



Dennis K. Gregory

On The Future Of Scripture

Throughout history up to the present day, Christians, Jews and Muslims, through nation states, have been justifying violence and other un-Godlike behaviors from *their* interpretation of Scripture; marching our world swiftly towards the precipice and into the abyss; acting, in my humble opinion, precisely in accordance to the dictates of Lucifer and his doomed family of wretched and ungrateful spirits. Since all people of faith, me included of course, believe that the Word of God is true, what can be done to the interpretation of Scripture that can end this impious madness emanating from all the major religions?

What about our own interpretation of Scripture and how we see our own faith in general? What is the reason why many intelligent and God loving people refuse to call themselves religious; and settle on the word 'spiritual' instead?

There is little doubt that the interpretation of Scripture by an individual who has faith has tremendous impact on many, and sometimes all, of the activities he or she will do in their lifetime. There is a clear continuum of this impact on all people of faith that ranges from denial to un-interest to ambivalence to curiosity to moderate/complete acceptance and finally to extreme life threatening passion. The global news of the day is highly likely to contain stories of persons acting somewhere along this continuum; with the headlines usually reflecting the far right end. This research will look into the question of the potential connection between how one interprets Scripture and the psychology and behavior of that person to see if there exists a correlation that can be used as a predictive factor in determining their future actions and explaining past behaviors. It will also attempt to bring forth modern insights into the more general question of the growing connection between religion and the social sciences.

The Literature Review

William Hurlbut and Paul Kalanithi (Hurlbut and Kalanithi 2001) of Stanford University tell us that evolutionary psychology and Christian theology once had serious irreconcilable differences of opinion. They attribute those differences to a faulty methodology of evolutionary psychology that refused to accept the possibility of transcendence, thus turning morality into mere functionality. Their basis is that there is evidence of increases in freedom, mind and moral awareness in humans throughout history, which in turn created a higher level of interdependence, which in turn created and made possible, the need for moral behavior. Their example of the theological equivalence of this is the revelation of love, in the natural order, by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. This thinking helps create the foundation for a connection between Scripture and psychology.

In 1950 Dr. Gordon W. Allport (Allport 1967) discusses how the positions of sex and religion have reversed since the Victorian era. As an example, he talks about the writings of William James when, in barely two pages, he talked about the role of sex in human life, which he referred to as the 'instinct of love'. Yet he felt free to use his immense genius to devote to his unparalleled work: 'The Varieties of Religious Experience'. In contrast, today psychologists write at incredible lengths about sex in human lives with the fervor of Freud or Kinsey and become seemingly uninterested and silent when confronted about religious passions even though such passions, like those of sex, are of universal interest to the human race. He ends by addressing the question why the cure of souls are moving more and more away from the churches and into the hands of psychiatrists; specifically through the use of psychotherapy.

Dr. Peter Hill, (Hill 2005) suggests that today, there are many signs that religion and religious claims in general have been given more weight within the scientific community than in past decades. Theologian Paul Tisch often describes himself as 'living on the boundary'. He further describes this as living between philosophy and theology, essence and existence, the findings of science and of theological revelation. There are many Christian professionals who also consider themselves as being in that same unique position as Tisch, inasmuch as they have the professional ability of analyzing their faith from a scientific perspective and their science from a faith perspective. Cognitive Experiential Self Theory (CEST) is a recognized example of how Christian thinking provides greater understanding of an emerging psychological theory, thereby demonstrating explanatory power and providing Scripture a more authoritative position within the scientific community. (Hill2005).

Treating Scripture as a science is not new. There is a well recognized scientific method of interpreting Scripture called hermeneutics that dates back at least to the ancient Jewish cultures. Corley, Lemke & Lovejoy (2002) tell us that issues with interpreting the Bible have been in the Christian faith from the very beginning with Jesus' confrontations with the Pharisees; when he once chided them saying "**Are you not in error because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God?**" (Mark Ch12 V24 NIV)

Closely associated with the word hermeneutics is exegesis. They both appear in other scientific disciplines but are used almost exclusively in the arena of theology. The specific skills of interpretation taught in Greco-Roman education have shaped the modern meaning of both terms. In today's meaning, both nouns refer to an 'explanation, interpretation or meaning of a text'. In addition, modern theory of communication involves an author who creates (encodes), a text and a reader who interprets (decodes) a text. Consequently, the process used to discover the meaning of a written document, in our case Scripture, has three basic facets; the author, the text and the reader. A satisfactory model for hermeneutics or exegesis should therefore take into account the 'triad' between biblical author, the scriptural text and the modern reader. (Corley, Lemke & Lovejoy 2002)

If indeed God is the author of all truth, as evangelicals and other religious groups are quick to claim, a good religious epistemology should be open to every legitimate source of knowledge. While Scripture will still be given final and ultimate authority in matters of faith, and practice directly relating to that faith; i.e. moral behavior, it does not follow that other sources of knowledge are not helpful; they may in fact even be *necessary*. From this logic, psychology can provide insight into theology. (Hill 2005)

Gary Collins and H. Newton Malony (Collins & Malony 1981) also discuss the long and contentious history between Christian theology and psychology. They point to Sigmund Freud, who wrote volumes on the subject of religion, where he once said that religion is a sort of universal illusion, a neurosis of humanity that should be replaced by science. Freud, being such a well respected scientist, caused several American psychologists to begin to use their skills to study religion from a scientific perspective. Clinical psychologist Paul Pruyser (Pruyser 1973) expounds on Freud's contribution to the psychology of religion where he concluded that the purpose of religion was remedial, rescuing and auto-therapeutic. He however warned that these clinical truths should not be elevated to an ontological level inasmuch as they could not be used to explain the existence of anything. Freud also claimed that faith, whatever solace it gives to an individual, presents that individual with intellectual difficulties because it creates cognitive oscillations between faith and doubt.

