

**Reconciling Evidence-Based Parenting Programs
with Biblical Perspectives on Child Rearing**

Evelyn R. Pajaron, Ph.D.

The parents' shaping influences and pivotal roles in their children's behavior, character, development, and outcomes have flooded research across multidisciplinary sciences in the past several decades. Books and peer-reviewed journals have recognized parenting, motherhood, and fatherhood as scientific and distinct areas of study (Bornstein 2002; Lamb 1997, 2010; O'Reilly 2011). The multidisciplinary sciences and varied theoretical perspectives show the complexity child-rearing entails and the dire implications when parents fail or are not supported in their God-given roles. In view of these realities, parent education programs have become major endeavors in developed countries to intervene, support, and scaffold families, especially families-at-risk. With the deluge of problem-addressing parenting programs offered by different fields of study, the trend has moved toward evidence-based parenting programs (EBPP) to prove effectiveness that can be replicated. EBPPs are those programs wherein empirical studies using randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have been rigorously evaluated and whose findings of their effectiveness have been peer-reviewed by experts (Cooney et al. 2007, 2).

Theoretical Bases of Parent Education Programs

Parent or Parenting Education (PEd) refers to an organized program that imparts information and skills to parents towards improving parent-child relationships and child development outcomes (Mahoney et al. 1999, 131; Fine 1980, 6). PEd encompasses the core domains of child development, parenting and parent-child relationships, and family. These domains have come up with theories based on substantial observation and research to explain the factors and inter-relatedness of those factors affecting certain as-

pects of a child's or a parent's development, their relationship, or how family members affect one another. These theories try to explain conceptually the factors and inter-relatedness of those factors affecting certain aspects of a child's or a parent's development, their relationship, or how family members affect one another. A brief summary of some major theories relating to parenting and parent education is presented in Table 1. These theoretical perspectives give helpful insights into children's development and parenting that often become the basis for PEd curriculums and programs.

FIELD	THEORY	PERSON	BASIC BELIEFS
Child Development	Psycho-analytic	Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)	A child's behavior is determined by unconscious desires through psychosexual stages of development linked to chronological age (oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital). How parents relate to the child's sexual desires could determine their development and adjustment.
	Maturational-Developmental	Arnold Gesell 1880–1961	A child goes through predictable stages and sequences of growth. The pacing for each child depends on internal factors (genetics, personality, temperament, physical and mental development) and external factors (parenting style, environment, culture, peers). A child's development changes with equilibrium (calm plateau) and disequilibrium (unsettled time of rapid growth and learning). Parents need to give reasonable guidance, not permissiveness nor rigidity (http://study.com/academy/lesson/arnold-gesell-biography-theory-of-child-development.html).
	Psycho-social	Erik Erikson (1902–	A child's identity and self-concept develop in stages (from infancy to adulthood) that need to be mastered at each

		1994)	level to become satisfied and productive members of society. A child needs certain stimulations to master the stages (trust vs. mistrust as infants, autonomy vs. shame and doubt at 0–3 years, initiative vs. guilt at 3–6 years, industry vs. inferiority at 5–12, and ego identity vs. role confusion at 12–18). Problems and developmental delays occur when those stimulations are not present.
	Moral Development	Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987)	A child’s understanding of right and wrong starts from pre-conventional (based on consequences) to conventional (obedience because of love) to post-conventional (moral values based on beliefs or truths that do not change).
	Cognitive-Developmental	Jean Piaget (1896–1990)	A child’s way of thinking develops in stages as he/she interacts with the environment: sensorimotor from birth to 2, preoperational from 2–7 as the child learns mental symbols and language, concrete operational from 7–11 as the child organizes learning more logically, and formal operational from 11 onwards with abstract thinking.
	Ecological Systems	Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917–2005)	Everything in a child and the child’s environment affects how he/she develops in a bidirectional way: microsystem (family, school, church, peers, and health services); mesosystem (referring to connections and interrelations between microsystem components); exosystem (neighbors, social support, mass media, and local politics that affect the child’s development); and macrosystem (cultural values, laws, and customs).

