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PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION
AND THE BOOKS THAT MADE IT HAPPEN

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Abstract: On the centennial of the death of William James (1842-1910), I approached faculty members at eighteen major theological centers of learning requesting them to identify the twelve most important books in the field of the psychology of religion written between James' 1902 classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience* up to Peter Homan's 1970 *Theology After Freud*. The request was for each faculty member (by agreement to remain anonymous) to identify the twelve books during that time period (1902-1970) which, in their opinion, constituted major contributions to the development of the discipline of psychology of religion. By mutual agreement, James was credited with being the purported founder of the psychology of religion and Homans the quintessential culmination of the discipline's respectability. Though obviously subjective, the survey did register a consensus of scholars teaching in the field and what follows is a critical assessment of the merits of those books which they selected.

Key Words: psychology of religion, William James, James H. Leuba, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, David E. Roberts, Gordon Allport, Eric Fromm, Otto Rank, David Bakan, Erik Erikson, Abraham Maslow, Peter Homans

Between William James' 1902 *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and Peter Homans' 1970 *Theology After Freud*, the field of the psychology of religion was born and grew to maturity. About that, there is no serious question or doubt¹. Within these seven decades, a discipline came into existence and established itself irrevocably as an indispensable component of the study of the human person. Under the influence of James' pioneering work and culminating in the provocative work of Homans, twelve books proved pivotal in the emergence of the psychology of religion as a respected area of research, study, and specialization within both the disciplines of psychology and theology. Of course, any number of scholars will wish to argue with the selection of these twelve titles but few will argue against the merits of those selected here. Another twelve could be named and another, but these have been chosen as indicative of the consensus within the academy of their crucial relevance to this collection honoring William James' life and work commemorating the centennial of his death in 1910².

It might prove helpful to the reader for there to be a simple listing of the twelve titles selected for consideration here and then, following a brief acknowledgement and assessment of Edwin D. Starbuck's 1899 Scribner's publication, *Psychology of Religion*, wherein the term "psychology of religion" was used for the first time, we will proceed with our assessment of each book and its relevance to the development of the field of study called the psychology of religion. The twelve titles which constitute the consensus among the scholars surveyed are as follows and they are listed and considered in chronological order of publication.³

(English Translation dates used where relevant)

- James, William (1902) *The Varieties of Religious Experience*
- Leuba, James H. (1915) *Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*
- Freud, Sigmund (1927) *The Future of an Illusion*
- Jung, Carl (1938) *Psychology and Religion*
- Roberts, David E. (1950) *Psychotherapy and A Christian View of Man*
- Allport, Gordon (1950) *The Individual and His Religion*
- Fromm, Eric (1950) *Psychoanalysis and Religion*
- Rank, Otto (1950) *Psychology and the Soul*
- Bakan, David (1958) *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition*
- Erikson, Erik (1958) *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*
- Maslow, Abraham (1970) *Religion, Values, and Peak-Experiences*
- Homans, Peter (1970) *Theology After Freud*

Clearly this collection and the timeframe covered by their publication can be divided into a three-step development, namely, from James to Jung (1902 to 1938), from Roberts to Rank (1950) which constituted the backbone of the discipline's development, and from Bakan

to Humans (1958-1970), when Freud comprised the beginning and ending of the third step. James, Leuba, Freud, and Jung were adventurers in the field of the psychology of religion, exploring where no one had ventured before and attempting an analysis that others would have understandably shied away from given the problematic of the subject matter. Religion was not to be tampered with during this time period except ever so gingerly. But on the shoulders of the four pioneers of James, Leuba, Freud, and Jung, Roberts, Allport, Fromm, and Rank were at liberty to explore the practical applications of their forebears' insights, speculations, and expostulations. These four, then, launched a monolithic barrage of investigations and applications the likes of which had never been imagined before and the likes of which will not be seen again as a single moment in time. Finally, and upon the shoulders of the second generation of adventurers, the four members of the third step, i.e., Bakan, Erikson, Maslow, and Homans, chose to address the insights of their predecessors relative to Freud and psychoanalysis in a manner that once and for all introduced the viability and effectiveness of the discipline of the psychology of religion for scholars and students of both religion and psychology. Certainly, there were grounds for discussion, argument, and dispute, but that the two fields of study had been brought to a creative synthesis of methodological insights and analysis would not again be seriously disputed by either religionists or psychologists.

The creation of a term, however, is not synonymous with the creation of a scholarly discipline of study. E(dwin) D(iller) Starbuck (1866-1947) was quite clearly aware of that but was, nevertheless, intent upon launching an enquiry with wide sweeping implications for both the discipline of psychology and the general field of religious studies. He did this with countless articles published in the best peer-reviewed journals but his book, *The Psychology of Religion*, published in New York in 1899 by Charles Scribner's proved to be the stone that truly rippled the scholarly waters for it was Starbuck who was the very first to use the actual term "psychology of religion." An Indiana Quaker and a sequential product of Indiana University (B.A.), Harvard University (M.A.) and Clark University (Ph.D.), Starbuck's major influences were William James at Harvard and G. Stanley Hall at Clark. The impetus for his pursuit of the psychology of religion as a lifelong field of study came from F. Max Muller's 1890 classic, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*. Starbuck stayed on at Clark as a research fellow where he worked closely with James H. Leuba (more about whom later). It was during these pivotal years of work that he wrote and published his classic, *The Psychology of Religion*, which went through three editions and was translated into German. Tension with Hall, if not outright jealousy on Hall's part, led Starbuck to move on in both his teaching subjects to include philosophy and education and to a series of university venues including the State University of Iowa and the University of Southern California. It was William James who elevated

Starbuck to a national figure by using Starbuck's empirical data in James' own book which constitutes the formal beginning of our consideration here. "If one attempts an evaluation of Starbuck's work from the perspective of several generations," says Beit-Hallahmi, "one might conclude that it will be remembered more by historians of the field than by practitioners. His work may belong with the classics of the field, but it must be numbered with the unread classics, even among scholars"⁴. It was not until a quarter of a century after Starbuck's now classic book, *The Psychology of Religion* (1899), and a year before Freud's pivotal *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), that the Hartford Seminary Foundation in Connecticut hosted a conference entitled, "The Possible Contributions of Modern Psychology to the Theory and Practice of Religion" in October of 1926⁵.

