

CHRISTIAN HUMANISM AND PSYCHOTHERAPY: A RESPONSE TO BERGIN'S ANTITHESES

by *John F. Curry*

Abstract. Secular and religious values of psychotherapists influence the process of psychotherapy. The psychologist Allen Bergin has pointed out several major antitheses between values of secular psychotherapists and their religiously oriented clients. The present essay is a response to Bergin's antitheses, on the one hand, and to humanistic psychology, on the other, from the point of view of a Christian humanism. Karl Rahner's theological anthropology is proposed as one possible foundation for an explicit articulation of the relationship between psychotherapy and religion, and as a means to address apparently divergent values of psychotherapists and religious believers.

Keywords: Christian humanism; humanistic psychology; psychology; psychotherapy; religion; theology.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Current status of religion and psychotherapy. At least since the work of Perry London (1964, 5), it has been recognized within the professions practicing psychotherapy that values and standards of the therapist influence the conduct and process of psychotherapy. Evidence for the value-laden nature of all schools of psychotherapy is abundant and is documented in London's analysis of psychodynamic and classical conditioning therapies (1964, 43-124), Leonard Krasner and Leonard Ullmann's analysis of operant therapies (1973, 490-93), and studies of value influence in "nondirective" or Rogerian therapy (Truax 1966, 1-9).

Recently, Allen Bergin, a leading psychotherapy researcher in clinical psychology, has called attention to the contrast between the values of secular psychotherapists and those of their religiously oriented

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clients (1980, 95-105). Bergin's article is of critical importance for two reasons. First, it calls attention to the need for therapists to have explicit values and to communicate these, where necessary, to their clients. Second, it recognizes the disparity between the secular humanism which predominates in the universities where psychotherapists are trained and the theism which predominates in the population of clients.

Bergin recognized that there are areas of overlap between the value systems of secular humanists and of religious believers, but the main point of his article is to draw sharp contrasts in several major value domains. Consequently, the point of view expressed by Bergin is that of an antithesis between psychotherapy and religion. His contribution may serve to augment the awareness and sensitivity of practicing psychotherapists, but the antithetical point of view also contains the potential to lead to a more complete bifurcation of secular psychotherapy and religious practice. Table 1 lists the major antitheses outlined by Bergin. The selection of "major" antitheses is the present author's, and it is based on the distinction between antitheses which reflect assumptions in fundamental philosophical-theological points of view and those which derive from these as cases of special ethics. Only the former are included in Table 1.

TABLE 1
BERGIN'S MAJOR ANTITHESES

<i>Theistic</i>	<i>Clinical-Humanistic</i>
God is supreme. Humility, acceptance of (divine) authority, and obedience (to the will of God) are virtues.	Humans are supreme. The self is aggrandized. Autonomy and rejection of external authority are virtues.
Personal identity is eternal and derived from the divine. Relationship with God defines self-worth.	Identity is ephemeral and mortal. Relationships with others define self-worth.
Love, affection, and self-transcendence are primary. Service and self-sacrifice are central to personal growth.	Personal needs and self-actualization are primary. Self-satisfaction is central to personal growth.
Personal responsibility for own harmful actions and changes in them. Acceptance of guilt, suffering, and contrition as keys to change. Restitution for harmful effects.	Others are responsible for our problems and changes. Minimizing guilt and relieving suffering before experiencing its meaning. Apology for harmful effects.

(Adapted from: Bergin 1980.)

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A second major viewpoint in contemporary psychotherapeutic thought holds that psychological humanism and religion, far from being antithetical, tend toward an identity. The position has recently been critiqued by Paul Vitz, who documents a clear exposition of the identity position (1977, 17-22).

Vitz finds the basis for identifying psychology and religion in humanistic psychology, as expounded by Erich Fromm, Carl Rogers, and others. Fromm (1947) broke with the pessimistic Freudian tradition in which aggression, a potentially destructive drive, is viewed as intrinsic to human nature. For Fromm humanity is intrinsically good, the source of virtue. Consequently, self-affirmation, not self-denial, is to be valued.

Likewise, for Rogers, the "fully functioning person" is one who constitutes the source of his/her own values, who experiences feelings in concert with cognitions, who wills in accord with the flow of a harmonious self (1963, 17-26). There is no presumed conflict between drives and morals, as in Freudian psychology, and no compromise between organismic needs and environmental constraints, as in behavioral psychology. In addition there are no apparently fixed limits on individual development or on options in human relationships. Rather, both the individual and the dyad or group are seen as "fully functioning" only when in flux or process and not when fixed or static. Vitz particularly criticizes Rogers for failing to specify any clinical subgroups (e.g., psychopathic or narcissistic) for whom the general definition and conditions of "fully functioning person" would not apply (Vitz 1977, 45).

