust, emphasis on fairness, and overall attitudes. The supervisor and employees should also attend training and assessments to identify their personality types, and how best to interact with other personality types in the workplace. Regardless of the chosen interventions, the application of a Christian approach by all involved parties would help to (1) avoid the conflict, and (2) address the conflict.

References

- Černe, M., Nerstad, C., Dysvik, A., & Škerlavaj, M. (2014). What goes around comes around: Knowledge hiding, perceived motivational climate, and creativity. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 57(1), 172-192. doi:10.5465/amj.2012.0122.
- Coleman Gallagher, V., Meurs, J. A., & Harris, K. J. (2016). Political skill reduces the negative impact of distrust. *Career Development International*, 21(5), 442-458. doi:10.1108/CDI-12-2015-0175.
- DiSCProfile. (n.d.). *DiSC Overview*. Retrieved from <https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/overview/>.
- DuFrene, D. D., & Lehman, C. M. (2014). Navigating change: Employee communication in times of instability. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 77(4), 443-452. doi:10.1177/2329490614544736.
- Elsbach, K. D., Stigliani, I., & Stroud, A. (2012). The building of employee distrust. *Organizational Dynamics*, 41(3), 254-263. doi:10.1016/j.orgdyn.2012.03.003.

- Grossner, T., Lopez-Kidwell, V., Labianca, G., & Ellwardt, L. (2012). Hearing it through the grapevine: Positive and negative workplace gossip. *Organizational Dynamics, 41*(1), 52-61. Doi: 10.1016/j.orgdyn.2011.12.007.
- Jo, N. Y., Lee, K. C., Lee, D. S., & Hahn, M. (2015). Empirical analysis of roles of perceived leadership styles and trust on team members' creativity: Evidence from Korean ICT companies. *Computers in Human Behavior, 42*(1), 149-156. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2014.03.015.
- Kang, M., & Sung, M. (2017). How symmetrical employee communication leads to employee engagement and positive employee communication behaviors: The mediation of employee-organization relationships. *Journal of Communication Management, 21*(1), 82-102. doi:10.1108/JCOM-04-2016-0026.
- Karasel, N., Karasel, N., Altınay, Z., Altınay, Z., Altınay, F., Altınay, F., . . . Dagli, G. (2018). Paternalist leadership style of the organizational trust. *Quality & Quantity, 52*(S1), 11-30. doi:10.1007/s11135-017-0580-x.
- Kim, Y. (2018). Enhancing employee communication behaviors for sensemaking and sensegiving in crisis situations: Strategic management approach for effective internal crisis communication. *Journal of Communication Management, 22*(4), 451-475. doi:10.1108/JCOM-03-2018-0025.
- Kujala, J., Lehtimäki, H. & Pučetaité, R. (2016). Trust and Distrust Constructing Unity and Fragmentation of Organisational Culture. *Journal of Business Ethics, 139*(1), 701-716. Doi:10.1007/s10551-015-2915-7.
- Lanaj, K., Kim, P. H., Koopman, J., & Matta, F. K. (2018). Daily mistrust: A resource perspective and its implications for work and home. *Personnel Psychology, 71*(4), 545-570. doi:10.1111/peps.12268.
- Mazzei, A., Butera, A., & Quarantino, L. (2019). Employee communication for engaging workplaces. *Journal of Business Strategy, 40*(6), 23-32. doi:10.1108/JBS-03-2019-0053.
- Porter, C. M. (2018). Long live social exchange theory. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 11*(3), 498-504. doi:10.1017/iop.2018.102.
- Quader, M. S. (2011). Perception of leadership styles and trust across cultures and gender: A comparative study on Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. *South Asian Journal of Management, 18*(2), 30. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/884627518?pq-origsite=summon>.
- Rahman, M. S., Osman-Gani, A. M., Momen, M. A., & Islam, N. (2015). Testing knowledge sharing effectiveness: Trust, motivation, leadership style, workplace spirituality and social network embedded model. *Management & Marketing, 10*(4), 284-303. doi:10.1515/mmcks-2015-0019.
- Raines, S. (2020). *Conflict Management for Managers: Resolving Workplace, Client, and Policy Disputes*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Rani, H., Arain, G. A., Kumar, A., & Shaikh, I. R. (2018). Interplay between trust and distrust in the workplace: Examining the effect of psychological contract breach on organizational disidentification. *Journal of Asia Business Studies, 12*(1), 1-16. doi:10.1108/JABS-02-2015-0022.
- Saad, Z. M., Sudin, S., & Shamsuddin, N. (2018). The influence of leadership

- style, personality attributes and employee communication on employee engagement. *Global Business and Management Research*, 10(3), 743. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2159615884/abstract/DB83386AF86B42A1PQ/1?accountid=12085>.
- Saunders, M. N., Dietz, G., & Thornhill, A. (2014). Trust and distrust: Polar opposites, or independent but co-existing? *Human Relations*, 67(6), 639-665. doi:10.1177/0018726713500831.
- Walden, J., Jung, E. H., & Westerman, C. Y. K. (2017). Employee communication, job engagement, and organizational commitment: A study of members of the millennial generation. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 29(2-3), 73-89. doi:10.1080/1062726X.2017.1329737.
- Willis, J. J., Koper, C.S., & Lum, C. (2017). The adaptation of license-plate readers for investigative purposes: police technology and innovation re-invention. *Justice quarterly*, 27(1), 614-638. doi:10.1080/07418825.2017.1329936.
- Willis, J. J., Koper, C. S., & Lum, C. (2018). Technology use and constituting structures: Accounting for the consequences of information technology on police organisational change. *Policing and Society*, 28(1), 1-20. doi:10.1080/10439463.2018.1557660.
- Yang, J., Lin, C., Fang, S., & Huang, C. (2019). An uncertainty management theory on the effects of abusive supervision. *Management Decision*, 57(11), 3079-3095. doi:10.1108/MD-06-2017-0604.
- Yasir, M., Imran, R., Irshad, M. K., Mohamad, N. A., & Khan, M. M. (2016). Leadership styles in relation to employees' trust and organizational change capacity: Evidence from non-profit organizations. *SAGE Open*, 6(4), 215824401667539. doi:10.1177/2158244016675396.
- Zargar, P., Sousan, A., & Farmanesh, P. (2019). Does trust in leader mediate the servant leadership style – job satisfaction relationship? *Management Science Letters*, 9(13), 2253-2268. doi: 10.5267/j.msl.2019.7.028.