Historians of the behavioral science would all more or less agree that the two volume study published in 1890, *The Principles of Psychology*, by William James constituted one of the most important events in the history of the emerging science of psychology in this country and, some would argue, throughout the European world as well. Granted the central place of this work by James in the science of psychology, it is the consensus of both psychologists and religionists that his *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, published in 1902, constituted the formal beginnings of the emergence of the sub-field of study in both psychology and religion now established as the psychology of religion. William James (1842-1910) was born into wealth, elegance, and eccentricity, being the son of a Swedenborgian theologian, Henry James, Sr., and the older brother of the subsequently internationally acclaimed novelists, Henry James. The godson of Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James attempted a career as an artist but found science, finally, more to his temperament and liking, discovered as a student at the Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard University where he continued as a medical student, taking his M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School in 1869, never, alas, to actually practice medicine⁶.

With no formal training in psychology *per se*, rather in biology, physiology, and anatomy, he once said that "the first lecture on psychology I ever heard was the first I ever gave"⁷. Not daunted by this lack of formal training, both James and Harvard pressed on in the creation of an experimental psychology course in 1875 which was attended, over several years, by some of Harvard's subsequently most illustrious students including none other than G. Stanley Hall. Suffering for years from heart problems, James died at his home in New Hampshire on August 29, 1910, holding out to the very end as a functional psychologist and pragmatic philosopher.

It was *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), however, that established him as a proponent of the value and efficacy of religious experience, making him the darling of laymen everywhere and the bane and nemesis of empirical psychologists throughout the English-speaking

world. This book, not approaching the scientific value of his *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), netted him the invitation from the University of Edinburgh to give the 1901 and 1902 Gifford Lectures, a forum wherein he was at liberty to chide the scientific community for its dismissive attitude toward the “value” of religious experience in deference to the “origins and ideas of religion.” This criticism took the psychological investigation of religious phenomena into a whole new realm of viability and possibility, for, as Charles Pearce is reported to have said, “James has penetrated into the hearts of people” with his sympathetic approach to the “value of religious experience.” Yet, his friend and colleague, George Santayana, responding with a resounding scientific critique of James’ work by pointing out that the “great weakness of his (James’) position is its tendency to disintegrate the idea of truth” in deference to “belief without reason”⁸.

Just over a dozen years after the publication of James’ Gifford Lectures, J. H. Leuba published the book that would take James’ work into a whole new and higher dimension of scientific respectability within the psychological community. Leuba’s book, *Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion* (London: Constable and Company, 1915), constituted a culmination of countless minor and esoteric studies of various religious phenomenon by a plethora of psychologists, most being former students of both James and G. Stanley Hall at Harvard, Leuba (1868-1948) being among the most prolific researchers and writers in the field. A Swiss by birth and early education, Leuba studied under G. Stanley Hall at Clark University where he graduated in 1895 and he stayed on as a research fellow until moving to Bryn Mawr College to become head of the psychology department.

A prolific researcher and writer, he eventually participated in the 1926 International Congress of Psychology in Germany in which he contributed a paper on a panel he shared with Ernest Jones. Of major significance was that fact that Leuba was consistently a student and faculty colleagues of E. D. Starbuck, both at Clark under G. Stanley Hall, and at Harvard under William James. The two, Starbuck and Leuba, worked closely together throughout their careers and it was only coincidence that Starbuck, rather than Leuba, actually coined the term “psychology of religion” for they both were early and major players in its development. Besides his major books (1915; 1926a), Leuba’s significant contribution to the advancement of the study of psychology of religion as a scientific researcher came when he presented a paper at the Hartford Seminary Foundation’s 1926 congress on “the possible contributions of modern psychology to the theory and practice of religion,”⁹ a gathering of scholars which included Starbuck and Hall as well. Unlike James’ work, which argued for the “value of religion” without attempting an assessment as to its etiology, Leuba brought to bear all of the available analytical tools of scientific enquiry into the meaning and nature of human behavioral responses to perceived and experienced encounter with

what was thought, by the subject, to be of a “religious” nature. Here was the application of the psychological science of behavior gone well beyond James’ sympathetic and empathetic embrace of the *sui generis* character of religious experience. From Leuba onward, the psychology of religion focused upon the empirical evidence of behavior and the *Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion* (1915) took its place at the head of the class.

No case needs to be made for the lofty ranking of Sigmund Freud in the study of either psychology or religion, for whether one is in favor of his system of thought or not, no one would be so irresponsible as to deny his primacy in such discussions as these. Whether early in his career writing *Totem and Taboo* (1918) or late in his career writing *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), Freud was always there and ready to contribute to and critique any serious discussion of religious behavior. An Austrian born neurologist driven by a desire to break from the oppression of anti-Semitism among his colleagues and to establish himself as a pioneer in medical research, Freud (1856 - 1939) set out to establish a school of thought and enquiry and he succeeded far beyond his greatest expectations. After finishing medical school and studying with some of the great minds of the day including the Parisian Jean Martin Charcot, he set up on his own a psychiatric practice in his home town of Vienna and eventually establish a system of analysis and treatment, viz., psychoanalysis, which was to sweep Europe and America with such profundity and comprehensiveness that, even today, “it is impossible to think of social criticism, counseling psychology, or psychiatric practice without having to deal with Freudian theory”¹⁰. At the end of his life, Freud and psychoanalysis were household words and professional juggernauts in the world of psychiatry and psychotherapy. And, to be honest about it, they both still are.

