

Christian Psychology: Towards the Reconciliation of Science and Religion



BY PETER MILNES & GENEVIEVE MILNES

Christian Psychology

The combination of Christianity and Psychology presents an immediate problem – we follow science in our study of psychology and yet we claim to be able to combine this with Christianity. So we may find ourselves caught between the often conflictual claims of science on one side and religion on the other. We may also be called upon to provide therapy to clients who are caught between secular science and their faith journey. This article seeks to provide a pathway towards reconciliation between science and faith – firstly by analyzing the word “believe”, and then by using the classic Indian board game Snakes and Ladders to show the positive

“ladders” in both science and religion as well as the dangers we have represented as snakes that lead inevitably to an Existential Void.

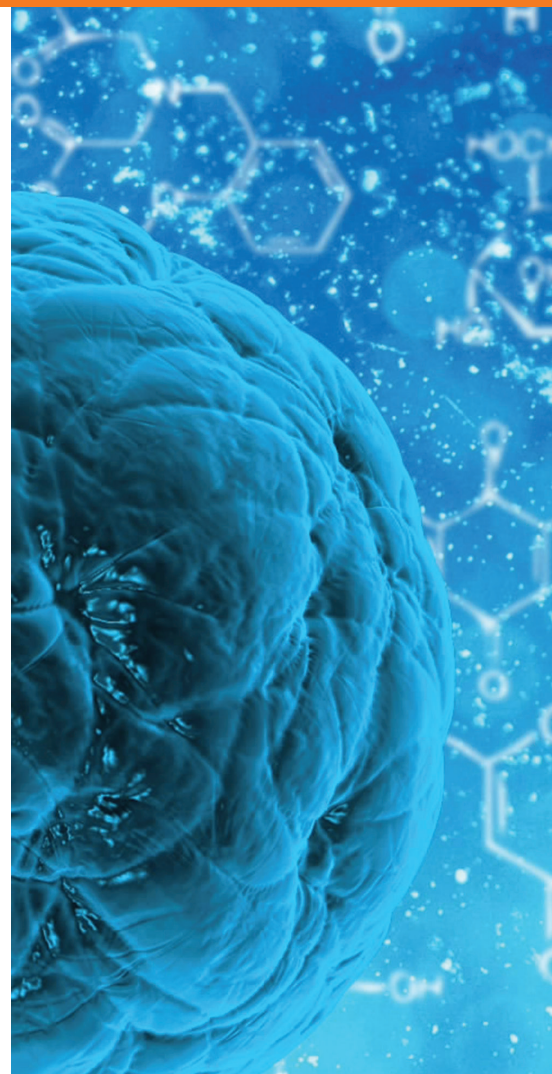
“Reason” or “Belief”?

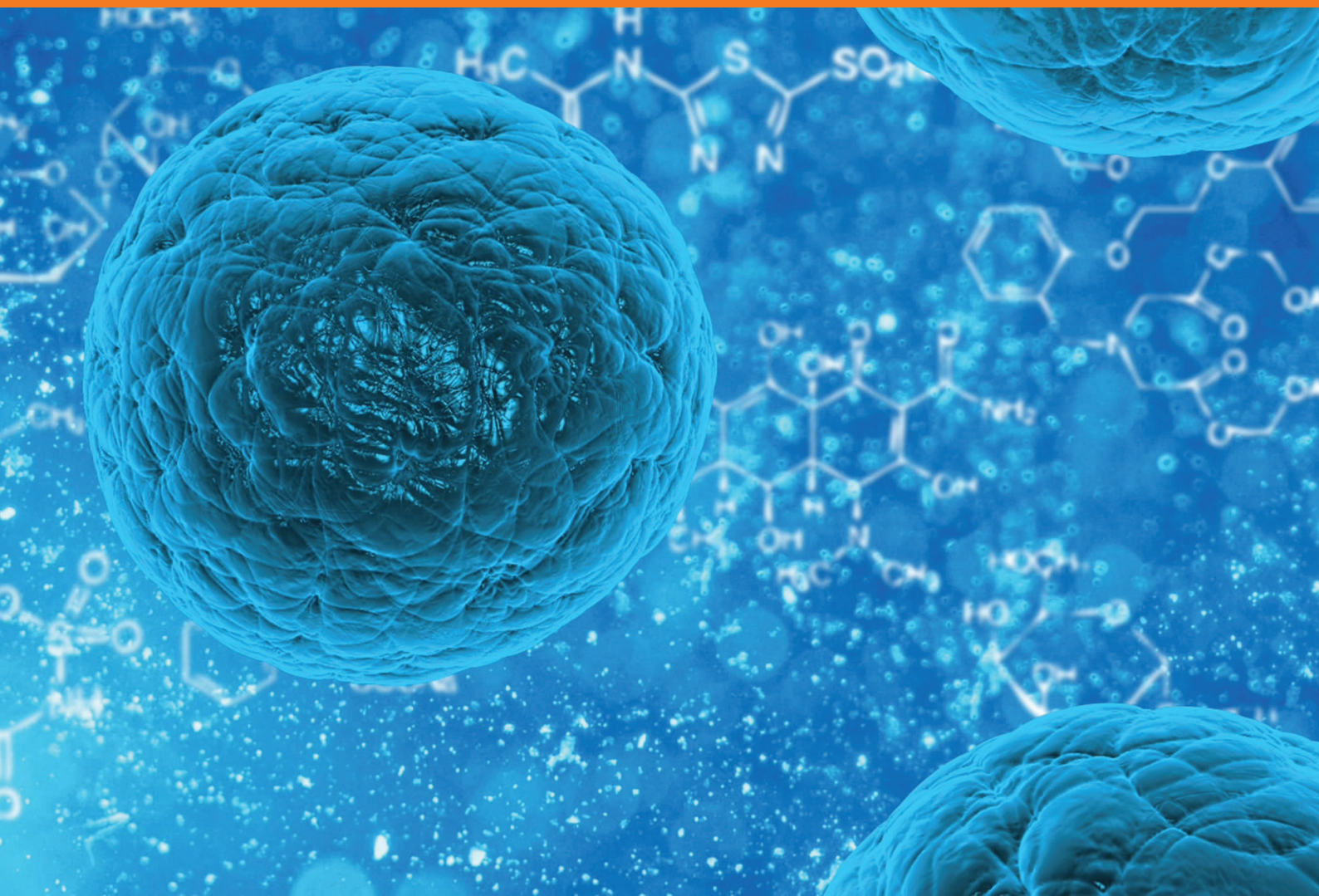
The word “believe” raises difficulty at the interface between religion and science. Many in the scientific and psychological community may agree with Freud’s (1927/1961) assertion that our “reason” should replace the illusory God created to fulfil an infantile need for a powerful father figure, and religion as a necessary restraint on our violent impulses. Some modern writers such as Dawkins (2006) and Hitchens (2009) assert that ‘all

religion is poison’. On the other hand there are religious people whose beliefs provide a way to know life and who are willing to defend them to the point of a martyr’s death. We suggest that Freud’s (1927/1961) vision of “beyond religion” does not do justice to human belief systems and this requires a reformulation of the concept of “belief” so that logical science can be reconciled with contemporary “spirituality”.