Exposing Evil Deeds: The Debbie Smith Act

By Deborah J. Link
Liberty University



Image Credit: Pixabay

For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed” (John 3:20, NKJV)

When DNA technology began to be used to identify criminals in the 1980s evidence collection in rape cases followed suit with the development of the rape kit. “A rape kit, or sexual assault kit (SAK), contains biological evidence collected from the victim’s body after the assault (e.g., blood, semen, saliva)

that can be analyzed for DNA, which can be instrumental in solving crimes and preventing future attacks” (Campbell et al., 2015, p. 152). Bodily fluids are collected from the victim, sealed in the kit and sent for DNA results. The kits began to be processed using the new DNA technology, but there was a problem almost from the beginning. There is a cost involved in processing each kit, also, there were not very many specialists who could process them in the early years of the new DNA technology. Processing of the kits began to back up not long after they began to be used to identify rapists—as early as the 1990s. “The current estimate of untested rape kits in the United States is upwards of 200,000, meaning that there are that many rape victims awaiting justice, while the key to unlocking the identity of their perpetrator collects dust on a shelf in storage. This nationwide tragedy has come to be known as the rape kit backlog” (Lion, 2018, p. 2).

However, the initial action to address the accumulation of untested kits did not happen until November 2004, when President George W. Bush signed the Debbie Smith Act or Justice for All Act (H.R. 1046) (Telsavaara & Arrigo, 2006). In an attempt to identify rapists, this Act made funding available to test more kits and to enter the data in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), which is a national crime database that is managed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

The Story of Debbie Smith

Debbie Smith was at her home in Williamsburg, Virginia on March 3, 1989, when she was attacked. A man wearing a ski mask entered her home around noon while she was in her kitchen and while her husband was on another floor of their home taking a nap. The intruder made it known that he had a gun, and Debbie, afraid to call attention to her husband, followed the intruder’s commands and was taken by the attacker into the woods

behind her house. While in the woods, the attacker raped Debbie repeatedly over an hour time frame. The attacker left, but not without threatening to return and kill her if she told anyone. When her attacker left, Debbie woke her husband and they went to the hospital to submit evidence for a rape kit. Debbie’s husband was a lieutenant at the local police department and knew about the DNA technology used with the rape kits.

Initially there was no DNA match found with the evidence taken from Debbie Smith. At that point the evidence was stored, along with many other rape kits. In 1994 Debbie Smith’s rape kit was sent for testing once again, after several sexual assaults occurred in the Williamsburg area (Telsavaara & Arrigo, 2006). Again, there was no match, but now the DNA evidence for Debbie Smith’s case was entered into CODIS, instead of a search only. Shortly after, in 1995, a match was found in CODIS in Debbie Smith’s case. Her attacker’s name was Normal Jimmerson. The case was prosecuted and Normal Jimmerson was given 161 years for the rape of Debbie Smith.

The Problem-A Backlog of Rape Kits Nationwide

There are many women who may never know the names of their attackers because of the backlog of untested rape kits. The backlog of untested kits continues to grow even though it was the success of Debbie Smith’s case that led to legislative actions. The primary causes for the backlogs according to Campbell et al. (2015) are:

Testing a rape kit requires resources—time and effort from the police to investigate the case and submit the kit for forensic testing; time and effort from the police crime lab staff to analyze the specimens for DNA; and time and money to outsource the testing to a private laboratory if the police department lab cannot keep

pace with the demand for forensic testing of crime scene evidence. (p. 152)

Another issue related to the problem of the backlog is caused by the extremely long wait time. After a long period of time victims try to move on from their attack. The long wait causes the victim to have to relive the attack again later if there is a change in the case, after the victim as worked hard to get past the attack. Victims are re-traumatized. Another issue is that not using the evidence from rape kits can result in wrong convictions. These may be overturned later after testing reveals the correct perpetrator, however the wrong person has served time for a crime that they did not commit. These instances could be avoided completely if the evidence is analyzed sooner. Yet another problem relates to the organizations which process the kits for testing. "Over time it became nearly crushing, as one team member noted, because the older cases almost always took more time because of the extra effort required to re-locate victims, suspects, witnesses, and crime scene evidence years after the crime occurred and was reported" (Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2019, p. 167).

Initial Steps Taken to Address the Backlog

Hansen (2011) wrote:

The DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 authorized a total of \$125 million in appropriations for fiscal years 2001-2004 for states to carry out DNA analysis of samples from crime scenes and increase the capacities of their public crime laboratories. In 2004 Congress amended that Act, re-titling it the Debbie Smith Act of 2004 and authorizing \$151 million in appropriations for each fiscal year between 2005 and 2009. (p. 950)

The Act was re-authorized again in 2014 and very recently in 2019. In 2004, the

Debbie Smith/Justice for All Act amended the federal criminal code, the Rules of Criminal Procedure, and the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 (ABE) (Telsavaara & Arrigo, 2006). The focus was to create changes that would ensure rape kit testing was done swiftly, and primarily through attorney generals' offices, and also provide the additional funding for activities to accomplish the additional testing. Another portion of the Act addresses the crime technicians in laboratories on the state and local level, calling for them begin testing the unanalyzed rape kits as soon as funding is made available. "However, more specifically, the act reforms the SANE program along with other medical assistance programs for victims of rape" (Telsavaara & Arrigo, 2006). SANE is an acronym for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. Through this program nurses are trained specifically on how to properly gather evidence in sexual assault cases. This helps to ensure more effective investigations and also more effective prosecutions.