For Vitz humanistic psychology is a psychology as religion. Particularly in the case of Rogers, there are explicit ties between psychology and a humanism which tends to replace traditional religion. Robert Sollod (1978, 96-98) has documented the dependence of Rogers on John Dewey and the virtual translation of Dewey's progressive education into Rogers's client-centered therapy. Likewise both Vitz and Sollod point to Rogers's "conversion experience" from a seminary student at Union Theological to a therapist and educator espousing self-directed, nonauthoritarian modes of exploration and inquiry.

Two major alternatives posed by contemporary writers on psychotherapy and religion are reflected in the works of Bergin, on the one hand, and the humanist psychologists, on the other. Bergin's antitheses highlight the option of opposition between humanistic psychotherapy and religion. Vitz, who himself takes a position similar to Bergin's, as a critic of humanism, clarifies the religious character of humanistic psychology itself. He shows that, within humanistic psychology, psychotherapy and the psychology of the self can function as a religion. In

this sense the Rogerian or humanist position would be one of identity between psychology and religion.

However, neither the antithetical nor the identity notions of the relationship between psychotherapy and religion prove satisfactory from a theological point of view. Moreover, for the psychotherapist and for the active client in the psychotherapeutic process the issue is far from academic. The antithetical position forces a choice between religion and applied psychological methods designed to relieve human suffering. It confronts contemporary human beings with a demand to give up either religious belief or access to a major healing tool of modern culture.

The identity position, on the other hand, forces a reduction of religion to psychology. This implies a radical secularization with the consequent abandonment of many traditionally religious questions, of the religious view of humanity, and of elements of religious experience.

The remainder of this essay will present a critique of both the antithetical and the identity positions. It will then examine a third, alternative view of the relationship between psychotherapy and religion, that of Christian humanism. After an exposition of the foundations of a Christian humanist position, it will be suggested that this perspective leads towards a resolution of the major antitheses articulated by Bergin.

The Christian humanism in this essay arises from the Roman Catholic tradition of Christianity. As such it represents one specific case study of the relationship between psychotherapy and religion. It is recognized that other religious traditions need to address this relationship as well, and it is hoped that the present study will stimulate efforts in this direction.

If a Christian humanism is possible, it must avoid both the identification of psychology as religion and the casting of psychology and religion as inveterate antagonists. This issue may be seen simply as one instance of the broader question of the relationship between Christianity and human culture, an issue that has existed for centuries and one that received clear analysis in the work of H. Richard Niebuhr.

Christianity and psychotherapy as an instance of Christ and culture. In his well-known work, *Christ and Culture*, Niebuhr (1951) pointed out that an enduring problem for Christians has been that of defining a relationship to their cultural environment. At various points in history Christians have been accused of contempt for human culture, for example, in the Marxist critique and in Edward Gibbon's analysis of the fall of Rome. At other times they have accepted human culture so fully

that they have reduced Christ to a fulfillment of the goals of their own culturally relative society.

Niebuhr has shown that, through the history of Christianity, three major answers have been given to the question of how Christians should relate to their contemporary culture. The first possible answer is that of opposition, or Christ against culture. This tradition is found in the first epistle of John with its emphasis on an expected imminent parousia (Niebuhr 1951, 49). Later, the tradition is expounded by Tertullian, who urged Christians to avoid service in the army, the civil service, or in the schools (Chadwick 1967, 91). He saw an essential conflict between reason and faith, justifying his own belief by its absurdity.

The second possible answer to the question of Christ and culture is that of agreement, or the Christ of culture. Niebuhr sees the origins of this tradition in the Judaizers of early Christianity who attempted to reduce Christ to a nonconflictual extension of their own belief system. The Gnostics, too, in attempting to reconcile the gospel with contemporary philosophy, tended to identify faith with advanced human knowledge. In more recent times liberal Protestantism has tended to depict Christ as a "great enlightener, great teacher, the one who directs all men in culture to the attainment of wisdom, moral perfection, and peace" (Niebuhr 1951, 92).

The third possible answer to the question of Christ and culture is that of integration without identity, or Christ above culture. Among those holding this position, Niebuhr discusses Christian "synthesists."

For Niebuhr (1951, 128-31) synthesists maintain the distinction between Christ and culture, God and man, and grace and nature but see continuity between the poles of each such distinction. Historically this approach to the question of Christ and culture may be traced to Justin Martyr, who embraced Christianity in the mid-second century, but retained much of his classical philosophical education. Justin positively valued many of the teachings of Plato but added that "the correct insights achieved by the Greek philosophers reached their completion in the gospel of Christ who embodies the highest moral ideal" (Chadwick 1967, 76).

The pinnacle of the synthesist point of view came with the work of Thomas Aquinas. Both Christ and culture are affirmed, yet Christ is seen as far above culture. For Aquinas the purpose or end of humanity is to realize human potentialities completely, as intellects seeking universal truth and wills seeking universal good. However, this implies that humanity is oriented fundamentally toward God and can attain only an imperfect happiness within the limits of human culture (Niebuhr 1951, 23).

Given these three possible answers to the question of Christ and culture, it can be shown that the positions of Bergin, on the one hand, and of the humanistic psychologists, on the other, do not exhaust the possible answers to the question of Christianity and psychotherapy which in itself is an aspect of contemporary culture.