Does Religious Belief Poison Everything?

When confronted by ‘existential crises’, humans often find meaning and comfort in what the ancient Greeks called the mythoi – stories that tell us who we are – rather than depend on the logoi – the logical knowledge (Milnes, 2017). These two streams of knowing – the mythoi and the logoi – are used interchangeably in everyday life. Without recourse to the mythoi, humans may be unable to:





- combat script-bondage (Berne, 1972:132), and/or
- the drive to repetition of the old script (de Vleminck, 2008:212).
- They may be unable to:
- find permission to change (Berne, 1972:132) and/or
- find freedom (Freud, 1923/1960:50).

Ultimately humans without recourse to the mythoi may abandon their drive to destiny (de Vleminck, 2008:212).

Common definitions of religious belief are confusing and often lead to an artificial distinction between secular and religious. Armstrong (2009, p. xi), Sløk (1996, pp. 25-28), Buxton (1999), and Peters (2003) have proposed a rapprochement between secular & religious knowing by understanding the two essential, equal, & complementary elements: logoi (plural of logos) and

mythoi (plural of mythos). So, our pathway through life depends on a combination and commitment to both "logoi belief" and "mythoi belief". While the logoi belief engages only the human senses and the mind to bring order to our observations, mythoi 'belief' engages the whole person and is practiced as a 'walk of faith'. Mythoi were something that had happened once but that also happens all the time (Armstrong, 2009:xi). For example, the Exodus from Egypt and the process of Salvation. The facts of the story are secondary to finding its relevance. Complementary religious mythoi in Greek mythology were required to help in living effectively in a confusing world by telling stories about "the more elusive, puzzling, and tragic aspects of the human predicament that lay outside the remit of logoi" (Armstrong, 2009, p. xi). The value of any myth is determined by the action of faith (Campbell, 1949) either in real life or in ritual and ceremony. Often people find it hard to explain how rituals and practices work, but just that, after practice, they

do. For example kneeling as an act of submission and gratitude. In the modern western world, a new form of logos, governed by scientific rationality that is driven by technology and economics has resulted in tremendous human advance but has also attempted to discredit and ignore the mythoi. Religious knowledge has often become theoretical rather than practical and emphasizes beliefs in creeds and dogmas rather than the praxis of faith. The logos-rationalized interpretation of religion has resulted in fundamentalism which has erupted in almost every major faith during the twentieth century (Armstrong, 2000) and the helpfulness of the mythoi has been diminished and ignored in modern western cultures.

Without the action of faith, the mythoi remain abstract and incredible - 'as opaque as a musical score until it is performed' (Sloek, 1989:217) and beyond the limits of reason (Turner, 2004:108-115). The complementary combination of the logos and mythos

can be likened to a violin (Steiner, 1989:217) – the logos describes the instrument, works out the score and fixes the strings; but until it is combined with the mythos to perform its magic of music and transport us to places we cannot adequately describe, the instrument is only mechanical. Eliade (1958:453-455) suggests that the mythoi are a primitive form of psychotherapy that assist the negotiation of the obscure regions of the psyche that profoundly influences thought and behaviour". Ultimately the dry, cold computerized logoi leaves humans in a meaningless existential void that fails to provide a pathway through life's dilemmas. On the other hand, dependence on the mythoi alone leads to a detachment from reality and extremist thinking. It is through our 'belief' or commitment to embark on our own pilgrimage in both logoi and mythoi that we are able to find meaning and purpose in life and also bring about a reconciliation between psychology and our faith.

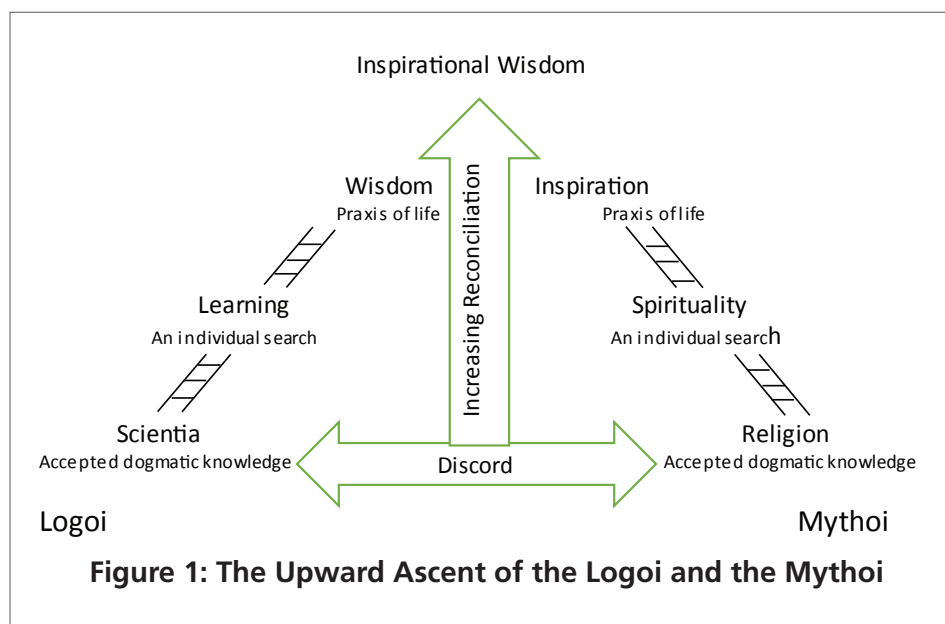
The Individual's Upward Ascent

We have represented the upward ascent of the mythoi and logoi as a series of ladders which are scaled by us in our desire to find meaning. The journey begins in a mythoi "group think tank" of Religion where accepted dogma is transmitted from one individual to the next. Religion should provide structures for the spiritual ascent in a search towards an Inspirational "praxis of life". Similarly, personal quest for logoi knowing begins with the "group think tank" of Scientia where accepted dogma should provide structures to ascend the ladders of Learning towards Wisdom (praxis of life). As humans we are required to scale both the Logoi ladders and the Mythoi ladders. At the level of "Scientia" and "Religion" we shall discover the most profound discord between science and Christianity. However, when we begin to scale the ladders in both mythoi and logoi towards Inspirational Wisdom we are more able to reconcile the two streams together in

a "praxis of life".