One example of how far reaching, comprehensive, and effective this Act can be is in the application of the Act in regard to the Court system:

Perhaps the most significant implication the Justice for All Act is likely to have on the court system is the accumulation of cases that will be prosecuted based on compelling DNA evidence. Thus, prosecutors will no longer need the confession of rapists to guarantee conviction; rather the DNA analysis will accomplish this end. (Telsavaara & Arrigo, 2006, p. 499)

In these cases, guilt is determined by science. Also, "it is worth noting that the Justice for All Act represents a fact- and evidence-based policy. This means that it does not seek to advocate for one ideology over another" (Telsavaara & Arrigo, 2006, p. 500). The Act also reaches into other areas such as Law

Enforcement policy, forensics, corrections, and juvenile justice. “It dispenses with conjecture, especially with respect to factual and legal guilt, and it has the potential to exonerate those falsely accused. In sum, the act represents powerful legislation that, in many ways, is long overdue” (Telsavaara & Arrigo, 2006, p. 502).

Criminological Theory Underlying the Debbie Smith Act

There are criminological theories which underlie or underpin each criminal policy that is created. For the Debbie Smith Act there could be several theories combined that apply to the legislation, as is the case with much policy. The theories that may apply to this policy are Learning theory, Marxist theory, and Labeling theory. Each of these theories will be described and discussed in relation to the Debbie Smith Act.

Labeling Theory

Labeling theory is the perspective on crime that suggests when a person is labeled deviant or a delinquent by social groups associated with them, the subject will adjust thinking and behavior to match the label that has been attached to them (Bernard et al., 2016). Initially it may be adults which label a youth as having good behavior overall, but the youth is observed participating in some bad behavior. Over time if the behavior which is thought to be bad continues, the youth eventually becomes defined, or labeled, as a bad youth (Bernard et al., 2016). The individual eventually understands that there is a negative label attached to them when they notice negative reactions from others as a result of their behavior. If the behavior does not stop, the subject’s thinking about him/herself (self-image) and behavior begins to change, at which point the subject is being affected by the label of deviant that was attached to them (Bernard et al., 2016). Additionally, at some point the subject’s self-

image itself is the means for generating of the deviant behavior, instead of some other or the original factor (labeling) being the cause (Bernard et al., 2016).

In regard to Labeling theory, any person who commits rape will be considered deviant by social groups that they are associated with-if others learn about the behavior. If the subject is not willing or not able to stop the behavior, they may consider themselves a rapist, or they may not. However, the subject likely will understand that established law is being broken when they commit rape and that what they are doing harms the victim.

Because the Debbie Smith Act is a policy that is meant to address the backlog of rape kits that sit untested in almost every jurisdiction across the United States, from a social or community safety perspective, and interests and actions (change efforts) of communities to address rape, “community partners can be thought of as valuable limited resources, so it is important to determine whether there are other community change efforts underway that may be tapping into and depleting this valuable resource” (Shaw et al., 2016, p. 1495).

Learning Theory

Learning theory, in general, is the perspective that criminal behavior is learned behavior, mainly through interactions with others (Bernard et al., 2016). This theory reflects truth from the Bible found at 1 Corinthians 15:33, “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits” (New King James Version). For application to the Debbie Smith Act, it is the cultural or subcultural branches of Learning theory, which are related, that may be relevant. Even though the Learning theory was developed in the 1930s, the theory remains unchanged and is relevant still today. The theory includes nine basic points and includes the principle of differential association (Bernard et al., 2016).

The basic premise of differential association is that there are legal codes that people can view as violating either favorably or unfavorably, and, when a person is surrounded by influences that allow them to view violating legal codes favorably, then the person can become delinquent in their behavior (Bernard et al., 2016).

Cultural Learning Theory

Cultural Learning theory is a theory which explains gang criminal behavior (Bernard et al., 2016). What is notable in this theory is the premise that there is a different set of values and interests for lower-class groups compared with middle-class groups (Bernard et al., 2016). Those in middle-class groups may value achievement, intelligence, and success, and those in lower-class groups may instead value street-smarts, excitement, or masculinity. The different sets of values or interests of the lower-class group may lead to deviant behavior because of the direction of focus or thinking, compared with the differing values or interests of middle-class groups.

Gang violence is a problem in many jurisdictions across the U.S. When youths of lower-class groups are able to spend a lot of time together and socializing without a lot of restrictions, there is ample time to learn bad behavior from other members of the group. When these youths increase their learning of the ways of the streets, or the street code, they not only learn aggression and violence as a method of dealing with others, but also they will need to learn how to counter the aggression and violence of others who have learned the same methods. “In the code of the street, the point is to subtly communicate a predisposition to violence, a willingness and an ability to create total chaos and mayhem, in order to deter potential aggression” (Bernard et al., 2016, p. 196).

One of the types of crimes that gangs have been found to be involved in is rape. The Debbie Smith Act is a policy that can

address gang related rape, since some of those who commit rape will also be members of violent gangs. These types of criminals obviously need to be caught so that their behavior can be stopped.

The failure of government, at all levels, allows dangerous individuals to pose a threat to communities while leaving survivors of sexual assault with the message that their attack, their rape, their violation of bodily integrity does not warrant protection or validation from those whom are charged with doing so. (Fucci, 2015, p. 195)

Subculture of Violence Theory

A Subculture of Violence theory was developed by Wolfgang and Ferracuti in the late 1960s. This theory describes conflicting values that underlie the dominant culture and others that underlie the violent subculture, which creates tension between the cultures (Bernard et al., 2016). For example, in the violent subculture, masculinity, violence, and honor may be held in higher regard when compared with the dominant culture values. What is valued in the violent subculture can be considered the rules of that subculture, and there are rewards for adherence to the rules, and also criticism or even punishment for those who do not conform to the rules. Regardless of the reasons for any negative responses from those in the group, responses will typically involve violence because the use of violence is the primary mode of resolving issues for those who have learned that this is acceptable, or even a good thing to do.