Add to this, Bruce Demarest and Gordon Lewis (Demarest & Lewis 1987) claim that evangelicals all over the world need a new paradigm in thinking that will take them into the future so that their faith can be maintained in an increasingly complex and ever advancing world. They term this new paradigm integrative theology. It is a very well defined six phase methodology that begins with the identification of the problem and ends with the applicability to specific life circumstances. It is then used by a researcher directly to interpret and analyze Scripture; with the only requirement being that the researcher be illumined with the Holy Spirit.

Another historical perspective on the contentious relationship between theology and psychology is given by James Leuba (Leuba1912) who points out that at the beginning of the last century, advancements in science and philosophy tried to convince the most knowledgeable theologians that those disciplines were the enemies, not the allies, of religion. These efforts served to energize the movement that theology was completely independent from science even though they realized that from the theologian's perspective, such conclusions, even if they had succeeded, would be totally indifferent to them. Equally interesting is that during that time, theologians appeared just as threatened as the scientists, and claimed that Christian theology was incompetent to enter into a direct or even an indirect proof of Christian revelations by seeking to show that it is in harmony with some kind of philosophy or scientific and secular view of the world.

In keeping in line with this thinking, we have Roland Robertson, (Robertson 1991) who discusses the relationship between religion and world system theory. Developed initially in 1974 by Immanuel Wallerstein, world system theory is a macro-sociological reality that seeks to explain the dynamics of the capitalist world economy as a total world social system. It focuses on development and unequal opportunities across nations and as such has found favor within academic circles around the world. Within this relatively new theory, religion is seen as epiphenomenal; an unfortunate nuisance that somehow must be addressed even though they believe it to be insignificant within their construct.

As an additional insight into the potential connection between Scripture interpretation and psychology, we have Professor Linton (Linton, n.d.) telling us that the Bible, as well as literature in general, is replete with literary style. He discusses the nature of style as it relates to content. He emphasizes that style gives literary structure, i.e., grammar, syntax and morphology, a breath of life. Several examples are used to see the impact on the reader that style has in Scripture with the intent to show that since style is a fusion of content and individuality, and that since no two individuals are the same, no two styles will be the same.

He concludes by stating from Kenneth Burke, who once wrote that style in literature, what he referred to as form, which of course includes Scripture, is an arousing and fulfillment of

our desires. He claims that while the body can get tired and the brain weary, the aesthetic capability never tires. The more it is used, the more it expands. Herein lays another connection between Scripture interpretation and the social sciences of psychology and psychiatry. (Linton n.d.)

In underscoring the importance and powerful implications of Scripture interpretation and the effect it has on the individual, we have John Shelby Spong (Spong 2005) telling us that the Bible is a mysterious book that has strange powers. He reminds us that Osama bin Laden invoked God when he directed his hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as President George W. Bush invoking God when he ordered missile attacks in Iraq. In addition we have Hamed Faleh Abu Hejleh, in a last letter to his family prior to being a deliverer of a suicide bomb writing, "I conclude by saying that we shall meet soon, God willing, in a paradise prepared for those who fear the Lord, the size of which spans heaven and earth. Lastly, praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds". (Hafez 2006)

Wayne G. Rollins and D. Andrew Kille (Rollins & Kille 2007) give several examples connecting Scripture to behavioral psychology. They first claim that there is general agreement between the Bible and behavioral psychology on the importance of environmental influence. In the Old Testament, the Bible issues several warnings to the Israelites about becoming contaminated by Pagan influence. (Deuteronomy Ch8 V9) The authors claim that the Bible affirms the connection to outside influence and our external behavior. They view this as a link to contingency management within behavioral theory as they both claim behavior as important. In addition, almost all behaviorists, as well as most scientists in general, believe that the most reliable data is observable data. They see this position as fully supported in the Bible in James Ch2 V 18 where it says that "I will show you my faith by my works". Also when Jesus says in Matthew Ch 7 V 17; "**You shall know them by their fruits**".

They also see integration between Scripture and psychology in the area of eschatology; which is the Biblical doctrine of the last things, such as the final judgment, the second coming and the end of times. With respect to these doctrines, Scripture spells out the ultimate rewards for mankind. These rewards not only provide incentive for righteous behavior, but for conversion, repentance and atonement. In the secular equivalence, the psychological behavioral principles of positive reinforcement contain goals, expectations and rewards.

Sam Harris (Harris 2004) uses principles of neuroscience to come to his conclusions as to what is wrong with religious interpretations today. For him, beliefs and actions are flip sides of the same coin. He points out that there are very clear scientific connections between how one behaves and what one believes in that could be found (although we haven't progressed to that level of specificity just yet) within very distinct neural connections in our brains. This has led

him to the ominous conclusion that unless religions begin to accept and adopt other valid sources of knowledge, like psychology and neuroscience, this world is headed for the abyss.