Bergin's antitheses as an instance of Christ against culture. The antithetical structure of Bergin's propositions immediately casts his position as consonant with a Christ against culture position. Clinical-humanistic therapists are seen as placing supreme value on the human individual, while theists, including Christians, assert the supremacy of God. Following from this, the therapeutic culture espouses autonomy and the rejection of external authority, situation ethics, self-satisfaction, and self-actualization. In contrast theists espouse humility, acceptance of divine authority, universal ethics of self-control, and self-sacrifice.

Given such a set of options, the Christian would be most likely to reject the clinical-humanist perspective as idolatrous and its underlying personality theories as diametrically opposed to fundamental Christian values. It would be impossible to integrate therapist values with the Sermon on the Mount, with traditional Christian morality, or with the doctrines of creation or redemption. Thus, the behavioral implication of such an antithetical view would be Christian avoidance of involvement in the psychotherapeutic aspects of contemporary culture.

Humanistic psychology as an instance of the Christ of culture. Humanistic psychology, as delineated by Vitz, identifies the psychological with the spiritual dimension in man. In an early, transitional period, humanistic psychological notions were advanced within liberal Protestantism by such writers as Harry Emerson Fosdick. Vitz (1977, chap. 6) points out that Fosdick actually preceded Rogers in the use of concepts such as "self-realization" and "becoming a person." The liberal Protestant approach of Fosdick stressed such concepts as personal development, self-discovery, creativity, and personality integration. It transposed religious notions, such as salvation, onto a psychological plane, where they were humanized and virtually identified with aspects of personality functioning.

Rogers and later humanistic psychologists broke entirely with the religious tradition. Such a development, in retrospect, may have been inevitable, given the identification of psychology and religion in the transitional stage of liberal Protestantism. Since theological ideas had lost their power and relevance and had largely been replaced by psychological ideas, the need for the former became increasingly less evident. While the believer who adopts the antithetical position out-

lined by Bergin is likely to avoid the psychotherapeutic process as an aspect of corrupt culture, the believer who adopts the position of humanistic psychology is likely to make psychotherapy a substitute for religious experience.

The possibility of a Christ above culture solution. If the antithetical and identity positions on the relationship of Christianity to psychotherapy have serious limitations, the possibility of a synthetic approach needs to be explored. Such an approach would enable the Christian believer to participate in the psychotherapeutic process yet not identify it as a substitute for religious practice. Such an approach would stress the continuity between human development and religious commitment without identifying the two.

The fundamental necessary condition for this "third approach" to the problem of Christianity and psychotherapy would be that it adequately address the theological problems posed by the first two approaches. At this point, then, it is necessary to outline the major theological problems created by the antithetical and by the identity approaches.

Theological critique of the antithetical position. There are three major theological problems with any antithetical approach to the relationship of Christianity and psychotherapy. First, God is seen as an opponent of human development. Second, God is seen as extrinsic to humanity. Third, a bifurcation is established between the two theological dogmas of creation and redemption.

The first of these problems is clearly indicated in Bergin's first antithesis: the supremacy of God versus the supremacy of man. At first glance the Christian believer may consider this to be the easiest of Bergin's antitheses to resolve in favor of the traditional religious point of view. Obviously, for the believer, humanity is not supreme in the relationship to God. However, to accept this overly simple response is to open the door to the major criticisms of religious belief in the contemporary age: those of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx. Both of these critics held that religion is a dangerous, negative influence which retards human development.

Freud's criticism of religious belief has been succinctly summarized by Fromm (1967, 10-13). For Freud religion originates in feelings of helplessness before the forces of nature and the forces of internal drives. So powerful are these feelings that they lead to the development of an "illusion" of a protective father figure. While this illusion is rooted in childhood experiences, it is projected onto the adult's experience of his world. A collective neurosis develops in which supposedly mature

adults behave toward their world as if they were children relying on and fearing their father. The illusion is not only misleading but it is also dangerous. It limits the development of critical thinking and of human intelligence. In short, religion for Freud retards human development by inhibiting human reason, the very dimension which psychotherapy (in his case, psychoanalysis) strives to expand.

Likewise, the essential Marxist criticism of religion was that religious belief had to be denied in order to affirm humanity. Leslie Dewart (1966, 56) noted that for Marxism "the affirmation of each (God and man) is held to be incompatible with that of the other, and . . . the existence of man is . . . undeniable." For Marx atheism was a negation of God and a simultaneous assertion of humanity. As Karl Rahner (1968, 346-56) notes, Marxism asserted the value of the secular world itself as something to be constructed by man. This challenged religious believers to work out a view of the secular world that neither rejected it nor dominated it.

To accept, then, that there is an antithesis between the affirmation of humanity and belief in God, that the supremacy of God implies the subordination of human beings, is to make religious belief susceptible once again the Freudian and Marxist criticisms. God is depicted as a being, albeit the supreme being, over against humanity. To accept this fully is to cast religion in the role of a deterrent to human psychological, social, and economic development.