Since rape is an act of violence, it is easy to understand that those who have learned that violent behavior is acceptable would use such behavior in domestic disputes and also with strangers. “Some researchers and practitioners have suggested prioritizing rape kit testing by victim–offender relationship because in stranger rape cases, the

perpetrator is not known, so DNA testing and a possible CODIS hit may be the best chance of solving the case” (Campbell et al., 2016, p. 557).

Similarly, related to Learning theory, is the concept of symbolic interactionism. The concept, developed by George H. Mead (1863-1931), theorizes that how people act toward something is based on what that thing means to them (Bernard et al., 2016). Further, the meanings of things result from interactions with others that a person is close to or influenced by (Bernard et al., 2016). Therefore, the meanings of criminal actions, “arises primarily from the meanings given to these acts by other people with whom the individual associates in intimate personal groups” (Bernard et al., 2016, p. 190). From this, the result of adopting or accepting delinquent behavior of others could result in harm to others through violence.

The understanding of this theory of criminal behavior in regard to rape should lead policymakers to also understand that there needs be a strong policy in place that helps to identify those in communities who are committing rape and also holds them accountable for their actions. “Every two and a half minutes, someone is sexually assaulted in the United States” (Hansen, 2011, p. 943). With the Debbie Smith Act we have that needed policy for accountability, but very importantly, science identifies who should be held accountable. The Debbie Smith Act is a policy which helps to facilitate that process.

Marxist Criminal Theory

Another theory that is potentially applicable to the Debbie Smith Act is Marxist criminal theory, based on the social and economic ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883). Karl Marx was not a criminologist, but Marx’s theories were applied to criminology later by others to explain that different aspects of society and the economy may have cascading effects related to crime. Willem Bongers was a

Marxist criminal theorist who thought that “the capitalist economic system encouraged all people to be greedy and selfish and to pursue their own benefits without regard for the welfare of their fellows” (Bernard et al., 2016, p. 271). This theory, presented in 1916, is based on the ideas of Marx related to capitalist economies and further expands on these to describe other effects of a capitalist economic system in other areas of society.

In regard to the use of DNA to identify criminals, and related to what Bongers theorized, “The premise behind, and the rise of, databanks can be largely understood through the sociological phenomenon that violent offenders will continue to commit crimes until caught” (Gregor, 2018, p. 958). The Debbie Smith Act is a policy which affirms that the public must be protected from those who are unconcerned for the welfare of others and are willing to do harm to others. This Act attempts to ensure rapists are identified as quickly as possible by providing resources to those who analyze the evidence collected from victims. When there is no identification of rapists there are multiple related issues for the community and society as a whole. “Untested kits also allow rapists to remain unprosecuted and at large, thereby endangering public safety” (Hansen, 2011, p. 946).

Perpetrators of rape fall within the theory of Bongers’s described above. With rape, the perpetrator’s behavior reflects that they are willing to do what they want without regard to the harm inflicted upon victims by their actions. Policymakers understand that strong policies are needed to address the liberties that people will take in our society, without regard to the harm inflicted upon others. For example, in Detroit a study was conducted regarding their backlog of rape kits where 1600 kits submitted for testing resulted in 455 matches in CODIS. For this sample alone, “in 127 of the 455 CODIS hits, the DNA match was to another sexual assault

case, meaning that the offender was a serial rapist who had raped multiple victims” (Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2017, p. 480).

Of course, this pertains to all crime where there is a victim, but is especially critical in regard to crimes where violence is involved. Primarily because of the violent nature of the crime, but also because the person committing the act is often unknown. “Now admissible in nearly every federal and state court, DNA evidence has been particularly effective in rape and criminal sexual assault cases to identify or confirm the identity of alleged assailants” (Hansen, 2011, p. 948). However, the Debbie Smith Act is a policy that, thus far, is only effective to a certain degree.

More Work Needs to Be Done: *The Backlog Persists*

There are some issues which are potentially hindering progress in reducing the backlog of untested rape kits. These lingering issues are within jurisdictions, however collectively, this is how the backlog persists on a national level. “The untested kits were a tangible symbol of a systemic breakdown in the criminal justice system’s response to sexual assault” (Campbell et al., 2017, p. 464). One issue is that different stakeholders have different goals, “and these organizations (police, prosecution, forensic laboratories, and victim advocacy programs) tend not to share power and resources” (Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2019, p. 161). More recently however, the focus has been on better collaboration between organizations through partnerships and organized teams called Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) (Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2019). “SARTs seek to improve the quality and coordination of services for survivors, reduce re-traumatization, and increase arrest and conviction rates” (Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2019, p. 161).

However, probably the primary and most widespread problem is the issue of funding, with each kit costing anywhere from \$500.00 to \$2,000.00 to test (Fulton, 2018). Fulton (2018) found in one state, Pennsylvania:

An eight-month review was conducted into the causes of the backlog, whether it can be cleared within the mandated three years, and how to put an end to future backlogs. After the review, the state found three major areas of concern, which provide crucial information to other states looking into the same problems. The first problem concerns funding. (p. 61)

Interestingly, in Pennsylvania, legislation was passed to mandate testing the kits, but without any added funding for the health department to collect the evidence for the kit, or for the lab to run their analysis (Fulton, 2018).