Finally, we have actual work being done in making the connections between Scripture interpretation and psychology. Authors Chad Barrett and Scott Roesch (Barrett and Roesch 2009) used the established personality measure known as the Five Factor Method or FFM, to determine a possible correlation between three defined types of religious orientation and personality type. The three types used are Intrinsic, Extrinsic and Quest religious orientations. Their quantitative study concluded that FFM correlations were generally no to medium. These findings were in agreement with the 1999 studies of Piedmont, Kosek and Taylor & MacDonald. Of interest is that within the data, there was a strong association between individuals with high intrinsic orientation, meaning a high degree of internalizing and seeing religion in all parts of their lives, and altruistic behavior. The remainder of the statistically significant correlations of this study were not entirely consistent with the other studies mentioned and are therefore not yet worthy of consideration for our purposes.

As has been shown, the connection between Scripture interpretation and psychology is clearly gaining momentum within scientific circles in spite of the contentious relationship between the two in the past. The end game will be to achieve that quantitative level of specificity that links beliefs to actions and actions to beliefs, as discussed by Sam Harris (Harris 2004). This is equivalent to saying that there exists a quantifiable factor within ones psychological and personality profile that can be a predictor of actions to beliefs and vice versa; which is the solution to our research question.

There are already several successfully tested and adopted for wide use personality indicators such as the Myers, Briggs Indicator and the Kiersey Temperament Sorter that have very granular approaches and definitions to why humans behave the way they do. I believe that these well thought through psychological constructs pave the way for a future connection between Scripture and psychology. It is being suggested from this research that those types of work puts us well on the way to developing a successful model to be applied to Scripture interpretation, religious beliefs and their associated behaviors. Once this is established, and I believe that it is just a matter of time, acceptance from many high profile theologians and those social science professionals 'living on the edge' of science and religion will surely follow. This will permit the data to be understood as to how it directly ties in with Scripture.

Since it would be, thank God, an unmitigated statement of pure insanity for someone to claim that they understand ALL truth, the ultimate purpose of this research is for Pastors, Rabbis, Clerics, psychologists and theologians in general to start preaching more knowledge

inclusive interpretations of Scripture to congregations around the world with the intent of promoting a more peaceful, loving and God-like global society.

Annotated Sources

Allport, G. W. (1967). *The individual and his religion: A psychological interpretation* (7th ed.). New York: The Macmillan Company.

The audience for this book would be college students, theologians, psychologists, psychiatrists, historians, and anyone interested in exploring the recent history of the roots of human behavior from a religious perspective.

Speaking from 1950, the author lets us know that over the past 50 years, the positions of sex and religion have been reversed. For example, William James wrote barely two pages on the role of sex in human life, which he referred to as the 'instinct of love'. Yet his immense genius, without any public taboo, was devoted to his unparalleled work: 'The Varieties of Religious Experience'. Today, psychologists write with the fervor of Freud or Kinsey about the sexual passions of mankind, but seem to go into hiding and become silent when religious passions are presented to them; even though religion, like sex, is of universal interest to the human race.

The author tells us that literate people around the world are growing more and more concerned with the relation between religion and psychology. He claims that while the majority subscribe to the basic tenets of a particular historic faith, they find that they hold onto that faith with many mental reservations. They ask the question of why doubts steadily haunt them. Of more importance, they say that while they still 'feel' religious, the regulative principles for their behavior are coming less and less from their faiths and more and more from psychology, psychiatry and mental hygiene.

When we study religion, the author claims, we are dealing with neither rationality nor irrationality, but rather an indistinguishable blend of reason and emotion. In other words, while immersed the study of religion itself, we are wholly engaged in a posture of the mind where logical thinking and emotions fuse; a pure holism, so to speak. In all other pursuits, like art, science, history, mathematics, language, sports, etc. the separateness of logic and emotion, while oscillating at times, is clear.

Finally, the author discusses the relationship between religion and psychiatry; specifically psychotherapy. He addresses the question of why the cure of souls is gravitating more and more away from the church and into the hands of psychiatrists. According to him, there are several reasons:

1. People prefer to look for physical causes for their difficulties, and the psychiatrist being a man or woman of science, may find such a cause. If he or she does, the patient is spared the pain of facing up to the realities of their inner lives. After all, a physical cause it is far less disturbing than discovering a cause in one's character.

2. The patient fears that their pastor will not sense the possible physical basis for their troubles, but will instead confuse the mental, physical and moral aspects of their lives in a way that will be humiliating to them. The pastor may, at the most inappropriate times, preach, pray or pass moral judgments.
3. The enormous prestige of modern science elevates the psychiatrist so the patient sees real hope in him or her. They feel that the psychiatrist keeps up to date with all the modern advancements of science with new discoveries about the human mind.
4. The patient knows the united front presented by science as opposed to the fractured, contentious and divided sects of religion.

Gordon W. Allport was born November 11, 1897 in Montezuma, Indiana, U.S. died October 9, 1967, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He earned his A.B. degree in 1919 in Philosophy and Economics (not psychology). He traveled to Robert College in Istanbul, Turkey, where he taught Economics and Philosophy for a year, before returning to Harvard to pursue his Ph.D. in Psychology on fellowship in 1920). His first publication, "Personality Traits: Their Classification and Measurement" in 1921, was co-authored with his older brother, Floyd Henry Allport, who became an important social psychologist. Allport earned his Master's degree in 1921, studying under Herbert S. Langfeld, and then his Ph.D. in 1922 working with Hugo Münsterber.

This book has clear and direct relevance to the research question of the potential connection between Scripture interpretation and the social sciences of psychology and psychiatry. Written over 50 years ago the information is not very current but still is in synch with the more current thinking on this subject.

Barrett, C. E., & Roesch, S. C. (2009). Evaluating the relationship between the five factor model of personality and religious orientation. *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 28(3), 195-199.

