Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists

Issues in Religion and Psychotherapy

Journal of the Association
of Mormon Counselors
& Psychotherapists

2014
volume 36

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Contributors need not be members of the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists. All manuscripts, books for review, and other editorial matter should be sent to: Rachel E. Crook Lyon, PhD, Editor, https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/IssuesInReligionAndPsychotherapy, 340 Q MCKB, Brigham Young University, Provo UT 84602. Manuscripts should be submitted in accordance with the Instructions for Contributors in this Journal.

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The Keystone of our Science: Exploring the Premises and Promises of the Book of Mormon for Psychology and Psychotherapy

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In late November 1841, having spent much of the day in council with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the home of Brigham Young, the Prophet Joseph took occasion to impress upon the brethren the central importance of the Book of Mormon to the work of the Restoration. Joseph instructed those in attendance "that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on Earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (History of the Church, vol. 4, p. 461). Latter-day Saints are not only very familiar with this prophetic instruction, but also take profound joy in knowing that the Lord speaks to his children in these latter-days through His chosen prophets and that He has provided us with yet another powerful testament of the life and mission of the Savior, Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon truly is the keystone of Latter-day Saint religion. As President Ezra Taft Benson once noted, "A keystone is the central stone in an arch. It holds all the other stones in place, and if removed, the arch crumbles" and "just as the arch crumbles if the keystone is removed, so does all the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon" (Benson, 1992, p.2). Clearly, then, the Book of Mormon is a book like no other.

Despite the common LDS understanding of the significance that the Book of Mormon has for religious thought and practice, it is not always the case that ordinary Latter-day Saints (in general) or Latter-day Saint scientists and scholars (in particular) have fully appreciated the intellectual significance that the Book of Mormon may have for how we understand and explain ourselves and the world. That is, while most Latter-day Saints recognize the profound impact that the Book of Mormon has in the context of religious history and the prevailing doctrines, practices, and theologies of the world's various religions, it seems all too often the case that there is a hesitancy among some LDS scholars to seriously engage the Book of Mormon for the possible *intellectual* contributions it might have for our work as professional scholars and researchers (at least, for those of us in disciplines other than religious studies). Rather, there seems to be a tendency to see the Book of Mormon as primarily, if not solely, a religious document meant to ground religious practice and belief, a work of scripture whose purpose is only to provide spiritual comfort and understanding to those in emotional or spiritual need, and not as a legitimate resource for shaping and guiding academic research, professional practice, or scholarly thinking in our various disciplines.

Richard Williams (1998) has argued, borrowing imagery from the prophet Isaiah, that the message of the Restoration is, for both the religious and the intellectual world, one of the "turning of things upside down" (2 Ne. 27:27); wherein the wisdom and learn-

ing of the world is turned on its head as basic assumptions and accepted knowledge of secular disciplines is brought into question by the light of the revealed word of God. We are in considerable agreement with Williams on this point, firmly convinced that the Book of Mormon contains not only a message and insights that has revolutionized (and will continue to revolutionize) the landscape of the religious world, but which can also radically revitalize and re-envision the world of secular learning by challenging certain widely-held assumptions and perspectives at the heart of our academic disciplines. In other words, not only is the Book of Mormon of profound religious and spiritual significance, it is also of profound intellectual significance—that is, if scholars are prepared to seriously consider it as such.

In this paper, we hope to offer an example of how Latter-day Saint researchers and scholars in academic disciplines might not always be taking the Book of Mormon seriously in their scholarship, and how they might do otherwise. We will do this by highlight some prevailing ideas in the discipline of psychology, and how the Book of Mormon might invite Latter-day Saint scholars to conscientiously dissent from the prevailing tenets of psychological research, and offer an alternative perspective instead. Although there are any of a number of conceptual places where one might begin to explore the possibility of a psychology grounded in the teachings of the Book of Mormon, we will begin this foray into the topic by discussing the general contours of the philosophy of naturalism, and the determinism and moral relativism that are implied in the philosophy of naturalism (at least insofar as it is commonly articulated in contemporary psychological theory and practice). At each point, by way of contrast, we will describe how the Book of Mormon—if we take it seriously—invites Latter-day Saint psychologists and scholars to develop an alternative approach in their theorizing and practice.

We will argue that a psychology grounded in the revealed doctrines of the Book of Mormon is one that embraces not only the fundamental reality of the God of the Restoration, but also His continual, active and dynamic involvement in the lives of His children and the world He has organized for them. Further, we will maintain that such a psychology is one that grounds human nature in moral agency and, thereby, is a psychology capable of articulating a vision of personhood wherein human actions are not taken to be merely the mechanical byproducts of various natural forces operating on material conditions, but are rather fundamentally meaningful and genuinely morally significant. Lastly, we will argue that a psychology that is solidly grounded in the revealed doctrines of the Book of Mormon will acknowledge that Christ's life, sufferings, death, and resurrection are relevant in addressing all forms of human suffering—and that moral truth and human conscience is not always a mere human construct or natural phenomenon, but is at times a divine bestowal of discernment and understanding. These three examples are just a few of the many ways in which taking the Book of Mormon seriously might lead Latter-day Saints to propose radically different accounts of human behavior and fundamentally different approaches to therapy.

The Scope and Purpose of the Analysis

Because psychology is a large and sprawling discipline, often noted for its contentiousness and lack of theoretical harmony, it would be misleading to say that all psychologists assume naturalism, or would arrive at the conclusion of necessary determinism or moral relativism. Therefore, we will of necessity speak about general trends and sometimes unarticulated assumptions, without always acknowledging more nuanced positions or the psychologists who might see themselves as exceptions to the trends we describe. There is, we realize, a danger in such an approach, insofar as it may strike some readers as being overly critical or nitpicky; while, at the same time, striking others as much too broad and sweeping.

In response to the former, we can only say that the intention of our analysis is not simply to pick at nits or to be critical simply for the sake of being critical. We do not seek to dismiss out of hand all of the valiant and illuminating work of those who have committed themselves to the study of human behavior solely because there is good reason to be skeptical regarding some of their assumptions and claims regarding the fundamental nature of human nature. Oddly, despite the high value that most academics place on skepticism and critical reflection, many seem to experience something akin to an allergic reaction when critical ex-

amination is offered from a serious and believing religious perspective. Indeed, while critical examinations of religious beliefs and practices that are grounded in a secular perspectives and the concerns of professional scholarship are generally taken to be legitimate enterprises at the outset, many academics are less than eager to critically reflect on academic disciplines, their assumptions and theories and practices, from an explicitly religious worldview or forthrightly theistic perspective. However, we believe that a healthy dialogue between mutually respected and respectful partners will do much to further the work of truth in both areas. Indeed, we would argue that just such a dialogue should be a centerpiece of academic life and education.

In contrast to those worried the possible excesses of sustained critical reflection, there are others who may be concerned that an analysis such as the one we propose here will be too general or abstract (or philosophical) to do any specific or practical good. In response, we can only confess that our analysis will and must be very general and sweeping in nature. However, given that what is intended here is a brief exploration of certain basic principles and foundational assumptions upon which more specific details of a psychology grounded in Book of Mormon teachings must inevitably hinge, a fairly general mode of analysis is not necessarily a bad thing—especially insofar as such an analysis may provide some orienting sense of what, in fact, the real issues at stake happen to be. We hope that our brief exploration into the possible contributions that the Book of Mormon might make to a psychology interested in "getting it right"—at least as far as questions concerning the nature of human nature and how persons ought most truthfully to be understood and carefully studied—is that such an exploration will ultimately provide the impetus for more detailed and critically informed work in the future, work that can perhaps shed necessary light on specifics and practice.

Psychology and the Philosophy of Naturalism

The philosophy of naturalism essentially claims that natural laws and/or principles ultimately govern all the events of nature, including our bodies, behaviors, and minds (see Griffin, 2000; Leahey, 1992; Slife, 2004; Viney & King, 2003). Naturalism is, as one historian has written, "science's central dogma" (Leahey, 1992, p. 379; see also, Hunter, 2007). Indeed, as others have pointed out, "Within Western culture, naturalism has become the default position for all serious inquiry" (Dembski, 1998, p. 14; see also MacIntyre, 2009; Marsden, 1997; Wilkens & Sanford, 2009). Naturalism is, thus, both the ontology and the epistemology (and, in some quarters, the ethics) out of which almost all contemporary intellectual discourse originates, as well as the presumptive context or background framework in which it takes place. According to such a perspective, nature is all there is—or, more accurately, all there is that can be known is that which is natural. Nature is taken to be self-sufficient and natural events are thought to be necessarily fixed and determinate, governed by independent, rationally discernable (via scientific inquiry) but non-intentional (i.e., undirected) laws and principles. Of course, there is nothing in this philosophy that assumes that all such laws or principles have already been discovered or discerned, only that such laws exist and govern all natural events. Ultimately, naturalism does maintain that such events are the only sort of events there are—or, at least, the only sort of events that can truly matter to science because they are the only sort of events that can be measured or known with any degree of reliability.

Psychology as a social science—that is, as a science of the social patterned in its assumptions and methods after the more established natural sciences (Smith, 1997)—constitutes the attempt to account for the meaning and nature of human mind and behavior solely in terms of natural events governed by natural laws (see, e.g., Davis & Rose, 2000; Evans & Rooney, 2008; Heiman, 2001). For psychologists operating within the naturalistic framework it seems clear that since human beings are part of the natural world, "who we are and what we do must ultimately be understood in naturalistic terms" (Dembski, 1998, p. 14). This interpretation of human being in naturalistic terms is not meant, however, to crudely deny our humanity—though such criticisms of naturalism have been made (see, e.g., Craig & Moreland, 2000; Goetz & Taliaferro, 2008; Olafson, 2001). After all, most contemporary psychologists (rightly) see their theorizing and research as a continuation of the tradition of humanistic thought whose roots lie in the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods of Western

intellectual history (Smith, 1997). Rather than denying our humanity, then, conceptualizing psychology as a species of natural science, and committing it to naturalistic forms of inquiry and explanation, is to "reinterpret our humanity as the consequence of brute material processes that were not consciously aiming at us" Dembski, 1998, p. 14). "Thus," as noted psychological methodologist Gary Heiman (2001) puts it:

> in the same way that the 'law of gravity' governs the behavior of planets or the 'laws of aerodynamics' govern the behavior of airplanes, psychologists assume there are laws of nature that govern the behavior of living organisms. Although some laws do not apply to all species (for example, laws dealing with nest building among birds do not apply to humans), a specific law does apply to all members of a group. Thus, when psychologists study the mating behavior of penguins, or the development of language in people, they are studying laws of nature. (p. 7)

Indeed, many contemporary psychologists, both researchers and practitioners, would readily agree that psychology is best defined and understood as the scientific study of mind and behavior for the express purpose of discovering those laws of nature which ultimately account for all human action and meaning (see, e.g., Coon & Mitterer, 2010; Passer & Smith, 2010; Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2008).

It is important to take a moment here and consider what the philosophy of naturalism has to say about the nature of God and His involvement in the world. Many scholars would argue there is nothing inherent in the formulation of naturalism described above that necessarily excludes or denies the existence of God (see, e.g., Padgett, 2003). Unlike more encompassing formulations of naturalism (i.e., metaphysical or ontological naturalism) in which the existence of God or any other sorts of supernatural beings is actively denied at the outset and only natural or material entities are admitted to exist, the form of naturalism most often defending in psychology is what is most commonly known as "methodological naturalism" (Porpora, 2006), This form of naturalism is usually thought to represent a more epistemologically modest form of naturalism. As such, methodological naturalism reflects an epistemological view that restricts scientific work to practical methods for acquiring empirically verifiable knowledge, and actively discourages speculation about ultimate metaphysical truths or religious realities. Thus, while it is admitted that individual scientists certainly possess their own individual theological biases and values, methodologically naturalistic science itself is taken to be a fundamentally "a-theistic" enterprise. That is, methodologically naturalistic science is a-theistic in the same way that it is a-moral: the methods of science neither assume nor entail any particular theological or moral views. Science, on this model, is a form of inquiry concerned only with what is demonstrably the case and never with what ought to be or might be the case. Science, according to the tenets of methodological naturalism, is simply a "set of empirical, analytical, self-critical techniques for establishing facts" (Allen, 1995, p. 3). Furthermore, only once the relevant facts of the world have been established in an objective fashion ought one then engage in the inherently biased, value-laden, and fundamentally extra-scientific enterprise of theoretical reflection and ethical or metaphysical speculation (theological or otherwise).

However, the philosophical and theological waters are much deeper and more treacherous here than they might at first appear. As many philosophers of science (see, e.g., Feyerabend, 1988; Gadamer, 2005; Kuhn, 1970; Polanyi, 1962) have shown over the course of the last century, a defining feature of any method—be it scientific or otherwise—is the profound influence that its basic philosophical assumptions and pre-investigatory biases play in both the formulation of the method and the interpretation of the findings it generates. In other words, all methods not only entail certain constitutive assumptions and values, but these very assumptions and values actually give rise to the methods themselves. Indeed, the common notion that objectivity and value-neutrality are and ought to be the hallmarks of scientific investigation is itself a philosophic assumption that reflects a certain set of defining values (Slife & Whoolery, 2006). More importantly for the present analysis, however, is the recognition that theological neutrality as a defining methodological value of contemporary science also reflects a particular value or set of values regarding the nature of God and the relevance of divine activity to scientific understandings of the world (Larmer, 2012). In other words, to make the claim that a sufficient explanation of some event in the world can be offered without needing to con-

sider or account for the possible involvement of God is to already have made the fundamentally non-neutral theological assumption that God is in some profound sense passively uninvolved in the way the world works, and, therefore, conceptually unnecessary to any viable account of it.

In short, then, while the postulation of God's existence might be important for those who want to know the ultimate—though ultimately unconfirmable—"why" of the world and the whence from which it comes, for the methodological naturalist God's existence is simply not relevant to providing an adequate account of how things are in the world. Thus, while naturalism, at least as discussed here, does not necessarily entail any claim about the non-existence of God, it does "affirm that if God exists, he was marvelously adept at covering his tracks and giving no evidence that he ever interacted with the world" (Dembski, 1998, p. 14; see also, Porpora, 2006). God, in such a scheme, may well exist, but if He does, He does so in such a way as to be essentially irrelevant to any understanding of the world and His people. In this way, even when naturalistic accounts of the universe downplay the strictly deterministic and law-like nature of the world and focus more explicitly on the method, it generally assumed that all of human activity, tradition, and social discourse can be accounted for through entirely "natural" theories and explanations—explanations that have no need for the existence of God for them to work. Ultimately, such a God might as well be non-existent because He is, for all meaningful intents and purposes, so profoundly passive as to be entirely uninvolved with the world (expect perhaps, one might speculate as Deists do, at the moment of creation), and, thus, a sort of unnecessary theoretical "add-on," perhaps meant to help religious believers feel better in some way. In the end, though, including such a profoundly passive and uninvolved God in one's scientific accounts really does little to expand our knowledge of the universe or its workings. As one scholar trenchantly puts it, "It remains logically permissible for the scientific naturalist to affirm God's existence but only by making God a superfluous rider on top of a self-contained account of the world" (Dembski, 1998, p. 14). One cannot help recalling the famous French mathematician Simon Laplace's bold response to the Emperor Napoleon when he was asked where the Creator was in his recently published account of the mechanics of the universe: "Sire, I had no need of that hypothesis!"

The Book of Mormon and God's Activity in the World

A sharp contrast to such a passive God can be seen in the understanding of God, and his relationship to mankind and the world, found in the Book of Mormon. The central message of the Book of Mormon is not only that the Creator is not a hypothesis—scientific or otherwise—but an actual person, the living Christ who is continually involved in the lives of His children and the events of His creations, and, indeed, one in whom His children have much need. Not only does the Book of Mormon teach that God created the world for His children (1 Ne. 17:36), but also that He is the "light and life of the world" (Mosiah. 16:9), the very power by which the heavens and the earth and all that are in them are sustained from moment to moment. Indeed, as Alma testifies to the anti-Christ Korihor, "all things denote that there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator" (Alma 30:44). And, again, in the 12th Chapter of Helaman, we read:

> For behold, the dust of the earth moveth hither and thither, to the dividing asunder, at the command of our great and everlasting God. Yea, behold at his voice do the hills and the mountains tremble and quake. And by the power of his voice they are broken up, and become smooth, yea, even like unto a valley. Yea, by the power of his voice doth the whole earth shake; Yea, by the power of his voice do the foundations rock, even to the very center. Yea, and if he say unto the earth—Move—it is moved. Yea, if he say unto the earth—Thou shalt go back, that it lengthen out the day for many hours—it is done; And thus, according to his word the earth goeth back, and it appeareth unto man that the sun standeth still; yea, and behold, this is so; for surely it is the earth that moveth and not the sun. And behold, also, if he say unto the waters of the great deep—Be thou dried up—it is done. (Hel. 12:8-16)

Clearly, this speaks to a God who is intimately involved in the events of the world He has organized.

Likewise, in the Book of Mormon we read of a God who is intimately involved in the social and interper-

sonal affairs of His children, directing and guiding, blessing and punishing, inviting and protecting them as they navigate the challenges and vicissitudes of life in the mortal sphere. The God of the Book of Mormon, unlike the absent or passive and uninvolved God of methodological naturalism, is a God who has descended from on high to be among mankind, to suffer as they suffer, to rejoice with them, to experience their pains and temptations, trials and grief so that "he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:12).

The word "succor" employed here by Alma is not a word one hears much anymore—at least, in common daily conversation—but it is one that is rich in poignant imagery in this context. A quick consult of Noah Webster's 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* teaches that to succor is to "to run to support; hence, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering." The conceptual and practical implications of this doctrine, not only for an understanding of the meaning of the Atonement of Christ but also for any meaningful account of human psychology and suffering—particularly in the context of healing in psychotherapy—are multiple and deep, and deserve thoughtful exploration by faithful Latter-day Saint psychologists. Suffice it to say that the Book of Mormon attests on almost every page to a God who is familial, familiar, and faithfully involved in His children's lives, continually seeking them out and inviting them to a more fruitful and intimate relationship with him. We believe that the reality of such a God demands that LDS psychologists and psychotherapists engage in a careful re-examination of their commitment to methodological naturalism, especially if they are to take the Book of Mormon and the Restoration in these latter-days seriously, both intellectually and spiritually.

Psychology and Determinism

One major implication of the philosophy of naturalism—whether endorsed in the extreme terms of an ontological materialism or in more limited purview of the methodological naturalism discussed above—is the assumption of determinism. As typically formulated by psychologists, determinism is the notion that "behavior is solely influenced by natural causes and does not depend on an individual's choice or 'free will" (Heiman, 2001, p. 7). Human beings, in this perspective, are simply natural objects—albeit very, very complex ones—which behave as they do because they must given the particular physical contexts in which they are found and the particular natural forces that happen to be operating on them. While few psychologists believe that all of the determinants of human behavior can be fully identified or known, most of them nonetheless "have faith" that human events "can be predicted, but only with a probability greater than chance" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 10). In other words, there are epistemological limits to our understanding of the determinants of behavior, but at the ontological level determinism is take to be a fundamental and necessary assumption of all legitimate psychological science.

Indeed, for many psychologists, the very possibility of achieving psychology's central scientific goals (i.e., explaining, predicting, and controlling human behavior) is necessarily predicated upon the assumption of an underlying natural and lawful deterministic order that can be discovered through rational and experimental inquiry, and which is ultimately responsible for all of our behaviors, thoughts, and feelings (Goodwin, 2010; Heiman, 2001). As Slife, Mitchell, & Whoolery (2004) show, "From laws of gravity to principles of pleasure (psychoanalysis), reinforcement (behaviorism), and organismic enhancement (humanism), these types of natural laws and principles supposedly govern all aspects of human beings, including our bodies, minds, and even spirits" (p. 36). To abandon or refuse such a foundational thesis in psychology, some psychologists argue, would bring all rational and scientific inquiry into the causes of human behavior and the nature of human nature to a screeching halt. If determinism is not true, Goodman (2010) asks, "then how can we ever know anything about behavior" (p. 10)? Echoing this sentiment, Heiman (2001) argues:

> If, instead, we assumed that organisms freely decide their behavior, then behavior truly would be chaotic, because the only explanation for every behavior would be 'because he or she wanted to.' Therefore, we reject the idea that free will plays a role. After all, you cannot walk off a cliff and 'will' yourself not to fall, because the law of gravity forces you to fall. Anyone else in the same situation will also fall because that is how gravity operates. Likewise, we assume that you cannot freely

> choose to exhibit a particular personality or respond in a particular way in a given situation. The laws of behavior force you to have certain attributes and to behave in a certain way in a given situation. Anyone else in that situation will be similarly influenced, because that is how the laws of behavior operate. (p. 7)

Ultimately, then, everything that we do, think, or feel—both individually and collectively—is the result of our inescapable entanglement in an "intricate web of causal forces" (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 102), the pervasive presence and power of which we human being are (in the best of circumstances) only vaguely aware and about which only a naturalistic science of psychology can teach us.

A classic illustration of this sort of thinking can be found in Stanley Milgram's description of the nature of social psychological inquiry:

> The social world does not impinge on us as a set of discrete variables, but as a vibrant, continuous stream of events whose constituent parts can be dissected only through analysis, and whose effects can be most compellingly demonstrated through the logic of experiments. Indeed, the creative claim of social psychology lies in its capacity to reconstruct varied types of social experience in an experimental format, to clarify and make visible the operation of obscure social forces so that they may be explored in terms of the language of cause and effect. (p. xix)

He further elaborates:

> The implicit model for experimental work is that of the person influenced by social forces while often believing in his or her own independence of them. It is thus a social psychology of the reactive individual, the recipient of forces and pressures emanating from outside oneself. (p. xix)

Obviously, as the possessor of such powerful and difficult to obtain knowledge, the psychologist is guaranteed a place of respect in the community. Indeed, it is just such an assumption that seems to constitute the discipline's primary justification for itself (see, Bakan, 1974 for a fuller discussion of this point).

As was clearly implied in the comments by Goodman (2010) and Heiman (2001) cited above, the only alternative form of explanation to a deterministic one that is even thought possible in this perspective is that behavior—if it is considered agentic in any meaningful way—is nothing more than an impenetrable and inexplicable chaos of random individual whim. Thus, it comes as no surprise that, when confronted with a "Sophie's Choice" such as this, many psychologists opt for the explanatory coherence and predictive power promised by determinism—an explanatory coherence seemingly attained in the more established natural sciences that psychology seeks to emulate.

Clearly, in the deterministic perspective of naturalistic psychology, the language and concepts of moral agency have no legitimate intellectual place. This is not to say that the *experience* of agency or conscious will is not taken to be real, or that psychologists deny that persons do actually experience themselves as moral agents. Rather, it is to say that such subjective experiences are usually interpreted as being "illusions," and, thus, the sort of thing best accounted for in terms of underlying psychological or biological mechanisms and processes (see, e.g., Modell, 2008; Wegner, 2002). As such, genuine moral agency, and the meaning attendant to it, play no significant role in the contemporary psychological understanding of human actions, their origins, or their meaning because moral agency is held to be merely a subjective experience, the necessitated product of some more objective and fundamental underlying causal process whose specification and prediction is the proper aim of scientific inquiry.

As we noted above, psychology is often noted for its contentiousness and lack of theoretical harmony, so it would be misleading to say that all psychologists are committed to deterministic or reductive forms of explanation (see, e.g., Dawda & Martin, 2001; Sappington, 1990). Some scholars in psychology have persistently argued for the scientific viability and ontological reality of human agency (see, e.g., Baer, Kaufman, & Baumeister, 2008; Baumeister, 2008; Frie, 2008; Gantt, 2002; James, 1897/1956; Kelly, 1963; Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003; May, 1981; Rychlak, 1983, 1994; Slife & Fisher, 2000; Williams, 1992). However, despite the impressive and thought-provoking efforts of such scholars, they have for various reasons remained firmly in the minority of the discipline and made little headway in changing the discipline's basic commitment to one or another form of deterministic explanation.

Other scholars have sought for a way out of the free will/determinism debate by either advancing some form of compatibilism (or "soft determinism") or en-

gaging in the intellectual schizophrenia of relegating agency to the sidelines of science because it is incompatible with the mechanical worldview of their discipline, even as they endorse the reality of agency in their personal lives (Baer, Kaufman, & Baumeister, 2008; Sappington, 1990). Neither of these approaches, however, provides for an intellectually satisfying resolution to the knotty problem of the relationship between human agency and mechanical determinism (Shariff, Schooler, & Vohs, 2008). For, on the one hand, despite a long and storied history of argument for the compatibility of necessary determinism and meaningful moral agency, the precise fashion in which genuinely meaningful agency can coexist in a world of natural law and determinate necessity has never really been made clear (Kane, 2011). In the end, moral agency is either reduced to a species of indeterminism—and, thus, by nature inexplicable, whimsical, and non-rational—or it is asserted to be some sort of mysterious ontological "add-on" that occupies some special (though difficult to defend) space in a fundamentally mechanical world. In the former case, while the possession of agency preserves a measure of freedom and responsibility in human action, human acts are ultimately rendered meaningless or absurd, irrational and intellectually indefensible by virtue of their lack of meaningful connection to what would otherwise be relevant events in the world (e.g., one's past, one's present context of relationships, one's embodiment, etc.). And, in the latter case, agency becomes little more than one more unnecessary hypothesis, a sort of prescientific hold-over from a less enlightened age—the sort of conclusion it is usually hoped can be avoided in the first place. Of course, refusing to seriously address the question of moral agency by (intellectually speaking) sticking one's head in the sand—that is, believing in agency or not believing in it depending on whether one happens to be standing in the lab or in the living room—is to commit oneself to serious intellectual hypocrisy.

The Book of Mormon and Moral Agency

For the Latter-day Saint psychologist who wishes to take the teachings of the Book of Mormon seriously, neither of these two options—sloppy compatibilism or naive hypocrisy—are intellectually or spiritually viable alternatives. A central message of the Book of Mormon is that moral agency is not something that one can "take or leave" in the quest to understand human nature and meaning, nor is it simply an "add-on" that can be sprinkled on top of fundamentally deterministic accounts of personhood so as to soften the nihilistic blow of mechanisim. Rather, the Book of Mormon teaches that moral agency is fundamental to human nature and that any science, any psychology, any cosmology that does not admit this fact will not only be inadequate to the task of making sense of human beings, but also profoundly misleading about them. Indeed, as Williams (2005) has argued:

> Perhaps no question regarding our fundamental human nature is more important than the question of agency. No issue takes us closer to the center of our being. Agency is a genuine watershed issue because the position we take on the issue of whether we are moral agents determines to a great extent the positions we must take on most other questions of psychological and therapeutic relevance. I think it is not an overstatement to say that, in the social sciences, it will be very difficult to get other questions right unless and until we get the question of agency right. Agency is the hinge on which our understanding of all other psychological phenomena turns. At the same time, no concept in the contemporary social sciences has shown itself to be more resistant to clarity, closure, or even consensus than has the concept of human agency. (p. 117)

While space constraints will not permit a full exploration of an approach to human agency that answers the various issues of determinism, indeterminism, and compatibilism, we believe that it will nonetheless be fruitful to point out some of the ways in which the Book of Mormon positions moral agency as fundamental to human existence. Additionally, we will show how taking the Book of Mormon seriously also demands that Latter-day Saint psychologists take moral agency seriously in their theoretical, methodological, and practical endeavors as psychologists, if they hope to make any genuine sense of what it means to be human.

In perhaps no other passage of scripture is the centrality of moral agency to human nature more clearly articulated than in Lehi's discourse to his sons just prior to his death in the second chapter of 2 Nephi. Here Lehi is teaching his sons that "there is a God, and he hath created all things, both in the heavens and

the earth, and all things that in them are, *both things to act and things to be acted upon*" (2 Ne. 2:14). In short, to be human, according to Father Lehi, is not to be one more object in a world of objects, "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind" (Eph. 4:14) of causality, regulated by the impersonal and mechanical laws of behavior that are so fervently postulated in contemporary scientific psychology. As Elder Maxwell (1976) noted years ago, "environment and heredity by themselves do not account for all human differences" (p. 591). Indeed, Lehi's son Jacob, apparently having taken his father's teachings to heart, later exhorts us to "cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life" (2 Ne. 10:23).