Status of the Debbie Smith Act and Other Legislation

In 2013 the Debbie Smith Act was expanded upon by the Sexual Assault Forensic Reporting (SAFER) Act (Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2019). The SAFER Act provides funding to jurisdictions for audits of the status of untested kits and for developing plans to get more kits processed. The Debbie Smith Act originally was passed in 2004, reauthorized in 2008, 2014, and again in 2019. The latest version of the Act includes updated dates related to activity and funding under the Act, but it also includes added requirements and measures for tracking progress. For example, in regard to workloads at laboratories that test for DNA:

Not later than 180 days after the end of the third fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of the Debbie Smith Act of 2019, and once every 3 fiscal years thereafter through fiscal year 2025, the Comptroller General of the United States shall issue a report on

the DNA analysis workloads at laboratories that participate in the Combined DNA Index System using data available from the DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Grant Program or other sources. (S. 820)

The Difference Made to Date

In 2014 in Ohio the Sexual Assault Kit Testing Initiative was initiated and supports sexual assault kit testing by requesting that within one year of enactment law enforcement agencies ship untested kits to the State Bureau of Criminal Investigations and new kits within 30 days of being collected (Fulton, 2018). A few other states have also added their names to the growing list of states passing stronger legislation. In 2015 Connecticut began requiring that within ten days all rape kits must be sent to the state crime lab (Fulton, 2018). In Michigan after 2014, rape kits in hospitals must be collected by law enforcement within fourteen days, sent for testing within the next fourteen days, and analyzed within ninety days, if there are sufficient resources to do so (Fulton, 2018). In Kentucky, law enforcement agencies must collect rape kits within five days, within thirty days submit them to a lab, and the kits must be analyzed there within ninety days (Fulton, 2018). Kentucky cleared their backlog entirely by 2017 (Fulton, 2018).

Further Recommendations

Very importantly, the primary recommendation and guidance according to Fulton (2018) are six pillars of ending the rape kit backlog: 1. audits or inventories, 2. testing of all untested/backlogged rape kits, 3. testing of all newly collected rape kits, 4. victims' rights to notice and to be informed, 5. tracking, and 6. funding. This will take added resource to address, and this is precisely what the Debbie Smith Act helps local agencies with. "The police have been through years

(decades, really) of hell, trying to do their jobs with continually depleting resources" (Campbell, 2017, p. 321).

There are some other, practical recommendations for the teams that are assigned to tackle the backlog. When a jurisdiction has large numbers of untested kits, "First, addressing the problem of untested rape kits requires a community champion or multiple champions of the cause" (Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2020, p. 164). There were several additional recommendations made in the study by Campbell and Fehler-Cabral (2020), one being to designate a senior executive for project oversight and management, another is development of a staffing plan to balance workloads.

The Christian Worldview

Interestingly, legislation that addresses the backlog of untested rape kits shines a light on the crime of rape, the criminals, and the plight of victims. It exposes all three rather than allowing them to continue to be hidden. Ephesians 5:11, primarily the second part of the verse, is applicable here. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (New King James Version). A lot of effort should continue to be applied to expose violent offenders who commit rape, as there are several benefits to communities and to society as a whole in the efforts to do so. "I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the poor" (Psalm 140:12, NKJV).

Those who commit rape commit a multitude of sins, which consist essentially of the entire list found at Mark 7:20-22. As with other types of crime, rapists who have not yet been identified hide what they have done, hoping no one will ever discover their crime. The Book of John speaks to this, "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:20, NKJV). More

truth that is found in Psalm 64 is very relative to this area of criminal behavior, especially when considering the criminological theories discussed. Psalm 64:5-6, “They encourage themselves in an evil matter; they talk of laying snares secretly; they say, ‘Who will see them?’ They devise iniquities: ‘We have perfected a shrewd scheme.’ Both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep” (NKJV).

There is much in the Bible about violence and foolish, or unwise, behavior. Primarily the Bible focuses on how harmful violence can be, as with all sin. “The bloodthirsty hate the blameless, but the upright seek his wellbeing. A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back” (Proverbs 29:10-11, NKJV). Also, further in the chapter, “An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression” (Proverbs 29:22, NKJV). Importantly, there is a way for man to deal with the violence, anger and sin nature within him, which is only through Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

References

- Bernard, T. J., Snipes, J. B., & Gerould, A. L. (2016). *Vold's Theoretical Criminology*. Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, R. & Fehler-Cabral, G. (2020). The best way out is always through: Addressing the problem of untested sexual assault kits (SAKs) through multidisciplinary collaboration. *Victims & Offenders*, 15(2), 159-173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2019.1679309>
- Campbell, R. (2017). Qualitative fieldwork within the criminal justice system: Emotions, advocacy, and the pursuit of social justice for untested sexual assault kits (SAKs). *American Psychological Association*, 4(3), 315–325. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/qup0000063>
- Campbell, R., & Fehler-Cabral, G. (2017). Accountability, collaboration, and social change: Ethical tensions in an action research project to address untested sexual assault kits (SAKs). *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 60, 476–482. DOI:10.1002/ajcp.12176
- Campbell, R., Fehler-Cabral, G., Bybee, D., & Shaw, J. (2017). Forgotten evidence: A mixed methods study of why sexual assault kits (SAKs) are not submitted for DNA forensic testing. *American Psychological Association*, 41(5), 454–467. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000252>
- Campbell, R., Pierce, S. J., Sharma, D. B., Feeney, H., & Fehler-Cabral, G. (2016). Should rape kit testing be prioritized by victim–offender relationship? Empirical comparison of forensic testing outcomes for stranger and nonstranger sexual assaults. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 15(2), 555-583. DOI:10.1111/1745-9133.12205
- Campbell, R., Shaw, J., & Fehler-Cabral, G. (2015). Shelving justice: The discovery of thousands of untested rape kits in Detroit. *City & Community* 14(2), 151-166. DOI:10.1111/cico.12108
- Debbie Smith Act of 2019. (2019). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/820/text>
- Fucci, G. (2015). No law and no order: Local, state and federal government responses to the United States rape kit backlog crisis. *Cardozo Public Law, Policy and Ethics Journal*, 14(1), 193-228.
- Fulton, S. (2018). The rape kit backlog: The

continuous hampering of society's protection and liberty interests. *Women's Rights Law Reporter*, 40(1/2), 43-71.

Greger, E. C. (2018). Rapid DNA testing and Virginia's rape kit backlog: A double-edged sword masquerading as miracle, or the future of forensic analysis. *University of Richmond Law Review*, 52(4), 941-964.

Hansen, M. (2011). Testing justice: Prospects for constitutional claims by victims whose rape kits remain untested. *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, 42(3), 943-992.