Between *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism* however, Freud wrote a little book, *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) which, without question, placed him front and center in all current and future discussions of the psychology of religion. If his *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) is one of the great 20th century critiques of western civilization, then his book on the future of an illusion is comparably one of the greatest criticisms of popularly practiced religion in western civilization. From William James, who wished to emphasize the “value” of religious experience whether or not the experience is real and true, to Leuba, who wished to emphasize the analytical requirement of a scientific methodology in studying experience described as religious behavior, the psychology of religion took a giant leap into respectability. With Freud, empowered by this liberated spirit of scientific enquiry into religious experience and behavior itself, he was able to employ his psychoanalytic methodology without restraint. Proposing that society is established upon the fundamental renunciation of instinct, Freud contends that religion is simultaneously an “instrument of coercion” and a “compensation for the stifled desires of mankind.”

Religion, he argues, functions as a substitute for the repressed desires which cannot be satisfied due to social restrictions on instinctual human behavior.

Freud is quick, even eager, to identify the benefits of the socialization of the human animal through the cultivation of culture including our moral development, our artistic and ideological refinements, and even our religious systems, illusory though they prove to be. Particularly with religion, Freud, as a psychoanalyst and social critic, is keen to draw poignant attention to the functions and values of religion to society and to the inevitable future of these functions and values as mechanisms of sublimation and repression of our natural instincts. Granted, religion provides a worldview and ethos of explanation as to the verities of life -- where we come from, who we are, where we are going -- but, says Freud, all of these function to stifle and inhibit natural aspirations which are contradictory to the needs and interests of society. Religion, then, provides an optional substitute for our desires which is socially acceptable. But the price is great. In exchange for an All-Seeing God, a father-imago, who looks over us and sees after us, humanity relinquishes our right to pursue our own fulfillment as individuals, ever stifled and inhibited by the rules laid down by the Overseer. The conflict between the individual and society is matched and surpassed by the conflict between individual desires and the constraints derived and administered by God. Religion is humanity's formalized response to our own feelings of insecurity, incompetence, and lack of control over the environment. The only genuine solution, says Freud, is for humanity to throw off this illusory source of an All Powerful God and assert our own independence with all of the dangers and risks implied by doing so.

From James to Leuba to Freud is no simple nor easy jump, but once it was made, there was no turning back. Freud demonstrated both the destructive and constructive power of psychological analysis of religious ideology and behavior. Whether one agreed with his psychoanalytic assessment, and many did not then nor do they now, nevertheless, the astuteness and acuteness of his analysis and critique set the psychological and religious world on its heels and what followed proved to be provocative and creative in the scholarly world. However, it took Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) of Zurich to recapture the religious world's interest in depth psychology's analysis of religion after the devastating blow from Freud. Jung was an avowed, though somewhat and sometimes less than traditionally orthodox, Christian and the son of a Swiss Reformed Church pastor. Though early on he was attracted to and influenced by Freud and psychoanalysis, Jung subsequently branched out on his own "and that has made all the difference." He took his medical degree from the University of Basel and launched his professional career in the Burgholzli, a psychiatric hospital in Zurich, alongside none other than Eugene Bleuler, a colleague who was early on to prove to be an

important confidant and collaborator. Following a period of close collegiality with Freud, during which time Freud anticipated Jung becoming his protégé, Jung broke with him over issues related to infantile sexuality and dream interpretation. As prolific a writer as Freud himself, Jung's career as a therapist was paralleled by his career as a writer, and though his book, *Psychology of the Unconscious* (1912) launched him into international notoriety, his little book, *Psychology and Religion*, based on the Terry Lectures given at Yale University in 1938, undoubtedly established him as a major player in the psychological study of religion, competing with Freud and psychoanalysis as the major school of depth psychology.

Unlike Freud, who seemed to have a personal agenda regarding the negative influences of religion on human freedom and personal development, Jung came with a positive assessment of the phenomenon, albeit somewhat unorthodox in his characterization of the impetus and motivation for the religious life. In 1952, during his declining years as a now popular sage, he wrote: "I find that all my thoughts circle around God like the planets around the sun, and are as irresistibly attracted by Him. I would feel it to be the grossest sin if I were to oppose any resistance to this force"¹¹. It is only here in his autobiography that Jung ever spoke of his personal relationship to God, choosing rather, as in his Terry Lectures, to maintain a professional distance and what he considered to be a scientifically respectable posture. "Notwithstanding the fact that I have often been called a philosopher, I am an empiricist and adhere to the phenomenological standpoint" he said in his opening remarks in the Terry Lectures at Yale University¹².

Jung, differing radically from Freud on this analytical point, argued that the increase in western society of the scientific understanding of the world has led us into a dehumanization of the natural and social environments in which we live and, thus, our prehistoric and primitive responsiveness to occurrences in the natural world have lost their "symbolic efficacy." Therefore, he suggested, modern man has lost touch, has become alienated, from his natural environment. This loss, contended Jung, has led humanity away from a belief in God and has produced a lack of awareness of powers implicit within human nature. Modern society has, therefore, fallen into the grip of psychological disorder and chaos. We are in desperate need, says Jung, of a religious mooring, a religiously-based worldview and ethos, to re-align ourselves with the "collective unconscious" which infuses all of our conscious and unconscious thoughts, actions, and dreams. While religion cannot be proven either true or false, it is quite apparent that the pragmatic value of religious ideology and its resulting belief system served the psychological needs of man "in search of his soul" . While contending vociferously for the universality of the collective unconscious, Jung is quick to point out that there is no possibility of empirically verifying its reality other than in the effectiveness of its use in the treatment of psychological disorders. "At

the root of the problem,” says Edward, “lies an ambiguous set of ontological claims. ... it is worth noting that we possess no statistical evidence of a worthwhile kind about the efficacy of Jungian psychotherapy”¹³. Be that as it may, the acclaim Jung’s Terry Lectures received particularly from the religious establishment and theological community of the time was profoundly instrumental in placing Jungian psychology front and center in the development of what would eventuate into a pastoral psychology embraced by virtually every seminary in the country.