- The ladders (virtues) represent structured logoi and mythoi that provide steps for individuals to climb. Climbing ladders requires a methodical step-by-step journey in a solitary process out of an existential void. With each step higher, our fears grow and the feelings of loneliness may be amplified. However, it is only through our individual ascent up the ladders that our logoi and mythoi can be truly integrated.

solutions, and the company of many fellow-travellers. The "snakes" were summarized by Frankl (1945:143) as 'Hedonism, Affluence, and Materialism' that block our search for meaning and are psychologically damaging. Ultimately, they lead to a decision-less, meaningless and hopeless existential void. Our diagram represents immediate gratification, quick and easy solutions as snakes. Life may be materially affluent (Scientia) and yet the existential void remains. This becomes particularly painful during



We are required to be intentional in our upward ascent. Freire (1972:23) proposed that the praxis of life required both action and reflection. The absence of reflection tends toward mindless script-bound activity; and the absence of action can result in fundamentalist "ivory towers" that struggle with ambiguity and may produce theoretical scripts that are unrelated to reality.

Snakes & Ladders

We have represented this as a series of snakes that can attack all stages of the upward ascent and lead us to an Existential Void.

- **The Snakes.** Contrary to the work required to ascend ladders, the snakes (vices) promise immediate gratification, quick and easy

solutions. On the other hand, some adopt a 'nominal religiosity' that partially satiates their desire for life's meaning through occasional church or temple attendance. Content to leave it at that, the sources of inspiration remain undeveloped and the richness of self-discovery is left unattended. Buber (1923/1996) observed that existential void militates against 'I-Thou' relationships (which have their genesis in the 'eternal Thou') and these are substituted with 'I-It' relationships (that reduces others to personal use or pleasure). Life becomes shallow, artificial and rather meaningless where the glow of inspiration and wisdom is dimmed.

Our original diagram now includes the snakes:

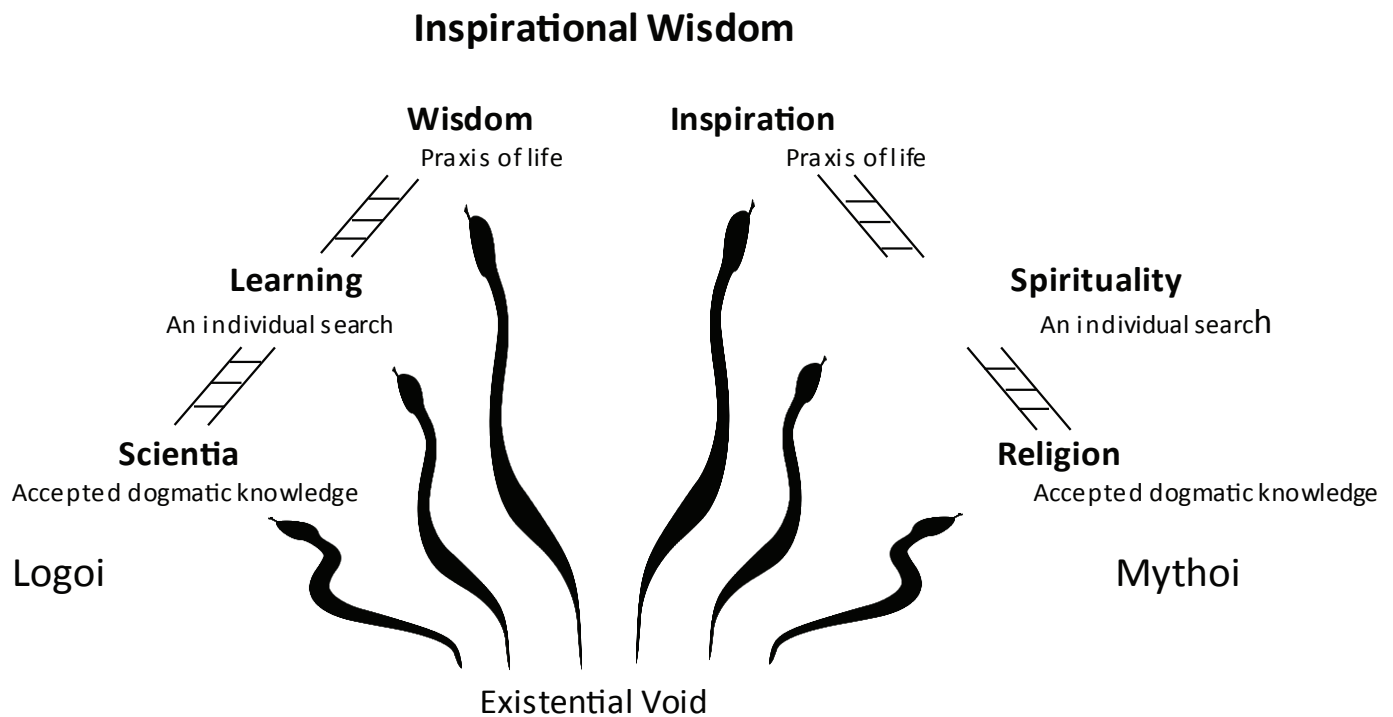


Figure 2: "Snakes & Ladders" of the Upward Ascent

NOTE: The 'snakes and ladders' lead to and from each of the six elements – scientia, learning, wisdom, religion, spirituality and inspiration—with the ladders leading to "inspirational wisdom" while the snakes descend to the "existential void".