The second problem with the antithetical position is a related but more general issue. To set God's supremacy against human autonomy, obedience to a supreme being against self-actualization, is to assume a great discontinuity between human experience and the realm of the divine. If God is depicted as over against humanity, then God is extrinsic to human history and experience. Gregory Baum (1970, 3-13) has referred to this point of view as extrinsicism, following the work of Maurice Blondel. As Baum notes, such a point of view is part and parcel of the belief system of numerous religious persons. For Blondel it was part of the official Catholic theology of the turn of the century, a theology against which he strongly reacted by teaching that God's revelation spoke to persons in their innermost depths, and that it was intrinsically related to human strivings.

For Christians the third major problem with the antithetical position is that it implies a great chasm between two central beliefs: creation and redemption. To set God over against humanity, to conceptualize God as extrinsic to human history and experience, is to devalue the created order. Niebuhr (1951, 76) has traced the eventual dualism of spirit and matter that develops in antithetical, "Christ against culture," theologies such as Montanism. The spirit is stressed as good, matter as evil.

Niebuhr sees the antithetical position as inadequate to explain the relationship of Christ to the creator since the work of creation is discounted. The material world is the created universe, so that any condemnation of the latter implies a real rejection of the doctrine of creation.

Theological critique of the identity position. Attempts to identify psychotherapy or psychology as a Christian religion are subject to two major criticisms. The first is that the psychotherapeutic point of view encourages narcissism and noncommitment, which are antithetical to Christianity. The second is that such a point of view is irreconcilable with the "offense" of the Cross.

The first of these criticisms has been made most explicitly by Philip Rieff. In *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* Rieff (1968, 29-47) develops the thesis that the first modern psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, is a therapy of the isolated self rather than a therapy of commitment. In this respect it is opposed to traditional religions and becomes an alternative to all religions. Rieff points out that Freud's view of humanity was essentially pessimistic and limited: he saw the person as ego moderating the conflicting forces of culture, on the one hand, and inner drives, on the other. Treatment, or therapy, consisted of analyzing one's inner forces, becoming aware of unconscious determinants of behavior, and increasing the scope and flexibility of the ego, or conscious, reflective self. Commitment to any one cultural system would be opposed to this "analytic attitude."

To identify psychotherapy as a religion would be to ignore the narcissistic element in at least the analytically based therapies. Pre-psychoanalytic healing efforts are discussed by Rieff as "therapies of commitment." Asceticism, mysticism, and ritual constitute aspects of commitment therapies. Although asceticism and mysticism can be individualistic in practice, they are oriented toward a shared system of symbols held by a healing or curing community. Religions, including Christianity, offer salvation through such a commitment to or joining with the social community while analytic therapy does not offer salvation but only information and a neutral, individualistic attitude.

The second major problem inherent in identifying psychotherapy and Christian religion is the "offense" of the Cross. The paradox of the "fulfilled" man as the crucified man is the ultimate criticism of the identity position. Rahner, in discussing Christian humanism, stresses that Christianity is the religion of the Cross. "In Christian Humanism man is subject to the law of death and the sign of a genuine humanism is a Man nailed to a Cross" (Rahner 1972a, 197).

The Cross is difficult to reconcile with aspects of humanist psychology. The nondirective, open, flowing process of decision mak-

ing in humanistic psychotherapy is based on assumptions about man and culture which are essentially conflict free. Neither within human beings nor between them are there presumed to be negative, irrational, destructive forces.

Conclusions of part one: necessary characteristics of a Christian humanism. The preceding critique of the antithetical and identity positions regarding Christianity and psychotherapy implies the necessary characteristics of a Christian humanist synthesis. First, such a synthesis would need to posit continuity between God and humanity, redemption and creation, grace and nature. God could not be conceptualized as over against nor as extrinsic to humanity. Positive developments in human growth and the application of therapeutic technique for the purpose of facilitating growth and relieving human suffering would be seen as continuous with God's plan of redemption.

The second major condition of a Christian humanism in the interface between Christianity and psychotherapy would be acceptance of the cross. The sober reality of all that is symbolized in the cross (death, injustice, social conflict) would temper such a humanism and distinguish it clearly from the more "conflict-free" humanism of Rogers. Likewise, acceptance of the Cross would imply recognition of the human capacity for error and self-delusion. In turn this would lead to acceptance of a certain kind of asceticism and a well-advised mistrust of self-realization as an adequate guideline for human development.

It is the major thesis of this paper that a Christian humanism can be articulated, which meets these conditions, and which can provide a theological structure for the integration of Christian faith and psychotherapeutic practice, without identifying the two.

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF A CHRISTIAN HUMANIST PERSPECTIVE IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

The transcendental turn in theology. In the development of Western philosophy a "Copernican revolution" occurred in the work of Immanuel Kant. His conclusion that the structure of the human mind imposed fundamental categories on perceived phenomena is well known. It changed the view of the human mind from that of a passive recipient of knowledge to that of an active contributor to knowledge (Thompson 1977, 119).