The audience for this journal article would be college students, statisticians, theologians, psychologists, psychiatrists and anyone interested in looking to see if there is a relationship between individual personality and religious orientation that can be expressed quantitatively.

The authors begin by telling us that since the reemergence of the psychology of religion, there have been many serious attempts to measure various religious constructs. Some believe that this new effort is just a 'religification' of already established personality constructs thus becoming in reality somewhat redundant in their work and conclusions.

Nevertheless, using well established statistical tools and measures, this article is used to show how religious scales relate to the already established measure of personality of the Five Factor Model; hereafter referred to as FFM. They quickly point out that in this FFM personality

model, religiosity does not assume any genetic component, but points to a rather broad based motivational domain or a more general individual difference variable that can explain behavior.

The approach used here to measure ones religiosity distinguishes between intrinsic, extrinsic and quest religious orientations. The intrinsically-oriented person internalizes their religion, sees it as utilitarian in nature and thus uses it as a self serving motives for religious beliefs and practices; incorporating their religious beliefs into all parts of their lives. The extrinsically-oriented person does not have the same internalization of religious faith and has a more casual and utilitarian approach to religion. They are more concerned with the benefits offered by their religion rather than the actual beliefs. Quest-oriented persons are more philosophical in nature and view religion as an open ended search for ultimate truth that engages the existential questions of life in general. While there is a substantial amount of literature demonstrating the usefulness of these three variables, they have not been well integrated into mainstream psychology for analytic purposes.

Charles E. Barrett is a graduate student at San Diego State University interested in studying religion and spirituality from a psychological perspective. Scott C. Roesch is an Associate Professor at San Diego state University where he teaches graduate courses in statistics. His interests focus on personality psychology, trait-state models of stress and coping and structural equation modeling.

Published in 2009, this article is very current and has a very direct connection to the research question of the potential link between Scripture interpretation and psychology.

Collins, G. R., & Malony, H. N. (Eds.). (1981). *Psychology & theology: Prospects for integration*. Nashville: Parthenon Press.

This books' main question is whether it is possible, or even desirable, to integrate psychology and Christianity. Psychology and theology have a long history of conflict, as Freud himself wrote many controversial papers on theology that surely helped to sustain the already contentious relationship between the two. Freud argued that religion is a sort of universal illusion, a neurosis of humanity and should be replaced by science. This in turn caused many major American psychologists to use their skills to do a scientific study of religious behavior.

The question of why bother spending the time in an attempt to tie these two seemingly disparate concepts together is raised and was first presented as a series of lectures. Clearly, there is a wide continuum of views and positions on this, ranging from those who ignore it all together to those who condemn the very thought of it and see it as a blasphemy, to those who believe it necessary and of great importance.

Finally this book discusses the much written about modern concept of 'psychology as a religion'. According to one of his sources, there is a growing strength throughout the United States and that it is deeply anti-Christian and also hostile to most other religions. It is portrayed

as a dangerous family destroying concept that is supported by tax dollars and accepted by mainstream universities and social programs.

Without question, this book adds to a more balanced approach to the research question by looking at some of the more dramatic thinking *against* the idea that Scripture interpretation does indeed have a psychological component to it.

Gary R. Collins is a licensed clinical psychologist with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Purdue University. He is author of numerous articles and over 50 books, including *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, *the Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling*, and *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality*. Published in 1981, this book is relatively current.

Corley, B., Lemke, S. W., & Lovejoy, G. I. (Eds.). (2002). *Biblical hermeneutics, A comprehensive introduction to interpreting Scripture* (2nd ed.). Nashville: Broadman & Holman.

This book is an introduction to hermeneutics. The audience will be college students, Theologians, Psychologists, Philosophers and anyone interested in the science behind interpreting Scripture. By definition, hermeneutics is the 'official' science of interpreting Scripture or that branch of theology that pertains to Biblical exegesis. Fundamentals of hermeneutics will include principles and rules of interpreting Scripture as well as issues with the interpreter.

It begins with how one should study the Bible and readily admits that questions concerning Scripture interpretation (the heart of this research question) have been with us since the very beginning. For example, in Mark Chapter 12 Verse 24 Jesus, in confrontation with the Pharisees, asked them: " **Are you not in error because you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God?**" This is a wonderful example of what an enormous subject this is. To this very day, Scripture interpretation can come between close friends, family members, casual acquaintances, strangers, as well as bitter enemies. It has actually become common knowledge that it is better to leave this issue unresolved than to risk the potentially dangerous and unkind consequences of revealing and discussing your true beliefs with others.

Dr. Bruce Corley is Professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been a Pastor at several churches and authored several books. Dr. Steven Lemke is Provost and Professor of Philosophy and Ethics at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Joy in Christ: Studies in Philippians* and *Living Hope: Studies in 1 Peter*. Dr. Grant Lovejoy is Associate Professor of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological seminary. He has also published several articles in the *Southwest Journal of Theology*; *Leadership Journal*, *Proclaim* and the *Leadership Handbook of Practical Theology*.

This book is relatively current as the latest edition was published in 2002. It will serve as a knowledge base of a well accepted science to this research question.

Demarest, B., & Lewis, G. (1987). *Integrative Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.

This book starts with the belief that Evangelicals all over the world need a new paradigm in thinking that will take them into the future so that their faith can be maintained in a complex and ever advancing world. This new thinking is being called Integrative Theology. It is posited on six distinct phases, beginning with the identification of the problem under consideration and ending with the applicability to specific life circumstances, where truth does not terminate in any abstract contemplation and faithful living flows from truth; as water flows from a fountain.