The Snakes and Ladders of the Human Quest for Meaning

We will now look at the snakes and ladders of each of the stages of the logoi and mythoi ascent. Given our focus on spirituality, the description of the logoi ascent will be abbreviated to retain a greater analysis on the 'snakes and ladders' of the mythoi. We will give examples from various religions, paths of spirituality, and sources of inspiration:

The logoi ascent:

1. **Scientia.** The ascent begins with the scientia of the material world.

- The ladders include observation, education and investigation that lead to new discoveries. The

scientific method has resulted in an expansion of knowledge and new technologies that increase our comforts in the material world. Scientia provides structures to learning such as statistics and the scientific method. The hard work of discovery is time-consuming, meticulous and demanding but is ultimately very rewarding.

- The snakes represent claims that the material world encompasses everything. This view becomes fixated 'scientia fundamentalism' that eschews any form of mythoi. Even Buddhist claims of compatibility with science (Lopez, 2008) are tempered:

"Modern science does not provide us with the knowledge of what is morally right or wrong, good or bad. When human beings are not concerned with such knowledge (moral), and do not care to pursue the principles of a morally good life, social interaction is not likely to become very different from that among brutes." (Premasiri, 2002).

Without the mythoi of religion, humanity is left in a dry, cold world lacking in ethos and pathos that slides back into a nihilistic existential void.

Authors such as Dawkins (2006) who view 'all religion is poison' fail to recognize that the snake of Scientia fundamentalism can harden their believers into hatred, scorn and persecution that is unwilling to engage in meaningful dialogue and, when taken to its extreme, can result in a totalitarian atheistic state.

2. **Learning** - the ascent of learning allows us to increase understanding of our world, to share information, to learn from mistakes, to make discoveries, and to see the world in a different light.

- The ladder can become increasingly lonely – especially if it takes us into opposition with generally accepted knowledge. Examples include learners such as the Renaissance scientist Galileo who was misunderstood and persecuted because it challenged contemporary thinking.

- The snakes represent the temptation to use learning to harm others, and to gain power by learning. They attack each other in the name of “science”. Another snake could be the temptation of making learning an end within itself. As the ancient father admonished his son:

‘Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body’ (Ecclesiastes 12:12).

Such learning can become futile and ultimately lead to an existential void.

3. **Wisdom** – inspires the individual and can be shared with others for the benefit of humankind.

- The ladder.** Eriksen (1950) suggested that this was the seventh stage of human development that could be experienced to a lesser or greater extent. The ancient proverb suggested that those who find wisdom are ‘blessed’ (Proverbs 3:13). Ibn Gabirol (retrieved 2016), an eleventh century Jewish philosopher saw this as a step-by-step process:

In seeking wisdom, the first step is silence, the second listening, the third remembering, the fourth practicing, the fifth teaching others.

- The snakes** represent the unethical uses of wisdom that become unkind, kept for themselves or their immediate group, and use it to fuel discord.

The Prophet warned against those who were ‘wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight’ and who called ‘evil good, and good evil; substituted darkness for light and light for darkness; and substituted bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter (Isaiah 5:20-21). Inevitably their ‘arrogant wisdom’ leads to the futility of an existential void.

1. The Mythoi Ascent: Religious Ladders & Snakes

Religion provides practical, corporate and social structures that should assist pilgrims on their pathway towards inspiration. Commonly agreed stories are taught, studied and practiced; ceremonies are performed to mark pilgrim progress; rituals are enacted to practice the faith; and meetings are held for mutual encouragement. Using this broad definition, the term ‘religion’ is not confined to groups with holy books, mystical incantations and moral codes. It can just as easily apply to a humanist helping agencies, sporting clubs, nature groups, meditation centres, rationalist societies and even psychotherapy associations – in fact, any form of inspiration that includes a defined journey and the presence of a group of people to encourage progress. Many of the groups do not realize how ‘religious’ they actually are and how fixed their codes have become.

- The ladders. The religious community provides a structure and nurture where inspiration, spirituality and personal growth are emphasized – in other words, they prescribe a ‘ladder’. This fulfils an important role in providing pilgrims with a path towards finding the meaning in life that is so important to mental health.
- The snakes. Instead of helping others, the religious turn their attention to conformity, I-It relationships become the order of the day, spirituality and inspiration are discouraged, and religious leaders /fellow pilgrims discourage true seekers. “False religions” have done untold harm. The following “snakes” are provided as a guide to therapists:

a. Substitution snakes. The religious institution substitutes hedonism, materialism, and affluence for the path of spirituality and the quest for inspiration. Examples of substitution:

- Us versus Them snakes – Stung by the criticism of scientia apologists or taken aback by the claims of an evolutionary world without a creator, some Christians have responded by harsh denunciation of these “opponents”. The result is an unedifying descent into conflict and argument instead of pursuing a spiritual ascent. While there is an important place for apologetics and dialogue with those who may not agree with our beliefs about God, there is a temptation for the “defense of the Gospel” to become a substitute for a spiritual quest.
- Health and Wealth snakes. People are told by their leaders that their faith (and donations) will result in personal wealth – (often called the ‘prosperity gospel’, ‘name and claim’ and ‘faith movement’) – and believers become complicit in the substitution of materialism for their spiritual quest. Appealing to the ‘magical’, the individual is attracted to the easy riches that is only really a religious veneer over the three snakes of hedonism, affluence and materialism.
- Club snakes. The quest for inspiration and the spiritual ladder is secondary and perhaps never begun because the society is more important. The temptation to join the group because of family connections, entertainment, possible partners, friendships and ways of passing time become more important than the spiritual quest. The feelings of belonging restrict religious behaviour to ‘nominal’, disinterested or passive resistant involvement. The club ultimately substitutes their group for the spiritual and inspirational journey.
- Thrill snakes. The emotional thrills, camaraderie, experiences, ‘spiritual highs’ tempt people to go from one religious experience to another in search of the ‘golden pathway’. However, thrills are no substitute for the spiritual ladder on the quest for inspiration. The temptation of

the snake of religious performances is initially directed at the emotional needs of the individual but leads to avoid disillusionment and the existential void.