The question of how to make sense of human behavior (in a way that is viable for a scholarly enterprise such as psychology) while taking moral agency seriously is a complicated question. Many Latter-day Saint psychologists have already tackled the issue, and most agree that agency would need to be conceptualized as something more than "indeterministic" or "random" behavior (see, e.g., Judd, 2005; Gantt, 2002; Williams, 2005; Yanchar, 2011). That is, agency is not "noise in the data," so to speak, or some mysterious "proportion of variance" (Miller & Atencio, 2008), but is a fundamental feature of human behavior *even when human beings behave in predictable ways*. Williams (1992, 2002, 2005), for example, has offered a conceptual framework for understanding agency that preserves meaningful connections between human action and its antecedents while simultaneously preserving *possibility* in human action. "Mechanical and biological links," he explains, "are clearly destructive of agency, as are stimulus-response links governed by environmental forces requiring no active participation by an agentic person . . . . Yet, even if nature and nurture fail to preserve agency, it does not follow that all meaningful links between antecedents and events destroy agency" (2005, p. 127). He describes the connections between past events and human action as being less a matter of the workings of efficient causal forces and more something akin to the "strong relationship that exists between the plot of a novel and any number of subplots" (p. 127). That is, if one were to change the plot, the nature of the subplots would dramatically change as well—but it does not follow that the plot causes the subplots, or that the subplots were necessitated by the plot. In the same way, we can talk meaningfully about how an individual's choices might be different had antecedent events or conditions occurred differently without, thereby, implying that the individual's choices were necessitated by those antecedents.

We share this example simply to highlight that capable Latter-day Saint thinkers have already made some progress in the effort to develop a robust conception of moral agency that does not eliminate a psychologist's ability to make predictions about human behavior or talk meaningfully about the antecedents of that behavior. Further, it is possible to talk meaningfully about a study of human behavior that does not rely on the sloppy compatibalistic language of "influence" rather than strict causation. That is, it may very well be possible to develop a robust study of human behavior that does not rely on deterministic or causitive narratives—that is, a study of human behavior that does not depict human beings as puppets being controlled by strings of variables. Human beings certainly act in a context that provides meaningful antecedents to human choice, and changes to that context may very well lead to different choices and outcomes—but psychologists can still nonetheless conceptualize human beings as the agents of their actions. Human action does not need to be seen as necessitated by its antecedents. For these reasons and more, we argue that Latter-day Saint psychologists have a number of conceptual tools that they can use to take the Book of Mormon seriously in their theorizing and practice.

Psychology and Moral Relativism

It is important to recognize that with the adoption of necessary determinism rather than moral agency as the principle conceptual bedrock from which inquiry in psychology is to proceed, a thorough-going moral relativism becomes all but an unavoidable logical consequence. Once human action is stripped of its fundamentally relational, agentive, and moral qualities, and instead is understood as merely the necessitated outcome of intrinsically non-relational, non-agentive, and non-moral conditions, states, variables, or mechanical processes, it can no longer be seen to be genuinely meaningful or moral in nature. That is not to say that persons would experience their lives

as without meaning, but rather that once a necessarily deterministic account is invoked to explain our behaviors, thoughts, and feelings, then any experiential meaning they might have is rendered suspect, reduced to being merely a subjective matter and, thus, in an important sense, not really real. As numerous scholars have shown, meaning in human behavior and experience requires genuine possibility (see, e.g., Ekstrom, 2001; Gantt & Williams, in press; Martin & Sugarman, 1999; Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003; Williams, 1992, 1994, 2005; Yanchar, 2011). That is to say, for an event (behavioral or emotional or cognitive) to be considered truly meaningful it must be genuinely possible for that event to have been otherwise than it was. Events that are necessarily determined to be as they are, and which cannot, therefore, be in any way otherwise than they are, have no genuine meaning. Such events simply are.

In the case of human behavior, then, only if persons are in some fundamental sense capable of being otherwise than they are, or doing otherwise than they do, is it defensible to say that there is any genuine meaning in what they are or do. Insofar as most psychological theories of human nature deny the reality of moral agency in their accounts of human nature, they cannot help but encourage a dangerous and virulent form of nihilism. Indeed, once the conceptual door is shut on the possibility of meaning and moral agency in our psychological accounts of human beings, their actions, and relationships, the door to nihilism would seem to be the only one left open.

Parasitic on an embrace of nihilism is moral relativism. If thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as the social and moral relationships that both give rise to and context for such things, are nothing more than the necessitated outcomes of underlying causal conditions—be they environmental, genetic, or some complex combination of the two—then not only does it no longer make sense to ascribe meaning to human actions, it is no longer legitimate to make distinctions of moral worth among them. For, if one's behaviors are not the sort of thing over which one has any genuine control and in the origination of which one has no real participatory role because they are just occurrences produced by forces outside of awareness and control, then it is no longer possible to claim that any particular act one might commit is in any way morally superior to any other act one might happen to commit (Gantt & Williams, in press; Robinson, 2002; Williams & Gantt, 2013).

As with the question of meaning, the question of moral qualities and distinctions is bound up with the possibility of possibility, with the reality of moral agency. For example, society condemns all sorts of criminal acts, and rightly punishing their perpetrators, precisely to the extent that (and only insofar as) genuine alternatives to committing a given criminal act were available to the criminal in question. The ascription of moral culpability hinges on the fact that the criminal chose to engage in a criminal act rather than in an act of honesty, charity, or self-control. Indeed, if it can be shown that the accused was in some sense unable to entertain alternatives, as in cases of severe mental disorder or external duress, society does not hold them accountable for their crimes. Likewise, if the behaviors, thoughts, and feelings in which people engage cannot be otherwise than they are, and the shaping of how they are is something in which they do not actively participate in meaningful, originative ways, then these acts are neither good nor bad nor indifferent in their very nature. Such acts simply are what they are and it would be as illegitimate to consider them worthy of either moral praise or condemnation as it would be illegitimate to consider the reflexive eye blink accompanying a sneeze to be worthy of moral praise or blame.

Further, in less strict modes of naturalism—where the possibility of agency is sometimes admitted, even if conceptualized as indeterminism and random activity—the nature of morality itself is often thought to be accounted for by means of entirely natural explanations (see, e.g., De Caro & Macarthur, 2010; Dennett, 2003; Ekstrom, 2001; Strawson, 2008). Psychologists and others have striven to find naturalistic accounts for the moral norms that afflict our conscience. Some psychologists propose evolutionary accounts for the origins of morality, while others find sociological accounts more to their tastes (see, e.g., the essays in Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). In nearly every case, however, moral norms are thought of as either the product of human evolution that only serve the survival interests of the species, or as the product of complex and abstract social forces that—if not also developed in the interests of the survival of the community—were developed to advantage powerful social groups over less

powerful parties. In neither case, however, is the idea of an active, involved, and loving God deemed necessary to developing an adequate account of the origins, nature, or meaning of our moral sensibilities.

Given this reduction of moral truth in naturalistic accounts, it is entirely understandable that "psychology has come to compete for and in large measure usurp the cultural and intellectual space once occupied by religion, literature, and moral philosophy" (Gantt, 2005, p. 53). In fact, Gantt (2005) explains, "It has become commonplace in our society to believe that psychologists not only hold the keys that will unlock the mystery of suffering but also possess the techniques necessary for eliminating it. Because of this assumption, psychologists are often afforded the sort of status and respect that was in earlier times reserved for priests and prophets" (p. 53). Indeed, much of modern psychotherapy seems to revolve around discerning the variables that account for a client's suffering, and adjusting those variables as necessary to alleviate that suffering. In this way, a person's moral choices are often sidelined as fundamentally irrelevant to his or her qualitative experience of life. In fact, in many psychotherapeutic traditions it is deemed unethical to bring moral or religious beliefs into the consulting room—the presumption being, at least it seems, that any healing the client undergoes must be occur in the absence of any (explicit) moral distinctions between right and wrong.

The Book of Mormon and Moral Accountability

Latter-day Saint psychologists who wish to take the Book of Mormon seriously will notice, however, that the Book of Mormon is laced with moral imperatives, and saturated with warnings about the consequences of moral transgression. This is closely related the issue of moral agency. Lehi, for example, teaches that "the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself" and that "man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other" (2 Ne. 2:16). However, Lehi is at pains to show that this capacity to act, to be "enticed by the one or the other," is not simply a matter of being free to choose whatsoever one might wish from amongst competing alternatives that have no intrinsic moral distinctions between them, as though moral agency were limited solely to the ability to do whatsoever one might wish. Rather, Lehi instructs his sons that agency is not simply the capacity to do whatever we might happen to want to do, with no moral strings attached and personal preference the sole criteria for action, but that agency is fundamentally moral agency and, thus, is about doing what one ought to do (see also Williams, 2005, p. 118).

For moral agents to know what one ought to do, however, requires access to a source of truth and a world in which to operate where there is a genuine moral topography and the consequences of one's acts are respected. Thus, Lehi states:

> And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given. Wherefore men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, though the great Mediator or all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself. (2 Ne. 2:26-27).

Rather, to be human is to be at the very root the sort of being who is capable of acting for the sake of genuinely meaningful moral purposes and in truly morally meaningful ways (Gantt & Williams, in press; Williams & Gantt, 2013). Further, our freedom lies in being able to choose between good and evil – a moral distinction that is eliminated in deterministic accounts of human behavior.

Further, the moral norms that so often afflict our conscience do not always have natural origins—that is, their origins cannot be found solely in the chance-ridden processes of evolution or human invention. Rather, the Book of Mormon speaks frequently about heavenly messengers that communicate moral instruction to mankind, as well as about a universal dispensation of moral discernment through the light of Christ: "For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil" (Moroni 7:16). Psychological theories that do not acknowledge the inherency of human conscience, its divine origins, and

our innate ability to discern between right and wrong in our daily activities, cannot fully account for human behavior (such as seemingly ceaseless attempts to rationalize and justify wrong action).

Further, in the world depicted by the Book of Mormon, our actions and choices have inescapable consequences in our lives. While not all unhappiness and suffering in the world is the result of sin (or, at least, the sin of the afflicted party), it does seem that the Book of Mormon teaches that sin often leads to suffering (see, e.g., Alma 41:10-11). It may very well be that some of the distress for which many people seek the help of psychologists can (and ought to) be addressed in moral terms. Further, the Book of Mormon strongly implies that seeking communion with God ought to be a first step in addressing and responding to the suffering of others, regardless of the source and cause of that distress. Indeed, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland may have articulated one of the implications that the Book of Mormon has for the discipline of psychology (were we to take the Book of Mormon seriously) when he taught:

> Are you battling a demon of addiction – tobacco or drugs or gambling, or the pernicious contemporary plague of pornography? Is your marriage in trouble or your child in danger? Are you confused with gender identity or searching for self-esteem? Do you—or someone you love—face disease or depression or death? Whatever other steps you may need to take to resolve these concerns, come first to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Trust in heaven's promises. In that regard Alma's testimony is my testimony: "I do know," he says, "that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions." (Holland, 2006, p. 70)

That is, while not implying that all emotional and mental distress or suffering is the consequence of sin on the part of the sufferer, we can still readily acknowledge that Jesus Christ, His life, death, and resurrection, is relevant in addressing all forms of suffering in this world. The Book of Mormon teaches that God condescended to become man (1 Nephi 11:26) and suffered "pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind," so that, as noted earlier in this paper, he might know "how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11-12). We do not believe that we can take the Book of Mormon seriously and at the same time relegate Christ and His suffering to the sidelines of psychotherapy theory or practice.

A Quick Word about the Natural Man

Clearly, any psychology grounded in the truth claims and intellectual insights of the Book of Mormon must ground itself in the reality of moral agency and, thereby, reject the presumption that human beings can be adequately studied and accounted for by means of fundamentally naturalistic or necessarily deterministic forms of inquiry and explanation. Likewise, any Latter-day Saint wishing to take the Book of Mormon seriously as an intellectual guide for psychological study must also be willing to radically rethink the very foundations of his or her science, its aims, implications, and basic conceptions of human nature in light of the Book of Mormon's unrelenting claims that moral agency is not only central to human existence but to the very plan of salvation itself. Perhaps, given the relativistic implications that inherently attend any psychology grounded in the philosophy of naturalism and necessary determinism, it is no surprise that Elder Boyd K. Packer (2004) remarked that "The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior" (p. 70).

We have occasionally heard the argument advanced that despite the significant differences between the grounding assumptions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the theories of mainstream psychology, the Gospel does not so much function to replace or overturn secular psychology so much as it provides needed qualifications to an otherwise limited perspective. In other words, secular psychology is reasonably accurate in its account of human nature—or, at least "good enough" insofar as it goes—but is limited somewhat because its findings apply only to the "natural man" (Mosiah 3:19) and not to the humble and penitent follower of God who has been "spiritually born of God" and experienced a mighty change of heart (Alma 5:14). The argument here seems to be, as Smith and Draper (2005) suggest, that "unlike many other doctrines of the gospel, the scriptural portrayal of 'the natural man' does not seem to conflict with the way human nature is depicted in many of the major theories of psychology, which often view humans as determined by bi-

ology or history" (p. 186). Indeed, as they also point out, "one cannot readily imagine a better description of fallen man's tendencies than 'stimulus-response, stimulus-response'" and that "extensive study of the natural man could very well lead one to believe that agency is illusory, truth is relative, and meaning is contextual when not entirely irrelevant" (Smith & Draper, 2005, pp. 186-187). Accordingly, mainstream psychology is "the study of the natural man"—and legitimately so—but is restricted somewhat in its scope and, therefore, somewhat incomplete because "it has not yet considered our divine origin and potential" (Smith & Draper, 2005, p. 187, italics in the original).

We believe, however, that generous defenses of contemporary psychological conceptions of human nature, and the theories and treatments that flow from such conceptions, may be based on an overly hasty reading of King Benjamin's statements about the natural man that are found in the Book of Mosiah. In Mosiah 3:19, one of the more famous scriptural passages in the Book of Mormon, we read:

> For the natural man is an enemy to God and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.

Easily the most striking thing about this verse—at least in relation to the present analysis—is the central role that moral agency plays in King Benjamin's description of the "natural man." In stark contrast to what one finds in much of contemporary psychological theory, there is no mention here of the natural man being a natural object compelled to act as he does (i.e., selfishly, immorally, etc.) by natural laws or the deterministic forces of biology or culture. Rather, for King Benjamin, the natural man is defined from the outset in terms of willful rebellion, disobedience, and pridefulness—all of which are fundamentally agentic and moral events. After all, one cannot genuinely rebel or disobey unless one can just as well obey or conform. While the natural man is defined here as an enemy to God, it is not the case that we must read into this passage of scripture that man is an enemy to God by his very nature. Rather, King Benjamin states that it is by virtue of the Fall of Adam that man has become as he chooses to be.

The fundamental reality of human nature presumed throughout King Benjamin's discourse is moral agency. Note, for example, how he teaches that the natural man is and will always be an enemy to God "unless *he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit*" and "*putteth off* the natural man" (Mosiah 3:19, emphasis added). Yielding oneself to the enticing and persuasion of another—in this case the Holy Spirit—is something only moral agents can do. Natural objects subject to the compelling forces of natural laws and deterministic processes do not yield to invitations—no matter how complex or sophisticated their chemical interactions and organic composition might happen to be—because such objects are capable only of responding as they must in consequence of the causal forces and conditions operating on them and governing them. To yield, to submit, to be willing to submit, to be enticed by, or to "putteth off" what one is doing (i.e., rebelling against God), on the other hand, requires moral agency and possibility, genuinely meaningful relationships and a vibrant moral context in which such relationships can arise and flourish.

The main point here, then, is that psychology—at least as found in its mainstream and more popular contemporary formulations—is NOT the study of the natural man and does not embody simply a limited perspective that is otherwise viable quite simply because naturalistic psychology has not even managed to get the nature of the natural man right in the first place. In its embrace of the philosophy of naturalism, and its subsequent rejection of moral agency as fundamental to human nature, contemporary psychology is not so much the study of the natural man as it is the study of the natural man *from the sinful and false perspective of the natural man*. That is, the very psychological theories we find scattered across the landscape of contemporary social science, assuming necessary determinism, psychological egoism, radical materialism, atheism, nihilism, and moral relativism as they do—and as the naturalistic perspective entails—are precisely the sort of accounts of human beings that one would expect to find being championed by a rebellious mankind seeking to evade the moral responsibility incumbent in our mortal existence as moral agents.

The argument we are making here should not be seen as advocating the wholesale rejection of the findings and insights of psychologists and other social scientists, nor should it be read as demanding a full-blown and entirely unique LDS psychology and psychotherapy. Rather, we wish only to draw attention to the fact that the Book of Mormon contains certain basic and significant truth claims about the nature of human nature and that LDS psychologists would do well to carefully and deeply consider such claims as they evaluate rival claims of the naturalistic psychologies in which they have been trained. Such consideration would seem to require, at the very least, a thoughtful and penetrating sifting of theories, methods, and practices that are founded upon (often hidden) naturalistic assumptions that deny or minimize the reality of moral agency and meaning. Somewhat more expansively, it may also require the formulation and championing of alternative modes of research and practice that are not only more attentive to the fundamentally moral and meaningful nature of human agency, but which also rigorously articulates a genuinely theistic framework within which to approach the study of human behavior (for examples of initial forays in this direction, see Coe & Hall, 2010; Jones & Butman, 2011; Larmer, 2012; Slife, Reber, & Lefevor, 2012).

Conclusion

In conclusion, we argue that Latter-day Saint psychologists who take the Book of Mormon seriously will highlight in their work: (1) God's activity, particularly in the world of human affairs; (2) the centrality of agency in their accounts of human behavior; (3) man's moral accountability and the role that Christ and His life and suffering can play in therapeutic healing. This article has really only begun to scratch the surface of the intellectual possibilities for psychology that can be found in the Book of Mormon. We believe that the Book of Mormon has yet much to teach psychology about the nature of human relationships, the sources of religious knowledge and practice, the limits and susceptibilities of human reason, the relationship of forgiveness to psychological and emotional healing, and the proper aims of our motives and desires, among many other things. For example, we believe that the Book of Mormon radically challenges widespread disciplinary and cultural assumptions that human behavior is fundamentally grounded in psychological egoism, or that religious faith is a matter of "mere belief" absent legitimate evidence and that scientific reason produces the only form of reliable knowledge, or that personhood can be adequately accounted for as the mere byproduct of brain function and evolutionary genetics. A defense of such assertions, however, must be left for another time. Suffice it to say that the Book of Mormon truly is a book like no other, and as such demands the most careful and respectful attention from LDS scholars regardless of their particular discipline of study—and not only for its spiritual insights and truth, but also for its intellectual possibilities and depth. Echoing Brother Joseph, the Book of Mormon truly is "the most correct of any book on Earth" and abiding by its precepts will not only bring one "nearer to God" but will also bring them nearer to themselves.

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The Phenomenon of Christ-like Compassion in Non-Christian Settings: A Response to Gantt, Wages, and Thayne

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As a Latter-Day Saint and psychologist, I greatly enjoyed reading Gantt, Wages, and Thayne's article regarding the Book of Mormon as a guide for Mormons in the diverse fields of psychology (as the "keystone" of our science, therapy, etc.). Although generally and largely in agreement with these authors, I would like to offer a friendly critique to extend this thinking into a way in which LDS professionals (particularly therapists) might practice their Christianity in non-Christian settings and do so ethically before non-Christian peers and in a way non-Christian peers might actually understand.

As practicing Christians, Mormons hold to a particular sense of truth or truthfulness; we believe that truth arises from a relationship with God, and that sense of truth perpetuates throughout the lives of His children because we all live *always already* in-relation with Him. For example, in 3 Ne. 13: 4 & 8, Christ tells the people that God "seeth in secret" and that He "knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." In the Book of Alma, Ammon tells King Lamoni, "He looketh down upon all the children of men; and he knows all the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Alma 18: 32). On God's side, He is relating to all of His children, intimately aware of them and blessing them. Granted, His children do not always reciprocate that awareness, most living insouciant to His presence. Those aware of Him, however, experience deity in the world in terms of His immanence and transcendence. The phenomenologist Jean-Luc Marion utilizes these terms to describe the Christian experience of God-in-the-world, and applies this term to our experiencing the world itself as well (Marion, 1998; 2002; 2004; 2007). *Immanence*, in this case, refers to the way in which God presents himself in the world, the way in which we feel Him or see His hand active in our world and relationships. Imagine a cup full of water, so full that the water level sits above the rim of the cup, and the slightest motion causes that water to run down the edges. This metaphor sits close to a theist's experience of the Holy Spirit in the world, always cusping and sometimes flowing over in the form of love, comfort, revelation, miracles, etc. However, we also experience God as *transcendent*, the Being beyond infinite depth, that the more we experience of His love, the more we grow in awareness that He loves beyond what we can fathom.

Joseph Smith referred to the Book of Mormon as the "keystone of our religion" (*History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 461), but the heart of that keystone is the atonement of Jesus Christ. All sense of Christian truthfulness arises from the atonement, and a uniquely Mormon sense of this truthfulness we find in the text itself and in the writings of latter-day prophets. Sterling McMurrin, a philosopher of Mormonism,

describes four different ways Mormons understand the workings of the atonement.

The first understanding, and perhaps the simplest, is the "substitution" understanding of the atonement. At its most basic, this understanding entails Christ substituting Himself for us and taking upon Himself all of the suffering warranted by our sins or failings. This model in the minds of Christians begged the question, "Who requires or enforces the suffering placed upon Christ as He substituted Himself for us?" Although I would argue that mortality entails suffering by its very nature (rain falls on the righteous and unrighteous alike—see John 16:33), others inspired by other scripture presented the second and third models of the atonement. In the second model, or "ransom" model, the devil has legitimate claim over those who sin, so God the Father paid the ransom for all by giving the devil His Son. Satan, however, could neither bind nor hold Christ, but Christ *did* take on the requisite amount of suffering (an infinite suffering for an infinite atonement) to satisfy Satan's legitimate claim. In the third model, called the "satisfaction" model, it is the perfect nature of God that makes His presence intolerable to the unclean, so by following Christ and partaking of the atonement, we can be clean like Him and become at-one again with God. The fourth and most modern consideration of the atonement McMurrin calls the "moral" model. In this model, Christ learned of all suffering through his mortal ministry, the ordeal in Gethsemane, and culminating with His death on the cross. By learning all suffering, Christ knew perfectly how to succor all suffering, and He offers Himself as a moral guide relative to how His followers should treat one another, and advocates for us to the Father because He understands our suffering perfectly (McMurrin, 2000). In each of the four cases, Christ, through His infinite love for us, suffered that we will not have to suffer eternally. For His followers who understand His atonement, they find comfort in the presence of His spirit. Although free from eternal suffering, they still suffer the vicissitudes of mortality, so Christ counsels them to love and serve one another as He serves His people (Mosiah 4:15; 23:15; Alma 13:28). Christ made it clear that in order to be counted among his followers, we should love one another as He loved us (John 13: 34-35), and that this love encompasses all people (John 3: 14).

Moral agency, from the perspective of the Restored Gospel, entails the fundamental moment-to-moment engagement with others either in a way that facilitates the power of the atonement, or one that inhibits the power of the atonement. Put simply, moral agency entails loving more or loving less (compared to Christ) as we relate to others in our world. This sense of truthfulness that we love like Christ is an in-relation sense of truth, not a static sense of truth. We live in a world of others, in-relation to them, and in a world of God, in-relation to Him. This epistemology is an epistemology of practice, not an epistemology of empirically received knowledge. From the perspective of an *epistemology of practice*, knowledge becomes a process (a going and trying and trying again) not a static thing (once we receive it we know it). This process unfolds in the present context and in-relation to it, there is no knowledge apart from the context of knowing (Polkinghorne, 1992). For example, "love thy neighbor," one of the two most important and emphasized of Christ's commands (Mark 12:31), does not work under the mainstream psychology epistemology of received knowledge. Although we may receive knowledge of these words, their application requires an epistemology of practice and a moral agent to apply them. As we love our neighbors at church, at home, at work, the way in which we love fits the context of the loving. We love our children, for example, differently than we love our colleagues, and we love our colleagues differently than we love our clients. We love our colleagues enough to go to a dinner party at their house and to take joy in their company. We love our clients differently, however; even when they earnestly invite us to such events, we gently remind them of our role of therapist, and the importance of our remaining outside their social circle so we can provide succor for them which those inside their circle cannot provide.

Our knowledge proves constantly approximate, never fully certain, because the present context eternally unfolds and changes, and with it our exercise of moral agency eternally unfolds and changes (Cook & Wagenaar, 2012). Because of this we often experience tentativeness and humility relative to what the best moral choice may be relative to how we treat our clients, our research subjects, and our colleagues. This same humility applies to the persistent question in our daily professional activities, "To what end do I do

this? Is this a good end?" As well as, "How should I work with this patient? What sorts of studies should I undertake? How should I interpret my data?" We understand the worth of these moral "shoulds" as we ask ourselves these questions in terms of Christ's example, even what we consider "true." As therapists, we do not counsel our clients to live a life that would lead to further bondage in sin, and as researchers we do not pursue methods of predicting and controlling others psychologically contrary to Christ's example. As St. Paul blessed the saints in Ephesus, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all fullness of God" (Eph. 3: 17-20, emphasis in original). The love of Christ is truth for a Christian, informing their moral agency in their world, a knowledge that constantly unfolds in our ever-changing contexts.

This understanding of truthfulness leaves practicing Saints in a difficult position relative to their work in a secular setting. The significant majority of psychologists, for example, do not participate in religious faith, leaving the faithful significantly in the minority (Plante, 2008). Although the American Psychological Association affirms the importance of religious diversity (APA, 2002), they do not specify that Christian epistemologies are welcome in the research and practice of psychology. The reason they do not include diverse epistemologies rests upon the difference between psychology's definition of knowledge and Mormonism's (or most religion's). This difference runs very deep. For example, Gerald Corey, whose textbooks instructors commonly use for counseling and psychotherapy training, cautions his readers quite strongly to never impose their own value system on the client, and to be aware of their own values. In addition, the therapist should support the client's values, regardless of the values of the therapist, and that it is the therapist's job to manage any difficulty arising from a difference between the client's values and their own (Corey, 2012). Managing these moral differences at work can be easy when the moral differences are slight or irrelevant (like when a client's value system may differ in many ways, but the treatment goals work for both therapist and client), but can be quite challenging when the moral differences are large (when the treatment goals cause the therapist to compromise something he/she believes to be true).

By way of example, many years ago in my own clinical training I had clients (and still have clients) who live a different lifestyle than the ones supported in the Book of Mormon. I once counseled a client who lived with his girlfriend, and although I did not think cohabitation before marriage was ideal (which I kept to myself, given that it was irrelevant to the client's presenting problem), both he and I felt motivated to help him improve his patience, understanding, and compassion for his girlfriend. My supervisor at the time expressed her worry that as a Mormon, I would pressure this client to conform to the principles of Mormonism. Only after listening to several tapes of our therapy did her worry decrease.

At the same time I counseled a client who struggled with his sexual orientation relative to his Evangelical faith. This client felt very strong same-sex attraction to other men in his church, and he knew that a few of them felt same-sex attracted as well. He felt very ashamed and guilty because of his ongoing temptation to reach out to these men sexually. Without critical reflection, I processed with him the value of his faith and the worthiness of his very difficult struggle. My supervisor expressed her displeasure upon listening to these tapes and gave me very explicit and direct instruction that should I wish to pass my practicum course, I should encourage him to explore his sexuality with other men. I pointed out to her that counseling him to explore sexual behavior with other men only addresses one part of the problem, and she deftly countered that only exploring sources of succor in his faith did so as well. She elaborated that much of his shame and guilt arose from his religious understanding of his sexuality, causing incongruence between his feeling (sexual attraction to other men) and his thinking (that he should not feel that way nor act upon it). She maintained that to resolve the incongruence he should follow with what he "naturally values" by "listening to his body." Only then could he achieve "healthy sexuality" (sexual feeling and behavior without ambivalence or intra-psychic conflict). She worried out loud that my Mormonism prevented me from counseling him in a healthy way because I imposed my religious values upon him. Highly anxious about

passing my practicum, but also feeling greatly conflicted by her requirements relative to my own values (and the client's expressed values), I asked for a compromise. I would present both sides of the issue and ask the client to explore them with me, namely the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing an Evangelical Christian model of chastity, and the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing sexual contact with other men. Although still torn, I also felt relief when my supervisor reluctantly relented, reminding me to provide her with a tape of that next session. I left feeling like the "intellectual hypocrite" Gannt, Wages, and Thayne refer to.