Lion, G. (2018). Bringing untested rape kits out of storage and into the courtroom: Encouraging the creation of public-private partnerships to eliminate the rape kit backlog. *Hastings Law Journal*, 1009, 1-22.

Shaw, J., Campbell, R., Hagstrom, J., O'Reilly, L., Kreiger, G., Cain, D., & Nye, J. (2016). Bringing research into practice: An evaluation of Michigan's sexual assault kit. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 31(8), 1476-1500. DOI: 10.1177/0886260514567964

Telsavaara, T. V. T. & Arrigo, B. A. (2006). DNA evidence in rape cases and the Debbie Smith act: Forensic practice and criminal justice implications. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 50(5), 487-505. DOI: 10.1177/0306624X05285929



Death on Hold: A Prisoner's Desperate Prayer and the Unlikely Family Who Became God's Answer

Authors: Burton & Anita Folsom

Publisher: Thomas Nelson, 2015

**Review By: Loudon S.B. Suggs (MA, MS),
Shorter University / Liberty University**

The January 24, 1983 issue of *Time Magazine* featured Kurt Andersen's cover worthy article, *The Death Penalty: An Eye for an Eye*. In the article, among others, Andersen interviewed twenty-three-year-old, Alabama death row inmate, Mitch Rutledge. Shortly after its publication, Burt Folsom (2015) read that article and was astonished by the story and interview with Mitch Rutledge. While the article focused on Rutledge's confessed crime, it also highlighted the young man's inability to read and write, and his reported IQ of 84. But it was not Rutledge's apparent lack of education and intellect, or even the 1981 murder for which Mitch Rutledge had been convicted that moved Burt Folsom to action. No, what struck Folsom about the Mitch

Rutledge interview was, out of all the death-row prisoners Andersen had interviewed for his article, Mitch Rutledge, was the only convicted murder who conveyed remorse, and said he was sorry for what he had done. Moreover, what Burt Folsom found inhumanly insensitive and offensive was, despite Mitch Rutledge's open remorse and repentance, Andersen concluded that Mitch Rutledge was disposable, "not worth killing" (p. 81). And, according to Andersen in the final words of his article, we (i.e., society) should, "Forget him" (p. 79).

Death on Hold is a biographical memoir of redemption and rehabilitation, caringly accented with poems and reflections from the heart and mind of Mitch Rutledge, framed in the redemptive power of God's love, forgiveness, and purpose. In *Death on Hold*, authors Burton and Anita Folsom (2015) launch readers on a heartfelt journey, that ventures along the road from ruin to redemption, guided by Mitch Rutledge himself. From the trials and tribulations of his tragic and traumatic youth. The opening chapters tell the story of how young Mitch was abandoned by his father, witnessed the death of his mother, and was discarded to the streets, where he quickly became submerged in the dog-eat-dog world of con-men and criminals, engaging in, human sexual exploitation, drugs, and violence. All of which led him in and out of jail and prison throughout most of his adolescence, before finally leading him to commit murder, and delivering him to Alabama's death-row by the age of twenty-one.

Told with simplistic eloquence, *Death on Hold* is a faith affirming, coming to grace, account of the once lost, hopeless, and seemingly forgotten Mitch Rutledge, that is an easy and emotional read. Likewise, authors Burton and Anita Folsom (2015) deliver a straightforward story of how God chose to reveal Himself to a murderer, through a meek and frightened young man, hiding under a bench, clutching a Bible, in a jail cell, before

explaining how they (Burt and Anita Folsom) and others, were moved, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in Christ, to love their neighbor (Matthew 22:39). Revealing how God brought angels, in the form of strangers, together (Matthew 25:39), to restore hope, and help save and reshape a life that had been judged to be, not worth saving. But as *Death on Hold* reveals, God had a different plan for Mitch Rutledge's life.

Faith Forward Future: Moving Past Your Disappointments, Delays, and Destructive Thinking

Author: Chad Veach

Publisher: Thomas Nelson, 2017

Reviewed by Andrea Stiles, M.A., Shorter University

Faith Forward Future, written by Chad Veach, is a straightforward book that details some of the author's own journey through disappointments, struggles inherent in human growth processes, and insights into how best to move through difficulties with resilience, hope, and a strengthened Christian faith. Veach is pastor of Zoe LA, a large evangelical church with multiple locations in Los Angeles, California. This 209-page book is laid out in 5 parts totaling 12 chapters. Each part ends with "5 takeaways" that reiterate the main lessons from those chapters. The takeaways offer application advise as well as clarification of substantive messages from the text.

It is clear from the book's beginning that the author is accustomed to addressing a

young audience. He served as a youth pastor for many years, and his style of communicating and inclusion of current cultural phenomena demonstrates his awareness of and sensitivity to influences on adolescents and young adults. He references social media and music popular among that age group throughout the book, and he moves rather quickly from subject to subject – capturing and sustaining the attention of those accustomed to continual stimulation.

Veach shares details of his life's journey through broken dreams, moral failings during the early years of youth ministry, and God's presence and grace through it all. His honesty regarding personal disappointments and failures lends credence to the sincerity with which he approaches the reading audience. He also interweaves scriptural accounts of the lives of prophets and disciples into the book illustrating how the nature to err inherent in humans does not render them useless to God and the building of His kingdom. Rather, he argues God's power is shown through His ability to transform even the most confused, conflicted, and stubborn into faithful servants who live out the gospel and impact the world in profoundly positive ways.

This author does not give only half the story. He is thorough in his descriptions of the totality of the human experience. He does not shy away from the consequences that destructive thinking and behaving has on self and others, but he does not stop there. He stresses the necessity of consequence for learning to be thorough and transformative. In other words, he validates the need for suffering in order for humans to mature in mind, heart, and faith. His message makes clear that apart from failure, there are many lessons that cannot be learned – lessons of compassion, humility, and perseverance.