- v. The Word snakes invites study of the holy books and commentaries to find deeper meaning. The substitution of the word for inspiration is powerful because 'religious knowledge' appears to engage all levels of knowing. The desire for the "Word" satiates the individual by the thinking and learning. The structures from the word are seen as helpful while the individual is lulled into a feeling of peace and comfort. They feel secure because there are others who share the same gnosis (secret truth). When their religion is attacked, their reaction can be increased rationalization and fundamentalism (Armstrong, 2000). The emphasis on interpretation of the Word leads to pilgrims to adopt 'them and us' attitudes around sets of beliefs, conspiracy theories about 'outsiders' and ultimately a caricature of the religion that fails to lift pilgrims from the existential void.
- vi. Stuck in past glory snakes. Sometime back in the past, many pilgrims may have been actively encouraged in their spiritual pathway and quest for inspiration. Now, the glory days are over and those who are left yearn for the past structures – sing the old songs, read the same literature, and perform the same rituals – unconscious that they have actually substituted a group of material objects for progress up the spiritual ladder. Whole religious organizations can become stuck in the conservative 'don't move on' driver on the slide to the existential void. These conservatives fear any new movement forward and become stuck in the past.
- vii. Short-cuts to Inspiration snakes. Instead of travelling the long and lonely path through the spiritual quest or 'mystical ascent', there

is a temptation to adopt 'easy spiritual solutions'. These solutions are offered by others who are quick to make capital selling a 'new approach' where spirituality becomes a superficial and thoughtless gloss that shies away from self-discovery. Their inspiration becomes focused on others and watching what they are doing before slavishly copying them instead of beginning the journey themselves. Eventually, the short-cuts may be exposed by questioning and the resulting disillusion only adds to the existential void already present.

- b. 'Religious City' snakes - This refers to the commercialization and politicization of the spiritual journey so that some are enriched and satisfied at the expense of others. In spite of promising enlightenment to pilgrims, all, including the leaders, are trapped within religious structures that ultimately make spiritual pathways more difficult to find. This has sometimes been summarized as the Three Gs (Glory, Girls, Gold) where leaders have used their positions to gratify their own desires. These examples are not exhaustive or confined to any particular faith. Many of these leaders started out in their spiritual journey with integrity and dedication. However, the three Gs proved to be distractions or 'snakes' that ultimately led them into the existential abyss. It should be pointed out that the majority of religious leaders do maintain integrity in their personal faith journey and provide nurture and support to many followers.
- i. Glory snakes. This refers to the misuse and maintenance of personal power while stripping away the self-determination of others. Religious organizations can be ideal places for 'elders', 'gurus', 'imams', 'swamis', 'priests', 'deacons', or 'pastors' to exert influence over others. Claiming religious authority allows these leaders to impose their will over others so that in some

religious organizations, members may be required to 'submit', 'learn from' or 'be accountable' to leaders up the chain. This is very common in religious cults. For those individuals seeking a parent figure, this creates an ideal circumstance for others to prey upon them with their dangerous injunctions. Some examples include:

~ Stalin was among the original revolutionaries aspiring to create human equality in a Communist state. Eventually he was overcome by his lust for power and glory and created a brutal dictatorship.

~ Ayatollah Khomeini was a champion of Islamic revival (Nasr, 2006:138) and attempted to establish good relations between the Sunnis and Shias. Eventually he went to war against Sunnis in Iraq and also ordered the execution of thousands of political prisoners (Iran Rights Documentation Centre, 2012).

~ Gatekeepers. The temptation to guard the religious organization leads to cover-ups and a 'culture of silence'. Examples include cover-ups for child sexual abusers in Christian denominations (Australian Government Royal Commission, 2017), the Zen teacher Eido Shimano and 90 of his teachers who admitted to sexual assault and endorsing a 'culture of silence' (HuffPost, 17 January 2015), shunning or 'disfellowshipping' for Jehovah's Witnesses leaving the organization (Holden, 2002: 32, 78-79), 'defending the faith' in the Sunni - Shia conflicts (Motadel, 2015) and the Protestant - Catholic division in Northern Ireland (Madden, 2016). The Gatekeepers may even go against their own religious principles to protect their organization.

- ii. Girl snakes. This refers to sexual activity and abuse by leaders upon both genders (even though I have indicated female only) which

is contrary to their own set of principles. These leaders are caught in their personal lust, abandon their own spiritual quest and prey upon their followers. Often they will act out of a Critical Parent ego state by telling followers that they should abstain the very activity in which they are indulging themselves. Some examples include:

~ Pr. Jimmy Swaggart was inspired to lead his flock into personal purity and preached against sex outside of marriage but he ultimately fell prey to temptation with prostitutes. His performance in publicly 'repenting' in tears on television has been met with skepticism – especially when he repeated the activities a few years later after being restored to the ministry (Wheters, 21 June 2013).

~ Swami Premananda established an orphanage and women's shelter but was found guilty of raping many of his followers and also of murder in 1997 (Indian Express, 21 August 1997).

~ "Sixteen Antigay Leaders Exposed as Gay or Bi" (Wilson, 2015) listed religious leaders who preached against homosexuality but were 'caught' being privately gay or bi.

~ Islamic preachers from the Movement for Unification and Reform party arrested for adultery over beach romp (McFadyen and Pallenberg, 2015)

~ Stripping the Gurus - Falk (2009) has outlined many examples of the abuses present in eastern religions that run counter to enlightenment and expose the "abusive human side" of the gurus.

iii. Gold snakes. This refers to the financial gain made by religious leaders at the expense of other pilgrims or those who profit from their 'spiritual' promises. Some examples include:

~ There are many tele-evangelists who have become very rich because of their 'ministry'. Some, such as Pr. Jimmy Bakker who was originally committed to helping the poor in Africa was eventually tempted by his lust for personal wealth which led eventually to a term of imprisonment and abandonment of his spiritual ascent.

~ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi who practiced yoga under the ascetic Guru Dev eschewing materialism and wealth went on to popularize Transcendental Meditation and in the process became "addicted to cash" according to Beatle John Lennon (Daily Mail, 7 February 2007).

2. The Mythoi Ascent – Spirituality Ladders & Snakes

Spirituality describes the individual pathway towards the source of inspiration. Human history shows us that this pathway is solitary and difficult.