What I learned all those years ago in my clinical training is that Mormons who work in highly secular settings (like psychology/psychotherapy) can find themselves trapped between seemingly mutually exclusive and mutually incompatible truth claims presented by their faith and their professional field. From these mutually exclusive claims to truth arise equally exclusive moral claims about what we should be doing as a field in our research and practice. As Gantt, Wages, and Thayne pointed out, the moral agency described in the Book of Mormon based in the atonement stands in stark contrast to the determinism arising from naturalism, and both present different moral implications for research and practice. In the case of my experience in supervision with this client, I learned that some psychologists fear religious therapists imposing their values on their clients, so much so that the APA includes carefully crafted language about the role of these values in therapy in their code of ethics (APA, 2002). Likewise, I also learned that secular psychology not only assumes very strong moral positions, but that psychotherapy entails these moral positions constantly and un-ambivalently (Burns, Goodman & Orman, 2013; Tjeltveit, 2003; 2004; Tjeltveit, Fiordalisi, & Smith, 1996; Richardson, Fowers & Guignon, 1996). I will discuss which moral values (specifically) after tracing a brief history of these moral positions.

On the surface, these two moral epistemologies (Mormonism and secular psychology) seem radically incommensurable, and to a degree they are (Draper, 2004; Draper, 2009). Both moral epistemologies arise from deeply rooted philosophical and historical traditions that have pulled increasingly apart. Naturalism, as Gantt, Wages, and Thayne discuss, arises from the natural magic of the medieval age. Slowly refined through the enlightenment, philosophical naturalists shared a desire for knowledge to be certain (if I mix substance A and B together I know I'll get C), replicable (every time I mix A and B together I get C), and universal (anyone who mixes A and B together will get C) (Robinson, 1995). By the modern age, anything uncertain, non-replicable, and non-universal became devalued in their search for certain, replicable, and universal truth (Taylor, 2007). In parallel fashion, Christianity also developed, but rather than embracing a naturalistic form of certainty epistemologically, Christian thinkers instead embraced an epistemology of faith that is uncertain (hence the need for faith itself), non-replicable (people do not always "feel the spirit" or receive revelatory confirmation of questions all the time or in the same way), but still universal in a way (all people are children of God and have—by degrees—the light of Christ) (Lewis, 2009; John 1:9). As I discussed previously, this epistemology is an epistemology of practice within ever-changing context, not a de-contextualized certain knowledge proposed by naturalism.

This issue, certainty vs. uncertainty, lies at the core of the split between psychology (arising from naturalism) and Mormonism (sharing a history with Christianity). Both groups value fundamentally different things epistemologically, so although the Book of Mormon presents an epistemology, those who value the certainty naturalism promises cannot get on board with the epistemology of Mormonism. Likewise, Mormons cannot authentically embrace the epistemology of naturalism, because the assumptions of naturalism imply consequences for how we should think of our fellow man and treat them which Mormons would object to (man as a determined natural object rather than a moral agent). Basically, the study of psychology assuming naturalism is the study of the natural man, and the implications for how we research and treat others are likewise natural-man centric (Smith & Draper, 2005).

In the second example, my supervisor felt concerned that I did not reflexively persuade the client to embrace his sexuality by finding same-sex partners. Indeed, APA has offered unilateral organizational support for same-sex relationships (APA 2010). While we may admire the APA's attempt to fight for justice, some of us worry about the lack of organizational lan-

guage around reconciliation of sexual minorities and Christianity, a language of sexuality tempered with spiritual faith, and looking to the greater good of others by tempering personal desire. Because of this, we find very little organizational help for our clients who struggle with same-sex attraction (or even those who have embraced their sexual identity) as they attempt to understand their place within Mormonism. This process seems highly uncertain and fraught with emotional and spiritual peril.

In this schism between the need for certainty and the embrace of uncertainty psychology needed to discard certain values in order to keep others. They kept the values associated with certainty (objectivism), and discarded those associated with subjectivity (like moral religiosity). As Richardson (2005) described, "Much of modern culture has been marked by this kind of 'give me certainty or give me death' attitude, which upon reflection seems to be neither realistic, mature, nor wise" (p. 25). Because an objectivist science fails utterly to give us morally subjective guidance, morals are regarded as individual, relative, and subjective. Indeed, the fundamental moral position of modern psychology is *moral relativism* and *liberal individualism* (Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999).

Moral relativism, in this case, entails the assumption that morals, by nature subjective and uncertain, will vary greatly across individuals. For example, you can't "know" that Christ's atonement redeems us all in our suffering in the same way that you "know" that mixing baking soda and vinegar will cause a reaction. One knowledge (atonement) seems highly idiosyncratic and uncertain compared to the other (chemical reaction) which you could prove to anyone. Because morals vary greatly from this perspective, and people feel their morals are true to themselves, people should be free to believe what they believe in their individual lives and apply those beliefs in a way that does not harm others. This liberal individualism involves freedom to believe (liberal) and proves highly individualistic (individualism), assuming that moral understanding occurs within an individual, and not across individuals or in-relation. Because moral values and a sense of "good" and "evil" mainstream psychologists view as subjective and individual, it does not fit within their need for certainty in their science. Indeed, when you examine introductory psychology textbooks, references to moral "good" and "evil" are entirely missing (see for example Myers 2011 or Cacioppo & Freeberg 2013 two popular introductory psychology texts). Psychotherapy, an outgrowth of this form of reasoning, always already entails moral relativism (thou shalt not impose thy values upon thy clients) and liberal individualism (thou shalt view thy clients as self-enclosed entities responsible only unto themselves).

With the value of certainty and hence relativism and individualism embraced by psychology on one side, and the value of uncertainty, moral contextualism, and obligation to others embraced by Mormonism on the other side, Mormon psychologists and psychotherapists find themselves trapped between two incommensurable moral positions. In my experience, many throw their hands in the air in the face of the incompatibility of these two positions. Years ago, during my clinical training, I had another supervisor who professed devotion to his LDS faith (and indeed faithfully maintained a leadership position within his congregation), yet simultaneously described himself therapeutically as a behaviorist. I queried as a supervisee how he reconciled the moral agency presented in the Book of Mormon with the determinism he assumed in his psychotherapy practice. His response proves typical in my experience—he presented a dualism in his life, in that his church life was his church life, and his professional life was his professional life, each with a different truth. When I asked if the atonement applied to his clients, he shrugged and waved the question off as "irrelevant" because that's a "totally different issue." In my opinion, indifference is the truest form of contempt, so I pressed gently about how he might reconcile his professional life with his personal life. At that point he expressed his frustration and ended the conversation. His frustration arose (I'm assuming, as it does for others) from the incommensurability of these two moral positions, that of mainstream psychology and that of the Gospel of Christ. Because of their seeming irreconcilability they pull for this intellectual hypocrisy, for this personal/professional dualism rather than holism.

But all is not lost—there is hope for LDS scholars who wish to holistically research, practice, worship, and serve within and without our field. Although rife with new tensions that will grow in focus as we attempt this process, tentatively I would like to offer compassion

as one way of bridging the schism between the personal and professional moral assumptions, and to give the epistemologists of the Restored Gospel a tentative hold in the world of psychology by which they may work. This endeavor proves risky, however, because psychology, as a field rejecting of the truthfulness of religion, will not listen to scripture. Hence, I will use the philosophies of men that are more commensurate with scripture to demonstrate how we might bridge this divide. I find this endeavor risky, because I risk the admonition not to mingle the philosophies of men with scripture. So, to work against that admonition I will start with scripture and will attempt to demonstrate how we can use these ideas to reach out to our colleagues in the world.

The field of psychology, particularly psychotherapy, makes it clear that when there is a difference in moral values (particularly religious moral values) the burden is on the part of the psychologist to either bracket her issues or handle the problems caused by a difference of values. However, when it comes to becoming at-one with another, differences can often prove helpful rather than detrimental, and we do not need to in-authentically "bracket" our values away. We see the most beneficial effect of difference in our relationship with Christ, as manifest through the atonement. Christ gave his life for all people (including our colleagues, research subjects, and clients) to reconcile us with God, and as different as we are from Him and each other, the atonement provides a model for reconciliation. Atonement, in the case of Christ, represents the ultimate propitiation, a word which indicates the process of bringing two people who disagree into agreement, reconciling conflict, or bringing together those who have been estranged (Talmage, 2012). Christ propitiated our relationship with the Father, and offers His sacrifice as a model we can follow to do likewise with our fellow man, especially our colleagues in psychology ("as I have loved you," says Christ, "love one another" [John 13: 34-35]).

The key to understanding this process of propitiation is love, which motivates God and Christ to reconcile all people to Them and to one another (John 13: 34-35; John 3:16; John 15: 13; D&C 42: 29; D&C 34: 3; Moroni 7: 47). In Romans 13: 10, Paul counsels the saints, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Love is so powerful an act that it satisfies the law and brings us closer to God. Love also motivated Christ to condescend into mortal form, so that by experiencing the vicissitudes of the flesh like us he could better reconcile us with the Father (Mosiah 15: 5–9). In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul offers, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make a reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2: 17-18). The Father built into His plan from the beginning the process of embodiment for all, including His beloved Son. For it is in and through the flesh that we are connected with one another compassionately granting us the ability to understand one another in important ways, allowing others to matter to us deeply (in sharp contrast to the assumptions of individualism and relativism).

Secular thinkers, perhaps independently of scripture, noted the importance of embodiment as well, and the relationship between embodiment and compassion (Levinas, 1998; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012; Marion, 2004; 2007; Mensch, 2003; 2009). Although an extended analysis of these philosophies would detract from my current presentation, a simple sketch of these philosophies relative to the incommensurability of the Gospel and Naturalism should suffice.

To these thinkers, our bodies link us and prompt us to share experience through two simultaneous processes, namely imagination and shared embodiment. For example, when we read the journal of one of our forebears, and she writes of her struggles with faith and survival, we can imagine that experience and relate to it. When she writes, "Today was blistering hot and dusty, the soil bucking the plow," we relate to that sentence imagining extreme heat, the smell feel and grit of dust, the hard ground impenetrable despite our efforts. Likewise, when we hear the story of another, whether joyful or tragic, we relate to the experience of that other, through *their* story.

Similarly, we relate to another through their visceral presence, and as they register embodied feeling, we co-experience it with them to a degree. Imagine working with a friend, for example, roofing a house. As you stand to ask him a question, you see him strike his finger with his hammer with some force, and recoil from

the pain. You will probably wince as well. In fact, often times our bodies mirror the experience of others, as reflected in what some scientists call "mirror neurons," the neural tissue that, when scanned, mirrors the same neural activation as the person whose pain we observe (Gallese, 2001). Although the naturalists within psychology have attempted to reduce our nuanced and complex empathic experience to these mere biological processes, they miss the richness that the whole context offers. In essence, we are beings in the world with others and alongside things all informing the rich context of our experience (Polt, 1999). As Merleau-Ponty argues (1945/2012), there can be no discussion of human beings without referencing the body and the social world from which it is inseparable. When I see another, I do not see them separable from our shared social world, like a de-contextualized object, but instead I view the body of another as a body like my own, capable of its own potentiality and of fulfilling its own projects. Because of this "the-other-like-me" experience, I can feel the same moral obligation toward another that I do toward myself. My existence, in this sense, is not a solitary one, but rather a shared co-existence with others within our social world. This being-with others in this whole context relates us to them deeply. As Mensch, (2003) argues,

> Such universality springs from our condition of plurality. We are always already with others. To work with them, we have to anticipate their action; but this requires that we regard the world, not just from our own, but also from their standpoints. It involves our letting ourselves be imaginatively shaped by the latter. Given our lack of immediate access to their memories and anticipations, the attempt to do this is never entirely successful (p. 172).

Although never entirely successful, our connection to others through our mutual experience of having a body can prove very powerful to how and why we relate to, love and serve others. Levinas, for example, in *Otherwise than Being* describes how I resonate with the hunger of another, and I feel as though the bread I eat was "snatched from my mouth" as I share my bread to ease the pain of his hunger (1998, p. 100).

En-pathein lies at the heart of these experiences. *En-pathein,* the root of the word "empathy" comes from the Greek, and it means to "suffer" or "undergo." Whether we observe the injured thumb of our friend on the roof, or the hunger of a child as we attempt to eat our bread, we suffer mortality and undergo all it brings together. As Mensch describes the process, "in its basic etymological sense, empathy is a feeling (a suffering or undergoing) of the world in and through another person. Flesh is our capacity to suffer and undergo. Tasking myself as another in empathy, I take up the other person's standpoint, letting myself be determined by his situation" (2003, p. 172). This determination is not an agency-removing determination, but one that entails visceral feeling and experience. One that requires us, should we wish to avoid this experience, to actively objectify or dehumanize the other (Draper, et. al, in press).

Although these philosophers present a thoroughly worldly interpretation of the phenomenon of empathy, we see important parallels that may help us bridge the incommensurable gap between mainstream psychology and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As I stated above, Christ undertook the harsh vicissitudes of mortality which required him to undergo the sometimes brutal coils of the flesh with its incumbent temptation and suffering. Because of this experience of the flesh, Christ serves as a perfect advocate for us with the Father (Hebrews, 7:25; 9: 24; 2 Nephi 2: 9; Mosiah 15: 8; D&C 29: 5). Embodiment proves so important and so powerful that even Deity condescended Himself into this frail mortal form to better love His people. So powerful was this experience of embodiment for Christ, so powerfully did it connect Him with all people, that He relates infinitely well with all people. In this relation, He commands that we then exercise compassion for one another as well, to the extent that such love for one another fulfills the law (as mentioned above). This implies that the ways in which we become caught up in moral differences between us and others pale in the importance of the moral virtue of love and compassion.

Empathy, a thin version of this deep compassion, stands as a core tenet to much of psychology and psychotherapy, offering LDS researchers and therapists a tenuous connection by which to resolve this morally incommensurable divide. The APA ethics code (2002) already entails aspirational virtues informed by a deep concern for the welfare of others. These virtues are *autonomy* (promoting self-determination in others), *non-maleficence* (doing no harm), *beneficence*

(promoting the dignity and welfare of others), *justice* (treating all people fairly), *fidelity* (loyalty, dependability), and *veracity* (truthfulness). The authors of the ethics code, inspired by these virtues, then attempted to codify specific ethical rules relative to each one. LDS therapists and scholars can contribute morally to research and practice of this ethical code by living out these higher virtues in their work and encouraging their colleagues to do the same. Too often people follow the letter of the law (the letter of the ethical code) and fail to live up to the aspirational virtues behind the law (or code, in this case), which can lead to great suffering (Mensch, 2003).

However, just pointing to, and living out, these higher and aspirational values does not mean that there are no differences in how an LDS scholar and a non-LDS scholar interpret and understand these virtues. For example, the value of autonomy stands as a central value in Mormonism and key to understanding moral agency. In the Book of Mormon Moroni raises the Standard of Liberty, a rallying call to all who follow Christ in those difficult times, which read, "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children" (Alma 46:12). Freedom creates autonomy, or the ability to self-govern. Even today, we see the modern Church emphasize freedom from debt, addiction, dependency and the importance of self-sufficiency (see http://www.lds.org/topics/welfare for an example of the importance of these principles for Latter-day Saints). For a mainstream psychologist, however, *autonomy* means *liberal individualism* and a contradictory moral relativism (as defined above), or the value of looking after one's own desires irrespective of the needs of others. The LDS psychologist has an opportunity in this case to present another understanding of autonomy.

Autonomy, to a Mormon, does not mean "I look after myself," but rather "I am free from those things that would prevent me from loving and serving others." This may seem directly contradictory to a mainstream psychologist, but other non-LDS scholars have argued for similar principles. Erich Fromm, an influential figure in the history of psychology argues that we need to concern ourselves not just with "freedom from" (oppression, disease, addiction, suffering), but also "freedom to" (love, grow, serve, develop, contribute) (Fromm, 1941). To keep our valid place morally in the field of psychology and to stand as a positive influence on our colleagues, we can gently and consistently work towards helping people become free to love, serve, and grow. Compassion, for an LDS psychologist, does not entail self-centered ways of being, which seem deeply problematic from a moral agency perspective, but rather an other-oriented way of being which gives our moral agency greater meaning.

We see this other-orientation in the LDS understanding of beneficence. To an LDS psychologist informed by moral agency, beneficence means doing good to others in a way that also increases their capacity to do good for others. "Good" then is not an individual good (my personal needs and wants are fulfilled) but a collective good (I'm healthy enough to love and serve others, especially those too incapacitated to do likewise). Beneficence then, entails not just seeing temporarily to the immediate wants and needs of others, but rather a concern for what will contribute to the collective welfare for as many people as possible for as long as possible. Again, this seems to stand in stark contrast with the assumed moral position within mainstream psychology.

Liberal individualism and moral relativism, as discussed above, did not arise in a vacuum. To offer a very brief sketch of another way of looking at the departure of these morals from shared in the western tradition to subjective and individual, I'll start with Neitzche's observations that God is dead in the hearts of men, and that rational people (like scientists) killed Him (Nietzsche, 1974; Vanahain, 2011). As I mentioned previously, the quest for certainty required those who believed themselves rational to exclude uncertainty. Although a rigorous history lies beyond the scope of my current text, evolution of man seemed far more certain and rational compared to the genesis of a deity-created man. Therefore, rational scholars observed that evolution (being certain) informed their understanding of the human experience. Part of that human experience is the cultural values of morality, which vary significantly between groups. Therefore, they understood these values as relative to a degree.

Because all human beings are subject to evolution however, the forces of evolution transcend culture. Evolution entails survival as a universal value, and those behaviors that lead to survival are rational, while those that work against survival are irrational. Often,

pleasurable or enjoyable activities (like eating, sleeping, lovemaking) also facilitate survival. Some difficult or unpleasant activities work against survival (going without sleep, fasting, and abstinence). Therefore, pleasure became a "good" due to its association with survival of the fittest. When we look at articles in psychology, we see this assumed good quite frequently. For example, when examining studies on religiosity and well-being, we see that religious people had an easier time coping with lost loved ones, and better adapted to the loss (Keeley, 2004); adolescents who are religious have greater social capital, and hence are more academically successful than their non-religious peers (Pamela & Furrow, 2004); religious people suffer from less anxiety and have more coping resources than non-religious people (Shreve-Neiger & Edelstein, 2004); undergraduate students who are participating Christians are more mentally and physically healthy than those who are not (Francis, et al. 2003); religious children demonstrate better coping skills after a divorce (Greeff & Van Der Merwe, 2004); and people who are actively religious forgive those that have traumatized them at a higher rate than those who are not. Hence, religious people become happy again sooner (Leach & Lark, 2004).

In essence, this research demonstrates that religion is good because it promotes pleasure (happiness, health, success, etc.). Note that the authors in psychology do not make the claim that religion is good because it requires great personal sacrifice and suffering at times—that idea is contrary to their values. This has an unfortunate side effect in the field and in our culture. As Richardson, Fowers, and Guignon observe, "The direct pursuit of security and happiness, when it defines what life is all about, seems to increasingly dissolve the capacity to respect and cherish others" (1999, p. 51). The moral agency model of the Book of Mormon offers Latter-day Saints an opportunity to dialogue on this issue. Granted, it requires a compromise of us, as our place in this field often does, but we can support the research and practice around volunteerism, altruism, and service-to-others (see Sneed & Cohen, 2013; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Musick & Wilson, 2003 for examples of research and theory in this area). Granted, for LDS scholars, the good of others stands as a good in-itself, regardless of the pleasurable or painful effect it has on us personally or collectively, but even within a field focused on the pleasure of the self we might offer a better way as we define it.

We find ourselves in good company within psychology, relative to looking out for the good of others as a value in-itself. Alfred Adler argued for a form of compassion and concern for others he called "social interest." "Social interest" according to him "means feeling with the whole, under the aspect of eternity. It means striving for a form of community which must be thought of as everlasting, as it could be thought of if mankind had reached the goal of perfection" (Rychlak, 1981, p. 137). Although Adler uses the term "eternity" and "perfection" from the perspective of social evolution rather than the LDS understanding of these terms, we still see that LDS psychologists do not stand alone valuing compassion and beneficence and how that requires us to look farther ahead than an immediate need or desire. We have a position from which we might validly engage with mainstream psychology without deluding ourselves that psychology as a field will change its moral position.

If we examine the other four moral virtues (non-maleficence, justice, veracity, and fidelity) as Latter-day Saints, we find that we can share those values in good conscience and non-hypocritically. However, we value these virtues for different reasons and toward different ends than the mainstream. Our end, as LDS psychologists, entails doing Christ's work to love and serve others compassionately, with a long-term view of what will do the best good for the largest number of people over the longest time. "Good" in this case, means Christ-like attributes He has commanded all of us to embody. For example, as I teach classes, write, research, and work in therapy I do so not just concerned with the immediate happiness of those who I serve, but rather the welfare of those they come in contact with.

A potential philosophy that might help us as we attempt to wrestle with these incommensurable values between Mormonism and mainstream psychology is dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984; 1986a; 1986b; 1986c; Moreson & Emerson, 1990; Baxter, 2004, Draper, Green, & Faulkner, 2009). Dialogue entails people coming together and communicating in such a manner wherein both are transformed to a degree. Given that LDS psychologists stand greatly outnumbered, it seems unrealistic that we can affect the field to a large

degree, but often times the small differences can matter. A method of facilitating this dialogue is to adopt an attitude of openness, even if our colleagues do not (Polizzi & Draper, 2013). Openness, in this case, does not entail giving up our integrity, but rather looking to how our deeply held values can fit into a given context. For example, how might we research in a more Christlike fashion? We would probably formulate our questions, gather our data, and interpret our results in a slightly different way, one with greater compassionate concern for the research subjects and interpreted from the frame of facilitating greater compassion. Likewise, for therapy we would counsel compassionately in a way that models compassion for our clients and therefore serves more people than just the clients themselves, while acknowledging that the best course of action for ourselves and our clients will not necessarily lead to immediate relief or happiness, but rather an appreciation for, and an acceptance of, some forms of suffering insofar as it facilitates compassion and service.

We could also model openness by humbly embracing uncertainty. The Liahona serves as an example of this. Lehi's family found themselves wandering in the wilderness, much as we wander through our lives. The Liahona served to guide them in the way they should go in a day-to-day manner. Alma clearly states that this compass works like the word of Christ, which can guide us in a moment-to-moment fashion as we engage with the world (Alma 37: 42-45). As Latter-day Saints we can certainly use this guidance as we engage with our secular colleagues who will not tolerate references to scripture because it will point us the way to make the greatest good out of our research or practice in a way they can understand or tolerate. By doing so, we will actually exercise the moral agency that Gantt and his colleagues discuss, a moral agency that can inform the field through our efforts, and can certainly inform our own theoretical, research, and clinical work.

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Book of Mormon Premises in Psychology and Psychotherapy: A Unique Approach?

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Reading Gantt, Wages and Thayne's (2014) "The Keystone of our Science: Exploring the Premises and Promises of the Book of Mormon for Psychology and Psychotherapy" was something like a breath of fresh air for me, and I am pleased with the opportunity to write a response. I appreciated the unapologetic and yet scholarly manner in which the authors placed the Book of Mormon at the center of their proposed framework for psychology and psychotherapy. I understand that these authors might be considered part of the "choir," but from my perspective it is about time that psychologists (and not just LDS or religious ones) begin to openly and honestly acknowledge the values that inescapably structure their work. Religious psychologists should no more be ashamed of how their beliefs—about human nature and relationships, the purpose of life, the possibility of change, etc.—inform their work any more than the psychoanalytic, behavioristic, humanistic, or otherwise naturalistic psychologists are ashamed of their foundational beliefs.

In my opinion, the authors made good use of their available space by articulating some of the dominant assumptions of naturalistic psychology and presenting alternatives derived from, or at least compatible with, Book of Mormon (and thus LDS) beliefs. Their approach was necessarily somewhat general, as they acknowledged, but as the authors intended, it does provide a good "conceptual [place] where one might begin to explore the possibility of a psychology grounded in the teachings of the Book of Mormon" (p. 4). Accordingly the authors considered three pervasive assumptions in psychology: philosophical naturalism, (its attendant) determinism, and moral relativism; and contrasted these with three incompatible alternatives supported by Book of Mormon doctrines: God's activity in the world (theism), moral agency, and moral accountability. They also included an excellent exploration of the meaning of the "natural man" as described in the Book of Mormon, contrasted with psychological assumptions about human nature.

Other contributions of the article by Gantt, et al. (2014) might include (but of course are not limited to) opening a dialogue on the topic, providing a framework for LDS psychologists that is compatible with their core beliefs, and providing an opportunity to flesh out, challenge, and push some of these ideas a bit farther. I appreciate the opportunities thus presented and so will make use of my response by employing the following question in an effort to explore further

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some of the topics raised by the authors: "How is this a uniquely Book of Mormon approach?" I will be drawing on many of the same Book of Mormon verses highlighted by Gantt et al., but hopefully considering them through the lens of this question will yield additional insights. Exploring ways in which the principles outlined by Gantt et al. might be more or less unique, as described in the Book of Mormon, might help clarify how this approach could make a difference in addressing the very old tensions between naturalistic and theistic assumptions about human nature, development, and healing.

How is this a uniquely Book of Mormon approach?

I do not ask this question to imply that the approach described by Gantt et al. (2014) *must* draw on doctrines *unique* to the Book of Mormon in order to be legitimately called "a psychology grounded in the teachings of the Book of Mormon" (p. 4). There are other reasons than creating a uniquely LDS psychology for supporting theism, moral agency, and moral accountability with teachings from the Book of Mormon—for example, to insure compatibility of our work with our beliefs and thus avoid "sloppy compatibilism or naïve hypocrisy" (Gantt et al., p. 18). It might also help some avoid the years of angst (experienced by myself) associated with being a serious theist working in a predominantly non-theistic, if not atheistic, field.

I ask the question because I think it might be useful in fleshing out the foundational beliefs underlying this approach, and perhaps pushing these ideas a bit farther. One does not have to look far to find serious theists outside of the LDS faith who believe strongly in moral agency and accountability. In spite of the influence of Calvinism, many of our Protestant neighbors hold not only to the serious theism inherent in Christianity (if Christianity is taken seriously), but also to a belief in moral agency and accountability. And although they may vary in the degree of emphasis placed on God's ongoing activity in the world, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and some religions that grew up farther to the East tend to acknowledge if not emphasize moral agency and accountability.

One response might be: Great! Then a psychology grounded in these teachings from the Book of Mormon might speak to a wider audience and not always "[remain] firmly in the minority" or "make little headway in changing the [discipline]" (Gantt et al., 2014, p. 17). Relegation to the fringe might be a real possibility if this approach were *uniquely* "Mormon." But illustrating the possibility of widespread agreement with the principles highlighted by Gantt et al. is also not the primary intent of my question. I want to dig a bit deeper into these teachings from the Book of Mormon to find out ways in which they might indeed be unique in their ability to: 1) help heal theisms and theists that have arguably been weakened by their long association with naturalistic science and psychology, in ways that more common formulations of these ideas have not, and 2) make inroads with the same healing influence to a world and people long saturated with naturalism and naturalistic psychology.

I believe the Book of Mormon is uniquely designed to challenge the naturalistic assumptions prevalent in our society for at least two reasons: First, it was written for our day (Mormon 8), when miracles (vs 26), the power of God (v. 28) and accountability would be denied (vs. 31). Even in the modern Christian world, including among LDS people, these truths are often downplayed or misunderstood. For example, miracles are often believed to be rare supernatural (outside of nature) incursions into the natural world from an otherwise separate spiritual reality. The power of God is often relegated primarily to a first cause, such as the creation, with a mechanistic nature largely running on its own after an initial act of God. And accountability is often downplayed through a misunderstanding of love, grace, and forgiveness. Second, as President Benson taught (Benson, 1988), the Book of Mormon brings people to Christ both by testifying of Christ and by exposing anti-Christ philosophies of the sort highlighted by Gantt et al. (2014). So with the intent of further exploring unique ways in which the Book of Mormon challenges these naturalistic philosophies, I use the remainder of my allotted space to dig a bit deeper into theism, moral agency, and accountability as described in the Book of Mormon.