A similar development occurred in Catholic theology around the turn of the twentieth century. Baum (1970, 1) has termed this development the "Blondelian shift." In essence the shift engineered by Maurice Blondel in Catholic theology represented a rejection of prior official teaching which depicted God as a divine being over against

humanity. Traditional nineteenth-century Catholic theology viewed God as extrinsic to human history and as communicating divine revelation from a locus outside history to human beings existing in an otherwise enclosed universe bounded by space and time.

Extrinsicism relied on an apologetics which argued that miracles verified the essential truth of God's revelation. The miracle demonstrated the authenticity of God's messengers, including Christ, and thereby affirmed the content of their message. Any congruence between the content of that message and lived human experience was perhaps of some interest, but it was in addition to the main method which was an argument from the authority of the messengers.

Blondel rejected extrinsicism and developed a theology of divine revelation which views such revelation as taking place in human life and history. Divine truth corresponds to some question arising in the human mind as a result of lived experience. It is not a set of unusual ideas sent to human beings on God's authority; rather it is a reality that enlightens and explains them to themselves.

For Blondel action is prior to conceptualization. Blondel viewed action as willing, choosing, and doing and as the course through which human beings sought to become themselves. Specific freely chosen acts, concrete behavior resulting from definite choices, reflect an underlying striving at the core of being to become fully human. Blondel viewed this underlying striving as infinite and incapable of fulfillment in any specific set of human choices. At this point, openness to the infinite becomes the essential human option.

At the level of this fundamental option human beings stand at the threshold of revelation, ready to hear the message which is intrinsically related to being, willing, and striving. The emphasis in Blondel's work on the correspondence between divine revelation and the questions arising in the human mind as a function of experience was termed the method of immanence. This method was the starting point in Catholic theology of a "Copernican revolution" in which the focus of theological analysis turned from the "objective" data of revelation to the characteristics of the human subject.

Following Blondel's lead, other twentieth-century theologians have studied divine revelation from the point of view of the believing subject. Baum (1970, 26) points out that Joseph Marechal and those who followed his method, including Rahner, began to analyze human knowing in terms of its presuppositions or conditions. For these "transcendental Thomists," who integrated the theology of Aquinas and the post-Kantian philosophy of human subjectivity, the act of knowing presupposes an orientation toward the absolute. The knowing subject puts into explicit concepts a small part of truth, representing a con-

scious, articulated derivation from the more fuzzily or vaguely perceived reality.

For Rahner human beings are defined as spirit-in-the-world, for example, as transcendence located in the finite universe. The term *spirit-in-the-world*, like the human condition, is essentially paradoxical: spirit strives toward the infinite, while in-the-world is a condition of limits. "Man in his knowing and willing is a being of absolute and unlimited transcendence. All his spiritual acts, no matter what their object, are founded on this transcendence, which is a reaching forward of knowledge and will" (Rahner 1966c, 49).

The transcendental turn in theology meant that theology would henceforth have as its starting point the human subject. Rahner's dictum, that theology is anthropology, essentially means that knowledge of the divine is knowledge of the truly human. His related dictum, that anthropology is Christology, indicates the Christian belief that the fully human is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

Rahner's theological anthropology, which holds that the coming together of God and humanity results from God's self-communication to human beings' self-transcending spirit (Lane 1975, 130), provides the theological foundations for a Christian humanism. These theological foundations include the two major requirements for an approach to the problem of Christianity and psychotherapy: first, continuity but nonidentity between God and humanity, grace and nature; second, acceptance of the cross. These essential foundations will be outlined below. Additional commentary and interpretation of Rahner's theological anthropology may be found in the collection of essays edited by O'Donovan (1980).

Continuity without identity in Rahner's theology. In Rahner's theological anthropology God is not depicted as the supreme being over against humanity but as the very ground of human being and the "whither" of humanity's transcendence. For Rahner humanity is transcendence, or spirit, reaching forward in the acts of knowing and willing. Yet this transcendence is oriented toward the infinite at all times. Prior to the formation of any explicit, articulated concepts about "God" there exists a kind of preconceptual or prereflective awareness of the infinite.

In his second lecture on the concept of mystery in Catholic theology Rahner (1966d) starts not with a description of mystery in itself but with an analysis of the human being, the subject confronted with mystery. The human being is transcendence reaching forward in knowledge and in will towards absolute being. The "whither" of the transcendence is always present as an unattainable, not fully captured, preconceptual reality.

For purposes of the present essay Rahner's notion of God as the whither of transcendence implies continuity between God and humanity. In the most fundamental core of being a person is immediately oriented toward God. God is not an object among other objects in the universe and hence not a potential rival or competitor for development or predominance. Rather, God is the absolute ground of being and the ultimate orientation of human development. Thus, the task for human beings is not to "know" God in an objectified, concrete, delimited fashion, as one being (although supreme) among other beings, but to maintain a radical openness to God, as the ultimate orientation of transcendence.