	Faith Development	James W. Fowler III (1940–2015)	A child moves from undifferentiated faith (0–2) where trust and attachment are important; intuitive-projective faith (2–7), where a child responds to stories, images, symbols, and experiences; mythic-literal faith (7–12), where a child accepts the stories of the faith community; synthetic-conventional (12+) where a child adopts a belief system (Fowler and Dell 2006, 34–40).
	Multiple Intelligences	Howard Gardner (1943–)	Not all children learn the same way, as each child’s mind is hardwired differently: mathematical-logical, linguistic, musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and existential.
Parent-Child Relationships	Behavioral	John B. Watson (1878–1958)	Based on classical conditioning, a child’s misbehavior is prevented through set routines, appropriate activities, and maintaining a positive, non-threatening environment. His advice on keeping children independent of adult love and affection drew criticism (Bigelow and Morris 2001, 26–28).
	Attachment	John Bowlby (1907–1990) & Mary Ainsworth (1913–1999)	A child needs to develop a secure attachment with a parent from which to learn, grow, and develop normally.
	Socio-cultural	Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934)	A child learns cognitively through socio-cultural interactions from guided learning within the zone of proximal devel-

			opment (guidance of a more knowledgeable person). The people and environment will influence what and how a child thinks. A child raised in cognitively and linguistically stimulating environments internalizes private speech faster, while low verbal social exchanges result in delays (http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html).
	Cognitive Social Learning	Albert Bandura (1925-)	A child learns through observation or direct instruction, imitation, and modeling in the context of relationships. A child’s behavior improves when good deeds are rewarded, and bad ones are ignored or sanctioned. Thus, a child learns to self-regulate over time (Albert Bandura’s biographical sketch at https://stanford.edu/dept/psychology/bandura/).
	Parenting Styles	Diana B. Baumrind (1927-)	A child’s behavior is directly related to parental attitudes and behavior of responsiveness and demandingness labeled as parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative.
Sources: Holden 2015, 30–61; psychologycharts.com; simplypsychology.org; McDermott 2002.			

Table 1: Major Theoretical Perspectives on Child and Parent

Development, Parent-Child Relationships, and Family

The psychoanalytic approaches to child development (Freud and Erikson) deal with the unconscious and self-concept formation. Behavioral approaches deal with managing the child’s behavior through routines, positive and negative reinforcements, and rewards (Watson). Developmental approaches deal with stages of growth in the cognitive, moral, psychosocial, and faith aspects (Gesell, Piaget, Fowler, and Kohlberg) and the impact of

people and environment on the child's development (Bowlby and Ainsworth, Baumrind, and Bronfenbrenner). Social learning approaches deal with the way children learn in relationships with others, particularly the parents (Vygotsky and Bandura). These basic theories have spawned many more as the scientific studies on fields affecting parenting and childrearing continue.

In contrast to these propositions that capsulize and organize the theorists' studies and observations from the human standpoint, the Bible provides the bigger picture and purpose of life from the perspective of God, who reveals himself and his ways through its pages. God inspired the Scriptures to be "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the [person] of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17 NASB).

Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Childrearing

The Bible is a rich source of wisdom for parents for bringing up children and maintaining harmonious family relationships. It has a few explicit commands for parents and children, as well as implicit lessons that can be derived from stories and from God's model as a "parent" in dealing with his "children." It situates childrearing in the bigger picture and context of God's scheme of things for his creatures and his overall plan for humanity. The theological perspectives and reflections on these biblical commands and principles also give insights that parents can learn from and apply.

Biblical Perspectives

The Bible is God's revelation of himself as creator, sustainer, sovereign ruler, redeemer, and restorer of all of his creation, especially of humanity made in his image (Gen 1–2; Ps 103:19; John 1:1–3; Col 1:15–17; Rev 21:1–7). Creation reflects wisdom, order, beauty, glory, harmony, awesome wonder, and the infinity of its creator (Ps 19:1–6; Rom 1:18–21). Through the Bible, we learn of him, his plan, purposes, and ways in relation to humanity and his creation. Although he is all-powerful, the Bible also tells that he is love and that his love is the basis, standard, and source of our love for others demonstrated in our actions (1 John 4:7–12; 1 Cor 13:4–8a; John 3:16; Rom

5:8). He also is just, righteous, and holy (Deut 32:4; Isa 45:21, 51:8; Jer 9:24). His laws reflect his character and are intended for the protection and for the good of his people (Rom 7:12; Ps 19:7–11). The commandments regulate a person’s relationship with God and with the rest of humanity and are summarized in the word “love” (Exod 20:1–17; Matt 22:36–40). This backdrop sets the basis and motivation to trust and obey God’s commands to parents and children regarding their responsibilities and relationships in the family.