Theism (and non-dualism)

Gantt et al. (2014) have articulated well the Book of Mormon doctrine that "the Creator is not a hypothesis…but an actual person, the living Christ who is con-

tinually involved…" (p. 11). There are many throughout the world who embrace this theistic premise, but a closer look at how it is described in the Book of Mormon might help us understand unique ways in which the Book of Mormon challenges naturalistic alternatives.

In the Book of Alma (chapter 30) we find an interesting dialogue that seems to prefigure some of the recent debates between the "new atheists" and believers. Korihor is brazen in using naturalistic arguments in a predominantly theistic society. It seems unlikely that such arguments would emerge in the imagination of a young Joseph Smith in the context of the religious fervor in which he found himself in the early 1800s, but a brief internet search today will reveal an abundance of such arguments—supporting the idea that this book was "written for our day" (Benson, 1988, p. 58; see also Mormon chapter 8).

Korihor's arguments centered on the idea that one cannot know that which is not experienced with the physical senses, prefiguring today's narrow empiricism, and he relegated religious belief to the "effect of a frenzied mind" (verse 16). This is a psychological claim! A similar claim was made by the likes of Freud, who described religious belief as "a system of wishful illusions" analogous to a collective "neurosis" (Freud, 1961, p. 43). Skinner was only slightly kinder in describing religious views as a function of positive and negative reinforcement, with God and heaven being simply an imaginary personification of positive reinforcement, and hell and the devil a personification of punishment (Skinner, 1953).

From his naturalistic beliefs, Korihor also derives a philosophy of living, pointing to some of the possible implications of naturalism for contemporary applied psychology:

> Every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature; therefore every man prospered according to his genius, and that every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime" (verse 17)

We see in Alma's response, a potential pathway for bringing healing to clients and to a discipline long steeped in philosophies similar to Korihor's. Alma's response contrasts both with Korihor's naturalism and with the view, prevalent among many modern theists, that the present world is so fallen as to make it quite distant from spiritual realities. This latter assumption slides toward the deistic belief that God is no longer involved with the world, and the dualistic idea that the spiritual and physical realms are so separate that interaction between them is rare and inexplicable at best, or perhaps non-existent. These influential philosophies, deism and dualism, which seek to reconcile naturalism and belief in God by granting each its separate space, have been described as little more than functional atheism (Slife & Reber, 2009; Richardson & Slife, 2013). In the words of Gantt et al. (2014), such a deistic or dualistic God "might as well be non-existent because He is, for all meaningful intents and purposes, so profoundly passive as to be entirely uninvolved with the world" (p. 11). In contrast, Alma claims:

> Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also all the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator. (verse 44)

In Alma's view, God's activity is inseparable from the material universe as well as lived experience. God speaks to humankind—to Korihor's living brethren as well as to prophets as recorded in scripture—and created and upholds the universe as evidenced both in its existence and continuous motion.

Alma also links his theistic beliefs to a philosophy of living, which includes service on behalf of others without expectation of monetary reward, a valuing of truth, and rejoicing in the joy of others (verses 33-34). Korihor's philosophy of living is focused on management of the self, whereas Alma's is focused on service to others. Alma's theism highlights the tendency of belief in a divine Father, who both transcends and unites mortal beings, to bring us out of ourselves.

This contrast in worldviews does not require the therapist or theoretician to preach one worldview or the other to his or her non-believing clients or students. However, there is nothing to prevent us from articulating these contrasting worldviews and their implications for living to our clients, students, or colleagues. Those we associate with are then equipped to consider or adopt theistic alternatives if they so

choose, whereas a thoroughly naturalistic psychology obscures such an alternative. This method of juxtaposing alternative worldviews and their implications for living can, of course, be derived from other sources outside of the Book of Mormon. However, it is rarely articulated in so clear and plain a fashion.

When working with clients, students or colleagues who may be less antagonistic to religious belief, the lessons we can derive from the Book of Mormon become increasingly unique when taken as a whole. Speaking to King Lamoni, whose mind had been opened by Ammon's dedicated service (his theistic philosophy of living), Ammon searched for common beliefs that would facilitate communication and understanding. "Believest thou that there is a God?" Ammon asks (Alma 18:24). Lamoni responds that he doesn't understand the question. But Ammon has done his homework. He is culturally literate. Using the terminology of his "client", Ammon rephrases the question: "Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit?" (verse 26). On receiving an affirmative answer, Ammon proceeds to build his bridge of influence and ultimately healing: "This is God" (verse 28). He continues building on and extending Lamoni's belief, not only in the existence of God, but also in an active God whose "Spirit dwelleth in me, which giveth me knowledge, and also power according to my faith and desires which are in God" (verse 35).

Rarely do we find this sort of ecumenical building on common beliefs across diverse faith traditions. Even though common ground in philosophies of living has been found and emphasized across theistic traditions, the idea that the "other" is worshipping a different or even false god remains prevalent. Atheists have capitalized on such divisions to undermine confidence in theistic approaches. In order to provide a convincing alternative to the prevalent naturalism in the world, it would be valuable for theists to follow Ammon's example and build on common beliefs—creating a more unified voice and vocabulary.

Outside of a religious example, such as the above, the technical aspect of this bridge-building approach is not foreign to psychologists who are often skilled in beginning with what clients, students, or colleagues know and believe before attempting to expand those beliefs. Drawing theistic understandings into this dynamic process may begin to illustrate the potential strength of using the Book of Mormon as a unique "keystone of our [psychological] science" (Gantt et al., 2014).

Further, and perhaps even more unique, possibilities in this regard are revealed in Book of Mormon accounts of how prophets address people who already share beliefs, but who seem hampered by fears, doubts, or apparent tensions within their faith. As I hinted above, some of those tensions may result from the notion that spiritual things are separate from temporal things. This view, followed to its logical end, might suggest to some that although God exists he is likely so far removed from us as to have little concern for our personal struggles. This belief prevents many from fully drawing on God's power of healing and at-one-ment (re-union).

If spiritual things are so separate from temporal, how can I ever be at one within myself—mind, spirit and body—much less with others? Nephi's brothers believed in God, but had a difficult time imagining that God would be interested in their personal questions and struggles (1 Nephi 15:8-9). They also apparently struggled to understand the relevance of spiritual things for their temporal existence, which might have caused them to ask whether Nephi was speaking of only spiritual realities, or whether his explanations also included "things which are temporal" (1 Nephi 15:31). Nephi responds in part that he was speaking of things "both temporal and spiritual" (verse 32), refusing to buy in to an absolute division of these aspects of reality. He also has reminded them:

> Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said?—If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you. (verse 11)

God is described as imminent, responsive; and spiritual and temporal realities as interwoven. This latter idea is expounded in the Doctrine and Covenants (29:31-34), where all things are described as spiritual unto God, reminiscent of Alma's claim that all things testify of God. There can be no serious dualism or deism in this framework; God is readily accessible for the process of healing as well as learning and understanding. With the combination of these elements of truth about God and spiritual realities—including insights into how we might speak about them with people with

whom we share beliefs as well as those who believe differently—we may be approaching a psychology uniquely grounded in the Book of Mormon.

Moral agency (and accountability)

Testimony of the existence and nature of moral agency and accountability is indeed one of the gems of the Book of Mormon, and although an emphasis on these principles can indeed be derived from other sources, it is rarely so clearly articulated. For example, Bible-only believers have debated the nature of human agency for centuries and there remain many who profess to believe firmly in the Bible and yet largely deny moral agency. Some Christians support the notion that an individual is saved by their choice to exercise faith in Christ, which includes obedience to his commandments. Others assert that humans have little if anything to say about whether they are saved or damned, the choice is God's, not ours (e.g. Calvinist).

Gantt et al. (2014) link a belief in moral agency to the Book of Mormon assertion that human beings are "free to act" (2 Nephi 10:23) in at least one regard: "to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life." This assertion that agency exists is helpful in anchoring a psychology *compatible* with the Book of Mormon, but it may not go far enough in describing an approach that is uniquely *grounded* in the Book of Mormon.

A closer look at agency in the Book of Mormon reveals an astonishingly rich understanding of the relationship between agency and determinism, and among antecedents, choices and consequences. The Book of Mormon can be interpreted as describing three aspects of what might be called a type of determinism: 1) Some things are created to be acted upon, 2) Some antecedents are predetermined from the beginning, but these fixed and predetermined antecedents *enable*, rather than constrain agency, and 3) consequences are inescapably determined by actions—even though those consequences apply to agentic beings (the Law of Justice). Rather than being set up as mutually exclusive descriptions of reality, agency and determinism in the Book of Mormon are described as co-constituting one another.

The first aspect of Book of Mormon determinism mentioned above describes a contrast between things that were created to act, and things that were created to be acted upon (2 Nephi 2:14). This description fills in a conceptual hole that exists when either agency or determinism are described as mutually exclusive descriptions of the whole of reality. In fully deterministic accounts, there are certainly things being acted upon by causal antecedents, but the antecedents are themselves described as pre-determined—as things acted upon by other acted upon things. So there is a kind of infinite regression of non-teleological causality with no agent. Everything in the universe is rolling around being acted upon, and only incidentally (or accidentally) "acting" upon other things. We essentially have effects acting upon effects accidentally, which is really no meaningful action at all—and no meaningful cause. There are things to be acted upon, but nothing to act upon them in any meaningful sense.

A fully agentic universe has the reverse problem, everything is acting and nothing is being acted upon. If even the rocks might choose to respond to or resist what could be no more than persuasive attempts to fling them, we would have an interesting universe indeed—but it would be quite different than the one we currently observe. In reality we observe exactly what the Book of Mormon describes, things that act, and things that are acted upon. In the former we find agency, in the latter determinism; these things acted upon have no other options available to them. This distinction is described also by Isaiah (10:15) and reflected in 2 Nephi (20:15) where the Lord asks rhetorically, and almost humorously, whether axes and saws and staffs can act against the human agents that use them.

However this simple contrast between agentic and determined things becomes more complicated when we understand that the Isaiah metaphor is using these "acted upon" objects to symbolize humans who try to resist God's power (e.g. the Assyrian king). At the same time the agentic human wielding the ax, saw and staff is used to symbolize God. One begins to understand the apparently irreconcilable conflicts, even confusion, among Bible-only believers regarding agency and determinism as they apply to the salvation of the human race.

Here the Book of Mormon brings much needed clarity by describing ways in which actions are in some sense both freely chosen and pre-determined by antecedents, and ways in which the truly agentic actions

that follow these antecedents result in predetermined consequences. The agency that takes place in between pre-determined antecedents and pre-determined consequences is not unlimited, but it is the fulcrum of meaningful existence. Little is said about particular "lifestyle" choices. The Book of Mormon centers agency on what can be described as a single but enormous choice: that between life and death (2 Nephi 10:23), or between atonement and separation and isolation.

This choice is alternatively described as being between liberty and captivity (2 Nephi 2:27), which helps clarify the meaning of "life" and "death" and provides greater insight into the relationship between agency and determinism. Captive, or dead, things cannot choose; they have no liberty. Free, or living, things can choose; and thus remain in the category of things that act. In this sense, the Book of Mormon teaches that the question of whether or not human action is determined or agentic depends on a choice. Nephi suggests that we are able to choose between agency (life) or determinism (death).

In this description we find a rather ingenious solution to the agency versus determinism problem, echoed in William James' deceptively simple decision (Perry, 1935/1974):

> I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life. I finished the first part of Renouvier's second Essais and see no reason why his definition of free will—the sustaining of a thought because I choose to when I might have other thoughts'—need be the definition of an illusion. At any rate, I will assume for the present—until next year—that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will. (p. 323).

This view contrasts with the deterministic unconscious forces of pyschodynamic theory, the deterministic environment of Thorndike and Skinner, and perhaps even the ubiquitous (and so in some senses deterministic) self-actualizing tendency described by the humanists. James humorously chooses to believe at least *"until next year"* that the choice to *sustain* a particular thought when others are possible is not an illusion. If James can choose to believe in agency, it exists. If he can choose to deny it, it still exists. But in choosing to deny one's ability to choose, one would essentially have to "say that the sun does not shine while he sees it" (Smith, 1965, p. 358)—which may be perhaps one of the most troubling descriptions of captivity and death.

This description of the possibility of losing agency by denying it is a damning indictment of deterministic psychologies; but the reverse possibility, which also constitutes this description, has powerful therapeutic implications. We may be constrained in many of our lesser choices, but in this one central choice—between being an actor and being an object to be acted upon, between living in an agentic or a deterministic world—it is our choice alone that can *determine* the outcome.

In this understanding that our choices determine outcomes or consequences we find another way in which the Book of Mormon acknowledges determinism: In the inescapability of Justice, or moral accountability, and our inability to redeem *ourselves* from the demands of justice. But to understand how such demands make sense in light of agency, we also need to understand how predetermined antecedents *enable*, rather than constrain, choice.

The Book of Mormon is clear that humankind could *not* act, we would indeed live in a deterministic world, if it weren't for the existence of opposition. As Gantt et al. (2014) mentioned, Lehi explains that, "man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other" (2 Nephi 2:16). These two possibilities for action, choosing life or death are represented by the antecedent existence of the tree of life and the forbidden fruit (vs. 15)—the former giving life and the latter leading to death. Since Adam and Eve were already alive, the tree of Life offered no additional opportunities for growth or agency until after death came into the world, at which time the tree of life became central to the possibility for growth and agency. So it was the forbidden fruit that initially offered the possibility of choice, and the tree of life (Christ) that finished the job of bringing meaningful agency into the world.

With the introduction of the tree of knowledge (representing possibility for agency), God warned that Adam and Eve would "surely die" (choose death) if they partook of the fruit; "nevertheless", he said, "thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given thee" (Moses 3:17). In the *commandment* not to eat this fruit, perhaps as much as in the fruit itself, God *gave* Adam and Eve the possibility for free will in this world. In the

act of giving this commandment, the possibility for disobedience presented itself for the first time, free will emerged, and knowledge of good and evil had already entered the world in some sense. Interestingly, the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who strongly influenced developmental and moral psychology through Piaget and Kohlberg, also recognized the connections between the ability to reason (knowledge), the ability to choose, accountability for action, and meaningful human existence (Kant, 1797/2002).

Still, these choices were predetermined: Adam and Eve could either choose to live with ignorance or choose to die with knowledge. And so as William James came to understand, choice itself was unavoidable. That a choice would be made was pre-determined. Somewhat ironically, and like the rest of us, Adam and Eve did not even have the choice to refrain from making a choice. Presented with the ability to choose, and the awareness that choice was possible (through the commandment not to partake), even the choice to refrain from choosing must be a choice. The emergence of knowledge of good and evil, enabled through agency (choice), seems almost to have been inevitable once the commandment was given. But rather than constraining agency in any meaningful sense, these pre-determined antecedents *enabled* a choice—and an important one.

Indeed in a somewhat odd, but pragmatic sense, the existence and awareness of predetermined options *force* free will. There would be no meaningful choice if Adam and Eve were simply given everything without the possibility of disobedience or resistance. They would have been like the plants and animals in Eden's garden, growing perhaps under God's care, but not by meaningful choice. So the Book of Mormon explains that it was by this initial choice that agency entered the world. This aspect of human agency seems lost on many theists who deny the necessity of Eve and Adam's choice.

However the job was not complete, and here is where even Kantian psychologists, and many others who affirm a kind of freewill, have fallen short. The deterministic Law of Justice (known elsewhere as the law of cause and effect, Karma, or the Law of the Harvest) prevented Adam and Eve, and all of us, from altering the consequences of their choices. The consequences were as predetermined as the antecedents: ignorant life or knowledgeable death. This dynamic plays out throughout the world today, individually and collectively, in the tension between a static safety and a dangerous freedom. It seems that the more freedom that is granted, the greater the risk of harm, evil and death. This creates a temptation to unduly restrict freedom, not only in act, but often even in thought: parents toward their children, teachers toward their students, governments toward the governed, and sometimes even therapists toward their clients. But overly restricting freedom involves enormous psychological and emotional risks as well, and often rebellion and conflict—a reassertion of freedom—and thus an increased danger of violence, disease, mental illness and death are right around the corner.

It seems the best we can hope for on our own is a kind a tenuous and temporary truce between danger and captivity—a delayed choice. And like our first mortal parents, in the end most of us end up trading one of these deaths for the other: ignorant safety for knowledgeable suffering. Since the fall of Adam and Eve many of our cultural narratives have been infused with the theme, from Exodus to the American Revolution, and on to *The Truman Show*. And although much of naturalistic psychology could be considered compatible with a utilitarian ethic of maximizing pleasure, even the utilitarian John Stuart Mill acknowledged this bleak choice (Mill, 1863/1906).

> It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides (p. 14)

To Mill, the sting of knowledge—of knowing both sides—is a greater pleasure than the bliss of ignorance. So the tree of life was guarded, and Adam and Eve were driven out to experience knowledge and death (Gen. 3: 22-24).

But what sort of agency is that which, following the acquisition of knowledge and thus a meaningful choice, only ends in death? Yet that is the way we would experience mortality, if we knew nothing of redemption. All of our choices would be rendered impotent and meaningless by our impending death, collectively and individually. In the words of Abinidi: "Thus all mankind were lost; and behold, they would have

been endlessly lost were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state" (Mosiah 16:4). So yes, agency exists for humankind, through the commandment and subsequent choice God gave in the garden, but without redemption it would be a meaningless sort of agency—we would be hopelessly lost in meaningless choices with ultimately equivalent predetermined consequences. No wonder non-theistic psychology becomes hopelessly deterministic. Even when choice is acknowledged, it means little in comparison to what appears to be oppressive determinism in both antecedents and consequences.

However, it is in this dance between agency and determinism (which might also be rendered as between "mercy" and "justice") that the beauty of the gospel is revealed—not in the absence of one or the other. By Adam and Eve's one meaningful choice, captivity and death came into the world, and ironically, further meaningful choice would have been lost if that were the end of the story. One choice, and then determinism would have had the victory by enacting the fixed and inevitable consequences: either ignorance or death, which are more alike than different. But Christ, symbolized by the tree of life (1 Nephi 11: 25-33), reconciles justice and mercy—as well as determinism and free will—and finishes the job of bringing agency to humankind. The words of Lehi (2 Nephi 2), mentioned by Gantt et al. (2014), may bear a second look in this light. Agency (limited) and determinism part one:

> If Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end. And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. (verses 22-23).

Agency (completed) and determinism part two:

> And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given. Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil . . . . (verses 26-27)

So Adam and Eve, after God grants them a choice, overcome an initial determinism of perpetual stasis—ignorant safety. Humankind is initially denied the ability to partake of the tree of life, so that they can experience the predetermined consequences of their choices (death) and learn the need for a Savior. They have knowledge now, but remain in captivity to a type of determinism: limited choice and fixed, essentially equivalent, consequences. But ultimately they are allowed to partake of the tree of life (in Christ's atonement), another choice. We may experience the full weight of predetermined consequences if we so choose, or we may choose to believe, and gain a witness by experience, that the law of Justice has been satisfied in Christ.

> And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption. (Alma 34:16).

So through Christ a second choice between life and death, liberty and captivity, is enabled, but with very different implications. Rather than being left only with a choice between ignorant life and knowledgeable death (a bleak but necessary choice), with Christ we are give a meaningful choice between knowledgeable life, and a death that may eventually bring with it a loss of even that knowledge we had once gained (Alma 12:10-11). Rather than between death and ignorance, our choice is now between life and ignorance. Now that is a real choice!

As with the idea of God's existence and the imminence of spiritual realities, the Book of Mormon suggests ways in which the joyful prospect of agency, accountability, and redemption can be articulated both to believers and non-believers. For the non-believer we can create conversations that reveal these alternative philosophies and their implications, allowing them a greater choice by considering truly alternative ways of understanding, acting, and being. In these

conversations with non-believers we can "speak by way of invitation" (Alma 5:62). For example, inviting them to first consider the possibility that we can choose to experience life in ways that acknowledge and celebrate real choices: first between knowledge and ignorance, between agency and determinism; and then between unity (at-one-ment) and isolation, between life and death.

We can also acknowledge the possibility that one might choose to deny agency, in which case one has also made a choice (albeit one made at best under the illusion that there was no choice made, and at worst under false pretenses). Unless we change our minds about the existence of agency, which would be a reaffirmation of choice, we would thereafter live an existence of self-imposed determinism—indecisive (lacking decision). And thus "carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14), or "driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:6). Alternatively, as the apostle James explains, it is the person who has decided (chosen), unwaveringly, to seek understanding from God (acknowledging His existence and influence) that receives true wisdom (James 1:5-6). Of course, for this choice to be meaningful, those we engage in such conversations have to first be aware that such a choice exists. Once that awareness is established, we can invite them to decide (see also Joshua 24:15). At that point, some kind of choice becomes inevitable. They will be determined to make a choice, even if it is only the choice to deny the possibility of choice. They will be brought into the thick of living or dying.

When speaking to the believer, Jacob's words to his "beloved brethren", quoted by Gantt et al. (2014), provide a possible model that we can follow with believing clients, students and colleagues. Jacob (2 Nephi 10) emphasizes the joyful act of *remembering* the gifts of agency and redemption offered through God's divine power, and manifest in Christ's atonement:

> Therefore, cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; and remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved. (verses 23-24)

Conclusion

The Book of Mormon does indeed provide a unique grounding for a psychology that acknowledges divine influence, agency and accountability. It also provides unique insights into how these important truths might be communicated to both believers and non-believers. I hope that others will take up the challenge presented by Gantt et al. (2014), and further explore and extend "a psychology grounded in the teachings of the Book of Mormon" (p. 4).

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"The Things of My Soul": Notes on the Book of Mormon and Psychology

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I am honored to provide a response to the important work of Gantt, Wages, and Thayne. As a specialist in scripture and its ancient historical setting I use work and insights from the social sciences as required, but I am not primarily a social scientist and will not be looking at their work through a social scientist's eyes. I find very little to disagree with in the article. It is refreshing to see that the authors have not taken that "comforting, not to say professionally advantageous" path "to imagine that no paradigm or assumptions frame our approach to psychology or sociology or political science or literary criticism, or at least that it is not our job to exhibit or to question those assumptions" (Hancock, 2014, p. 49). I would like to add to some of the arguments from an outside perspective.

Potential Positives and Potential Pitfalls

I applaud Gantt, Wages, and Thayne for addressing the "hesitancy among some LDS scholars to seriously engage the Book of Mormon for the possible *intellectual* contributions it might have for our work as professional scholars and researchers." They rightfully decry those who "see the Book of Mormon as primarily, if not solely, a religious document meant to ground religious practice and belief, a work of scripture whose purpose is only to provide spiritual comfort and understanding to those in emotional or spiritual need, and not as a legitimate resource for shaping and guiding academic research, professional practice, or scholarly thinking in our various disciplines." The Book of Mormon is a rich resource. Latter-day Saints who take seriously the commandment to worship God with all their mind (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; Mosiah 2:11; 7:33; Moroni 10:32; D&C 4:2; 20:31; 59:5) and who take seriously the inspired nature of their scriptures ought to consider seriously what those scriptures might say about their subjects of study.

The Book of Mormon is both a scriptural record that forms part of the canon of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and an ancient Mesoamerican document. Basing a social scientific theory on the Book of Mormon has a number of advantages as well as some potential pitfalls. Among the advantages the following are instructive. As a canonical text, the Book of Mormon has the advantage of being widely read and widely believed among members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It thus serves as both a common point of reference among those accepting its canonical status, and is considered true, authoritative, and binding. As a historical account covering a thousand years that pays particular attention to how the gospel (as it defines it) interacts with the lives of individuals, it provides a thousand years' worth of data. As has been argued (Hamblin, 1994) accepting the antiquity of the Book of Mormon requires an acceptance of its inspiration. As an inspired text, the Book of Mormon's value for presenting truth is increased even though it admits on multiple occasions that it might contain mistakes (Title Page, 1 Nephi 19:6; 3 Nephi 8:1-2; Mormon 8:12; 9:31-33).

These advantages have a reverse side. Those who wrote the Book of Mormon wrote what they were

interested in, and not necessarily the things we might be interested in (e.g. 1 Nephi 1:16-17; 6:1; 19:5-7). The record, furthermore, was abbreviated and not complete (e.g. Words of Mormon 1:5; Helaman 3:14; 3 Nephi 5:8-9). Thus our thousand years' of data are incomplete, and we might potentially be missing significant information that might change the theories we develop from the data or provide important nuances.

Furthermore, although the Book of Mormon seems particularly interested in showing how obedience or rejection of the gospel message in the lives of ancient individuals, these were individuals who lived in a particular ancient American context and this context occasionally appears in the story (Sorenson, 1985, 2013; Clark, 2005a, 2005b). Using the Book of Mormon as a basis potentially risks importing cultural norms that may not be appropriate for another culture. An example of such practices might be seen in courtship practices in the Book of Mormon. The account of Nephi and his brothers courting their wives is as follows: "we went up unto the house of Ishmael, and we did gain favor in the sight of Ishmael, insomuch that we did speak unto him the words of the Lord. And it came to pass that the Lord did soften the heart of Ishmael, and also his household" (1 Nephi 7:4–5). So the obtaining wives consisted of speaking the word of the Lord to the women's father. This is a cultural feature that might work well in some cultures but not others. A different version of courtship appears among the Jaredites: "Now the daughter of Jared was exceedingly fair. And it came to pass that she did talk with her father, and said unto him: Whereby hath my father so much sorrow? Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory? And now, therefore, let my father send for Akish, the son of Kimnor; and behold, I am fair, and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife; wherefore if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife, then shall ye say: I will give her if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king. And now Omer was a friend to Akish; wherefore, when Jared had sent for Akish, the daughter of Jared danced before him that she pleased him, insomuch that he desired her to wife. And it came to pass that he said unto Jared: Give her unto me to wife. And Jared said unto him: I will give her unto you, if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king." (Ether 8:9–12). So this courtship is initiated by the daughter who proposes to seduce the man who will bargain with the father and be required to murder someone as a bride price. The Book of Mormon actually condemns this particular episode. These are the only examples of courtship given in the Book of Mormon and may not have even been common among their respective societies, and it would probably be culturally inappropriate to build a universal theory of proper courtship based on these isolated examples.

Similar problems can beset the use of the Bible and, in fact, are more prevalent among certain Christians. These Christians believe that "the Bible represents the totality of God's communication to and will for humanity," and that "the divine will about all of the issues relevant to Christian belief and life are contained in the Bible." Consequently, they believe that "the Bible teaches doctrine and morals with every affirmation that it makes, so that together those affirmations comprise something like a handbook or textbook for Christian belief and living, a compendium of divine and therefore inerrant teachings on a full array of subjects—including science, economics, health, politics, and romance" (Smith, 2011, p. 4-5; cf. Noll, 2011, p. 127-130). "Masses of American Christians are biblicists who expect the Bible to be able to speak with authority on a nearly limitless range of topics" (Smith, 2011, p. 10) even though "on important matters the Bible apparently is not clear, consistent, and univocal enough to enable the best-intentioned, most highly skilled, believing readers to come to agreement as to what it teaches" (Smith, 2011, p. 25).

A similar problem has found its way into Islam. J. al-Khalili (2010, p. 126) notes the problems that come from "the literalists' view that the text of the Qur'an and *Hadith* (the recorded conversations of the Prophet) gave Muslims everything they would ever need to know about their faith, and so the sort of philosophical debate and reasoning as practised by the Mu'tazilites and the scholars of *kalām* was not only unnecessary, but un-Islamic. This view has since broadened in some quarters to the erroneous belief that all knowledge is contained in the Qur'an; that anything God felt it was worth mankind knowing, including the laws of nature

and our place in the universe, can be found written in the Qur'an, so there is no point in scientific enquiry."

Gantt, Wages and Thayne, however, seem to have avoided the potential pitfalls in their study. The terms *psychology* and *psychotherapy* both come from the Greek term ψυχή meaning *soul*. The soul is a concern of the Book of Mormon. Nephi may have decided not to write many things on the plates that might interest one, but he did say of the plates, "upon these I write the things of my *soul*" (2 Nephi 4:15). We might, therefore, expect the Book of Mormon to have some important things to say on the topic, particularly when the authors say that they "have none other object save it be the everlasting welfare of your souls" (2 Nephi 2:30). It would be surprising if the Book of Mormon, with its concern for the soul, did not have anything to say that would be of use in the study of the soul.