At the same time, Rahner's theology clearly posits a nonidentity between God and humanity. A human being is a being among other beings while God is the absolute ground of being and orientation of transcendence. Neither human beings, nor their products, nor their concepts—and especially not their concepts about God—are identical with the ultimate ground of being. The openness of the human to the absolute by necessity implies a never completed, never closed, never satisfied process of human development. Hence, there can be no identity of any specific psychological state or model of humanity with absolute truth (Rahner 1972a, 187-204).

As Brian McDermott (1980, 50-60) has pointed out, there is even the possibility in Rahner's Christian humanism that one can opt not to pursue this process of development. The choice not to give one's self to others (and thus to the absolute) involves a closing in upon the self that negates the process of receiving and giving love.

Rahner reviews the traditional scholastic notion of grace as a superstructure built upon human nature but outside the realm of consciousness and hence of psychology. Rahner views the notion of "pure" nature, as opposed to divine grace, as an abstraction which does not correspond to human reality. "Our actual nature is *never* 'pure' nature. It is a nature installed in a supernatural order which man can never leave, even as a sinner and unbeliever" (1966a, 185). The human experience of unfulfilled longing as well as the transcendental structure of human intelligence are the indicators that humanity is, in its nature, oriented toward a beyond. The supernatural, then, is not to be confused with the odd, the bizarre, the parapsychological, or the totally other-than-human as it sometimes is in popular psychology. Rather, it is the fundamental orientation of humanity in its present existential condition (the "supernatural existential").

For purposes of the present paper the major point to be derived from this contemporary analysis of nature and grace is that there is a continuity between divine graciousness and human development. For

the Christian human development is seen as reaching its peak of self-transcendence in Jesus Christ who is simultaneously the ultimate gift of God to humanity. In basing a Christian humanism on this theological foundation the words of Rahner are succinct and to the point: "One must indeed always remember that God is not diminished by our becoming greater" (1966a, 177).

The cross and limits of self-realization. The essence of a Christian humanism, in Rahner's theology, is radical openness to the future with consequent refusal to absolutize any concrete humanism. In "Christian Humanism" Rahner indicates the different levels on which this dynamic is explored. At the sociopolitical level Christian humanism accepts responsibility for building the future of humanity. As opposed to a Christ against culture type of withdrawal from the sociopolitical arena, Christian humanism "does not give the Christian an excuse for being indifferent to a concrete humanism of the future" (Rahner 1972a, 200). While the Christian is obliged to create the human future, radical transcendence and openness to God imply the refusal to absolutize any particular humanism.

At the personal level Christian humanism is characterized chiefly by its orientation toward death. The Christian accepts the law of death and has as one major symbol the Cross. The act of death is the final act of the Christian life, the most radical act of openness to the transcendent future. In death a person gives up his or her own particular constructions, certainties, and personalized humanism. Both biologically and interpersonally in death a person makes way for other people, thus affirming the absolute future of God, not of the self, and affirming the right of others to a future which will be different.

Following directly from acceptance of death, Christian humanism accepts limits on self-realization. In an article on the topic of self-realization Rahner (1972b) criticizes the rush toward personal fulfillment at any price. The need to try everything, the inability to choose between options, and the attempt to reach fulfillment by piecing together varieties of concrete experience are all seen as attempts to avoid the reality of death and human limits. Rahner emphasizes that, for the Christian humanist, fullness is not a sum total of present experiences, but the absolute future, the whither of human transcendence which Christians call "God." The limits on self-realization which this implies consist chiefly in allowing the self to renounce one option in favor of another.

In addition to acceptance of death and acceptance of limits on self-realization Christian humanism contains a radical view of the relationship between love of God and love of neighbor. Just as it stressed

continuity between God and humanity, and between grace, and nature, it proposes a continuity between love of God and love of neighbor. This provides a theological foundation for a new type of asceticism more readily integrated with goals of psychotherapy.

In Rahner's Christian humanism love of neighbor is the primary act of love of God (1974, 231-52). The two great commandments given by Jesus (Matthew 22:37-40) have an intrinsic unity. Wherever love of neighbor attains its fullness it is so much dependent upon divine grace that it is also an act of love of God.

A human being is located from the outset in an interpersonal matrix. God is not one object or one person among others in this matrix but the whither of human transcendence, the ground of being and absolute future. The human experience of God, which is a necessary condition for the possibility of historical revelation, "is possible only in and through man who has *already* (in logical priority) experienced the human Thou . . ." (1974, 145). By this Rahner indicates that the concrete, interpersonal world is the setting, and in some way the condition, for the preconceptual, noncategorical experience of God. Within this setting human beings make a fundamental moral option: to love or to hate others. Through this option human beings form themselves and thereby either accept or reject their basic orientation to the destiny of transcendence.