God instituted marriage with the first man and woman, and he gave them the ability to procreate and the responsibility to have dominion as stewards of his creation (Gen 1:27–28, 2:18–25, 4:1–2; Heb 2:6–8). God is personally involved in forming each child in the womb (Ps 139:13–16; Eccl 11:5) and gives them as blessings and gifts from him (Gen 1:28; Ps 127:3–5; 128:3–6). One of the stated purposes of this union is to raise godly offspring (Mal 2:15). The Bible gives a few explicit directions to parents on how to bring this about. Parents are commanded to take God’s statutes, commands, and ordinances to heart and to instruct patiently and intentionally their children and grandchildren about God, his laws, and his ways as life presents itself throughout the day (Deut 6; 11:18–22; Eph 6:4). They are to train and discipline their children (Prov 19:18; 22:6; 23:13–14) without exasperating or embittering them (Col 3:21; Eph 6:4). It is implicit that parents ought to love their children (Titus 2:4; Prov 13:24), provide for their needs (1 Tim 5:8; Matt 7:9–10; Luke 11:11–12), teach them (Deut 4:9, 6:7; Prov 1–9), and show compassion to them (Ps 103:13).

God is shown as displaying paternal and maternal characteristics and ways that serve as models for parents. God disciplines his children for their good (Heb 12:4–11; Prov 3:11–12), gives good gifts generously to them (Matt 7:9–11; Luke 11:11–13; Rom 8:32), and comforts, nurses, and nurtures them (Isa 66:12–13; Hos 11:1–4). God’s dealings with Israel are often portrayed in father-child images (Deut 14:1–2; Jer 3:19; 31:20; Hos 11:1) and show what parenting involves. He loves them (Deut 7:7–8; 23:5), yearns for them (Jer 31:20), feels grief when they sin (Ps 78:40), and gets provoked and feels angry when they continually refuse to obey (Ps 78:21–22, 31). He shows mercy and compassion (Isa 14:1; 30:18), hears their cries for help

and deliverance (Exod 3:7–9), and forgives their sins (Jer 31:34). But he also lets them suffer the consequences of their choices with their repeated failure and refusal to obey (2 Kgs 17:7–8; Ps 78:10–11, 40–42, 56–56; Jer 9:13–16).

In Proverbs 1–9, the kind of conversation occurring between parents and children provides insights. Both parents are involved in the instruction of the child about how to apply God’s ways with wisdom as the child interacts with the world around him or her. They teach, instruct, and extol the ways of wisdom, and they warn about the enticements and dangers the child might face. The father’s (Prov 1–7) and personified wisdom’s (Prov 8–9) manner, attitude, and persuasive words to the son seem to support a preference for persuasion and rhetorical, rather than physical, means of instructing, admonishing, and rebuking the son. Many passages address the wise or foolish use of the mouth and lips (Prov 4:24; 10:6, 11, 32; 12:14; 14:3; 15:2; 16:23). The use of the rod as a form of discipline (Prov 23:13–14; 13:24; 22:15) is set as only one of the many tools in the full range and levels of disciplinary measures shown in the book of Proverbs. William Brown explains, “While the corporal means of discipline is accepted in these sayings, biblical wisdom probes deeply into the rationales and motivations behind such usage with the effect of imposing limits: edification rather than punishment, love rather than hatred motivates acts of discipline” (Brown 2008, 72). Proverbs 22:15 recognizes that “foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child” (NASB) and therefore wise instruction, godly discipline, reproof, training, and correction are needed so as to impart wisdom and develop character (Prov 3:11–12; 13:24; 22:6, 15; Eph 6:4). The child is urged to receive, obey, remember, and keep the parents’ instructions and to honor them (Prov 3:1; 4:10; Eph 6:1). The basis and motivation for heeding the parent’s admonitions are a healthy reverence and awe of God and a desire to please him, not legalistic outward obedience to a set of rules.