Research using integrative theology thus uses a consciously chosen methodology that defines your presupposition and imposes it on Scripture with the sole assumption that the researcher is illumined with the Holy Spirit. It is therefore relevant and a very appropriate tool in analyzing this research question of the possible interconnectedness between Scripture interpretation and the psychology of the interpreter.

Dr. Bruce Demarest is professor of theology and spiritual formation at Denver Seminary. He received a Ph.D. in biblical and historical theology from the University of Manchester, England, an M.A. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, an M.S. from Adelphi University, and a B.S. from Wheaton College. Gordon R. Lewis (Ph.D., Syracuse University) is senior professor of systematic theology and Christian philosophy at Denver Seminary. He is the past president of the Evangelical Philosophical Society and the Evangelical Theological Society, and is the author of seven books and many articles. Published in 1987, this book is relatively current in its content.

Hafez, H. M. (2006). *Manufacturing human bombs: The making of Palestinian suicide bombers*. Washington D.C.: Endowment of the United States Institute of Peace.

This book is a very well done analysis on both the individual and group motives for why people are willing to give up their lives for what they believe. The audience is a broad one and will include college students, Theologians, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Politicians, Military Analysts, anarchists and anyone interested in understanding the powerful impact suicide bombers have on our society.

While a short history of this phenomena is presented, which includes all types of 'suicide' actions, from the Japanese Kamikaze pilots to the present day Middle East suicide bombers, there is significant quantitative data used to support his claim that there is logic behind these life ending actions.

Emphasis is given to the psychological profiles of individuals and groups involved in this historical reality in an effort to not only explain why, but also to give the reader a chance to see the predictive potential of this analysis. Of heartfelt importance, several last will and testaments from suicide bombers are given, where they frequently refer to their interpretation of what GOD wants them to do. This is a direct link to this research question and at the same time, shows the enormous need to understand this potentially catastrophic phenomenon and why this research question is of paramount importance.

The author, Mohammed M. Hafez, is a visiting professor in the department of political science at the University of Missouri. He is a graduate of the United States Institute of Peace and a former Guggenheim Foundation fellow and USIA fellow. He has also published *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*. This book is current and I believe that it adds a powerful message to the research question.

Harris, S. (2004). *The end of faith: Religion, terror and the future of reason* (1st ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

The audience for this book would be college students, theologians, psychologists, psychiatrists, politicians, military analysts, military strategists or anyone interested in a better understanding of the current and future dynamics of the nature of faith, religion, terror and reason.

The author begins with several dramatic examples demonstrating a very high correlation between specific religions (beliefs) and human behavior. He places people of faith on a continuum that ranges from those who gain solace and inspiration from a specific tradition yet remain fully committed to tolerance and diversity on one end, to those willing to destroy the world with the belief of what they see as heresy on the other end. He simply categorizes them as religious moderates and religious extremists.

The central theme of this book claims that the religious moderates themselves subscribe to the notion that everyone should be free to believe whatever he or she wants to believe about God. Such a notion, he further claims, is one of the principal forces driving this world right to the abyss. With this in mind, he nevertheless maintains that a sacred dimension to our existence, and coming to terms with it, could very well be the highest purpose of human life.

The author spends a great deal of time discussing the nature of belief; specifically from a neuroscience perspective. He points out that the power that belief has over our emotional lives is total. For every emotion that you are capable of feeling, there is a belief that can invoke it in a moment's time. He further claims that all higher-order cognitive states, of which belief is one, are in some way an outgrowth of our capacity to act. He goes even further to claim that beliefs are 'principals of action' by which our understanding, (and misunderstanding) of the world is made available to guide our behavior.

He concludes by stating that the purpose of his book is to help close the door to a certain irrationality that he sees permeating this world that many religious beliefs bring forth. By forsaking all valid sources of knowledge about this world, religions rely upon ancient taboos

and pre-scientific fancies as though they held ultimate metaphysical truth. He claims that faith makes very well intentioned people incapable of thinking rationally about many of their deepest concerns, and at worst has become a continuous source of human violence.

Sam Harris is a graduate in philosophy from Stanford University. He is working on his doctorate in neuroscience studying the neural basis of belief, disbelief, and uncertainty.

This work, published in 2004, is very current in its thinking and is directly relevant to the research question as he addresses the connection between science and religion.

Hathaway, W. L. (2005). Scripture and psychological science: Integrative challenges & callings. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 33(2), 89-97.

This journal article is an attempt to define several different legitimate approaches Scripture can have as an input and addition to the science of psychology. It offers a broad range of existing options and positions as to how the two can interface. His audience will consist of Theologians, Psychologists, graduate students and those seeking some degree of a scientific interface between Scripture and human psychology. The author uses both normative and non normative strategies realizing that for many scholars, non normative strategies often do not prove sound enough to convince them. Nevertheless, he includes them to present a fuller range of thinking and as a useful contrast to the normative strategies.

One such non normative strategy used is to simply describe the role scripture plays in human life without acknowledging its primacy or making any theological judgments. An interesting note here is that he intentionally uses the small's' when spelling scripture in this section to denote just that. One of his sources uses this approach to denote the primacy of scripture *in the psyche of the individual* and therefore how an individual constructs their reality of the world. While still possibly, for some, not completely convincing, it is without question a compelling analysis and perspective.