For the believing Christian, furthermore, Rahner (1975, 195-200) has shown that the relationship to Jesus is based upon love of neighbor. The act of love of neighbor is a commitment of one's own existence to that other person, a commitment in hope that is justified by God's gift of unconditional love. Without love of neighbor a Christian "relationship with Jesus" is merely a mental construct used to escape the demands of reality.

The unity of love of God and love of neighbor, coupled with the acceptance of death and human limitations in Christian humanism, call for a different type of asceticism from that which characterized previous, more "extrinsic" theologies. This point has been explicated most fully by Baum (1970, 139-61). The extrinsic asceticism generally consisted of practices designed to enhance one's self-control and to reduce the likelihood of overly narcissistic behavior. While such practices are still needed as a part of a Christian humanist life, they can be seen as limited in their presuppositions about nature and grace, and about the relationship between love of neighbor and love of God.

Traditional, extrinsic ascetic practices include fasting, self-denial, and solitary prayer. Baum indicates that these practices were oriented towards limiting one's self-seeking, self-loving, narcissistic behaviors. They presumed that self-love was the root of sinfulness. One might add

that they also involved turning away from the "natural" world and that they were largely private practices unrelated to communal aspects of Christianity.

Three developments in psychology and theology have tended to reduce the emphasis on these traditional ascetical practices, and to increase the emphasis on other types of asceticism. These include the discovery of self-destructive forces in depth psychology and the theological reconceptualizations of nature and grace, and love of neighbor, already described above. The discovery of self-destructive forces in depth psychology implied a human capacity for self-hatred that was equal in potential to that for self-love (Keith, Curry, & Autry 1981, 329-46). What appeared to be narcissistic behavior was seen as a defense against radical insecurity and anxiety (Baum 1970, 146). In terms of ascetical practices this implied that self-punishment techniques could be used in a way that, far from enhancing Christian development, led only to further self-hatred, neurotic guilt, or self-righteousness.

The new asceticism, as outlined by Baum, calls for inquiry into one's motives. Specific behaviors, even those prescribed by religious law, are seen as potentially either constructive or destructive, depending upon a person's understanding of motives and orientation toward other persons. Stress on the continuity between nature and grace implies that human beings need not turn away from the world in order to practice self-discipline in the movement toward self-fulfillment. Rather, involvement in the secular world and dedication to improving the human condition may prove to be more Christian, and more difficult, than private self-denial.

While traditional ascetical practices helped individuals to struggle with internal sinfulness, they were not oriented toward the social struggle. Furthermore, they could be subverted even within the personal, internal struggle by unconscious self-destructive motives. While such traditional practices need to be retained, they also need to be augmented, on the one front by social involvement and on the other by careful dialogic analysis of the self. The latter is within the realm of psychotherapy to the extent that such therapy focuses on insight into one's motives, drives, and defenses.

Following the review of major theological foundations for a Christian humanism the issue of Christianity and psychotherapy can be reexamined. Returning to the starting point it will be argued that a Christian humanist perspective allows a resolution of Bergin's major antitheses. This, in turn, permits an integration of psychotherapy and religious practice without reducing these two poles to an identity.

TOWARDS A RESOLUTION OF BERGIN'S ANTITHESES

The first antithesis: supreme God vs. supreme man. Perhaps Bergin's first antithesis is the most important one since it places the relationship between God and humanity in a dominance-submission paradigm thus "forcing a choice." The paradigm itself is a major point of departure for atheistic thinkers and, as was indicated above, it played a central role in the thinking both of Marx and Freud.

The antithesis is based on faulty presuppositions from the point of view of Christian humanism. It assumes that God is a being among other beings who is, for the believer, the supreme being. As we have seen this view is not that of Christian humanism which views God as the ground of being and the whither or ultimate orientation of man's transcendence. Thus, God and humanity are not locked in rivalry or antagonism. Developments in human knowledge, science, or technology do not in some way threaten God. Rather, God is the ultimate future toward which human accomplishments are directed.

It would be equally faulty, however, to conclude that humanity is supreme. Humans are radically contingent and in need of God's grace or self communication to attain the end toward which they strive. Self-reliance would represent the closing of one's self to the radical future. Any reification of a particular humanism, a particular psychology, or a particular sociopolitical system as an absolute would represent unwarranted self aggrandizement by man and would be opposed to Christian humanism.

In this sense the theistic virtues mentioned by Bergin—humility and obedience to the will of God—would be retained in Christian humanism. However, they would not be conceptualized along dominance-submission lines. In obeying the will of God human beings obey the one who calls them to be themselves. Obedience to God is also obedience to one's innermost conscience and to the striving for absolute being which lies at the core of humanity.

Similarly, humility is not to be confused with low self-esteem or feelings of inferiority. The humility of the Christian humanist is an accurate awareness of the self—free of the distortions of defense mechanisms, resistances, and unrealistic expectations. Humility before God would imply humility before death and the ability to "let go" of certain options in order to retain others.