The biblical perspective on childrearing centers on God, who gives children as presents whom parents are to steward and raise toward godliness, using the different tools available in their toolkit as shown in Proverbs. God’s parental modeling shows that parenting requires commitment, is demanding and challenging, and carries no guaranteed results as it deals with people who have been given the freewill to make their own choices.

Theological perspectives

A number of notable theologians speak particularly on parental responsibility as a serious calling and duty towards the nurture of children. John Chrysostom (A.D. 347–407), Archbishop of Constantinople, “raises parenthood to cardinal importance in the Christian religion as a moral and ecclesial calling” (Guroian 2001, 77). He speaks strongly against parental neglect of children. He says parents are to teach and instill virtues and godliness in the children so as to “reveal the image of God within them” and increase their likeness to God (Chrysostom 1986, 44, 68–71). Martin Luther (1483–1546), a German Catholic priest who figured in the Protestant Reformation, spoke of parental responsibility as “the highest duty,” that parents will give an account to God, and that they thus “must spare no toil, trouble, or cost in teaching and educating our children to serve God and humanity” (Janzow 1978, 40). He also talked about the critical role the wider community and civil authorities have in the education of children, especially impoverished ones (Strohl 2001, 150–54). He provided his catechisms for parents and the church to use, as he sees children as capable of spiritual learning but also recognizes their sinfulness asserting itself by age seven (Strohl 2001, 144–45).

In the Pietist tradition that influenced Hermann Francke (1663–1726) and Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834), the family was considered “a church within the church,” since “the Christian home was to be a center of worship and Bible study in which children could actually experience the full range of Christian religious affections and come to a living faith in Christ” (DeVries 2001, 333). Francke claims that the primary goal of parents is to lead their children to godliness with an emphasis on reading and studying the Bible (especially the Gospels), living out the Word in their lives, and praying with and for their children (Bunge 2001, 264–70). He explains that only extreme emergencies may require the use of the “rod.” He praises God if it is not used at all and warns against extreme forms of punishment (Bunge 2001, 267). Schleiermacher believes that parents need to devote all their energy and enthusiasm to live out an authentic living

faith and present Christ through the whole manner of life at home and in the godly way they relate to their children (DeVries 2001, 333). He enumerates ways parents could damage children's emotional health: minimizing and not taking the children's concerns and interests seriously, failing to respond empathically to their emotions, parents having mood swings and failing to control their own emotions, and parents attempting to live their dreams through their children (DeVries 2001, 342). Horace Bushnell (1802–1876), an American Congregational Pastor and theologian, also writes much about children's nurture in the faith. He claims that "if the parents live in the Spirit as they ought, they will have the Spirit for the child as truly as for themselves, and the child will be grown, so to speak, in the molds of the Spirit, even from his infancy" (Bushnell 1896, 227–40).

A few theologians theorize about and recognize the different stages of the life cycle in relation to sin, salvation, and accountability in their writings. Augustine proposes six stages: infancy, childhood, puberty, young adulthood, middle age of the *seniores*, and old age, with non-innocence at infancy and increasing accountability as age progresses (Stortz 2001, 83–86). Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), an Italian Dominican priest, sees the human capacity to grow in virtue and wisdom even though tainted with original sin. His developmental stage theory is based on the child's ability to reason and make responsible choices and therefore have accountability: *infantia*, *pueritia* (dawning of rational thought, around age seven), and *adolescencia* (Traina 2001, 112–20). Luther alludes to children's developmental stages in relation to sin as marked with the seven-year crises: a child under seven has not developed real thoughts; at fourteen, the sex drive is awakened, and thereafter, the child becomes aggressive and defiant of authority (Strohl 2001, 144–45). Francke does not categorically mention stages of childhood, but he distinguishes children, *kinder*, being under twelve, and young people, *jugend*, being around twelve to fifteen, with regards to their special needs and difficulties (Bunge 2001, 269). Karl Barth (1886–1968), a very influential twentieth-century Swiss Reformed theologian, addresses children's being more than their nature. He describes children as needy beginners with a "sheer readiness to learn," characterized by play and having "freedom in limitation" (Werpehowski 2001, 392–93). This

theorizing of early theologians on developmental stages and characteristics of children seems to be a precursor to contemporary developmental theories, such as that of theologian James W. Fowler's (1940–2015) faith development from birth to old age.