By the middle of the 20th century, the touchstones of the development of the psychology of religion as a *bona fide*, however yet fledgling, discipline of study, though many had contributed, were clearly the pivotal works of James, Leuba, Freud, and Jung. From respectable curiosity to depth analysis, the “psychological” nature of religious ideology and behavior was well established, thanks to these four individuals who were, of course, buttressed by the works of many, though lesser, researcher and writers of the time¹⁴. And, though Jung was unabashed in his allegiance to Christianity, being the son of a Christian minister and himself a psychiatrist who did not fail to traffic in Christianity nomenclature, nevertheless, a full fledged address to the relationship between the Christian view of the human condition and the relevance of a scientific psychology had not yet occurred. All of that changed profoundly in 1950 with the publication of *Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man* by David E. Roberts of Union Theological Seminary in New York City. That same year, three leading psychologists would publish their contributions to the field of psychology of religion and, with these four books, the discipline of psychology of religion was well positioned to claim a rightful place at the table in both academies of psychology and religious studies.

David E. Roberts (1911 - 1955) was an Omaha, Nebraska, native and the son of the Rev. Dr. William E. Roberts. He graduated in 1931 from Occidental College and went on to earn his Bachelor of Divinity *magna cum laude* from the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Having earned a traveling fellowship from the Seminary, he traveled and studied extensively in Germany and England, earning his Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, and returning to the Seminary in 1936 as a member of the faculty, first as instructor, and then in rapid succession assistant professor, associate professor, the Marcellus Hartley Professor of the Philosophy of Religion and Dean of Students by 1950, dying in his sleep at the early age of 44 in 1955. A Phi Beta Kappa and prolific writer of scholarly articles for the leading journals of the day, his only book was the now classic and at the time internationally acclaimed *Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man*, published in New York by Charles Scribner’s Sons in 1950. A brief 161 page study, it was poised to change the face of psychological studies of Christian thought in every major seminary

in the United States. Both Rollo May, a leading psychotherapist of the time, and Paul Tillich, the leading liberal Protestant theologian of the 20th century, joined in touting the originality of Roberts' study and Seward Hiltner of Princeton, the leading authority in the fledgling field at the time of pastoral care and counseling, mandated that all pastors and theologians as well as psychologists and psychotherapists owed it to themselves and their profession to become acquainted with "this remarkable book."

Roberts' work was cut out for him in this study because, on the one hand, he had to tread lightly, but confidently, amidst the psychological nomenclature and analysis of religious behavior, satisfying both psychiatry and secular psychologists, while simultaneously threading his way through the theological maze of fundamental Christian concepts such as creation, the Fall, sin, grace, predestination, and salvation. To please the medical and psychological community was ominous, but to complicate that by attempting to at least stay clear of major battles with divergent theologies within the Christian camp was quite another. He did it with aplomb to, seemingly, the satisfaction and commendation of both disciplines of psychology and theology.

Granted that Roberts' theocentricism and, sometimes quite conspicuously, his christocentricism took a major hand in setting the agenda for discussion of the interrelatedness of psychotherapy (and its seasoned partner psychoanalysis) and Christian theology, nevertheless, he is eager to demonstrate that a mature theological methodology would and should incorporate psychological components in its concept of the human person. Sin and depression, therapy and forgiveness, salvation and wholeness constitute parallels in psychology and religion and his attempt was to demonstrate how both professions can work together for the benefit of the individual without necessarily relinquishing the unique domain of each. Whether he succeeded or not is not so important for us here as to realize that the discipline of the psychology of religion took a major stride forward in fostering dialogue between the two disciplines and the two professions of clergy and psychologists in a way that all previous attempts had neither tried nor succeeded. To even place the terms "psychotherapy" and "Christian" within the same title of the book was monumental and set the stage for the next twenty-five years of dialogue between the professions.

Though Roberts was responsible for bringing depth psychology and Christianity theology into direct dialogue, the psychology of religion was not destined to morph into a sub-set of Christian thought. The pursuit of the role and application of the psychology of religion was from the beginning perceived to be more broadly cast. Later in the century, we will see psychology of religion focus again upon specific religious traditions with Bakan on Judaism and Homans and Erikson on Christianity. But for now, it fell to Gordon Willard Allport (1897-1967) to refocus upon the interfacing of psychology and religion. The son of a country doctor from

Montezuma, Indiana, and the product of an iconic exemplification of the Protestant religion and work ethic, Allport, along with his mother and their numerous children, assisted the father in a family-run hospital and clinic. Following his older brothers to Harvard University, Allport took his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.(1922) and, winning a coveted traveling fellowship, spent two years studying at, first, the Gestalt School in Berlin, Germany, and another year at Cambridge University in England. First taking a teaching position in psychology at Harvard University, he then taught for four years at Dartmouth College before returning to spend the remainder of his academic career back at Harvard. Becoming the editor of the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Allport went on to be President of the American Psychological Association and President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, dying in Cambridge, MA, at the age of seventy years old.