Gantt, Wages and Thayne specifically target three presuppositions of modern psychology that they correctly see as running counter to the Book of Mormon—naturalism, determinism, and relativism—and address each of them in turn. I will add some comments to each of these subjects in the same order.

Naturalism

I think Gantt, Wages and Thayne are correct when they observe, "Oddly, despite the high value that most academics place on skepticism and critical reflection, many seem to experience something akin to an allergic reaction when critical examination is offered from a serious and believing religious perspective."

Naturalism—the idea that everything in the natural world can be explained by the natural world, and no supernatural forces are necessary or desirable in explanations—has long been an axiom of science. One need only recall Pierre-Simon de Laplace's declaration that he had no need of the hypothesis of God to explain the universe to see that "aggressive atheism" has been with science a long time (Bell, 1965, p. 181, 173). "The most fundamental statement we can make about science stretches directly from Newton to Popper: that science involves building a wall around the physical universe, or the natural world, and shielding it as far as possible from the universes of values, morals, and spirits." (Marks, 2009, p. 61). "The bedrock upon which modern science was built consists of some highly culture-bound assumptions about the nature of the material universe, its relation to the nonmaterial universe, and the value of studying it" (Marks, 2009, p. 36-37).

Naturalism started off in science, more or less, as a necessity. Since we cannot force God into the laboratory perhaps we might be safer assuming he is not there. "This bracketing off of nature from supernature became the signature of science." (Marks, 2009, p. 5). The bracketing assumptions, however, become a self-fulfilling, circular argument and thus logically fallacious.

The Book of Mormon, however, argues against naturalism: "Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend" (Mosiah 4:9). The Book of Mormon explicitly claims that its purpose is the "convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God" (Book of Mormon Title Page). Not only does the Book of Mormon argue that God does exist but it also argues that from time to time he interferes in the natural world. "he ceaseth not to be God, and is a God of miracles. And the reason why he ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men is because that they dwindle in unbelief, and depart from the right way, and know not the God in whom they should trust." (Mormon 9:19–20). While most of the time, God lets the universe go its own way, from time to time, he will do "whatsoever thing is expedient in [him]" (Moroni 7:33).

Determinism

Historically there has been a tendency among people to want to absolve themselves for responsibility for their actions. Thus one finds that Western Christianity after Augustine adopted theological positions that made God responsible for all their actions. As Augustine put it: "Who will be so foolish and blasphemous as to say that God cannot change the evil wills of men, whichever, whenever, and wheresoever he chooses" (Augustine, *Enchiridion* 98, in Schaff, 1887, p. 3:268). "Behind all of this was a particular conception of God's sovereignty, a conception which in the case of Augustine owed something to Manicheanism, and fatalism" (Witherington, 2005, p. 87). Islam too,

after the decline of the Muʿtazilites, took the position that man's power (*qadar*) to decide for themselves was subordinate to God's omnipotence (*jabr*). "Since God is omnipotent," the standard Muslim argument runs, "everything must be pre-ordained and directed by God, and humans can logically therefore have no free will." (al-Khalili, 2010, p. 126). So much of the Muslim world "still sees the universe running its predestined course, determined by the will of Allah, who not only guides the world at large, but also predestines the fate of each and every man individually" (Patai, 1967, p. 157). Large proportions of the religious world consider determinism a sacred dogma

Of course, determinism is older than either Christianity or Islam. One ancient Egyptian text puts it succinctly: "Nothing ever happens on earth except that which God has ordained on the horizon" (de

Cenival, 1988, pl. 14; Spiegelberg, 1917, Tafel XIII; Hoffmann and Quack, 2007, p. 218). Another ancient Egyptian text advises the constant refrain: "God is the one who brings the future and fortune that come." (Lexa, 1926; Hoffmann and Quack, 2007, p. 239-73). Not all Egyptians, however, believed that. Some considered determinism as a philosophy so dangerous that when one defendant in a trial before the king sought to defend his actions by saying, "When it pleased [the god] Re to command me he put the well-being of Pharaoh in my heart, but when it displeased Re to command me, he put the misfortune of Pharaoh in my heart." The Pharaoh, however, did not accept the man's attempt to avoid responsibility and had him executed (Glanville, 1955, pl. 3-4; Hoffmann and Quack, 2007, 278). The reason for the extreme punishment is that determinism is incompatible with accountability. If your actions are determined then you cannot be held accountable for them. Ancient society demanded accountability for one's actions. Modern society is double-minded on the matter. On the one hand, the individual does not want to be held accountable for his own actions but on the other hand he wants other individuals held accountable for theirs. We see some of this in the tendency to absolve individuals from the consequences of their actions and blame other individuals, society, culture, or the system. Some go as far as wanting to hold other individuals accountable for the consequences of their own actions.

Intellectual defenses of determinism tend to come from two sources: theology and physics. The theologi–cal defense of determinism tends to come from those who want to emphasize the power or sovereignty of God. Calvanism, for example, emphasizes "the total, absolute, meticulous sovereignty of God in providence by which God governs the entire course of human history down to the minutest details and renders everything certain so that no event is fortuitous or accidental but fits into God's overall plan and purpose" (Olson, 2011, p. 40). This does not necessarily hold up biblically, since, "in the very texts where God's sovereignty is stressed, there is also a stress on viable human choice when it comes to moral matters" (Witherington, 2005, p. 60). We have already seen a Muslim version of this argument that is essentially the same.

From the physics side of things, "In the Newtonian (or Hamiltonian, etc.) scheme, 'determinism' means that *initial data at one particular time* completely fix the behaviour at all other times." (Penrose, 1990, p. 214). More modern versions of physics alter the situation slightly. "Determinism, in special relativity, can be formulated as the fact that initial data on any given simultaneous space *S* fixes the behaviour in the whole of the space-time . . . . If we want to know what is going to happen at some event *P* lying somewhere to the future of *S*, then we only need the initial data in some bounded (finite) region of *S*, and not on the whole of *S* . . . . This is actually much more satisfactory than the situation that arises in the Newtonian case, where one would, in principle, need to know what was going on over the entire *infinite* 'slice' in order to make any prediction at all about what is going to happen at any point a moment later" (Penrose, 1990, p. 214-15).

Thus, in physics, "*ontological determinism* claims that the evolution equations which govern the time development of the ultimate constituents of the world are deterministic; that is, the state of these constituents at a given time in the future is determined uniquely by the state of these constituents now. All theories of physics which have ever been proposed as fundamental—Newtonian particle physics, the electromagnetic field equations of Maxwell, Einstein's general relativity theory for gravity, and even quantum mechanics—all of these are ontologically deterministic theories. They differ only in the nature of the entities which

are claimed as fundamental . . . . To the extent that we believe the fundamental equations to be true, we are forced by the evidence to be ontological determinists" (Barrow and Tipler, 1986, p. 138-139). For physicists, "in most of our SUPERB theories there is a clear-cut determinism, in the sense that if the state of the system is known at any one time, then it is completely fixed at all later (or indeed earlier) times by the equations of the theory. In this way there seems to be no room for 'free will' since the future behaviour of a system seems to be totally determined by the physical laws." (Penrose, 1989, p. 431). And yet, for all this, "Biologists can rarely predict the future states of the systems they study" (Marks, 2009, p. 62).

Starting with general relativity, things begin to get more complicated. "'Determinism' in general relativity is a good deal more complicated a matter than in special relativity . . . . In the first place, we must use a *spacelike surface S* for the specification of initial data (rather than just a simultaneous surface). Then it turns out that the Einstein equations do give a locally deterministic behaviour for the gravitational field, assuming (as is usual) that the matter fields contributing to the tensor ENERGY behave deterministically. However, there are considerable complications. The very geometry of the space-time—including its light cone 'causality' structure—is now part of what is being actually determined. We do not know this light-cone structure ahead of time, so we cannot tell which *parts of S* will be needed to determine the behaviour at some future event *P*. In some extreme situations it can be the case that even *all of S* may be insufficient, and global determinism is consequently lost! . . . It would seem to be highly unlikely that any possible such 'failure of determinism' that might occur with 'extreme' gravitational fields could have any direct bearing on matters at the human scale of things, but we see from this that the question of determinism in general relativity is not at all so clear-cut as one might wish" (Penrose, 1990, p. 215-16). So there are some potential problems with *ontological determinism*. That, however, is not the only form of determinism.

"*Methodological determinism* holds that in the study of complex phenomena, such as living beings, we should always look for deterministic laws governing the phenomena." But as a practical matter, "this form of determinism is much too strong. It is often the case that complex phenomena are better described by statistical laws in which chance is fundamental" (Barrow and Tipler, 1986, p. 139). So when living beings are being discussed, the complexity renders determinism unusable.

Living beings are not the only example where determinism is impractical. "Behaviour that appears random to us—for example, fluid turbulence—is described by mathematical models that exhibit a very sensitive dependence on initial conditions. These mathematical models are deterministic in principle but not in practice: in order to know the state of the system precisely at any future time one must know its initial state exactly. In practice, there always exists some minute error in our knowledge of the initial state, and this error is amplified exponentially in the evolution time of the system, so that very soon we have no idea where the state of the system resides. Laplacian determinism is impossible" (Barrow and Tipler, 1986, p. 119).

Barrow and Tipler also provide an explanation of why determinism, from a psychological point of view is so impractical as to be impossible:

"It seems likely that such a purely causal, non-teleological and complete explanation of purposeful biological behaviour would be so complex that no such explanation will ever be achieved. That justification for this assertion is a simple numerical estimate of the complexity of living beings. The amount of information that can be stored in a human brain is estimated to be between 10^{10} and 10^{15} bits, with the lower number assuming there is one bit stored on the average for each of the brains 10^{10} cells. Now about 1% to 10% of the brain's cells are firing at any one time, at a rate of about 100 hertz. This gives a computation rate of 10 to 1000 gigaflops (a gigaflop is 10^9 floating point computations per second. The lower bound of 10 gigaflops is about the rate at which the eye processes information before it is sent to the brain . . . .

"But only the information which a human being can process consciously, or hold in the forefront of the mind, can be used in forming a humanly acceptable explanation. We don't know exactly how much this would be, but it is comparable in order of magnitude to the information coded in a single book, which is typically 1 to 10 million bits. No explanations humans have ever dealt with has been as complex as this . . . .

"This argument assumes of course that we require at least 1010 bits—the lower bound of the brains capacity of the human mind—in order to carry out a numerical simulation of a human being. If anything, this is a wild underestimate, because it ignores round-off errors. Even more important, in fact the essential point in estimating the difficulty of carrying out at numerical simulation of a living creature, is that the actions of living creatures are unstable from the causal (numerical simulation) point of view: a tiny change in the initial input or stored information can lead to a drastic change in the macroscopic behaviour. For this reason it is not possible to reduce substantially the amount of data required in a simulation much below 10^{10} bits." (Barrow and Tipler, 1986, p. 136-137). Barrow and Tipler argue that complex systems cannot be completely understood or explained by causal arguments, but "we will find teleological explanations of its actions more useful than causal ones, at least in understanding its most complex behaviour." (Barrow and Tipler, 1986, 137). Thus, Schwartz, Stapp, and Beauregard maintain, "Until recently, virtually all attempts to understand the functional activity of the brain have been based, at least implicitly, on some principles of classic physics that have been known to be fundamentally false for three-quarters of a century." (2005, p. 1310)

Determinism also runs into problems from quantum mechanics. "Even the *U* part of quantum mechanics [the evolution process described by Schrödinger's equations] has this completely deterministic character. However, the *R* 'quantum-jump' part [formed by the squared moduli of quantum amplitudes to obtain classical probabilities] is not deterministic, and it introduces a completely random element into the time-evolution." (Penrose, 1989, p. 431).

"*Epistemological determinism* holds that it is possible, using the deterministic fundamental evolution equations (which are assumed to exist), to compute and hence predict the future behaviour of complex systems, in particular the future behaviour of living organisms. This form of determinism we also deny. The theory of quantum mechanics itself tells us that it is impossible to get the necessary information to predict the future wave function, even though the future wave function is in fact determined. We have argued at length above that the behaviour of living organisms like ourselves is too complex to be predictable by beings of similar complexity" (Barrow and Tipler, 1986, p. 139).

Roger Penrose (1990) has provided an argument for the impossibility of determinism in the human brain from quantum mechanics. Penrose (1990, p. 400) notes that "there is, in fact, at least one clear place where action at the single quantum level can have importance for neural activity, and this is in the *retina*. (Recall that the retina is technically part of the brain!) Experiments with toads have shown that under suitable conditions, a *single photon* impinging on the dark-adapted retina can be sufficient to trigger a macroscopic nerve signal. The same appears to be true of man." Penrose (1990, p. 400) then goes on to ask, "Since there *are* neurons in the human body that can be triggered by single quantum events, is it not reasonable to ask whether cells of this kind might be found somewhere in the main part of the human brain?" Since single quantum events (which are not deterministic) can trigger macroscopic nerve signals in the brain, we cannot say that the brain behaves in a deterministic fashion (cf. Gardner, 2013, p. 23-24). More recent work argues that "certain structural features of ion conductance channels critical to synaptic function *entail* that the classic approximation fails in principle to cover the dynamics of a human brain. Quantum dynamics must be *used in principle*." Thus non-deterministic quantum mechanics definitely plays a role in "the conscious choices by human agents" (Schwartz, Stapp, and Beauregard, 2005, p. 1310).

Other arguments have been made from neuroscience against determinism (Balaguer, 2009; Schwartz, Stapp and Beauregard, 2005).

Using quantum mechanics as an example provides a way to talk about probable outcomes. We can see a range of possible reactions and even chart probable outcomes given initial constraints but that does not determine the decisions of any particular individual. Quantum mechanics can determine the probabilities that certain outcomes will occur given the way the experiment is constructed and these probabilities match the aggregate data of many particles but they cannot predict the behavior of a particular particle. In the same way, one might construct correlations and probabilities for outcomes given initial constraints and predict the aggregate results for large numbers of individuals but still be unable to predict the result for any

given individual. The individual still has agency and still chooses. This is not a Book of Mormon model *per se*, but it is a model that is compatible with Book of Mormon hypotheses.

The Book of Mormon, of course, repudiates determinism. According to the Book of Mormon, "men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil" (2 Nephi 2:27). They are thus not forced to choose but allowed to choose. Along with that comes the accountability for the choices made. Men "have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day" (2 Nephi 2:26; cf. 2 Nephi 10:23; Alma 13:3; 30:8-9; Helaman 13:29; 14:31).

Finally, data does not necessarily support determinism. For example, the typical pattern for adolescent sexuality in the United States is that the first sexual experience occurs about the age of sixteen (Regnerus, 2007, p. 127-128). "Teens are likely to either not have sex at all until late adolescence—the most common pattern—or to have it more often and with more than one partner. One-timers and steadies are not the norm. Once sexual activity has commenced, it usually continues, and with age the sexual network branches out" (Regnerus, 2007, p. 134). This is the general pattern, and under determinism we would expect that pattern to hold regardless of situation. And yet, "Mormon youths are unlikely to have sex before age 18 in the first place, but if they do have sex, they're more likely to try it once and then refrain from further sexual activity." (Regnerus, 2007, p. 132-33). Of those who have sex before marriage only 44% of Latter-day Saint youth follow the general pattern whereas at least 82.7% to 100% of other groups do. Although the author of the study did not explore the reasons for the difference, it is clear that some thing or combination of things in Latter-day Saint teaching or practice made a significant difference in the behavioral patterns. This both defies determinism and provides an area where further research might shed light on what is likely to make a difference. Other religious groups may behave deterministically (and many of them believe in determinism) but Latter-day Saints (who do not believe in determinism) do not.

Relativism

Albert Einstein published the special theory of relativity in 1905. By 1930 Squires could already talk about "a new movement in psychology with the principle of relativity made current and popular by the great physicist Einstein" (Squires, 1930, p. 156). This was explained as follows: Because "For Einstein, these [space and time] values depend directly on the position of the observer" (Squires, 1930, p. 162) so in Gestalt psychology "every perception, whether of a person's face or of anything else, exists in its own right, is itself" (Squires, 1930, p. 162). "Just as Einstein gave an impetus to physics by expounding the relative nature of space and time, so the champions of the configuration psychology have been assiduously engaged in the attempt to demonstrate the relative character of our mental life" (Squires, 1930, p. 156). Whereas "the traditional psychology taught that a color possesses a more or less absolute, unchanging character . . . [the newer psychology] would seem to show conclusively that color quality is a matter relative to the meaning borne by the quality" (Squires, 1930, p. 157). The relativism imported into psychology was explicitly anti-religious: "Primitive man saw in human purpose the expression of the will of good and evil spirits. In nature, the lightning and the whirlwind voiced the wrath of a god. The coming of modern science has enabled us to understand the events of physical nature in terms of natural causes, but the struggle to interpret human action without reference to supernatural agencies has been long drawn out and severe" (Squires, 1930, p. 160-161). Relativism was brought into psychology explicitly to support naturalism. This is yet another example of how "from its very inception modern science was used to underpin political ideologies" (Marks, 2009, p. 47).

Relativism thus denies that there are absolute truths. Under relativism there is only truth from a certain point of view, and a change in that point of view changes truth. One of the results of this philosophy, taken to its logical conclusion is that science is not a way of discovering truth. "Through a lens of cultural relativism, [science] becomes another way

of producing knowledge . . . . While this should not seem terribly threatening, it nevertheless proved to be surprisingly threatening to one segment of the scientific community—the segment that had grown accustomed to having its authority on virtually all matters stand without scrutiny. Presumably this was because such relativistic approaches to knowledge contain an implicitly repudiation of science as a source of unquestioned truth about the world. They certainly highlight the role of science as a cultural authority." (Marks, 2009, p. 63). Not only does relativism undermine science, it undermines itself. If there are no privileged points of view, there is no particular reason to privilege relativism. Relativism cannot be used to say that a religious point of view is wrong. If all points of view are valid, certainly any particular religious point of view must be valid as well.

Most individual practitioners of a discipline are happy to work within the confines of a discipline without questioning the basic presuppositions of the discipline. This is true in the social sciences as well as elsewhere. It is unusual to find critiques of relativism in disciplines like psychology. The humanities seem to have produced more of them. Social scientists who wish to provide a robust critique of relativism might need to look outside their discipline.

The Book of Mormon does provide critiques of relativism. It asserts that the Spirit "speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls. But behold, we are not witnesses alone in these things; for God also spake them unto prophets of old" (Jacob 4:13). In spite of various competing claims, the Book of Mormon asserts that some things are real (cf. Alma 32:35) and that we can learn of them through the Spirit and through various witnesses provided by God, including prophets of old. Through these means we can come to know of the truth ourselves (Alma 5:45-46, 48; 34:8; 36:4-6; Helaman 7:29; 15:7-8). These assertions of the existence of an absolute truth contradict the assertions of relativism that no such truth exists.

Conclusions

Much more can and will be said about these topics. Gantt, Wages, and Thayne have done a great service pointing out some problematic presuppositions in psychology that contradict the Book of Mormon. It is a healthy thing to be aware of conflicts and potential conflicts between our academic disciplines and the Gospel. If we really believe that we must serve God with all our heart and mind (Deuteronomy 6:5; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27; Mosiah 7:33; D&C 4:2; 59:5) then we need to use our whole minds, not just a fragmented or compartmentalized portion of them, and all our knowledge and learning, not just the part pertaining to our discipline, to determine how best to serve him. While there may be disciplines where this is not possible or appropriate, if we do not fashion a distinctively Latter-day Saint approach to our disciplines we risk exposure to every wind of doctrine in our academic disciplines. We will then not be able to see when our academic disciplines bring us in conflict with the Gospel and be instruments in leading ourselves and others "carefully down to hell" (2 Nephi 28:21-31). Gantt, Wages, and Thayne have done a great service in calling attention to the issue.

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Can a Keystone Save a Broken Arch?

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Gantt, Wages, and Thayne correctly identify a number of implicit (it could be argued explicit as well) assumptions that accompany psychology and psychotherapy in their current state today—naturalism, determinism, and moral relativism. These assumptions are accurately shown to be especially problematic to the development of a psychology and method of psychotherapy based on the truths contained in the Book of Mormon and, as an extension, the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. We concur with the authors as they quoted Richard Williams (1998), that the truths contained in the Book of Mormon and the Restoration have the power to enact a "turning of things upside down". The existence of an active and loving God, humanity defined by their nature as moral agents, and the idea of being accountable for how we live in accordance to truth, are powerful course-changing ideas. Our main concerns and perhaps the themes of our criticism are wrapped up in two important questions: Why do we assume psychology to be the best vehicle of delivery for the precious truths of the Gospel? And why do we assume that psychology can be "saved" through the infusion of the Gospel at all?

Psychology largely appeared and became established in response to the breakdown of basic/traditional values. Williams (2003, p.4) spoke about the field of psychology as being ". . . thrust into the cultural breach to give meaning and stability in those very areas of life where religion and even the family used to function." The problem is that psychology has chosen a delivery system rife with questionable values—as Gantt et al., have pointed out in some detail. This is where we find ourselves having much in common philosophically with Gantt and his fellow authors. We wholeheartedly support the efforts of Gantt et al. and others to challenge the underlying assumptions and questionable values espoused by the field of psychology. Another commonality we believe we share with the authors is a commitment to Elder Neal A. Maxwell's (1976) suggestion given to LDS social scientists nearly 40 years ago to "become more of a link and bridge between revealed truth and the world of scholarship." While we commend the authors to envision that link using the restored truth contained in the Book of Mormon, there are some important questions left unaddressed—even in an article designed to be sweeping and general. How can the precious truths of the Book of Mormon be conveyed through a discipline that takes pride in an objective and relativistic approach to human experience? What motivation does psychology have to work its way out of business by reinstating values that it was designed to replace? It seems a strong temptation, especially for LDS professionals, to attempt to infuse the gospel into psychological practice–with hope to improve it. The title of the article attempts to suggest that the "keystone" provided to the LDS religion can be translated and imported to become the keystone of psychology. Can the keystone, therefore, be used in this way to shore up an earthly endeavor that is actively trying to replace its inspired tenets with empirically supported treatments? What motivation might

God have to bless the continued existence of a human endeavor that has actively tried to usurp a measure of influence in His children's lives? Whether moving from one language to another or from the religious to the secular, the work of translation and importation involves collateral loss. In the context of language, the history and cultural significance is often lost or never fully captured as a word is translated. Something new is born, a counterfeit that tries to show its equivalence by pointing you in the same direction—to a similar experience—that was conveyed by the original. We contend that a similar process takes place as we try to take religious truth to a secular realm. Much of the power and eternal context (of the religious truth) is lost in the form of collateral damage in the constraining and reducing processes required by a secular science such as psychology. We once again call Williams's assertion to attention that psychology is thrust into a breach where it tries to counterfeit truths and experiences far too potent and sacred to fully imitate.

We must be careful, though, not to set religion and psychology as the poles of a false dichotomy—one is completely true and the other completely false. We take the stance that each is necessary, and taken together they make a more complete picture of mortality. Yet each approach stands on sufficiently different premises that complete concordance is unlikely {e.g. the creation/evolution}. Religion generally holds out guiding principles, context, and aspirational ideals without much attention to mechanisms of action or causal relationships. These are the macro-level ideas that provide a foundation and direction to our lives as well as an overarching framework that allows us to comprehend the vicissitudes of mortal life. Psychological science, on the other hand, concerns itself with micro-level ideas without much to say about the macro—although a stated goal is to discover the macro by examining the micro. Psychology is more concerned with delineating order and predictability in the world concerning human behavior (and functioning results from micro-level realities) than it is in the origin of that order. It is hard to argue that attention to either the macro or the micro can be complete without attention to the other, but that is not to say that attempts should be made to study both at the same time and in the same ways. The authors identified three key macro-level ideas (existence of God, agency, and accountability) that should be incorporated into psychology. The complication is that in order to translate macro-level ideas into a micro-level science you have to acknowledge the collateral loses that will be incurred.

This shines light on a dilemma faced by LDS psychologists: Do we pare down eternal principles like the phenomenon of human agency to incorporate gospel truths into our professional work? If so, how do we "institutionalize" agency—making it a tenet of a theory (and defining it in terms of mechanisms of action or causal relationships)? Or, do we ask psychology to gut and rip out its own foundation? This seems to be the crossroads at which the authors would like to place psychology. A tall order for a young discipline that still after 100 years of existence has yet to solidify a common definition of its primary subject matter—the human being. Business as usual—compartmentalizing our faith and our profession seems to be the easiest and least painful solution. This issue is beyond the scope of this paper, but this example serves to illustrate how easy it is to let psychology continue to be a counterfeit of religion, a necessary evil that pays our bills. We cannot forget, though, that we do live in a fallen world and our friends do still suffer. We can use our positions, training, and skill to alleviate suffering. In spite of being a counterfeit, we can still use psychology to help people improve their circumstances. Even the worst counterfeit bears some semblance to the original, and there are benefits to be gained in the application of psychology. The therapeutic relationship has been shown to be a significant therapeutic factor. And even when the spirit is absent in therapy, we still have some things we can do. Let us remain humble, however, and not make claims beyond our abilities. {Let's not think to create another system, or different deliveries within the existing system, (perhaps better, yet also/still a counterfeit) that we hold out as an approximation (substitute) for the original.}This paper, and others like it, is essential in the ongoing dialogue of professional psychology. We cannot do our duty, and respond to our responsibility, without calling attention to what is missing in the counterfeit system and asserting boldly what we believe will improve the human condition.

As we sat down to write a response to this paper, we found it relatively easy to compare and contrast the strengths of religious gospel-centered truths with

the shortcomings of psychological science. It would be easy to let this critique end here, having only spoken of the incompatibility between religion and science. But that would not be very helpful. In fact, that would be hypocritical on our part as we would be perpetuating the "business as usual" cycle mentioned above. While we cannot fully agree with Gantt et al., we believe this article calls to attention an important conflict between psychology and religion: Who are we going to allow to define the world and what it means to be a human being? The debate we will invite, but not finish, is to engage these important issues using the language of preference—because preference is the counter to contempt (Gottman, 1995) and the language of agency. Privileging either Religion or Psychology sets in motion a competition/fight that may be irrelevant in the end. While seriously presenting alternatives to be examined, and eventually chosen, seems useful. Stated plainly, our call is for discussion to be held in the arena of competing philosophies of what it means to be a human being on this planet, in this universe, at this time. We understand that all sides of any debate ultimately rest on unprovable beginning premises, and, therefore, there will be no undisputed victor. The value of dialogue is not arriving at agreement that one or the other side is more correct, but rather understanding between the parties as to what the other values and then the opportunity to choose a response to approach or distance in the relationship. It is the ultimate expression of agency to choose the basic premises of our lives and how we then express the operation of those premises in day to day decisions. This element of choice and consideration needs to take a more prominent role in ongoing debates.

We again acknowledge and applaud the authors' skill at articulating psychology's underlying assumptions. We also applaud the authors' willingness and boldness to counter these assumption with the truths contained in the Book of Mormon, allowing us to envision a science informed by the keystone of the gospel. But, this approach belies a subtle but significant problem. Trying to import revealed truth into the science of psychology situates the processes of implementation, application, and evaluation under a scientific paradigm. We believe this will limit the importation process because all discussion and action will be dictated by the problematic methods and assumptions currently plaguing psychology. In essence, we are trying to set a keystone into an arch we knowingly identify as being of dubious quality, and secretly (?) wish to see toppled! This is why we suggest the scope of debate needs to be both broadened, and engaged on a different level. In a field with so many so-called foundational theories or approaches vying for attention, we wonder if anyone will care for the "Mormon" approach to therapy unless they understand, and choose, some measure of its sacred Source and how it changes what it means to be a being who is a child of God.