Early theologians substantially admonish parents for their crucial role in the children's nurture in the faith and development of godly character. They have also pointed out the difficulty of doing so, and some see the role of the church and schools as supporting parents in their endeavor. Some created catechisms for parents to use. A few also proposed theories of the development of children based on their observations, experience, and in response to the issues of their times.

Biblical/Theological Perspectives and Psychology

The use of humanistic theories as bases of PEd programs is a valid concern. The PEd research base expanded in the 1990s because of family breakdown, youth and family violence, and alcohol and drug use, which were problems needing interventions (Karpowitz 2001, 3–11). PEd studies proliferated due to the recognition that children's problematic behaviors previously addressed with therapeutic intervention, institutionalization, or juvenile detention, could be traced back to the parent-child relationship (NREPP 2015, 1–2; Haslam et al. 2016, 2). PEd showed more promise in dealing with children's problematic behavior than just treating the child alone. Some programs on the list of EBPPs have come from Alfred Adler's and Carl Rogers' therapeutic interventions that have developed into prevention parenting programs. So, does one reject these and solely use the Bible and its perspectives on childrearing, integrate the two together, or subordinate the humanistic perspectives to the Bible?

Psychology Today

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines psychology as the science of mind and behavior. Psychology has become a complex field with many branches, depending on the sources and institution, and the field keeps expanding. *MedicalNewsToday* lists the following branches: Clinical (integrates sci-

ence, theory, and practice to understand, predict and relieve maladjustment, disability, and discomfort), cognitive (how people acquire and process information), developmental (human development across the lifespan), evolutionary (how behavior is affected by psychological adjustments during evolution), forensic (applied to criminal investigation and the law), medical (how behavior, biology, and social context affect health and illness), neuropsychology (structure and brain function in relation to behavior and psychological processes), occupational (work performance and organization function), and social (impact of social influences on human behavior) (Nordqvist 2015). One blog lists 32 branches, while the American Psychological Association and Wikipedia have 50+ divisions. There are branches that are considered pure science (which increases understanding of one's world, believed to be ethically neutral), and there are those called applied science (which seek to solve problems regarding human activity) (Gale 2005). Thus, psychology today has become a complex conglomeration of many views and perspectives, some very helpful in understanding people, and others being outright unbiblical in their propositions (e.g., evolutionary, humanistic). Thus, the same question that is raised in using PEd based on humanistic theories is part of the bigger controversy surrounding the use of the Bible and psychology among Christian educators, psychologists, and psychiatrists.

Views on the Use of the Bible and Psychology in Helping People

These arguments and conflicting views have been developed because of a number of issues. First is the use of psychology by Christian psychologists and counselors who use humanistic ideas that leave God out and seek solutions that do not deal with sin. Second is that pastors, Christians, and theologians throughout the centuries before modern psychology counseled people until psychologists and psychiatrists took over. The arguments have developed into a number of views and approaches to the problem.

Non-integrationists: "Sola Scriptura"

The non-integrationists champion the sufficiency of Scripture for all the issues of life (2 Pet 1:3–4) and all categories of problems. This group is also

sometimes labeled as anti-psychology/anti-psychiatry as they view these as psycho-heresy (Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 5–7) or the religion of self-worship rather than a “science” (Vitz 1994, 1–2; Benner 1998, 41–46) because it relies on foolish human wisdom (1 Cor 1:18–25, 2:4–6; 1 Tim 6:20), which is an idolatrous practice (Jer 2:11–13). For them, the Bible alone, backed by God’s power and the Holy Spirit’s work, is sufficient to deal with the real needs and problems of people that can only be met in Christ (Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 10–12). Jay E. Adams, Martin and Deidre Bobgan, and Jim Owen are known advocates of this view. They point out the failure of psychiatry and psychology in truly helping people as the moral dimension and God are excluded in the picture (Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 20–24; Adams 1970, 1–17), whereas Christians have used God’s Word as sufficient for centuries before the advent of these fields (Johnson 2010, 11–14; Benner 1998, 28–34). They sound the alarm on “Christian” psychology heavily influenced by humanistic presuppositions that have invaded churches and seminaries and see this as a threat to biblical Christianity (Owen 2004, 22; Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 7–12; Adams 1979, xi–xii). The Bobgans are “not referring to the entire field of psychological study” but only to that part that deals with “man-made systems of understanding and treatment,” which includes “psychotherapy conducted by psychiatrists, psychologists, marriage and family counselors, and social workers” (Bobgan and Bobgan 2012, 26–27). Adams also does not disregard science and “welcomes it as a useful adjunct” but uses “strictly biblical approaches” to his *nouthetic* (Greek for admonish or instruct) counseling ministry (Adams 1970, xxi). Natural science methods of the hard sciences such as astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology, contributed to this view and were applied to the study of human beings, who possess spiritual and psychological features not found in the natural factual sciences (Johnson 2010, 17).