Allport's internationally acclaimed study of the nature of personal religion in the development of the individual, *The Individual and His Religion*, was published by Macmillan in 1950, and became a recognized classic in the study of the function of religious sentiment in the personality of the individual. Five years later, his *Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality* (1955) would clench his reputation. Neither a Freudian nor a Jungian, but rather falling loosely into the social psychology school of the time, Allport did quote Jung in saying that, of his thousands of patients over the age of thirty-five with which he dealt, "all have been people whose problem in the last resort was that of finding a religious outlook on life"¹⁵. Allport's interest was the relationship between religious beliefs and practices -- ideology and behavior -- as relates to the maturation process of the personality, contending that religion in an individual's life can mature along with his or her personality if attended to properly. Yet, he never argued for the truthfulness of religion, merely its influence upon individual maturation, both for good and ill. "My effort," he wrote in the Preface of this little classic, "is directed solely to a portrayal of the place of subjective religion in the structure of personality whenever and wherever religion has such a place. My approach is psychological ... I make no assumptions and no denials regarding the claims of revealed religion"¹⁶. Here was a recognized psychologist from an established school applying his science to the study of religious ideology and behavior. It was internationally acclaimed and set the bar even higher for both disciplines in that, irrespective of the truthfulness of religious belief, there is indisputably a "relationship" between what one believes about the meaning and purpose of his or her individual life and the development and maturity of that individual's personality and well-being. Allport said of his work: "A man's religion is the audacious bid he makes to bind himself to creation and to the Creator. It is his ultimate attempt to enlarge and to complete his own personality by finding the supreme context in which he rightly belongs. In these

pages, I have undertaken the task of discovering the place of religion in the life-economy of the individual, of seeking a psychological understanding of the nature and functioning of the religious sentiment, and tracing the full course of religious development in the normally mature and productive personality"¹⁷. This he did and, setting the bar higher than yet having been set, he challenged scholars and researchers in both camps, psychology and religion, to demonstrate the viability and efficacy of this interfacing agenda.

Eric Fromm (1900-1980), A German psychoanalyst and the only child of Orthodox Jewish parents, was educated at the University of Frankfurt am Main in jurisprudence before transferring to the University of Heidelberg where he studied sociology under Max Weber's younger brother, Alfred, as well as psychiatry under Karl Jaspers. Taking his Ph.D. in sociology from Heidelberg in 1922, he went on to become a psychoanalyst at the Frieda Reichmann's psychoanalytic sanatorium in Heidelberg after which he joined the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research where he completed his training and residency. Fleeing Nazi Germany in the 1930s, he went to Geneva and subsequently to New York where he taught at the New School for Social Research and then at Columbia University where he became a life-long colleague and confidant of Karen Horney whose book, *Self Analysis* (1942), reflects their close association in life and thought. Working in the development of the New York Branch of the Washington School of Psychiatry after leaving Columbia, Fromm became a co-founder of the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis, and Psychology. He later moved to Mexico City and taught on the National Autonomous University faculty in the medical school before returning to teach psychology at Michigan State University and, subsequently, at New York University. He died in his home in Switzerland at the age of eighty years old, all the while maintaining an active clinical practice.

Whereas Allport, as a social psychologist whose international notoriety was set by his 1941 *Escape from Freedom*, brought the study of the psychology of religion to focus upon the value and function of religious ideology for the individual, whether religion was true or not, Fromm, as a psychoanalyst, chose to emphasize the efficacy of psychoanalytic insights into the human condition which religion serves. Religion is not in danger of scientific scrutiny nor is psychoanalysis treading on forbidden ground. Rather, whereas religion addresses a fundamental need found in the human condition, psychoanalysis provides a scientific mechanism to understand, assess, and facilitate an address to that human situation, a condition which is fraught with fear, anxiety, and uncertainty about the verities of life and our future in it. "Psychoanalysis assesses the persistent tension between traditional religion and the underlying philosophy of psychoanalysis," explains Fromm, "which many believe regards the satisfaction of instinctive and material wishes as the sole aim of life."

Fromm argues that “psychoanalysis is neither the enemy of religion nor its ally but rather is concerned with the human reality behind theological doctrines and with the realization of the human values underlying all great religious teachings”¹⁸. Though his 1956 classic, *The Art of Loving*, is considered his greatest work, catapulting him into international notoriety as a psychoanalytically insightful social critique, it was his inquiry into the nature and function of religious belief and practice and its relationship to the healthy, inquisitive, and scientifically astute human mind, namely, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (1950), which proved to be just that approach to the psychology of religion which made it equally and legitimately the domain of both psychologists and theologians alike.

The profundity of the psychoanalytic school founded by Sigmund Freud was clouded by the wake of great practitioners who, because of its inordinately imperialistic claim to exclusivity in psychotherapeutic theory and practice. As Alfred Adler and Carl Jung fell by the wayside into professional censorship from Freud and his society of practitioners, so, likewise, did Otto Rank (1884-1939). This, however, was profoundly surprising as Rank was perceived by the inner circle to be “Freud’s heir apparent” and certainly his “right-hand man.” Rank, an Austrian-born psychoanalysis and a medical graduate of the University of Vienna, chose rather than to focus upon the more commonly accepted clinical application of psychoanalytic practice to address issues implicit in mythology, literature, religion, and the arts, a decision which seemed to have pleased Freud initially a great deal. His first major work, which gained Freud acclamation, was his *Art and Artist* (1907) which employed Freud’s theory of dream mechanisms to explain the mental processes operative within the artist’s mind. A founder of the International Psychoanalytical Association and its Secretary for a number of years, after a falling out with Freud over Rank’s unwillingness to continue to tout the Oedipus Complex as the center piece of his own emerging psychoanalytic theory of human motivation as reflected in Rank’s 1924 book, *The Trauma of Birth*, Freud removed him from both the editorship of the *Internationale Zeitschrift fur Psychoanalyse* and membership in the IPA. Consequently, Rank left Vienna with his wife and daughter and moved his prestigious psychoanalytic practice to Paris where he remained busy as both a practitioner and research/writer for much of the remainder of his life, moving finally to New York City where he died in 1939, just five weeks after the death of Freud.