A good starting point may be questioning how psychology received the privilege of trying to define humanity in the first place: essentially trying to present itself as a "religion." Although psychology deflects its action through deceptively decrying/denouncing its objectives as religious, yet it engages the essential religious questions and takes adherents away from other religions—essentially competing in the religious arena. Psychology arrived late to the conflict between science and religion as they have struggled for primacy as a source of truth and knowledge. Psychology has had to hit the ground running as it were in order to keep up—a fact that is reflected in the field's shaky foundational premises. The assumptions underlying psychology, as delineated by the authors, inform the definitions of humanity as psychology attempts to understand the type of creature we happen to be. These assumptions also play out in the therapy room in the form of techniques prescribed to instill the values and skills that will lead to the optimal performance of said creatures. This is analogous to how the religious doctrines or revealed truths of the LDS church (or any other religion) inform what it means to be a human being. Principles, ordinances, and covenants based in these religious doctrines inform how we are to live a fully flourishing life. This is how psychology took advantage of the "breach" that laid before it—by mimicking and counterfeiting what held sway in the lives of people before the discipline even existed. This is where we need to challenge psychology and engage in the debate for defining what is. We need to not only recognize that psychology is a late-comer trying to catch up, but that psychology is openly rebelling against the more established religious truth. This rebellion not only calls attention to itself in order to garner some sense of legitimacy, but like all rebellions, results in the

creation of a new entity similar to what had been rebelled against. Rebellion against a government results in a new type of government that will replace it. Similarly, rebellion against a religion will result in a new type of religion—namely the field we call psychology. Once we understand that what is at stake is larger than merely adding new concepts to our professional discipline; we are motivated to question psychology's legitimacy and authority to answer questions about our eternal nature. We are also more able to question whether it is possible, as psychology suggests, to compartmentalize our profession away from our religion.

Unfortunately, we do not have the luxury of waiting for these great debates to be resolved when a client shows up at our office door. Likewise, we are not all left to do the deep philosophy. We each can (and do) examine the ways the great debates and deep philosophy show up in the world. We can be swept along by the cultural norms of the day, be constrained by the traditions of our fathers, join with those we consider our friends, experiment with multiple paradigms until we find one we find adequate, look for something new when an old approach fails, or myriad other ways to encounter and choose a paradigm for our individual lives and professional practice. Stated in the most practical and pragmatic way: How do we get truth into the therapy room? While we cannot endorse the keystone approach, we do know that the most powerful tool a therapist has is himself in the therapeutic relationship. And by being a gospel-centered therapist (Gleave, 2012) who strives to live and embody the truths of the restored gospel, something beyond our capabilities can be brought to the therapy relationship. On this note we end by echoing Elder Maxwell that an LDS scholar should not only be building bridges, but have "his citizenship in the kingdom, but [carry] his passport into the professional world—not the other way around."

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The Book of Mormon, Psychology, and Critical Dialogue: That All Might be Edified and Rejoice Together

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As a scholar it is always an honor to have one's ideas carefully considered by one's colleagues, especially – as in this instance – when such consideration is undertaken by those whose scholarly efforts have long been so influential on one's own thinking and whose penetrating insights have consistently proven their intellectual worth. We are, thus, truly grateful for the time and energy and serious consideration the various respondents to our article ("The Keystone of our Science: Exploring the Premises and Promises of the Book of Mormon for Psychology and Psychotherapy") have invested in engaging the arguments and ideas we presented there. We have been genuinely challenged, edified, and enlightened by the thoughtful commentaries and critiques offered by Michael Richardson, Matthew Draper, John Gee, and Robert Gleave in their various responses to our exploration of the possible impact that taking the Book of Mormon more seriously might have for LDS psychologists wishing to ground their research, practice, and theorizing more explicitly in its teachings. We can only hope the sort of intellectual dialogue initiated here may in the end prove not only to be an opportune invitation to greater discussion of these and related issues among LDS scholars, but also an effective framework for how to conduct such discussions in a manner that is both sophisticated and charitable.

While extensive replies to each one of the authors who so graciously responded to our work is unfortunately not possible given space constraints, we would nonetheless like to briefly note some reactions to their offered commentaries. We were especially pleased so many of the respondents opted to take our analysis as an invitation to further critical reflection on questions and issues in their own areas of psychological theory and practice. In particular, we very much enjoyed the way in which our respondents chose to explore the expansive possibilities that Book of Mormon teachings have for those seeking to ground their psychological thinking and practice in something other than the philosophy of naturalism so pervasive in our discipline. Thus, we very much welcome Richardson's meditation on the question of human agency and how it might be more deeply articulated and appreciated in both psychological theory and psychotherapeutic practice. Similarly, we found Draper's suggestions for some very specific ways in which the LDS professional might be able to live-out the Christian worldview of the Book of Mormon in non-Christian/secular settings, and do so in ways that their non-Christian peers can both understand and respect, to be quite helpful and thought-provoking. His discussion of compassion as a central guiding principle for genuinely Christian therapeutic practice is important and worthy of careful consideration by all LDS therapists.

Although his overall response was more critical of our analysis and proposal than the other respondents, we nonetheless found ourselves very much in agreement with Gleave's caution against the all-too-common temptation among LDS practitioners to infuse contemporary psychological science with doctrines of the restored gospel of Christ in the vain hope of effecting some sort of harmonious reconciliation between the two. Taking the gospel of Christ seriously, in both the scholarly arena of our academic disciplines and in our professional lives, is one that demands a high level of sophistication, a very cautious tread, and an unfailing willingness to seek for the spirit of discernment every bit as much as the gift of knowledge.

In addition to the contributions and comments offered by our fellow psychologists, we were particularly heartened to see some of the ways Gee, as a non-social scientist, was able to take up issues we identified and broaden the conversation by offering a fresh perspective from outside the discipline of psychology. Gee's penetrating analysis demonstrates again that the Book of Mormon embodies intellectual implications that not only span across many academic disciplines, but which also reach deeply into the very heart of the modern world. In the end, for us, such critically reflective and positively expansive dialogue among LDS scholars and practitioners is precisely what our article was intended to stimulate in the first place.

In the spirit of continuing the dialogue our article initiated, as well as in the hope of providing further clarification of our own position, we would like to briefly draw attention to a couple of the relatively few instances in which we believe our respondents may have misread or misunderstood our argument. Draper, for example, seems not to have fully appreciated (or, perhaps, has not been fully persuaded by) our argument that naturalistic psychology is not, in fact, a study of the natural man. Contrary to his assertion that "the study of psychology assuming naturalism is the study of the natural man" (see also Smith & Draper, 2005), we believe that any reading of the nature of the natural man as a "determined natural object rather than a moral agent" (Draper, this volume) reflects a common misreading of King Benjamin's famous discourse. We are convinced, and believe we have clearly shown, that the assumption of moral agency is pervasive throughout King Benjamin's analysis of the natural man. For example, according to King Benjamin, the natural man is an enemy to God—not by his fundamental nature as a determinately selfish object but as a willfully rebelling moral agent yielding to the invitations of the Adversary. Further, the natural man is an enemy to God only insofar, and only for as long as, he refuses to "yield to the enticings of the Holy Spirit" and chooses not to "putteth off the natural man" by being "willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit . . ." (Mosiah 3:19). Clearly, whatever else may be the case, for King Benjamin, the natural man is fundamentally a moral agent and not a natural object whose behavior and psychological life are merely subject to impersonal natural forces and physical conditions. Thus our claim is that naturalistic psychology does not even offer an adequate understanding of "the natural man" because it rejects the fundamental reality of moral agency in all meaningful and purposive human behavior. At best, then, we would say naturalistic psychology is not in fact the study of the natural man (i.e., fallen and sinful man), but rather the study of the natural man from the sinful and falsifying perspective of the natural man. That is, man in rebellion against God seeking justification for sin by denying his own moral agency and accountability, as well as rejecting the reality of genuine and transcendent moral distinctions.

On balance, however, this disagreement as to the meaning of the concept of "natural man" is really a relatively minor quibble when considered in the larger context of Draper's otherwise excellent and powerful article. Somewhat more serious, in contrast, is our disagreement with Gleave's reading of our argument. Again, due to limited space, we will forgo offering any lengthy analysis or full-blown response here. However, we do wish to note that we firmly believe that what Gleave has identified as his main concerns and themes of criticism are, in fact, misplaced since they seem to be aimed at arguments we did not make and positions we do not hold. Thus, when Gleave asks, "Why do we assume psychology to be the best vehicle of delivery for the precious truths of the Gospel?," we can only respond that we have no answer to this question because such is not what we assume, nor is it a position for which we would wish to argue. We most emphatically do not believe that psychology is the best vehicle for the delivery of the precious truths of the Gospel. Rather, we believe sacred scripture and prophetic ut-

terance, coupled with the soul-to-soul witnessing of the Holy Ghost, to be the best vehicle of delivery for the precious truths of the Gospel. Psychology, on the other hand, is simply one avenue of interaction among many in which we human beings attempt to serve and understand one another.

Of course, we are fully aware that, even if grounded in a thoroughly Latter-day Saint perspective, any psychology or psychotherapy by itself would be wholly inadequate absent the soul-changing revelatory power of the Holy Ghost. At best, then, we envision a psychology in which LDS (and other, like-minded Christian) practitioners and professionals can enjoy a conceptual and practical space wherein human agency and moral accountability, as well as the gifts of the Spirit and the healing powers of the Atonement of Christ, have place to be manifest, be recognized for what they are, and be defended in an intellectually sophisticated and respectable manner. We do not seek to articulate, or even advocate for, any particular LDS Psychology or Psychotherapy, so much as to help our fellow LDS psychologists recognize the many subtle—and sometimes not so subtle—ways in which a philosophy of naturalism that is toxic to the reality of the Restored Gospel permeates contemporary psychological theory, research, and practice. Our hope is that in doing so they might not only reconsider their intellectual and moral commitments to such a psychology, but they might also re-examine the teaching of sacred scripture as a means of re-envisioning what psychological research and therapeutic practice might otherwise be were it to be constructed on a vastly different intellectual foundation.

Similarly, we doubt we can provide a satisfying answer to Gleave's second question ("And why do we assume that psychology can be 'saved' through the infusion of the Gospel at all?") because we do not believe that psychology can or ought to be "saved through an infusion of the Gospel"—particularly if one maintains that psychology must of necessity be understood only as a study of human behavior grounded in and directed by naturalistic assumptions and serving naturalistic aims and goals. The philosophy of naturalism and the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ are at root fundamentally incompatible worldviews, entailing profoundly divergent truth claims and understandings of reality.

However, *naturalistic* psychology, or psychology grounded in naturalistic assumptions, is not (or at least need not be) synonymous in either content or meaning with psychology, because psychological theorizing, research, and practice can be grounded in non-naturalistic assumptions. We have little hope that psychology as a professional discipline will (in the foreseeable future), as a whole, relinquish is deeply-rooted naturalism, but we do not feel the need to identify the profession as a whole by its prevailing naturalistic assumptions. Thus, while *naturalistic* psychology may be fundamentally antagonistic to Gospel truth, psychology need not be, if we can create space for an ideological pluralism within the discipline. Psychology as a research discipline and therapeutic practice has lengthy history of creating room for a number of vastly different and competing philosophical paradigms (consider, for example, the philosophical and theoretical differences between Behaviorism and Humanism, or Psychoanalysis and Existentialism), as well as a willingness to treat differing perspectives as legitimate contributions to the ongoing discussion of what human beings are and how therapy could be conducted.

As such, our goal is not to "modify" existing theories by inserting into them Gospel concepts, or to frame naturalistic psychology in ways that we think are more compatible with Gospel precepts.[1] Our vision is not to "save" these many competing traditions, but merely to provide an alternative philosophical grounding to them for both the research and practice of psychology and psychotherapy, one in which moral agency, meaningful divine activity, and genuine moral accountability are taken seriously. Our hope is, rather, that our colleagues can help us undertake such a project (and many have already striven to do just that), and to articulate and defend the theoretical foundations of such a perspective in a way that earns a place at the table of discussion within the discipline. After all, if Carl Rogers can carve out a space for his worldview in the discipline—a worldview that in many ways departed substantially from the deterministic theories of his day, even if not in a way that satisfies (or should satisfy) Latter-day Saints—then so can we.

1. The many intellectual and spiritual dangers of such an endeavor have already been amply articulated by Sorenson in his masterful and still deeply relevant 1981 article, "The Shotgun Marriage of the Psychological Therapy and the Gospel of Repentance."

In short, then, the purpose of examining psychology from a perspective grounded in the truths of the Restored Gospel and the Book of Mormon is not so much to rescue naturalistic psychology from some set or subset of its excesses, nor is it merely to provide some religiously sensitive minor correctives. Rather, we propose an alternative will challenge and overturn it by providing an intellectually viable and spiritually honest alternative to naturalistic models of psychological theorizing and practice. It is in that spirit that we chose to open our article by stating the wish to examine some of the ways in which the teachings of the Book of Mormon "might invite Latter-day Saint scholars to conscientiously dissent from the prevailing tenets of psychological research, and offer an alternative perspective instead" (Gantt, Wages, & Thayne, this volume). Likewise, it is why we bring our paper to a close by again stating:

> we wish only to draw attention to the fact that the Book of Mormon contains certain basic and significant truth claims about the nature of human nature and that LDS psychologists would do well to carefully and deeply consider such claims as they evaluate rival claims of the naturalistic psychologies in which they have been trained. Such consideration would seem to require, at the very least, a thoughtful and penetrating sifting of theories, methods, and practices that are founded upon (often hidden) naturalistic assumptions that deny or minimize the reality of moral agency and meaning. Somewhat more expansively, it may also require the formulation and championing of alternative modes of research and practice that are not only more attentive to the fundamentally moral and meaningful nature of human agency, but which also rigorously articulates a genuinely theistic framework within which to approach the study of human behavior.

In other words, we are not in the business of seeking to "save" psychology by infusing it with Gospel practices, ideas, or ideals. Rather, we simply wish to encourage LDS psychologists to engage in deeper reflection on the nature of the intellectual and spiritual commitments of their chosen discipline, and to do so in light of the profound truths about God, man, and the universe that are contained in the Book of Mormon. We believe it is well past time when LDS psychologists—long accustomed to examining their faith in the light of theories and therapies of naturalistic psychology—began to carefully examine their psychology in light of the assumptions, doctrines, and worldview of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ, particularly as found in the keystone of our religion.

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Scrupulosity: Practical Treatment Considerations Drawn from Clinical and Ecclesiastical Experiences with Latter-day Saint Persons Struggling with Religiously-oriented Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

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Scrupulosity, a religiously-oriented form of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), is both a clinical matter for treatment and can be an ecclesiastical concern for members, therapists, and priesthood leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later-day Saints. Just as some people of all faiths suffer from scrupulosity, Latter-day Saints (LDS) persons are not immune. This article addresses the issues pertaining to scrupulosity and provides practical treatment considerations for working with LDS persons struggling with scrupulosity from both a clinical and ecclesiastical perspective. A treatment approach, including consultation with priesthood leaders, is outlined.
Keywords: Scrupulosity, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Religion, Latter-day Saint, Clinical Treatment

Scrupulosity is emerging as a recognized subtype of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) pertaining to religious-oriented obsessions and compulsions (Abramowitz et al., 2002; Nelson et al., 2006; and Olatunji et al., 2007). Essentially, scrupulosity is a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder, which manifests as religious symptoms. Both scrupulosity and obsessive-compulsive disorder have two features that must be present in order to make an accurate diagnosis; (1) intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and (2) actions to neutralize the intrusive thoughts (compulsions). While many individuals suffering with OCD may experience a wide range of symptoms or issues, such as contamination obsessions, pathologic doubt, need for symmetry, sexual obsessions, and compulsive hand-washing/cleaning among others (see Ciarrochi, 1995 for a complete review of symptoms), people who struggle with scrupulosity primarily manifest their symptoms through religious-based issues

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(though they may exhibit other OCD symptoms, as well). Often scrupulosity is described as "the doubting disease" or "seeing sin where there is none" (Ciarrochi, 1995; Nelson et al. 2006). The symptoms of this disorder are invasive and distressing in the individual's daily functioning and can impair occupational, social, and family relationships.

Often a person exhibiting scrupulosity will first seek help from a religious official believing that the symptoms are a religious-based issue, as opposed to a mental health issue. This is the first obstacle that clinicians face in the treatment of this disorder. Furthermore, religious officials may make the mistake of inadvertently reinforcing the distress and anxiety associated with scrupulosity by viewing the concerns solely through a religious perspective. In addition to this obstacle, people living with scrupulosity are often suspicious of mental health professionals, believing that the clinician is ignorant of their religious beliefs or will attempt to convert them to anti-religious practices. For this reason, appropriate co-consultation between the individual's religious leader and the treating clinician is advisable. This study presents practical treatment considerations to assist therapists, counselors, and other clinicians treating LDS persons who are struggling with scrupulosity based on the research and our clinical experience working with this population.

Literature

Definitions and Symptoms

Scrupulosity has two essential features of diagnostic criteria; "(1) recurrent intrusive thoughts, urges, doubts, or images that, although perceived as senseless, evoke anxiety (obsessions); and (2) repeated urges to perform excessive overt or covert rituals to neutralize the anxiety" (Abramowitz, Deacon, Woods, & Tolin, 2004, p. 70). The religious manifestation of the obsessions and compulsions distinctly identifies scrupulosity from obsessive-compulsive disorder. The obsessions (thoughts), for scrupulosity take form as "persistent doubts and fears about sin, blasphemy, and punishment from God" (Hepworth, Simonds, & Marsh, 2010, p.1). The compulsions (actions), take the form as "excessive religious behavior such as repeated praying and seeking reassurance about religious beliefs" (Hepworth et al., 2010, p.1). In order to meet the criteria for scrupulosity, Ciarrocchi (1995) argues that the individual must experience fear from the obsession and simultaneously attempt to prevent the compulsion.

Ciarrocchi (1995) describes the symptoms of scrupulosity as "seeing sin where there is none," (p. 5). Prominent symptoms of scrupulosity include excessive and inappropriate guilt, worry, and doubt. Although these symptoms are perceived to be related to the individual's religious beliefs, these persons often find no solace in seeking reassurance or guidance from religious officials. This inability to be reassured results in significant impairment in the individual's daily functioning (Hepworth et al., 2010). As stated in Steketee, Quay and White (1991), Rosen suggests that the excessive guilt experienced by the scrupulous person is what perpetuates the compulsive behaviors and fearful obsessions.

Ciarrocchi (1995) illustrates in his book, *The Doubting Disease: Help for Scrupulosity and Religious Compulsions*, how symptoms of scrupulosity are exhibited and perpetuated by fears and anxiety. Ciarrocchi (1995) offers a case example of a symptom theme of causing harm or injury to other people, which is considered a sin. In this example, the obsession is a "nurse [who] worries he will miscalculate medications and injure [the] patient" (Ciarrocchi, 1995, p. 46). The compulsion is the nurse will "check [the] dosage frequently. [Who] eventually gives up nursing" (Ciarrocchi, 1995, p. 46). He continues by explaining that this may be why patients are resistant to sharing these feelings and urges (Ciarrocchi, 1995).

Earliest known cases of scrupulosity are found in early prominent religious reform leaders and founders of religious societies. These cases include Martin Luther, English Puritan writer John Bunyan and Spanish founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius Loyola. Luther's symptoms became evident when he celebrated his first mass in 1517. He feared that an act of omission during the mass would be a sin, even if this was an accidental omission (Cefalu, 2010). Based on early cases, Freud theorized that religion was an "obsessional ritual" and further recognized a similarity between religious rituals and defense mechanisms" (Zoher, Goldman, Calamary, & Mashiah, 2005, p. 858; Ciarrocchi, 1995). Theorists today on the other hand, agree that scrupulosity is a psychological disorder as opposed to Freud's theory of

using religion to escape "unconscious impulses" (Zoher et al., 2005, p. 858).

Distinguishing Between Normal Religious Behavior and Pathological Behavior

A challenge for most clinicians working with scrupulosity is distinguishing the line between "normal" religious behavior and pathological neurosis. The term "normal" is based on the particular religion in which an individual practices, due to the varying amount of beliefs and rituals between religions, denominations, and sects. Some signs distinguishing pathological symptoms from normal behavior include: 1. If the behavior exhibited by the individual exceeds what is required set by religious doctrine, 2. If the behavior is focused on insignificant religious rituals, thus ignoring other important aspects of their religious beliefs, and 3. If the symptoms resemble signs of OCD, for example, compulsions for checking or cleansing (Ciarrocchi, 1995).

Ciarrocchi (1995) argues that symptoms are frequent, intense and last much longer than religious rituals ought to. Similar to OCD features, the scrupulous person imagines a more horrible outcome then it is in reality and resists the obsessions by attempting to neutralize them. The primary distinction between OCD and scruples, is the religious nature of the symptoms and its effects on the cognitive process. The efficacy for treatment of scrupulosity also appears more controversial then treatment for OCD. While OCD treatment methods include behavioral therapy, behavioral therapy alone (without attention to spiritual aspects of belief and behavior) may not be effective treatment for scrupulosity (Ciarrocci, 1995).

Causes of Scrupulosity

The cause of scrupulosity is one of the most controversial topics associated with this disorder. Researchers have examined whether the degree to which the individual believes in a religion is the cause of religious obsessions, or if it is caused by cultural influences. Tek and Ulug (2001) argue scrupulosity is not associated with religiosity, but is simply the manifestation of symptoms. In their study conducted in 2001, Tek and Ulug found no association between the religious practices of the person and the obsessive-compulsive symptoms. Instead of religious practices, Tek and Ulug (2001) believe that it may be the culture that places more emphasis on religion, which contributes to the expressions of these types of religious symptoms.

Yorulmaz, Gencoz, and Woody (2009) and Zohar et al. (2005) agree that religiosity contributes to the symptoms of scrupulosity. Yorulmaz et al. (2009) discovered an association between the level of religiousness and the symptoms experienced by scrupulosity. Zohar et al. (2005), states that although the relationship between the obsessions and compulsions and religiosity is vague, those individuals who practiced religious beliefs and who have strengthened their religious beliefs demonstrate higher obsessive-compulsive behaviors. Sica, Novara, and Sanavio (2002) add that individuals with high devoutness experienced higher levels of obsessions and cognitions then individuals with low levels of devoutness.

Moral thought-action fusion (TAF) is one theory that attempts to explain the source of scrupulosity symptoms. Moral TAF is the association that immoral thoughts are the equivalent to immoral actions. Since scrupulosity exhibits symptoms based on fears of sin and fears of God, moral TAF drives these fears and anxiety further by equating thoughts with behavior (Hepworth et al., 2010). Christian bible passages such as Matthew 5:27-28 (King James version), support this theory stating, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28 KJV). Thus to a scrupulous person, the consequences of immoral thoughts are construed to be the same as the consequences of immoral behavior, and this again perpetuates the anxiety associated with these symptoms (Siev, Chambless, & Huppert, 2010).

One problem with this theory is that it may only applicable to Christian based religions. According to a study conducted by Siev, Chambless, and Huppert (2010), moral TAF is culturally normative to Christian religions, and may not readily apply to religions such as Judaism or Islam. These authors continue to say, moral TAF varies by religion and is inconsistently associated with religious symptoms (Siev et al., 2010).

Obstacles to Treatment of Scrupulosity

Clinicians face several obstacles in identifying and treating patients with scrupulosity. Often, the first contact made by a scrupulous person will be a church leader based on the nature of this disorder (Hepworth et al., 2010). This may be detrimental to the individual, if the church leader is unaware of scrupulosity and fails to refer the church member to a therapist. Another possibility is the clergy member may say something to the scrupulous person to perpetuate the anxiety and fears associated with scrupulosity (Huppert & Siev, 2010).

From the perspective of the scrupulous person, they believe this is a religious issue they are experiencing, not a mental health issue. They also may feel that the therapist does not have sufficient knowledge of their religious beliefs to state whether these behaviors are healthy or if they are obsessions. Scrupulous persons may also feel suspicious of psychotherapists and the mental health field, believing that the therapist is going to try to convert them from their religion (Huppert & Siev, 2010; Hepworth et al., 2010). Due to the fear of being converted from their religious beliefs and their suspicions of the therapist, one study conducted by Greenberg and Shefler (2002) discovered that in general, people with scrupulosity would rather seek medication for the interfering symptoms, than to attempt traditional therapy. Scrupulous people would rather engage in a treatment they believe will not intrude on their religious beliefs and practices (Greenberg & Shefler, 2002).

Latter-day Saints and Scrupulosity

As a religious group and culture, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not immune from mental health concerns. Despite the research indicating that active, faithful Latter-day Saints (LDS) have significantly lower rates of suicide (Hilton, Fellingham, and Lyon, 2002) and either lower or comparable rates of anxiety, depression, divorce, and other mental illnesses or family problems (Bergin, 1992; Decker & Chatlin, 2000; Judd, 1999), LDS persons may experience mental health concerns like any other group of people. Historically, LDS people were somewhat reticent to seek counseling or therapy for a variety of reasons (Koltko, 1992), however in recent years there has been an increasing openness to seeking treatment for mental health needs. One example of this increased awareness of mental health issues among the LDS population was the publication of the book *Valley of Sorrow* from an emeritus General Authority on the topic of mental illness in the church (Morrison, 2003). Emerging from this increased awareness and acceptance of treatment for mental health and family problems among LDS people has been a small increase in research on the topic of scrupulosity among church members (Twohig & Crosby, 2010; Dehling, Morrison, & Twohig, 2013). These two studies are the only recent studies that could be found on scrupulosity that specifically focuses on treatment efficacy with LDS populations. Dehling, Morrison, and Twohig (2013) recently published their results from using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which is a form of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), with five LDS people struggling with scrupulosity. Their study indicated that use of ACT helped reduce scrupulous-based compulsions by 74% at post-treatment and 80% at the 3-month follow-up. One of the primary reasons they attributed to the success of ACT with this disorder is that ACT causes the individual in treatment to address the symptoms at the meta-cognitive level, thus helping them break out of the anxiety-provoking thought process loop characteristic of scrupulosity. Dehlin et al. (2013) describe ACT in the following:

> ACT for OCD seeks to address the context in which obsessions are experienced through the teaching and practice of such concepts as acceptance of thoughts and feelings, learning to disempower thoughts and feelings by not giving them more significance than they merit, mindfulness, and values-based committed action. These skills are taught through exercises, discus¬sions, and experiential exercises and metaphors in the therapy sessions. Through weekly homework assignments, clients are able to further apply the techniques learned in session to real-life situations and problems. (p. 411)

Practical Treatment Considerations

Expanding the Treatment Approach Options for LDS Persons

The lead author of t this article is currently both an ecclesiastical leader in the church (bishop) and a part-time clinician at LDS Services, in addition to being

a professor of marriage and family therapy. This has granted him a rich opportunity to examine this issue of scrupulosity from both the perspective of a clergyman and a mental health professional. Deriving from these combined experiences, the current treatment approach our team recommends builds upon the previous use of ACT and CBT approaches with individuals suffering from scrupulosity by adding LDS-specific spiritual perspectives, as well. Though Dehlin et al. (2013) recommend avoiding religious content in their use of ACT in order to focus on metacognitive processes, our team's approach sees initial religious and spiritual content discussions in the early phases of treatment as essential for building a therapeutic alliance and establishing a foundation of trust. This may seem counter-intuitive to address spiritual concerns and have doctrinal/spiritual discussions while concomitantly maintaining a goal to help the client engage in a metacognitive break from the religiously-oriented, anxiety-provoking thought process loop, but experience has shown that such spiritual discussions are a necessary precursor to any progress through other interventions. Without establishing this spiritual foundation, the scrupulous are simply too anxious to pursue the metacognitive work of ACT/CBT approaches. Primarily, this addresses the issue of joining or building a relationship of trust with the client at a spiritual level as well as other dimensions of the therapeutic relationship. Once the client is able to trust that the therapist has expertise in religious/spiritual matters (and some authoritative experience in addressing similarly intertwined religious/mental health concerns as a result of one's church service, experience, and professional training), the client suffering from scrupulosity is generally more open to receiving new ideas and suggestions that may assist them. Once the client and therapist have an established relationship that demonstrates respect for the client's faith and a capacity on the part of the therapist to speak intelligently (if not quasi-authoritatively) on religious matters, then the mental health treatment from a psychotherapeutic perspective can commence.