Integrationists: “All truth is God’s truth”

The integrationists believe that God reveals his truth in his word, the Bible, and in his world, his creation (Murray 2013, 205–206), both of which can be studied and investigated. A number of writers trace the important role

that Christians have had in the development of soul care, education, hospitals, and the natural sciences long before modern psychology and psychiatry came into the picture (Johnson 2010, 10–19; Myers 2010, 50; Entwistle 2015, 40–44; Benner 1998, 35). Modern psychology’s humanistic worldview simply has taken over the field “with its vast output” and its “broad range of topics” (Johnson 2010, 25). Integrationists are dedicated to combining their knowledge of Scripture with their knowledge of human behavior that they observe in real-world settings. There are a number of views on the integrationist camp. The book edited by Eric Johnson, *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views* (2010), describes five different views in this camp and the ongoing dialogue on those views.

The levels-of-explanation approach (LOE) addresses human nature within the biological and scientific framework of psychology, where scientists are able to contribute to the discipline regardless of worldview differences. Its proponents maintain the importance of reality that is a “multi-layered unity” (physical, biological, chemical, psychological, social, philosophical, and theological), each of which has a corresponding discipline of diagnosis and treatment, and studies appropriate for each (Johnson 2010, 33–34; Myers 2010, 51–53). David Myers shows how Christians have benefited from the much research in the social sciences that supports biblical family values and practices (Myers 2010, 62–70). They, in turn, have influenced contemporary psychology in areas of forgiveness, psychology of religion, spirituality, and values in therapy (Johnson 2010, 34). David Myers, Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, Warren Brown, and Malcolm Jeeves, as well as Christian academicians in Christian and secular colleges, are proponents of this view. However, critics say that they give more weight to science and use it as a lens in understanding Scripture (Jones 2010, 83). This perspective presents a truncated approach to the science of the person and does not address the prescriptive aspect of that science (Coe and Hall 2010, 90–95).

The Integration View believes that both the Bible and psychology address in different ways the problems of human nature. In explaining this view, Stanton Jones affirms the Scriptures as authoritative for everything necessary for a full life in Christ (2 Pet 1:3); however, it “does not provide

us all that we need in order to understand human beings fully,” while psychology gives “practical tools for understanding and improving the human condition” (Jones 2010, 101–2, 110–15). In this view, there is a wide spectrum that supplements the biblical teaching with sprinklings of psychology and those that adopt the psychological methods with a sprinkling of prayer and Scripture (Keller 2010, 3). Stanton posits elements of an integrative approach for Christian counselors and psychologists as follows: anchor oneself in biblical truth by being students of the Bible and theology to shape one’s work; commit to the highest scientific standards and in rational argumentation of one’s scientific work; pay attention to the tension between biblical and scientific data where substantive issues may require a clear stand for biblical truth; seek to conduct one’s profession shaped first and foremost by Christian convictions; and be tentative, patient and humble toward improved understanding (Jones 2010, 116–17). Many Christian counselors and authors and most Christian schools that offer counseling graduate programs embrace the integration view. Bruce Narramore, James Dobson, Henry Cloud, and John Townsend, Minirth and Meier, Gary Collins, Stanton Jones, Mark McMinn, and Steve Sandage are some of those belonging in this category, together with the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS) and the American Association of Christian Counselors (Johnson 2010, 34–35). Critics, however, say that this approach lacks a clear methodology of integration (Coe and Hall 2010, 137–38), a “Christianized” version of psychology that has science as its starting point (Roberts 2010, 134–35), and this approach zeroes in on the usefulness of science but does not address the fatal flaw of psychotherapies’ view of reality and how people change (Powlison 2010, 143–46).