Spiritual experience is personal. It cannot be transmitted ... That is why one can find, among the followers of creedal religions, a certain morality, a great amount of theology, but such a little real religion (personal realization of truth) compared to what could be expected.' (Devi, 1939: 24-25)

a. The Spirituality ladders: An example of the 'mystical ascent' has been described by Evelyn Underhill (1961:81) and Raymond Bailey (1987:28) as a summary of the many forms of 'mysticism':

i. Beyond scientia. The first stage of the mystic ascent is a period of seclusion and struggle which results in a trans-sensate experience which opens the door to knowledge that lies beyond the scientia of the material world.

ii. Purgativa. The second stage of

the mystic ascent is self-analysis, purgation and even annihilation from the bonds of materialism and the corrupted self.

iii. Contemptus sui - The third stage of the mystic ascent is joyous detachment or repudiation of the old social world but not as yet, integration with the One.

iv. Timor. The fourth stage of the mystic ascent is the "dark night of the soul" when joy is negated and replaced with a sense of dread – holy fear of the perfect Holy One. Faith then, and not reason, is the door through which one passes into the "dazzling darkness" (Bailey: 1987:106).

v. Amor. The fifth stage of the mystic ascent is out of the valley and onto a plateau or resting place where tranquillity and peace are the rewards of having made contact with one's deepest consciousness. In this passive state, bodily feelings disappeared, memory and imagination are absorbed in God and body.

vi. Teoria. The sixth stage of the mystic ascent is when the social world that was abandoned at the beginning of the quest "is no longer threat but a place where the mystic is free to manifest love by practical involvement". (Bailey, 1987, 28). The mystic searches for a window through which a broader and clearer view of the world may be found - the "real" that lies beneath the surface. The aim is for experience, as opposed to the acquisition of knowledge.

Examples of this 'mystic ascent' is evident in the lives of Old Testament prophets, Jesus Christ, Teresa d'Avila and St John of the Cross (Milnes, 2014) in the 14th century.

b. The Spirituality Snakes

i. Failure to start snake: The fear of the solitary mystical ascent tempts

nominal religious folk to remain in Christian City. By retreating from the spiritual quest, the temptation to find meaning in the snakes of hedonism, affluence, and materialism ultimately lead to the existential void.

- ii. Faith in the ladder snake. The 'spiritual ladder' becomes a means within itself. The pilgrim loses sight of the inspirational calling and faith is placed in the 'spiritual system' where completing tasks, goals and rituals replace attention to the spiritual journey. Instead of experiencing spiritual growth, much psychic energy is expended on the anxiety of keeping all of the rules. Therapists encountering these pilgrims may look for an over-zealous self-criticism or an over-conforming activities that wear out the individual in an onerous system.

- iii. The failure to return snake. The experience of spiritual discovery becomes so important that all else falls by the wayside. Time is passed by attendance at endless conferences and spiritual retreats. Months are taken off work to spend time in contemplation and prayer. Pilgrimages and shrines are methodically visited. Responsibilities to family, friends and employer slip by the wayside. Unlike the 'mystic ascent' where a person returns with Teoria to live life to greater fullness and to see the world with new eyes, these pilgrims are tempted to remain in their personal spiritual process year after year. Therapists should explore whether this is an 'escape hatch' to escape from the pressures of ordinary life.

- iv. The misguided journey snake: In the 14th century, the Discalced Carmelites discarded their shoes in frigid conditions, practised self-harm, ritual-flagellation and subjected themselves to extreme physical privation and poverty. They eschewed marriage and spent their nights in lonely cells before awakening at regular intervals

during the night for prayer. This was supposed to help them with the steps of Purgativa and Contemptus sui to annihilate materialism and see beyond the flesh and the corrupted self to reach for greater enlightenment on their mystic ascent. Nowadays, we may not encounter many of these pilgrims and we would probably take a dim view of the self-harm and self-derogation involved in their spiritual journeys. As therapists, we may be inclined to interpret these practices as a pathological self-hatred. Spiritual pride can be the "payoff" (e.g. Pharisees), religious mania can be adopted by an individual to cover for misdeeds ('the devil made me do it'), a special dispensation ('the Lord told me to'), a delusion ('the end is near - tomorrow'), and protection of the group ('he was one of the enemy') and religious ideas can become entwined with mental instability.

The presence of these 'snakes' on the spiritual ladder should not stop us as therapists from the possibilities of spiritual renewal that may come through the mystical ascent. Healthy spirituality should ultimately be attached to the rational world as the violin is to music. However, there are times when pilgrims need withdrawal from the Hedonism, Affluence, and Materialism (Frankl, 1946) that often surround modern living in order to make progress in their mystical ascent.

3. The Mythoi Ascent – Inspiration Ladders & Snakes

Inspiration: - By definition inspiration comes from outside of ourselves and elicits a visceral personal response.

- a. The Inspiration Ladder: Buber (1923/1996) described inspiration as "an encounter with the Eternal Thou" that informs our 'I-Thou' relationships. Frankl's moment of transcendence was translated into

doing a deed, and encountering another or changing attitude (Marshall & Marshall, 2016). There is no way around it – the Spiritual pathway is slow, painful and lonely. We cannot do it for others and they cannot do it for us. It is a solitary, secret and hidden journey in which the individual strives towards understanding of himself and the Other (God). That is why "spiritual classics" such as Dark Night of the Soul are so riveting and richly rewarding. It is in our solitary journey to encounter the 'Eternal Thou' that we learn to relate to others as I-Thou and where the other person is a subject and that we can minimize our I-It relationships with others who become mere objects of our manipulation (Buber, 1923/1996). In the spiritual pathway, we may discover things about ourselves that are not comfortable or welcome.

- b. The Mythoi Ascent: Inspiration Snakes

The Snakes: Like the source of inspiration, Transactional Analysts need to understand the possibilities of pathology in the spiritual journey:

- i. Quality Analysis: Not all inspiration is good inspiration. While some inspiration can fulfil a very healthy function in our lives, others can be just plain harmful. This is why it is necessary for therapists to analyse the source of the inspiration to ensure that this is a positive place. It is also the reason that religious scholars develop notions of ultimate inspiration beyond underdeveloped notions of deity that may lead to the bloodshed, violence and unhealthy psychological states. Similarly, some pilgrims that are 'radicalized' may not be encouraged to improve their lives but rather to destroy the enemies of the faith. Therapists are encouraged to engage clients in a discussion of the sources of inspiration in a supportive manner while not surrendering their ability to analyse the extent to which

inspiration is related to everyday living and the meaning of life.