The courage to break from Freud was epic and iconic on Rank’s part, having been designated publicly by Freud as his successor to the leadership of the psychoanalytic movement within psychiatry. But for Rank to address the taboo topic of “the soul” was nothing short of monumental. Yet, Rank’s interest on the relationship between the discipline of psychology and the human experience he calls “the soul” was pivotal in his own development. The human will to live forever against

death, the conflict between the individual and social consciousness which has produced both “consolation and inspiration” is what Rank came to call the “immortal soul,” and he chose unabashedly to introduce the concept within the developing discipline of psychology of religion. “Dealing with life, experience, growth, the soul, and man’s need to believe in immortality, this volume (says the publisher) provides a penetrating study of man’s spiritual development through the ages, of man’s efforts to sustain himself spiritually in the face of knowledge and doubt, and of his destructive and creative strivings to come to terms with death”¹⁹. The book’s central thesis is that intellectual psychology cannot give the human person the immortal soul deserves, and that the consolation of attempting to rationalize spiritual matters out of existence, which too many psychologists have offered their followers, is futile. We must face reality, says Rank, no matter how painful it may be. Courage, to be sure, was the force behind Rank’s challenge to psychology to confront honestly and boldly the reality of the soul and for theologians, without pride or condescension, to realize the profound insight psychology offers to an understanding of the driving forces within the human spirit. Beyond Allport, who wanted us to accept the function of religion, whether true or not, Rank wants us to accept the truth of the human quest for immortality against the inevitabilities of death and the key role that religion plays in that quest.

Near the end of the decade of the 1950s which, as we have noted, include blockbuster studies in the psychology of religion by Roberts, Allport, Fromm, and Rank, David Bakan (1921-2004), an adventurous psychologist who had taken his Ph.D. (1948) at Ohio State University and fresh to the University of Chicago (1961-1968) by way of the University of Missouri (1949-1961), came onto the scene with a radical application of etiological sleuthing applied to Sigmund Freud. A prolific writer and one whose courage matched that of Otto Rank’s in daring to revisit the ideological infrastructure of Freud’s psychoanalytic theories themselves, Bakan wrote the book for psychologists that equaled the insightfulness of Roberts’ work written for Christian clergy. Ending his long and distinguished career at York University in Toronto where he died in 2004, Bakan had been an executive member of the American Psychological Association and on the Advisory Board of the Canadian Council on Children and Youth. One of his international distinctions was his becoming the founding editor of the *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*.

Bakan’s *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* published, in 1958 by D. Van Nostrand Company of Princeton, New Jersey, was destined, from day one, to become a controversial classic in the field of the history of psychoanalysis and a pillar of support for the psychology of religion. Bakan goes on to have a distinguished career as a scholar and teacher at York University in Canada, but this book, which came out upon his arrival

at the University of Chicago, established him as a pivotal player in this emerging discipline. In the second edition, published by Schocken Books of New York, the publisher points out that Bakan chose to accept Freud's own distinction between being a Jew and his acceptance of Jewish doctrine and, by using this distinction as a hermeneutical tool, "demonstrates what power Jewish mystical doctrine retained in the formation of Freud's technical genius"²⁰. This had not been attempted, even hinted at, prior to Bakan and the boldness of the venture elevated the psychology of religion as a field of study to that of a national agenda. "By sharpening the reader's perspective about the ways in which Freud was, and was not, Jewish," says Schocken, Bakan presented a book that spoke to the fate of all people in the modern world, an inquiry into the nature of the relationship between the etiology of faith and the development of the human personality. It set the stage for the next fifty years of research in the psychology of religion as regards the relationship between religious ideology and religious behavior.

What Bakan did to Freud, Erik Erikson (1902-1994) did to Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation. Erikson's (1958) *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*, published by W. W. Norton and Company of New York, came off the press, without orchestration of collaboration, the same year Bakan's book on Freud was released. Called "a very profound study" by none other than Reinhold Niebuhr of Harvard, the book demonstrated the deep insights into theological speculation the etiology of psychological development can offer. As with Bakan on Freud, Erikson on Luther produced a whirlwind of acclaim and controversy.

Erik Erikson (known during his childhood and early adulthood as Erik Homburger owing to a complicated history of patrimony) was the son of a prominent Jewish mother from Copenhagen and he was raised in the Jewish faith. Born in Frankfurt, Germany, he studied in Vienna with Anna Freud and become a trained psychoanalyst at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute as well as a teacher from the Montessori Academy there. Never receiving any university degree, these two experiences were his only documented training credentials but he went on, following immigration with his wife, to Boston where he set up as the first child psychoanalyst in that city, taking positions at the Massachusetts General Hospital as well as the Harvard Medical School's Psychological Clinic. Never one to question his own talents and abilities, he pushed forward in Boston and at Harvard, eventually landing an appointment at Yale University's Human Relations Institute and Medical School, all the while honing his skills as a clinician, researcher, and writer. He eventually took a post at the Institute of Child Welfare at the University of California at Berkeley during which time he wrote the book that made him famous, *Childhood and Society* (1950), which subsequently went through numerous revisions and editions. Leaving California, he went to teach at the Austen Riggs Center, a prominent psychiatric treatment facility in Stockbridge, MA, but subsequently

returned to Harvard as Professor of Human Development where he remained until his death in 1994.

"Identify crisis" is one of many terms created by Erikson in developing his eight stages of development, moving beyond and above the standard five stages developed by the father of psychoanalysis himself, Sigmund Freud. Erikson, always eager to best his betters, his eight stages catapulted him into stardom, a reputation he protected even to the extent of failing to acknowledge that one of his sons was institutionalized from infancy in a sanitarium in California due to Down Syndrome, not even attending the young man's funeral and only telling his other children of Neil's existence at the time of his death. The image of the perfect family was crucial to Erikson, the father of developmental psychology, and, thus, Neil was pushed into oblivion.