The next approach is the Christian psychology approach. It traces its roots to the Bible as a rich source of deep psychological thought for Christians since the early church. The Society for Christian Psychology exists to promote the development of distinctly Christian psychology (including theory, research, and practice) that is based on a Christian understanding of human nature” (christianpsych.org). It seeks to retrieve Christian psychology from Scripture and the understanding of the person from Christian

historical tradition and aims to develop a psychological theory that is distinctively Christian (Roberts and Watson 2010, 174–75). Basically, these psychologists fall somewhere between an integration approach and a biblical counseling approach since there is the willingness to use certain psychological terms and techniques (Keller 2010, 3). This model is often criticized because there is no real practical application for this view as to how to construct a complete psychology from Scriptures and Christian tradition alone (Jones 2010, 185). Larry Crabb, Dan Allender, Neil Anderson Tremper Longman III are named as belonging to this view (Johnson 2010, 37)

The fourth view is the transformational psychology approach put forth by John Coe, a theologian, and Todd Hall, a psychologist. Instead of trying to integrate two things, the Bible and psychology, they argue for a spiritual formation approach to psychology and theology, starting with a spiritually transformed psychologist doing the process, method, and product afresh in the Spirit (Coe and Hall 2010, 200–201, 212–16). The Christian psychologist starts with the basic tenets of faith as ontological realities and legitimate data of science, then considers all relevant material—Scriptures, creation, existing psychological/scientific/theological reflections, and theories—to come up with a unified new kind of psychology (Coe and Hall 2010, 204–207). In this view, psychology is a descriptive and prescriptive process of investigation for the purpose of changing people, and it looks to soul care as a primary point of practice (Coe and Hall 2010, 220–25). Critics of this view call this goal too ambitious, lacking concrete examples and realistic application in the field, and so they question some of its assumptions and assertions (Myers 2010, 227–29; Jones 2010, 230–34; Powlison 2010, 242–44).

The Biblical Counseling view, the continuation of Jay Adam’s nouthetic counseling with some distinct difference, sees counseling as a theological discipline (Powlison 2010, 1–3; Jones 2010, 276). David Powlison states that the Christian faith *is* a psychology and Christian ministry *is* a psychotherapy (Powlison 2010, 245). He proposes a model that is focused primarily on the place of Scripture and theology and the manner in which biblical principles can be involved in the care of individuals in a therapeutic/counseling

setting (Powlison 2010, 257–58). Some of the positive claims of the proponents of this view are that they have: (1) rebuilt biblical counseling on biblical presuppositions resulting in more biblical aims and methods; (2) reclaimed pastoral care usurped by secular counseling; (3) provided theological and practical resources for the church and trained Christians to use the Bible to address a vast range of problems; and (4) emphasized the necessity of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the Christian community to effect long term transformations (Murray 2013, 204–205). Critics say Powlison’s psychology has no clear definition (Myers 2010, 273–75) and offers no style of counseling for non-Christians.

In summary, the non-integrationists want to do away with modern psychology and strictly use the Bible alone as sufficient to counsel people, while the integrationists have varied perspectives in a continuum on how to go about the integration process. There are those who want to impact modern psychology with academic excellence incorporating biblical values and ideals (LOE), while others want to create a Christian psychology with Christian terminology and thinking (Christian, Biblical, Transformational), or take what both offer and use them in one’s practice (integration view). The integration and LOE use the academic definition of psychology, while the others give it different or hazy meanings. Some of the good things being advocated by these views are:

1. Be a good and astute student of the Bible and historical Christian tradition, as well as the sciences and their historical and theoretical foundations to understand the issues and make educated valuations.
2. Consider the perspectives and merits of the different viewpoints and yet have a critical eye to see the weaknesses.

As Eric Johnson puts it, “It would be a serious mistake to assume that there is only one correct position among the five such that the others are wholly in error” (Johnson 2010, 292).