One normative approach is to start with traditional accounts of Scripture that understands it as a reserve of objectively atomistic facts that are given to us by GOD. The next step is therefore to construct a Biblical psychology by arranging all the assured facts of human nature available through Scripture and then combining with it any consistent facts of human nature derived from empirical studies. Such a model will now convey to theologians, psychologists and all those seeking degree of a scientific interface for their beliefs, that the Word of GOD is indeed authoritative and even infallible.

The author, William Hathaway, has the title of Professor of Psychology, Director of the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at Regent University. He holds a Masters in Philosophy and a PhD in Clinical Psychology from Bowling Green University. Published about six years ago,

this paper is current and quite relevant to the question of how psychology impacts Scripture interpretation.

Hill, P. C. (2005). Living on the boundary: Scriptural authority and psychology. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 33(2), 98-112.

This journal is a look into the thinking of social science professionals who also happen to be active Christians and who wrestle with attempting to reconcile both the secular and religious sides of their lives. The title, *Living on the Boundary*, denotes how many of them see themselves and their unique positions in life; i.e. being able to analyze their science from a religious perspective and analyze their religion from a science perspective. It is intended for psychologists, college students, theologians, and all those with an interest in looking at religion from a scientific perspective.

A core purpose of this research is to describe and place Biblical authority in perspective. They claim that if God is the author of all truth and not just the author of special revelation, and if there are indeed multiple sources of knowledge that can lead to a greater understanding of that truth, then the authority of Scripture must be evaluated not only by its own claim that appeals to just one source of knowledge; i.e. special revelation, but also to claims by other sources of knowledge, including reason and empirical knowledge.

Dr. Peter C. Hill is Professor of Psychology at the Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University (CA) and Editor of the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*. In addition to his research on forgiveness, his published research interests include measurement issues, the psychology of religion, and positive psychology. His most recent book, co-authored with Ralph Hood and Paul Williamson, is *The Psychology of Fundamentalism: An Intratextual Approach* published in 2005 by Guilford Press. Dr. Hill is particularly interested in forgiveness, justice (especially restorative justice), and health. Published in 2005, this work represents very current thinking and is especially relevant to our research question of a possible connection between Scripture interpretation and the psychology of the individual.

Hurlbut, W., & Kalanithi, P. (2001). Evolutionary theory and the emergence of moral nature. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 29(4), 330-339.

This journal discusses the historical beginnings of the now recognized science of evolutionary psychology. The audience will be college students, theologians, historians, psychologists and anyone interested in a better understanding of how our psychological natures developed over time.

The authors discuss the original irreconcilable differences between Christian theology and evolutionary psychology as having been attributed to an overextension and misapplication of the methodology of evolutionary psychology inasmuch as it gave no acknowledgement of the possibility of transcendence, thus turning morality into mere functionality. Within human

phylogeny, there is evidence of an increase in freedom, mind and moral awareness. This in turn causes increased interpersonal dependence, which in turn makes possible and necessary moral behavior. The Christian theological equivalence of this, within the natural order, is the revelation of love through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

There exists a counter argument from some evolutionary psychologists to this thinking that questions the significance of the very category of morality and its relation to transcendent truths. They claim that since evolution could preserve only that which works in the service of survival and reproduction, they cast doubt that there is even a possibility that the human mind is capable of the clarity and conviction necessary for an authentic morality based on such an exalted idea as the genuine generosity and self sacrifice of Christian love.

They conclude by saying that in the moment of history when Christ died, all of creation was lifted to another level of meaning. All the evolutionary struggles, the seemingly futility of human suffering and sacrifice and even death itself, was raised to the possibility of a participation in a greater meaning. Christian faith is a faith of love; an affirmation of the overarching goodness of life in general. It is in this that it unequivocally denies the pessimism, cynicism, and amoral implications of evolutionary psychology, while at the same time affirm the positive significance of the evolutionary process.

William Hurlbit is Professor of Human Biology at Stanford University who specializes in the convergence of biotechnology, medicine and ethics. Paul Kalanithi has an MA in English from Stanford University and specializes in reconciling biological understanding of the human person with life as experienced.

This work, published in 2001, is current and brings an historical perspective to the research question by describing some of the beginning differences between theology and science as it applies to the individual.

Leuba, J. H. (1912). *A psychological study of religion*. New York: MacMillan & Company.

The author begins with an historical perspective to support his claim that religion is indeed a type of rational behavior. From some of the earliest civilizations, he discusses how humans utilize all available forces within their existence aimed at gratifying human desires. He rejects the thinking of some that religion is composed of specific purposes and emotions that differentiates itself from the rest of life. He claims that *any* impulse, *any* emotion can lead to religious activity and that within that, there is *no* emotion or impulse that is not also found outside of it.

The author points out that for many years, there has been a continuum of the relationships between religion and morality. They range from morality having no existence outside of religion to one that it is the very fruit of religion, to that there is absolutely no connection between the two. He gives several historical examples supporting both ends and the middle, but points out that as time moves forward there is a gaining momentum that there is a very definite connection.

Around the turn of the last century, he points out that scientific and philosophical advancements tried to convince the most informed theologians that in the traditional sense, those disciplines were the enemies, not allies of religion. These conclusions served to energize the effort to render theology completely independent of science and metaphysics. However they realized that from the theologians perspective, such a conclusion, had it succeeded, would have been totally indifferent to them. On the flip side, Christian theologians appeared equally as threatened and adamant and claimed that Christianity, and in particular theology, was totally incompetent to enter into a direct or indirect proof of Christian Revelation by seeking to show that it is in harmony with some kind of philosophy or secular view of the world.