Erikson's work on Luther, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*. N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1958, was nothing short of brilliant. Moving psychology of religion beyond merely a dialogic encounter between psychologists and theologians, Erikson chose the biography of one of the greatest religious leaders in western Christian history as the focus of his psychoanalytic attention. And, to be sure, it proved epic in its implications and ramifications. Erikson's own personal history, the contrast between who he really was and who he thought he was growing up (owing to complications of marital impropriety and a failure of discretion), led him to identify with Luther's own personal identify crisis, the struggle between what the Church said it was and what it proved to be in Luther's experience. Therein lay the nexus for a psychoanalytic story worth the telling. Erikson told it with insight, provocation, and creativity. And when it was told, both the psychological community and the Christian community were ready to do battle over issues related to psychological development and faith experience. The book was a profoundly telling insight into the biography of a religious leader, from his initial doubts to his final commitments and the book has proven a great tool for pastoral psychology and counseling in dealing with religious etiology of behavioral crises.

With Bakan's analysis of Freud and Erikson's analysis of Luther having precipitated a raging national debate, the stage was set for a frontal attack upon the institution of religion itself, an attack which simultaneously condemned the institutionalization of religion while affirming the efficacy of the religious experience. That task was eagerly embraced by Abraham Harold Maslow (1908 - 1970). Maslow was born in Brooklyn, New York, the first of seven children to parents who were uneducated Jews from Russia. Because he was intellectually gifted, he distinguished himself at the Brooklyn Borough High School. His father's ambition for him to study law lasted only a few weeks at the City College of New York and, after transferring to Cornell for a few courses, Maslow returned to CCNY but failed to complete his degree. Maslow married his

high school sweetheart when he was 20 and his bride 19. He, then, applied to and was accepted at the University of Wisconsin where he earned his B.A. in 1930, his M.A. in 1931, and his Ph.D. in 1934, all in psychology. After serving on the Wisconsin faculty as Assistant Instructor in Psychology (1930-1934) and Teaching Fellow in Psychology (1934-1935), Maslow was back to New York to Teacher's College, Columbia University, where he became interested specifically in research on human sexuality. At Columbia, he served as a Carnegie Fellow from 1935-1937. Unlike Freud, Jung, and Adler, Maslow was disinclined to focus his attention and research upon the mentally ill, preferring to study why and how people are mentally healthy, happy, and fulfilled. Eventually, he would develop a whole psychodynamic schema of theoretical constructs and a conceptual framework called the "hierarchy of needs." From 1951 to 1969, he taught at Brandeis University where he developed the concept of "self-actualization." Maslow was elected president of the American Psychological Association and became the founding editor of both the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* and the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. The recognized head of what became known as the Third Force in psychology, that is, the humanistic school *vis a vis* Freudian psychology and behaviorism, Maslow ended his teaching career as the first Resident Fellow of the W. P. Laughlin Charitable Foundation in Menlo Park where he died on the 8th of June, 1970, at the age of sixty-two.

Not religion itself but the institutionalization of religion, rather than the experience and value of religious sentiment, was the victim of Maslow systematic dissection. Maslow contended unabashedly that "man has a higher and transcendent nature, and," he pointed out, "this is part of his essence," even suggesting that it is actually part of his biological nature as a member of a species which has evolved through history. The book which made it all come together was his 1970 *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* published by Penguin of New York. Maslow's criticism suggested that the institutionalization of religious experience had cost the individual severely. An instant best seller, Maslow's opening statement set the tone for the whole book: "Organized Religion, the churches, finally may become the major enemies of the religious experience and the religious experiencer. This is a main thesis of this book"²¹ (Note 19). Whereas David Roberts had attempted to show how psychotherapy and Christian theology could compliment each other and Allport had argued for the "value" of religious experience, whether true or not, and whereas Bakan had shown the influence of Hassidic mysticism upon the theories of Freud's psychoanalysis while Erikson demonstrated the value of a psychoanalytic analysis of a religious fanatic like Luther, Maslow was the first of the leading psychologists to frontally attack "organized religion" itself, and he did it by simultaneously affirming and vindicating the meaning and value of the religious experience is valid and true for the individual. This was transformative in the field of psychology for now the

science was able to demonstrate a capacity at social criticism without posturing as an “atheistic” endeavor to dislodge religion from the individual. Rather, it was a demonstration of how the institutions of religion could meaningfully and effectively be dislodged from the authentic religious experience itself. This Maslow did in his *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, thereby empowering both the science of psychology to proceed with its analytical agenda as well as validating and authenticating members of society who thought of themselves as “spiritual” without being “religious.” His two previous books, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962) and *The Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance* (1966) set the scholarly standard for the writing of the book on religious values. His final work, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (1971) assured Maslow of a place in the history of psychology. Today, the whole secular spirituality movement of individuals who seek to affirm and nurture their feelings of spirituality while denying any attraction to or subjectivity to religious institutions. Spirituality without the church, synagogue, or mosque was what came out of Maslow’s analysis and that sentiment still persists throughout modern western society today.

The consensus among the respondents from the eighteen theological schools approached in preparation for this article is that Peter Homans’ 1970 *Theology After Freud*, published by Bobbs-Merrill, constitutes the culminating work which set in place the discipline of the psychology of religion. Gerald Gargiulo said it best in his review of the book: “What happens to theology *after* it allows itself to experience Freud is the theme of the work”²². For the first time, the discipline of theology itself, i.e., the methodological approach to the study of God by people of faith, was challenged to encounter a psychoanalytic school of thought. The effort was not to try and understand the individual’s religious experience but rather to bring face to face the two disciplines, their methodologies, domain assumptions, operational modalities of analysis and expostulations. Theology encountering psychology and *vice versa* was what Homans called for and did. This was pivotal and monumental and both disciplines were called to arms and, more importantly, challenged to be fair and responsive to the other. Peter Humans (1930-2009) was a native of New York City and graduated from Princeton University, earning his divinity degree from the Virginia Theological Seminary and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the Divinity School of the University of Chicago in 1964. He taught social science and the history of religion at the University of Chicago from 1965 to 2001, when he retired.