The following steps outline our basic approach to treating scrupulosity:

1. Joining/Building a Relationship of Trust
2. Assessment - Including the Penn Inventory of Scrupulosity (PIOS)
3. Ecclesiastical Consultation
4. Diagnosis (Including Client Acceptance of the Diagnosis) and Treatment Plan
5. Medication Evaluation Referral
6. Spiritual Doctrine Review/Reframes
7. Bibliotherapy–Church/Mormon publications; Ciarrocchi (1995) The Doubting Disease; and Schwartz (1996) Brain Lock among Others
8. ACT/CBT

Joining/Building a Relationship of Trust

Common factors research (Lambert & Barley, 2001; Sprenkle, 2002; Sprenkle, Davis, & Lebow, 2009) indicates how essential establishing a relationship of trust or "joining" (Minuchin, 1974) is to the success of any therapeutic process. With LDS persons suffering from scrupulosity, establishing a strong clinical working relationship is crucial. Because earlier generations of psychologists and other mental health professionals were skeptical, if not antagonistic, towards religion, people of faith were often wary of receiving therapy. They feared their faith would be ridiculed and were concerned the clinician would seek to dissuade them from being faithful to their religious tenants. For the scrupulous believers, their worldview or perspective is fundamentally religious, therefore any attempts to address their difficulties from a secular approach would be suspicious, at best, and sacrilegious, at worst. So it is essential that in the initial sessions of treatment with a faithful believer suffering with scrupulosity that the therapist be extremely "faith-friendly" and can demonstrate that they understand the client's religious views.

Among the LDS who have a history of persecution in the early foundational periods of the church's rise in the 19th century, an "us vs. them" mentality toward "the world" sometimes persists. Thus previous generations of Latter-day Saints were often unwilling to go to a therapist or interpret their problems through a mental health perspective (Kolto, 1992). Although competent therapists, regardless of their religious affiliation, can be helpful in treating LDS OCD sufferers, scrupulosity often requires an LDS therapist—given the high level of religious distrust that a scrupulous client would likely feel towards an non-LDS client—or at least consultation with an LDS therapist on the part

of a non-LDS counselor regarding some of the unique nuances of belief in the LDS faith. Additionally, an LDS person with scrupulosity will likely be wary of even an LDS therapist until the therapist has passed some sort of client-imposed "secret test" (Broderick, 1992) that the therapist is "orthodox" or "faithful" as a Latter-day Saint and not a "Jack-Mormon" whose religious opinions are not to be trusted. Thus some limited self-disclosure may be appropriate (for example, as part of introducing myself—the lead author—to a client struggling with scrupulosity, I include my current calling as a bishop[1] to help ease their concerns about "what kind of Mormon" I am). While this is not necessary with all LDS clients, persons with scrupulosity seem to need that initial assurance they are in "spiritually-safe" hands with their new therapist. Sometimes, as part of their "secret testing" the client will want to discuss doctrine or ask questions about spiritual matters. While the therapist must use one's clinical judgment as to what pieces of information would be useful to explore and which ones are irrelevant tangents, it is important to understand this initial penchant for the scrupulous person to focus on spiritual questions in the early phases of treatment as an attempt to reduce their own anxiety about whether or not they can trust this therapist spiritually, rather than interpreting their questions as the client's incapacity to resist their obsessions and compulsions (as one might conclude if these behaviors continue in the later phases of treatment). Thus joining on a religious and spiritual level is essential at the outset of therapy and ample time (perhaps multiple sessions) should be devoted to this early aspect of therapy. In fact, one of the keys to success we have seen is *patience* in the early phases of treatment. Joining, assessing, consulting, diagnosing, and treatment planning cannot be rushed with the scrupulous client. Their propensity to doubt, obsess, and vacillate (as symptoms of OCD/scrupulosity) determines the necessity of slow, and patient foundation building in these early steps. In supervision, we find that therapists who rush through these early foundational stages have poorer outcomes.

1. I often have to ensure throughout the course of treatment that the client realizes I am not their bishop and that they must address any confessions or authoritative, ecclesiastical-requiring concerns with their bishop who holds the keys of stewardship for them.

Assessment

In addition to the traditional assessments one might use with cases of anxiety (e.g. Outcome Questionnaire, Beck Anxiety Inventory, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Family Assessment Device, and so forth), when working with cases of scrupulosity, the Penn Inventory of Scrupulosity (PIOS) is a requisite assessment tool. Developed by Abramowitz et al. (2002), this 19 item self-report instrument assesses the level of scrupulosity utilizing a Likert scale from 0-4 with zero representing no scrupulous thoughts or behaviors and four representing constantly experiencing scrupulous thoughts or behaviors. Six of the 19 items pertain to "Fears of God" and thirteen items pertain to "Fears of Sin" (Olatunji et al., 2007). Examples of questions in the PIOS include: "Item 1. I worry that I might have dishonest thoughts, Item 2. I fear that I might be an evil person, Item 3. I fear I will act immorally, Item 4. I feel urges to confess sins over and over again, Item 15. I worry I will never have a good relationship with God, Item 16. I feel guilty about immoral thoughts I have had, and Item 17. I worry that God is upset with me" (see Abramowitz et al., 2002). The PIOS has been shown to have high levels of validity and reliability (see Abramowitz et al., 2002; Olatunji et al., 2007).

Ecclesiastical Consultation

Obtaining a release of information for purposes of co-consultation with the LDS person's bishop, branch president, stake president, mission president, or other appropriate priesthood leader is essential. Latter-day Saints have an ecclesiastical structure that emphasizes priesthood keys and specific responsibilities pertaining to revelation, counsel, and accountability for ward members under the priesthood leader's stewardship. Therefore, consulting with the scrupulous client's proper priesthood leader can be a source of reassurance for the client that the therapist is not providing counseling along a course that significantly differs from their priesthood leader. The practice of co-consultation by LDS Family Services and other LDS therapists with priesthood leaders consistently conforms to ethical and legal requirements (e.g. consistently obtaining signed written releases of confidential information from the client prior to co-consultation), and is sound clinical practice that significantly aids the client's treatment prognosis.

Ecclesiastical consultations have demonstrable value in our experience with scrupulous clients. In some cases, educating priesthood leaders (who serve as clergy from the laity and often do not have formal training in counseling or therapy) about mental illness, OCD in general, and scrupulosity in particular, is the first step. Such priesthood leaders may not understand why a member of their congregation is constantly confessing sins they have already addressed previously or just cannot seem to stop focusing on praying "just right." Explaining scrupulosity gives content and context to the priesthood leader so they can lovingly and compassionately counsel the scrupulous person.

Ecclesiastical consultations also serve the valuable purpose of lending credibility or authority to the therapist in the eyes of the client. If the scrupulous person places a high value on doing what is right in the sight of God (often as interpreted by the priesthood leader's perspective in whom the LDS scrupulous person likely has high confidence), then having the therapist and the priesthood leader on the "same page" regarding treatment lends some borrowed trust and credibility from the priesthood leader to the therapist. Essentially, if the therapist can demonstrate that the bishop and the therapist are in agreement, then client compliance on the part of the LDS scrupulous person increases significantly.

Diagnosis (Including Client Acceptance of the Diagnosis) and Treatment Planning

Once the assessments and clinical judgment of the therapist lead him or her to suspect a diagnosis of OCD/scrupulosity, the therapist should work in concert with the client to mutually agree upon the scrupulosity diagnosis. It is crucial to remember that the client will likely have an oscillating waxing and waning in their confidence in the diagnosis of scrupulosity. They have usually interpreted their struggles as *primarily* religiously-based for several years, so accepting a new perspective of their trials and tribulations pertaining to their symptoms as being primarily a mentally-health-based issue with religious nuances will take some time to assimilate and adapt to in their thought process and emotional capacity to accept this shift. Thus their ebb and flow of acceptance and non-acceptance of the diagnosis is understandable and predictable. Given that scrupulosity is often termed "the doubting disease" it is no wonder that doubts about the "correctness" of the diagnosis will also ensue. This undulation between acceptance and non-acceptance of the diagnosis is symptomatic of their overall undulating "ups-and-downs," "back-and-forth" of their anxieties and thought processes in their lives. Both the scripture 1 Kings 18: 21 "How long halt ye between two opinions?" and chapter 8 of C.S. Lewis's (1942/2001) *The Screwtape Letters*, which explains why the up and down undulation pattern in life is normal and common to all (as well as a valuable, purposeful tool God uses in our lives to develop us) can be very helpful at this stage of treatment.

As their confidence, acceptance, and ownership of the diagnosis of scrupulosity is strengthened and emboldened, the therapist then proceeds to develop a mutually agreed upon treatment plan involving medication evaluation, spiritual discussions/reframes, bibliotherapy, CBT, and ACT.

Medication Evaluation Referral

Referral to a competent medical physician (preferably a psychiatrist) for medication evaluation and possible prescription is another key element to treatment success. Research (Bloch et al., 2010; Shin et al., 2014) has shown that anti-depressant medications in the classification of Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) generally have positive outcome results for improving the health and functioning of people suffering from OCD. Should a physician choose to prescribe a medication, the therapist's role most often involves medication compliance review.

Spiritual Doctrine Review/Reframes

Therapists must address the spiritual and doctrinal content of the client's concerns and help reframe them to a more positive and helpful perspective. The client's anxiety-based perspective of God may tend to overemphasize fear, strict obedience, vengefulness, and austerity. They may have blasphemous thoughts, inadequate perspectives about sin and righteousness, or feelings and compulsions towards apologizing or confessing sins that were not really sins in the first place (or will not believe they have been forgiven of legitimate sins for which they have truly, fully repented). Additionally, their religiously-oriented obsessions and compulsions may be compounded by other forms of

OCD behaviors, including excessive washing, compulsive gambling, compulsive pornography usage and masturbation, hoarding, or other similar, common compulsive behaviors. Addressing some of the spiritual aspects and reframing/cognitive restructuring along the lines of religious perspectives, may reduce anxiety sufficiently that other treatments may begin to be tried for those associated problems.

In terms of reframing doctrinal understandings while counseling LDS persons with scrupulosity, it has been helpful to emphasize the role of pre-mortal creation and the organization of intelligences into spirit sons and daughters of a loving Heavenly Father who saw value in these unique intelligence and chose to create them into His children. Further, we emphasize that God nurtured, tutored, and developed all of us in the pre-mortal realms. A quote from Pres. George Q. Cannon describing us pre-mortally enjoying God's "presence and His smiles" (see Pace, 2005) is emphasized to reframe God as a loving, smiling God who cares about us individually and is easily pleased with us. Reframing the spiritual perspective from what could best be described in the classic sermon of Jonathan Edwards' (1741) *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (which the person suffering from scrupulosity probably obsesses over and personalizes) to a more loving, benevolent, and merciful Deity as taught in the LDS theology and tradition is thus conceptually linked with "correcting false doctrine" and therefore the scrupulous person is caught in a bind where to continue their unhealthy, self-prosecutorial perspective would be to continue down a path that contains the errors of the Apostasy era. This strategic juxtaposition is a catalyst for their openness to accept more positive and healthy reframes of God and themselves.

Often clients are projecting flaws and problems they experienced with their mortal parents onto God. Vitz's (2000) work regarding the psychology of atheism and faith in God as being linked with one's early childhood experiences with earthly parents is helpful to further counter oppressive notions of a God who carries the capriciousness, austerity, and judgmentalism that may have existed in the client's earthly parentage. In exploring the client's family of origin, we seek to separate their feelings about their parents from their perspective on God. We seek to help them come to see and know God and His love through a clear lens rather than through the cloudy and dark lens that comes from projecting one's earthly parents' characteristics onto Heavenly Father. Once the client is in this position of accepting a more loving and tender view of God (and a Being who desires a compassionate and understanding relationship with the client), further scriptural and doctrinal evidence can be given adding "line upon line, precept upon precept" depending upon the level of resistance the client raises to such doctrinal reframes. Typical examples of scriptures about both God's loving nature and our non-anxious emotional state He seeks from us that are commonly used would be:

- D&C 18:10—"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;" (emphasis added)
- D&C 112:4—"Let thy heart be of good cheer before my face;"
- D&C 6:36—"Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not."
- Philippians 4:6–7—"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Also, the footnote in reference to "careful" states that the Greek translation of the phrase suggests "Don't be unduly concerned about anything."
- Jeremiah 29:11–14—"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord."

Bibliotherapy

Clients with scrupulosity are given certain readings to reinforce these new spiritual concepts about a loving God who delights in His children and wants them to have self-worth as He sees worth in them. Elder Glenn L. Pace's "Confidence and Self-Worth" (Ensign, Jan. 2005, p. 32) article is a typical starting reading assignment. Much of the client's scrupulous anxiety stems from their feelings of low self-worth before God. Thus building of self-esteem and confidence is valuable

toward reducing this anxiety that underlies scrupulosity. Using authoritative sources (e.g. scriptures, general conference talks from General Authorities, and publications from Church Magazines) helps aid the process because the scrupulous individual finds these sources credible.

From both an ecclesiastical and a professional position, the lead author generally asks the LDS scrupulous individual who is seeking repentance (in an ecclesiastical role) or help (in a professional role) to read other church-related material that will not exacerbate their condition and will reinforce the new positive spiritual paradigm about a loving God and their personal worth that we are attempting to build. Books such as Wilcox's (2009) *The Continuous Atonement* or Robinson's (1992) *Believing Christ* are extremely useful and powerful with the scrupulous or otherwise discouraged saints. While an impressive and powerful work regarding repentance and forgiveness, Pres. Spencer W. Kimball's (1969) **The Miracle of Forgiveness** (particularly his early chapters) tends to induce greater guilt and therefore is not normally recommended to the scrupulous persons who already have excessive and inordinate spiritual guilt. Such a reading assignment is used for people who are far too comfortable in their sins and need the motivating warning of repentance found in Kimball's (1969) classic work. But the scrupulous are almost always motivated to repent—often they seek repentance when they have not actually sinned. So prescribing such a reading assignment is contraindicated in this instance.

Once the emerging new (more positive, tender, loving, and accepting) spiritual paradigm begins to be tentatively accepted, we will begin to assign some readings specific to OCD and scrupulosity. Two essential books in this regard are Ciarrocchi's (1995) *The Doubting Disease* and Schwartz's (1996) *Brain Lock*.

Ciarrocchi's (1995) is a unique work from the perspective of both an associate professor of pastoral counseling in the Catholic tradition and a clinical psychologist. His very readable text carefully reviews both historical and contemporary examples of scrupulosity, discusses the philosophical and theological teachings of the centuries of religious thought concerning the subject, and then outlines a treatment plan of CBT interventions coupled with religious perspectives that he finds useful in his work. His descriptions of both OCD/scrupulous behavior and of the intricate moral reasoning used in religious writings and teachings over the Christian Era centuries is exceptionally well done. Clients find that this normalizes their experiences to a degree. They also find hope in the understanding that treatment, though new and emerging for scrupulosity, is available and generally effective.

In Schwartz's (1996) book *Brain Lock* and Schwartz and Gladding's (2011) *You Are Not Your Brain*, this leading research psychiatrist on neuroplasticity offers a four-step process for the OCD/scrupulous person to use in response to their obsessions and compulsions: 1. Relabel, 2. Reattribute, 3. Refocus, and 4. Revalue. These steps introduce some of the concepts of cognitive and behavioral restructuring we do with clients in the ACT/CBT phase of treatment.

In one rare instance, a television show, *Monk* (Breckman et al, 2004), was recommended to a client struggling with OCD/scrupulosity. In fact the mother (who was the primary client) and her two sons—literally half of the family—all suffered from this mental illness. They were very unfamiliar with OCD and the mother, in particular, was resistant to any consideration of medications. Sensing their need for some visual understanding of the OCD illness (though admittedly in an extreme format to create humor for the show), I (the lead author) recommended they watch the show *Monk*. I particularly hoped they would see that although the main character (Mr. Monk) suffered with OCD, the illness was actually a unique part of him that made him so good at what he does. Rather than portraying someone with mental illness pejoratively, the show highlighted his positive qualities during his struggle with OCD. I also wanted the family to enjoy some clean humor together that might allow for some of the tension in their relationships to be diffused. After watching the show for a number of weeks, the mother came to a session, thanked me for introducing the show to her family, talked about how much it helped them, and discussed an episode where Mr. Monk had tried an experimental medication and it completely relaxed him to the point of totally changing his behavior in very uncharacteristic ways. Though she knew such a television portrayal was an exaggeration, it helped her ponder over her own situation and she determined she was finally ready to try medications. Eventually, through medication and counseling,

her two sons were able to improve to the point of being able to accept missionary calls and faithfully serve in the mission field. The mother also improved significantly with treatment.

Such exposure to new ideas and possibilities to a person previously lacking of hope can be powerful. Through articles, books, and even television or films, persons struggling with scrupulosity can begin to accept new perspectives that are more positive and healthy.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy/Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Bibliotherapy can be a starting point for treatment sessions. Clients who engage in such readings are given a basic framework of new language and novel ideas to talk about their experiences. This quickly enables the ACT/CBT work to begin in earnest.

Building upon Schwartz's (1996) four-step model, clients are encouraged to discuss their specific scrupulous obsessions and compulsions and then the therapist and client can explore how to relabel, reattribute, refocus, and revalue them.

Helping the client to recognize and relabel the unwanted thoughts, urges, and behaviors as obsessions and compulsions rather than some type of spiritual impression that something is amiss in their life is particularly difficult in a religious culture that consistently emphasizes heeding spiritual promptings as revelation from God. It takes considerable practice and life experience for the average LDS person to distinguish between an actual spiritual prompting, inspiration, or revelation from Heaven and a random thought, emotional impulse, or affective experience common to our mortal experience. But consistent familiarity with legitimate spiritual experiences does bring into one's life a refinement of discernment and a heightened capacity to differentiate between inspiration and emotion. The LDS person with scrupulosity, however, has experiences with religion and spirituality that have further intertwined complex emotional issues with spiritual ones to the point where their ability to judge between the two is severely impaired. It is true they may have heightened anxiety and sensitivity about religious matters and dilemmas of right and wrong, but that does not necessarily equate to greater discernment and clarity about distinguishing between the emotional and spiritual feelings. In fact, the opposite is usually the case. They have so blended their affective issues with spiritual ones that their capacity to differentiate is greatly impaired. Relabeling the unwanted thoughts, urges, and behaviors as OCD rather than revelation actually begins to help them differentiate between the two and actually frees them up to have quite different, legitimate spiritual experiences that are affirming of them and positive. It is the first step to being free to truly come to know God as He really is and establishing a healthy, loving relationship with Him without the murky lens of anxiety impeding. In relabeling, clients are encouraged to identify their false brain messages for what they really are: obsessions and compulsions—not spiritual promptings or warnings that they have sinned or might sin. Identifying their inner emotional experience as their own mental processes frees them to truly experience spiritual experiences later on that are genuine. Relabeling begins the metacognitive process of standing objective to one's self and watch or view one's thoughts and actions from a position of mindful awareness. Schwartz (1996) cites Adam Smith's concept of the "impartial and well-informed spectator" to describe standing "meta" to one's self. This strengthens the LDS scrupulous person's capacity to build healthy discernment. This step often requires patient and persistent practice on the part of the client. Techniques involved with relabeling and expanding the client's metacognitive capacity might include journaling, telling one's obsessions to a tape recorder in the most extreme fashion (e.g. fear of germs—imagine falling in mud) and playing it over and over to the point of boredom, or engaging in useful activity (because passivity is a key component of OCD continuing to plague the individual).

Reattributing these obsessions and compulsions to one's OCD/scrupulosity is the next crucial step. Clients are taught to say to themselves, "It's not me, it's my brain" or "It's not sin, it's my scrupulosity" or other similar refrains. Helping the client attribute their problem to something that is totally "in their head"—a mental process that is a false alarm rather than something to pay attention to—is the goal. Encouraging the client to consider the metaphor that their brain is simply "stuck in gear" and needs some action to get it unstuck helps them prepare to take that necessary action (step 3—refocus) and

eventually dismiss the urge as undeserving of their attention and interest (step 4 —revalue).

Refocusing is the key to helping the client move forward. Just as faith is a "principle of action and power" (*Lectures on Faith* 1:10–13) that affects "both physical and mental" exertions (verse 10), refocusing toward wholesome activities and thoughts unrelated to the obsessions and compulsions takes faith on the part of the scrupulous and will bring the benefits of peace and clarity. As the LDS person with scrupulosity engages in other thoughts and actions and ignores the scrupulous urges, even for as short a period of time as ten to fifteen minutes, they become empowered and become better able to differentiate reality from obsession. Much like the native American story of a boy with two wolves in his heart—a good wolf and a bad wolf —who is taught that whichever wolf will eventually win depends on which wolf the boy chooses to feed, persons struggling with scrupulosity are faced with having to choose to feed one perspective or another. As they erode the OCD based paradigm of obsessions and compulsions, they must "starve" their obsessions and compulsions by "feeding" the thoughts and actions that are healthy. Refocusing gives the client the tools to choose to focus on healthy thoughts and actions.

Revaluing is the final step in Schwartz's (1996) model, and is, in essence, the result of persistent and diligent application of the first three steps. By relabeling, reattributing, and refocusing, the client comes to see the obsessions and compulsions for what they really are—false, deceptive brain messages that are of no value or worth. This enables the client to dismiss them. The unwanted thoughts and behavioral urges will likely continue to come, but the client will be able to quickly dismiss them as of no worth or value over time with consistent effort.

Adding to Schwartz's (1996; Schwartz & Gladding, 2011) model, Ciarrocchi's (1995) approach adds the importance of keeping a record or journal of daily dysfunctional thoughts, feelings, and behaviors along with the power of exposure and response prevention therapy. For example, one client, a young college age man, was consistently ten to fifteen minutes late to sessions. When asked why this was happening, he admitted he was trying to get his prayers "just right" and then that would delay his preparation and travel time. In fact, he had daily struggles with excessive praying as well as daily fears that when he noticed a pretty girl at work he was "lusting" after her. His prayers often involved repenting for looking at her and thinking she was attractive. We explored places in the scriptures where prophets had prayed in a manner that does not fit with the modern LDS format of beginning prayers by addressing Heavenly Father and ending in the name of Christ (e.g., in Alma 31:26 the prophet Alma begins his prayer, "O, how long O Lord . . ." and the ending of his prayer in verse 35 does not even include an "amen"). The client was asked if he felt God had heard and accepted Alma's prayer even though it did not follow the formulaic model of prayer that he (the client) is seeking to rigidly follow. He was then asked to follow the counsel in Philippians 4:6–7 and make his simple, heartfelt prayers of thanksgiving and requests be made "known unto God" in whatever inarticulate manner they may be and then resist the temptation to pray again and again with the promise that if he did so he would find the "peace which passeth all understanding." He might not know or understand why such imperfect prayers work, but he would find peace and the knowledge that they are indeed heard and answered. This exposure to the thing he feared the most coupled with the response prevention of not allowing himself to pray repeatedly was exceptionally helpful to him. Regarding the "repentance" for noticing a pretty girl at work, we carefully discussed the distinction between righteously noticing attractiveness in a potential romantic interest and "mentally undressing" and imagining specific sexual actions with a person. He was encouraged that he was already resisting temptations of lust by avoiding pornography and averting his eyes when scantily clad women were portrayed on television, films, or magazine covers, and so he was to be commended for his efforts to be pure. But in avoiding the righteous attractiveness of a potential dating companion, he was "looking beyond the mark" (see Jacob 4:14) and taking a good thing too far. In modern terms, he was allowing a "strength" to become his "downfall" (Oaks, 1994). He was encouraged to take action and talk to her to develop a friendship. In time, he was encouraged to ask her out on a date. This exposure to the very thing he was afraid of was very helpful because he had to take action and dismiss his former perceptions that held him bound.

Lastly, from Dehlin et al. (2013) we suggest specific, weekly, active homework assignments idiosyncratic to the clients particular concerns. Getting the client to "stay busy" (Schwartz, 1996) and avoid passivity is essential. Whether it is physical exercise, socializing, attending church social events, or engaging in some other meaningful labor or effort, active homework assignments help them to consistently and repetitively refocus and revalue.

Conclusion

LDS persons with scrupulosity experience a great deal of suffering. Fortunately, emerging treatment trends show great promise. The model described in this article builds on the recent trends in ACT/CBT treatment for OCD, but adds several practical treatment considerations. A careful and patient emphasis on joining, assessment, ecclesiastical consultation, diagnosis and treatment planning, medication evaluation, spiritual and doctrinal reframes, bibliotherapy, and ACT/CBT can yield positive clinical outcomes.

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Exploring Perceived Attitudes of Counseling between LDS Religious Leaders and Mental Health Therapists

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Perceived attitudes between mental health therapists and local congregational LDS religious leaders regarding the value, function, and efficacy of mental health therapy were qualitatively examined. Qualitative data emerging from 4 LDS religious leaders (all male; 3 bishops and 1 stake president) and 7 mental health therapists (5 females, 2 males) were analyzed. Results showed differences in attitudes related to the collaboration process as well as the efficacy and process of counseling between local mental health therapists and LDS religious leaders in a specific Southwest region of the U.S. Additional results are reported. Implications are discussed related to these findings.
Keywords: Mental health therapy, counseling, mental health referral collaboration, Latter-Day Saints.

The general view of mental health professionals toward religion and its contribution to positive mental health has fluctuated over the years. This is shown as early as 1927, in Sigmund Freud's book titled, "The Future of an Illusion" in which he refers to religion as a form of childhood neurosis (Freud, 1927). Albert Ellis (1958) suggested that "Religious creeds encourage some of the craziest kinds of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and favor severe manifestations of neurosis, borderline personality states, and sometimes even psychosis." Concurrently, up until the publication of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV, 1994), religious and spiritual experiences were referenced as characteristics of psychopathology such as paranoia, delusions, hallucinations and schizotypal symptoms (Levin, 2010).

Despite early psychotherapists who supported religion and spirituality (i.e., Carl Jung), the negative view of religion held by psychotherapists was widespread. Only more recently have the relationships among religiosity and spirituality been examined with significant emphasis on efforts to strengthen its positive impact on mental health (Witztum, 2011; Allen & Heppner, 2011; Allen & Wang, 2013; Yeh, Arora & Wu, 2006; Yeh, Inman, Kim, & Okubo, 2006).

It is somewhat common for highly religious individuals in need of mental health services to first seek help from their religious leaders. Consequently, this religious setting can potentially become a channel through which referral to professional mental health assistance can be considered (Kloos, Horneffer & Moore, 1995). The perceptions that religious leaders and clergy may have toward mental health therapists and vice a versa may also be impacting this potentially collaborative healing process. Such perceptions could enhance or diminish the treatment opportunities and positive outcomes of people seeking help. Kloos and colleagues (1995) suggested that, overall, religious leaders are willing to collaborate with mental health professionals.

In a two-part study (Foskett et al, 2004) involving both mental health professionals and religious leaders,

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researchers gathered and quantified a portrayal of the perceptions of both mental health professionals and religious leaders toward each other. In general, mental health professionals reported that there is a significant and meaningful link between religious belief and mental health when working with some clients, and this could possibly help therapists better understand clients' religious framework in session. A majority of religious leaders also identified a significant link between mental health and religion. However, over half of all religious leaders thought that exposure to mental health therapy could also confuse individuals about their religious faith and practice. These results suggested that mental health professionals are more understanding and open to collaborating with religious leaders and the beliefs of religious clients than are religious leaders toward mental health professionals (Foskett, Marriott, & Wilson-Rudd, 2004).

The perceived attitudes of mental health therapy/therapists by religious leaders, and mental health therapists' attitudes of religious leaders' beliefs and practice are essential to examine. There may be incorrect assumptions and biases of each other, which then can negatively impact the referral process that could otherwise potentially assist either a client or church member in distress. There is very little research regarding these perceived attitudes among mental health therapists and Latter-day Saint (LDS) religious leaders. Thus, this study seeks to answer these following questions:

1. What are the LDS religious leaders' attitudes that may delay the referral collaboration process between mental health therapists and LDS religious leaders?
2. What are LDS religious leaders' perceptions of and attitudes toward mental health counselors?
3. What are the perceptions of mental health professionals towards LDS religious leaders' function when working with members who struggle with psychological difficulties?
4. What differences might exist in LDS leaders' perceptions of LDS therapists/LDS Family Services therapists and Non-LDS therapists/non-LDS Family Services therapists?
5. What perceptions do mental health therapists have toward LDS religious leaders' referral processes?