The second antithesis: self-worth defined by relationship with God versus relationships with others. Inasmuch as humanity is contingent and God is the ground of being, Christian humanism would hold that all value, including the value of persons, derives from God. However, more than that issue seems contained in Bergin's second antithesis. The point that

is at issue is whether self-worth is directly given by God or whether it is given by one's fellow humans. To this question the Christian humanist would respond that it is ultimately given by God, but given necessarily through the mediation of other persons.

Christian humanism posits a unity between love of God and love of neighbor. Only as a result of having already received love in his encounters with other humans can one be responsive to the awareness of one's own transcendence.

Similarly, every act of love of neighbor, since it is grounded in and supported by the love of God, is itself an act of love of God. For the Christian humanist, following Rahner's distinction between conceptual and preconceptual knowledge, this is the case whether or not any explicit categorical reference is made to God.

The fully articulated, conceptualized awareness of the relationship between love of God and love of neighbor would imply a sense of personhood, of inner responsibility, and of personal call from the horizon of a person's transcendence. However, strictly speaking, this awareness would be beyond the realm of psychotherapy. Psychotherapy would be of assistance to one who wanted to explore the self in relation to others including personal defenses, style, and interpersonal patterns.

The third antithesis: self-sacrifice versus self-actualization. The acceptance of the Cross in Christian humanism precludes any simple identification of human development with self-actualization as the latter is described by humanist psychologists. Essentially, this is because of the failure of the humanists to recognize the power of evil—in the form of self-deception, defensiveness, and resistance—in the psychotherapeutic process. Ironically, it is the same failure to recognize the self-defeating forces in persons that Baum cites as a weakness of traditional, extrinsic asceticism. The synthesis to be drawn from this third antithesis would be that true self-actualization is based on self-sacrifice in the form of a balanced asceticism.

The "new" asceticism, as described above in the review of Baum's work, has three major components. The first is a set of self-control practices. This it takes in part from traditional asceticism. The purpose of this ascesis is to harness narcissistic tendencies. Contemporary psychotherapies also place great emphasis on self-control training in the treatment of such problem behaviors as obesity (Thoresen & Mahoney 1974, 117-18) and aggression (Lochman, Burch, Curry, & Lampron 1984, 915-16).

The second component is self-examination. Since the discovery of depth psychology and the unconscious this ascesis has become more concerned with motivational factors and self-deceptive mechanisms.

There seems to be little or no conflict between Christian and humanistic values regarding these first two types of asceticism.

The third aspect of Baum's contemporary asceticism is social commitment. A privatized, personal Christianity cannot suffice here. The same must be said of a privatized, personal psychotherapy (Jessor 1956, 265). A common goal of Christian humanism and psychotherapy would be the development of a person's ability to go beyond the self and to "give the self away" in productive, caring relationships.

The fourth antithesis: acceptance versus minimizing of guilt and suffering. In a Christian humanist perspective guilt has two meanings: it is a powerful psychological affect (its general meaning in psychotherapy), and it is a synonym for sin or the turning away of humanity from the horizon of its transcendence. This is a theological meaning which pertains to an existential condition of humanity at the core of human being.

Two points need to be made regarding the proposed antithesis concerning guilt and suffering. First, with reference to the affective meaning of guilt, the humanist-clinical position articulated by Bergin is clearly not a universal. It depends upon the therapist's analysis of the client's problem. If the problem is a neurotic one, marked by internal conflict, inability to accept one's own humanity, and overbearing guilt, then humanist-clinical therapists will attempt to reduce the inappropriate guilt. If the guilt is a symptom of major depression, biochemical interventions may be used to alleviate the person's suffering. However, many contemporary clients have personality disorders rather than neuroses. These clients typically have some consistent personality trait which blocks the development of their personal relationship, but the traits are more bothersome to others than to themselves. In the most extreme cases, that of sociopathic character disorders, there is a marked lack of empathy and normal guilt. In such cases the therapist will attempt to increase, rather than to decrease, affective guilt.

Second, with reference to the theological meaning of guilt and its relationship to suffering, Christian humanism posits a distinction between the role of the secular psychotherapist and the religious minister or priest. The psychotherapist addresses and attempts to alleviate suffering, for example, self-defeating patterns of interaction or behavior. It is beyond the realm of psychotherapy to pronounce forgiveness of what is meant theologically by guilt.

CONCLUSIONS

A Christian humanism based on the theology of Rahner can serve to reduce the antithetical relationship posited by Bergin between reli-

gious and clinical-humanistic values. The issue is by no means purely intellectual. An antithetical point of view can prevent religious believers from making use of psychotherapeutic methods to alleviate human suffering. It can also lead therapists to disregard a significant source of support and hope in religious clients. An uncritical merger of psychotherapy and religion, on the other hand, can lead to a cultural climate lacking in social commitment and in awareness of dimensions of transcendence. Bergin has performed a major service by calling this issue to the attention of psychotherapists. The present paper addresses the issue from a Catholic Christian perspective. It is hoped that this effort will stimulate those with other religious perspectives to address this problem which is one instance of the relationship of religion to culture.

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