Beginning with an assessment of the viability and utility of William James’ study of the wide range and depth of religious experiences, Homans sought a possible reinterpretation of the theological terms “transcendence” and “immanence” within the context of what he called a “third reading of Freud.” Using Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich as representatives of classic existential theology, he faced off with his third

reading, namely, an “iconic reading” *vis a vis* “mechanistic” and “dynamic” readings, and suggested a theology of nostalgia be perceived as immanence and hope as transcendence. Though there is serious dispute among psychoanalysts with his attempted “redefinition” of theological terms using a psychoanalytic license which some question his right to use, Homans proceeded, however, to call to task Christian theologians on precisely this point of definitional nomenclature, calling them to explore and employ more contemporary and scientifically viable terms for the transcendent and immanent experience within religious experience. “Christian thought, for the most part,” he said, “has been a theology without a psychology, and Christian man has regularly decided to understand his psychology, when he wanted it at all, under the control of his theology.” Homans then concluded his preface by saying that, therefore, “the purpose of this book, then, is to explicate the issues and lines of relation between these three foci: the way that theology, in defining itself, distinguishes itself from psychoanalysis, the possibility of different understandings of psychoanalysis that such a distinction raises; and the part psychoanalysis has to play in what theologians and others call the process of secularization”²³ (Note 21). Whether he pulled it off or not is not our concern here. Rather, we wish to emphasize that as Homans began with an analysis of William James in his approach to Freud and psychoanalysis in pursuit of a theological understanding of religious experience, he brought the discipline of the psychology of religion to a level of maturity which heretofore was lacking. His contribution to the establishment of the discipline is indisputable. What the discipline has chosen to do in the last quarter of the 20th century with its legacy calls for a further enquiry.

Concluding Comment

From William James to Peter Homans is a seventy-year span of time commencing with an investigation into the nature of religious experience and concluding with a clarion call for theology and psychology to converge upon the phenomenon of religious experience with scientific integrity and theological responsibility. The twelve books considered in this essay are all iconic and epic in the contributions they made to the subjects they covered. That eighteen of the top theological institutions in the United States were asked to collaborate in identifying just what twelve books would be credited with contributing to the development of the discipline of the psychology of religion. The request itself was a unique event. It is hoped that the task before us at the outset has been met and discharged with integrity and credibility.

Notes:

¹ Key sources validated this claim are Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, "Psychology of Religion, 1880-1930: the Rise and Fall of a Psychological Movement," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 10 (1974): 84-90.; G. A. Coe, *The Psychology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916); Gerald J. Gargiulo, "Review of Peter Homan's *Theology After Freud*," *American Imago*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1971): 99-103; Howard H. Kendler, *Historical Foundations of Modern Psychology* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1987); and Oscar Strunk, "The Present Status of the Psychology of Religion," *The Journal of Bible and Religion*, vol. 26 (1957): 387-392.

² See for further elaboration on this point Robert D. Richardson, *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

³ The eighteen institutions approached were Andover Newton Theological School, Boston University School of Theology, Candler School of Theology (Emory University), Catholic Theological Union, Duke University Divinity School, General Theological Seminary, Graduate Theological Foundation, Harvard University Divinity School, Lutheran School of Theology (Chicago), Perkins School of Theology (Southern Methodist University), Princeton Theological Seminary, San Francisco Theological Seminary, St. John's University School of Theology, St. Joseph's Seminary (New York), Union Theological Seminary (New York), University of Chicago Divinity School, Yale University Divinity School.

⁴ Beit-Hallahmi, 86.

⁵ Beit-Hallahmi, 86.

⁶ Richardson, 149.

⁷ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902), 31.

⁸ F. H. Page, "The Psychology of Religion after Fifty Years," *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 5 (1951): 60-67.

⁹ James H. Leuba, "Psychology of Religion," *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 23 (1926): 714-722.

¹⁰ This point is further explicated in Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (NY: W. W. Norton, 1988).

¹¹ Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (London: Collins & Routledge & KeganPaul, 1963), xi.

¹² Carl Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1938), 31.

¹³ Paul Edwards, "Carl Jung," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (NY: Macmillan Publishing Co.), Vol. 3, 123-131.

¹⁴ For multiple validations of this point see Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, "Psychology of Religion, 1880-1930: the Rise and Fall of a Psychological Movement," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 10 (1974): 84-90; G. A. Coe, *The Psychology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916); Gerald J. Gargiulo, "Review of Peter Homan's *Theology After Freud*," *American Imago*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (1971): 99-103; Howard H. Kendler, *Historical Foundations of Modern Psychology* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1987); and Oscar Strunk, "The Present Status of the Psychology of Religion," *The Journal of Bible and Religion*, vol. 26 (1957): 387-392.

¹⁵ Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (NY: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1933), 45.

¹⁶ Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion* (NY: Macmillan & Co., 1950), xi.

- ¹⁷ Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion* (NY: Macmillan & Co., 1950), 9.
- ¹⁸ (Fromm 1950)
- ¹⁹ Otto Rank, *Psychology and the Soul* (NY: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1950), ix.
- ²⁰ David Bakan, *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Princeton, NH:D. Van Nostrand Co., 1958), ix.
- ²¹ Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (NY: Penguin Books, 1970), 4.
- ²² Gerald J. Gargiulo, "Review of Peter Homans' *Theology After Freud*," *American Imago*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1971): 99-103.
- ²³ Peter Homans, *Theology After Freud: An Interpretive Inquiry* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1970), 12.

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