- ii. Inspirational Blockages cause people to be unable to relate properly within themselves. In this space it is possible that 'negative' inspiration occurs:
 - Negative Leader Inspiration. A person who has had inadequate view of Self or their own parenting may be drawn towards a Guru or Parent figure as a source of 'inspiration'. 'Radicalised individuals may become so imbued with "should statements" that they lose the ability to understand any other view (fundamentalist). The jihad, crusade and the cause disconnects them from present reality and they fall deeper and deeper under the influence of 'cult leadership'. Ultimately they surrendering their will or decision-making functions to others within the group and suspicious of the 'world outside'. The cult leadership takes on the role of the Parent.

Lifton's (1969) classic outline of "eight methods of thought reform" utilized by "cult leaders" provide insight into the ways that control is obtained over the followers: -

- milieu control (a controlled environment);
- mystical manipulation (the leader claims special powers, authority and wisdom to interpret the world);
- demand of purity (followers are required to behave according to tight "black-and-white" rules and trust the leadership absolutely – no ifs or buts);
- cult of confession (full disclosure of misdemeanours is encouraged with the promise of a return to favour but the content of the confessions can be used later to gain greater control);
- sacred science (the leader/s hold a

specialized gnosis [knowledge of the truth] so that her claims/insights were as true as the Divine);

- loaded language (symbolic language specific to the cult is used to describe spiritual/ material issues);
- doctrine over the person (the leader/s views fully explain all and subjugates opposing or contrary individualized opinion);
- dispensing of existence (obedience to the cultic system promises wholeness and completeness).

By these means the pilgrims lose agency. If and when cult leaders are exposed, the pathway back to the spiritual quest is damaged. Trust in others is broken and the process of shunning leave the pilgrim feeling alone. They may feel a loss of purpose that was found in the cult. They may carry residual but overwhelming fears of punishment promised against outsiders. Regret over time wasted and anger against the abusers may take time to heal. Shame and guilt may result from the realization that they have been complicit in their own thought reform. The greater the loss of agency, the more profound the negative effects when 'coming out'.

- Negative Knowledge Inspiration: A person may be "inspired" by knowledge to the point where any sense of the Ethos and Pathos is lost. The intellectual pursuit becomes an end within itself and obsession with the 'negative inspiration' cause loss of contact with family and friends – common in post graduate students. Unfortunately many people espousing a "rationalist world view" have succumbed to a rather shallow view of inspiration that ultimately leads to the existential void. de Botton's (2010) "Guide for Atheists" suggests that they have 'thrown the baby out with the bathwater because there is much that religion teachers through rituals, ceremonies and teaching techniques to bring life and personal growth.

- Negative Emotional Inspiration centres on the appeal of adventure, purpose, secret knowledge, excitement, miracles and belonging is swept away with romantic notions of fulfilment of personal destiny. Unhappy with their own lot, they find inspiration in the cause. Although their zeal may alienate others, they find comfort in knowing that they are part of a winning crusade – in this life or the next. The feeling of being in the in-group of winners or the promise of an afterlife in paradise leads to an increasing disconnect from previous friends and family.

Reconciling Psychology (Logoi) and Christianity (Mythoi)

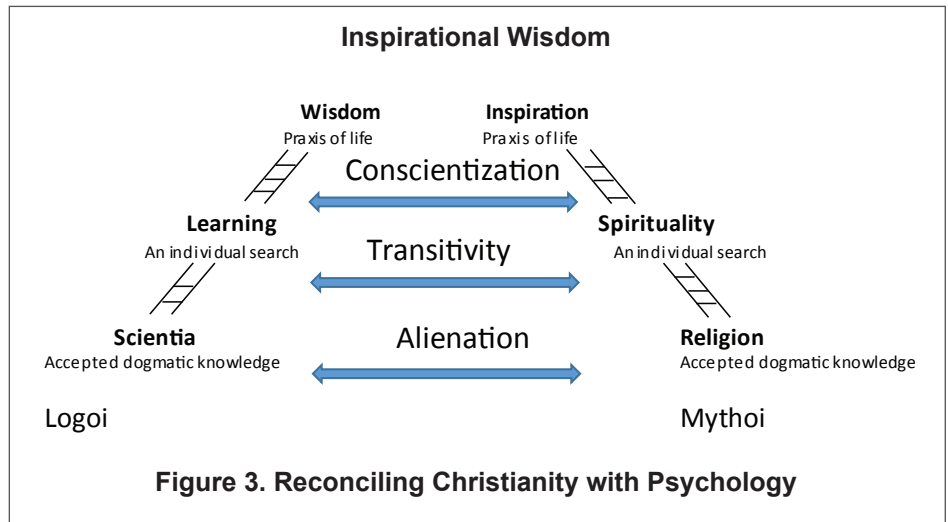
Now that we have examined the snakes and ladders that affect the upward ascent to Inspirational Wisdom, let us analyse in a little more detail the difficulty in reconciling the mythoi with the logoi. As we stated earlier, discord is greater at the lower levels - in particular, reconciling Scientia and religion. We will use Freire's (1972) terms - alienation, transitivity and concientizacao – to describe the three 'bridges' between the logoi and the mythoi:

- Alienation describes the relationship between 'religion' with 'scientia'. Failure to personally embark on the ascent of spirituality and learning means that we become dependent on the human creations of 'accepted' religion and scientia. Because we depend on others, our thoughts do not correspond to our present reality (Freire, 1972:23). This is most obvious when we become stuck in the conflict zone between Scientia and religion. Our language becomes increasingly unreal and the structures designed to assist our upward ascent are ignored. We become stuck in positions where we uncritically accept all the "religious" and "scientific" things that have been selected by other for us to

believe. Without our individual commitment to the upward ascent, our descent into the existential void becomes inevitable.

- Transitivity describes our early attempts to combine 'spirituality' with 'learning'. The beginning of transitivity is 'naïve', fragile and capable of distortion because we may still have the consciousness of the alienated mass. However, but in transitivity we are developing the capacity for learning and spirituality. These phases are difficult and we are still very fragile. In the face of opposition, we may become discouraged and cease our upward ascent. However, our transitivity is necessary precursor to attaining 'inspirational wisdom'.
- Conscientization (Freire, 1972). By combining 'inspiration' with 'wisdom', we become knowing subjects who journey towards 'inspirational wisdom'. This allows us to have a deeper awareness of ourselves, others and our environment and to contribute towards transformation. Our grasp of the logoi can be combined with power of the mythoi so that the separateness of the instrument, musician and music is overcome. Buber (1923) suggested that the encounter with the 'Eternal Thou' transforms previous 'I-It' relationships into 'I-Thou' communion. This is not other-worldly, this is the real world in which we can choose to live. Effective psychotherapy involves the reconciliation of the mythoi with the logoi. Failure to include the mythoi into psychological practice renders the logoi of psychology with little purpose and meaning.