James Henry Leuba (1867-1946) was an American psychologist, best known for his contributions to the psychology of religion. His work in this area is marked by a reductionist tendency to explain mysticism and other religious experiences in physiological terms. Philosophically, his position may be described as naturalism. He was Professor of Psychology at Byrn Mawr College.

The combination of these historical views is a great look into the progress and advancement on both sides. This clearly leads us directly into the current research question of the possibility of the connection between Scripture interpretation and psychology. Published in 1912, this book provides an invaluable perspective as to the origins of this research question and where its future may be headed.

Linton, C. D. (n.d.). *The importance of literary style in Bible translation today*. Retrieved February 6, 2010, from Biblica Web site: http://www.biblica.com/niv/mct/NIV_MCT.pdf

This paper presents an interesting, important and critical perspective to the research question inasmuch as it discusses an aspect of Scripture interpretation that is not often analyzed; i.e., literary style. The audience is college students, theologians, psychologists, linguists, educators, and anyone interested in understanding different perspectives of the complexity of Scripture interpretation.

The author lets us know that all verbal communication, whether it is oral or written, has two inseparable but distinct dimensions: what is said, and how it is said. The *what*; or the content substance, is often overshadowed by the *how*, or more specifically, the style. For example, Job says to his dullard friends in Ch 12 V2, "Doubtless you are the people and wisdom will die with you"! By use of the literary device of irony, he communicated exactly the opposite of what he literally said and at the same time, giving real teeth to his rebuking of them. In another case, in 1Samuel Ch 21 V 15 Aschish asks, "Am I so short of madmen that you have to

bring this fellow (David) in front of me to perform like this”? The literary style being employed here is rhetorical, interrogative, funny, yet declarative in structure.

The author states that literary style is so intertwined with content throughout the entire Bible, and all literature for that matter, that it is naïve of someone to ask the question of why can't we simply have a direct translation from the original or why do all translations sound so different from one another? In truth, style is the means of animating the body of writing, (grammar, syntax, morphology, etc) so as to give it the breath of life.

The word style itself is a derivative from the Latin work *stylus*, more precisely, *stilus* and means a tool for writing, or ultimately a tool for communicating. Furthermore, this definition is instructive in nature; i.e., a 'how to'; consequently, there must be *matter* to be used. In our case the matter is ideas, images, feelings, values etc. The 'Platonic ideal' then of style is that it forms a natural harmony with content which gives it the form of life. It also follows that since style is the fusion of idea with individuality, and since no two individuals are the same, no two styles will ever be the same.

Dr. Calvin D. Linton was Professor Emeritus of English literature at George Washington University and also served as dean of its Liberal Arts College. He received his PhD from Johns Hopkins University.

Written less than twenty years ago, this work is current and provides a critical level of analysis to the research question. It brings an insight into the link between Scripture interpretation and psychology, as it gives several examples denoting how difficult Scripture interpretation can be and ultimately why there is seemingly an infinite amount of disagreement.

Pruyser, P. W. (1973). Sigmund Freud and his legacy: Psychoanalytic psychology of religion. C. Glock & P. E. Hammond (Eds.), *Beyond the classics?: Essays in the scientific study of religion* (1 ed., pp. 243-290). New York: Harper & Row.

This essay presents a formidable challenge by Sigmund Freud to many theologians and social scientists and anyone else who insists that there exists a connection between science and religion. It begins with an interesting insight into Freud himself where it tells us that once, during a private conversation, he referred to himself as a 'wicked pagan and a Godless Jew'. It also claims that his daughter described their household as 'totally non-religious'. Nevertheless, Freud devoted a sizable portion of his voluminous writings to the subject of religion. This background data is important when considering that Freud proceeded with his analysis on religion not only as a detached scholar, but also, and very importantly, as a clinical diagnostician with a keen interest in healing by setting therapeutic goals for his patients.

A few (from among the many) of Freud's contributions to the psychology of religion include:

- 1) The origins and development of Religion- Phylogenetic - He believed that modern religious thought has an ancestral beginning with the notion of specific things being taboo. Such feelings somehow became part of our genetic code.
- 2) Specific Functions of Religion – these would include a remedial, rescuing and auto-therapeutic function. He saw these as clinical truths but warned that clinical truths should not be elevated to an ontological level; i.e. they cannot be used to explain the existence of anything.
- 3) Religion as a means of social control – Freud believed that every person craves an authority to aid him or her in their inability to resolve things. According to him, society must call for renunciations of impulses on its members but at the same time demand support for its authority.
- 4) Religion and reality testing – The connecting terms between feelings and reality testing in religion is doubt. Faith, whatever solace it gives, presents intellectual difficulties. Ambivalence is rampant in relation to human and divine objects. This gives rise to cognitive oscillations between faith and doubt.

Paul W. Pruyser is a clinical psychologist and is serving as Associate Director of the Department of Education of the Meminger Foundation. He graduated from Avond Gymnasium in Amsterdam and received his PhD from Boston University in 1953. He has also served as Senior Clinical Psychologist at the Topeka State Hospital in Kansas.

While Freud's work is decades old, this analysis will add a significant opposing perspective to the research question of whether there is a connection between Scripture interpretation and psychology. Such a formidable opposition viewpoint will surely strengthen the ability of the research solution to withstand and effectively defend itself against criticisms.

Robertson, R. (1991). The globalization paradigm: Thinking globally. In D. G. Bromley (Ed.), *Religion and the social order: New developments in theory and research* (1 ed., Vol. 1, pp. 207-224). Greenwich: JAI Press Inc.

The audience of this book would be college students, economists, politicians, diplomats, theologians, social scientists and anyone interested in how religion is viewed in the future by some theorists.