Veach addresses the self-defeating inner speech that many young people experience especially in response to

disappointments. He challenges the reader to measure the negative assumptions they make and beliefs they hold against the claims of scripture. Feelings are put into proper context by illustrating how misleading they can be through detailing how feelings led Biblical characters into all sorts of scenarios that proved disastrous, and how obedience to God would have spared them much grief. But again, he follows up with how God remained true to His Word and faithful to His promise of forgiveness and love. He redeemed those who turned back to Him even after the vilest of transgressions. Hope is offered through repeated evidence of grace.

The heaviness of the book's subject matter is somewhat relieved through the author's use of humor and casual speech that is more easily digested by teenage and young adult readers. Though the book's messages of hope, transformation, and renewal are applicable to people of all ages, the tone and casual manner in which the book is written targets the youth. Heavily laced with scripture, the invitation to follow Christ is made from page to page. The importance of trusting Him more than trusting one's own thoughts and feelings is highlighted and reinforced. The case for relevancy of scripture to contemporary problems in living is made by detailing the struggles of the prophets and disciples and drawing parallels to today's dilemmas.

The author's stated purpose of the book is to help readers to move forward with deeper faith, a clarified purpose, and with greater hope. His assumption is that most people suffer disappointments in life from broken dreams or moral failures. His personal experience of these along with bearing witness to it as a pastor fueled his desire to reach out with words of encouragement from scripture to combat false beliefs that can render a person debilitated. His offer of hope is rooted in God's proven grace in the lives of many that are recorded in both the old and new

testaments of scripture as well as his own experience of grace that sustained and renewed him in his own journey through a valley of brokenness. Faith Forward Future is recommend-worthy for teen and young adults who need encouragement to persevere through hard seasons.

True Faith and Allegiance: A Story of Service and Sacrifice in War and Peace

Author: Alberto R. Gonzalez

Publisher: Thomas Nelson, 2016

**Reviewed by Justin Pettegrew, Ph.D.,
Shorter University**

Alberto R. Gonzales' autobiography provides an interesting glimpse into the inner workings of his role in the Bush administration in the years following 911. Perhaps even more fascinating was his own life story, following his personal journey from a child of Mexican immigrants to becoming Secretary of State of Texas, Texas Supreme Court Justice, and the United States Attorney General.

The book starts on September 9, 2001 and details Gonzales' learning of the attacks and his immediate actions thereafter. This opening foray provides a sense of the trauma and uncertainty on that historic day as Gonzales split his energies between concern for his family's safety while meeting with other White House officials, including President Bush. This chapter also sets the stage for the rest of the book as most of the controversial aspects of Gonzales' career center on his role in the United States government's response to the 911 attacks. The book consists of thirty-nine chapters examining Gonzales' rise to power from

humble beginnings. Naturally, most of the book centers on his time as United States Attorney General while providing background on his steps leading to this position.

Gonzales' rise to Washington D.C. insider is a classic American success story. His parents, Mexican immigrants, had grade school educations. His father worked in construction while his mother raised eight children in a two-bedroom home with no telephone or hot water. Gonzales had a complicated relationship with his father. On the one hand, young Alberto's father modeled family loyalty, hard work, and a positive spirit – values which carried Gonzales throughout his life. On the other hand, his father was an alcoholic, which led to domestic problems in the home. Consequently, Gonzales became a teetotaler and modeled his spiritual life after his mother, who was a dedicated Christian. Indeed, the biography is peppered with references to prayer and devotion, which were consistently important aspects of Gonzales's identity throughout his life. Following a successful academic and athletic high school career, Gonzales joined the Air Force. After his enlistment he was accepted into the Air Force Academy, transferred to Rice University and eventually attended Harvard Law School. Gonzales' humble account of this meteoric rise contains gratitude for those who helped him along the way and downplays the intellectual talent, grit, and determination that are necessary to make such advances.

Much of the second half of the book reads like a summary of the important events of his days as a Washington insider. These chapters cover the controversial aspects of his career and the pages are filled with exacting detail including meeting times with individual players and summaries of these conversations. Perhaps not surprisingly, Gonzales' recollections provide justification for his various decisions. Likewise, the book supplements these particulars with pithy quotes that support Gonzales' specific

viewpoints. For example, on the need for increased surveillance following 9/11, he writes, “At times, identifying a threat to our country or gather intelligence to prevent another attack was like trying to find a needle in a haystack, Now imagine that you do not even have a haystack!” (297)

While one might expect this type of defense in almost any autobiography of a powerful Washington operator, what is missing from this story is contemplation of the criticism and seriousness of these decisions. Gonzales has had time to ruminate over the support of the use of controversial surveillance methods and “enhanced interrogation techniques,” which some would more simply describe as “torture.” There is, however, little deep reflection, pause or doubt regarding the correctness of these decisions.

Thus, in many ways the book delivers what one would expect: a classic American rise from the lowest ranks of society to the highest echelons of power in Washington D.C. combined with an insider’s view of the Bush administration both in Texas and in the White House. For the general public, Gonzales’ story offers a fascinating journey as the child of Mexican immigrants to the inner circle of the White House. This book will also be of interest to politicians concerned with the inner workings of the Bush administration, particularly in its response to the 9/11 attacks.

Jesus Politics: How to Win Back the Soul of America

Author: Phil Robertson

Publisher: Thomas Nelson, 2020

**Reviewed by Rick Crawford, Ph.D.,
Shorter University**

Phil Robertson’s recent book *Jesus Politics: How to Win Back the Soul of America* is, all things considered, a pretty easy read. The chapters are short, the topic is always timely, and – in the understatement of the young millennium – the writing style isn’t exactly stuffy. For example, don’t skip the part early in Chapter 2 where Robertson talks about what happened to his couch after a flood! Indeed, the book is pretty much what anyone with any familiarity at all with the Duck Commander himself would likely expect.

That said, however, the light (I won’t say “redneck”) writing style found in many parts of the book does not overwhelm the seriousness of the topic. Without question, Robertson offers an obviously heartfelt description of the current condition of America and what Christians should do about it.