It is our mission to ascend both sets of ladders and avoid the snakes presented in this article. It is by climbing them ourselves that we are able to attain our own inspiration. While we may at times be caught up in lower level conflicts between mythoi and logoi, our ultimate quest is to bring about a reconciliation



of Psychology and Christianity as 'inspirational wisdom'. Many of our clients live affluent, hedonistic and materialistic lives in which they suffer the sadness of an existential void.

Ministry of Reconciliation

We have been given the ministry of reconciliation:

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:16-19 NIV).

Bibliography

Adler, N. (1997). Purpose in Life. Psychosocial workgroup. MacArthur Foundation, New York.

Armstrong, K. (1993) A History of God. Knopf, New York.

Armstrong, K. (2000), The Battle for God. Knopf, New York

Armstrong, K. (2009) The Case for God,

Knopf, New York.

Australian Government (2017) Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, www.childabuseoyalcommission.gov.au

Bailey, R. (1987) Thomas Merton on Mysticism. Image, New York.

Berne, E. (1972) What to you say after you say hello? Corgi, New York.

Buber, M. (1923/1996) I and Thou. (Trans. Ronald Gregor Smith), T&T Clark, Edinburgh

Campbell, J. (1949) The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Costello, S. (2014) An Existential Analysis of Anxiety: Frankl, Kierkegaard, Voegelin. <https://drstephenjcostello.wordpress.com/2014/02/17/an-existential-analysis-of-anxiety-frankl-kierkegaard-voegelin/>

Daily Mail (7 February 2008) Lennon was right. The Giggling Guru was a shameless old fraud. www.dailymail.co.uk.

Dawkins, R. (2006) The God Delusion. Bantam Books. London.

de Botton, A. (2010) Religion for Atheists (Penguin, Middlesex)

Devi, Savitri (1939/ 2016) A Warning to Hindus. www.mourningtheancient.com.hindus.pdf

de Vleming, J. (2008) Tragic Choices: Fate, Oedipus and Beyond. In A.Cools, T.Crombez, R.Siegers & J.Taels (eds) The Locus of Tragedy: Studies in Contemporary Phenomenology. Koninklijke Brill, Leiden., The Netherlands.

Eliade, M. (1958) Patterns in Comparative Religion, University of Nebraska Press, Nebraska.

Erikson, E.H. (1950/1993) Childhood and Society. W. W. Norton & Company, New York.

Falk, Geoffrey. D. (2009) Stripping the Gurus: Sex, Violence, Abuse and Enlightenment. Million Monkeys Press, USA.

Ford, Z. (26 August 2016) The Truth About the Massive New Study That has Captivated Anti-LGBT Groups. [zford@thinkprogress.org](http://thinkprogress.org).

Frankl, V.E. (1945) Man's Search for Meaning, Pocket Books, New York.

Freire, P. (1972) Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Penguin, Middlesex.

Freud, Sigmund (1927/1961) The Future of an Illusion Norton, London.

Freud, S. (1923/1960) The Ego and the Id. Standard Edition 19, London.

Gabirol, Ibn (retrieved 2016) Quotations. www.searchquotes.com/search/Teaching

Hitchens, C. & Tony Jones (6 October 2009) Does Religion Poison Everything? On Big Ideas, ABC National Radio. <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/bigideas/stories>;

Holden, Andrew (2002) Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement. Routledge, London.

Holy Bible, Ecclesiastes 12:12; Isaiah 5:20-21; Proverbs 3:13; John 1:9.

HuffPost, 17 January 2015.

Human Rights Documentation Centre (retrieved 2012) A Faith Denied: The Persecution of the Baha'is of Iran. iranhrdc.org.

Indian Express, Premananda Gets Life Sentence. 21 August 1997

Iran Rights Documentation Center (2012) Reports. www.iranhrdc.org Index 1.html.

James, M. & Jongeward, M. (1972) Born to Win. Addison-Wesley, New York.

Klein, Lifton, R.L. (1969) Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism, W. W. Norton & Co., New York.

Lopez, D.S. (2008) Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed. (University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

MacIntyre, A. (1981) After Virtue. Bloomsbury, London.

Madden, Gerrard (May 31 2016) Defending the Faith, Jacobin: Reason in Revolt. www.jacobinmag.com > 2016/05.

Marshall, M. & Marshall, E. (2012). Logotherapy Revisited: Review of the Tenets of Viktor E. Frankl's Logotherapy. Ottawa Institute of Logotherapy, Ottawa.

Mayer, L.S. (2016) Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological and Social Sciences. The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology and Society Vol. 50. Fall 2016)

McFadyen, Siobhan and Pallenberg, Monika (6 September 2016) Scandal as Islamic Preachers Arrested for Adultery over Beach Romp. www.express.co.uk

Milnes, P. (2017) The Pilgrim Model:

Using Transactional Analysis to Explore the Spiritual Pathway toward Meaning and Knowing, Transactional Analysis Journal. 47(3) 203-217.

Milnes, P. & Milnes, G. (2014) Spirituality and Sexuality in Sixteenth Century Christian Mysticism, CCAA 7th National Conference, Sydney, Australia

Motadel, David (May 23, 2015) 'Defending the Faith' in the Middle East. The New York Times.

Nasr, V. (2006) The Shia Revival, Norton, New York.

Nietzsche, F. (1895/1977) Twilight of the Idols. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Premasiri (2002) Buddhist Ethics, Moral Perfection and Modern Society. Buddhist Publication Society, Newsletter No.49, 200s, Sri Lanka.

Sloek, J. (1996) Devotional Language, (tr. Moussin). Walter de Gruyter, Amsterdam.

Steiner, G. (1967) Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman, Atheneum: New York.

Turner, D.(2004) Faith, Reason and the Existence of God, , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Underhill, E. (1961) Mysticism. Dutton, New York.

Wheters, Bill (21 June 2013) You Tube

Wilson, Erin, F. (2015) Sixteen Antigay Leaders Exposed as Gay or Bi. www.advocate.com/politics