The author discusses the relationship between religion and world system theory. By definition, world system theory, first categorized as such by Immanuel Wallerstein in 1974, is a macro-sociological perspective that seeks to explain the dynamics of the capitalist world economy as a total world social system. Because of its emphasis on development and unequal opportunities across nations, it has garnered significant attention within academic circles,

development theorists and practitioners around the world. It has clearly gained momentum as an intellectual and political endeavor.

Where does religion fit in? Within this newly formed world system theory, religion is seen as epiphenomenal; a sort of outside nuisance concept that begrudgingly must be admitted to and dealt with to some degree; even though it has little significance. From this, the author questions its plausibility over the long run. Without question, world system theory encompasses and consolidates much of the power interests around the world but remains very narrow in its focus as a purely economic definition of the world.

Roland Robertson, one of the world's pioneers in the study of globalization, was appointed to a chair at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland in 1999. He taught at the Universities of Leeds, Essex and Pittsburgh, USA before being appointed, as Head of the Department of Sociology, to a chair at the University of York in 1970. He returned to Pittsburgh in 1973, subsequently achieving the rank of Distinguished Service Professor.

This work presents a very interesting and important perspective of how powerful people see the place of religion in the future. It is therefore very relevant to the research question as the solution must take into account future perspectives and challenges.

Rollins, W. G., & Kille, D. A. (2007). Behavioral psychology and the Bible. E. Bolin & G. Goldberg (Eds.), *Psychological insights into the Bible* (pp. 58-63). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

These authors present very clear and straightforward thinking on the connection between the Bible and behavioral psychology. They begin by claiming that there is general agreement between the Bible and behavior psychology on the importance of environmental influence. For example, they mention that in the Old Testament, the Bible issues several warnings to the Israelites about becoming contaminated by Pagan influence. (Deuteronomy Ch8 V9). Scripture not only assumes the importance of our environment, but also affirms the importance of our external behavior. As a result, what these authors see is a direct link between contingency management and Christian theology inasmuch as both claim that behavior is important. Furthermore, behaviorists claim that the most reliable data is observable data. This position is fully supported in the Bible in James Ch 2 V 18 where it says "I will show you my faith by my works". In addition, Matthew supports the primacy of observable data when Jesus claims that "**You shall know them by their fruits**". (Matthew Ch7 V17).

Another area of integration between theology and behavioral psychology is eschatology and positive reinforcement. Eschatology deals with the Biblical doctrines of the last things, final judgment, the second coming and the end times. In dealing with these doctrines, Scripture spells out the ultimate rewards facing mankind. These rewards not only provide incentive for conversion, repentance and atonement, but also serve as a motivation for righteous living. Compare this to the behavioral principles of positive reinforcement; which is the psychology of goals, expectations and rewards and you can plainly see their parallel nature as its eschatological equivalent.

Wayne G. Rollins is Adjunct Professor of Scripture at Hartford Seminary and Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at Assumption College. He received his Ph.D. in New Testament Studies from Yale University and is Founder and Chair of the Society of Biblical Literature Section on Psychology and Biblical Studies. D. Andrew Kille was born January 6, 1950 in Ventura, California. He attended Ojai Valley School and The Thatcher School before entering Stanford University. He graduated in 1971 with a degree in English Literature, and attended seminary at the American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley. He served on the staff of the Grace Baptist Church in San Jose, California for fifteen years, before returning to school. He received the first Ph.D. granted in psychological biblical criticism from the Graduate Theological Union in 1997. His interest in psychology and the Bible began during his years as a pastor and was nurtured through the work of Morton Kelsey, John Sanford, Elizabeth Howes, and The Guild for Psychological Studies, and Carl Jung.

This work, recently published, gives fresh and direct insights into the connection between Scripture interpretation and psychology. It is supported by several straightforward examples to support their thinking. It's relevance to the research question is clear and will add real substantive value.

Spong, J. S. (2005). *The sins of Scripture: Exposing the Bible's texts of hate to reveal the God of love*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

This book covers many of the far reaching and highly sensitive impacts the Bible has on our lives and history in general. It begins by stating unequivocally that the Bible itself is a book like no other, inasmuch as it possesses a strange power. It has been the world's bestselling book since printing began and was the very first printing off the Gutenberg press. It has totally saturated our culture and even impacts our subconscious. For all intents and purposes, it has been translated into every language and dialect in the world.

The Bible is of course called the "Word of God" because everyone reserves to himself or herself *the right to interpret what that claim means*. Herein lays the connection to the research question. This book brazenly questions the veracity of the infinite number of interpretations and consequent fundamental beliefs that people conjure up within their minds. By questioning the logic of many common interpretations of a literal translation of the Bible against what is commonly held about specific characteristics of God, like God is Love, the author forces us into critical examination of the results of our own deeply held beliefs; many of which have gone unexamined. Such extreme criticism will be a very healthy addition to the research question to ensure that its solution can adequately be defended.

The author, John Shelby Spong, was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1952, and received his Master of Divinity degree in 1955 from the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia. That seminary and Saint Paul's College have both conferred on him honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees. He served as rector of

St. Joseph's Church in Durham, North Carolina from 1955 to 1957; rector of Calvary Parish, Tarboro, North Carolina from 1957 to 1965; rector of St. John's Church in Lynchburg, Virginia from 1965 to 1969; and rector of St. Paul's Church in Richmond, Virginia from 1969 to 1976. Published in 2005, this book is very current and is clearly very relevant to the research question.