Method

Participants

Qualitative data for this study were collected in a southwest region of the U.S. Participants were specifically targeted and recruited for 2 specific participant groups: (1) LDS religious leaders [3 bishops and 1 stake president] and (2) mental health therapists (5 females, 2 males; consisting of licensed psychologists, clinical social workers, and professional counselors). Therapists' religious affiliation was not assessed. The mean ages for the 2 groups were 51.6 for LDS religious leaders and 42.8 for mental health therapists. All therapists have at least 10 years of clinical experience.

Procedure

The following is a 6-step data gathering and qualitative analysis process by interviewing participants through a method called Narrative Research Analysis (NRA; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000): (1) Sharing personal experiences, (2) Identify significant statements, (3) Group into "meaning units" or themes, (4) Describe verbatim examples, (5) Describe "how" they experienced it, and (6) Integrate descriptions, meaning units, and themes into the "what" and "how" they experienced it, culminating into the "essence" of their experience. This analysis allowed the authors to elicit personally meaningful and rich experiences from these two groups regarding information about their perceptions, attitudes, and assumptions of each other. Below are the questions posed in the interviews.

Questions for LDS Religious Leaders:

1. What is your overall view on mental health therapists and psychology in general?
2. What is your overall view on mental health therapists in this region?
3. What has been your experience when you have been working with a member of your congregation who is also seeing a therapist or who has seen a therapist?
4. What has been your experience with referring the members of your congregation to the local therapists in this area?

5. To whom do you usually refer your members; to non-affiliated LDS Family Services therapists or those who directly work for or affiliated with LDS Family Services? And why to either?
6. At what point during your counseling meetings with your member do you feel like it's time for the member to seek out professional counseling services? In short, how do you assess when it is time to involve a therapist?

Questions for Mental Health Therapists:

1. What is your overall view of LDS religious leaders in this area related to helping their members with psychological or emotional difficulties?
2. What has been your experience with the referral process when working with the local LDS religious leaders, either referring your clients to or receiving referrals from them to work with their members in session?
3. If you had an active LDS client who struggled with religious issues in his/her life, would you send your client to their bishop or stake president for further help that they may need? If so (or not), why?
4. In what ways has working with these local LDS religious leaders related to the referral process been (or not been) helpful?
5. At what point during your counseling sessions with your client do you feel like it's time for the member to seek out ecclesiastical counseling services from their LDS religious leader? In short, how do you assess when it is time to involve the bishop or stake president?

Results

Qualitative Analysis

The following are the questions and corresponding transcribed responses to each question for both LDS religious leaders and mental health therapists.

LDS Religious Leaders

1. What is your overall view on mental health therapists and psychology in general?

Bishop 1:

"I think it's beneficial to certain people. But I don't always think that the person being diagnosed in need of counseling is accurate, because I've seen a lot of counseling for individuals with no results. As an untrained professional it's hard to see someone struggling so much go through counseling and see no results."

Bishop 2:

"Yes, I think it's helpful to people, but only if that individual is willing to accept the help and put in the work."

Bishop 3:

"I think it's a very valuable asset for those who need it. I think that the quality level of therapists is in a broad spectrum based upon training and clinical experience, but I generally have a very high view of the industry."

Stake President:

"I think there is certainly a need for that, I think there's a need for mental health and psychology and it's needed. There are those that need it and those that are trained can help those that need the process."

2. What is your overall view on mental health therapists in this region?

Bishop 1:

"I've only worked with a handful of them, but in my opinion the ones in this region that I have worked with have been extremely skilled and wonderful to work with for the most part."

Bishop 2:

"I think they are very competent. I haven't worked with tons of therapists, but the ones who have worked with my family have been experts and the ones I worked with since being a Bishop have been successful for the most part."

Bishop 3:

"I think generally there's a limited amount of quality therapists in this region, that's a function of the population. There are exceptional therapists that I've worked with as a bishop, but there's I think a bit of a shortage, especially I think as it relates to adolescent and teen mental health, as well as addiction."

Stake President:

"From the experience that I've had I feel very comfortable. There's been a lot out there to offer I think in this area we've been blessed with a lot of directions to go where to go."

3. What has been your experience when you have been working with a member of your congregation who is also seeing a therapist or who has seen a therapist?

Bishop 1:

"I've been disappointed with the results in most cases."

Bishop 2:

"I have seen mixed results, but my experience has been mostly positive in most cases. A lot of the time when results are disappointing I think it's more because of the individual than the therapists' abilities."

Bishop 3:

"It's been excellent actually, with permission of the member of my congregation, or the client, we cooperate quite closely with the therapist and it helps a lot."

Stake President:

"Well I think for the most part it's been positive, it's been a positive thing. There have been a variety of different issues that we see and I think from many times there are addictions and there can be some positive things happen."

4. What has been your experience with referring the members of your congregation to the local therapists in this area?

Bishop 1:

"Again I've seen mixed results, like I said I have been disappointed, but we do refer."

Bishop 2:

"For the most part it has been a good experience. Like I said earlier, when things have been disappointing I think it has been because the individual doesn't really have a desire to change their situation. That is hard when that happens."

Bishop 3:

"Well I have generally only referred members of my congregation to a couple of therapists, that I have comfort level with and it's been good as a result and I've been a bishop for a little over four years and I've generally determined where the best fits lie, and so it's a fairly limited number of therapists that I've referred."

Stake President:

"You know in my area I probably refer them to LDS family services. Many of them have been missionaries, with a variety of problems-depression, some addictions, and some eating disorders. Those are some of the things that we have seen and we've had some good success. Not always are they solved, immediately, and you know that, it's not a go and take a pill and they're better like sometimes they are here [veterinarian hospital] but it would be a process that take some time in route. I've felt very good about it."

5. To whom do you usually refer your members; to non-affiliated LDS Family Services therapists or those who directly work for or affiliated with LDS Family Services? And why to either?

Bishop 1:

"LDS Family Services is easier from our standpoint because of the church connection. But I have not used only those people. I'm not bound to that and I have some members know who came in with a therapist in mind and so we work with that therapist. I've seen better results when the member themselves wants counseling and already as someone in mind they can trust and work with, so I am not bound with only Family Services. I've enjoyed working with a mixture of therapists in the community."

Bishop 2:

"Well as I am a Bishop I have been given training. I don't know much about the therapy process so the church has the LDS family services for us to refer to. I usually go with what I know, like in anything. The connection with the church makes it easiest for me to refer my members to LDS Family Services. I wouldn't be opposed of referring elsewhere necessarily, but when my members come in and accept or want counseling they know less than I do often. So I go with what I know and with the ties of the church LDS services is the easiest way and a good one I think."

Bishop 3:

"It depends on the circumstance. I would say I've referred more to non-affiliated therapists. I have made referrals to affiliated therapists. It depends upon the issue that's being faced by the member of the congregation. There are therapists that are affiliated with LDS Family Services that have specialties that are consistent with the needs and I've referred them to that therapist at the time."

Stake President:

"We typically refer to the LDS Family Services. Many of those are pre-missionary evaluations and they require that for the mission. And so we have often times, if they have been to another therapist, we have gotten information and added that to what's already there if they have been working with a therapist outside of LDS Family Services."

6. At what point during your counseling meetings with your member do you feel like it's time for the member to seek out professional counseling services? In short, how do you assess when it is time to involve a therapist?

Bishop 1:

"There are a couple of things I've used as guidelines, one is addiction. When I can identify that it's an addiction issue, I think professional counseling is best. Or if I think they are at risk to themselves or someone else. It's hard to analyze that with the few times you meet with them as a church leader. Some you meet with a lot, but a lot of the time I would prefer them to seek out counseling themselves, but that's usually when I get people who just want the church to pay for it."

Bishop 2:

"Now I am no professional, but I usually bring up counseling to a member when I think there is more going on than just the individual seeking support or forgiveness. When I start feeling like an individual's problems are psychological problems, that's when I think they need more help than just from me. It's a hard thing to know, but if I start worrying at all I ask my member if they would like it or think it's necessary."

Bishop 3:

"Well I think a lot of that is dependent upon the bishop's experience and capability in the area but as for me when it's clear that the amount of time and the severity of the mental health challenge is significant then I will bring a therapist in, not to pass the member of my congregation off to the therapist, but to bring that therapist in as a member of my team."

Stake President:

"In my situation, I've seen what's there and many times that's written down and they will say "we've had this issue, we've had that problem" and so as I look at those things, there are certain things that require to be evaluated before they go on a mission-eating disorders for example would be something that would need to be evaluated by a therapist, and so we would, rather than try to do the therapy ourselves, we would try to assess how much it is and what's going on there and then we refer to them. You know there are some things that we see that we will try to work with and help. For example, an addiction for pornography would be something we would try to work with and try to do the things that we could do on the basis of just being a church leader that we would try to help, and there are times that we would, could see that we don't necessarily give traction in and maybe need help. So at that point after with them a little bit and seen that we're not making any progress on what happened we refer them."

Mental Health Therapists:

1. What is your overall view of LDS religious leaders in this area related to helping their members with psychological or emotional difficulties?

Female Therapist 1:

"They don't refer to professionals as often as they should. Too many LDS leaders try to counsel themselves and go into areas that they really should refer out to professionals."

Female Therapist 2:

"Reluctant, I don't think they buy into the concept. Not to say there aren't several that are willing to help, there are. I'm just not sure they understand what counseling is and that makes them fearful. They have a lack of information."

Female Therapist 3:

"Well, from my experience that's one of the first things they (leaders) ask is if they need counseling and help with paying for therapy. I think their pretty good at trying to get the individual to pay what they can and

then their willing to help with the rest. From my experience religious leaders are open to it and willing to help and support their members. With the information they have they are helpful in getting people the help that they need."

Female Therapist 4:

"I think generally I worry that bishops and stake presidents are unskilled when they try to do too much in the area of emotional and psychological therapy counseling and health. I have worked with bishops who were really great at assessing, like 'there is a problem that goes way beyond the scope of what I am going to do as your bishop, let's get you into counseling.' I personally really appreciate when a bishop sort of recognizes that 'this is beyond the scope of what I can do to help you, so let's get you into therapy.' I think that occasionally, I don't know that I have necessarily ran into this a lot, but I think occasionally bishops feel like, 'yeah lets work on this together and I'm like no that's a bad idea, you are in over your head.'"

Female Therapist 5:

"I would say that in general my overall view is probably that they, I have to say, that they try to keep in within the context of religion, like mental health therapy. And so probably want to, as much as possible to have the bishop do most of the people thing, I guess with their members. And partly I think that… I feel so weird making blanket statements because my experience has been kinda mixed. But I think that with religious issues that maybe contradict church teaching; I think that definitely there is more of an attempt, a stronger attempt, to keep things within the religion for mental health or therapy."

Male Therapist 1:

"I don't have that much experience with dealing with the religious leaders and so forth. Primarily I have worked with bishops and taking overflow and people that have requested to see me. But as far as religious leaders being accepting and so forth I think they are open to using myself and they don't question us about what we are doing and let us do what we are doing. And I use different forms of therapy such as hypnotherapy and so forth and I've never had anything negative come back."

Male Therapist 2:

"LDS religious leaders feel they are over and almost responsible for the members of their congregation. I've seen many leaders work with their members to help them and they do, but sometimes I feel like they (leaders) try to deal with psychological problems too much. It's almost discredits the training I have received, well that's what I have felt and experienced a lot."

2. What has been your experience with the referral process when working with the local LDS religious leaders, either referring your clients to or receiving referrals from them to work with their members in session?

Female Therapist 1:

"I don't think I've ever had a referral from an LDS leader. My own Bishop... I've counseled actually people in my own neighborhood so to speak; ward area, and they have come into me on their own, but not through a recommendation from the church. I try really hard to keep religion out of the office. If somebody asked me directly I usually counter that with "Why do you need to know that?" Because I have been a very traditional LDS individual, but in my practice I think I'm really liberal as far as bringing the church into it. I just don't do that."

Female Therapist 2:

"It has been very good, to financially support that, that is. LDS Family Services has been good at seeing clients, it's a very comfortable process. It's a very good educating process for them, at least that's my impression."

Female Therapist 3:

"I work under some other therapists, so they are the ones that get the referrals and then give them to me. I then will send an update every once in a while to the Bishop who is also working with my client. You know it seems like most of the time they just refer straight to LDS Family services unless they knew a therapist who is LDS also and he (the Bishop) knew that therapist was a strong active member in the LDS church. That's been my experience and perception anyways."

Female Therapist 4:

"I have experienced it both ways, usually most of the referrals I have received from bishops have been into my private practice, when I was doing private practice, and not through CAPS. Most of my experience with bishops has been really supportive and I think really interested in the people they work with and counsel in sort of helping and supporting them in what they can

do. I have nothing but good experiences with bishops who are supportive to counseling. I have had a couple of occasions when a student who works with me who has an institute teacher or a bishop who also wants to touch base and just offer some support and help in the experience. I think it has been a little more when I have referred people to their bishops. Usually... I don't think I ever necessarily say, you should go to your bishop, but I will sort of talk about; would it be helpful to go to your bishop and maybe nudge people toward their bishop in that way. And I think that sometimes bishops are really great and really supportive and really helpful. I think that other times students sort of feel like that wasn't helpful at all, I didn't feel understood or I sort of feel frustrated or judged or something like that."

Female Therapist 5:

"Well my experience has been kinda mixed. I have had some good experiences where I have felt that bishops have completely supported me regarding treatment of individuals, without questioning of my religious background. And then completely the opposite, which is a denial of referral or a denial from a client who requested to see me; through using church funds because I am not LDS and that they should best go to, like LDS Family Services. Tends to be the go to LDS Family Services because they can provide better treatment for you, with in the context of your religion. Now, on the other side of that the support has been, like when it is supportive, it is really supportive. It's like black and white."

Male Therapist 1:

"Again, they have been open, flexible, I've only had like one bishop request information. The rest of them have pretty much allowed us to do what we need to do and not added input and gotten into my business."

Male Therapist 2:

"Well typically they refer their members to their own counselors, but I have seen some clients who have been members. I will discuss with them about seeing their Bishop if I think it will help that individual. It all just depends on my client."

3. If you had an active LDS client who struggled with religious issues in his/her life, would you send your client to their bishop or stake president for further help that they may need? If so (or not), why?

Female Therapist 1:

"Well that is going to depend individually. I wouldn't automatically, though. Because I think if they've come to a private practice they're not going to be really receptive to me sending them back to the church, if they haven't approached their church then that is their issue. I don't think I should even go there. So no, I would not I think that is crossing the boundary."

Female Therapist 2:

"That's a very hard question. It really depends on the client and their needs, it's not my call."

Female Therapist 3:

"Yes for sure. If my client feels they need it that is a barrier I can't help them with."

Female Therapist 4:

"Yes I would. I feel like I do pretty routinely. I am pretty clear that I have no ecclesiastical authority, I am LDS, but certainly I cannot help you repent from sin or clarify some sort of ecclesiastical or doctrinal sorts of issues. And I think that sometimes it is really helpful for students to go in with somebody who has ecclesiastical authority through that process. It kind of varies; I mean it really kind of depends a lot on what the concern is. So, if somebody comes in and they are struggling with, for example, masturbating and pornography; I am not going to necessarily refer them right to their bishop because I have had some really mixed experiences with that. So bishops are really helpful and supportive and some bishops are really punishing and severe. I don't know, I don't necessarily see you need to go right to your bishop with that. I think you can make progress on it through counseling. But I am thinking about another student I worked with a few years ago who was kind of going through a faith transition or a faith crisis. Trying to figure out what do I really believe? I have never really felt the spirit the way everybody says I should feel the spirit and I have done everything right. I have gone on a mission I've done it all. I don't get it and we talked a lot about where could you get support and where could you get help with this? What would some good resources be? And is there anyone that you trust that you could talk to about these things, these concerns and these question that you have, who could maybe... had more wisdom and could provide some guidance? And I think that's been the best thing. You know my bishop from my home ward is a really awesome guy; I really trust him and I would like to talk to him. And so yeah."

Female Therapist 5:

"If it was my client? I think it would depend on what they wanted. I think it would depend on their relationship with that religious leader, if they thought that it would be helpful or not. I don't know if I could say yes or not to that. Yes, if it's going to help, but I think that sometimes they (client) have already seen that person and they don't feel like it would be helpful or useful. So sometimes I am a more objective person, you know because I don't have the same religious beliefs."

Male Therapist 1:

"I was born and raised LDS myself and so forth, I am not active, but if I got into some areas that I felt that it would be beneficial I would get a signed release first from the client to talk to that Bishop and see where we'd go from there. In most cases I have always kept my clients and the Bishops have not jumped in and or whatever but if there is a need then I'm open."

Male Therapist 2:

"Again, it really just depends on the client. If they feel it would help them or if I think they can't get over something like guilt without seeing their Bishop, I may ask if that is something they would see as beneficial for them."

4. In what ways has working with these local LDS religious leaders related to the referral process been (or not been) helpful?

Female Therapist 1:

"I don't think I've ever had a referral. I think that is because most refer to LDS social services. I've had it mentioned to me that I ought to get connected to them but I am not sure if that is where I want to go."

Female Therapist 2:

"There have been some struggles. The Bishops and State Presidents approaches are very religious based. They may be a good person, but if they haven't been trained properly, they lack the skill level in dealing with large issues, like rape and incest. They can offer guidance as a cleric but not "therapize" you correctly. A cleric may say pray more, however, that may not be the whole cure, very myopic view. It may be a piece but not a cure all, not the big picture. Positives would be the LDS 12 step program in relation to drugs and alcohol abuse, its spiritual based and on a more spiritual track. I think that may be caring, I think . . ."

Female Therapist 3:

"It is helpful working with Bishops who know they don't have the education and training as we do as therapists to help their members and they don't act like they do, so I can use my training to help that individual. At the same time I can't act like I have the authority of an individual that their church leader does. It's helpful when they refer to us to just trust us in the process. I haven't experienced anything not helpful for the most part."

Female Therapist 4:

"I think that I always really appreciate it when a bishop is just supportive, supportive of the counseling process. I think a lot of bishops are really supportive in terms of helping to pay for counseling, which is an incredible resource. When bishops are willing to help pay for it, willing to help support it, wants to check in and touch base on how things are going, that's really great. I think probably something that would be less helpful would be like: a lot of questions, wanting to know a lot of specifics, or when will this wrap up and kind of pin down a lot of details that I think are kind of hard to do in counseling. Counseling is more of an art. It's not the same as going to a doctor asking, how long until the broken arm fixes? It feels like there is pressure like, when will this be fixed or what are you doing? How's it going? you know . . ."

Female Therapist 5:

"I think that it has been very helpful. I don't know if I could provide a more elaborate answer than that. It's pretty easy, I could say that. It's easy, useful and helpful. I like getting checks from the LDS church."

Male Therapist 1:

"Yes, I have worked with and known of a couple of Bishops and so forth and received some referrals from them. Primarily it is word of mouth from clients that have asked questions to their friends and I have received many clients that way, referrals from their friends and recommendations for their friends and so forth. Word of mouth."

Male Therapist 2:

"Well as I said earlier, I haven't worked with the religious leaders much as they seem to always refer to their counselors. But the few I have worked with been very different. Sometimes it has been good and sometimes

it has not been. It has been successful when the Bishop has trusted me to do my job, but in all honesty that hasn't happen often."

5. At what point during your counseling sessions with your client do you feel like it's time for the member to seek out ecclesiastical counseling services from their LDS religious leader? In short, how do you assess when it is time to involve the bishop or stake president?

Female Therapist 1:

"I don't. I think it is appropriate for the individual if they ask for advice or for direction with that. To encourage them if that is what they need or want. If I can see if that is a desire that they have then certainly I would encourage them to go that direction but I certainly wouldn't make a referral. I wouldn't even ask to get involved."

Female Therapist 2:

"That's the client's call, not mine. It comes up; each religion has a repentance process. I would be supportive of whatever they chose."

Female Therapist 3:

"From my experience ecclesiastical leaders have already been involved. If I had a client come that hadn't been referred I would see where the client is at. If I felt like they needed it I would ask them if they wanted to see their Bishop as well or ask if the client wants their Bishop involved. It all depends on what the client wants."

Female Therapist 4:

"That's a good question. It kind of goes back to that therapy is more of an art than a science. I don't have that rubric I use to assess it more when it feels relevant or feels pressing. Again I am not necessarily saying, you should go talk to your bishop I am saying, would it be helpful, like you have this fear that you have repented of past sins, but maybe not fully enough. I don't think that's the case when it helps you talk to your bishop that you get somebody with ecclesiastical authority that helps weigh in on the matter. And the client to say, yeah I would like to do that or no I don't think that will be helpful."

Female Therapist 5:

"Again I think that it really depends on what they want and I don't think that I can, I don't think that it is my job to make that call really. I think that's their job to decide. If they are doing something that they feel is against the teachings of their religion and they are going to continue to suffer guilt because of it, then I might ask if they think that going to help by speaking with their bishop. I usually ask them that question to kinda assess when or not it might be useful or helpful. But I think that it really depends on the person. I don't see it as something that has to be done. It is really up to what they want."

Male Therapist 1:

"Either the request from the client / patient or else... you like you know the first thing that popped into my head was abuse issues and that and so forth but by law I am supposed to record those. I would refer to the Bishops as needed in general, but I would be cautious, at the state of Utah, professional laws and so forth I have to follow as a guideline but then also is that if this person needs religious support and assistance and we should check out that route, again get a release of information and making sure that the client is on board and feels comfortable and I would go with if necessary to support or provide assistance where needed."

Male Therapist 2:

"I feel that is usually completely separate from me working with my clients. If they feel they should do that great, but that is not my job. There have been times clients have expressed this need to talk to their Bishop, but they are too scared, so I will help them work through that. It really just depends on what the client wants to do. Often times clients I have worked with in the LDS community have already involved their Bishop and have come to me separately."

Below are the themes and meaning units that were generated from the data responses of both LDS religious leaders and mental health therapists.

LDS Religious Leaders' Attitudes of Mental Health Therapists and Therapy

LDS religious leaders tend to:

- Have an overall positive attitude around therapy/therapists and the assistance they can provide.
- See quality therapists as valuable/needed in some limited circumstances. There may be a shortage of

qualified, good therapists. However, most therapists are skilled and qualified.
- Feel somewhat discouraged with therapists/therapy when "results" do not come or do not come quickly.
- See therapy as a system for "symptom relief" as opposed to understanding the developmental process of therapy and the broader implications of therapy (i.e., identity development or values clarification) as indicated by being "disappointed" with the lack of results.
- See the responsibility for change should lie mostly with client.

Collaboration:
- Favor LDS Family Services as it's easier, they understand the needs of the members, and due to the connection with the LDS Church, but would refer out to non-affiliated therapists if needed or if member chooses their someone outside of LDS Family Services.
- Be selective with therapists because of "mixed" results (poor therapeutic outcomes)

Mental Health Therapists' Attitudes of LDS Religious Leaders

Therapists believe LDS leaders tend to:
- Be helpful and supportive in general around counseling.
- Lack skills, training, and competence, and may go beyond the scope of their function with their members related to psychological processes and adjustments.
- Be reluctant and fearful about therapy/therapists; may be specifically due to the local mental health therapists in the region.
- Devalue the mental health field when they may not use mental health therapists for their members, and may try to work with members themselves.
- Lack trust around therapy/therapists, but in some cases can be open to allow the therapist to do their work.

Collaboration:
- Prefer LDS Family Services therapists as first choice, or will refer to a therapist who they know is active in the LDS Church.
- Show mixed results around collaboration.
- Helpful in supporting their members financially for counseling.
- Could be a better resource with working with "guilt" or "sins."
- Tend to see referral as a one-way street with bishops referring to them, but not vice-versa.

Discussion

Some of the existing research suggests that mental health professionals are more understanding and open to collaborating with religious leaders and the beliefs of religious clients than are religious leaders toward mental health professionals (Foskett, Marriott, & Wilson-Rudd, 2004). However, the qualitative findings in this study may not clearly support this result. For example, among the mental health therapist participants, there appears to be specific discouragement toward LDS religious leaders, particularly around (1) their perceived belief that LDS religious leaders may discredit their field, (2) lack of trust and increased fear around counseling, and (3) the perception that they may not be qualified to work with some members' issues. These issues could potentially contribute to a poor working relationship and stifle collaboration. Although some results show a disappointing attitude about the lack of "results" when their members go through therapy (these LDS leaders may tend to misunderstand and oversimplify the process of therapy) or that there may be a shortage of qualified therapists, the themes also seem to be positive towards therapy and therapists by LDS religious leaders. For example, during the referral process, some LDS leaders have observed, in most cases, that mental health therapists are "skilled," "competent," and they feel "comfortable" referring to therapists in their region.

However, there seems to be a positive bias held by LDS leaders towards therapists affiliated with LDS Family Services than therapists who are unaffiliated with the LDS Church. It is possible such a bias is not only due to the easiness of the referral or that LDS Family Services therapists "understand" their members' issues, but could also be based on leaders' concerns, fears, and worries around the approach taken by many therapy/therapists in this specific region. Another potential explanation around this bias is that

LDS religious leaders may also want to maintain the reputable name and image of the LDS Church by safeguarding and protecting it.

Conversely, attitudes of mental health therapists about referring a client to a local LDS religious leader to seek ecclesiastical guidance seems to be positive and based on exploring this possibility further. Therapists may be more open to the client deciding whether a referral to the LDS leader would be another resource for help or not (i.e., be less likely to discourage collaboration with a religious leader), as indicated by the statement, "it's the client's call" or "if it's helpful, it really depends on the client." In addition, therapists seem to believe that it would be important that LDS leaders take the lead and work more with spiritual struggles such as "guilt" and "sin." These results may suggest that therapists in this study may hold less negative bias or be less fearful about what local LDS leaders do to help their congregations. However, a potential weakness of this study is that therapists' personal views of the religion were not assessed, therefore such a finding could be due to therapists who are also active LDS members and who also support their leaders.

The findings also show that therapists tend to believe some local LDS leaders may work beyond their scope of expertise based on overlapping ideas between "psychological problems" and "sins." While feeling competent in dealing with the sinful behaviors of their members, leaders may need to refer out for those experiencing significant psychological struggles. Thus, a lack of trust and failure by local LDS leaders to collaborate may ensue around therapy/therapists due to some of their perceived attitudes as well as their negative experiences with therapists in this area. This lack of trust may contribute to a poor LDS religious leader/therapist collaboration and suggests that LDS leaders in this sample may fear that therapists hold divergent worldviews about the developmental needs of individuals seeking help. Although these results may expand our thinking of cross collaboration and the referral process between mental health therapists and LDS religious leaders, the results may not be generalizable across all LDS congregations, LDS clients, and mental health therapists due to the small sample size as well as the unique and specific (seemingly unfavorable) experiences in this region between mental health professionals and LDS religious leaders.

However, the results do help us to be aware of this possible collaborative dialog and make potential implications. It is important that mental health professionals educate other helpers (clergy) about the process of mental health therapy and better understand what it is that mental health therapists actually do and don't do. Likewise, it is vital for mental health professionals to be open and understanding towards religious diversity and the meaningfulness one's spiritual life. For example, mental health therapists should strive to practice cultural competence with highly religious individuals, the institution and their leadership (i.e., LDS Priesthood structure), and how they view spiritual healing. When mental health therapists are able to be culturally sensitive to spiritual diversity, appropriate communication and education regarding the therapy process between mental health therapists and LDS religious leaders can be achieved. Productive and effective conversations between clergy and mental health professionals are needed, but in a fashion that fosters mutual understanding of each other's role, cultural sensitivity, religious respect, and establishing a healthy and open dialog between the two healing services to meet the client's needs. First step could be to begin with a discussion perhaps 2-3 meetings with these 2 groups of helpers (or have ongoing meetings when new mental health therapists are in the area and new LDS leaders are called) examining underlying assumptions about the helping process so both mental health therapists and clergy can better understand each other's roles. Then, moving to demystify and deconstruct certain assumptions and biases that may exist towards each other. This could entail mental health therapists learning about the LDS church, their beliefs, and how they view psychological struggles, while LDS religious leaders educate themselves in the general, ethical, and effective practices of psychotherapy. Both can be familiar with and understand clearly what will take place when the mental health therapist receives an LDS client and when the LDS leader refers his members to a mental health therapist. Future research could explore how this cultural, mental health, and religious education between these two groups can be improved to raise more awareness, foster more cultural sensitivity, and establish healthy working relationships between mental health therapists and LDS religious leaders.

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