Implications for Transformative Filipino Parenting Education

What is the bearing of all these views on the Transformative Filipino Parenting Education (TFPEd) program our team seeks to implement among parents in low SES communities? The TFPEd will not make use of the lessons based on the humanistic theories but will only learn from the strengths and weaknesses of the PEd programs and processes in order to guide the processes towards evidence-based practice. Since parenting is culture-based, issues confronting Filipino cultural ways and beliefs in parenting need to be addressed. The Philippine population is composed of 80.6% Roman Catholics, 3.2% Evangelical and Bible-believing Christians, and at least 4.8% Bible-using religious groups (Philippine Statistics Authority 2015, 28). The high level of spirituality (personal relationship with God) and its religious expression (public rituals and *fiestas*) are evident not only among adults but also among the youth aged 18–25 years old (Batara 2015, 9–11; Cornelio 2016, 59) and among children (Pajaron 2013, 33–34). Because of this, the Filipino PEd has more affinity with pieces of evidence from the burgeoning field of faith-based parenting program studies, where religion is an independent variable affecting family relationships and functioning (Vermeer 2014, 405–407) than with humanistic EBPPs that dominate the field. The biblical and theological perspectives on childrearing will become the appropriate foundation for the TFPEd program because of the strong cultural trait of being *maka-Diyos* (Godward) that permeates the Filipino psyche. Moreover, parenting is a very difficult and challenging responsibility considering the multi-faceted needs and multi-dimensional aspects of children's development. The parents' own stresses, struggles, and family circumstances with which they have to deal compound the difficulty level even more. Teaching parents information and skills without dealing with the thoughts, motivations, and intents of the heart may lead to temporary behavior change but may not last for the long haul. Transformation, a change of heart and mind that results in a change in actions, is brought about by establishing a personal relationship with God and by being empowered by the Holy Spirit. These are essential to being able to love unconditionally and give sacrificially for the benefit of others (2 Cor 5:17–19; 1 John 4:10–19; Eph 5:18–6:4). The internal transformation as a result of the

Triune God's work in the lives of the parents is sought while facilitating transformative learning approaches, strategies, and experiences in the TFPEd program.

Using the biblical framework, however, does not discount the helpful contribution of the wisdom that has been gained from years of studying children and parent-child relationships that give flesh to principles found in Scriptures. Feminist theologian Bonnie Miller-McLemore gives an engaging discussion on the merits of Psychology in helping understand and sympathize with children and their needs, yet also points out its lack of moral and religious understanding of the complicated nature of children "and the ambiguities of parenting" (Miller-McLemore 2003, 51). Parents are to attend to the child's development in all domains (physical, intellectual, socio-emotional, spiritual, moral) as exemplified by Jesus (Luke 2:52). The developmental theories of Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, Fowler, and Gardner could serve as guides on parenting practices according to the children's ages and stages. The book of Deuteronomy gives prominent attention to way-of-life teaching and sensorial experiences that arouse children's curiosity and facilitate their learning, which is advocated by Albert Bandura's cognitive social learning and Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural models. The importance of family embedded in a nurturing faith community and nation is identified in the Scriptures as essential to the child's growth in faith. This biblical perspective justifies Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, where the wider environment exerts an influence on the child and vice versa. The findings in neuroscience on the rapid development of the child's brain in the early years would caution Filipino parents to avoid false assumptions that children have no sense until four years old and instead lay a good foundation of interaction and habits (Prov 22:6) starting from infancy. In other words, we make use of academic research and scientific findings that somehow affirm and complement biblical principles and design to become more effective in helping parents understand their children.

Bible scholars and theologians continue to mine Scripture for fresh perspectives on children and childhood, while psychologists, educators, and scientists continue to write books and peer-reviewed journals on their findings on motherhood, fatherhood, and parent education. As encouraged by

the different approaches, we strive to be experts on children and parenting and hone our biblical framework in the field of actual parent education and parenting experiences. Using a Bible-based parenting program that strives to be transformative and evidence-based and satisfies the standards of the secular world, which we are trying to reach and impact, is a move to fill a great need in our society. We echo P. J. Watson:

The work of Christians in the social sciences, therefore, is to use scientific methods to intrusively and explicitly promote biblical perspectives on what persons and cultures should be. Scientific methods include qualitative and quantitative forms of analysis that Christians can use to transform the world in ways that are compatible with a biblical worldview. (2010, 283)

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