Forced to offer a criticism of the book, my main one would be Robertson’s use of the term “politics.” At first blush, this sounds very much like the tired narrative of Christians’ misplaced reliance on political activism as the primary method of influencing America. Several decades of this approach have gotten us nowhere, and a good argument can be made that it – or perhaps more correctly the extremely partisan behavior that has developed from it – has actually been counter-productive.

Ultimately, however, I’m not quite sure if that’s what Robertson means by his use of the term. On one hand, his lists of “action items” usually emphasize political behavior. Further, for example, in the abortion chapter he writes that “[w]e’re to use our votes to put people in office who will work to end this awful American genocide. *And where our political action is ineffective* (emphasis added), we’re to use our time, money, and influence to persuade others to protect life” (p. 82).

On the other hand, Robertson clearly speaks against a partisan approach, writing

that “I’m more interested in advancing policies that align with the kingdom of heaven than I am in advancing the agenda of any political party” (p. xx). Elsewhere, he writes that “[t]he problem with our country isn’t a problem that can be solved by any particular political party” (p. 4) and “...don’t play the partisan games of the day. Don’t buy the lie that one side has it all together. Instead, pay attention to the individual politicians and their platforms” (p. 168).

All that said, the real story of the book is to be found in the many examples of how Robertson and his immediate family have been the hands and feet of Jesus to those who found themselves in a rough patch. These stories range from the truck for Red (p. 28) to Robertson’s wife (Miss Kay, for those who don’t already know) meeting the young woman in distress after hours at the crisis pregnancy center (p. 83) to the heroin addict who randomly showed up at church one Sunday (p. 158) to many others in between.

In sum, it’s a story of Jesus followers using what they have to do what they can where they are. A big downside to our misplaced emphasis on political activism is that many Christians get so caught up in it that they forget to be disciples. They think their responsibility has ended when they simply show up and “vote right.” In reality, their responsibility hasn’t even begun at that point. After all, the last thing Jesus told us before leaving this earth was to go and make disciples (Matthew 28: 19-20), not to go and win elections. Ultimately, Christians getting back to an emphasis on doing what we can where we are with what we have will do more to reshape American than any degree of political activism.

Finally, Robertson’s approach to the anger and division in contemporary America – especially in the political process – is worth noting. Specifically, Christians are to do all we can to cultivate a culture of mercy and forgiveness (Chapter 9). It’s amazing

sometimes how our response to a very simple situation can advance this front, as illustrated by the very funny story about Robertson’s son Jase asking an employee for directions to the restroom in a fancy New York hotel (I won’t spoil it). The Bible teaches us that we are to be about “...speaking the truth *in love*” (Epesians 4:15; emphasis added). We Christians can get so busy convincing ourselves that what we think is truth that we forget all about the *love* part. Unfortunately, that’s the part that can help us do the best in influencing the culture around us.

All things considered, Robertson’s book is worth a rather entertaining read. His example will challenge us, if only we are willing to let it.

Loving My Actual Neighbor: 7 Practices to Treasure the People Right in Front of You

Author: Alexander Kuykendall

Publisher: Baker Books, 2019

Reviewed by Anthony Catanzaro, Shorter University

*The book *Loving My Actual Neighbor: 7 Practices to Treasure the People Right in Front of You* gives advice on how to follow one of the most important commandments outlined by Christ: Love your neighbor as you would yourself. Alexandra Kuykendall explains fleshly habits in the simplest of forms and ways that Christians can overcome each of them. In the spirit of Easter, this book innately correlates the similarities between the Friday Jesus was hung on the cross and the Sunday he rose again. It is filled with real life stories of living in a broken world where it always seems like the “Friday that Jesus died” and how to make the best of your time while*

waiting for Him to rise again. Kuykendall explains “We know the hope of Jesus overcoming death, and yet our days are found in a fallen world in the shadows of Good Friday. Life on this Earth is in the Holy Saturday Space” (21). This is referred to as Saturday living.

Loving your neighbor has never been so simple than in this how-to, step by step guidebook. An interesting refresher is how this book gently reminds the reader that we are not the center of the universe. On page 30, Alexandra states “I am neither the boss of the world nor the expert in everything”. This reminds the reader that we should be walking more humbly than we are now. We are not the judge or jury, rather we are brothers and sisters in Christ who had to come to the cross for help. We are called as a people to walk alongside our neighbors and show them the kind of love Jesus has for us, without assuming that we are in any part responsible for their commitment to Christ. Again, Christ alone can save souls.

This book is filled with many points to make certain that you are checking in with yourself. How can I best love my neighbor? How can I get “self” out of the way? Am I doing it for the right reasons? Specifically, in the chapter about “Asking Questions to Learn”, we are reminded to “ask questions with only the intent to learn” rather than questions that do not reflect genuine curiosity. All too often we are concerned about ourselves. Kuykendall writes in a way that challenges us to ask our neighbor questions with the only intention being intuitive listening.

It is full of real-world advice on how to change your perspective on loving your neighbor. Kuykendall puts these practices into use by encouraging her family to live this life. As talked about on page 105, she frequently speaks with her children about having “the courage to feel, question, stay, be honest, admit you are wrong, disagree, and to act”.

She dives in deep to each of these issues, explaining how to put them in to action.

From the title, this book may seem like you are only loving the person across the street or next door to your house. However, it is consisting of those we meet in common places we might go to, such as church, parks, grocery stores, the daycare, the drug store, etc. On the other hand, we are also encouraged to love those people Jesus sought out in places we would not normally go: the “rough side of town”, smoke shops, bars. If we come across these people, we should love them despite their differences in the same way Jesus did. She explains that “Our attention, time, influence, skills and influence can all be given for our neighbors benefit” (171). We are called to go above and beyond for our neighbors.

Overall, if you are looking for a book that will help you figure out or remind you exactly what it means to love people, this one is for you. It will help you evaluate and humble yourself by pointing to Christ and His work on the cross, and Kuykendall provides excellent resources at the end of her book to ensure success. The time to get to know that person down the street is now!